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Women Workers in Sheffield's Metal Trades, c.1742-1867

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Abstract

This thesis will consider the economic and social lives of women who were engaged in Sheffield's metal trades. The timeframe for this research – c.1742-1867 – is significant as 1742 saw the introduction of the crucible method of producing steel and the invention of Old Sheffield Plate. The introduction of the Bessemer converter and large-scale production of steel took place in the 1860s. Sheffield's metal trades constituted a distinctive working context due to the continuation of the workshop-based production, subdivision of labour and the organisation of the industry through the Cutlers' Company.

Women's contribution to the labour force during the Industrial Revolution has been the focus of studies since Ivy Pinchbeck's book *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* was published in 1930, yet still, historians acknowledge the unresolved issues of the scale and nature of women's participation. This study contributes to these debates by considering an industry in which women were a minority in the workforce, and will include analysis of businesswomen and of women employed in the metal trades. These women faced restrictions through a lack of training, discourse against them, and a lack of organisational change by the Cutlers' Company. Despite these restrictions, the metal trades offered some women relatively high wages compared with other industries, although not always a stable form of employment. Women worked in a variety of roles often, but not exclusively, associated with the finishing processes of metal goods. Family was important in this working context, and could bring opportunities to women's working lives. This working environment could enable women's domestic and working roles to be combined. Although women were a minority within the metal trades, their experiences reflected diversity within this group.

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List of Abbreviations

AO: Ancestry Online

AOS: Assay Office Archive, Sheffield

BL: Borthwick Institute, University of York

CC: Company of Cutlers' Archive

KIM: Kelham Island Museum, Sheffield

LB: Lloyd's Bank Archive, London

SA: Sheffield Archives

SC: Special Collections, Western Bank Library, University of Sheffield

SFC: Sheffield Flood Claims Archive (<https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/>)

SIMT: Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust

SLL: Sheffield Local Studies Library

SMA: Sheffield Museums Archive

SRL: Sheffield Reference Library

WRY: West Yorkshire Archives

Introduction

'This town of Sheffield is very populous and large [...] here they make all sorts of cutlery-ware [...] and they talked of 30,000 men employed in the whole.'

Daniel Defoe (1710-2)¹

'The women and children are all employed in the various branches [of the metal trades] and earn very good wages, much more than by spinning wool in any part of the kingdom.'

Arthur Young (1770)²

'Only about seven females are employed in the works, all grown up. Some are in the warehouse and brush and wrap up files, and others in a shop scour the files with sand, which is heavy and dirty work and more suitable for men.'

Mr Alfred Peace, Owner of Messrs. Peace, Ward and Co.'s, Steel File, &c.
Manufacturers, Saville Street in Sheffield (1865)³

The travel narratives of Daniel Defoe and Arthur Young from the eighteenth century provide visitors' impressions of the town and a sense of what some people during this period understood of women in Sheffield's metal trades. Daniel Defoe was travelling in the early eighteenth century and identified the metal trades with reference to men but not women. This could reflect the dominance of male workers in the places he visited, since we do not know whether Defoe visited workshops and people's homes, or whether he simply assumed that women did not have a role in Sheffield's metal trades. However, in 1770 Arthur Young noted women and children participating in the metal trades in Sheffield, and that they were being well paid to do so. The third extract above, from 1865, is the response

¹ D. Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, Vol. 2, Visiting Sheffield 1710-1712*, (1962), p. 183, cited in D. Hey, *The Fiery Blades of Hallamshire: Sheffield and its Neighbourhoods, 1660-1740* (Leicester, 1991), p. 2; D. Hey, 'The South Yorkshire Steel Industry and the Industrial Revolution', *Northern History* 42 (2005), p. 91.

² A. Young, *A Six Month Tour Through the North of England (1770)*, vol. 1, *Northern tour*, (2nd edn, 1770), pp. 123-6, cited in I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 275.

³ SLL: 331.3 SQ, *J. E. White's Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (1865), p. 39.

of a male file manufacturer in an interview for a report on the trade in which he is describing the work of seven women he employed to scour files (a finishing role in the file trade). All three extracts raise questions about the extent and nature of women's participation in Sheffield's metal trades c. 1742-1867.

This introduction is divided into three sections. The first section will consider the historiography associated with both women workers and women in business during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I will demonstrate how my study of women in Sheffield's metal trades will provide a distinctive contribution to our current understanding of this broader area of study. This analysis will consider the division of labour in which women were a minority in the workforce, the class of women indicated by their position in the workplace, and the importance of family in this working context which could result in opportunities and restrictions to women's working lives. The second section will include a summary of current research findings on Sheffield's metal trades, providing an overview of the context in which women worked. There will also be a consideration of gaps in the current understanding of women in the context of Sheffield's metal trades, in order to identify the areas that my study will need to address. Sheffield was not the only region associated with the metal trades and this section will determine what local factors led to the development of the metal trades in Sheffield and the implications of this for women workers. The analysis will include the workshop-based production, subdivision of labour and the organisation of the trade through the Cutlers' Company, which remained significant into the nineteenth century. The third section will outline the intentions of each chapter, together with the issues and opportunities presented by the sources available. Finally, reference will be made to the collaborative nature of my Ph.D. scholarship for this thesis.

Women's contribution to the labour force during the Industrial Revolution has been the focus of studies since Ivy Pinchbeck's book *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* published in 1930, yet still, historians acknowledge the 'unresolved issues' of women's participation in the labour force

during this period.⁴ A major debate regarding women's work during the Industrial Revolution concerns the extent to which women were part of the workforce, and whether this may have changed throughout the period. Leigh Shaw-Taylor argued: 'they [historians] have variously held that over the course of the Industrial Revolution paid employment for women was increasing; decreasing; stable; increasing and then decreasing.'⁵ Some historians have argued that women's employment opportunities were limited with the emergence of a separation of spheres during the nineteenth century. Others have argued that the pre-industrial era was more akin to the industrial period for women. Finally, there are those who see changes as circular as opposed to linear. An understanding of women's participation in the workforce is an important issue to resolve, as otherwise it distorts our understanding of the Industrial Revolution as well as gender relations during this period. Therefore, a more detailed consideration of these divergent conclusions will now be considered to establish how my study will contribute to these wider debates.

Ivy Pinchbeck argued that women's employment opportunities decreased during the Industrial Revolution. However, she also argued that the period was associated with an improvement in women's lives through 'better conditions, a greater variety of openings and an improved status [in society]'.⁶ Deborah Valenze argued that although women had a significant role in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, by the nineteenth century their work opportunities became more precarious and restricted.⁷ Bridget Hill explained that although women did work outside the home in a wide range of trades, this declined during the Industrial Revolution as it was seen as 'unfeminine', with 'immoral habits' and 'physically too demanding'.⁸ However, differences between the roles of women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have also been

⁴ I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981); N. Goose, 'Working women in Industrial England', in N. Goose (ed.), *Women's work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 15.

⁵ L. Shaw-Taylor, 'Diverse Experiences: The Geography of Adult Female Employment in England and the 1851 Census', in N. Goose (ed.), *Women's work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 30.

⁶ I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 4.

⁷ D. Valenze, *The First Industrial Woman* (Oxford, 1995).

⁸ B. Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 259.

acknowledged. She stated: 'not all women's work in the eighteenth century was in the household, but a great deal of it was.'⁹ She did not support Ivy Pinchbeck's positive assessment of the impact of industrialisation on women's lives, and argued that women were seen as victims of the new industrial regime with low wages, poor living conditions and a loss of work through competition with male workers. As work moved away from the home, wages were organised so that competition between men and women now existed and the wealth of the male employer increased; for middle-class women this meant they did not have to work, and for labouring women, the competition with men meant they were not always needed for paid work.¹⁰

Subsequent writers have acknowledged that the changing context in which women worked was complex. Amanda Vickery challenged the perception that there was a 'golden age' of women's work before capitalism.¹¹ As far back as 1200 women's work was 'low skilled, low status and low paying'.¹² Jane Humphries and Sara Horrell acknowledged that women's paid labour in the factory or as outworkers increased during the Industrial Revolution, but overall women and children's contributions to the family income were relatively small throughout the eighteenth century and remained so into the nineteenth century.¹³ The overall picture presented is that opportunities for women to undertake paid labour had limitations both before and during the Industrial Revolution.

Maxine Berg stated, 'when we talk of industry in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we are talking of a largely female workforce'.¹⁴ However, Maxine Berg and Pat Hudson argued that by the mid nineteenth century, women and children's labour was declining in importance through a mixture of legislation,

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰ L. Downs, *Writing Gender History* (2nd edn, London, 2010), p. 296.

¹¹ A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 294-332.

¹² J. Bennett, 'History That Stands Still: Women Workers in the European past', *Feminist Studies* 14.2 (1988), pp. 269-83.

¹³ S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-breadwinner Family, 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 186.

¹⁴ M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 156.

the activities of male trade unionists, and the increasingly pervasive ideology of the male breadwinner, which posited an ideal family in which the male householder earned a family wage and women were not engaged in paid employment.¹⁵ Hannah Barker's analysis of women workers claimed that although the early phase of the Industrial Revolution saw an expansion of women's employment, it appeared to have been only temporary in certain sectors, such as the cotton mills.¹⁶ Significantly, there were growing numbers of women working in low-wage, putting-out work, particularly in the textile and small metalware trades.¹⁷ Whilst providing a broad overview of women's work, these studies draw attention to significant variations between trades and localities when establishing the impact of the Industrial Revolution on women.

Pat Hudson has also argued that studies at a national level 'attempt casual analysis'.¹⁸ Pamela Sharpe believed there were contradictory effects regarding women's work opportunities and wages depending on the region and industry in question.¹⁹ In order to address the disparity in the field she proposed that more detailed case studies of women's employment opportunities were needed. She proposed that fresh analysis needed to be 'from the bottom up, paying attention to localized differences and to such factors as seasonal change, age-specificity, and marital status'.²⁰ This study reflects the principle of considering a local context of a particular industry in order to provide a holistic understanding of the patterns of women's employment. As such, this thesis will demonstrate that locally constructed restrictions on women entering the metal trades impacted upon the extent of women's employment in the industry. However, women's employment opportunities increased slightly during the mid nineteenth century because of a reduction in the power of the Cutlers' Company, recognition of informal training

¹⁵ M. Berg and P. Hudson, 'Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review* 45.1 (1992), p. 37.

¹⁶ H. Barker, 'Women and Work', in H. Barker and E. Chalus (eds), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850, An Introduction* (Oxon, 2005), p. 133.

¹⁷ M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 158.

¹⁸ P. Hudson, *Regions and Industries: A Perspective on the Industrial Revolution in Britain* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 1.

¹⁹ P. Sharpe, 'Continuity and Change: Women's History and Economic History in Britain', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 21-33.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

within the family and an increased visibility of women's opportunities via newspaper advertisements.

To broaden the view of the socio-economic scope of women's contribution to the labour force during the Industrial Revolution, women in business must also be considered alongside workers involved in producing metal goods. The presence of businesswomen in the Industrial Revolution has been extensively researched in a variety of locations.²¹ These studies have sought to challenge the ideology of separate spheres by showing that women were central to, and largely uncontested in, urban commercial life. The separate spheres ideology stated that women from the middle class retreated into private and domestic duties during the period. The spheres were defined by public power (of men) and private domesticity (of women). Through the development of modern capitalism and urbanisation at the end of the eighteenth century it was argued there was 'a historic break and a realigned gender order emerged'.²² Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argued that, 'by the mid-nineteenth century, *work*, when it meant gainful employment, was becoming a problematic activity for a particular group of middle-class women'.²³ However, in 2006 Nicola Phillips' study based on businesswomen in London, and Hannah Barker's research into businesswomen in Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds, concluded that women in business were 'central to urban society and to the development of commerce'²⁴ and were 'a significant, if not always visible, part of England's expanding economy'.²⁵ These conclusions are also confirmed in studies related to a broader time period and include locations, such as Birmingham and London.²⁶

²¹ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006); N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006); A. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c1800-1870* (London, 2009); J. Aston, 'Female Business Owners in England, 1849-1901', Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 2012).

²² L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (2nd edition, Oxon, 2002), p. xvi.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

²⁴ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 2.

²⁵ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 261.

²⁶ J. Aston, 'Female Business Owners in England, 1849-1901', Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 2012); A. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c1800-1870* (London, 2009); A. Kay, 'Retailing, Respectability and the Independent Woman in Nineteenth-century London', in R. Beachy, B. Craig and A. Owen (eds),

Significantly, these studies on businesswomen have shown that women could be active in masculine forms of trade. Hannah Barker concluded that although women in business were more likely to be involved in 'women's work', 'a significant and steady proportion' of the middling women listed in directories were involved in 'masculine work': '12 to 24 per cent in Manchester; 12 to 16 per cent in Leeds; and 12 to 37 per cent in Sheffield after 1774 (with 61 per cent, almost all in manufacturing, in 1774).'²⁷ Nicola Phillips stated that women were most numerous in feminine trades but,

Their presence was also detectable within many "new" and more specialised trades in London [...] yet even if all the individual women in London's "feminine trades" associated with food and drink, dress and education are discounted, more than 40 per cent of insured businesswomen remained spread, albeit thinly, over a wide variety of other trades.²⁸

The contribution of my thesis to these findings arises from my focus explicitly on women whose experiences were shaped by their involvement in a masculine working context.

Jennifer Aston's analysis of women entering Birmingham directories did not consider the metal trades in isolation but related them to 'Miscellaneous including Manufacturing & Professional' sectors and 'other retailing'. She noted her surprise (given that this category included the metal trades for which Birmingham was renowned) that only 29 per cent of businesswomen were entered into this category in 1849.²⁹ Whilst studies have shown that women could participate in masculine trades, this thesis will consider how their involvement in a masculine working environment impacted on businesswomen's experiences. Christine Wiskin found that between 1780 and 1825, women advertising in Birmingham's

Women, Business and Finance in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Rethinking Separate Spheres (Oxford, 2006), pp. 152-66.

²⁷ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 66-7.

²⁸ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 142-4.

²⁹ J. Aston, 'Female Business Owners in England, 1849-1901', Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 2012), pp. 89-90.

metal trades declined.³⁰ She argued that the declining numbers of women who ran metal trades businesses resulted from changes in the way the trades were organised. She argued that the steady impoverishment of small producers in the early nineteenth century reduced the chances for women to run their own enterprises in these trades.³¹ My study requires a detailed examination of a wide range of sources on a minority group, as opposed to attempting to draw together threads from a disparate range of contexts, which is an issue with more general studies. I will demonstrate that the Cutlers' Company (the cutlery and metal goods guild) in Sheffield restricted women, meaning they could only inherit and not create a business in the metal trades, which limited the growth of businesswomen in the industry. However, women contested their position through the use of their husbands' trademarks and ran businesses for prolonged periods, sometimes alongside their sons, which suggests that women's level of involvement in particular trades was determined by social and cultural factors rather than women's ability to run these businesses.

In order to understand the context women faced in Sheffield's metal trades in relation to their gender, it is necessary to consider the following: first, the implications of the fact that they were a small minority in the workforce; second, there was diversity in the experiences of women in relation to those associated with a business compared to those who were employees; third, family had implications for the nature of women's involvement in the metal trades.

Women's history has evolved into gender history that identifies the need to understand the lives of women not in isolation, but in relation to men.³² In order to understand the lives of women in the metal trades, it is necessary to appreciate 'masculinity's power to shape [women's] experience'.³³ Beatrice Craig outlined the reasons why particular work was considered inherently 'feminine' or 'masculine': 'physicians, philosophers and later politicians reconceptualized men and women

³⁰ C. Wiskin, 'Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826', Ph.D. thesis (Warwick University, 2000), p. 120.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

³² L. Downs, *Writing Gender History* (2nd edn, London, 2010), p. 88.

³³ J. Tosh 'What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain', *History Workshop* 38 (1994), p. 198.

as opposite sexes, defined by fixed, innate characteristics, and visibly meant by laws of nature to operate in mutually exclusive spheres.³⁴ Work is often determined by 'masculine' or 'feminine' attributes through the skills adopted, which impacted upon the numbers of men and women involved in different types of work.

Masculine forms of work were associated with hard, sometimes dangerous and heavy forms of work. For example, seafaring has commonly been regarded as the most exclusively male dominated occupation.³⁵ In 1842 the Mines & Collieries Act banned women and children under the age of ten from working underground in the mine, which was regarded as dangerous work and more suitable for men. In contrast to men's work, terms such as 'inexpensive', 'adaptability', 'elasticity', 'seasonality', 'irregularity' and 'dexterity' have been used to characterise the nature of female employment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³⁶ Furthermore, women's work has been notoriously difficult to locate in the historical records because only women in 'regular' employment were noted in the census.³⁷ Hannah Barker stated that women's jobs were seen as less important than those of men, as indicated by their lower wages: for example, 'women who laboured for pay were typically receiving one-third to one-half of a male wage'.³⁸ According to Maxine Berg, it was low wages and female dexterity that enabled women to have such a significant impact on particular industries.³⁹ New industries went to places which had high levels of female unemployment as women were regarded as cheap labour.⁴⁰ A further difficulty for women was the introduction of

³⁴ B. Craig, *Women and Business since 1500* (London, 2016), p. 93.

³⁵ M. Creighton, and L. Norling, 'Introduction', in M. Creighton, and L. Norling (eds), *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (Baltimore, 1996), p. viii.

³⁶ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialisation in England, 1700-1870* (London, 2000), p. 1.

³⁷ S. McGeevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), pp. 489-512; A. Wilkinson, 'Women and Occupations in the Census of England and Wales: 1851-90', Ph.D. thesis (University of Exeter, 2012); A. Wilkinson and E. Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work, in the Victorian Censuses Revisited', *History Workshop Journal* 81 (2016), pp. 17-38.

³⁸ H. Barker, 'Women and Work', in H. Barker and E. Chalus (eds), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850, An Introduction* (Oxon, 2005), p. 127.

³⁹ M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 168.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

machinery, which brought a division of labour, with women at the bottom.⁴¹ In contrast, there were 'relatively high earnings for women' in areas of the North and the Midlands where textiles, metal trades and potteries were expanding rapidly.⁴² This suggests that the transformation within an industry impacted on women's place and their roles within the workforce. This conclusion is significant given that Sheffield's metal trades underwent little change after 1742, until the 1860s with the introduction of the Bessemer converter and large-scale production of steel. I will demonstrate that women's employment opportunities saw only a little growth, in which their roles were often restricted.

However, there were exceptions to this gendered division of labour as Katrina Honeyman found women workers were both 'uniquely dexterous but could also perform heavy labour when required'.⁴³ Although women were banned from going underground in the mine after 1842, women working in the coalmines were described as 'fatigued and working in poor conditions, but were good workers'.⁴⁴ Furthermore, shifting concepts of masculine or feminine work indicate that gender distinctions could evolve with changes in technology or the organisation of a particular trade. John Styles argued that pre-industrial dressmaking trades were 'reconstructed as ideally feminine'.⁴⁵ It has also been found that women played active and important roles in the maritime enterprise.⁴⁶

Studies of businesswomen have shown that women could, and did, participate in masculine trades.⁴⁷ Businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades have been identified as distinctive. Hannah Barker found that, apart from a sharp decline in 1828, the percentage of businesswomen working in 'masculine' manufacturing

⁴¹ D. Valenze, *The First Industrial Woman* (Oxford, 1995), p. 183.

⁴² M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 158.

⁴³ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialisation in England, 1700-1870* (London, 2000), p. 50.

⁴⁴ I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 252.

⁴⁵ J. Styles, 'Clothing the North: The Supply of Non-Elite Clothing in the Eighteenth-Century North of England', *Textile History* 25 (1994), pp. 139-66.

⁴⁶ M. Creighton and L. Norling, 'Introduction', in M. Creighton, and L. Norling (eds), *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (Baltimore, 1996), p. viii.

⁴⁷ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 66-7; N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 143-4; pp. 254-5.

was significant in Sheffield: 60.7 per cent in 1774; 37.1 per cent in 1787; 21.2 per cent in 1797; 30.1 per cent in 1817; and finally 8.3 per cent in 1828.⁴⁸ A significant proportion (49 out of 107) of these women were identified as metal workers.⁴⁹ Beatrice Craig noted that businesswomen in Sheffield displayed a different pattern to those in other locations where ‘most women capitalized on skills their contemporaries deemed womanly’.⁵⁰ For example, in contrast to Hannah Barker’s figures noted above, in Boston in 1876 more than 80 per cent of businesswomen clustered into ‘feminine’ trades.⁵¹ Whilst these studies show the involvement of businesswomen in Sheffield’s metal trades and other masculine forms of work, they do not provide a sufficiently comprehensive study to examine the nature of women’s experiences in this context, an area that my thesis will address. There is also a need to consider if businesswomen’s involvement continued throughout the nineteenth century and how the opportunities of businesswomen in the metal trades compared with women employed in the industry.

To establish how different industries shaped women’s experiences, Valerie Hall considered working-class women during the period 1860-1939 in Northumberland. These women were participating in mining communities, inshore fishing communities and agricultural communities, and they all ‘perform[ed] work that, to many outsiders, appeared “masculine” in nature’.⁵² These three industries also had differences: in mining communities many women were denied economically productive work outside the home, whilst family-based fishing enterprises enabled women to perform tasks from the home, and agricultural labourers could work in a family unit and also work independently. She emphasises the impact of the industry on women’s experiences as being of more importance than the locality. This demonstrates that there were diverse experiences of women in different masculine trades in a particular location. My

⁴⁸ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2005), p. 65.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

⁵⁰ B. Craig, *Women and Business since 1500* (London, 2016), pp. 107-9; p. 112.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-9.

⁵² V. Hall, *Women at Work: How Different Industries Shaped Women’s Experiences* (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 5.

study will focus on Sheffield's metal trades and will show that there were also diverse experiences of women within a single industry.

The metal trades in Sheffield and Birmingham are described as being particularly distinctive involving a 'successful alternative route to industrialisation', yet more attention in literature has been made in relation to women's work in the Birmingham and Black Country metal trades.⁵³ Maxine Berg indicated that even though the metal trades were more prominent in Sheffield than in Birmingham, more women were working in Birmingham.⁵⁴ Clive Behagg's analysis of the workforce in Birmingham's metal trades in 1851 found 18 per cent of the workforce were women.⁵⁵ Carol Morgan's study on Birmingham and the Black Country found that small metal industries employing females were 'well entrenched' and 'especially exploited'.⁵⁶ In the manufacture of these goods there was a 'rigidly sex segregated labour market' in which many girls and women were employed to carry out work at home 'requiring close attention and dexterity'.⁵⁷ A clean and quiet environment was deemed appropriate for the work of women.⁵⁸ The work that women undertook in the metal trades beyond Sheffield was set by boundaries established by their gender. The implications are that in an industry where women constituted a large proportion of the workforce, their position remained weak given that the roles they performed were unskilled and received a lower wage than skilled male workers. This raises a question about women's involvement in the same industry but in a different location. In posing this question to the metal trades of Sheffield, my thesis will demonstrate that being a minority in the workforce could provide unexpected opportunities for women. I will demonstrate that many women undertook the finishing roles of metal goods in Sheffield, although some women undertook a broader range of roles, which was

⁵³ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialisation in England, 1700-1870* (London, 2000), p. 41.

⁵⁴ M. Berg, 'Women's Consumption and the Industrial Classes of Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Social History* 30 (1996), p. 418.

⁵⁵ C. Behagg, *Politics and Production in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1990), p. 48.

⁵⁶ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 16.

⁵⁷ C. Morgan, 'Work for Girls? The Small Metal Industries in England, 1840-1915', in M. Maynes, B. Soland and C. Benninghaus (eds.), *Secret Gardens, Satanic Mills: Placing Girls in European History 1750-1960* (Bloomington, 2005), pp. 67-80; C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 70.

⁵⁸ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 10.

made possible through family connections. A comparison with metal trades beyond Sheffield will show that women's experiences were shaped by local conditions affecting the organisation of the industry.

There were variations in the experiences of women during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It has been argued that middle-class women and working-class women had little in common except for bearing children.⁵⁹ However, Deborah Valenze stated that the seclusion of women in the nineteenth century related to class as well as gender; the social demand of civilising the working-class female was a central concern of industrial society and the middle classes saw themselves as 'protectors of female virtue'.⁶⁰ Significantly, Robert Shoemaker argued that, 'although these ideas [separate spheres] were quite influential among the middle classes, they were viewed more sceptically by working-class women, most of whom could not afford to stop working'.⁶¹ By implication the rank or class of women needs to be appreciated when considering the experiences of women in the metal trades, as it would in any other working context.

Whilst studies on women as business owners and as employees have shown that women could be engaged in masculine forms of work, my study will consider how women in different positions in the workforce negotiated their role in this masculine working context. It is important to consider the definition that will be used to define a particular social group, as exemplified in several studies of women. Emma Griffin investigated the lives of the 'ordinary men, women and children' in order to 'unlock the meaning of working-class life'.⁶² Hannah Barker used trade directories that often reflected the lives of 'modest property owners', rather than a study of the labouring poor or wealthy middle class.⁶³ Wendy Gamber used the term 'businesswomen' to label the women in her study as 'self-employed women

⁵⁹ V. Hall, *Women at Work: How Different Industries Shaped Women's Experiences* (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 4.

⁶⁰ D. Valenze, *The First Industrial Woman*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 185.

⁶¹ R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London, 1998), p. 207.

⁶² E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven and London, 2013), p. 4.

⁶³ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 3.

who ran their own concerns, however miniscule or ephemeral'.⁶⁴ Beatrice Craig's study of businesswomen described a business as 'a unit that makes decisions with respect to the production and sale of commodities and services'.⁶⁵ To make the case for a study on women in business, Nicola Phillips reflected upon the numerous accounts that have focused upon 'labouring women as the victims, or at least employees, of middle-class male capitalists'.⁶⁶ She argued that businesswomen did not fit comfortably in current literature due to 'the lack of conceptual space available when class is used as the primary paradigm for relations of power'.⁶⁷ Since 2006, a number of studies on businesswomen have addressed this gap in the literature; however, these studies research businesswomen in isolation and do not consider the broad socio-economic background of women.

Furthermore, studies of Sheffield's metal trades have acknowledged the importance of family in this working context, and therefore the description of business owners as a 'range of individuals who would have been described by contemporaries as being "in trade" but whom historians might more typically define as "petit bourgeois" or lower middle class' provides a useful definition'.⁶⁸ Hannah Barker acknowledged the need to broaden her terminology, stating that further research on specific regions will emphasise the realities of women of all classes in this period.⁶⁹ In my study, women's position in the workforce will be defined by whether they were employed in the trade or whether they owned a business in which they could employ others. I will also consider women who belonged to families involved in the metal trades. The studies outlined above have focused on a particular social group of women, typically businesswomen or women workers. My thesis will show the diversity of experiences of women in a particular region and trade during the Industrial Revolution.

⁶⁴ W. Gamber, 'A Gendered Enterprise: Placing Nineteenth Century Businesswomen in History', *The Business History Review* 77.2 (1998), p. 190.

⁶⁵ B. Craig, *Women and Business since 1500* (London, 2016) p. 6.

⁶⁶ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 9.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁸ H. Barker and M. Ishizu, 'Inheritance and Continuity in Small Family Businesses During the Early Industrial Revolution', *Business History* 54.2 (2012), p. 229.

⁶⁹ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 170.

In order to understand how businesswomen and women employees operated in Sheffield's metal trades, it is necessary to appreciate how the production process was organised. Sheffield's metal trades workforce comprised of factors (merchants), little mesters and outworkers, but these categories were not fixed: 'a "merchant" might be a manufacturer, a "manufacturer" might be a little master, and a "little master" might be an outworker.'⁷⁰ Factors (merchants) rented workshops to 'little mesters', who often worked alongside numerous outworkers. Geoffrey Tweedale stated: 'most merchants were backstreet traders, too, with no more than a name on a door, a small warehouse, and a couple of staff. They commissioned cutlery from outworkers, stamped it with their trademark, and then made a profit by selling.'⁷¹ Hannah Barker's study of businesswomen in Sheffield suggested that Sheffield's distinctive mode of production in the metal trades allowed a higher proportion of female participation in 'masculine' metalwork, compared to the cotton trade in Manchester or woollen manufacturing in Leeds.⁷² The definitions of those women involved in Sheffield's metal trades reflect a variety of arrangements for businesses and could imply a businesswomen working in isolation, as a skilled worker with several apprentices, or running several workshops employing workers in each. By implication there were differences in the size of businesses in Sheffield's metal trades, whether men or women ran them. For the purposes of my study it is necessary to appreciate there is evidence of some variety in the size and subsequent wealth derived from metal trades businesses owned by women, but that their definitive role in a business is not always identifiable in historical records.

The two groups of women explored in my thesis – businesswomen and women employees – can be labelled by their social class, however, Valerie Hall argued that 'a further divergence between the experiences of the women grew out of the

⁷⁰ R. Grayson and A. White, "More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 343.

⁷¹ G. Tweedale, 'Back Street Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

⁷² H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 66.

differences in the economic structure of their families.⁷³ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argued that women's only access to the economic enterprise was through the 'hidden investments' in the family business.⁷⁴ Daughters received their inheritances in trust, which protected the money from loss by current or future husbands, but also prevented women from using the money for a business venture.⁷⁵ Christine Wiskin argued that we should not be dismissive of women who acquired businesses through inheritance, nor regard them as mere figureheads but as actively engaged women in business. She states:

Assisting their husbands or parents, as well as literally living above the shop, they [women] learned how the enterprise should be run and how the particular trade was organised. It is more pertinent to ask why, despite accounts of the withdrawal or exclusion of "middling sort" women from independent economic action at this time, there were many who did not sell up.⁷⁶

Previous research on Sheffield's metal trades has shown the importance of family in the metal trades, particularly in cutlery businesses: 'the family was virtually synonymous with the firm.'⁷⁷ Geoffrey Tweedale also stated that women could help cutlery businesses to survive after the death of a spouse.⁷⁸ Anna Clark emphasised that gender division at work was related to 'power relations within the family and in the workplace'.⁷⁹ There is a need to establish more broadly the consequences and opportunities for women who inherited a business in Sheffield's metal trades. Furthermore, it has been argued that the use of girls and women as a reservoir of cheap labour in Birmingham's metal trades made families less dependent on the male breadwinner than in Sheffield.⁸⁰ The following analysis will involve discussion on the implications of family for both businesswomen and

⁷³ V. Hall, *Women at Work: How Different Industries Shaped Women's Experiences* (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 165.

⁷⁴ C. Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 172-202.

⁷⁵ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 328.

⁷⁶ C. Wiskin, 'Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826', Ph.D. thesis (Warwick University, 2000), p. 92.

⁷⁷ G. Tweedale, 'Back Street Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), pp. 875-91.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 883.

⁷⁹ A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (London, 1995), p. 14.

⁸⁰ D. Smith, *Conflict and Compromise: Class Formation in English Society 1830-1914* (London, 1982), p. 43.

women employees. I will demonstrate how family was not only important in giving women opportunities to inherit a business, but also in enabling those employed in a family business to receive particularly high wages and to gain informal training through family members. Family links to the metal trades could also provide economic security for women outside the workplace through charitable support. Women in Sheffield's metal trades were in a minority but I will show how the family created opportunities which provided some economic stability for women.

Women's marital status impacted upon their opportunities as both employees and business owners. One of the enduring perceptions of women in industrialisation is 'a "mill girl" or a "married operative" torn from her family by the need to earn wages'.⁸¹ Emma Griffin concluded that women's work was different to children's and men's as it did not grow, nor did the kind of work they do change dramatically.⁸² She argued that this was due to existing social structures and cultural expectations and that marriage, but particularly motherhood, were reasons for preventing women's employment opportunities.⁸³ Pamela Sharpe argued that we need a much broader definition of employment for women, as they can often be associated with work that does not translate into a wage, and thereby a readily measurable economic indicator of employment.⁸⁴ Although women who worked and owned businesses would also have to undertake important domestic duties, this thesis is concerned with productive labour defined by tasks within the industry and which received a monetary income.

It was not until 1870 that coverture, the status of a married woman considered to be under the protection and authority of her husband, was abolished in England and Wales. Married women under common law were prevented by the legal doctrine of coverture (*feme covert*) from ownership of moveable goods, land and property, but widows and spinsters (*feme sole*) owned it like men. Several studies related to property rights have found that women were not prevented from being

⁸¹ L. Tilly and J. Scott, *Women, Work and Family* (London, 1989), p. 63.

⁸² E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven and London, 2013), p. 96.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁸⁴ P. Sharpe, 'Continuity and Change: Women's History and Economic History in Britain', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 26.

active agents in the economy if they were single or widowed.⁸⁵ Judith Spicksley argued that by the seventeenth century there was widespread acceptance of single women lending money as a form of business, offering some single women a measure of financial independence that may have impacted on their marriage decisions.⁸⁶ Amy Erickson showed that married women in London from a broad social-economic background were involved in the labour market in some way throughout the long eighteenth century.⁸⁷ Hannah Barker showed how husbands and wives could work together, as well as widows, mothers, sons, sisters and siblings as partners in a business, reflecting the importance of family.⁸⁸ Emma Griffin also indicated two areas of employment for married women, shopkeeping and innkeeping, as enterprises that included women working alongside their husbands, although 'women were certainly not working alongside their husbands as carpenters, furniture-makers, metalworkers, or in any other skilled trades that men followed'.⁸⁹ Tim Stretton and Krista Kesslerling concluded on 'the many exceptions to coverture, the ways individuals worked around or ignored its strictures, and its variability across time and place' although they also acknowledged 'the persistence and power of coverture'.⁹⁰ The question that arises from this work for my study is the impact of women's marital status to enter a male dominated industry in Sheffield.

Whilst the *feme sole* exception allowed women to conduct their own businesses, the law of coverture led to women having more limited access to capital. Women's marital status affected the types of contract and wage they were likely to have, with married women only able to perform casual employment, becoming dependent on the male breadwinner.⁹¹ However, married women as

⁸⁵ A. Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London, 1995).

⁸⁶ J. Spicksley, "'Fly with a Duck in Thy Mouth": Single Women as Sources of Credit in Seventeenth-Century England', *Social History* 3.2 (2007).

⁸⁷ A. Erikson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change* 23.2 (2008) p. 292.

⁸⁸ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 122-5.

⁸⁹ E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven and London, 2013), p. 92.

⁹⁰ T. Stretton and K. Kesselring, 'Conclusion', in T. Stretton and K. Kesselring (eds), *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World* (London, 2013), p. 264.

⁹¹ J. Humphries and J. Weisdorf, 'The Wages of women in England, 1260-1850', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.2 (2015), p. 429.

consumers could evade restrictions of coverture, which was 'partial and contested, rather than monolithic'.⁹² Hannah Barker suggests that Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds 'may have been different from other English towns, particularly those where borough customs did not explicitly allow married women to trade independently of their husbands'.⁹³ This directly raises the question regarding the governing bodies in Sheffield's metal trades and their implications for women, particularly those who were married. My study will demonstrate that a lack of training restricted the opportunities for young women and the Cutlers' Company restricted women establishing their own businesses. However, male family members alleviated some of these restraints for their daughters, wives and widows through informal training and bequeathing women money and businesses, which enabled women's participation in the industry despite their marital status.

Sheffield's metal trades

An understanding of Sheffield as a centre for the production of metal goods during the Industrial Revolution is a prerequisite for examining the working lives of women within this context. Sheffield's location made it distinctive in relation to its industrial potential and growth compared to other towns.⁹⁴ This was due to the hills and river valleys of the Don, Loxley, Porter, Rivelin and Sheaf that surrounded Sheffield. The five rivers coming into Sheffield helped the industries develop; using water for their source of power, at least 150 mills were active in 1800.⁹⁵ This, combined with the rich beds of iron ore, and ample timber available locally, provided essential resources for the development of its iron and steel industries. Sheffield produced high quality steel from the late seventeenth century and was dominant in the cutlery industry as early as the fourteenth century. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the steel industry surpassed cutlery-

⁹² M. Finn, 'Women, Consumption and Coverture in England, c. 1760-1860', *Historical Journal* 39.3 (1996), pp. 703-22.

⁹³ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 70.

⁹⁴ V. Beauchamp and J. Unwin, 'Sheffield Cutlery and Tableware Industry 1750-1900', in J. Symonds (ed.), *The Historical Archaeology of the Sheffield Cutlery and Tableware Industry, 1750-1900* (Oxford, 2002), p. 53.

⁹⁵ M. P. Johnson, 'The History of Grinders Asthma in Sheffield', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 11 (1981), p. 65.

making as the area's major industry. Sheffield was unique, as by the eighteenth century it was the only place in England producing large quantities of cutlery, having overtaken London and creating an unrivalled reputation. Peter Mandler draws attention to the vulnerability of single-industry towns such as Sheffield: 'where neither child nor female labour was in demand, it was nearly impossible to keep the family wage above subsistence level even in the best of times.'⁹⁶ I will show that – despite being in a minority – women in Sheffield's metal trades took advantage of several opportunities to alleviate the economic vulnerabilities that may have arisen in this working context.

The timeframe for this research, c.1742-1867, is significant to the development of the metal industries in Sheffield. Sheffield's metal trades were associated predominantly with workshop production until the introduction of the Bessemer converter in the 1860s, which resulted in a 'revolution in production' for Sheffield.⁹⁷ Benjamin Huntsman's invention in 1742 introduced the crucible method of producing steel, which has been described as the most important discovery ever made in Sheffield: 'not only did it put Sheffield on the map for making steel, but it also fed the cutlery trades already in the town'.⁹⁸ In 1742, Thomas Boulsover invented Old Sheffield Plate, fusing silver onto copper enabling the production of small and medium items that looked like silver, but at one third of the price. The working context reflects broader social and economic aspects in which, 'the nature of the work largely determines the character of a local society'.⁹⁹ An understanding of these localised differences needs to be established in relation to workshop production, subdivision of labour and the organisation of the metal trades in Sheffield.

⁹⁶ P. Mandler, 'Poverty and Charity in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis: An Introduction', in P. Mandler (ed.), *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 5.

⁹⁷ D. Hey, *A History of Sheffield* (3rd edn, Lancaster, 2010), p. 91.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁹⁹ D. Hey, 'Continuities and Perceptions', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993, Vol. 2, Society* (Sheffield, 1993), pp. 875-91.

The years classically identified with the Industrial Revolution are 'about 1760 to 1820', which involved technological and economic change.¹⁰⁰ Developments in the late eighteenth century included technological advancements such as Arkwright's water frame in the textile industry and Henry Cort's introduction of rolling and puddling in the iron industry. This narrowly defined understanding of the Industrial Revolution has been challenged. For example, the notion of linking changes in technology to an industrial revolution led to revolutions in the thirteenth century and the period 1540-1640.¹⁰¹ However, these arguments rested on evidence from a few industries rather than fundamental changes in the economy and society. Subsequently debates have centred on whether the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were associated with rapid or gradual change.

Walt Rostow argued that there was a 'take off' from a traditional past into the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain; 'when forces of modernization contend[ed] against the habits and institutions, the values and vested interests of the traditional society, make a decisive break-through.'¹⁰² However, much debate has countered his argument by questioning whether the term 'revolution' is appropriate by describing the term as a 'conceptual relic'.¹⁰³ Instead, it is argued, the process of industrialisation describes both the gradual changes in the economy and the workforce: 'quantitative indicators of economic growth have challenged traditional ideas of rapid industrialization.'¹⁰⁴ Maxine Berg argued that small-scale production remained significant throughout the process of industrialisation with the factory system only emerging gradually.¹⁰⁵ Peter Stearns stated in 2015 that the debate over whether there was an Industrial Revolution had died down considerably over the past 25 years. Stearns acknowledged that while some

¹⁰⁰ M. Berg, 'What difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 149.

¹⁰¹ E. Carus-Wilson, 'An Industrial Revolution of the Thirteenth Century', *The Economic History Review* 11.1 (1941), pp. 39-60; J. Neff 'The Progress of Technology and the Growth of Large-Scale Industry in Great Britain, 1540-1640', *The Economic History Review* 5.1 (1934), pp. 3-24.

¹⁰² W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (3rd edn, Cambridge, 1990), p. 36.

¹⁰³ N. Stone, *Europe Transformed, 1878-1919* (London, 1983), p. 83.

¹⁰⁴ M. Berg, 'What difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 149.

¹⁰⁵ M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain* (2nd edn, London, 1994), p. 206.

historians have accommodated the concept of an Industrial Revolution as being valid, the whole process has become generally understood as an expanded time frame, which was less dramatic and more gradual than had earlier been thought.¹⁰⁶ He also drew attention to social implications of industrialisation on 'various aspects of human life, from living standards to work experiences to an impressive alteration of leisure habits, with due attention to differences in social class and gender'.¹⁰⁷

This updated concept of the Industrial Revolution has implications for the role of women during the process of industrialisation. Maxine Berg identified the key role played by female workers over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰⁸ Ivy Pinchbeck considered 1750-1850 as 'the period of greatest change so far as women's activities are concerned'.¹⁰⁹ However, Hannah Barker stated that although this early phase saw an expansion of women's employment, it was only temporary in certain sectors, since 'men were reasserting their dominance in the cotton mills by the 1790s'.¹¹⁰ The metal trades in Sheffield experienced an expansion in the workforce alongside a growth in population. The focus of my study examines the role of women during the period c.1742-1867, which extends beyond the period traditionally associated with the British Industrial Revolution. The process of industrialisation in Sheffield's metal trades was a gradual transformation during which the greatest technological changes took place at the end of this period of research with the introduction of the Bessemer Converter. Given this, it is appropriate to understand women's experiences during the period c.1742-1867 within a process of industrialisation rather than the Industrial Revolution.

Sheffield's industrial growth was dominated by a traditional small-scale workshop organisation in which 'technological factors, such as the development of

¹⁰⁶ P. Stearns, *Debating the Industrial Revolution* (London, 2015), pp. 20-3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 156.

¹⁰⁹ I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 4.

¹¹⁰ H. Barker, 'Women and Work', in H. Barker and E. Chalus (ed.) *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850, An Introduction* (Oxon, 2005), p. 133.

machinery, were relatively insignificant'.¹¹¹ Technological changes did not commence until the 1860s in Sheffield with the introduction of the Bessemer converter, which produced large quantities of steel at speed. David Hey stated: 'the road to industrialisation [in Sheffield's metal trades] was very different from that followed by the cotton and woollen towns with their large factories.'¹¹²

Birmingham's metal industries were reorganised as early as the 1830s so the large firms gave out work to the small firms.¹¹³ Ivy Pinchbeck argued that the distinctive nature of the workshop production differed significantly to how factories were organised, and argued this organisation meant children from a young age could work there.¹¹⁴ Although women were a minority in the metal trades in Sheffield, the implications of the workshop production process presented advantages for women. Workshop organisation could be helpful to women as it meant that productive labour and domestic duties could be combined.

However, Ruth Grayson argued that although Sheffield was characterised by small workshops, of 'little mesters' and of outworkers, this was in fact a classic example of British industrialisation rather than an anomaly.¹¹⁵ Other historians are in agreement that rapid technical change was not the universal experience during the Industrial Revolution, and the workshop mode of production was not unique to Sheffield.¹¹⁶ Maxine Berg argued that the factory system emerged in the eighteenth century within the framework of dynamic small-producer capitalism. It took until

¹¹¹ N. Wray, 'Workshops of the Sheffield Cutlery and Edge-Tool Trades', in P. S. Barnwell, M. Palmer and M. Airs (eds), *The Vernacular Workshop: from craft to industry, 1400-1900* (York, 2004), p. 137.

¹¹² D. Hey, 'Continuities and Perceptions', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993*, vol. 2, *Society* (Sheffield, 1993), pp. 875-91.

¹¹³ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 81.

¹¹⁴ I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 272.

¹¹⁵ R. Grayson, 'Who Was Master? Class Relationships in Nineteenth-Century Sheffield', in A. Kidd and D. Nicholls (eds), *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity Since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), p. 43.

¹¹⁶ M. Berg, *The Machinery Question and the Making of the Political Economy 1815-1848* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 1-2; R. Grayson and A. White, 'More Myth than Reality': The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 339;

R. Grayson, 'Who Was Master? Class Relationships in Nineteenth-Century Sheffield', in A. Kidd and D. Nicholls (eds), *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 42-57; C. Behagg, *Politics and Production in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1990), pp. 2-3; M. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1996), pp. 131-2.

the early nineteenth century in the industry most closely associated with organisational change, the cotton textiles, for factory work to become the dominant form of organisation, whilst 'in many other industries the rise of the factory system was a long drawn-out affair'.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Clive Behagg used a case study of Birmingham gun manufacturing to redefine the role of small firms against the understanding of the Industrial Revolution characterised by the factory system.¹¹⁸ In my thesis, the significance of the workshop production is related to the impact this had on women in this working context, which has particular resonance given that women operated as a minority group within this masculine industry. For workers in Sheffield's metal trades, the workshop and home are often described as synonymous.¹¹⁹ If this was the case, this could have particular implications for women working in this context, allowing them to carry out domestic duties and paid labour within the same space. Establishing how workshop production impacted upon women in Sheffield's metal trades has implications for the ways in which women in other locations, and in trades not organised in the factory system, might also be reconsidered.

The eighteenth century gradually saw a division of labour in Sheffield's metal trades. As traditional methods of production remained in Sheffield, changes for workers came from the reorganisation of the production processes involved. The production of goods in the metal trades was often completed by a sequence of stages which different people undertook. This flexibility meant that masters could accept orders and then distribute these to other craftsmen (male or female) to have the work completed. The manufacture of knives, scissors and razors followed an unchanging routine: forging, grinding, hafting (handle making), assembling, polishing, and finally, packing and distribution.¹²⁰ During the period of this research most men in Sheffield increasingly specialised in one or more

¹¹⁷ M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain* (2nd edn, London, 1994), p. 206.

¹¹⁸ C. Behagg, 'Mass Production Without the Factory: Craft Producers, Guns and Small Firm Innovation, 1790-1815', *Business History* 44.3 (1998), pp. 1-15.

¹¹⁹ P. Bedford, 'Work, Space & Power in an English Industrial Slum: "The Crofts", Sheffield 1750-1850', in A. Mayne and T. Murray (eds), *The Archaeology of Urban Landscapes: Explorations in Slumlands* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 111-13.

¹²⁰ G. Lloyd, *The Cutlery Trades: An Historical Essay in the Economics of Small-Scale Production* (2nd edn, London, 1968).

manufacturing processes, becoming forgers, grinders or assemblers, or they made one specific type of knife. This led to increasing specialisation and fragmentation, with the ability and/or the need to accept only small orders.¹²¹ I will demonstrate that although women in Sheffield's metal trades could potentially be involved in a wide range of metal trades performing a variety of roles, women clustered into the finishing processes of metal goods.

David Hey specified a hierarchy in the workplace for Sheffield when he discussed the polishing of the blades and the fitting of handles but refers only to men: 'these men did not forge or grind their own blades, but spent their working time in their chambers on the well-paid jobs of assembling and finishing.'¹²² Katrina Honeyman emphasised the hierarchy of roles that determined where work would take place in other trades and locations. She argued that, in the textile industry, growing competition and technical change in the late eighteenth century intensified existing differences in the structure of production rather than concentrating manufacture in the factory.¹²³ This meant a hierarchy was evident in the textile industry in the early nineteenth century when the spinning and finishing stages of production were completed in large centralised units. Men, women and children worked alongside each other in hand-loom weaving, while the daughters and wives of weavers entered the factories to work the power-looms.¹²⁴ Ruth Grayson and Alan White indicated that traditional methods of production and a workshop-based organisation led to an exploitation of the so-called 'robust artisans'. This became a more serious issue as the nineteenth century progressed, with the 'small master', who increasingly produced outwork, protected by neither an employer nor a union.¹²⁵ As men were exploited, they tried to maintain their position as skilled workers, which reinforced the position of women in lower paid occupations.

¹²¹ J. Unwin, 'A Filecutter's Hammer from the Hawley Collection', in S. Macdonald (ed.), *Materializing Sheffield: Place, Culture and Identity* (2006), <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/matshef/unwin/MSfilecutter.htm> [accessed 4 July 2013].

¹²² D. Hey, *A History of Sheffield* (3rd edn, Lancaster, 2010), p 81.

¹²³ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialisation in England, 1700-1870* (London, 2000), p. 41.

¹²⁴ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 23.

¹²⁵ R. Grayson and A. White, "'More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 346.

The division of labour in Birmingham's metal trades reflected the differing physical demands during the production process, so that women and children made small chains and nails at home while the men worked in puddling and rolling mills.¹²⁶ Research into particular metal trades in Sheffield included the Britannia metal trade in Sheffield 1857-8, which showed that women were treated differently to men in both the wage system and roles performed. Women performed the finishing roles in the business. Tyler stated that in the Britannia metal trades in Sheffield during the years 1857-8, a woman's role was 'possibly' a caster and that she was 'probably a married woman', but he gives no reason as to why this marital status would be for this particular role in the metal trades.¹²⁷ The weekly earning for 'rubbers' (a finishing role in the metal trades) ranged from 4s 1½d to 12s, indicating the fluctuation in wages for women, although these wage fluctuations can also be seen in the male rates of pay, but to a lesser extent, with a range of 15s to £1 13s.¹²⁸ Simon Barley's research based on ledgers of saw makers in Sheffield identified women in business contact with Joseph Wilson including, 'five [who] were from his saw business, three being burnishers (of saws or perhaps plate), one a saw ribber (i.e. polisher) and one in the saw handle department' indicating the finishing roles women performed in this type of metal trade.¹²⁹ This indicates that women were employed in the finishing processes in the production of metal goods. My thesis will establish how far all women were engaged in the finishing processes of metal goods and whether there was diversity in the roles they performed.

The metal trades involved a huge range of products and roles related to the subdivision of labour; it is therefore appropriate to discuss the types of metal trades and roles my thesis will include. In relation to 'lower-middling' class women, Hannah Barker concluded that female 'significance as producers and

¹²⁶ M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 157.

¹²⁷ J. E. Tyler, 'Wages and Hours in the Britannia-Metal trade at Sheffield 1857-8', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 5 (1938), p. 33.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.

¹²⁹ S. Barley, 'Hand Tool Manufacture During the Industrial Revolution: Saw-making in Sheffield c.1750-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2008), p. 268.

distributors' grew in Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield.¹³⁰ Beatrice Craig reflected upon Hannah Barker's work, stating:

In northern England as in the capital, a significant and steady proportion of women listed in the directories engaged in masculine trades as well, and their proportion did not decline. The majority however were not involved in the town's major industry, but in consumer orientated production: engravers and printers, jewellers, saddlers, umbrella and parasol makers, pipe manufacturers and rugmakers for instance.¹³¹

This thesis will consider women as both producers and distributors of metal goods. These roles could involve producing metal goods, packaging metal goods and/or selling metal goods. It extends the range of sources that Hannah Barker used, in order to provide a broader understanding of the experiences of female employment opportunities, enabling the study to go beyond 'lower middling women' and capture both middle- and working-class women workers.¹³²

The organisation of the Sheffield's metal trades had a profound impact on women's engagement with this form of work, both as business owners and as women employed in the trade. Richard Childs stated that the very nature of Sheffield's staple industries had a profound influence on its social and political structure and distinguished it from other manufacturing towns. For example, the masters of Sheffield had been apprentices and journeymen which meant 'the employers of the town therefore had a great affinity with the employed'.¹³³ Prior to Sheffield's incorporation in 1841 the town administration was in the control of the Town Trustees, the Church Burgesses, and the Cutlers' Company.

The Cutlers' Company organised apprenticeships, admitted freemen, registered cutlers' marks and regulated the quality of cutlery produced. It also held festivals and political meetings in the Cutlers' Hall. The Act of Incorporation in 1624 gave

¹³⁰ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 171.

¹³¹ B. Craig, *Women and Business since 1500* (London, 2016) p. 110.

¹³² H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 5.

¹³³ R. Childs, 'Sheffield Before 1843', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993*, vol. 1, *Politics* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 10.

the Company jurisdiction over 'all persons using to make Knives, Blades, Scissors, Sheeres, Sickles, Cutlery wares and all other wares and manufacture made or wrought of yron and steele, dwelling or inhabiting within the said Lordship and Liberty of Hallamshire, or within six miles'.¹³⁴ Sheffield was distinctive because the Cutlers' Company remained important throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as 'one of the most influential groups in the town'.¹³⁵ Amy Erickson has shown that the London companies offered girls of prosperous middling and genteel origins a structured career path into more feminine trades.¹³⁶ Although the influence of the Cutlers' Company over civic and trade activity was certainly changing in the nineteenth century, in contrast to Amy Erickson's findings my thesis will show how the workings of this establishment had significant implications for the participation of women in Sheffield's metal trades.

Sheffield's metal trades during the Industrial Revolution are predominantly understood in relation to the lives of men.¹³⁷ Current literature is vague and brief in addressing the input that women contributed to the metal trades. I will now consider the difficulties with identifying women in a masculine working context, establish what has been recognised in relation to women in Sheffield's metal trades, and outline the ways in which my study will address both these points. Men dominate the visual representations of Sheffield's metal trades during the Industrial Revolution. This contrasts to other working scenes in other industries and locations. Examples include images from a power-loom factory in Stockport, and those of women in Birmingham's metal trades, where women formed a higher proportion of the workforce compared to that in Sheffield.¹³⁸ For women, spinning was a symbol of femininity in popular culture that was seen as the 'quintessential

¹³⁴ J. Unwin, 'The Hallamshire Cutlery Trades in the Late 17th Century: A Study of the Hearth Tax Returns and the Records of the Cutlers' Company', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2003), p. 2.

¹³⁵ J. Roach, 'The Company and the Community: Charity, Education and Technology, 1624-1914', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 241.

¹³⁶ A. Erickson, 'Working London, Eleanor Mosley and Other Milliners in the City of London Companies, 1700-1750', *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011), pp. 147-72.

¹³⁷ For example, in K. Harvey, 'Craftsmen in Common: Skills, Objects and Masculinity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in H. Greig, J. Hamlett and L. Hannan (eds), *Gender and Material Culture c.1750-1950* (London, 2016), pp. 68-89.

¹³⁸ T. Barringer, *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain* (Yale, 2005), pp. 194-5; C. Morgan, *Women workers and gender identities, 1835-1913: The cotton and metal industries in England* (London, 2001).

female employment'.¹³⁹ Olwen Hufton argued that most early modern writers defined women and men in relation to Adam and Eve. For women, Eve 'gave cultural homogeneity to a representation of the western European woman'.¹⁴⁰ Traditionally, depictions of Adam and Eve in artwork involve Eve spinning while Adam is digging on the land.¹⁴¹ In contrast to this, images of women working in the masculine trade of coalmining were used as propaganda to promote women and children's exclusion from this dangerous form of work in 1842.¹⁴² These images depicted women as dirty, exhausted and in danger.

Visual representations of women are certainly less evident in the metal trades than in other major industries. An example of women working in the metal trades can be found in 'A day at the Birmingham Factories', which is an engraving made in 1844 of William Elliott's button-making factory on Regent Street.¹⁴³ Tim Barringer reflected upon Godfrey Skye's paintings of Sheffield industrial scenes, describing the work of fork grinding as 'robust, manly and picturesque'.¹⁴⁴ The paintings by W. J. Stevenson and Joseph Wrightson also represent the Sheffield metal trades as an entirely male workforce in the workshop, with children visiting their father but with no mother present.¹⁴⁵

An example of a typical visual representation of Sheffield is by artist William Ibbitt (1804-1869) who is most well-known for his engraved panoramic views of Sheffield. Ibbitt was originally a silversmith, then local councillor and self-taught artist. Ibbitt's work, painted in 1854, entitled 'South East View of Sheffield from Park Hill', shows a heavily industrialised scene with an array of smoking chimneys polluting the sky. It is impossible to identify the gender of the working figures in

¹³⁹ R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London, 1998), p. 161.

¹⁴⁰ O. Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A history of women in Western Europe, 1500-1800* (London, 1995), p. 27.

¹⁴¹ Attributed to the Master of the Dark Eyes, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Between 1485 and 1509, 470 x 345 (330x275), The British Library, London.

¹⁴² 'Girl pulling a coal tub in mine. From official report of the parliamentary commission', <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/ashley.html> [accessed 18 April 2014].

¹⁴³ J. Cattell, 'The workshops of Birmingham's Jewellery', in P. S. Barnwell, M. Palmer and M. Airs (eds), *The Vernacular Workshop: from craft to industry, 1400-1900* (York, 2004), p. 163.

¹⁴⁴ T. Barringer, *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain* (Yale, 2005), p. 208. and pp. 194-5.

¹⁴⁵ W. J. Stevenson, *Union Wheel*, 1887, Oil on panel, 47.2 x 59.5cm; Joseph Wrightson McIntyre, *Interior of Holme Head Wheel, Rivelin Valley*, Sheffield, 1879, Oil on canvas, 70 x 105.5cm.

the far background; however, the men and women in the foreground are presented as relaxing away from the dirt and toil of the town. The painting includes both rich and poor men and women as reflected in their attire, who are clustered in different parts of the foreground. Neither men nor women in the foreground are engaged in industrial work and it is evident that they look clean and relaxed. Some men are at least standing by mill stones, suggesting an involvement in industrial work, whereas the only woman working is undertaking domestic duties including washing some clothes.¹⁴⁶ This painting resonates with perceptions of women in the metal trades in Derby as depicted by artist Joseph Wright, who represents women as nurturers of children in a working scene rather than producers of metal goods alongside men.¹⁴⁷

In contrast to the numerous paintings of men working in Sheffield's metal trades, there are none for this period that represent women workers. The earliest image of women working in Sheffield's metal trades does not appear until 1874, involving a scene of women buffers and which will be further discussed in chapter one.¹⁴⁸ It has been argued that silences in art can tell us more about the unfeminine nature of work than the non-existence or hidden reality of work, 'the euphemisation of women's activity is all the more manifest when one seeks physical signs betraying the hardness of their work'.¹⁴⁹ The lack of images of women working in Sheffield's metal trades serves to indicate they were performing roles in a workplace set against their feminine ideals. My thesis will demonstrate that the Sheffield's metal trades were predominantly represented in masculine terms and consequently evidence of women's involvement in this context is in reference to their social and economic lives.

Women had to remain modest when represented in the realms of what was regarded as socially accepted: 'representations of working women in the

¹⁴⁶ William Ibbitt, *South East View of Sheffield from Park Hill*, 1855, copy displayed at Kelham Island Museum.

¹⁴⁷ Joseph Wright, *An Iron Forge*, 1772, Oil on canvas.

¹⁴⁸ Painting of buffers at Kelham Island (Artist Unknown), *Women buffing at Martin Hall & Co.*, (noted as 1886), Kelham Island Museum.

¹⁴⁹ I. Baudino, 'Eighteenth-Century Images of Working Women', in I. Baudino, J. Carre and C. Revauger (eds), *The Invisible Women: Aspects of Women's Work in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2005), p. 175.

eighteenth century appear to be redolent of the dominant male ideology which favoured women's seclusion and her identification with the private sphere.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, the reality of women's work was often 'denied or distorted in the name of a postulated essence of woman'.¹⁵¹ The presence of women metalworkers may have been of no interest to artists or their clients, or outside the realms of their experiences and/or imagination. It has also been argued that few working-class men could afford to ensure their wives' removal from the workplace into the purely domestic realm, meaning that domesticity in popular culture brought 'a conflict between image and reality'.¹⁵² It is this disparity between the 'image' currently presented and the 'reality' that will be addressed in my thesis, which will focus on the social and economic realities of both women employees and businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades.

However, the one visual representation of a woman involved in the metal trades is the portrait of Elizabeth Parkin to be discussed in chapter four. She reflects a prominent figure in business and money-lending who directly helped to establish the growth of Sheffield's metal trades during the eighteenth century. Shearer West argued that portraits are a 'powerful form of representation' in that they not only represent a unique individual but also represent the subject's 'social position or "inner life" such as their character or virtues' and 'probe the uniqueness of an individual'.¹⁵³ The economic growth of countries including Britain during the eighteenth century, together with a wider circulation of newspapers and pamphlets, brought greater attention to the lives and personal attributes of public figures, and portraiture also fuelled this 'celebrity of individuals'.¹⁵⁴ However, the painting of Elizabeth Parkin was hung in the entrance of her home at Ravenfield Hall, suggesting that she wanted to impress visitors, as

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁵¹ I. Baudino, J. Carre and C. Revauger, 'Introduction', in I. Baudino, J. Carre and C. Revauger (eds), *The Invisible Women: Aspects of Women's Work in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2005), p. 2.

¹⁵² A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (London, 1995), p. 248.

¹⁵³ S. West, *Portraiture* (Oxford, 2004), p. 21.

¹⁵⁴ S. West, *Portraiture* (Oxford, 2004), p. 94.

opposed to the public.¹⁵⁵ The portrait does not remotely attempt to relate Elizabeth Parkin with the metal trades but rather reflects her wealth and status. This is to be expected given that during the eighteenth century ‘the strict definition of genres, which guided painters’ practice, excluded images of industrious people from history paintings or idealized landscapes, and even from portraits’.¹⁵⁶

Contemporary writings reported that Elizabeth Parkin successfully managed several businesses, one of which was in the metal trades.¹⁵⁷ Julie Banham’s study referred briefly to Elizabeth Parkin but in her role as Queen in the local society at the Sheffield Assembly rather than as a businesswoman.¹⁵⁸ Elizabeth Parkin was a successful businesswoman and prominent figure in Sheffield. Shearer West argued that a tendency to represent women ‘ideally, allegorical, or theatrically’ persisted into the nineteenth century, and it is evident that Elizabeth Parkin was visually represented in this gendered framework, far removed from the metal trades business with which she was engaged.¹⁵⁹ Chapter four will consider how Elizabeth Parkin was able to establish her prominent social and economic position in Sheffield society through the inheritance of her family’s metal trades business and her continuation within this industry.

Furthermore, Alison Twells’ research on Mary Ann Rawson, daughter of John Read who was owner of the Sheffield Smelting Company, demonstrates the social and political role of a woman associated with the metal trades in Sheffield in the nineteenth century. Alison Twells argued that middle-class missionary women played a crucial role in the reshaping of relationships of class and ethnicity, with particular reference to Mary Ann Rawson’s work related to the Sheffield Female

¹⁵⁵ Clifton Park Museum Website, (<http://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/9920/portrait-of-elizabeth-parkin-english-school>) [accessed 22 February 2015].

¹⁵⁶ I. Baudino, ‘Eighteenth-Century Images of Working Women’, in I. Baudino, J. Carre and C. Revauger (eds), *The Invisible Women: Aspects of Women’s Work in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2005), p. 173.

¹⁵⁷ B. A. Holderness, ‘Elizabeth Parkin and her Investments, 1733-66’, *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 10 (1973), p. 86.

¹⁵⁸ J. Banham, ‘Politeness in Eighteenth-Century Sheffield; Practices, Accoutrements and Spaces for Sociability’, Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2011), p. 284; R. Leader, *Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century* (Sheffield, 1905), p. 114.

¹⁵⁹ S. West, *Portraiture* (Oxford, 2004), p. 153.

Anti-Slavery Society.¹⁶⁰ I will demonstrate in chapter four that Mary's important political work was funded by the metal trades company run by her family. She also performed informal roles in this business. My study will demonstrate how women in high status positions in society were able to undertake their particular roles in society because of their family metal trades businesses.

Literature related to the Sheffield metal trades includes suggestions about the numbers of women employed, but as yet no systematic study has been undertaken to provide a precise assessment to the extent of women's involvement. The language used by several historians to describe women's experience and roles in the metal trades is currently vague. Sidney Pollard argued that female labour was associated with the light trades that 'employed few women'.¹⁶¹ Simon Barley's study of saw makers in Sheffield claimed that, 'Sheffield's cutlery trade employed few women and children'.¹⁶² He sought to make sense of the nature of women's employment through an examination of Joseph Wilson's business records, but commented that the evidence was 'very slight' and did not amplify or modify opinions on women's work more generally.¹⁶³ Sidney Pollard noted the more unfavourable conditions in dangerous trades such as grinding in which 'especially boys' started working at an early age.¹⁶⁴ He also made reference to a dispute in the file trade in 1866, 'affecting 4,000 men beside some 1,500 women and boys'.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, Joan Unwin's study of file cutters in Sheffield argued that, 'the cutting of a file required minimal tools and a stiddy could be set up in a kitchen or workshop in a yard and with a hammer, chisels, and supplied with file blanks, a woman could keep an eye on children, the dinner and earn money'.¹⁶⁶ This made the metal trades in Sheffield particularly accessible to women as it allowed them to multitask with their various tasks related to both work and domestic duties. Thus,

¹⁶⁰ A. Twells, "'Happy English Children": Class, Ethnicity, and the Making of Missionary Women in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Women's Studies International Forum* 21.3 (1998), pp. 235-45.

¹⁶¹ S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 70.

¹⁶² S. Barley, 'Hand Tool Manufacture During the Industrial Revolution: Saw-making in Sheffield c.1750-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2008), p. 265.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

¹⁶⁴ S. Pollard, 'Labour', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993*, vol. 2, *Society* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 263.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

¹⁶⁶ J. Unwin, 'A Filecutter's Hammer from the Hawley Collection', in S. Macdonald (ed.), *Materializing Sheffield: Place, Culture and Identity* (2006), <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/matshef/unwin/MSfilecutter.htm> [accessed 4 July 2013].

women clearly had a role in Sheffield's metal trades that needs further exploring in order to establish an accurate and broad overview of their participation in this industry. Research to date has not gone beyond generalised comments about the role of women in Sheffield's metal trades and has tended to be restricted to studies of individual firms. I will undertake a systematic study of trade directories, census abstracts, individual census returns and commissioner reports to establish a detailed overview of the extent and nature of women's engagement in the metal trades in Sheffield.

Several studies have provided suggestive details in relation to women's involvement in the metal trades in Sheffield. Ivy Pinchbeck referred to the census of 1841, which included 159 women as cutlers, 158 as scissor makers, 42 as fork makers.¹⁶⁷ Richard Childs also highlighted that in 1842 it was calculated that 25,000 men and 7,000 women and children were employed, but also that 17,000 were partly employed and 3,000 were unemployed in Sheffield's metal trades.¹⁶⁸ Statistics produced in 1843 by George Holland provided numerical evidence of women workers in particular metal trades. For example, in the file trade there were 100 women out of a total workforce of 2,220.¹⁶⁹ George Holland also provided an example of a silver and plate manufactory in which, 'there are sixteen women and girls, to fifty-six men and nine boys'.¹⁷⁰ In the saw manufacture trade there was 'one female to about every eight men'.¹⁷¹ Some trades such as a saw-handle maker are indicated as not employing any women.¹⁷² This indicates that women were outnumbered by men in the metal trades, and were confined to specific roles and trades. These figures provide a limited understanding as they are based on a specific year (1843) so do not reveal change over time. Whilst these figures are indicative of the role of women in the metal trades in 1843, they need to be set beside other sources. For the purposes of my thesis there is a need to use

¹⁶⁷ 'Population Returns, Occupation abstract', 1844, xxvii, pp. 31-44, cited in I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 276.

¹⁶⁸ R. Childs, 'Sheffield Before 1843', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993*, vol. 1, *Politics* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 9.

¹⁶⁹ G. Holland, *Vital statistics of Sheffield (1843)* (London, 1843), p. 186.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 172.

a range of evidence to demonstrate how far the position of women changed over time, the metal trades they participated in and the roles they undertook.

Geoffrey Tweedale's tentative conclusion that women could step forward to run a metal trades business if their husbands died or the family lacked a male heir, was based by his own admission on a 'bald list' of businesswomen.¹⁷³ This work provides an encouraging basis for further research into the role of women in both the cutlery trade and other types of metal trades in Sheffield. Hannah Barker's study of businesswomen in Sheffield stated that of the trade directory entries by women in manufacturing in Sheffield, 49 out of 107 entries were involved in metalwork. I will use a broader definition of metalwork than the one used by Hannah Barker, by including the manufacturing and trading of metal goods, and I will consider women's involvement until 1865. Furthermore, Hannah Barker used five trade directories across the period 1774-1828 to provide initial figures of businesswomen in manufacturing in Sheffield, concluding it to be, 'a consistently large area of female employment throughout the period [until a remarkable decline in 1828]'.¹⁷⁴ I will examine trade directories (which list businesswomen) and compare this data to the census abstracts and commissioner reports to consider a wider social group. I will demonstrate that the sources currently used to study women's participation (trade directories or census returns) reflect particular types of workers (businesswomen and all women involved in the metal trades). By considering data from a range of sources that reflect businesswomen and women employees, this thesis will show the extent and differences of women's participation in Sheffield's metal trades.

Sources

Attempts to provide a general perspective on the role of women during the Industrial Revolution have been beset by problems associated with the fragmentary nature of available evidence, together with the fact that it is

¹⁷³ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), pp. 883-5.

¹⁷⁴ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2005), p. 65.

impossible to establish a commonality of women's experiences.¹⁷⁵ It is important to consider the absence of women in historical records as well as the evidence that has been examined in my thesis. For example, it has already been established in this introduction that women in Sheffield's metal trades were not visible in paintings. Researching the lives of women is particularly challenging in this thesis given that I will analyse the experiences of women from a broad socio-economic background including businesswomen, women from business families and women as employees within the metal trades. Indeed, for many of the workers in Sheffield's metal trades, work was undertaken behind closed doors in the workshop or the home, and therefore out of public view. It has been argued that women's work in Sheffield's metal trades was hidden as opposed to scarce.¹⁷⁶ It is important to consider the ways in which a picture of their lives can be pieced together through a range of historical records.

In order to access such a range of material to capture the lives of women it was necessary to locate sources in several different archives. The majority of unprinted primary documents were located in Sheffield Archives, whilst Sheffield Local Studies Library held the printed documents including the commissioner reports and trade directories. Sheffield Reference Library provided microfiches of the census abstracts, whilst online resources were used to locate the more detailed individual census returns. The Assay Office Archive presented findings on the charity established by Mary Parsons in 1815, a charity which has continued and is now run by this organisation. The Borthwick Institute of Archives based at York University holds the majority of inventories for Sheffield, which were located via the search engine 'find my past'. Sheffield Archives presented some miscellaneous documents that included several inventories and wills and a training contract. Archives based outside of Sheffield, including the National Archives, Lloyds Bank Archive and Wakefield Archive, were utilised to locate particular individual sources rather than as a starting point to research. Several collections used in this thesis can be accessed online. Ancestry Online was used to search for individual

¹⁷⁵ L. Shaw-Taylor, 'Diverse Experiences: The Geography of Adult Female Employment in England and the 1851 census', in N. Goose (ed.), *Women's Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 30.

¹⁷⁶ R. Grayson and A. White, "'More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 337.

women in the census returns which showed the specificities of their age, role, and household. Sheffield Flood Claims Archive presented detailed insurance claims from 1864 for people located in an area of town in which the metal trades were concentrated. These claims provided evidence of the wages women claimed in relation to the loss of work as a result of the flood. Evidence presented in this thesis has therefore utilised a wide range of resources available and has made particular use of local institutions in Sheffield.

There were difficulties concerning the access to, and survival of, some important local sources. For example, a substantial number of workhouse records for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were destroyed as a consequence of bombing during World War II.¹⁷⁷ Many documents reveal much about the economic lives of women in Sheffield, but do not specify whether they were metal trades workers. Finding references to women can prove time consuming and they are often difficult to access. For example, although the West Riding Quarter Sessions and Northern Circuit Assizes Records survive for Sheffield, it would have required searching every female case to determine whether the indicted woman was from Sheffield, and also a metal trades worker.¹⁷⁸ However, time pressures have prevented such a time-consuming task and, as such, the evidence that has been accessed is, in places, fragmentary.¹⁷⁹ In order to address the fragmentary nature of sources and quantify the extent to which women were involved in Sheffield's metal trades, I will utilise trade directories and census return abstracts, whilst a range of other sources such as commissioner reports, rate books, street plans, newspapers, letters, inventories and business account books will provide additional qualitative and quantitative data. The nature and scope of each source affected the extent to which the evidence sheds light on the role of women in the metal trades.

¹⁷⁷ SA: Sources available included: Guardians' Minutes 1838-1929 from Worley Union; Letter Books from Sheffield Union, (1847-61).

¹⁷⁸ Also, the assizes records survive for the Northern Circuit.

¹⁷⁹ Wakefield archives hold West Riding Quarter Session Court Records. Although Sheffield is included with West Riding, the session held in Sheffield did not necessarily include the people from Sheffield. Also, the occupation of women was not stated in the index to this collection. The only way of searching this would be to research individual court cases reported in newspapers, which would provide a selective, and possibly limited, understanding of women's economic lives.

The first census was undertaken in 1801 but women were not asked to provide information of their occupation until 1841. The census has been described as ‘a poor tool’, ‘almost useless’ and ‘demonstrably inaccurate’.¹⁸⁰ However, rather than focus on the issues associated with the census data historians can instead consider what the census reveals.¹⁸¹ Census abstracts are documents collating all the individual census returns compiled by the enumerator, providing a macro-perspective of women and men’s engagement within the metal trades. Studying individual census returns from Burgess Street in chapter two will build upon the evidence from the macro perspective in chapter one provided by census abstracts of Sheffield. Whilst census abstracts provide a broad overview of women’s participation in the metal trades, individual census returns provide information about specific women’s marital status, age, role at work and family.

Prior to the census of 1841, the task of locating women metal trades workers in sources is impeded by limited occupational information. However, a longitudinal study from 1774 until 1865 was possible through the use of trade directories. This source has been used extensively in studies of businesswomen.¹⁸² Although trade directories provide evidence over a much longer period than the census returns, the records are limited in respect to businesswomen and they were not undertaken at regular time intervals. However, trade directories provided good evidence of the number and names of businesswomen during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In addition, the names and dates of women who were entered into trade

¹⁸⁰ P. Sharpe, ‘Continuity and Change: Women’s history and Economic History in Britain’, in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women’s Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 24; S. Horrell and J. Humphries, ‘Women’s Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-Breadwinner Family, 1790-1865’, in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women’s Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 177.

¹⁸¹ L. Shaw-Taylor, ‘Diverse Experiences: The Geography of Adult Female Employment in England and the 1851 census’, in N. Goose (ed.), *Women’s Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 33.

¹⁸² J. Aston, ‘Female Business Owners in England, 1849-1901’, Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 2012); A. Kay, ‘Retailing, Respectability and the Independent Woman in Nineteenth-Century London’, in R. Beachy, B. Craig and A. Owen (eds), *Women, Business and finance in Nineteenth-century Europe: Rethinking separate spheres* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 152-66; H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006); C. Wiskin, ‘Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826’, Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 2000).

directories were used to locate surviving inventories for businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades. This was a particularly useful cross reference, as inventories do not always reveal a person's occupation. For example, Julie Banham's research on probate inventories from Hallamshire in the eighteenth century included 17 females, of which one woman identified her occupation as a grocer, while the remaining 16 were identified by marital status.¹⁸³ Inventories showed the listed moveable goods and their location in the house, although only a limited number of inventories by women in Sheffield's metal trades were made or could be located. Not many men and even fewer women made a will, and those who did were undertaking requirements of *bona notabilia*.¹⁸⁴ These requirements included possessing personal goods valued at five pounds or more and estates worth at least five pounds. Although the group of businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades who had an inventory was small, the evidence presented reflected patterns of space which would have resonated with the experiences of women (and men) who did not make an inventory.

Savings accounts reflected a person who was actively taking control over their money but who also had the financial means to warrant opening an account in the first place. It is important to acknowledge that the following study uses depositors' declarations from the Sheffield and Hallamshire bank, and this data did not show individual's account transactions. For the period December 1857 to December 1863, women's accounts could be identified as being linked to the metal trades by their own occupation or their marital status in relation to their husbands' occupations. The Sheffield and Hallamshire Bank account records from 1831 provide details of money moving in and out of individual accounts, yet these accounts were identified only by a name, without reference to address or occupation, in contrast to the records available from 1857.

A sample of newspapers from between 1763 and 1865 was researched in order to ascertain references to women associated with the metal trades throughout

¹⁸³ J. Banham, 'Politeness in Eighteenth-Century Sheffield; Practices, Accoutrements and Spaces for Sociability', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2011).

¹⁸⁴ A. Owens, 'Property, Gender and the Life Course: Inheritance and Family Welfare Provision in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Social History* 26.3 (2001), p. 306.

most of the period of this study. All newspapers produced in Sheffield prior to 1790 that survived were researched, whilst a sample of Sheffield newspapers was taken over five-year intervals from 1790 to 1865. There was no evidence of women who owned metal trades businesses placing advertisements in these newspapers, however, there was evidence of job advertisements for women employees. Job advertisements in newspapers for women workers provide important information on the participation of women in the metal trades. Advertisements for women also show the requirements for them made by men, in a 'public arena'.¹⁸⁵ I found 80 job advertisements for women in the metal trades, all from male employers seeking women employees. These job advertisements show how prospective male employers represented the roles and skills of the women that they sought.

Commissioner reports provide evidence of the daily routine and hours worked by women employed in the metal trades. The Royal Commissions were investigatory bodies, which examined the conditions of work in Sheffield's metal trades in 1843 and 1865. A Royal Commission inquiry was divided into two main sections. First, there were the testimonies taken from individuals by the sub-commissioners, which provide evidence of the role and skills identified by each individual who was interviewed. Although the evidence derived from these interviews reflects employees answering particular questions in a controlled environment, they do provide incidental details on the everyday lives of women who were employed in Sheffield's metal trades. Secondly, the responses of employers who were interviewed reflect attitudes to the women they employed, as do the figures and gendered breakdown of their workforce.

Three company records were selected because they provided specific evidence of women working in Sheffield's metal trades and the wages they received. Other company wage books available such as those from Marshall and Mitchell, Sheffield Smelting Company, Joseph Wilks, and Spear and Jackson provided no evidence of women workers. The forthcoming analysis will only focus on monetary payments

¹⁸⁵ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 89.

made by each of the companies. The insurance claims have been catalogued and a full text is available online, which provides a valuable resource for research into economic aspects of women's lives associated with Sheffield's metal trades by offering incidental evidence of their presence and wages within the industry.

A key aim of my thesis is to identify some significant features of the working conditions of women in Sheffield's metal trades from a wide socio-economic background, including businesswomen and women as employees. This is by no means a straightforward task and it is appropriate to consider the approaches to sources used by historians. Pamela Sharpe argued that a 'necessity of imaginative recovery of women from invisibility is still evident when trying to learn more about the lives of labouring women'.¹⁸⁶ In order to reflect women on a broad socio-economic scale Amy Erickson's research used court records and employers' apprenticeship records.¹⁸⁷ When considering the specific nature of sources it has been argued that ordinary working men and women were not included in the trade directories as they were 'not economically significant enough'.¹⁸⁸ Penelope Lane suggests cross-referencing probate inventories with trade directories 'to pinpoint those different economic interests that formed the backbone of "middling" women's wealth and methods of earning income'.¹⁸⁹

In order to gain an insight into women's economic opportunities it has been necessary to draw upon, and cross-reference, a range of sources and, where possible, to build up case studies in relation to women in Sheffield's metal trades. The location of businesswomen evident in trade directories has been plotted onto a map of Sheffield to identify a relevant street (Burgess Street) in order to build a case study using other sources. Evidence from trade directories is again used in chapter four as it provided information on a limited number of women in the metal trades who had a probate inventory, as trade directories were only produced in Sheffield from 1774 when probate inventories became less frequent and less

¹⁸⁶ P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism* (London, 2006), pp. 152-3.

¹⁸⁷ A. Erikson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change* 23.2 (2008) p. 292.

¹⁸⁸ D. Mills, *Rural Community History from Trade Directories* (Hertfordshire, 2001), p. 14.

¹⁸⁹ P. Lane, 'Women in the Regional Economy: The East Midlands, 1700-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 1999), p. 25.

detailed. These inventories, alongside commissioner reports, provided evidence of women's space beyond Burgess Street. Evidence is also drawn from individual charities related to the metal trades such as the William Parkin Charity, Thomas Hanbey's Charity and Mary Parsons' Charity to show the importance of family to the metal trades in providing financial security for women. Evidence from Thomas Hanbey's Charity will be cross-referenced with individual census returns to establish the households of recipients of the charity. This evidence will show how far the Cutlers' Company and women who had inherited wealth from their family metal trades businesses provided financial security to women associated with the metal trades.

Outline of chapters

The following chapters will provide a detailed insight into the role and experiences of both businesswomen and women employees during the period c.1742-1867. This will include an examination of general trends to uncover the breadth of women's involvement in the metal trades, together with a micro study that will show the social and physical environment in which they worked.

Chapter one will examine the extent to which women contributed to Sheffield's metal trades, the nature of their contribution, and the implications for women involved in trades in which they were a minority. As a minority in the workforce, women were subject to organisational structures built around the interests of their male counterparts. This chapter contributes to broader questions regarding gender and work during this period and in particular it will seek to address the fundamental issue raised by this. Although the number of women involved in the metal trades between 1841 and 1861 increased, figures for businesswomen remained relatively static throughout the period 1774-1865.

A street study undertaken in chapter two will consider the response to the broadly based quantitative study made in chapter one. This will show the importance of the family to women in Sheffield's metal trades and the consequences of the workshop organisation of the metal trades for

businesswomen and women as employees. This will contribute to our understanding of the spaces in which women worked and I will also show that whilst the home and workshop in Sheffield were in close proximity, they cannot be described as 'synonymous' given that businesswomen purposefully separated their living and working spaces, and work could take place in the street and in outside yards. I will also show that family could help support women in Sheffield's metal trades through training and by the bequeathing of a business, but that women could also be independent from family once they had established themselves in the metal trades.

Chapter three will focus on women who were employed in the metal trades and women working in family businesses, and consider the income that they received and how this compared to that of men, as well as women in other locations and trades. I will also consider the type of roles in which they participated and the regularity of their employment. Evidence regarding the regularity of women's employment suggests women could have stable employment opportunities within particular companies, but that this pattern was not consistent for all workers. I will also show that women in Sheffield's metal trades could receive a relatively high wage compared to women in other locations and trades. However, women predominantly received a much lower wage than their male counterparts. Although it is difficult to completely separate the market and customary forces which dictated the wages women received, it is concluded that both impacted on the predominantly lower wages women would receive for their work in Sheffield's metal trades in contrast to their male counterparts.

Chapter four will develop findings from chapter three, which revealed that women who were working in their family business were often better paid than unrelated male workers. This chapter will examine the level of control women had over their economic lives. With respect to businesswomen this will be considered through inheritance, whilst a look at charities will highlight economic benefits to women whose families worked in the metal trades. Savings accounts are used to provide evidence for women who were employed in the metal trades, as well as women who owned businesses and family members of workers in the metal

trades. Whilst some women received money or assets through inheritance or charity, and although there were obstacles to their economic independence because of their gender, I will show that women associated with the metal trades were actively engaged in controlling their finances.

Collaborative doctoral award

Whilst the research aims of my thesis have been outlined it is important to acknowledge another output in addition to my thesis. The funding for my Ph.D. was an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) collaborative doctoral award (CDA) with Kelham Island Museum of Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust (SIMT). CDAs are based on the value of 'co-production' although this work is not currently recognised in how the Research Excellence Framework (REF) measures impact.¹⁹⁰ Recent AHRC initiatives emphasise knowledge exchange rather than knowledge transfer and reflect a two-way exchange rather than a one-way transfer.¹⁹¹ It is appropriate to outline where this process began. Kelham Island Museum website sets out the aims of the museum:

Kelham Island was opened in 1982 to house the objects, pictures and archive material representing Sheffield's industrial story. Our interactive galleries tell the story from light trades and skilled workmanship to mass production and what it was like to live and work in Sheffield during the Industrial Revolution. Follow the growth of the steel city through the Victorian Era and two world wars to see how steelmaking forged both the city of today and the world!¹⁹²

The museum also houses a Bessemer converter as well as a 'River Don Engine'. I was able to receive academic support through the supervision from the Museum Services Manager (collections and interpretation). The Ken Hawley Tool Collection is a separate museum, but located in the same building and they also have their own archive, museum curators and voluntary research team.

¹⁹⁰ L. King and G. Rivett, 'Engaging People in Making History: Impact, Public Engagement and the World Beyond Campus', *History Workshop Journal* 80 (2015), p. 220.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁹² Kelham Island Museum, www.simt.co.uk/klehamislandmuseum [accessed 14 July 2016].

The collaborative partner had several aims and these were altered during the project. First, I would catalogue a collection at the museum archive. This would benefit the museum as the material was currently uncatalogued and the contents of a relatively large collection of items and material were unknown to the museum curators. There was also the potential for locating material that could be used within the thesis. If evidence was located in this collection, then this could be included in the second objective to disseminate some of the research findings in a summer exhibition on women's work and family in the museum. This output was altered by the museum supervisor who wanted the research to be disseminated into the permanent display, which currently excluded the story of women in Sheffield's metal trades from the period of my research. Prior to completing the thesis I presented my findings for this display to the South Yorkshire Industrial History Society Group at Kelham Island Museum.

Laura King and Gary Rivett have considered the criteria for public engagement impact being 'too focused on the outputs and endpoints of engagement activities, rather than valuing a process of two-way engagement or valuing the expertise of non-academics'.¹⁹³ Karen Harvey has also identified the usefulness of public history beyond 'learning lessons', 'public debate' and 'transferable skills', to include ways in which this engagement benefits and enriches both the public and the historian's own understanding of the past.¹⁹⁴ In light of these comments regarding collaborative work, in the conclusion to my thesis I will reflect upon the research outputs and process of the collaboration, the ways in which it enriched my research and the ways in which I met the broader objectives set by my collaborative partner.

¹⁹³ L. King and G. Rivett, 'Engaging People in Making History: Impact, Public Engagement and the World Beyond Campus', *History Workshop Journal* 80 (2015), p. 220.

¹⁹⁴ K. Harvey, 'Envisioning the Past: Art, Historiography and Public History', *Cultural and Social History* 12.4 (2015), pp. 527-43.

Chapter one

“Heavy and dirty work, more suitable for men”: The Scale of Women’s Participation in Sheffield’s Metal Trades

During an interview in 1843 for a report on working conditions in Sheffield, a mother of a young buffer girl described her daughter’s work, noting it was both ‘hard work’ and ‘men’s work’.¹⁹⁵ Other women workers in Sheffield’s metal trades considered their work to be challenging: ‘It is the hardest work that is done here, and the youngest always do it.’¹⁹⁶ Twenty years later, a male file manufacturer described the work of women he employed as, ‘heavy and dirty work more suitable for men’.¹⁹⁷ Such contemporary descriptions suggest that we need to reassess generalisations that women were excluded from the metal trades, often characterized as ‘men’s work’.¹⁹⁸ This chapter will examine the extent to which women contributed to Sheffield’s metal trades, the nature of their contribution, and the implications for women involved in trades in which they were a minority.

This study of the role of women in Sheffield’s metal trades contributes to broader questions regarding gender and work during this period. Nigel Goose stated, in 2007, that fundamental questions remained unanswered regarding the impact of industrialisation upon women’s employment patterns.¹⁹⁹ Pamela Sharpe suggested that local studies on women’s employment could address the disparity within the current - somewhat conflicting - understanding of women’s opportunities.²⁰⁰ The metal trades in Sheffield provide a distinctive local case study given that women were in the minority but in an industry that dominated the local economy. This chapter will draw upon two main source types: trade directories for the period 1774-1865 and census abstracts for the period 1841-61. Statistical data derived from this will be combined with qualitative evidence from

¹⁹⁵ Sheffield Local Studies Library [SLL hereafter]: 331.3 SQ, *J. C. Symons, Children’s Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners, Trades and Manufacturers* (1843), p. 25.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁹⁷ SLL: 331.3 SQ, *J. E. White’s Report on Metal Manufacture, Children’s Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (1865), p. 39.

¹⁹⁸ S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 70.

¹⁹⁹ N. Goose, ‘Working women in Industrial England’ in N. Goose (ed.), *Women’s work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 15.

²⁰⁰ P. Sharpe, ‘Continuity and Change: Women’s history and Economic History in Britain’ in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women’s Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 27.

commissioner reports, advertisements and newspapers to examine the employment both of women who owned a metal trades business, and of women who were employed in the metal trade. The resulting analysis will show how many women worked in the metal trades and any changes in this over time, what metal trades they entered, the age profile of the female workforce in the mid nineteenth century, and men's reaction to women in the workforce during the nineteenth century.

Leigh Shaw-Taylor has commented that research into women's work, especially in the period before the 1841 census, suffers from a profound paucity of systematic data, to the extent that it is possible to develop a number of contradictory views on trends in female participation in the formal economy.²⁰¹ Ivy Pinchbeck argued that women's opportunities decreased.²⁰² This argument has been repeated by Deborah Valenze, who stated that women had a significant role in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, but by the nineteenth century their work opportunities had become more precarious and often limited to domestic service.²⁰³ Furthermore, Jane Humphries and Sara Horrell noted that, aside from factory and outworkers, the contribution of women and children to the family income were relatively small throughout the eighteenth century and remained so throughout the nineteenth century.²⁰⁴ Maxine Berg provided a different perspective in which she argued that women and children workers were fundamental to the progress of the Industrial Revolution, as she stated: 'when we talk of industry in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we are talking of a largely female workforce.'²⁰⁵

Even when historians are in agreement on the important contribution made by

²⁰¹ L. Shaw-Taylor, 'Diverse Experiences: The Geography of Adult Female Employment in England and the 1851 Census', in N. Goose (ed.), *Women's Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 30.

²⁰² I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 4.

²⁰³ D. Valenze, *The First Industrial Woman*, (Oxford, 1995), pp. 185-6.

²⁰⁴ S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-breadwinner Family, 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 186.

²⁰⁵ M. Berg, 'What Difference Did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 157.

women in the workforce during the Industrial Revolution, the timing of their significance is disputed. Maxine Berg and Pat Hudson also argued that by the mid nineteenth century, women and children's labour was declining in importance.²⁰⁶ Neil McKendrick argued that opportunities for women were more consistent after this period and has challenged the premise that women were replaced by machinery in the mid nineteenth century.²⁰⁷ Significantly, the Sheffield metal trades did not experience the organisational changes associated with industries such as cotton. Technological changes in Sheffield's metal trades did not commence until the 1860s with the introduction of the Bessemer converter, which produced large quantities of steel at speed. Ivy Pinchbeck argued: 'as might be expected under these conditions of domestic and workshop organisation, girls as well as boys were put to the metal trades at an early age.'²⁰⁸ However, it has been argued that rapid technical change was not the universal experience during the Industrial Revolution, and the workshop mode of production was not unique to Sheffield.²⁰⁹ This chapter will examine the changes and continuities experienced by women in Sheffield's metal trades prior to the development of the Bessemer converter, providing a clearer picture of the chronology of women's working opportunities.

This chapter will consider how the organisation of the industry affected women workers. This will involve analysing women as employees (outworkers) and also as business owners (traders/manufacturers). Barker helpfully described 'family business owners' as, 'a range of individuals who would have been described by contemporaries as being "in trade", but whom historians might more typically

²⁰⁶ M. Berg and P. Hudson, 'Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review* 45.1 (1992), p. 37.

²⁰⁷ N. McKendrick, 'Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution', in N. McKendrick (ed.), *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society in Honour of J.H. Plumb* (London, 1974), pp. 152-210.

²⁰⁸ I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 272.

²⁰⁹ M. Berg, *The Machinery Question and the Making of the Political Economy 1815-1848* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 1-2; R. Grayson and A. White, "'More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 339; R. Grayson, 'Who Was Master? Class Relationships in Nineteenth-Century Sheffield', in A. Kidd and D. Nicholls (eds), *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity Since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 42-57; C. Behagg, *Politics and Production in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1990), pp. 2-3; M. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (London, 1996), pp. 131-2.

define as “petit bourgeois” or lower middle class’.²¹⁰ The masters of Sheffield were originally apprentices and journeymen, which meant ‘the employers of the town therefore had a great affinity with the employed’.²¹¹ In this chapter I will examine the different classes of women involved in the metal trades. I will also explore their access to employment. Sheffield’s metal trades were distinctive, as many were controlled by the Cutlers’ Company into the nineteenth century whilst in other locations trading guilds lost much of their power and influence during the eighteenth century.²¹² Although the influence of the Cutlers’ Company over civic and trade activity was certainly changing in the nineteenth century, this chapter will show how this establishment still had significant power, organised by and for men, which had implications for the participation of women who were a minority group in Sheffield’s metal trades.

In examining both women employees and businesswomen, this chapter will engage with work that suggests different experiences for these two groups during the nineteenth century. The ideology of separate spheres meant that women from the middle class retreated into private, domestic duties, outside the world of work during the nineteenth century. The separate spheres framework has been convincingly questioned.²¹³ The separate spheres ideology was restricted in scope, as most working-class women could not afford to stop work.²¹⁴ There is a need to consider the different experiences of these two groups of women in Sheffield’s metal trades – business owners and employees – which will be a key thread in both this chapter and my thesis.

Studies of Sheffield’s metal trades have made limited reference to women employed in this work, which contrasts with Birmingham and the Black Country

²¹⁰ H. Barker and M. Ishizu, ‘Inheritance and Continuity in Small Family Businesses During the Early Industrial Revolution’, *Business History* 54.2 (2012), p. 229.

²¹¹ R. Childs, ‘Sheffield Before 1843’, in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993, Vol. 1, Politics* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 10.

²¹² P. Corfield, *The Impact of the English Towns 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982), p. 86.

²¹³ A. Vickery, ‘Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women’s History’ in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women’s Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 294-332.

²¹⁴ R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London, 1998), p. 207.

where women's employment appears to have been greater.²¹⁵ Current understanding on women's engagement in Sheffield's metal trades is vague.²¹⁶ This chapter provides the first thoroughgoing quantitative overview of women workers in the Sheffield metal industry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, showing the range of metal trades in which women participated. Significantly, Hannah Barker showed that the number of businesswomen in Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester entering a business into a trade directory grew between 1760 and 1830.²¹⁷ Most recently, Geoffrey Tweedale acknowledged the 'important role' of women and girls in cutlery manufacture in Sheffield, as both workers and inheriting businesses. Women could step forward to run a metal trades business if their husband died or the family lacked a male heir.²¹⁸ Hannah Barker's study of businesswomen in Sheffield suggested that distinctive modes of production allowed a higher proportion of female participation in 'masculine' metalwork, compared to the cotton trade in Manchester or woollen manufacturing in Leeds.²¹⁹ She concluded:

Although the proportion of women involved in 'masculine' employments is much smaller than those engaged in 'women's work', it still constitutes a significant and steady proportion of the middling women listed in directories: 12 to 24 per cent in Manchester; 12 to 16 per cent in Leeds; and 12 to 37 per cent in Sheffield after 1774 (with 61 per cent, almost all in manufacturing, in 1774).²²⁰

However, in 1828 there was a sharp decline to 8.3 per cent of women participating in manufacturing in Sheffield (which included metal trades).²²¹

²¹⁵ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001); F. Terry-Chandler, 'Women, Work and the Family: Birmingham 1800-1870', Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1995).

²¹⁶ S. Barley, 'Hand Tool Manufacture During the Industrial Revolution: Saw-Making in Sheffield c.1750-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2008), p. 265; S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 70; 'Population Returns, Occupation Abstract', 1844, xxvii, pp. 31-44 cited in I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 276.

²¹⁷ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 39-71.

²¹⁸ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 883-5.

²¹⁹ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 66.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

Significantly, of the trade directory entries by women in manufacturing in Sheffield, 49 out of 107 entries were involved in metalwork. This chapter uses a broader definition of metalwork than that used by Hannah Barker, including the manufacturing and trading of metal goods, and it will consider if this pattern of decline continued until 1865. Having examined the trade directories, which list businesswomen, I will compare these to the census abstracts and commissioner reports to consider a wider social group.

This chapter will show that although women were a smaller proportion of the workforce than men, they were employed in the trades throughout the period 1774-1865. However, whilst the opportunities grew for women workers from 1841 to 1861, the number of businesswomen 1774-1861 remained relatively static despite the population growth, but with a significant increase in 1865. One important factor was the social context of work. As a minority in the workforce, women were subject to organisational structures built around the interests of their male counterparts. As this chapter will show, this limited their participation in the metal trades.

Methodology

In order to quantify the extent to which women were involved in Sheffield's metal trades, I will utilise trade directories and census return abstracts, whilst commissioner reports and newspaper advertisements will provide additional qualitative and quantitative data. The Royal Commissions were investigatory bodies, which examined the conditions of work in Sheffield's metal trades in 1843 and 1865. Each Royal Commission inquiry was divided into two main sections. First, there were the testimonies taken from individuals by the sub-commissioners, which provide evidence of the role and skills identified by each individual who was interviewed. Second, the commissioners used this information to write the First Report of the Commissions, which was described as 'a digest of the whole matter returned'.²²² Nigel Goose argued that 'precise quantification is impossible' from the

²²² S. Hamilton, 'Images of Femininity in the Royal Commissions of the 1830s and 1840s', in E. Yeo (ed.), *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-representation in the Public Sphere* (Manchester, 1998), p. 80.

data. However, interviews with male employers revealed the number of women in their company and reflect snapshots of their company.²²³

Job advertisements in newspapers for women workers also provide important information on the participation of women in the metal trades. Advertisements for women show the requirements for them made by men, in a 'public arena'.²²⁴ This chapter will focus on newspaper advertisements available from 1760 to 1865, sampled at five-year intervals.²²⁵ This research revealed that no women in a metal trades business advertised in newspapers, which is surprising given that Barker showed that women in male trades - such as types of manufacturing, building and furnishing - did not shy away from publicly advertising their businesses, although she does not mention metal trades as an example.²²⁶ However, this chapter uses 80 examples of job advertisements in newspapers, all from male employers seeking women employees. When analysing business advertisements to consider how far notions of gender dictated the role, skill and type of metal trade of women workers, I will use the same approach as Jon Stobart and explore 'the subject, composition, language and appearance' of newspaper advertisements.²²⁷

Census abstracts 1841-61 are used in this chapter to provide an overview of working women's occupations in Sheffield and to investigate the age of these workers. The individual census returns provide evidence on the employment of women in the metal trades, together with information about location, and household structure to be discussed in chapter two. Census abstracts are all the individual census returns compiled by the enumerator, providing a macro-perspective of women and men's engagement with the metal trades. The first census was undertaken in 1801 but women were not asked to provide information

²²³ N. Goose, 'Working Women in Industrial England', in N. Goose (ed.), *Women's Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 21.

²²⁴ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 89.

²²⁵ Special Collections, Western Bank Library, University of Sheffield [SC hereafter] and SLL: *Public Advertiser* (1760-1793), *Sheffield Register* (1790), *Sheffield Iris* (1795-1815) and *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* (1820-1865).

²²⁶ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 80.

²²⁷ J. Stobart, *Sugar and Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650-1830* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 165-89.

of their occupation until 1841. The occupational categories in 1841 were broader than in subsequent years, resulting in greater detail in the roles and trades specified in censuses after 1841. However, the 1841 census was seen as 'a transitional stage' and its reliability has subsequently been questioned.²²⁸ From 1851 the population figures were organised by registration counties, registration districts, sub-districts, parishes and townships. Occupational data in the census abstracts consisted of summary tables on female occupations broken down by country, county, registration district and principal towns. This chapter uses the table for the 'Principal Town' of Sheffield as this provided evidence of women both under and over 20 years of age, showing employment opportunities for both women and girls. For the census abstracts of 1851 and 1861 only, seventeen occupational categories which included subcategories were identified (Table 1.2). None of the seventeen categories related exclusively to the metal trades, however evidence derived from these seventeen categories provided an overall indication of the pattern of women's employment in Sheffield. The metal trades were included as subcategories in the following three overall categories: 'Class XIV, persons working and dealing in Minerals', and 'Class XI, persons engaged in Art and mechanic productions'.²²⁹ It is necessary to focus on the subcategories which refer to specific metal trades rather than the seventeen overall categories to determine the role of women in the metal trades.

The census has been described by researchers of women's work as 'a poor tool', 'almost useless' and 'demonstrably inaccurate'.²³⁰ Edward Higgs argued that under-recording of married women's occupations, seasonal work, casual work, part-time work and work that was done in the home are some of the serious problems for historians investigating female employment during this period using census data.²³¹ It has been argued that the type of work women undertook, as well

²²⁸ E. Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), p. 2.

²²⁹ Sheffield Reference Library [hereafter SRL]: 1851 Census Microfiche 57.648; 1861 Census Microfiche 69.426.

²³⁰ P. Sharpe, 'Continuity and Change: Women's history and Economic History in Britain', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 24; S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-Breadwinner Family, 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 177.

²³¹ E. Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), p. 97.

as their marital status, impacted upon occupational information included in the census records. Edward Higgs argued that the census enumerators tended to record full-time work whilst during this period women often worked for pay on a casual or part-time basis.²³² Furthermore, Jane Humphries and Sara Horrell have argued that 'frequently enumerators omitted any occupational designation for married women whose work was thus particularly under-reported.'²³³ More recently, studies have revised this argument in relation to the enumeration of regular employment for women.²³⁴ These studies have demonstrated that women in regular employment were consistently enumerated regardless of marital status.²³⁵

The trade directories used in my thesis did not provide evidence of women's marital status. The names of businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades derived from four of the trade directories from the mid nineteenth century (1837, 1854, 1861 and 1865) were cross-referenced with individual census returns. Out of 127 trade directory entries by women in Sheffield's metal trades, only 22 women could be identified in the census material with the same occupation, totalling just 17.3 per cent of women who were evident in both the census and trade directory evidence. The correlation between names of businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades recorded in the census returns and trade directories was 3 out of 27 in 1841, 11 and of 29 in 1851 and 8 out of 72 in 1861. The variation between the 1851 records compared with 1841 and 1861 would suggest that there were issues with respect to the accuracy of enumerator records. The under-enumeration of women in Sheffield's metal trades (82.7 per cent) reflected John Holley's findings on married women working in the Border region woollen mills, who when comparing

²³² E. Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), p. 97.

²³³ S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-Breadwinner Family 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 177-78.

²³⁴ S. McGeevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), pp. 489-512; A. Wilkinson, 'Women and Occupations in the Census of England and Wales: 1851-90', Ph.D. thesis (University of Exeter, 2012); A. Wilkinson and E. Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work, in the Victorian Censuses Revisited', *History Workshop Journal* 81 (2016), pp. 17-38.

²³⁵ S. McGeevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), p. 507.

wage books and census returns, found under-enumeration ranged between 46 to 100 per cent.²³⁶ Indeed, even in 1851 only 38 per cent of names of businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades appeared in both records. It is possible that some women may have changed occupations between the time the trade directory was published and when the census data was compiled. However, these findings do suggest that census records do not include evidence of all women's engagement in the metal trades. Therefore it could be argued that census returns only provide a minimum record on the number of women engaged in Sheffield's metal trades. The census abstracts do not identify the marital status of women (or men). The individual census returns do identify a person's marital status, and these records were used in chapter two (marital status identified in individual census returns is discussed pp. 113-7). However, an examination of the individual census returns and trade directories for Burgess Street only provides evidence of one woman, Hannah Shaw, in both sources. Therefore, it was not possible to examine the reliability of census recordings with regards to women's marital status. This demonstrates the need to use a range of sources within my thesis, whilst acknowledging the level of detail that the census does provide on some women who engaged in Sheffield's metal trades. The case has been convincingly made for the value of the census material and, although it may not show every occupation a woman may have undertaken, there are a limited number of places to look for this information, particularly for a group of women workers who were in a minority. Rather than focus on the issues associated with the census data, Leigh Shaw-Taylor urges historians to consider what the census reveals.²³⁷

Trade directories are sources that have been used extensively in studies of businesswomen.²³⁸ The directories provide evidence of the role of women in

²³⁶ E. Roberts, *Women's Work 1840-1940: Waiting for a Living Wage* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 9.

²³⁷ L. Shaw-Taylor, 'Diverse Experiences: The Geography of Adult Female Employment in England and the 1851 census', in N. Goose (ed.), *Women's Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 33.

²³⁸ J. Aston, 'Female Business Owners in England, 1849-1901', Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 2012); A. Kay, 'Retailing, Respectability and the Independent Woman in Nineteenth-Century London', in R. Beachy, B. Craig and A. Owen (eds), *Women, Business and finance in Nineteenth-century Europe: Rethinking separate spheres* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 152-66; H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830*, (Oxford, 2006); C. Wiskin, 'Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826', Ph.D. thesis (Warwick University, 2000).

Sheffield's metal trades from the late eighteenth century. Maxine Berg claimed that long-run quantitative data on the place of women in the eighteenth century was 'meagre', and that trade directories 'were incomplete, and those that were kept indicated only a small place for women in the metal trades'.²³⁹ However, Hannah Barker's investigation into Sheffield's trade directories between 1760 and 1830 showed a higher proportion of female participation throughout this period in 'masculine' trades, including metalwork, compared to the cotton trade in Manchester or woollen manufacturing in Leeds.²⁴⁰ This chapter will investigate directories from 1774 and will go beyond 1830 until 1865. Furthermore, in contrast to Hannah Barker I will consider women in the metal trades as producers and traders together, rather than separating them as she does. Consequently, it can be argued that, despite the limitations of trade directories, they nevertheless provide useful information for research on businessmen and businesswomen.

There are 317 businesswomen evident in sixteen trade directories between 1774 and 1865.²⁴¹ These sixteen directories were selected on the basis that, where possible, the entirety of the directory concerned only Sheffield (and in one case exclusively Sheffield metal trades), and reflected nearly every decade between 1770 and 1860 to allow a comparison across this period. The trade directories used from the eighteenth century represent all of the available sources for this period, where surviving evidence is limited, compared to the later period where directories were selected by decade. British directories that included sections on Sheffield were researched alongside local Sheffield directories. Furthermore, Hannah Barker's research into Sheffield directories between 1774 and 1828 identified traders in metal goods in the 'shop keeping' category rather than 'manufacturing'.²⁴² I have included women in manufacturing and in the retail of metal goods, as both contributed to the trades. Furthermore, women could produce and sell goods in the metal trades, as exemplified by Hannah Shaw, to be

²³⁹ M. Berg, 'Women's Property and the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24.2 (1993), p. 236.

²⁴⁰ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 66.

²⁴¹ A commercial section is available in every directory except for 1814-15, which instead included two trade sections.

²⁴² H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 177-86.

discussed in chapter two, who produced and sold magnets at her premises in Burgess Street.

The manner in which trade directories were compiled, and the difference between the separate commercial and trade sections in some directories, also needs to be considered when assessing their validity. Directories were voluntary, required a fee and were a vehicle to help people promote their work. Indeed, it has been argued that ordinary working men and women were not included in the trade directories as they were 'not economically significant enough'.²⁴³ By implication, women included in the directories were a particular type of worker with the financial means to enter their business. Directories can also inform us of multiple employments, the existence and identification of firms and the economic activity of women, which is often unrecorded in other sources in the pre-census period.²⁴⁴ Local trade directories were often produced by compilers or their agents, visiting in person the shops and houses they listed.²⁴⁵ The directories often began with a statement indicating the possibility of errors, with additions and corrections added at the last minute.²⁴⁶ Given that directories were not consistently compiled, there was no standardisation in the way names were recorded, meaning many businesswomen could be unidentifiable. The directory of 1822 included 174 female entries in which no occupation was given, it is therefore possible that the number of women involved in metal trades is underestimated. The trade directory section for 1814-15 also provided limited evidence of women in the metal trades, but this was compensated by the fact that it had a second trade section that included more female entries in the industry.

Trade directories produced in Sheffield from 1774 were evolving throughout the period of this research. Surviving trade directories for Sheffield did not detail the costs of advertising. However, many of the directories did detail the way in which they were compiled and acknowledged that inaccuracies and incomplete

²⁴³ D. Mills, *Rural Community History from Trade Directories* (Hertfordshire, 2001), p. 14.

²⁴⁴ P. Corfield and S. Kelly, "'Giving Directions to the Town": The Early Town Directories', *Urban History* 11 (1984), p. 32.

²⁴⁵ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 48.

²⁴⁶ SA: *A Directory of Sheffield* (1787), p. iv.

records were inevitable. For example in 1774 the editor noted that: 'he found it impossible to procure the names and directions of every individual'.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, the 1854 Post Office trade directory hints at the financial gain of publishing a trade directory through its fee: 'an enterprise of individual profit, is nevertheless a Work of public unity'.²⁴⁸ The unsystematic compilation of trade directories and the required fee would inevitably have deterred some women (and men) from entering and being recorded in this document.

The focus and nature of publishers in trade directories changed throughout the period. During the mid eighteenth century there was rapid expansion in the number of trade directories being produced for which 'their usefulness was generally recognised'.²⁴⁹ During the mid nineteenth century there was a rise in large-scale directory firms, which reduced the number of small local publishers.²⁵⁰ This is evident in Sheffield too, where in 1854 and 1865 the surviving documents were produced by the Post Office, whereas earlier in 1797 the Sheffield Iris editor James Montgomery produced a trade directory.²⁵¹ The larger-scale firms provided a better coverage of a particular area than locally produced trade directories.²⁵² Specialised trade directories were being produced in Great Britain by the mid nineteenth century, and in 1861 a specialised Sheffield trade directory was produced, *Cutlers and Silversmiths of Sheffield, Collinson & Co.*, (1861). This directory showed a decrease in entries by businesswomen in the metal trades which may suggest that women were less likely to enter into a specialised directory. Furthermore, the publisher of a trade directory impacted upon its content. Gareth Shaw argued that relatively large directory publishing companies including Pigot and Slater, William White, and Frederick Kelly 'were all instrumental in establishing the importance of directories and improving the way

²⁴⁷ SLL: *Sheffield Trade Directory* (1774), p. 1.

²⁴⁸ SLL: *Post Office Directory of Sheffield* (1854), p. 1.

²⁴⁹ J. Norton, *Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales Excluding London, Published Before 1856* (London, 1950), p. 6.

²⁵⁰ G. Shaw, 'Directories as Sources in Urban History: A Review of British and Canadian Material', *Urban History* 11 (1984), p. 39.

²⁵¹ *A Directory of Sheffield Including the Manufacturers of the Adjacent Villages*, Printed by J. Montgomery, (1797).

²⁵² G. Shaw, 'Directories as Sources in Urban History: A Review of British and Canadian Material', *Urban History* 11 (1984), p. 40.

in which they were produced.²⁵³ Chapter one utilises the *Pigot Trade Directory*, (1837) and it has been argued that James Pigot was a particularly good publisher of trade directories; ‘the success of this company was due entirely to Pigot’s organisation abilities and rigorous approach to the gathering of information.’²⁵⁴ There was an increase in number of businesswomen entering metal trades into the *Post Office Directory of Sheffield*, (1865). This may be explained by the fact that Kelly’s Directories were regarded as the ‘epitome of large-scale directory publishers’²⁵⁵ and were named the Post Office Trade Directory as Kelly used the resources and employees of the Post Office to compile and distribute the directory.²⁵⁶ Although trade directories may not include all women who owned a metal trade business, they provide invaluable detail on the name, trade and address of a number of these women, and this evidence can be examined and analysed alongside other available sources.

Furthermore, women sometimes entered into two parts of the directories: in one section they were listed in alphabetical order and in another by trade. Although in principle the two lists should be the same, this was not always the case. Graph 1.1 below shows six trade directories that had two sections which provided different results for the number of women who entered a metal trades business, which was in contrast to Christine Wiskin’s findings of women advertising in all trades in Birmingham.²⁵⁷ Consequently, the aggregate totals (the red column) indicate all women in the metal trades, taken from entries in both lists, but removing duplicates. The difference in aggregate totals of each directory is particularly marked in 1825, in which only five women entered their business into the trade section, whereas 16 women entered into the commercial listing. On the other hand, in 1787, ten more women listed themselves in the trade section of the directory, and thus looking at just one section of the directory for 1787 would exclude nearly a third more women from the total. The important finding from

²⁵³G. Shaw ‘Giving Directions to the Past’ in G. Shaw (ed.), *Directing the Past: Directories and the Local Historian*, *British Association for Local History* (2003), p. 10.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

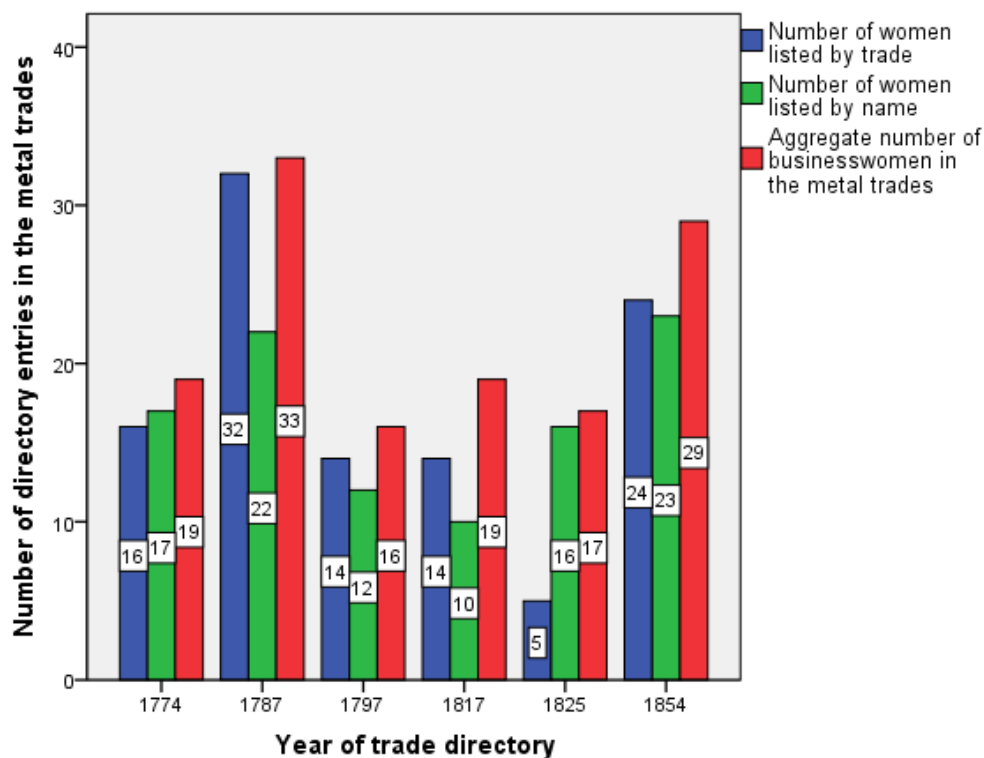
²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁵⁷ C. Wiskin, ‘Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826’, Ph.D. thesis (Warwick University, 2000), p. 104.

graph 1.1 is that, when using trade directories, researchers must combine data from the different sections of the source. It is not clear why some women are listed in only one section of the directories. Directories organised by trade heading have been considered useful as they give an immediate indication of how specialised or how general particular trades were.²⁵⁸ Hannah Barker argued that directory lists that were organised alphabetically by surname provided a ‘poor finding tool for strangers’.²⁵⁹ The disparity might therefore be due to the individual having to pay more to be in both. A listing by name might also suggest a well-known business owner who could be found quickly by someone seeking his or her business. Whatever the reason, it is important to consider the varied composition of trade directories to establish robust evidence. It is evident that there are issues with directories as a source and with particular directories, but nevertheless they provide important information on some businesswomen involved in the metal trade.

Graph 1.1: The commercial and trade sections of six trade directories



Source: Sheffield Archives [hereafter SA]: Sheffield trade directories, (1774, 1787, 1797, 1817, 1825 and 1854).

²⁵⁸ D. Mills, *Rural Community History from Trade Directories*, (Hertfordshire, 2001), p. 13.

²⁵⁹ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 53.

The number of women in Sheffield's metal trades

Sheffield experienced rapid population growth during the period under study in this thesis, from 12,000 men and women in 1750 to 185,172 by 1861, with the metal trades prospering alongside this growing population. In order to analyse the number of women in the metal trades, I will begin by looking at evidence for the period 1841-61, when the census returns provided evidence of women's occupations. Material from the census returns is used alongside the commissioner report of 1843 to provide numbers of women associated with the metal trades and to assess how this compared with men and with the employment of women in other areas of the local economy. An examination of the role of all women in the metal trades from 1841-61 is followed by an analysis of trade directories for the period 1774-1865. Directories relate to businesswomen and do not provide an insight into the role of all women but do suggest continuities and changes with respect to women's role in the metal trades across the period as a whole.

Evidence from census abstracts showed that women's employment in the metal trades increased from 1841 to 1861. This evidence is reflected in Table 1.1 below which shows the number of men and women in the metal trades in census abstracts in 1841, 1851 and 1861. It is important to recognise that the figures refer both to women as employees, as well as to those women who owned businesses. The number of women in the metal trades increased from 958 in 1841, to 2,656 in 1851, and finally to 3,752 by 1861; this shows nearly a four-fold increase of women in just 20 years. As a percentage of the female population in Sheffield, those involved in the metal trades grew from 1.7 per cent to 4 per cent, which shows the growth of women in the metal trades was sustained through population growth.²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ SRL: 1841 Census Microfiche 48.225; 1851 Census Microfiche 57.648; 1861 Census Microfiche 69.426; Total female population in Sheffield in 1841, 56,207; in 1851, 67,810; in 1861, 93,032.

Table 1.1: Number and proportion of women and men in Sheffield involved in the metal trades in census abstracts, 1841-61

Year	Number of women in the metal trades	% of Sheffield's female population	Number of men in the metal trades	% of Sheffield's male population	Total number of men and women in the metal trades	% of the metal trades workforce that were women
1841	958	1.7%	16,466	30.0%	17,424	5.5%
1851	2,656	3.9%	23,693	35.1%	26,349	10.1%
1861	3,752	4.0%	29,223	31.7%	32,975	11.4%

Source: SRL: 1841 Census Microfiche 48.225; 1851 Census Microfiche 57.648; 1861 Census Microfiche 69.426.

Numbers of men employed in the metal trades were much higher than numbers of women, and also accounted for nearly a third of the male population in Sheffield. Male employment in the metal trades also grew from 16,466 in 1841, to 23,693 in 1851, and 29,223 by 1861, and as a proportion of the male population this accounted for between 30 and 35 per cent, rising by 5.1 per cent from 1841-51 but then declining by 3.4 per cent from 1851-1861.²⁶¹ This decrease in men entering the metal trades in 1861 may be explained by the proportion of women as a percentage of the metal trades workforce growing from 5.5 per cent in 1841, to 10.1 per cent in 1851, and 11.6 per cent in 1861. Although the percentage of women in the metal trades workforce from 1841 to 1861 shows only relatively small changes, it suggests that during the 1850s some men were finding opportunities outside the metal trades at a time when women were continuing to find opportunities within them. By implication, the rise in the proportion of

²⁶¹ SRL: 1841 Census Microfiche 48.225; 1851 Census Microfiche 57.648; 1861 Census Microfiche 69.426; Total male population in Sheffield in 1841, 54,884; in 1851, 67,500; in 1861, 92,140.

women in the metal trades, even if relatively small, challenges the argument that women's opportunities were decreasing by the mid nineteenth century through a mixture of legislation, the activity of trade unionists, and the male breadwinner ideology.²⁶² Despite well-established arguments that women were a minority in Sheffield's metal trades, there is evidence to show that the number women was increasing in the mid nineteenth century.²⁶³

The finding in Sheffield's metal trades contrasts with those for Birmingham, where women and girls in the metal trades were a 'reservoir of cheap labour'.²⁶⁴ Clive Behagg's analysis of the workforce in Birmingham's metal trades in 1851 found eighteen per cent of the workforce was women.²⁶⁵ This suggests that local customs impacted on the opportunities for women in work. The proportion of women in Sheffield's metal trades contrasts with women in the 'highly feminized' domestic service work in 1851 where, 'women outnumbered men nine to one.'²⁶⁶ Even though women did not comprise a large proportion of the metal trades workforce, the findings in census abstracts challenge the argument that women's opportunities in certain forms of paid employment were decreasing during the mid nineteenth century.

Table 1.2: Female occupations in principle towns (Sheffield Borough), 1851 and 1861 censuses

Occupation classification	1851	% of female population	1861	% of female population
Class I: Government of the country	4	0.006%	15	0.02%

²⁶² S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-breadwinner Family, 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 172-202.

²⁶³ S. Barley, 'Hand Tool Manufacture during the Industrial Revolution: Saw-making in Sheffield c.1750-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2008), p. 265; S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 70.

²⁶⁴ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England*, (London, 2001), p. 81.

²⁶⁵ C. Behagg, *Politics and Production in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1990), p.48.

²⁶⁶ M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain* (2nd edn, London, 1994), p. 137.

Class II: Defence of the country	0		0	
Class III: Learned professions	28	0.04%	602	0.65%
Class IV: Literature, fine arts and the sciences	357	0.53%		
Class V: Domestic offices or duties of wives, mothers, mistresses of families, children, relatives	50,774	74.88%	72,330	77.75%
Class VI: Entertaining, clothing and performing	9,435	13.91%	12,349	13.27%
Class VII: Persons who sell, keep, let or lend	498	0.73%	358	0.38%
Class VIII: Persons engaged in the conveyance of men, animals, goods and messages	811	1.20%	911	0.98%
Class IX: Working the land	388	0.57%	376	0.40%
Class X: Persons engaged about animals	0		0	
Class XI: Art and mechanic productions	111	0.16%	1,886	2.03%
Class XII: Animal matters	1,144	1.69%	575	0.62%
Class XIII: Vegetable kingdom	737	1.09%	785	0.84%
Class XIV: Minerals	1,921	2.83%	1,323	1.42%
Class XV: Labourers and others (undefined)	42	0.06%	60	0.06%
Class XVI: Persons of rank or property, no occupation	471	0.69%	346	0.37%
Class XVII: No occupation	1,089	1.6%	1,116	1.20%
Total female population	67,810		93,032	

Source: SRL: 1851 Census Microfiche 57.648; 1861 Census Microfiche 69.426.

We can compare the employment of women in Sheffield's metal trades with their involvement in other trades. Table 1.2 shows census data of all women in Sheffield enumerated in 1851 and 1861. The census abstracts provide information on all forms of employment for women in Sheffield and show that women were represented in most categories with the exception of 'Class II Defence of the Country' and 'Class X Persons engaged "about" animals'. In both 1851 and 1861 the two occupational categories that dominated female employment were 'domestic offices' and 'entertainment, clothing and performing'. Women's employment in 'domestic offices' increased from 74.88 per cent of all women in Sheffield in 1851, to 77.75 per cent in 1861 whilst those engaged in 'entertainment, clothing and performing' decreased slightly from 13.91 per cent in 1851, to 13.27 per cent in 1861. The category of 'domestic offices' included roles such as wife, widow (of no specified occupation), daughter, granddaughter, sister, niece, and scholar (under tuition at home or school). The dominance of 'domestic offices' may provide some support to Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's argument that middle-class women were increasingly removed from 'gainful employment' during the nineteenth century.²⁶⁷ However, women in Sheffield in 'domestic offices' also provided support for the hypothesis that many women who undertook services and productive occupations at home would have been included in this category and therefore excluded from occupational record.²⁶⁸ Although specific instructions from 1851 that 'occupations of women who are regularly employed from home, or at home, in any but domestic duties, [are] to be distinctly recorded', it has been argued that much productive labour was not regarded as an occupation.²⁶⁹ The census abstracts may underestimate the number of women who worked, such as part-time, seasonal or casual employment, which could include women's hidden involvement in the metal trades but were not recorded at the time the census was compiled. This analysis on women's occupations in Sheffield puts the relatively small figures and proportions of women engaged in the metal trades in perspective, as only just over 20 per cent of women in Sheffield recorded any regular form of employment.

²⁶⁷ L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (2nd edition, Oxon, 2002), p. 431.

²⁶⁸ E. Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), p. 98.

²⁶⁹ E. Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), p. 98.

However, the contribution of women in Sheffield's metal trades varied from business to business, as can be exemplified by looking more closely at the responses of six business owners in the commissioner report in 1843. Table 1.3 below shows evidence from commissioner reports regarding the number of women who worked in several large metal manufacturers in Sheffield. Messr Dixon ran a plate and white-metal manufacturers and claimed in an interview that a significant proportion of his workforce was female. He told the commissioner, 'we employ about 600 or 700 people here of whom from 300 to 400 are men, and the rest are women with a few girls and boys'.²⁷⁰ This shows that around 35 per cent of the workforce for this company were women, a significantly higher figure than the 12 per cent general figure from the census. For this particular male employer, women had an important role to contribute to their business. However, this picture was not evident with the other manufacturers shown in Table 1.3. John Kenyon, a producer of files, saws and steel, employed 23 women out of a workforce of 166, whereas James Moorhouse a manufacturer of penknives employed no women. This may reflect the particular metal goods each manufacturer made, although it is also possible that attitudes towards gender or contextual factors such as family associations or training required could have influenced the male employers' choices. The data on the number of female employees also suggests that women over the age of 21 were more likely to be employed than young women aged between 13 and 21. Furthermore, the age of women and girls differed to their male counterparts, with only two girls under 13 employed (compared to 22 boys under 13), 35 women between the age of 13-21 (compared to 249 boys) which may reflect a high number of male apprentices, and 65 women (compared to 602 men) being over the age of 21. Overall, Table 1.3 shows that women, and some girls and young women, worked in a range of metal trades and could account for a significant (albeit less than men) proportion of the workforce in large manufacturers. However, it is important to establish if these employers should be treated in isolation, as these organisations were particularly large and only reflect six businesses.

²⁷⁰ SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. C. Symons, *Children's Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners. Trades and Manufacturers* (London, 1843), p. 44.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

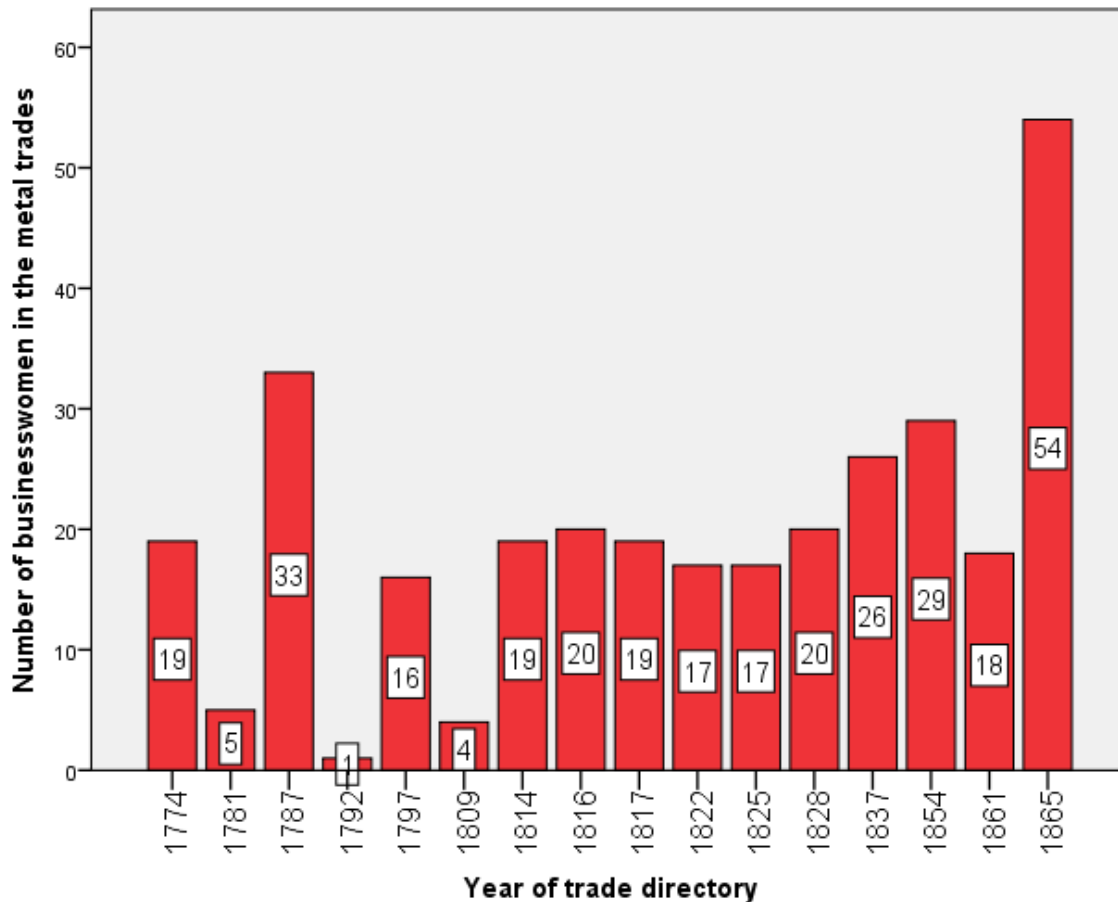
Table 1.3: The number and age of workers in the metal trades as indicated in commissioner report evidence, 1843.

Manufacturer	21 years of age and upwards		Between 13 and 21 years of age		under 13 years of age		Total	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Samuel Cocker and Son Manufacturers of steel, files, wire, needles &c	7	83	20	22	0	2	27	107
John Kenyon and Co. Manufacturer of files, saws and steel	23	92	0	51	0	0	23	143
Edward Giblee and Co. Manufacturer of all kinds of table cutlery	1	32	0	24	0	4	1	60
James Moorhouse Manufacturer of penknives	0	27	0	16	0	2	0	45
Joseph Rodgers and Sons Manufacturer of cutlery	18	324	5	134	0	13	23	471
George Whitham and Co. Manufacturer of files, steel, screws and spindles	16	44	10	2	2	1	28	47
Total	65	602	35	249	2	22	102	873

Source: SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. C. Symons, *Children's Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners, Trades and Manufacturers* (1843), pp. 36-9.

The census abstracts included all women involved in the metal trades, both as employees and businesswomen. The only available sources that provide an overview of women in work for the period 1774-1865 are trade directories. Graph 1.2 below shows the number of businesswomen in each trade directory (after both commercial and trade sections were aggregated and duplicate entries were removed from the count).

Graph 1.2: The number of entries made by women in the metal trades in sixteen trade directories, 1774-1865



Source: SA and SLL: Sheffield trade directories, (1774-1865).

The number of women recorded in each directory did not change dramatically with nine out of 16 directories containing 15-20 entries for women in the metal trades. The quality of directories improved during the course of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁷¹ The very low figures for women in some directories (1781, 1792 and 1809) can be explained by the idiosyncratic compilation of the directories. Businesswomen only accounted for 0.9 per cent of metal trades entries in the 1861 directory, which, interestingly, was a directory specifically concerned with Sheffield’s metal trades, suggesting that women had limited opportunities to enter this directory because of this. Significantly, there was a three-fold increase of women entering a metal trades business in the 1865 directory compared to the 1861 directory, and double the amount recorded in 1854. This sudden increase

²⁷¹ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 54.

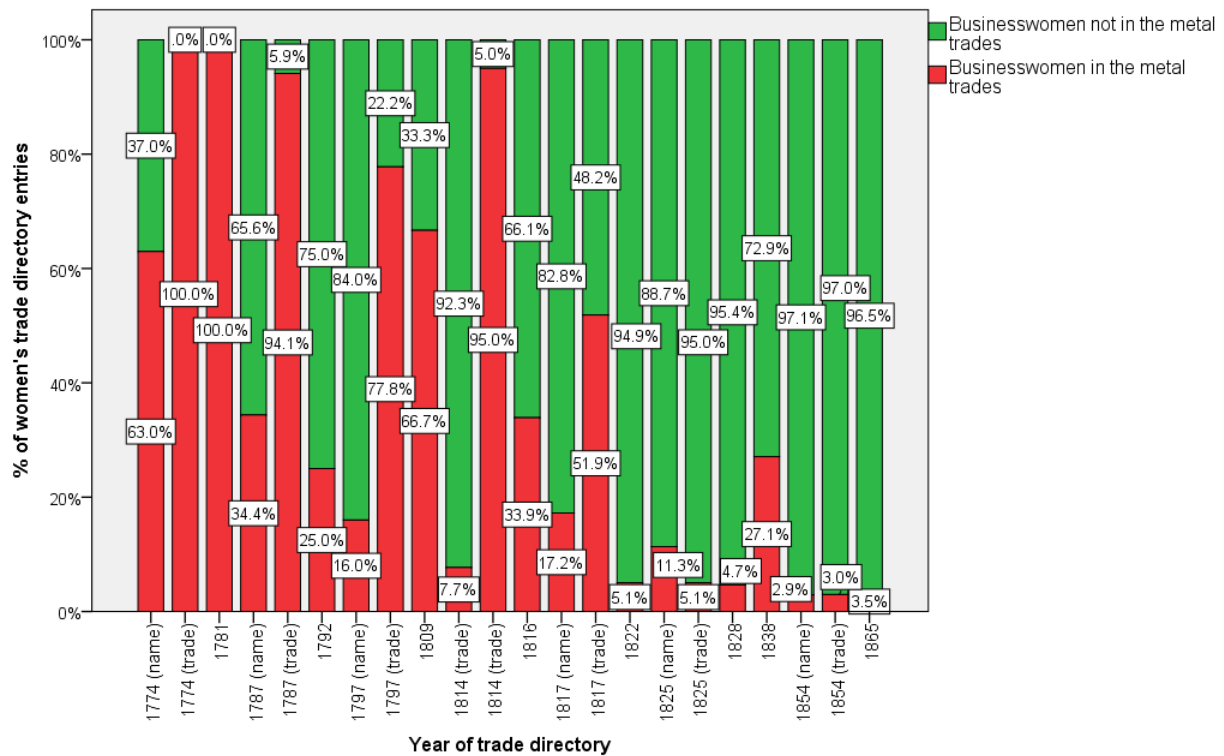
took place at a time when the steel industry was beginning to change. Henry Bessemer moved to Sheffield in 1858 and licensed his method of converting huge amounts of iron into steel in a relatively short time to two steelmakers, John Brown and George Cammell, who began to produce Bessemer steel on an unprecedented scale during the 1860s. The number of businesswomen in the metal trades in 1865 increased to 54 at a time when the industry was experiencing rapid change, although this directory had significantly more entries by women in all forms of business, women in the metal trades only increased by 0.5 per cent (graph 1.3). In contrast, the declining numbers of women who ran metal trades businesses in Birmingham resulted from the 'steady impoverishment of the small producer' due to changes in the way the trade was reorganised to factory-based production in the early nineteenth century, which impacted on the likelihood of women being able to engage in their own businesses in this trade.²⁷² Although the number and proportion of entries in Sheffield's metal trades grew in 1865, the overall pattern was that women entering a metal trade into a directory remained static.

In order to appreciate the significance of businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades it is appropriate to compare these trades with other business opportunities for women. Despite no apparent reduction in numbers, the significance of businesswomen in the metal trades, compared to other trades, appears to reduce over time. Graph 1.3 compares businesswomen in the metal trades with other forms of trade. The results suggest that as the period progressed businesswomen were more likely to enter a trade outside of the metal trades. The trade directories suggest that the metal trades dominated business opportunities for women in 1774, 1781 and 1793 and the number of women in the metal trades was relatively high during the period of the French Wars (1793-1815), accounting for over 50 per cent of entries in seven out of eleven directories. However, from the 1822 directory most entries for women were overwhelmingly related to other trades. The number of women advertising in all other trades, not including the metal trades, increased, from ten entries in 1774, to 1,498 entries by 1865 (appendix

²⁷² C. Wiskin, 'Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826', Ph.D. thesis (Warwick University, 2000), p. 145.

one). The proportion of metal trades entries amongst women drastically reduced from 100 per cent in the trade section of the directory in 1774 to just 3.5 per cent by 1865.

Graph 1.3: A comparison of directory entries (per cent) by women in the metal/non-metal trades, 1774-1865



Source: SA and SLL: Sheffield trade directories, (1774-1865).

* The number of women in trade directories who entered non-metal trades and metal trades businesses - including trade and name (commercial) sections, (1774-1865):

Non-metal trades: 1774 (name) (10), 1774 (trade) (0), 1781 (0), 1787 (name) (42), 1787 (trade) (2), 1792 (3), 1797 (name) (63), 1797 (trade) (4), 1809 (2), 1814 (trade) (24), 1814 (trade) (1), 1816 (39), 1817 (name) (48), 1817 (trade) (13), 1822 (319), 1825 (name) (125), 1825 (trade) 94), 1828 (410), 1838 (70), 1854 (name) (766), 1854 (trade) (781), 1865 (1, 501).

Metal trades: 1774 (name) (17), 1774 (trade) (16), 1781 (5), 1787 (name) (22), 1787 (trade) (32), 1792 (1), 1797 (name) (12), 1797 (trade) (14), 1809 (4), 1814 (trade) (2), 1814 (trade) (19), 1816 (20), 1817 (name) (10), 1817 (trade) (14), 1822 (17), 1825 (name) (16), 1825 (trade) (5), 1828 (20), 1838 (26), 1854 (name) (23), 1854 (trade) (24), 1865 (54).

A comparison with the proportion of entries for metal trades businesswomen in Sheffield with those in Birmingham shows that women in both locations were increasingly more likely to enter business outside the metal trades in the mid

nineteenth century. Aston's analysis of women entering Birmingham directories did not consider the metal trades in isolation but related them to a 'Miscellaneous including Manufacturing & Professional' sector and 'other retailing'. She noted to her surprise, given that it included the metal trades, that only 29 per cent of businesswomen were entered into this category in 1849.²⁷³ Although the trade section of the Sheffield directory in 1838 recorded a comparable 27.1 per cent of businesswomen involved in the metal trades, the general trend for women's engagement in Sheffield metal trades during the mid nineteenth century was much lower than in 1838. Significantly, 40 per cent of women in Birmingham entered a textile business into directories, showing that women in Birmingham were most likely to enter a trade which can be described as 'feminine' in contrast to entering a 'male' metal trade.²⁷⁴ It has been suggested that earlier Sheffield directories perhaps focused on the metal trades to the exclusion of other industries, but this would be difficult to prove.²⁷⁵ It is important to appreciate that the non-metal trades included a wide range of business opportunities for women. The comparative number of women in non-metal trades (at 1,498 entries in 1865) and the metal trades (at 54 in 1865), puts the increased number of businesswomen entered for the metal trades in 1865 into perspective. Overall, it can be established that businesswomen in Sheffield were increasingly less likely to enter a metal trade into directories, although women's business opportunities in Sheffield more generally flourished as the period progressed.

Table 1.4 below shows the number of businessmen and women from four selected directories, including both commercial and trade sections to avoid a duplication of those who entered into both sections. It shows that the number of entries for the metal trades experienced a four-fold increase between 1774 and 1861. The majority of these entries were by men, representing at the very least 92 per cent of the entries in the metal trades. Hannah Barker concluded that businesswomen in Sheffield's manufacturing sector (which included the metal trades) between 1760 and 1830 accounted for between 12 and 37 per cent of

²⁷³ J. Aston, 'Female Business Owners in England, 1849-1901', Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 2012), pp. 86-90.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-6.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

entries, with 61 per cent in 1774.²⁷⁶ However, Graph 1.2 has shown the actual number of businesswomen in the metal trades rose from only 19 in 1774, to 26 in 1837, and then fell to 18 in 1861, although the number of businesswomen was to rise after this, reaching 54 in 1865. These figures demonstrate the idiosyncratic nature of directories, but also the small number of women who ran metal trades businesses compared with men. It is difficult to establish specific reasons for the increase in 1865 apart from the possibility that the industry as a whole was growing in response to the introduction of the Bessemer converter, which may have had ramifications for Sheffield's metal trades industry. Although the total number of all women's entries in the directories increased during the period 1774-1865, the number of businesswomen remained static from 1774 to 1861 (appendix one). The implication of these findings is that whilst the census has shown that there were increased numbers of women employees in the industry, this pattern was not replicated for businesswomen whose number remained static.

Table 1.4: Men and women in Sheffield's metal trades from trade directories (1774, 1787, 1837, 1861)

Source Type	Total number of entries in the metal trades	Number of men in the metal trades	Number of women in the metal trades	% of the metal trades business owners that were men	% of the metal trades business owners that were women
1774 Trade Directory (Commercial section)	357	340	17	95.2%	4.8%
1774 Trade Directory (Trade section)	571	555	16	97.2%	2.8%
1787 Trade Directory (Commercial Section)	438	405	33	92.5%	7.5%
1787 Trade Directory (Trade Section)	826	804	22	97.3%	2.7%
1837 Trade Directory	1,825	1,799	26	98.6%	1.4%
1861 Trade Directory	1,899	1,881	18	99.1%	0.9%

Source: SA and SLL: Sheffield trade directories, (1774-1861).

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-5.

The role of women in Sheffield's metal trades

Given that it has been established that women participated in the metal trades, albeit as a relatively small proportion of the metal trades workforce, it is appropriate to consider the nature of the work they undertook. This will involve considering the range of metal trades that women participated in, and the age profile of those engaged. Where possible, this analysis will include a consideration of the differences between women as employees and as business owners.

Trade directories and census abstracts show the range of metal trades in which women were involved. Evidence has been aggregated from all directories and census abstracts to show the pattern of women's engagement in different aspects of the metal trades. It was possible to identify 102 different metal trades in which women participated. The directories often specifically labelled trades, such as the type of knife being manufactured, whereas the census abstracts after 1851 provided less detail and assigned people to occupational subcategories. Indeed, Barker found that of 479 directory entries in manufacturing (in which the metal trades were included), there were 209 different occupational labels amounting to 2.3 women for every label, whilst in contrast clothing had 9.4 women per label.²⁷⁷ To make sense of this large amount of data related to women in Sheffield's metal trades, it was necessary to group occupational labels into ten of my own categories to establish patterns for the types of metal trades women were more commonly involved in. Appendix two shows the full range of metal trades that have been grouped into ten categories. These ten categories were based around several frameworks provided by both contemporary and secondary sources. The *Illustrated Sheffield List* provided individual pictures of 'machinery and engineer's tools' which helped to define some metal goods but did not cover all the metal trades collected from the census and trade directories.²⁷⁸ The 1774 trade directory provided 'a classical account of the cutlers, edgetool, file, button, fork, lancet, razor, phelm, scissor and ink stand makers, plate and plated manufacturers'²⁷⁹ which

²⁷⁷ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 69.

²⁷⁸ SLL: 672 SST, *Illustrated Sheffield List*, (3rd edn, Sheffield, 1863).

²⁷⁹ SLL: *Sheffield Trade Directory* (1774), p. 1.

indicated some of the dominant metal trades in Sheffield. Unwin notes that cutlery is something that cuts, having a blade or cutting edge, whilst spoons and forks do not qualify and are termed flatware.²⁸⁰ Other publications provide useful categories of metal goods.²⁸¹ Finally, women's work in Sheffield's metal trades has commonly been associated with finishing processes such as 'burnishing', so this was also included as a category.²⁸² Drawing together these sources provided a useful framework to categorise women's work in the metal trades which is used in Graph 1.4 to include: 'Cutlery', 'File trade', 'Finishing roles', 'Flatware', 'Manufacturing tools', 'Agricultural and Medical goods', 'Personal tools and goods', 'Scissor maker' and 'Traders', and 'Other' which included those trades that could not be easily assigned to the other nine categories.

Graph 1.4 shows that women were involved in producing a wide range of metal goods, as both employees and business owners. In most cases, women were categorised by the type of metal goods that they produced or sold, rather than their role in the production of the metal good. For example, businesswomen who were labelled as only trading (rather than producing) metal goods only accounted for 4.7 per cent of trade directory entries. However, 25.4 per cent of women in the census abstract were identified by their role in the finishing processes on a range of metal goods, but only one woman who sold, and possibly made, the paste for polishing metal goods, and another in saw handles, were identified in directories. This percentage of women in the census abstracts undertaking the finishing processes is perhaps lower than expected, given that research has placed considerable emphasis on the role of women in relation to these tasks. Chapter two will show how individual census returns provided more detail on the roles women undertook, suggesting a higher proportion of women in the finishing processes of metal goods that the census abstracts here suggest. It is striking that 43.2 per cent of businesswomen between 1774 and 1865 were involved in the cutlery trade,

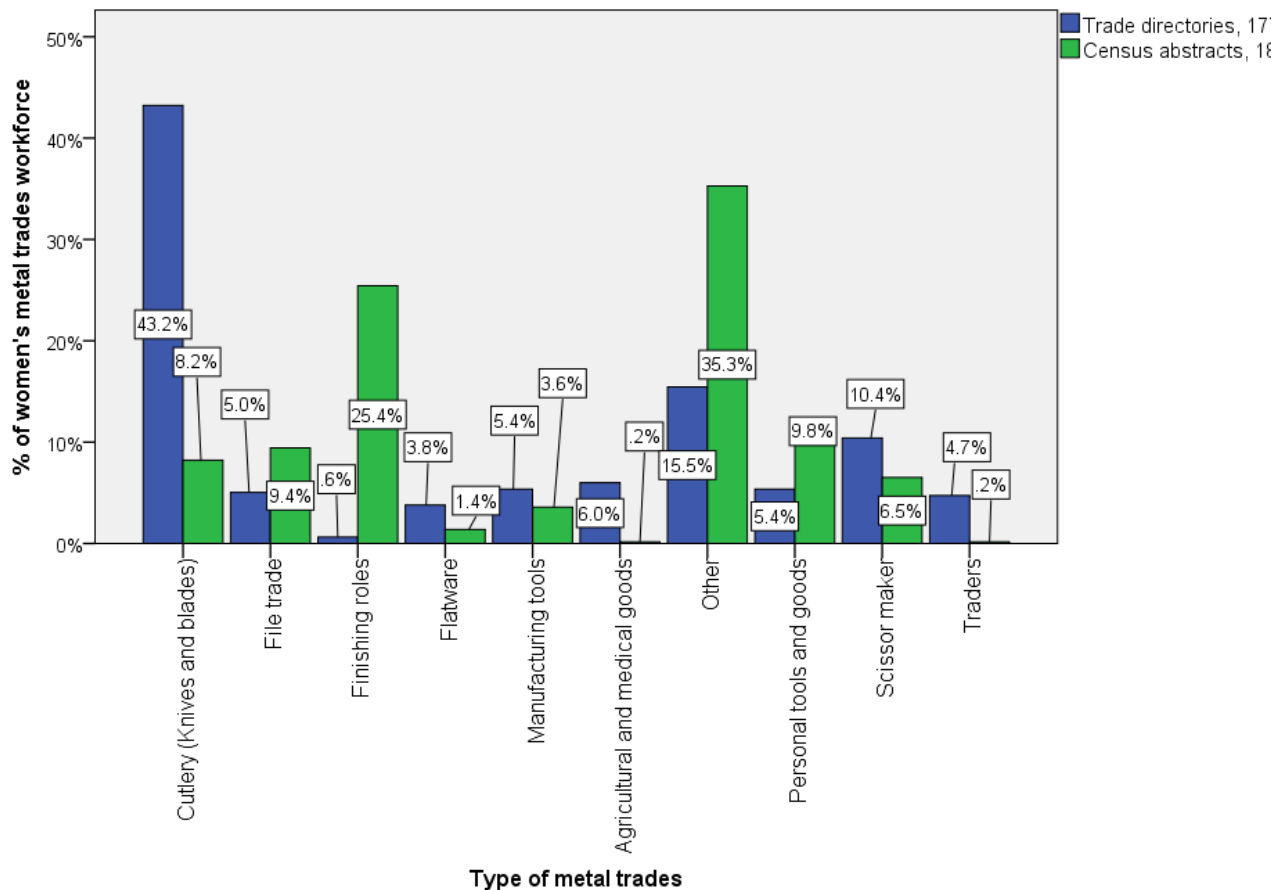
²⁸⁰ J. Unwin, 'A Filecutter's Hammer from the Hawley Collection', in S. Macdonald (ed.), *Materializing Sheffield: Place, Culture and Identity* (2006), <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/matshef/unwin/MSfilecutter.htm> [accessed 4 July 2013].

²⁸¹ D. Bateson, *The Ken Hawley Collection Trust* (Sheffield, 2010), p. 1.

²⁸² S. Barley, 'Hand Tool Manufacture during the Industrial Revolution: Saw-making in Sheffield c.1750-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2008), p. 268; G. Holland, *Vital statistics of Sheffield (1843)* (London, 1843), pp. 185-7.

which was the main product associated with the local area. This may reflect compilers of trade directories focusing on the cutlery trade given the significance of that trade in the locality. However, it is also interesting to note that the census abstracts for the mid nineteenth century showed only 8.2 per cent of women involved in the cutlery trade, which might suggest that women employees had different opportunities to businesswomen in Sheffield's major metal industry. This raises issues related to women's opportunities to enter the cutlery trade, which will be explored later in this chapter.

Graph 1.4: The type of metal trades women participated in based on trade directories and census abstracts



Source: SA and SRL: Trade directories 1774-1865 and Census abstracts 1841-61.

* The number of women undertaking each role in trade directories and census abstracts

Trade directories: Cutlery (knives and blades) (137), File trade (16), Finishing roles (2), Flatware (12), Manufacturing tools (17), Agricultural and medical tools (19), Other (49), Personal tools and goods (17), Scissor maker (33), Traders (15), Total (317).

Census abstracts: Cutlery (knives and blades) (605), File trade (695), Finishing roles (1,873), Flatware (102), Manufacturing tools (264), Agricultural and medical tools (12), Other (2,599), Personal tools and goods (725), Scissor maker (479), Traders (12), Total (7, 366).

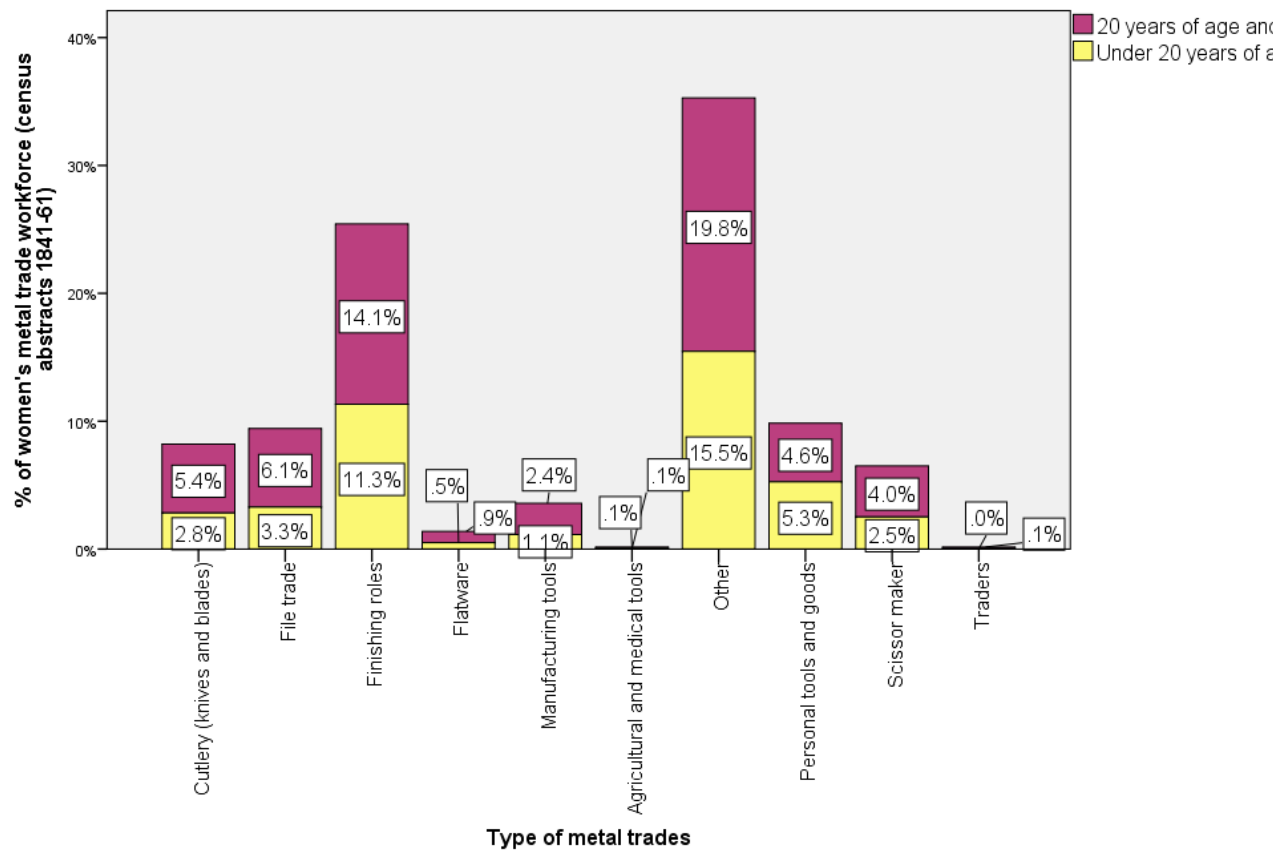
The census abstracts can also be used to ascertain the age profile of women who worked in the metal trades. Table 1.5 below shows that between 1841 and 1861 there was an increase in the number of women involved with Sheffield's metal trades who were 20 years of age and upwards, although the proportion of those under 20 years of age was significant and did increase to 44 per cent in 1851, an increase that was maintained in 1861. Graph 1.5 combines evidence from the three census abstracts to determine whether the age profiles varied between different types of metal trades. The 'other' category contained the largest proportion of entries by women and girls but included a broad range of metal trades that were difficult to attribute to one category, for example 'a dealer in iron and steel'. Graph 1.5 shows that women 20 years of age and upwards were slightly more prevalent than girls under 20 years in all of the metal trades, with the exception of personal goods and tools. Overall, the evidence from census abstracts regarding the age and roles has shown that, although a small proportion of the workforce, women above and below 20 years of age were engaged in a wide range of trades, which most commonly involved undertaking the finishing process of metal goods.

Table 1.5: The age (under and over 20 years of age) of women involved in the metal trades, 1841-61

Year of census	Number: Under 20 years of age	% Under 20 years of age	Number: 20 years of age and over	% 20 years of age and over
1841	316	32 %	642	68%
1851	1,171	44 %	1,485	56%
1861	1,637	44 %	2,115	56%

Source: SRL: 1841 Census Microfiche 48.225; 1851 Census Microfiche 57.648; 1861 Census Microfiche 69.426.

Graph 1.5: A comparative age profile of women in the metal trades: based on census returns 1841-61



Source: SRL: 1841 Census Microfiche 48.225; 1851 Census Microfiche 57.648; 1861 Census Microfiche 69.426.

* The number of women undertaking each role who were 20 years of age and upwards and under 20 years of age:

20 years of age and upwards: Cutlery (knives and blades) (397), File trade (453), Finishing roles (1039), Flatware (65), Manufacturing tools (180), Agricultural and medical tools (7), Other (1,460), Personal tools and goods (338), Scissor maker (294), Traders (9), Total (4,242).

Under 20 years of age: Cutlery (knives and blades) (208), File trade (242), Finishing roles (834), Flatware (37), Manufacturing tools (84), Agricultural and medical tools (5), Other (1,139), Personal tools and goods (387), Scissor maker (185), Traders (3), Total (3,124).

In comparison to the almost equal proportion of women above and below 20 years of age in Sheffield, Clive Behagg's analysis of the male and female workforce in 1851 for Birmingham's metal trades found 11 per cent of the workforce included women over the age of 20, whilst 7 per cent were under the age of 20.²⁸³ A comparable prominence of girls in the workforce was also concluded for the

²⁸³ C. Behagg, *Politics and Production in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1990), p. 48.

cotton industry in 1818 where women accounted for 'little over half the workforce, and children accounted for a substantial proportion', although it must be noted that this evidence was based on a parliamentary report into children's employment and would consequently prioritise young girls over women.²⁸⁴ These findings suggest that Sheffield's metal trades were not unique with respect to employing women and girls. This finding is perhaps surprising given that the workshop or home environment had noticeable advantages for women to undertake childcare duties alongside work.²⁸⁵ Table 1.3 shows that only two girls compared to 22 boys under the age of thirteen were employed in six large firms in Sheffield. Individual census returns explored in chapter two show young girls residing in Burgess Street rarely worked in the metal trades, with the youngest being 14-year-old Martha Haywood who was a spoon buffer.²⁸⁶ The limited number of young girls in the metal trades contrasts to boys who from 1712 could begin apprenticeships at the Cutlers' Company from as young as 12 years old and would complete their training at 21 years of age.²⁸⁷ The difference between the training opportunities available to men and women will be dealt with more fully in the final section of this chapter regarding the restrictions placed upon women employees by the guild that organised the cutlery trade, and in chapter four regarding the opportunities that arose for women through the inheritance of a family business.

Advertisements for women workers in nineteenth-century newspapers show the expectations employers had of women in the metal trades.²⁸⁸ On the basis of a sample of newspaper advertisements from 1841 to 1865, it was possible to find eighty job advertisements for women in the metal trades. Although graph 1.5 shows that the balance between women and girls employed in the metal trades

²⁸⁴ M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 154-6.

²⁸⁵ J. Unwin, 'A Filecutter's Hammer from the Hawley Collection', in S. Macdonald (ed.), *Materializing Sheffield: Place, Culture and Identity* (2006), <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/matshef/unwin/MSfilecutter.htm> [accessed 4 July 2013].

²⁸⁶ *Ancestry Online* [hereafter *AO*], <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> (version 2010): Martha Haywood, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, (1841).

²⁸⁷ D. Hey and J. Unwin, 'The Company, its Freemen, and its Apprentices, 1624-1860', in C. Binfield and D. Hey (eds), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 31.

²⁸⁸ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 89.

was relatively even, the advertisements include nine requests for young women; seventeen specifically asking for girls, and the remaining fifty-four adverts requesting women workers.²⁸⁹ Furthermore, 45 per cent of the newspaper advertisements required women to be experienced in the role.

Prior to 1841, advertisements for jobs in the metal trades only made reference to men. This suggests that women must have found employment through informal means such as family business contacts. After 1841 there were advertisements for women to work in the metal trades, which coincided with some growth in the numbers of women employed in the metal trades as indicated in census abstracts, 1841-61. The metal trades typically involved a range of processes to reach the finished article, and different people in different locations often carried out these tasks.²⁹⁰ David Hey specified a hierarchy in the workplace when he discussed the polishing of the blades and the fitting of handles with reference to men.²⁹¹ This is interesting, as it suggests that finishing roles were well paid, although chapter three will show that men (whom David Hey is referring to) were paid more than women. The finishing roles accounted for a quarter of women's newspaper advertisements and 26.3 per cent of their jobs in the census abstracts. However, finishing roles were rare in newspaper advertisements, accounting for under a quarter of the jobs advertised. The most frequently advertised role was for warehouse work, which consisted of whetting, wrapping and casing up metal goods, and accounted for 59 out of 80 adverts. To undertake the role of warehouse work it was often noted that women had to be 'steady' and with 'first rate hands.'²⁹² Three advertisements for warehouse work in Sheffield stated that the women needed to be able to 'read and write'²⁹³, and a further three advertisements stated they had to be 'clever'.²⁹⁴ This challenges Deborah Valenze's argument that by the nineteenth century women were typically engaged in 'unskilled work'.²⁹⁵ This evidence also resonates with that found in relation to women in the metal

²⁸⁹ *Sheffield Independent*, 23 February 1850.

²⁹⁰ D. Hey, *A History of Sheffield* (3rd edn, Lancaster, 2010), p. 81.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

²⁹² *Sheffield Independent*, 25 May 1850.

²⁹³ *Sheffield Independent*, 20 January 1855.

²⁹⁴ *Sheffield Independent*, 30 May 1840; *Sheffield Independent* 1 February 1845; *Sheffield Independent*, 8 March 1845.

²⁹⁵ D. Valenze, *The First Industrial Woman* (Oxford, 1995), p. 183.

trades in Birmingham and the Black Country, which indicated that ‘women were thought to be better suited to light work requiring quickness and dexterity, attributes which came to be considered naturally feminine’.²⁹⁶ In Birmingham’s metal trades the division of this labour was due to the differing physical demands during the production process.²⁹⁷ The evidence from the advertisements suggests that women worked in a wide range of trades and undertook demanding roles that required skill.

It has been established that although women constituted a small proportion of the workforce in Sheffield’s metal trades, it was possible for women and girls to take part in a range of metal trades, both as businesswomen and as employees. The dominance of the cutlery trade for businesswomen and the finishing roles for women employees suggest that there were different opportunities and restrictions for these two groups of women working in the metal trades, which will now be explored.

Men’s attitude to women in Sheffield’s metal trades

Evidence derived from trade directories and census abstracts indicated that, whilst the metal trades offered increased employment for women as workers, their opportunities to operate as businesswomen were limited as the period progressed. This section will examine the structures and customs which shaped these employment opportunities. It has also been argued that women’s working opportunities decreased during the Industrial Revolution as some work was seen as ‘unfeminine’, associated with ‘immoral habits’ and ‘physically too demanding.’²⁹⁸ However, this chapter began with evidence from commissioner reports that showed that women performed hard work which was sometimes likened to men’s work. Other sources made generalisations about the nature of women’s work in the metal trades. For example, a male cutler said that buffing was so dirty, ‘that

²⁹⁶ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 157.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

²⁹⁸ B. Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth Century England*, (Oxford, 1989), p. 259.

only females of not a very superior class like to come to it'.²⁹⁹ This shows that some roles in the metal trades were associated with certain labouring women. These extracts in commissioner reports also show that public discussion regarding women's presence in Sheffield's metal trades was apparent despite their small number.

Some sense of concern about women's work in the metal trades is evident in the case of the file trade. During the nineteenth century, women's involvement in the file trade was represented in newspapers as particularly problematic. In 1847 there were several articles involving men, who were disputing women working in the file trade.³⁰⁰ A meeting took place between masters and workmen in the file trade, who tried to implement a £3 fine on men who employed female family members or enabled other women to participate in the file trade by grinding and sharpening their chisels.³⁰¹ Manufacturers (masters) were not in agreement, which caused tensions with their workers, who threatened to strike.³⁰² In 1866 an article argued that boys were not at work in Sheffield because of the employment opportunities given to women: 'if less encouragement were given to females working, there would be chance of boys getting into the [file] trade.'³⁰³ There is also evidence that women were discriminated against when manufacturers argued that women were being ordered by male workers to immediately cease work in the file trade, 'not because of their unfitness, not because of their mechanical incapacity, but because of their feminine gender'.³⁰⁴ This evidence also demonstrates that women were skilled enough to perform the roles men undertook.

However, the important role of women in the Industrial Revolution has often been explained by their cheapness to employ.³⁰⁵ Indeed, it was argued: 'the masters who knew certain files, for which the more delicate manipulation of

²⁹⁹ SLL: 331.3 SQ, *J. E. White's Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (London, 1865), p. 39.

³⁰⁰ *Sheffield Independent*, 21 August 1847.

³⁰¹ *Sheffield Independent*, 30 October 1847.

³⁰² *Sheffield Independent*, 28 August 1847.

³⁰³ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 9th January 1866.

³⁰⁴ *Sheffield Independent*, 21 August 1847.

³⁰⁵ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1870* (London, 2000), p. 12.

women is best adapted, could neither be so well nor so cheaply made by men.'³⁰⁶ Furthermore, manufacturers were against file cutters 'expelling women' from the file trade, but argued: 'they would not give plain (i.e. men's) work to women. Instead women should be allowed to do 'small and boy's work.'³⁰⁷ Although the file trade accounted for only 9.3 per cent of the female metal trades workforce according to census data, but as the fifth most common metal trade for women it received considerable public attention from men. It is important to indicate that the 1851 census did not identify the file trade separately, so this percentage was most likely to be higher than can be identified in census abstracts. This possible disparity is supported further by women's opportunities in the file trade, which grew in number from 106 women in 1841, to 589 women in 1861. Attitudes to women's working opportunities were dependent partly on the impact these opportunities were thought to have on men's work.

Evidence concerning the Sheffield Outrages showed male perceptions of women as business owners and employees. Trade disputes in particular arose between masters, and their journeymen and apprentices in Sheffield's metal trades from the 1840s following the formation and developing power of trade unions. The Sheffield Outrages involved intimidation by a small group of trade unionists through 'rattenings' that were acts of petty violence, theft, threatening behaviour and vandalism, used by workers on their employers to regulate the industry. The Sheffield Outrages included attacks on businesswomen as well as men. Trade union directives indicated that men needed to protect their rights against businesswomen, stating that, 'no member of this society shall be allowed to work for any master or masters or mistress or mistresses'.³⁰⁸ A widowed scissor grinder, Sarah Shackley, was intimidated by trade union members for hiring two apprentices, which was disliked, as it took work away from more highly trained journeymen in the trade. It is interesting to note that whilst Sarah was able to employ apprentices, she was not able to undertake an apprenticeship herself, which suggests that it was another employee of Sarah's who was training these

³⁰⁶ *Sheffield Independent*, 24 January 1852.

³⁰⁷ *Sheffield Independent*, 9 September 1847.

³⁰⁸ SA: MD5846, File Forgers Union (Sheffield) Articles of agreement, 1831; Minutes, etc., (1866-1945).

two boys. Sarah was threatened that if she did not respond to requests to immediately sack the two workers, her grindstone and equipment in her workshop would be destroyed.³⁰⁹ The two workers refused to leave Sarah's business without a week's notice and, 'she entreated him [the trade union leader], as she was a widow with four children, not to carry out this threat to destroy her tools'.³¹⁰ However, the next morning Sarah's tools were stolen and the grindstone was damaged. During the dispute, perceptions of businesswomen were predicated by their role as employers rather than their gender. This meant that businesswomen had no protection against a hostile workforce. At the same time, in a speech made by the union leader William Broadhead, the presence of businesswomen was not acknowledged when he stated, 'the working man ought to be defended against such tyrannical masters [...] [it is the] trade union which binds them all together as brothers and they can help one another.'³¹¹

Women workers were neither protected nor represented by a trade union. Threatening letters were sent to wives of male metalworkers, reflecting the significance of the family in Sheffield's metal trades.³¹² A Royal Commission of inquiry into trade unions was set up in 1867 with special powers to report on the Sheffield Outrages. There is no evidence in the report to suggest that women had an active role in the attacks. Women were never presented as the accused but rather as witnesses to their husbands' involvement with the trade unions, which they claimed was outside their knowledge.³¹³ Indeed, a newspaper report at the same time as the Commission inquiry depicted an incident in which women were the accidental victims of male aggression. This related to an incident that took place in 1861 on Acorn Street and was deemed particularly negative by the press, as innocent victims were killed in a gunpowder attack by trade unionists. The press reported that, 'an obnoxious man was aimed at. A young wife and mother

³⁰⁹ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 2 January 1847.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ SA: MD1451, 'The Good of Trade Unions: Manuscript Essay Written by J. Broadhead for Henry Sayer', (October 1860).

³¹² SLL: 331.88 S, F. H. Hill, 'An Account of Some Trade Combinations in Sheffield Prepared for the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, at the Request of the Committee on Trades' Societies, (1860).

³¹³ 'Document: Sheffield Outrages Inquiry (1867)', in A. Adams (ed.), *The Sheffield Outrages: Report Presented to the Trade Union Commissioners in 1867* (Bath, 1971), p. 158.

and an aged woman are the victims'.³¹⁴ The man accused of undertaking the attack was demonised in the local press, which questioned: 'how he could show his head in Sheffield when everybody would point at him as the scoundrel that killed the woman!'³¹⁵ This report clearly set out to attack trade unions by focusing on the woman who was a victim.

The symbolic use of a woman's name during the Sheffield Outrages demonstrated disdain towards them, reflecting a common practice in industrial disputes during the period. An act of intimidation on behalf of trade unions to employers involved a threatening letter signed by 'Mary Ann'. The main instigator behind the Sheffield Outrages from 1848 was the saw grinder and union leader, William Broadhead who was married to Mary Jane Wildgoose, although there is no evidence that Mary was involved in these disputes. Political cartoons of the period also depicted 'Mary Ann' and although they referred to the character as a 'her' in all cases, one cartoon presented her as a man, although in a much smaller and daintier depiction than the male workers surrounding him.³¹⁶ The absence of women in a political and social movement is not surprising. It has been argued that, 'the language of urban politics was such that women's presence or influence could not be acknowledged.'³¹⁷ Indeed, political reform organisations were primarily 'organised by and for men who contemporary society did not consider to be part of the political process: small tradesmen, artisans, journeymen, and labourers'.³¹⁸ Women's presence in urban politics associated with Sheffield's metal trades would have been controlled by men, in which women had no agency at all.

The Cutlers' Company shaped the limitations and opportunities for women in Sheffield's metal trades to a large extent. This organisation was an authoritative trading body for the metal trades in Sheffield. The Cutlers' Company organised

³¹⁴ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 2 July 1867.

³¹⁵ SLL: 042 S, 'The Trades Sentinel, and Workmen's Guidepost: An Address to the Trades of Sheffield, by a Committee Appointed by a Meeting of Trades' Delegates: Local Pamphlets', *rev Brewin Grant B.A. 1867 Trade Outrage Commission and its Lessons*, vol. 25. (1847).

³¹⁶ SA: SY299, Sheffield Political Cartoons (1868).

³¹⁷ R. Sweet, 'Women and Civic Life in Eighteenth-Century England', in R. Sweet and P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 22.

³¹⁸ J. MacDonald, "'The Freedom of Election' The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire and the Growth of Radicalism in Sheffield 1784-1792', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2005), p. 1.

apprenticeships, admitted freemen, registered cutlers' marks and regulated the quality of cutlery produced, and also held festivals and political meetings in the Cutlers' Hall. The Act of Incorporation in 1624 gave the Company jurisdiction 'to control the number of apprentices, record the identifying marks of the trained cutlers, scissorsmiths, sickle- and shearsmiths.'³¹⁹ Sheffield was distinctive because the Cutlers' Company remained important throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as 'one of the most influential groups in the town'.³²⁰ Many of the metal trades businesses owned by women were under the control of the Cutlers' Company (appendix two). Furthermore, more freemen were allowed after 1793, resulting in expanding opportunities for men and potentially providing more women with a business to inherit. However, the Company's powers were reduced in 1814 by the Fourth Act of Parliament, which made the trades less restricted: 'the cutlery trades had been made open to virtually anyone who wished to enter.'³²¹ The Company still promoted local industry and widened its membership, and in 1859 they included steel, saw, and edge-tool trades to incorporate the new heavy metal trades of steel and armaments. However, although there were changes in the powers of the Cutlers' Company, the opportunities for women remained limited.

The Cutlers' Company controlled the admittance of freemen and apprenticeships to the trade. Whilst the power of guilds was in decline on a national scale by the late eighteenth century, this was not the case in Sheffield's metal trades. During the early modern period, guilds were considered as 'archetypal patriarchal institutions', whereas by the eighteenth century their authoritative power diminished and they were transformed into 'social clubs or property-owning trusts'.³²² Sheffield was famous for its production of cutlery, scissors and files, all of which were under the control of the Cutlers' Company. It

³¹⁹ J. Unwin, 'The Hallamshire Cutlery Trades in the Late 17th Century: A Study of the Hearth Tax Returns and the Records of the Cutlers' Company', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2003), p. 2.

³²⁰ J. Roach, 'The Company and the Community: Charity, Education and Technology, 1624-1914', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds.), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 241.

³²¹ D. Hey and J. Unwin, 'The Company, its Freemen, and its Apprentices, 1626-1860', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds.), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 38.

³²² C. Crowston, 'Women, Gender and Guilds in Early Modern Europe', Paper given at Utrecht University, (5-7th October, 2006), p. 19, <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/papers/guilds-crowston.pdf> [accessed 31 July 2016]; P. Corfield, *The Impact of the English Towns 1700-1800*, (Oxford, 1982), p. 86.

has been said that, 'before Sheffield's incorporation in 1843, the town was effectively governed by the Cutlers' Company, and it was the Cutlers' Hall, not the town hall, which continued to be the focal point of Sheffield's economic and civic spirit into the present century'.³²³ Hannah Barker suggests that Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds 'may have been different from other English towns, particularly those where borough customs did not explicitly allow married women to trade independently of their husbands'.³²⁴ She also indicated that businesswomen living in fast growing and less regulated urban centres were able to exploit commercial opportunities with greater ease and for a longer period than in less dynamic settings.³²⁵ Unwin suggested that businesswomen in Sheffield's cutlery trade undertook a managerial role in a context where women workers could not access training, and argued that,

There were women owners of smithies and since no girls were apprenticed to cutlers, one must assume that they were either employing men to work at them or were renting them out. Several of the women were possibly the widows of cutlery craftsmen and therefore may have continued to manage their late husbands' journeymen.³²⁶

I will show that both businesswomen and women as employees were restricted in the metal trades by the Cutlers' company by exclusion from training. The restrictions on apprenticeships for women in the Cutlers' Company would not only prohibit them being engaged in skilled roles as employees, but also inhibit their progress to journeyman status when they could have their own trademark and thereby their own metal trades business.

The role of women in the Cutlers' Company was confined to specific areas, typically associated with the Cutlers' Feast. This was an annual social event to 'provide opportunities for the Master Cutler and the Company to acquire and exert

³²³ R. Grayson and A. White, "More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 339; R. Childs, 'Sheffield Before 1843', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993, Vol. 1, Politics* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 16.

³²⁴ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 70.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

³²⁶ J. Unwin, *The Hallamshire Cutlery Trades in the Late 17th century: A Study of the Hearth Tax Returns and the Records of the Cutlers' Company*, Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2003), p. 315.

influence'.³²⁷ Guilds were typically male-dominated institutions; however, 'there is no shortage of evidence to show that women belonged to guilds and craft companies and could wield influence within these organizations'.³²⁸ Whilst it has been argued that these events had important social and political outcomes, the dearth of archival evidence for businesswomen suggests that their working opportunities were still limited.³²⁹ In fact, women's involvement in a metal trades business only led to formal association with the Cutlers' Company after the death of their spouse. Chapter four will show, through an investigation of wills and inventories, that husbands left their metal trades businesses to their wives, which enabled women to enter the metal trades as business owners. However, women had no agency in being able to establish a metal trades business on their own, and the apprenticeship system can help to explain why this was the case.

Such companies controlled trades through apprenticeships. Apprenticeships for girls were often in feminine forms of work such as housewifery, millinery and other textile trades.³³⁰ Indeed, the archives of the Cutlers' Company contain records of some 28,500 apprenticeships and freedoms from 1624-1814, of which 47 per cent of apprentices took out their freedoms upon completing their terms and payments - none of these referred to a woman.³³¹ Whereas, all formal apprenticeships in cutlery were for males: 'no girls were apprenticed to cutler, etc.'³³² In contrast:

³²⁷ J. MacDonald 'The Cutler's Feast', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds.), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 225.

³²⁸ R. Sweet, 'Women and Civic Life in Eighteenth-Century England', in R. Sweet and P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 22.

³²⁹ R. Sweet, 'Women and Civic Life in Eighteenth-Century England', in R. Sweet and P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 33; E. Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics and the Political World of late Eighteenth-century England', *The Historical Journal* 43.3 (2000), p. 685.

³³⁰ J. Collins, 'Jane Holt, Milliner, and other Women in Business: Apprentices, Freewomen and Mistresses in the Clothworkers' Company, 1606-1800', *Textile History* 44.1 (2013), pp. 72-94; A. Erickson, 'Working London, Eleanor Mosley and Other Milliners in the City of London Companies, 1700-1750', *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011), pp. 147-72.

³³¹ D. Hey and J. Unwin, 'The Company, its Freemen, and its Apprentices, 1626-1860', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds.), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 33-4.

³³² J. Unwin, *The Hallamshire Cutlery Trades in the late 17th century: A Study of the Hearth Tax Returns and the Records of the Cutlers' Company*, Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2003), p. 315.

A boy could become a master without having completed a formal apprenticeship, if he had been trained by a father who was a freeman of the Cutlers' Company. Those boys who were not the sons of freemen had to serve an apprenticeship for at least seven years, until they were 21 or more years.³³³

Apprenticeships were organised either by parish councils or town guilds. Whilst there were no opportunities for women to gain formal training in the Cutlers' Company, there is evidence of established manufacturers in Sheffield's metal trades having apprenticeships for girls, but in feminine forms of work outside the metal trades. For example, there are two apprenticeship records by John Reed, who owned Sheffield Smelting Company, for two girls to become housekeepers.³³⁴ In 1740 Mary Tomlin was apprenticed as a mantua maker to Thomas Heinfield who was a files smith.³³⁵ It is not known why Thomas apprenticed Mary 'in the most genteel of feminine trades'; although due to the constraints of coverture it was most likely under the guise of his wife or daughter.³³⁶ However, statistics published in 1843 claimed that girls could enter into a three-year apprenticeship for burnishing within the silver and plated manufacturing trades.³³⁷ Furthermore, two female burnishers told the commissioner in a report that they were apprentices.³³⁸ Typically, female apprentices were unusual (representing no more than 1 per cent of the total).³³⁹ Furthermore, 'female apprenticeship had its own norms, including shorter terms'.³⁴⁰ Indeed, it has been argued that girls were usually apprenticed in domestic service, clothing trades and agriculture at the exclusion from other trades, to socially construct women's work as unskilled, even if great care and concentration went into their roles.³⁴¹ Women's

³³³ D. Hey and J. Unwin, 'The Company, its Freemen, and its Apprentices, 1626-1860', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds.), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 31.

³³⁴ SA: SSC 670-2, Indenture of Apprenticeship (1 January 1772).

³³⁵ SA: MD 5863/3, Apprentice Indenture, Mary Tomlin (1740).

³³⁶ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 177.

³³⁷ G. Holland, *Vital Statistics of Sheffield (1843)* (London, 1843), p. 155.

³³⁸ SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. C. Symons, *Children's Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners. Trades and Manufacturers*, (1843), p. 7; SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. E. White's *Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission, Fourth Report* (London, 1865), p. 49.

³³⁹ A. Erickson, 'Working London, Eleanor Mosley and other Milliners in the City of London Companies, 1700-1750', *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011), p. 150.

³⁴⁰ L. Gowing, "'The Manner of Submission' Gender and Demeanour in Seventeenth-Century London', *Cultural and Social History* 10.1 (2013), p. 29.

³⁴¹ F. Terry-Chandler, 'Women, Work and the Family: Birmingham 1800-1870', Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1995), p. 108.

exclusion from formal apprenticeship in Sheffield's metal trades perpetuated the attitude that this was men's work and ensured that women's work was likely to be viewed as unskilled.

One important exception to this was Margaret Turley, who had an informal three-year contract for Japanned goods in 1781.³⁴² The process of japanning involved the application of a dark varnish to tin or metal ware to make it black and shiny, and was regarded as a finishing process in the metal trades. The object would then have to be stove-dried until a thick and glossy coat had been built up. The agreement was between Joseph Turley, and Margaret his wife, with William Dunn and Joseph Ridge, showing that training in the metal trades was not just open to girls, but also to married women. The relationship between the two employers and Joseph and Margaret Turley is not known, but significantly the agreement was made on behalf of a married couple. This is in contrast to most apprenticeships that were considered an agreement between parents and the employers, 'who might also end up standing as substitutes for parental authority' for the apprenticed child.³⁴³ The agreement stated that the contract would be for three years, 'for the space of twelve hours each day' and Margaret would 'to the best and utmost of her power skill and knowledge employ herself in stoving of japanned goods'.³⁴⁴

In return for Margaret's labour the employers agreed to pay her ten shillings per week for the three-year period, a high wage for women to be further explored in chapter three.³⁴⁵ There is evidence from Birmingham of two-year apprenticeships for young girls in hand burnishing, which was considered an 'excellent' and 'highly skilled' form of work.³⁴⁶ The finishing roles, including burnishing, also accounted for 26.3 per cent of women's metal trades work in

³⁴² SA: MD1727, Margaret Turley Three-year Contract Japanned Goods, (25 October 1781).

³⁴³ A. Erickson, 'Working London, Eleanor Mosley and Other Milliners in the City of London Companies, 1700-1750', *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011), p. 150; L. Gowing, "'The Manner of Submission" Gender and Demeanour in Seventeenth-century London', *Cultural and Social History* 10.1 (2013) p. 29.

³⁴⁴ SA: MD1727, Margaret Turley Three-year Contract Japanned Goods, (25 October 1781).

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 139.

Sheffield, as derived from the census abstracts 1841-61. Thus, the roles women performed in Sheffield's metal trades involved a considerable level of skill, which could include informal contracts, although these were for a shorter duration than those of their male counterparts. However, evidence of this was limited and outside the realms of the Cutlers' Company. Whilst Erickson has shown that the London companies offered girls of prosperous middling and genteel origins a structured career path into more feminine trades, training for women in Sheffield's metal trades was severely restricted, if not non-existent.³⁴⁷

Of course, training may have been undertaken on an informal basis rather than via a formal apprenticeship. Snell has argued that using apprenticeship records alone hides most women's work.³⁴⁸ The significance of the family for women's training opportunities in Sheffield's metal trades is evident in the advertisement for a young girl in which her experience was requested as dependent on being 'brought up in the trade.'³⁴⁹ The commissioner report also showed that girls often worked alongside their mother, demonstrating the importance of family for learning a trade. Furthermore, evidence to be discussed in chapter two suggests that girls could receive training from their father. Thus, women could acquire skill in the metal trades through more informal training methods, in which the family's role was often paramount to a woman's entry into the metal trades workforce. Furthermore, the 1851 census provided the opportunity for male or female employers to declare the gender split of their workforce. Although by the admission of the enumerator this was an 'imperfect' reflection of the full range of women and children in employment, and the resulting evidence suggested that women worked alongside men, but never in isolation. Thus, women were working and owning businesses in an environment that was dominated by men in several different ways, both in terms of numbers and in respect of formally recognised skill.

³⁴⁷ A. Erickson, 'Working London, Eleanor Mosley and other Milliners in the City of London Companies, 1700-1750', *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011), pp. 147-72.

³⁴⁸ K. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 277.

³⁴⁹ *Sheffield Independent*, 17 March 1860.

Conclusion

Leigh Shaw-Taylor observed that research into women's work is limited by a lack of systematic data.³⁵⁰ The census abstracts provided the most comprehensive overview of women's engagement in the metal trades, but were limited to the mid nineteenth century. References to women in newspaper advertisements and commissioner reports relate only to the period after 1840. The only sources that provided evidence of the period from the eighteenth century were trade directories from 1774, which were restricted to businesswomen and apprenticeship records provided some insight into women employees. However, the sources do provide valuable information about continuity and change for businesswomen, the range and extent of employment opportunities for all women, together with some of the issues faced by women working in a male-dominated industry.

The findings from this chapter do not challenge existing views with respect to the small proportion of women in Sheffield's metal trades. However, the findings offer several distinctive perspectives on women in this industry. First, the chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the numbers and age profile of women in the metal trades and the types of metal goods they helped to produce and/or sell. Second, the chapter has highlighted why women metal workers in Sheffield operated as a minority. Third, the findings show differences between businesswomen and women as employees. The implications of each of these points overlap and will now be considered in greater detail.

Despite the fact that women were a minority group in the overall metal trade workforce in Sheffield, their contribution could vary over time. However, it is important to distinguish between businesswomen and women employees. The number of women in business was relatively small, typically varying between 15-20 entries per directory. This accounted for 4.8 per cent of all metal trades entries in the commercial section of the 1774 directory, but only 0.9 per cent in 1861. A comparison between women's entries for the metal trades and non-metal trades

³⁵⁰ L. Shaw-Taylor, 'Diverse Experiences: The Geography of Adult Female Employment in England and the 1851 census', in N. Goose (ed.), *Women's Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), p. 30.

showed that the metal trades dominated from 1774 until 1817, but declined relative to other trades after this. This may reflect the way in which the directories were compiled, but the overall impression is that the proportion of women as business owners declined in the metal trades, whilst women's business opportunities elsewhere increased. In contrast, the census abstracts show that the number of women in the metal trades had a four-fold increase between 1841 and 1861, and as proportion of this workforce they accounted for 5.5 per cent in 1841, 10.1 per cent in 1851, and 11.4 per cent in 1861. Even though women were a minority, their proportion of the metal trades workforce was increasing slightly by the end of the period. The increasing visibility of advertisements for women in newspaper from 1840 could be one explanation as to why women were more likely to enter the metal trades in this period.

Women in Sheffield were involved in producing a wide range of metal goods. The only identifiable roles in the metal trades that women performed were in the finishing processes and in the trading of particular metal goods. However, it can be established that women in some form were involved in the production of a wide range of metal goods which might include, for example, cutlery, files, personal tools and goods, and scissors. There were also some differences between the metal trades that businesswomen owned compared to those in which women were employed. Both groups were associated with a range of types of metal trades, but whereas 43.2 per cent of businesswomen were engaged in the cutlery industry, only 8.2 per cent of women workers were in this trade. This may reflect the sources on which the evidence is based as well as the way in which the cutlery trade was governed. Furthermore, the largest category of women workers in the metal trades related to the finishing processes of metal goods, and accounted for 26.4 per cent. This shows that, although most trades included both businesswomen and women as employees, in the two most significant categories, the pattern of their engagement did not correlate. One explanation is the types of restrictions businesswomen and women as employees faced, although it is important to note that there were some opportunities for women employees to receive training. Chapter two will consider the informal ways women employees

entered the metal trades, whilst chapter four will consider the ways in which businesswomen inherited a trade.

The age profile of women identified in the census abstracts from 1841-61 indicates that, predominantly, Sheffield's metal trades employed women over the age of 20, although a significant and growing proportion of women and girls under the age of 20 years were entering the metal trades. Very young girls were infrequently engaged in the metal trades in contrast to young boys. Furthermore, the findings based on 80 advertisements indicated that more than 54 required women, as opposed to nine for young women and 17 for girls. Newspaper advertisements would also request a level of experience or for the woman to have been brought up in the trade. The implication from this evidence is that some women in Sheffield's metal trades were required to have a degree of skill based on maturity and prior engagement with the trade.

A lack of reference to women in the apprenticeship and freemen records from the Cutlers' Company shows that the organisation formally excluded women and restricted their role to the organisation of social functions. In 1801, the Cutlers' Company tried to restrict widows inheriting a trademark. Although the application of this restriction was unsuccessful, it does show that women were only able to engage as business owners once men had established the business. Furthermore, in 1851 the proportion of women working in Birmingham's metal trades was four times greater than that of women in Sheffield. It may be significant that in Birmingham, factories developed sooner than in Sheffield and these large-scale workplaces were more conducive to women's employment. Apprenticeship regulations in Birmingham's metal trades were also more flexible than elsewhere, 'in length of time, types of training, and opportunities available'.³⁵¹ No guilds existed in Birmingham's metal trades.³⁵² The situation in Sheffield appears somewhat different, where the Cutlers' Company played a key role. Throughout

³⁵¹ M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain* (2nd edn, London, 1994), p. 276.

³⁵² R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London, 1998), p. 164.

the nineteenth century the Cutlers' Company remained significant in Sheffield.³⁵³ Although the Cutlers' Company did not govern all forms of the metal trades, cutlery was the dominant product of the industry and the metal trades under their jurisdiction were increasing throughout the period. Access to apprenticeships available outside the Cutlers' Company was also limited for women, providing only a three-year term, compared with seven to ten years for those offered to men. Examples of women employees who managed to obtain contracts were limited, and could be said to be the exception rather than the norm. In addition to these formal restrictions, the newspaper evidence of male file-workers attempting to restrict the inclusion of women, and the Sheffield Outrages attacks coupled with a lack of protecting women's working rights, show the informal ways in which women were restricted in this working context.

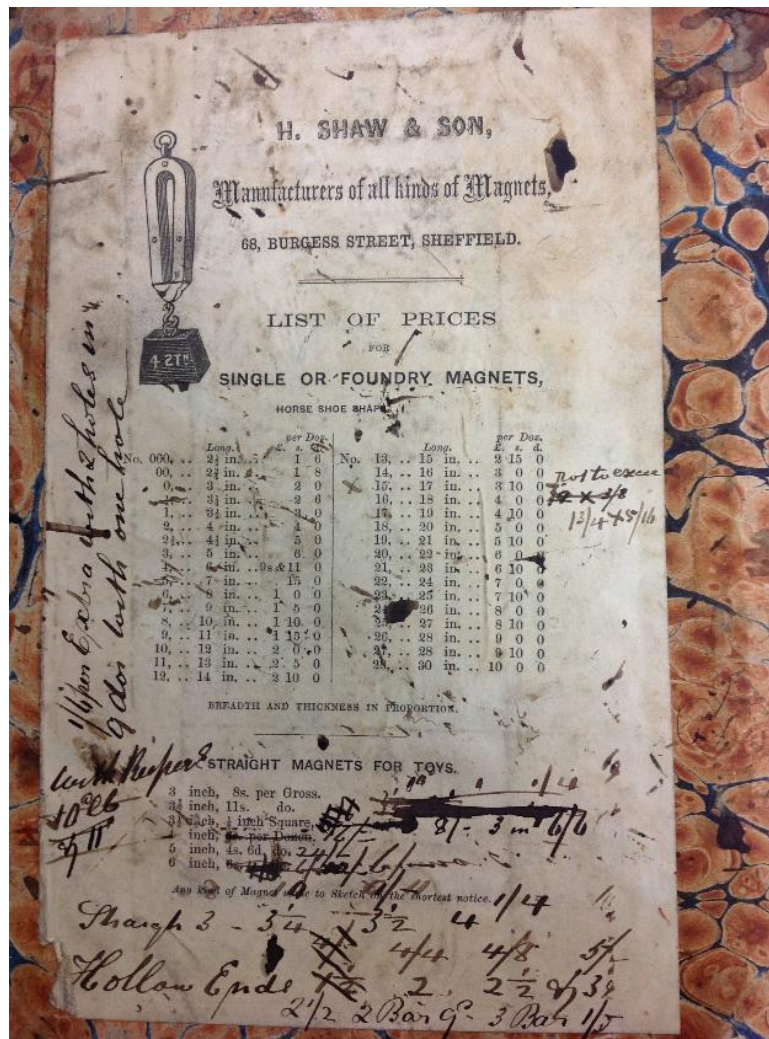
Women as both business owners and employees in Sheffield's metal trades were operating in a context that was not made easy for them. Despite forming only a small proportion of the workforce, women of different ages undertook a broad range of roles that could require expertise and skill. As a minority they faced constraints and opposition from male workers and authoritative organisations in the town. These conditions reflect women's status as a minority in the metal trades. In order to understand the broader social context of this minority status, the next chapter will build upon the overview provided here, and undertake a case study of a street in Sheffield in which businesswomen were concentrated. This micro perspective will examine the households of women as business owners and as employees in the metal trades, and the space in which they were working and living.

³⁵³ R. Grayson and A. White, "More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 339; R. Childs, 'Sheffield Before 1843', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993, Vol 1. Politics*, (Sheffield, 1993), p. 16.

Chapter two

The households and space of women in the metal trades: Burgess Street and beyond

Figure 2.1: Hannah Shaw Magnet company sales ledger, 1856



Source: SA: Sales Ledger, HSM/2, (1856-1966).

Hannah Shaw & Son was a magnet company operating in Sheffield under the Shaw family until 1954. The price listing (Figure 2.1.) taken from the company sales ledger shows the range of magnets made by the company. Hannah's family business began in the early nineteenth century and its origins are clouded with myth. The story begins with a rumoured meeting at the *Black Swan Inn* on Burgess Street. John Shaw, later to be known as 'Magnet Jack', was drinking with a stranger

from Birmingham when the conversation turned to magnetism. The gentleman claimed he had ‘the secret of this mysterious force which had puzzled the world for centuries’.³⁵⁴ By the time the Birmingham stranger had sunk his fill of ale, the Sheffielder had learned the secrets of magnetism, and so the business of magnet making began for the Shaw family. Parish records show that John Shaw and Hannah Marshall were married on 7 July 1816 at St Paul’s Cathedral, the local parish of Burgess Street in Sheffield.³⁵⁵ John Shaw died in 1837 and Hannah quickly established herself as the owner of his company.³⁵⁶ Hannah was involved in a specialised trade, being only one of two magnet-making companies in Sheffield.

Hannah moved from 34 to 68 Burgess Street in 1839, and the census for 1841 stated that she was a magnet maker and head of the household, and she lived with her children and grandchildren.³⁵⁷ After Hannah’s death, the 1851 census showed that her son, Thomas, took over the business.³⁵⁸ The census enumerator appears to have skipped 68 Burgess in 1861 but a 31-year-old man living at 66 Burgess Street was listed as magnet maker, suggesting he worked next door and that the business had continued.³⁵⁹ Furthermore, Hannah’s daughter, Caroline Shaw, was registered in addition to her brother in the 1865 trade directory as a magnet maker at 68 Burgess Street.³⁶⁰ The family was integral to the running and maintenance of the magnet company at 68 Burgess Street.

The processes involved when producing magnets included heating coloured wax in a large copper saucepan. The wax was then rolled between two plates.³⁶¹ This was followed by heating steel bars which were poured into shaped jigs, hammered into shape and then cooled to solidify. The process was carried out in

³⁵⁴ *The Star*, 11 March 1955; L. Pepper, *Magnets and Memories: A Celebration of the 200 years of H. Shaw (Magnets 1783-1982)* (Sheffield, 1983), p. 15.

³⁵⁵ SA: Parish Records MS, PR 138/114, 7 July 1816.

³⁵⁶ John Shaw was one of two magnet manufacturers in Sheffield in the *Pigot Trade Directory* (1837); *White’s Directory of Sheffield* (1837) - presumably published later in the year - ‘Shaw Hanh. & Thos’ was listed at 34 Burgess Street.

³⁵⁷ AO: Hannah Shaw, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841.

³⁵⁸ AO: Thomas Shaw, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851.

³⁵⁹ AO: Thomas Windley, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

³⁶⁰ SLL: *Post Office Directory of Sheffield* (1865).

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

the workshop in the back yard of 68 Burgess Street in which ‘the Blacksmith Hearth, heavily built of brick, would be the centre of operations, and adjacent would be the bellows, barrel shaped with leather sides and a large handle to be pushed back and forth to generate the high temperatures needed to manipulate the steel bars’.³⁶² The magnetising operation was shrouded in secrecy, and ‘the magnetizing room was at the top of the building, where strangers were expressly forbidden to go’.³⁶³ The spaces in which Hannah both operated her business and lived were located in close proximity to each other, but remained separate spaces. In 1839 Hannah was paying separate rents for a house at a cost of 7s 1½d per year, and for a workshop costing 3s.³⁶⁴ The exact role Hannah undertook in the magnet business cannot be established, but she managed a specialised production process that involved the use of both her home and a workshop.

In some respects, Hannah was not typical of businesswomen associated with the metal trades, as magnet making was highly specialised. However, several themes emerge from studying Hannah and the space and household at 68 Burgess Street. First, family and gender were significant, as Hannah took over the business when her husband died, she eventually went into partnership with her son, and her daughter Caroline worked in the business. Second, work took place in clearly defined areas in the living space and outside in the yard. Third, Hannah's story reflects the experience of a businesswoman in a specialised metal trade, rather than a woman employed in the more general metal trades.

Karen Harvey found that, during the eighteenth century, ‘home’ was increasingly distinguishable from related terms such as ‘house’, ‘household’ and ‘family’.³⁶⁵ She argued that rather than a collection of social relationships, an economic unit, a physical construction, or a co-resident unit:

³⁶² L. Pepper, *Magnets and Memories: A celebration of the 200 years of H. Shaw (Magnets 1783-1982)* (Sheffield, 1983), p. 10.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁶⁴ SA: Rate Book, SU 1, RB 281 (1851), pp. 159-65.

³⁶⁵ K. Harvey, ‘Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *Gender & History* 21.3 (2009), p. 525.

'Home' encompassed all these feeling and more, connoting emotional states and serving imaginative or representational functions. In any analysis, we must keep in mind both the instability of these meanings and the possibility that users of terms could activate different meanings at different times; the term referred to many different levels of experience, but over time became a noun of state.³⁶⁶

Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff argued that during the nineteenth century there was a growing separation of work from the home, associated with the emergence of the middle-class home as a private domain.³⁶⁷ John Tosh associated domesticity in the nineteenth century with 'privacy and comfort, separation from the workplace, and the merging of domestic space and family members into a single commanding concept'.³⁶⁸ The situation with respect to the living and working space in Sheffield's metal trades was somewhat different, in that the workshop was regarded as 'synonymous with the home', working space and the street are described as 'porous'³⁶⁹ and Sheffield's cutlery industry has been described as 'homely'.³⁷⁰ Maxine Berg stated that the metal trades in Birmingham 'employed a mixed family labour force or high proportions of women and children in home and large-scale workshops'.³⁷¹ Hannah Barker stated that the distinctive modes of production in Sheffield, such as the small workshop organisation, allowed a higher number of women in business to be involved compared to other types of employment.³⁷² This chapter will establish the impact of this distinctive working context dominated by men, and in which the family and home were integral, on women's role in the household and the space in which they worked and lived.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 526.

³⁶⁷ L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (2nd edn, Oxon, 2002), pp. 357-369.

³⁶⁸ J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (London, 2007), p. 4.

³⁶⁹ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

³⁷⁰ R. Leader, *History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire, in the County of York* (Sheffield, 1905), p. 287.

³⁷¹ M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain* (2nd edn, London, 1994), p. 141.

³⁷² H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 66.

The significance of family and work connects with debates related to women's marital status. Nicola Phillips showed that married women could act independently when she stated that, 'city wives could therefore trade alone and rent out the premises necessary to do so, but in both cases had to make it clear to other people that they were acting as if single'.³⁷³ There is evidence that a large proportion of businesswomen who were lodging house keepers, were also heads of households which, it has been argued, was at odds with the central tenets of the ideology of separate spheres, which emphasised female dependency within the context of a patriarchal nuclear family.³⁷⁴ Chapter one has shown that in Sheffield, businesswomen could only acquire a metal trades business through inheritance. A study of individual businesswomen in the metal trades provides the opportunity to consider the importance of family in the running of a woman's business.

Marital status had a significant impact on women's employment opportunities, and there is a debate about whether this helped or hindered their employment opportunities. Amy Erickson's research used court records and employer's apprenticeship records to reflect women on a broad socio-economic scale, and concluded that 'what we can be confident about is that the number of married women in London who were *not* involved in the labour market in some way throughout the long eighteenth century was extremely small'.³⁷⁵ Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf recently argued that women's marital status affected the type of contract and wage they were likely to have, suggesting that married women were only able to perform casual employment and became dependent on the male breadwinner.³⁷⁶ Emma Griffin argued that marriage, and particularly motherhood, restricted women's employment opportunities.³⁷⁷ She also cast doubt on whether working-class wives worked alongside their husbands in skilled trades, such as

³⁷³ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 54.

³⁷⁴ A. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c1800-1870* (London, 2009), p. 113.

³⁷⁵ A. Erikson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change*, 23. 2 (2008) p. 292.

³⁷⁶ J. Humphries and J. Weisdorf, 'The Wages of women in England, 1260-1850', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.2 (2015), p. 429.

³⁷⁷ E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven and London, 2013), pp. 96-7.

work in the metal trades.³⁷⁸ It has been argued that the gender division in labour and work was dependent on power relations within the family and in the workplace.³⁷⁹ This is a significant point, given that Geoffrey Tweedale has emphasised the importance of family in Sheffield's metal trades businesses.³⁸⁰ The following analysis will involve discussion on the implications of family for both businesswomen and women employees in relation to their age, marital status, role, training, and the difficulties and opportunities which they faced.

When considering the number of metalworkers living in a particular house it is important to include 'persons living under the same roof and under the authority of a householder', such as a servant, apprentices, wards or long-term guests.³⁸¹ It has been suggested that the limited reference to women in the Sheffield metal trades was possibly because women's work was hidden from view as opposed to scarce, as outworkers were normally based in the home or rented workshop space, 'potentially placing it [outwork] beyond the reach of both census enumerators and factory inspectors'.³⁸² However, through an examination of individual census returns and commissioner reports, alongside inventories, maps and newspapers, I will show that the activities of women employees in Sheffield's metal trades were not always hidden from view in the workshop space, and also that businesswomen were not restricted to work in the space in which they lived. Consequently, women's lives and the importance of their families in Sheffield's metal trades are evident in historical record. This evidence builds upon the broader conclusions made in chapter one on women's participation in the metal trades.

Samuel Griffiths argued that the organisation of Sheffield's metal trades, whereby the completion of a single item required its passage through several distinct workshops, had a considerable impact upon the spatial organisation of the

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³⁷⁹ A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (London, 1995), p. 14.

³⁸⁰ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), pp. 875-91.

³⁸¹ N. Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 20.

³⁸² R. Grayson, and A. White, "'More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 340.

town and its provision of public space.³⁸³ It has been suggested that this organisation allowed a high number of businesswomen to enter the trade.³⁸⁴ Given that Hannah Shaw lived and worked at 68 Burgess Street, she was able to organise this space for undertaking different tasks, using particular rooms and the outside yard space. This organisation enabled her to perform domestic duties and run her business within, or nearby, the same space. With respect to women employees, Ivy Pinchbeck stated that women and girls could assist their husbands and fathers given that this work could be undertaken on an informal and flexible basis in the 'small domestic workshop'.³⁸⁵ The implication of these two scenarios is that there was a link between the family working together in the same space and the production of metal goods.

The concept of space has been significant in studies related to gender and work. Doreen Massey claimed that the process of change during industrialisation disrupted the old patriarchal form of domestic production associated with the pre-industrial economy. The nineteenth century saw the construction of a mosaic of differences between regions and industries. For example, in the cotton industry of Lancashire, wage labour for women in factories outside the home became more developed than in other parts of the country. Doreen Massey argued that 'this situation caused moral outrage amongst the Victorian middle classes and presented serious competition to working class men'.³⁸⁶ It has been argued that although women did work outside the home in a wide range of trades, this practice declined during the Industrial Revolution as it was seen as 'unfeminine', associated with 'immoral habits', and regarded as 'physically too demanding'.³⁸⁷ The implication was,

It wasn't so much "work" as "going out to work" which was the threat to patriarchal order [...] it threatened the ability of women to adequately perform their domestic role as homemaker for men and children, and it gave them an

³⁸³ S. Griffiths, 'Historical Space and the Interpretation of Urban Transformation: The Spatiality of Social and Cultural Change in Sheffield c.1770-1910', Ph.D. thesis (University College London, 2008).

³⁸⁴ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2005), p. 66.

³⁸⁵ I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 275.

³⁸⁶ D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 195.

³⁸⁷ B. Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 259.

entry into public life, mixed company, a life not defined by family and husband.³⁸⁸

If the home and the workshop are to be regarded as 'synonymous' then the issue of the space in which women worked would not be of concern to women in Sheffield's metal trades.³⁸⁹ However, I will show there was diversity within the experiences of women in the metal trades in the way space was used. Through an examination of space I will show the importance of defining women's experiences between those who owned a business and premises, to women employed in the metal trades.

Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett argued that for women in business, certain trades did not see a separation of home and work, in which 'the domestic and the commercial continued to coexist under one roof'.³⁹⁰ Sheffield's metal trades are considered distinctive in industrial production as they consisted of outwork in workshop-based modes of production, as opposed to large factories.³⁹¹ This situation persisted until at least the second half of the nineteenth century, and has in fact remained in many branches of metal goods being produced in Sheffield to this day. Geoffrey Tweedale stated: "'workers" residences were often in the same street as the factory; sometimes they were *inside* the factory, with many workers living on the premises. This even applied to the owners of bigger factories.'³⁹² Consequently, the factory, workshop and home had shared or linked spaces.³⁹³ I will show that whilst the space in which businesswomen lived and worked was nearby, this space did not always 'coexist under one roof'.³⁹⁴ The implication is that

³⁸⁸ D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 198.

³⁸⁹ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

³⁹⁰ H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living Above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010), p. 312.

³⁹¹ D. Hey, 'Continuities and Perceptions', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993, Vol. 2, Society* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 7.

³⁹² G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

³⁹³ P. Belford, 'Work, Space & Power in an English Industrial Slum: "The Crofts", Sheffield, 1750-1850', in A. Mayne and T. Murray (eds), *The Archaeology of Urban Landscapes: Explorations in Slumlands* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 111.

³⁹⁴ H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living Above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010), p. 312.

businesswomen were operating in public spaces, such as the street, which were fundamental to Sheffield and its metal trades.

The purpose of this chapter is to build upon the broad findings made in the previous chapter, to show the importance of the family to women in Sheffield's metal trades and the consequences of the workshop organisation of the metal trades for businesswomen and women as employees. I will show that family could help support women in Sheffield's metal trades through training and the bequeathing of a business, but that women could also be independent from family once they had established themselves in the trade. I will also show that whilst the home and workshop in Sheffield were in close proximity, they cannot be described as 'synonymous' given that businesswomen purposefully separated their living and working spaces, and work could take place in the street and outside yards. There were also clear differences between the experiences of businesswomen and women employees with respect to the spaces in which they lived and worked.

Methodology

It has been suggested that women's work in Sheffield's metal trades was hidden rather than scarce.³⁹⁵ Chapter one has shown that the number of women participating in the metal trades only accounted for, at its peak, 4.3 per cent of the female population, whilst research into Sheffield's metal trades has often focused on big firms rather than small enterprises due to the lack of data.³⁹⁶ Consequently, women in Sheffield's metal trades are particularly difficult to locate in historical record given their small number and the trade predominantly consisting of small family businesses. A street study provides the opportunity to use a range of sources related to a local area with reference to the space and context in which people worked. As a form of micro-history a street study has the following attributes: 'it is appealing to the general public, it is realistic, it conveys personal experience and whatever it has in its focus, the lines branching out from this reach

³⁹⁵ R. Grayson and A. White, "More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 337.

³⁹⁶ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 875.

very far.³⁹⁷ Street studies have been used to investigate social changes, with streets selected on the basis of being ‘the capital’s most notorious’ in relation to religious radicalism.³⁹⁸ Hannah Barker’s study of Boar Lane in Leeds showed the ‘physical appearance’ of women’s businesses ‘contemporizes walking the streets’.³⁹⁹ An important distinction here is that she discusses the physicality of the actual business run by a woman, rather than the physical presence of a businesswoman operating in the street, which this chapter will focus upon. Her selection of this street was determined by its typicality, ‘in terms of the range of goods and services on offer and the proportion of female-owned enterprises found there in 1826’.⁴⁰⁰ The reason for focusing on Burgess Street in this study was its significance to the town’s development and because it included the greatest number of trade directory entries of women in the metal trades. However, due to the limited sources available for Burgess Street it was necessary to broaden the geographical area. As a result, commissioner reports and probate inventories were drawn together to complement the findings from Burgess Street.

Evidence collated for chapter one provided a useful starting point to find out more about the lives of women in Sheffield’s metal trades. Issues and considerations associated with trade directories and census returns were dealt with in chapter one. Trade directories provided evidence of six businesswomen in Burgess Street associated with the metal trades between 1774 and 1865. Studying individual census returns from Burgess Street will build upon the evidence from the macro perspective in the previous chapter provided by census abstracts of Sheffield. Individual census returns used for the current chapter are different from census abstracts in that they provide information about women’s marital status, age, role at work and family. However, not all entries included an occupation, as the enumerator often omitted occupational designation, particularly for married

³⁹⁷ I. Sziujártó, ‘Four Arguments for Microhistory’, *Rethinking History* 6.2 (2002), pp. 209–215, <http://web.uvic.ca/~jlutz/courses/hist481/pdfs/Four%20Arguments%20for%20Microhistory.pdf> [accessed 15 August 2016].

³⁹⁸ A. Johns, ‘Coleman Street’, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71.1 (March, 2008) p. 33.

³⁹⁹ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 97.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

women.⁴⁰¹ The 1841 census does not distinguish who was the head of the house in each property, although the first person listed in the house is noticeably often the oldest male or female of the household, thus suggesting they are the head of the household. The 1851 and 1861 individual census returns provided formal information on the head of the house. Individual census returns identified 38 women employees, of which two were business owners evident in trade directories. These 38 women provided information on women's occupational roles and households for the period 1841 to 1861.

Sheffield trade directories also provided a starting point to search for any women who may have had the means to require an inventory. Inventories and commissioner reports provided evidence of women's space beyond Burgess Street. Issues and considerations associated with commissioner reports were dealt with in chapter one and inventories will be discussed in chapter four. Inventories showed the listed moveable goods and their location in the house. The Royal Commission was an investigatory body, which examined the conditions of work in Sheffield's metal trades in 1843 and 1865. The commissioner's presence would have undoubtedly affected the answers these women gave, and women's lack of control over the interview when they responded to the commissioner's questions dictated what would be discussed.⁴⁰² However, these interviews undertaken by the sub commissioner are the only surviving documents in which working-class women discussed their work. The employees' responses in interviews for commissioner reports provided incidental details on the movement between home and work of women and girls working in the metal trades. Inventories showed the distinction between the space of the home and work in relation to businesswomen who had enough capital to warrant an inventory. Together, these sources give us a picture of the space in which women lived and work, and how this may have differed if you were a business owner or a women employee.

⁴⁰¹ S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-Breadwinner Family 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 178.

⁴⁰² S. Hamilton, 'Images of Femininity in the Royal Commissions of the 1830s and 1840s', in E. Yeo (ed.), *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere* (Manchester, 1998), p. 93.

Burgess Street

Burgess Street was located in the centre of Sheffield and the production and trading of metal goods, and trade directories showed that businesswomen were more prominent in this street than elsewhere in Sheffield. The location of Burgess Street is shown in Figure 2.2 below. This map was produced using the addresses of women in the metal trades indicated in sixteen trade directories, 1774–1865. Using the programme Microsoft Paint, the addresses of women’s businesses were plotted onto a photograph of a map produced in 1868. This map was selected on the basis of clearly identifying each street in the centre of Sheffield for the period of this research. The total number of entries by women in the sixteen trade directories totalled 317, although only 201 entries are plotted onto the map, as the remaining 116 were not located in the centre of Sheffield. The trade directories indicated (after aggregating the entries to avoid duplication) that Burgess Street had the highest number of women, totalling six metal trades business owners throughout this period.⁴⁰³ Although this figure did not significantly differ to those for other nearby streets, it provided a way of selecting a street for which evidence on women would be most likely to be found. Furthermore, in 1764 the importance of this street was indicated in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* by the following comment: ‘there are 40 streets in this town: but the principal are the High Street, Norfolk Street, Fargate, Coalpit Lane, Burgess Street and Westbar.’⁴⁰⁴ It has been argued that the cutlery industry was a ‘remarkably concentrated’ and ‘insular place’ within an area that covered a square mile, and the map clearly shows that women were at the centre of that activity.⁴⁰⁵ As evident in advertisements in Birmingham’s metal trades, the location of a woman’s business in the centre of commercial activity was something in which she took great pride.⁴⁰⁶

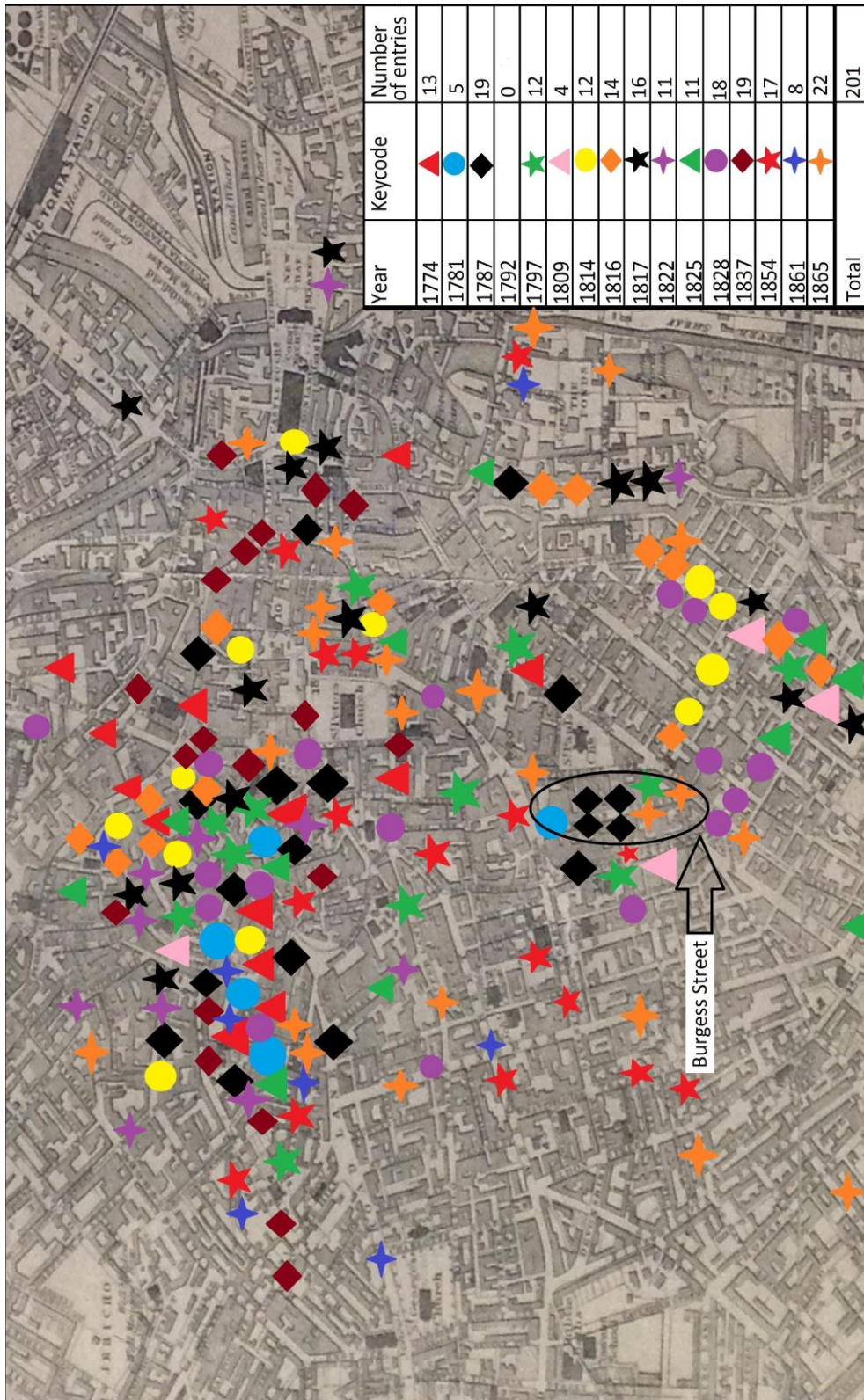
⁴⁰³ The figures for women in the metal trades residing in Burgess Street and entered into a trade directory as a metal worker did not significantly differ to other streets in the centre of the town. For example, Arundel Street had 15 entries, although this only accounted for 4 women who appeared in successive trade directories.

⁴⁰⁴ AO: *The Gentleman’s Magazine Library 1731-1868* (London, 1764), p. 330.

⁴⁰⁵ G. Tweedale, ‘Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry’, *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 877.

⁴⁰⁶ C. Wiskin, ‘Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826’, Ph.D. thesis (Warwick University, 2000), p. 108.

Figure 2.2: Women's directory entries plotted on a map of Sheffield with Burgess Street circled, 1774-1865



Source: SLL: S2M (LS), 'Map Published 1868 by William White, 10 Bank St.'; SA and SLL: Entries by women in the metal trades in 16 trade directories on Sheffield who were located in the centre of Sheffield, 1774-1865.

Table 2.1 below shows the growing population in Burgess Street until 1861, with a predictably equal proportion of females compared to males during the period 1841-1861, ranging between 46 to 50 per cent. The lower figure for both men and women living in Burgess Street in 1861 compared to 1851 is striking and suggests that people were leaving Burgess Street. It is difficult to explain the decrease in the population of Burgess Street by 1861, which may reflect the reliability of the evidence, although there may have been some move towards locations where larger factories were developing in areas such as Carlisle Street that were just outside the centre of Sheffield.⁴⁰⁷ The difference could also reflect a change in land use from residential and industrial to commercial use, which was evident on 15 December 1873 when a concert hall was opened on Burgess Street. Significantly, Table 2.2 shows that the number of women in the metal trades grew in each census from 1841 up to, and including, 1861. The number of women in Burgess Street working in the metal trades increased from eight women in 1841, to 14 in 1851 and 16 by 1861. This gives a total of 38 individual census entries for women living in Burgess Street between 1841 and 1861 that were working in the metal trades (appendix three). The fact that no women's name occurred in more than one census return for Burgess Street suggests that these 38 women's circumstances changed within a decade. These changes in circumstance could have included marriage, movement, change of occupation, or death. Women as a proportion of the metal trades workforce living in Burgess Street grew from ten per cent to 17 per cent by 1861. This proportion is higher than that for women living in Sheffield, which rose from 5.5 per cent in 1841 to 11.4 per cent by 1861 (Table 1.1). Thus, women living in Burgess Street who worked in the metal trades reflect a comparable gendered working environment to the rest of Sheffield, albeit not quite as extreme as it could have been comparably.

⁴⁰⁷ In 1858, Carlisle Street was where Henry Bessemer opened Bessemer Steel Works.

Table 2.1: Number of people living in Burgess Street taken from the censuses of 1841, 1851 and 1861

Census Date	Number of female residents in Burgess Street	Number of male residents in Burgess Street	Total number of residents in Burgess Street	% of female residents
1841	201	202	403	50 %
1851	234	272	506	46 %
1861	167	186	353	47 %

Source: AO: Burgess Street individual census returns, 1841-61.

Table 2.2: Number and proportions of metal trades workers on Burgess Street from individual census returns, 1841-61

Census year	Number of female metal trades workers	Number of male metal trades workers	% of metal trades workforce that were female	% of metal trades women residing in Burgess Street	% of metal trades men residing in Burgess Street
1841	8	71	10%	4%	35%
1851	14	104	12%	6%	38%
1861	16	77	17%	10%	41%

Source: AO: Burgess Street individual census returns, (1841-61).

Investigating individual census returns for Burgess Street between 1841 and 1861 has enabled 38 women to be identified as working in the metal trades, providing a case study to interrogate the roles, age and marital status of these women. During the period 1841 to 1861, the finishing processes of metal goods were the dominant forms of metalwork that women in Burgess Street were engaged in; of the 38 women involved in the metal trades, there were 18 women (47 per cent) engaged in these roles. The finishing roles that women undertook in Burgess Street involved a range of labels including silver burnisher, silver polisher, file scourer, and silver buffer. The particular metal good being 'buffed' was not identified, suggesting that these women could work with a range of metal goods.

Women also undertook other finishing roles on particular metal goods such as in 1841, one fork filer⁴⁰⁸ and one scissor filer⁴⁰⁹, and in 1861, two fork filers⁴¹⁰, and a comb stainer.⁴¹¹ This totals 23 women out of 38 women (61 per cent) living in Burgess Street who were undertaking roles associated with the finishing processes. This is a higher percentage of women undertaking the finishing processes than the census abstracts indicated in chapter one (26.3 per cent), and can be explained by the level of detail given in individual census returns in contrast to census abstracts. In Birmingham and the Black Country, 'women were thought to be better suited to light work requiring quickness and dexterity, attributes which came to be considered naturally feminine. Accordingly, from tailoring to pottery-making to work in metal, women were engaged in the labour of finishing, particularly the smaller items'.⁴¹² Many women undertaking the finishing processes in Sheffield's metal trades reflect their role in work that was deemed more appropriate for them.

Burgess Street was an ideal location to live and undertake the finishing processes of metal goods as it was closely situated to where goods would have been transported out of Sheffield. This was helped by road improvements that began in Sheffield during the 1740s. For example, in 1758 the highway from Wakefield and Huddersfield across the moors to the county boundary at Austerlands and down to Manchester and Oldham was turnpiked. Its advocates described Sheffield as 'being situated in a trading and populous Part of the [West Riding] and much used and frequented for the carriage and Conveyance of Goods, Wares and Merchandize, Commodities and Provisions, made, manufactured and consumed in that county'.⁴¹³ Another area in which the road system was developed was very close to Burgess Street: 'The Southern route was by way of Fargate,

⁴⁰⁸ AO: Mary Hingham, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841.

⁴⁰⁹ AO: Ann White, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841.

⁴¹⁰ AO: Anna Croucher, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Elizabeth Platts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴¹¹ AO: May Ann Hartley, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴¹² C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 10.

⁴¹³ D. Hey, *A History of the Peak District Moors* (Barnsley, 2014), p. 110.

Barker's Pool, Coalpit Lane, and Button Lane to a hamlet called Little Sheffield.'⁴¹⁴ In *William White's Directory* in 1845 carriers of goods leaving from particular Public Houses are specified. *Green Dragon* on Fargate, very close to Burgess Street, was transporting goods across the Peak District to Bakewell, Buxton and Grindleford.⁴¹⁵ The road developments show that Burgess Street was located in a central position for trade in Sheffield, and an ideal place for women to undertake the finishing processes on metal goods before they were transported out of Sheffield. This may explain why women living in Burgess Street represented a higher proportion of the metal trades workforce than in Sheffield more generally (Table 1.1 and Table 2.2).

However, the remaining 15 out of the 38 (39 per cent) women involved in the metal trades living in Burgess Street were performing roles in the metal trades other than the finishing processes. Hannah Shaw was a magnet maker who was listed in the trade directories and census returns.⁴¹⁶ Women could also perform skilled roles in a family business whilst not being linked to the business through a trade directory entry. For example, Martha Barber and her husband were silver platers, which was regarded as 'highly labour intensive'.⁴¹⁷ For example, a burnisher of a silver-plated good would require a level of skill to make sure they did not rub through the layer of the expensive silver on the plated metal good. The level of skill to perform this role was evident by the requirements of a three-year apprenticeship, as opposed to two years for burnishing in Birmingham for metal goods including buckles, clasps and brooches⁴¹⁸, although aside from George Holland's claim, no evidence of this kind has survived for Sheffield.⁴¹⁹ Other surprising occupations for women included a table-knife cutler⁴²⁰, a scissor

⁴¹⁴ A. Goodfellow, 'Sheffield Turnpikes in the 18th Century', *Hunter Archaeological Society Transaction* 15 (1943), p. 73.

⁴¹⁵ SLL: *William White's Trade Directory* (Sheffield, 1845), p. 26.

⁴¹⁶ AO: Hannah Shaw, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; SLL: *The White Sheffield Directory of Sheffield of 1837; Post Office Directory of Sheffield*, (1865).

⁴¹⁷ AO: Martha Barber, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; D. Higgins and G. Tweedale., 'The Commercial Development of the Sheffield Silver and Electro-Plate Industry 1840-1914', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 19 (1997), p. 64.

⁴¹⁸ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 139.

⁴¹⁹ G. Holland, *Vital statistics of Sheffield (1843)* (London, 1843), p. 155.

⁴²⁰ AO: Ann Smith, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841.

manufacturer⁴²¹, a steel-roller widow⁴²², a needle grinder widow⁴²³, a silver smith widow⁴²⁴ and a cutler's wife⁴²⁵, for example. This challenges the argument that the types of occupations women undertook were narrow, or narrowing, during the period associated with the Industrial Revolution.⁴²⁶ Significantly, women involved in these skilled roles in the metal trades often identified themselves in relation to their marital status, a pattern not seen in any of the finishing role occupations and this reflects how men legitimised women in these roles, and how instrumental men were to women entering occupations in the metal trades outside the finishing processes.

The metal trades in Sheffield were open to both young and older women, ranging between 14 and 67 years of age. However, only seven girls and young women under 20 years of age (18 per cent of the Burgess Street sample) could be identified within individual census returns. Four girls in the Burgess Street sample performed roles in the finishing processes of metal goods, whilst Harriet Fill and Elizabeth Burkinshaw worked in their father's trade. The remaining girl, Ann Smith, will be discussed shortly.⁴²⁷ This proportion of girls in the metal trades is relatively low compared to the findings in chapter one (44 per cent of women 20 years of age and under in 1851 and 1861) and compared to women workers in the cotton industry.⁴²⁸ This low proportion of girls and young women in Burgess Street may reflect an anomaly rather than the norm, but the evidence from individual

⁴²¹ AO: Hannah Roberts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851.

⁴²² AO: Mary Walker, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴²³ AO: Mary Ann Turner, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴²⁴ AO: Sarah Wariss, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴²⁵ AO: Mary Sellars, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴²⁶ B. Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 85; K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1780* (London, 2000), p. 144; P. Earle, 'The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 121-48.

⁴²⁷ AO: Martha Haywood aged 14, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; AO: Ann Smith aged 18, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; AO: Elizabeth Harrison aged 16, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Caroline White aged 17, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Charlotte Middleton aged 17, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Emma Cocking aged 17, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Harriet Fill aged 17, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴²⁸ M. Berg, 'What difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 155.

census returns does provide an important reflection on the ways in which young girls could enter the trade.

Girls and young women working in the metal trades and living in Burgess Street could be trained on an informal basis through their parents. In the 1861 census two young girls were working with their father. In both these cases there was a son within the family, but of a very young age and therefore unable to work. These two examples included a saw-handle maker and his 21-year-old daughter, Emma, who 'works with father'⁴²⁹, and John Hill, a 50-year-old table-knife cutter and his 17-year-old daughter, Harriet, with Harriet's work given as 'work with father'.⁴³⁰ The close nature of work and home in Sheffield and Birmingham's metal trades meant 'children would have seen their fathers working'.⁴³¹ Furthermore, 17-year-old Hannah Cocking and her mother lived together and both performed the finishing role of 'file scourers'.⁴³² The evidence of informal training in a trade compares with other industries such as husbandry in the eighteenth century where 'wives and daughters could work alongside their husbands and fathers, and they could carry out the same tasks and exhibit the same skills, but never acquire any legally recognised training'.⁴³³ The limitations identified in chapter one for formal training through apprenticeships were alleviated to some extent by opportunities for informal training from within the family for girls and young women.

Given that women in Burgess Street were predominantly over 20 years of age, and that there was a wide range of ages identified, it is important to examine how marital status impacted upon the opportunities for women in the metal trades. Only nine women (24 per cent of the Burgess Street sample) worked in the metal trades and lived with their husbands, suggesting women's opportunities were not limited once they were married.⁴³⁴ A slight growth in the number of married

⁴²⁹ AO: Emma Burkinshaw, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴³⁰ AO: Harriet Hill, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴³¹ C. Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, 1981), p. 5.

⁴³² AO: Hannah Cocking aged 53, and Emma Cocking aged 17, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851.

⁴³³ B. Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 102.

⁴³⁴ AO: Mary Naylor, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; AO: Martha Barber, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Charlotte Chatterton, Burgess Street Individual Census

women working in the metal trades living in Burgess Street was evident in 1861, and more women may have worked irregularly, their activities going unrecorded in the census.⁴³⁵ This limits Dennis Smith's argument that Sheffield women were financially more dependent on the male breadwinner than in Birmingham.⁴³⁶ The individual census returns did not include an occupation for every individual living on Burgess Street and it has been argued that the enumerator often omitted occupational designation, particularly for married women.⁴³⁷ John McKay, who showed that married women's opportunities increased in the mid nineteenth century in Lancashire's cotton industry, has subsequently debated this issue. However, he acknowledged that this may have reflected the important presence of the cotton industry in the locality and women's volume in this workforce – a contrast to the gendered working environment in Sheffield's metal trades.⁴³⁸ However, despite this gendered working environment, married women did not necessarily retreat from the workplace during the mid nineteenth century.

Significantly, seven women in the Burgess Street sample identified their occupation in relation to their husband's (or late husband's) occupation.⁴³⁹ For example, occupational labels could include 'cutler's wife'⁴⁴⁰, and a 'silver smith widow' indicating that these women worked (or had worked) alongside their

Returns, 1851; AO: Ann Croucher, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Charlotte Marsden, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Harriet Boddington, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Anna Hoyle, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Mary Ann Hartley, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Mary Sellars, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴³⁵ S. McGreevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), p. 493.

⁴³⁶ D. Smith, *Conflict and Compromise: Class Formation in English Society 1830-1914* (London, 1982), p. 43.

⁴³⁷ S. Horrell. and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-Breadwinner Family, 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 178.

⁴³⁸ J. McKay, 'Married women and Work in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire: The Evidence of the 1851 and 1861 Census Reports', in N. Goose (ed.), *Women's work in Industrial England: Regional and Local perspectives* (Hertfordshire, 2007), pp. 164-81.

⁴³⁹ AO: Mary Walker, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Mary Ann Turner, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Harriet Boddington, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Sarah Wariss, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Martha Martin, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Mary Sellars, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Mary Broomhead, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴⁴⁰ AO: Mary Sellars, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

husbands.⁴⁴¹ Edward Higgs argued that women's occupations labelled in relation to their husbands in the census should be defined as 'dependents, whatever their productive function'.⁴⁴² However, Sophie McGreevor has convincingly argued that the labelling of an occupation by a familial relation was an accurate indicator of a woman's occupation. This labelling can be explained by a misunderstanding of census instructions for occupations such as farming, where familial occupations were understood as individual family members' occupations.⁴⁴³ Therefore, the data on married women and widows linked to their husbands in Sheffield undertaking roles outside of the finishing processes can be regarded as an accurate indicator of the work they performed.

Furthermore, the individual census return for 21 Burgess Street in 1861 stated that William Marsden was an innkeeper and table-knife manufacturer and his wife Charlotte was listed as an 'innkeeper, manufacturer employ[-er of] hands'.⁴⁴⁴ This implies that Charlotte employed others to help run her husband's manufacturing business of table knives. The trade directory of 1854 showed that William Marsden was previously manufacturing table cutlery at 3 and 15 Burgess Street.⁴⁴⁵ This was clearly a large business as it was spread across two properties. This is an example of a woman helping to run her husband's metal trades business, yet it is unclear what precise role Charlotte was performing within this business. This evidence provides some support to Amy Erickson's argument that married women's work in the eighteenth century was often unrecorded and that 'marriage was important for women for legal and contractual reasons; otherwise, it appears to have had little impact upon occupation'.⁴⁴⁶ However, Charlotte's husband was integral to enabling her to engage in the metal trades business.

⁴⁴¹ AO: Sarah Wariss, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴⁴² E. Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Working in the Nineteenth-Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal* 23.1 (1987), p. 60.

⁴⁴³ S. McGreevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), p. 506.

⁴⁴⁴ AO: Charlotte Marsden, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851.

⁴⁴⁵ SLL: *Post Office Directory of Sheffield* (1854), p. 166.

⁴⁴⁶ A. Erikson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change* 23.2 (August 2008), p. 292.

Although men were instrumental in enabling women to enter the metal trades, women living in Burgess Street could support themselves independently through employment in the metal trades when a man was no longer present. Individual census returns showed that eight women were the head of a household and working in the metal trades between 1841 and 1861.⁴⁴⁷ Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff point out that, by definition, married women were not considered heads of households, and the census sample they used showed that 69 per cent of female household heads were widows and 21 per cent were single.⁴⁴⁸ For example, Mary Urwin who was a widow lived with her son and daughter who were also engaged in the metal trades.⁴⁴⁹ Ann Smith was an 18-year-old 'table-knife cutler' listed as living alone in 1841.⁴⁵⁰ However, the entry after Ann in the individual census returns was her mother, three lodgers, and 30-year-old table-knife cutler James Smith, who was presumably Ann's brother.⁴⁵¹ It is unclear why Ann is listed separately, which may have been an error on the part of the enumerator, but the evidence suggests that Ann lost her father at a young age, which enabled her to work alongside her brother in the cutlery trade. Although this was a male dominated trade, women could independently support a family by working in the metal trades.

Furthermore, two women living in Burgess Street were identified in the census as living independently from any family, and supporting themselves through their work in the metal trades.⁴⁵² The women performed finishing roles as a silver buffer and fork filer. Elizabeth Platts aged 32 lived alone, whilst Emma Seamanson aged 20 was lodging in a house, which supports the argument that 'unmarried women worked in their parents' households or in other households if there was no need

⁴⁴⁷ AO: Ann Smith, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; AO: Ann White, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; AO: Hannah Shaw, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; AO: Mary Hingham, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; AO: Mary Urwin, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Hannah Cocking, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Hannah Roberts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; AO: Mary Walker, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴⁴⁸ L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (2nd edn, Oxon, 2002), p. 273.

⁴⁴⁹ AO: Mary Urwin, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851.

⁴⁵⁰ AO: Ann Smith, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841.

⁴⁵¹ AO: James Smith, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841.

⁴⁵² AO: Emma Seamanson, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Elizabeth Platts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

for their labour at home'.⁴⁵³ Whilst men were of significance to women entering the metal trades, through inheritance of a business or informal training at work, women could sustain their involvement in the metal trades independently of men. This contrasts with factory employment which although 'permitted the emergence of women workers as "independent" wage earners, the wage that they earned did not allow them to become independent'.⁴⁵⁴ Chapter three will show that there was potential for women in Sheffield's metal trades to earn relatively high wages. These two independent women workers did not appear in more than one census, suggesting that their independent and single status was transient. However, these two women, alongside the eight women who were the heads of households and engaged in the metal trades, show that women were able to demonstrate a degree of economic independence in a male dominated trade. These women remind us of the limitations of the argument for the emergence of the separate spheres, which emphasised female dependency within the context of a patriarchal nuclear family.

Whilst individual census returns capture all women in the metal trades, businesswomen are captured in trade directories.⁴⁵⁵ The trade directories showed that six businesswomen lived and worked in Burgess Street, 1774-1865. However, by examining the individual census returns alongside the trade directories it was evident that women faced difficulties in a masculine trade and, similar to other trades, 'it was not uncommon for businesswomen to "hide" their own trades behind that of their husbands'.⁴⁵⁶ In 1851 this was the case for Hannah Roberts' scissor manufacturing business in Burgess Street. John Roberts is listed in the 1841 census as a scissor manufacturer living at 44 Burgess Street with his wife, Hannah, two sons, Henry and George, and a young daughter Emma. Also living at 44 Burgess Street were two young boys aged 16 and 14 who were presumably apprentices to John Roberts.⁴⁵⁷ In 1851 Hannah Roberts was recorded as head of the house at 44 Burgess Street, living without her husband, and her occupation is

⁴⁵³ L. Tilly, and J. Scott, *Women, Work and Family* (London, 1989), pp. 227-8.

⁴⁵⁴ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1780* (London, 2000), p. 54.

⁴⁵⁵ Hannah Shaw was the only woman residing in Burgess Street who was identified working in a metal trade in trade directories and the individual census returns, 1841.

⁴⁵⁶ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 168.

⁴⁵⁷ AO: John Roberts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841.

listed as a scissor manufacturer.⁴⁵⁸ Her sons, Henry, who was 22, and George, who was 20, are also listed as scissor manufacturers.⁴⁵⁹ However, in the 1845 and 1854 trade directories this company was listed as 'Roberts John & son, manufacturers of scissors, shears for tailors, horse trimming & pruning'.⁴⁶⁰ A wife could be an informal partner in the business, providing an extra source of capital, an extra pair of hands, extra knowledge and an extra set of family and friends.⁴⁶¹ The sources showed that Hannah was involved in the running of this metal trades business, but the public identity of the business remained under John's name despite Hannah running the household and being listed as a scissor manufacturer in the individual census returns. Thus, married women's opportunities in the metal trades were not strictly constrained, but instead given the nature of sources and the public representation of a business, married women's occupations are not always evident in records.

Family involvement in the business did not always give women economic security. Businesswomen could face economic difficulties despite a son being linked to the business. Elizabeth Ludlam was 12s 6d in arrears to a debtor entitled 'Dr'.⁴⁶² Another example is Hannah Green who, in 1782, was paying 2s rent.⁴⁶³ She next appears in the 1821 rate book which showed that the rent had increased to 3s and she had accumulated 15s of arrears.⁴⁶⁴ This shows how a businesswoman could struggle financially after the loss of her husband. In contrast to his mother, John Green paid rent on a large property at 22-23 Burgess Street that included six smithies, and had no debts.⁴⁶⁵ Elizabeth Ludlam's son Thomas, who lived at 17 Burgess Street and worked in the family metal business, also had no arrears whilst his mother did.⁴⁶⁶ This suggests that their sons were supporting their own businesses, or inadequately supporting their mothers, or it could have been a way

⁴⁵⁸AO: Hannah Roberts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851.

⁴⁵⁹ AO: Henry and George Roberts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴⁶⁰ SLL: *White's Trade Directory of Sheffield* (1845), p. 193; *Post Office Directory of Sheffield* (1854), p. 13.

⁴⁶¹ C. Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 180.

⁴⁶² SA: Rate Book, SU, RB 121, (1801), pp. 75-80.

⁴⁶³ SA: Rate Book, SU, RB 28, (1782), pp. 38-42.

⁴⁶⁴ SA: Rate Book, SU B, RB 179, (1821), pp.10-18.

⁴⁶⁵ SA: 1633 of MS, Plans with schedules or references, of all Burgesses' property in the town and parish of Sheffield, 1768, with revisions to 1794, by William Fairbank, (1794).

⁴⁶⁶ SA: Rate Book, SU L, RB 37, (1791), pp. 64-6.

to offset losses (from the evidence available we just don't know). A son maintaining a family business was a common occurrence in metal trades in Birmingham as well as in Sheffield.⁴⁶⁷ What is clear is that neither of the sons referenced above had accrued arrears for the properties they rented, and their businesses were continuing. This pattern was not unique to Sheffield as 'eighteenth-century records indicate that women were more likely to be poor and in receipt of poor relief ... mainly through absence – through death or desertion – of a male partner'.⁴⁶⁸ Hannah Barker also noted the 'individual fallibility and the vicissitudes of economic life' of women in business, indicating a woman in Sheffield's metal trades who had gone bankrupt in 1817.⁴⁶⁹ Therefore, evidence of women in Sheffield's metal trades supports the argument regarding the financial risk placed upon women who inherited a business.

Women in Burgess Street did not set up their own metal trades businesses but inherited their late husbands' businesses. This pattern is not surprising, as 'respectable married women did not start their own small businesses'.⁴⁷⁰ Chapter one has also shown that men and the Cutlers' Company restricted women's opportunities to enter the metal trades. Businesswomen in other localities and trades were also involved in forms of masculine work, such as Ann Nelson, a coach proprietor in 'a highly competitive masculine trade'.⁴⁷¹ A significant feature of the working life of businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades is not the way in which they entered their business, but the length of time before they exited the business. Whilst Geoffrey Tweedale argued this activity of widows in Sheffield's metal trades could be no more than a 'stop gap'⁴⁷², comparable to women in other locations who were 'temporary incumbents', documentations reveal that Hannah Green was involved in the business for 40 years, Elizabeth Ludlam for 19 years, and Hannah

⁴⁶⁷ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 95.

⁴⁶⁸ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1780* (London, 2000), p. 139.

⁴⁶⁹ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 130.

⁴⁷⁰ L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (2nd edn, Oxon, 2002), p. 304.

⁴⁷¹ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 254-5.

⁴⁷² G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 883.

Shaw for 14 years.⁴⁷³ In contrast, Hannah Barker indicated only '10 per cent of businesses headed by women lasted over a decade'.⁴⁷⁴ Thus, widows who took over their husbands' metal trades businesses in Sheffield were more permanent than expected. Women's 'smooth manner' in taking over a business and the number of women who stayed in charge after their sons came of age indicates their skill and commercial knowledge.⁴⁷⁵ These businesswomen show that although financial problems could arise, their sustained activity in the business reflect the competence of women who owned businesses in Sheffield's metal trades.

Although it is not clear the exact role undertaken by businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades, their role in running the business after the death of a husband is *'prima facie* evidence that they [a widow] had been involved in the same business with their husbands during the marriage'.⁴⁷⁶ Hannah Shaw died on 9 March 1851 at 61 years of age, meaning she would never know that by the following May her business was awarded a medal at the Great Exhibition for the manufacturing of magnets.⁴⁷⁷ Furthermore, Hannah Shaw and five businesswomen located beyond Burgess Street entered their businesses into a trade directory and also each had a whole page advertisement at the back of the trade directory. Hannah Shaw's magnet making business advertisement included pictures to show people the large range of magnets she produced.⁴⁷⁸ The additional advertising suggests that these six women were commercially ambitious compared to those women who merely relied on their names appearing in the trade directories. Indeed, women represented their businesses as 'the best' produced by both male and female business owners in Sheffield. For example, Jane Rawson described her business products as 'the best steel files, rapes & cabinet rasps'.⁴⁷⁹ These

⁴⁷³ L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, (2nd edn, Oxon, 2002), p. 284.

⁴⁷⁴ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 129.

⁴⁷⁵ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 133; A. Owens, 'Inheritance and the Life-Cycle of Family Firms in the Early Industrial Revolution', *Business History* 44.1 (Jan, 2002), p. 27.

⁴⁷⁶ A. Erikson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change* 23.2 (August, 2008), p. 269.

⁴⁷⁷ L. Pepper, *Magnets and Memories: A Celebration of the 200 years of H. Shaw (Magnets 1783-1982)* (Sheffield, 1983), p. 23.

⁴⁷⁸ Kelham Island Museum [hereafter KIM:] *General Directory of Sheffield 1856 Part 2*, p. 173.

⁴⁷⁹ KIM: *General Directory of Sheffield 1856 Part 2*, p. 123.

statements from businesswomen are assertive, reflect confidence, and a clear desire to sell their goods. This contrasts with research into women's advertisements in trades such as milliners which were characterised by 'expressions of gentility and morality, but also a disavowal of any desire for financial gain in their advertisements [...] this encompassed the need for outward polish (refinement), social discipline (sociability) and a compatibility with the manners of society's highest orders (gentility).'⁴⁸⁰ Although the sample of women advertising their metal trades business in Sheffield is small, these women did not conform to notions of femininity and represented themselves as equal, if not better, than their male counterparts. It has been argued that a woman who achieved success in a male dominated trade 'demonstrates the success that businesswomen could achieve in terms of both securing a financial income for themselves and also negotiating a position in the public sphere regardless of their gender'.⁴⁸¹ The success of the business indicates that Hannah and other businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades were capable and effective in running a metal trades business, although their involvement in the metal trades business was only apparent, or at least publically recorded, once they became a widow.

This street study has enabled a more detailed consideration of individual women's lives. The evidence with respect to Burgess Street confirms the broadly-based findings of chapter one concerning the male dominated nature of the metal trades, women workers' increasing participation in the metal trades during the mid nineteenth century, the typical finishing roles women undertook, and how both girls and women were involved in the metal trades. However, this study of Burgess Street has enabled a more detailed insight into the complexities of women's work. This work could be hidden but was more likely to be visible for those women employed in the metal trades compared to businesswomen. The metal trades workforce included women irrespective of their marital status, and included a broad range of roles outside the finishing processes with the support of a husband or father. Although work was often initiated in a family context, women had the potential to become independent workers from men. The minority of

⁴⁸⁰ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 206.

⁴⁸¹ J. Aston, 'Female Business Ownership in Birmingham 1849-1901', *Midland History* 37. 2 (2012), p. 196.

women that were involved in the metal trades would have found the space in which they were working dominated by men. The following section in this chapter will consider the space in Burgess Street in which women lived and worked, and will also examine sources related to Sheffield more broadly, to consider the different experiences between women as employees and as business owners.

Space in Burgess Street and beyond

During the eighteenth century the area surrounding Burgess Street was developing to accommodate the growing population and sustain the increase in production of metal goods. Pevsner's guide to Sheffield stated that 'the natural expansion of the town was accelerated in the area of Sheffield from the mid-eighteenth century by the laying out of the partly surviving grid of streets in Burgess Street and the nearer part of Alsop Fields'.⁴⁸² Prior to this, the south-east district was open land on the Norfolk estate known as Alsop fields. In 1737 the Church Burgesses started to grant 800-year building leases, expanding the southern edge of the town. Subsequently, 'a 1756 rate book mentioned the new Burgess Street in the south-west, and fifteen years later Fairbank's map marked the new Cross Street (now Cross Burgess Street)'.⁴⁸³ Burgess Street was established in 1738, and the 1768 Fairbank's maps of Burgess Street together with an Ordnance Survey map for 1851 show the development in the area, which had implications for the space in which women lived and worked.

⁴⁸² R. Harman and J. Minnis, *Pevsner Architectural Guides Sheffield* (London, 2004), p. 94.

⁴⁸³ D. Hey, *A History of Sheffield* (3rd edn, Lancaster, 2010), p. 69.

Figure 2.3: Plans of Burgess Street in 1768, with revisions in 1794 made by William Fairbank



Source: SA: 1633 Volume of MS, Plans with schedules or references, of all Burgesses' property in the town and parish of Sheffield, 1768, with revisions to 1794, by William Fairbank, (1794).

Figure 2.4: Ordnance Survey Map of Sheffield, 1850



Source: SLL: Sheet 26, Ordnance Survey Map of Sheffield, survey carried out in 1850 and engraved in 1853.

Maps and plans of Burgess Street show the development of the built environment in which women lived and worked. The plans and schemes of homes and public buildings were identified in papers belonging to three generations of the Fairbanks, surveyors to the town between 1736 and 1848. Urban historians argue that maps provide raw data of different moments in time to show urban structures and change, but mapping is a ‘human practice’ that should not be regarded as ‘statements of geographical facts’.⁴⁸⁴ However, given that the survival rate of architects’ and builders’ records is usually too low to be relied upon, it is particularly fortunate to have obtained these sources as they provide a visual insight into the environment occupied by women in the metal trades.⁴⁸⁵ A comparison between a section of a street plan in the Fairbank map produced in

⁴⁸⁴ M. Edney, ‘Theory and the History of Cartography’, *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996), p. 187.

⁴⁸⁵ A. Kenny, ‘Sources for the History of Housing in English Provincial Towns in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, *Construction History* 6 (1990), p. 65.

1767 (Figure 2.3)⁴⁸⁶ with an Ordnance Survey map produced in 1850 (Figure 2.4) shows how significantly the area developed during this period.⁴⁸⁷ The Fairbank map (Figure 2.3) shows houses rented in Burgess Street and has used different colours to show how they were allocated to the tenants. The distribution of space in Burgess Street in 1768 shows that some properties were larger, containing more yard space, and a workshop space.⁴⁸⁸ It was on these backstreet courtyards that all sizes of metal trades works were to be found.

Women in Burgess Street during the eighteenth century would be living in an area that was developing: houses were large and often included a yard space in which work could take place. From the 1790s, leaseholders in Sheffield began to expand the buildings, decreasing the yard space.⁴⁸⁹ Households continued to grow into the nineteenth century and by the census of 1861 house numbers in Burgess Street reached 86.⁴⁹⁰ The houses in which women working in Sheffield's metal trades lived were described as follows: 'the sorts of houses occupied by small business families in northwest towns had relatively narrow street frontages of between seventeen and twenty-two feet, since all but the oldest houses were invariably one room wide: the result of population density and the value of street-facing land.'⁴⁹¹ This description was more evident in the Ordnance Survey map from 1851 (Figure 2.4), which shows that the properties in Burgess Street had developed in the nineteenth century and the houses had been split to accommodate a growth in the number of households.⁴⁹² The number of ratepayers in the street grew from 40 in 1756, to 85 in 1861, although when the population was higher in 1851 there were 115 ratepayers (appendix four).⁴⁹³ This shows that the space of the houses and yards in which metal trades workers lived and worked

⁴⁸⁶ SA: FC/FB/33 &34, William Fairbank Map, 1768.

⁴⁸⁷ SLL: Sheet 26, Ordnance Survey Map of Sheffield, survey carried out in 1850 and engraved in 1853.

⁴⁸⁸ SA: FC/FB/33 &34, William Fairbank Map, 1768.

⁴⁸⁹ P. Bedford, 'Work, Space & Power in an English Industrial Slum: "The Crofts", Sheffield 1750-1850', in A. Mayne and T. Murray (eds), *The Archaeology of Urban Landscapes: Explorations in Slumlands* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 110.

⁴⁹⁰ AO: Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861.

⁴⁹¹ H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living Above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010), p. 313.

⁴⁹² SLL: Sheet 26, Ordnance Survey Map of Sheffield, survey carried out in 1850 and engraved in 1853.

⁴⁹³ SA: Rate books, SU, RB 1, 5, 14, 28, 37, 121, 130, 179, 208, 239, 281, and 309, (1756-1861).

was becoming increasingly crowded until the period between 1851 and 1861, when houses may have become vacated, houses had fewer occupants, or more non-residential houses were present. Prior to 1861, the street had developed to accommodate the growing population associated with the growth in the metal trades. However, the figures in Table 2.1 showed that between 1851 and 1861, the number of people living in Burgess Street decreased from 506 to 353, meaning that after 1851 the amount of working and living space perhaps improved. Newspaper reports on fires close to Burgess Street indicate that due to close confinements of the buildings fires could spread very quickly. For example, when a fire started on the adjacent Pinstone Street, which Burgess Street yards backed onto, 'alarm spread' as 'the workshops and woodyard are situated in a court in Pinstone Street and are hemmed in on every side with other workshops and cottages'.⁴⁹⁴ The close confinement of buildings by the mid nineteenth century brought safety issues to the occupants and metal trades workers in Burgess Street. Samuel Griffiths has shown that most industrial activity took place in the streets to the south and west of the pre-eighteenth century centre of the town, where Burgess Street is located.⁴⁹⁵ The close proximity of houses and workshops suggests that people lived and experienced their domestic lives close to their working environment. The way the space was organised allowed for a significant number of people in the metal trades to work and live there.

The conditions of this increasingly populated space would have been difficult for women who lived or owned a metal trades business in Burgess Street. A sanitary report on Sheffield in 1847 described the poor living conditions in Burgess Street and its surrounding streets, claiming it be the worst in the town due to its bad drainage and dirty living conditions.⁴⁹⁶ The houses in Burgess Street were described as, 'small ill-ventilated houses and courts'.⁴⁹⁷ Once inside the house these conditions did not improve as 'the rooms are too low, and the supply of light

⁴⁹⁴ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 3 January 1857.

⁴⁹⁵ S. Griffiths, 'Historical Space and the Interpretation of Urban Transformation: The Spatiality of Social and Cultural Change in Sheffield c.1770-1910', Ph.D. thesis (University College London, 2008), p. 104.

⁴⁹⁶ SA: SY325/2, A Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Borough of Sheffield (1847), pp. 25-6.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

and air very imperfect: the cellars constantly contain filthy water'.⁴⁹⁸ The report described the impact of these conditions on the inhabitants of Burgess Street, 'Many suffer from low fever; others from a slight sense of languor and loss of appetite; and the health of all is more or less affected'.⁴⁹⁹ This report implies that women working in the metal trades and living in Burgess Street would have experienced living in an increasingly crowded and unhealthy environment. This resonates with accounts of the conditions in general in Sheffield during this period, which describe the thick smog in the air that surrounded the over-crowded streets: 'The houses are uniformly built with brick, but are not clean, from the constant smoke in which the town was enveloped'.⁵⁰⁰ The workshops were also described in a similar state, 'workshops, especially used for cutlery are cramped and ill-arranged'.⁵⁰¹ The close confinement of the working and living space in Sheffield's metal trades meant that any health issues impacted upon both home and working space. By the mid nineteenth century there were closely built houses and workshops in Burgess Street, which meant that people lived and experienced their domestic lives close to a working environment. Although these conditions would be the same for men, this analysis provides a sense of what women's working conditions were like in this context.

Evidence of space owned by businesswomen can be examined through a case study of Hannah Green who was one of the six businesswomen who lived and worked in Burgess Street 1781-1821. The Fairbank map (Figure 2.3) map shows that many of the houses in Burgess Street had a separate building in the yard. This map also provided information on specific buildings and the people who rented them, indicating that John Green was renting property at 23 Burgess Street.⁵⁰² Hannah Green, who resided at 23 Burgess Street, inherited her husband's edge tool business in 1781. In 1768 Hannah's husband made rent payments that included

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁰⁰ E. Dayes, *The Works of the Late Edward Dayes*, (1805, the excursion was made in 1803), cited in S. Pybus (ed), *Damned Bad Place, Sheffield: An Anthology of Writing About Sheffield Through the Ages* (Sheffield, 1999), p. 82.

⁵⁰¹ SRL: 331.3 SQ, *J. E. White's Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (1865), p. 4.

⁵⁰² SA: 1633 of MS, Plans with schedules and references of all Burgesses' property in the town and parish of Sheffield, 1768 with revisions to 1794 by William Fairbank, (1794).

625 yards of land, and had two tenants and six smithies.⁵⁰³ Hannah Green inherited the business and thereby the responsibility for paying these rents. Figure 2.3 shows three separate buildings in the backyard of John Green's property, whilst the remaining six smithies may be in the shared yard space or across the street. The yard in which workshops were located was a community space and overlooked by the surrounding houses 'so a stranger in the yard could be instantly detected and treated appropriately'.⁵⁰⁴ Workshops could be a room, apartment or building in which 'a skilled workman or woman had a degree of control over the rhythm and intensity of the processes undertaken to produce something which could be a finished article or only one part of that article'.⁵⁰⁵ Hannah Shaw is the only female metal trades worker who had an entry in a rate book for a separate house and workshop space in Burgess Street.⁵⁰⁶ Hannah Green and Hannah Shaw's business records indicated separate spaces in the home and for the workshop in the edge tool business, and for different tasks in the magnet making process.

However, it is not possible to determine from evidence based on Burgess Street how far the use of space was determined by gender. To identify the way women organised the space in which they lived and worked requires research beyond Burgess Street. It has been argued that the cutlery industry was a 'remarkably concentrated' and 'insular place', within an area that covered just a square mile.⁵⁰⁷ Consequently, evidence based on probate inventories and commissioner reports from nearby streets provide insight into women's likely experiences in Burgess Street. Probate inventories describe the rooms and objects in the home and workshop for businesswomen. Commissioner reports provide evidence of the impact of space on women and girls who were employed in workshops. These sources are explored in the following section to investigate the space in which women employees and business owners worked and lived.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴ P. Bedford, 'Work, Space & Power in an English Industrial Slum: "The Crofts", Sheffield, 1750-1850', in A. Mayne and T. Murray (eds), *The Archaeology of Urban Landscapes: Explorations in Slumlands* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 111.

⁵⁰⁵ M. Palmer, 'The Workshop: Type of Building or Method of Work?', in P. S. Barnwell, M. Palmer and M. Airs (eds), *The Vernacular Workshop: From Craft to Industry, 1400-1900* (York, 2004), pp. 1-2.

⁵⁰⁶ SA: Rate Book, SU 1, RB 281, (1851), pp. 144-65.

⁵⁰⁷ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 877.

Beyond Burgess Street

Businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades would often store raw metal used to produce their goods in the cellar of their living space. In Widow Mitchel's inventory the 'iron and steel' accounted for one of the most valuable items on the inventory at £5,3,0 and was kept in the cellar of the house.⁵⁰⁸ Furthermore, it was noted that a 'stock of scissor [was] in the house and in the workman's hands', which indicates that items of production went between the workshop, the cellar and outside the living space.⁵⁰⁹ This reflects the difficulty in establishing an absolute separation of home and work, particularly after 1700 when there was a gradual trend towards removing the workspace from the home, 'or at least out of public view'.⁵¹⁰ To an extent, the items related to the metal trades in the cellar support Geoffrey Tweedale's argument that, 'often home and workshop were synonymous' meaning that space in which people worked and lived in Sheffield was less segregated than in a factory-based system.⁵¹¹ However, although the cellar was in the living space, it did not intrude on domestic or entertaining spaces, supporting the argument that rooms were not often used for both domestic and business tasks.⁵¹² The workshop-based organisation of certain metal trades allowed the living and working spaces to be in close proximity but was organised in a way that separated one from the other.

Apart from the cellar, most rooms in women's living spaces were not used to produce or trade goods, with most tasks undertaken in outside space in the yard or street. The inventory for Hannah Wilde, a silversmith, in 1781 listed seven rooms: 'house', 'kitchen', 'chamber', 'upper chamber', 'cellar', whilst all items to do with her metal trade were either located 'In the smithy' or 'In the warehouse'.⁵¹³ This was in contrast to other trades, such as hatters, which required a significant

⁵⁰⁸ SA: Tibbitts collection: TC1055 (b), Inventory of Widow Mitchel, 28 January 1739/40.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁰ J. Whittle, 'The House as a Place of Work in Early Modern Rural England', *Home Cultures* 8.2 (2011), p. 147.

⁵¹¹ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

⁵¹² H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living Above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010), p. 316.

⁵¹³ Borthwick Library, University of York [hereafter BL]: 121, f., Inventory of Hannah Wilde, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, August 1777.

number of rooms for the production of goods, and which took precedence over living space in the house.⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, the location of tools, and thereby the production of metal goods, shows that the living and working spaces were separate spaces. Widow Mitchel's smithy across the road contained 'wood and other trifling things' while 'out of the doors', presumably referring to the yard space, there was a grinding stone, an anvil stock and a stone trough.⁵¹⁵ The smithy of scissor maker Mary Redfearne contained all tools, a grinding stone, hardening sharth, scales which totalled £30,16,9.⁵¹⁶ Furthermore, Ann Allen's probate showed that she kept her tools, and metal products in the warehouses and shop, whilst household goods were in the dwelling house.⁵¹⁷ Hannah Shaw, who was discussed in the introduction to this chapter, used particular rooms for particular tasks, which reflects the specialised nature of her trade rather than her being an example of the norm.⁵¹⁸

More commonly, businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades showed evidence of a separation of working space that was physically outside the living space in the yard or across the street. These findings contrasted to evidence from Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett who showed that small businesses relied on passing custom, which therefore required a separate shop floor inside the living space where trade could take place.⁵¹⁹ Nicola Phillips also found little evidence of a separation of home and work for businesswomen during the period 'since their dwelling house remained the prime site of business'.⁵²⁰ In contrast, workshops in the cutlery trades were small and they were usually attached to, or close by, the home.⁵²¹ For example, the inventory of Widow Mitchel, a scissor smith, noted a 'large smithy, the lesser smithy, and the smithy across the road with space outside

⁵¹⁴ H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living Above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010), p. 315.

⁵¹⁵ SA: Tibbitts collection: TC1055 (b), Inventory of Widow Mitchel, 28 January 1739/40.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁶ BL: Vol. 135, f.225, Inventory of Mary Redfearne, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, May 1791.

⁵¹⁷ BL: Inventory of Ann Allen, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, August 1794.

⁵¹⁸ L. Pepper, *Magnets and Memories: A Celebration of the 200 years of H. Shaw (Magnets 1783-1982)* (Sheffield, 1983), p. 10.

⁵¹⁹ H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living Above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010), pp. 314-15.

⁵²⁰ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 172.

⁵²¹ J. Macdonald, "'The Freedom of Election' The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire and the Growth of Radicalism in Sheffield 1784-1792', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2005), p. 37.

the doors' which represent three working spaces outside the domestic space of the home.⁵²² Mary Redfearne's will bequeathed everything to her daughter Hannah: 'wherein I now dwell together with the workshops smithies and appurtenances thereunto belonging.'⁵²³ Mary clearly defined two separate spaces for living and work, in which the workshop included objects allocated to the metal trades business. Jane Rendell argued that streets were gendered spaces, which should be conceptualised by gender through spatial location and movement.⁵²⁴ Women in public places such as streets lead to fears of 'working-and idle-class contamination of the public realm'.⁵²⁵ The implication of the movement between the living and working space across the street in Sheffield's metal trades suggests space in the town was less defined by gender than elsewhere.

Furthermore, the outside space in which businesswomen were participating, including the yard and street, was an important aspect to the way business was undertaken in Sheffield's metal trades. Geoffrey Tweedale stated: 'contemporary accounts described a hidden world, where backstreet entry would lead into a "a common yard, entirely surrounded by private workshops, rising fully six stories high, from whence proceeded the clangor of hammer and anvil, the burr of the grinding wheel, and the rattle of host of lathes"'.⁵²⁶ This describes a space which was public and outside the home, but familiar to local residents. The yard in which workshops were located was a community space and overlooked by the surrounding houses.⁵²⁷ The streets themselves '[that] had been intended as thoroughfares became extensions of the house and workshop in which business transactions were openly made'.⁵²⁸ Samuel Griffiths argued that this space in the streets of Sheffield would have been both familiar and public: 'it is reasonable to

⁵²² SA: Tibbitts collection: TC1055 (b), Inventory of Widow Mitchel, 28 January 1739/40.

⁵²³ BL: Vol. 135, f.225, Inventory of Mary Redfearne, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, May 1791.

⁵²⁴ J. Rendell, 'Displaying Sexuality: Gendered Identities in the Early Nineteenth-Century Street', in N. Fyfe (ed), *Images of the Street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space* (Oxon, 1998), pp. 76-7

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁵²⁶ *Sheffield Independent*, 1 January 1889, cited in G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 877.

⁵²⁷ P. Bedford, 'Work, Space & Power in an English Industrial Slum: "The Crofts", Sheffield, 1750-1850', in A. Mayne and T. Murray (eds), *The Archaeology of Urban Landscapes: Explorations in Slumlands* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 111.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

suggest that the residential courts and industrial yards became familiar to local residents. Residential courts were, in spatial terms at least, open to the street'.⁵²⁹ Given this, we could assume that, whilst directory entries related to the house where money could be exchanged, production and the passing of goods could predominantly take place outside the living space. Both men and women in business could pass each other, meet and communicate with their neighbours, employers and employees. Significantly, the space in which businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades operated was not only separated from their living space, but also merged with a very public space in the street in which both production and trading of metal goods could take place.

Figure 2.5 The Graphic, November 28th 1874



Source: *The Graphic*, 28 November 1874.

The image above, from 1874 (Figure 2.5), represents the space women employees worked in for the period subsequent to that explored so far in this chapter. No images were made, or survived, of women working during the period

⁵²⁹ S. Griffiths, 'Historical Space and the Interpretation of Urban Transformation: The Spatiality of Social and Cultural Change in Sheffield c.1770-1910', Ph.D. thesis (University College London, 2008), pp. 282-3.

prior to 1867. It remains to be established in the final section of this chapter how far this image represents either a continuity in, or change to, the space in which women worked. The image represents women employees of the knife manufacturer Martin Hall and Co., and depicts women performing the role of buffing alongside male workers. A gendered segregation of space reflected the fact that men and women performed specific gendered tasks in different areas of the working space or at home.⁵³⁰ However, the image represents a working space that was not organised by gender. It is perhaps surprising that women in Sheffield's metal trades were represented in this way: working outside the home, in the company of men, and performing the same tasks, rather than the workshop-based production near to the home that often characterises the local trade. Significantly, women in the image are not working in the home and are in an environment where children are not present; the high ceilings and large windows suggest that it was a factory space rather than a workshop in the yard. The image reflects a comparable working context to textile factories or coalmining where the working and domestic spaces were separate.⁵³¹ William Luson Thomas, founder and publisher of *The Graphic*, targeted upper-middle-class readers. The intention was to publish an illustrated weekly news and general interest paper that possessed superior visual appeal to competitors such as the *Illustrated London News* by including illustrations of high quality created by artists rather than draughtsmen.⁵³² This representation may reflect middle-class ideals of the type of work women should be undertaking, in an orderly environment that was not overtly dirty, and in which women were not in a minority.

Women could work in space that was actively separated from men by employers of larger manufactories. In 1843 in the *Sheffield Mercury*, Samuel Roberts recollected in a newspaper his father's family business, and stated that in 1783 women employees were 'respectable women' who worked separately to men: 'we had the females employed in a separate building, to which the workmen had no admission ... the burnishing women and girls worked in a passage room

⁵³⁰ R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London, 1998), p. 163.

⁵³¹ D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 191-200.

⁵³² A. Korda, *Printing and Painting the News in Victorian London: The Graphic and Social Realism, 1869-1891* (Farnham, 2015), p. 49.

between two rooms containing workmen of the description mentioned.⁵³³ Women were considered an established part of the workforce and were given a pension: 'many of the females remained with us till they have from age become past working'.⁵³⁴ Furthermore, the passage from Samuel Roberts shows the shift in the nineteenth century between the social activities women and men could engage in together. The passage further states that in 1783 there was 'a sort of saturnalia called the *Candle Light* supper at a public house, where the workmen, the workwomen, the masters, and the other trades connected with them ... we got quit of the annual feast, and put a stop to all drinking parties in the working rooms.'⁵³⁵ This passage suggests a growing discomfort during this period of women and men who worked in the metal trades socialising, and a rigid separation of space between men and women. The image from 1874 showed a sanitised, harmonious mixed-gender working environment, whilst evidence of the preceding period gives a very different insight into the working environment experienced by women.

There was also variation in the space in which women were required to work dependent on the task involved:

There are a great number of small outshops like this in Sheffield in which file cutters work, usually from three to six in a shop ... women and girls sometimes worked in their houses, as well as in small shops; but boys have to work in a shop with a man, as they must be taught their trade by men.⁵³⁶

Men and boys were confined to the workshop due to the nature of their work and the need to learn a particular skill. Women on the other hand could perform many of their tasks in the living space due to the lack of tools required and the lack of equipment needed, such as a furnace. The family cutlery business run by William Dunn on Scotland Street in Sheffield revealed female family members helped by performing the finishing roles in times of increased production rates. The instruction in a letter between a father and son regarding women's work indicated the requirement of a comfortable domestic space to carry out their

⁵³³ *Sheffield Mercury*, 17 October 1843.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁵³⁶ SRL: 331.3 SQ, J. E. White's *Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (1865), p. 35.

duties suggesting that, 'she might do them in the chamber by the fire and be comfortable'.⁵³⁷ Unwin's study of file cutters in Sheffield also argued that women's work could take place in the domestic space, and women 'could keep an eye on children, the dinner and earn money.'⁵³⁸ The space in which women performed their work was in the living space and concurs with women's work generally, in which a clean and quiet environment was deemed appropriate for the work of women.⁵³⁹ This finding is in contrast to that of women who owned their own business where inventories suggest that the production of metal goods took place outside the living space, which could reflect the type of tasks involved. Jane Whittle showed that women undertook agricultural tasks in the home in the pre-industrial period, and showed a distinction of space by the work tasks undertaken, between dirty and wet to clean and dry work, whilst the chamber was a space free from work of all kinds.⁵⁴⁰ The evidence in Sheffield's metal trades also showed a separation of space determined by the suitability of space to the task involved, alongside what type of work was appropriate for women to undertake.

Women in Sheffield's metal trades were in a minority, and legislation concerning them was not introduced until later than for other industries, such as textiles and mining. In 1802 the working hours of children in the textile industry were reduced to 12 hours per day with no working at night. By 1842 women were included in these Acts. The 1842 Mine Act prohibited women and children under ten working underground and the 1844 Factory Act prohibited women working in textile mills for more than 12 hours per day during the week and nine hours on Sunday, including an hour and a half for meals. Under the 1850 Factory Act women and children in industries such as textiles were only allowed to work between the hours of 6am and 6pm in the summer and 7am to 7pm in the winter, and not after 2pm on Saturdays. However, Sheffield's metal trades remained exempt from

⁵³⁷ D. J. Smith, 'The World of William Dunn, Cutler and Engineer 1747-1808', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 24 (2007), p. 22.

⁵³⁸ J. Unwin, 'A Filecutter's Hammer from the Hawley Collection', in *Materializing Sheffield: Place, Culture and Identity*, <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/matshef/unwin/MSfilecutter.htm>, [accessed 5 July 2013].

⁵³⁹ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 10.

⁵⁴⁰ J. Whittle, 'The House as a Place of Work in Early Modern Rural England,' *Home Cultures* 8.2 (2011), pp. 133-50.

legislation until 1867 for factories and large workshops, and 1878 for small workshops which potentially raised similar health and moral issues. Therefore, women were not protected in this workforce for the duration of the period of this study, and the implications to their state of health and moral wellbeing was a growing concern that was to be reflected in commissioner reports.

Although there is some evidence that women could work in the home, women employed in the metal trades had conflicting responsibilities of domestic and work duties.⁵⁴¹ Their work in the metal trades required women to be in locations that could be nearby, but still separated, from the home. Girls could return home for dinner halfway through the day, suggesting that the space was nearby but still separated.⁵⁴² However, mothers faced criticism for leaving the domestic space to go to the workshop rather than looking after their children, and when women sent their child to work it was considered that women were left at home being idle.⁵⁴³ Furthermore, the work carried out by women was not always confined to the workshop or home, and consequently their work would have been very public. For example, a commissioner interview in 1865 revealed that women collected steel from the centre of Sheffield and carried it to the workshop for the men to produce metal goods.⁵⁴⁴ Although the living and working space for women as employees could be in close proximity, they were in fact separate spaces. For women as employees, the separation of space created moral concerns for mothers and young girls. Going out to work threatened patriarchal order, and separated the space of the home and workshop.⁵⁴⁵ This resonated with the experiences of women in the cotton industry of Lancashire, in which women going out of the home to work in factories caused moral outrage among the Victorian middle classes.⁵⁴⁶

Joyce Burnette has argued that women were less productive than men as they

⁵⁴¹ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

⁵⁴² SRL: 331.3 SQ, J. E. White's *Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (1865), p. 49.

⁵⁴³ SRL: 331.3 SQ, J. C. Symons, *Children's Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners, Trades and Manufacturers* (1843), p. 18.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

⁵⁴⁵ D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 198.

⁵⁴⁶ D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 195.

worked fewer hours.⁵⁴⁷ However, the commissioner reports showed that long hours could be avoided to allow for childcare arrangements between family members with one woman working at two in the afternoon until nine or ten at night, while her sister began at seven in the morning until two, so they could look after her baby.⁵⁴⁸ This may also be true of other women whose roles as mothers and wives had to be accommodated alongside their role as producers of metal goods. Women exercised a degree of flexibility in meeting their domestic work, which required a separation between their use of domestic and work spaces. For example, one woman stated that she would often stop work and return home for two hours 'for meals and doing things in the house, and on Thursdays and Fridays generally work until 9 – 9 1/2 pm'.⁵⁴⁹ The movement between the workshop and home shows that the working demands placed on women meant that they had to balance the responsibilities associated with domestic and industrial work alongside each other.

Women who worked in the workshop often operated in a mixed gendered environment. One woman described how men had to lift her up onto the workshop bench so she could reach her work, given her very young age.⁵⁵⁰ The situation in Sheffield's metal trades contrasted to Birmingham, which became known for the manufacture of guns and swords as well as toys and jewellery and had a 'rigidly sex segregated labour market'.⁵⁵¹ A number of male workers in Sheffield commented that the presence of women in the workspace alongside men was a fundamental reason for the decline in the moral behaviour of workers.⁵⁵² One male worker described the mixed-sex environment as a 'contamination'.⁵⁵³ This proximity of women to men at work was seen negatively in relation to female drinking, sexual behaviour and bad language. This close proximity of women to men was in contrast to Manchester and Leeds where it was said 'the factory system

⁵⁴⁷ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 93.

⁵⁴⁸ SRL: 331.3 SQ, J. E. White's Report on Metal Manufacture, *Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (1865), p. 25.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁵¹ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 80.

⁵⁵² SRL: 331.3 SQ, J. C. Symons, *Children's Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners, Trades and Manufacturers* (1843), p. 7.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

prevents their running wild in the same manner'.⁵⁵⁴ The workshop environment was said to have a particularly detrimental impact on women when evidence in the reports stated: 'I fear that their employment chiefly as warehouse girls, who pack up, and dust and clean different articles of manufacture does not tend to improve their morals, or fit them for the various offices of domestic life.'⁵⁵⁵ A minister suggested that the condition of the workshops was deemed more problematic for women than men, stating that a young girl he had personally met in Sheffield 'was prevailed on to take the course of life [prostitution] she had adopted entirely by the elder girl when she was within the warehouse where they were working together'.⁵⁵⁶ These comments can be compared to those made in reports on mining in which women were described as 'debased, voracious and depraved'.⁵⁵⁷ However, women in Sheffield's metal trades were in a minority compared to other trades and locations, and it could be argued that the moral implications of the presence of women in a male dominated space would have been more of a concern than in factories in which women often outnumbered, or were more equal in number to, men.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to situate women's work in the context of the family and household environment. It has attempted to establish the impact family had on individual women's experiences, and to consider how far the phrases 'going out to work'⁵⁵⁸ and 'living above the shop'⁵⁵⁹ reflected the experiences of women as employees and business owners in a working context which was described as 'synonymous with the home'.⁵⁶⁰ I will first conclude on the importance of family to both women as employees and business owners. For both groups of women, the

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁷ S. Hamilton, 'Images of Femininity in the Royal Commissions of the 1830s and 1840s', in E. Yeo (ed.), *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere* (Manchester, 1998), p. 91.

⁵⁵⁸ D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 198.

⁵⁵⁹ H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living Above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010), pp. 311-28.

⁵⁶⁰ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

family remained important, providing routes into, and opportunities in, a range of metal trades. The family was imperative for inheriting a business and in some cases the help (or lack of) from family members impacted considerably on the business. Wives and widows could identify themselves in relation to their husbands' occupations, indicating their involvement in the metal trades as an employee, or working in their husbands' businesses in the metal trades. There were some opportunities for young girls, although not to the same extent as in the cotton industry.⁵⁶¹ This can be explained by limited training and apprenticeship opportunities for girls, which were formally associated with men's work, reflecting gendered power relations within the industry. Evidence on Burgess Street showed two daughters who were able to learn their trade informally in the context of the family, whilst Hannah and Emma Cocking lived alone and supported themselves through performing identical roles, thus also illustrating the importance of female family members.⁵⁶²

Although men were important for enabling women to enter the metal trades, women showed that from this point onwards they could be capable and economically independent in this form of work. Businesswomen's success can be measured by their length of time operating the business compared to other industries.⁵⁶³ Evidence of women employees also showed some women working and supporting themselves and their families in a male dominated trade, whilst two women worked and lived independently of family. Predominantly single and widowed women worked in the metal trades, although married women were increasingly likely to participate during the mid nineteenth century despite the fact they may have been under-represented in census returns.

The evidence suggests that neither 'synonymous' nor a 'separation of space' describes the experiences of living and working space for women involved in Sheffield's metal trades. Women employees and businesswomen had different experiences in this working context, with the former often experiencing a clear

⁵⁶¹ M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain* (2nd edn, (London, 1994), p. 141.

⁵⁶² AO: Hannah and Emma Cocking, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851.

⁵⁶³ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2005), p. 129.

separation to their living and working space by undertaking work in an employer's workshop away from where she lived, and with the latter instead experiencing a separation of living and working space which were nevertheless in close proximity to one another. However, Sheffield's metal trades have also been characterised as 'homely'⁵⁶⁴, by which is meant the space was within a concentrated area of the town, and the workshop, home and street has been described as porous.⁵⁶⁵ This organisation complicates the use of space for both women employees and businesswomen, in different ways.

Significantly, the close proximity of the living and work space for businesswomen and many women employees allowed a fluidity of movement which contrasts with other locations and forms of work where women worked in the living space, or in a large group, outside the home, away from men.⁵⁶⁶ There was limited evidence to show that women in Sheffield's metal trades would have undertaken tasks within the living space, although this is more difficult to prove as much of this work may have gone unrecorded. Although the specific role a businesswoman undertook could not be established, her work was not only separated from her living space, but was often in a very public space across the street or in the yard, in which both production and trading of metal goods took place. This was in contrast to businesswomen elsewhere who separated the living space to accommodate the business, described as 'living above the shop'.⁵⁶⁷ The close proximity between the living and outside working space in Sheffield's metal trades still enabled some women employees to leave the working space for food, childcare duties or to undertake domestic duties during the working day.

The workshop space typically included men and women, although larger firms that employed a greater number of women would have had more reason to accommodate a separation of space between men and women. Particular concern

⁵⁶⁴ R. Leader, *History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire, in the County of York* (Sheffield, 1905), p. 287.

⁵⁶⁵ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An analysis of the family firm in the nineteenth-century Sheffield cutlery industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

⁵⁶⁶ J. Cattell, 'The Workshops of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', in P. S. Barnwell, M. Palmer and M. Airs (eds), *The Vernacular Workshop: From Craft to Industry, 1400-1900* (York, 2004), p. 163.

⁵⁶⁷ H. Barker and J. Hamlett, 'Living Above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', *Journal of Family History* 35.4 (2010), pp. 311-28.

was raised by contemporary observers about the prospect of women and girls sharing the same space as men and boys, claiming it encouraged promiscuity, drinking and prostitution, which reflected views expressed about women working in other areas of the country and industries. It contrasted to other locations and trades, such as the coal industry in Durham, where men and women were totally separated through space and in Birmingham metal trades, which had a 'rigidly sex-segregated labour market'.⁵⁶⁸ The small number of women compared to men in the metal trades may explain why there was a lack of defined gendered space.

⁵⁶⁸ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), pp. 67-80.

Chapter three:

Wages and the regularity of work for women working in Sheffield's metal trades

It was the eve of 11 March 1864, when 'a calamity, appalling and almost unparalleled disaster' was to strike Sheffield.⁵⁶⁹ The Dale Dyke Dam at Bradfield collapsed allowing over 650 million gallons of water to be swept into the centre of Sheffield, reaching a depth of up to six feet. The disaster led to one of the largest insurance awards of its time against the Sheffield Water Company. Richard Beedham, a spoon and fork finisher who lived at 82 Wellington Street in Sheffield, was one of the many metal trades workers affected by the flood. Richard needed to claim for five days 'loss of employment and rent in consequence of the stoppage of my premises situated at Jepson's Wheel, Corporation Street'. He received £2 10s for the loss of employment for himself and his male apprentice. Richard's assistants Elizabeth Maskell and Margaret Cowen received the much lower sum of money at 12s 6d each for five days of work.⁵⁷⁰

The claim does not reveal the amount of hours of work the men or women undertook during the five days, or their exact roles in the workplace, although reference to women as 'assistants' showed a hierarchical division of labour. Women's lower wage compared with men may indicate that these women were working fewer hours than the men each day or were restricted to certain tasks that were of less economic value to Richard Beedham's spoon and fork finishing business, resulting in their receipt of a lower market wage. Another possibility was that these women performed the same type of work as men but received a lower wage because of their gender, and consequently women received wages dictated by custom rather than the market value of the work undertaken. Whatever the cause of the gender wage gap, women working for Richard Beedham were economically disadvantaged when compared to men. This chapter will examine a collection of wage books and insurance claims to assess how far Richard Beedham's workforce reflected the limited economic position of women in

⁵⁶⁹ SA: S. Harrison, *A complete History of the Great Sheffield Flood* (London & Sheffield, 1864).

⁵⁷⁰ Sheffield Flood Claims Archive [hereafter SFC]: Claim 5646, Certificate Granted 20 March 1865, <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/> [accessed 22 March 2014].

Sheffield's metal trades between 1786 and 1864. This chapter will also establish whether women in Sheffield's metal trades received a wage dictated by custom or by the market. Commissioner reports will suggest the daily routine and hours worked by women employed in the metal trades. An examination of wages, together with working roles and the regularity of employment opportunities for women, will show how gender impacted upon women's economic opportunities in a male dominated working environment. Due to the nature of the sources relating to wages rather than to business accounts (in respect of which only Hannah Shaw's magnet business account book has survived), businesswomen are not included in this analysis. Instead, evidence of women engaged in a family business whose situation provided them with an economic advantage will be compared with women as employees in the metal trades.

The wages women received during the Industrial Revolution have received considerable attention from historians. There is a general agreement that women earned from a third to half of the wages received by men.⁵⁷¹ It has been argued that women's 'cheapness to employ' enabled them to become a large proportion of the workforce.⁵⁷² Chapters one and two have shown that women accounted for a small proportion of the metal trades workforce and some of the implications of this for women's wages will be explored in this chapter. Attempts to explain the reasons for women's lower wages have proved more controversial with respect to how far this reflected custom or the market. It is hard to distinguish between a market and customary wage as both are based on gender discrimination. Joyce Burnette argued that women received a market wage, which she stated focused on actuality rather than ideology; rather than understanding how people in the Industrial Revolution discussed women's work, she was primarily interested in what people did in the place of work.⁵⁷³ However, the significance of custom in determining

⁵⁷¹ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 72; M. Berg, 'What difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 158; P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (London, 1996), p. 146; K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1780* (London, 2000), p. 54.

⁵⁷² M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 149-69.

⁵⁷³ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 3-4.

wage rates has been long-discussed amongst historians.⁵⁷⁴ If wages were dictated by custom, women were paid less than men not because of the facts of the work that they performed, such as the roles women undertook, the innate abilities men possessed to produce larger quantities of goods than women, and the length of time dedicated to work with a monetary outcome, but because of women's gender. Penelope Lane concluded that 'if women were discriminated outside the workplace, then why would it stop in the form of the wage they received?'.⁵⁷⁵ Custom wages for women reflected underlying gendered perceptions of the economic value of women.

Joyce Burnette challenged the argument that women received a customary wage, stating that gender discrimination still existed but not in the form of a wage based on custom. She argued that market forces dictated women's lower wages since wages were driven by the facts of women's labour, such as the productivity of women in the workplace. She explained that women were less productive than men due to their 'strength and human capital'.⁵⁷⁶ This infers that women's lower productivity level was caused by the fact that their physical strength, skills, and training were not sufficient to enable them to perform more highly paid jobs, which were typically undertaken by men, whilst their domestic duties limited their opportunities in the monetary valued workplace. Her use of the term 'productivity' has been challenged by Amy Froide, who argued: 'if we chose to measure women's productivity by including their household work and child care alongside their market labor, I think we would find that women were as productive as, or more productive than men in the past.'⁵⁷⁷ However, Joyce Burnette's reference to productivity related specifically to women's role as paid workers, and by productivity she meant the value of the marginal product of labour, or the increase

⁵⁷⁴ M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 158; P. Lane, 'Women in the Regional Economy: The East Midlands, 1700-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 1999), p. 261.

⁵⁷⁵ P. Lane, 'Women in the Regional Economy: The East Midlands, 1700-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 1999), p. 261.

⁵⁷⁶ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 103.

⁵⁷⁷ A. Froide, 'Disciplinary Differences: A Historian's Take on Why Wages Differed by Gender in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Social Science History* 33.4 (2009), p. 468.

in firm revenues, that resulted from hiring one more worker.⁵⁷⁸

Pamela Sharpe provides a more complex argument that both customary and market factors affected women's wages, which 'were subject to traditional, local and cultural differences'.⁵⁷⁹ For example, women working alongside their husbands received custom wages in agricultural tasks such as weeding.⁵⁸⁰ However, in localised trades such as straw-plaiting, women could sometimes earn more than their husbands; at other times they could be very poorly paid, and these wages were dependent on 'urban markets and urban tastes'.⁵⁸¹ She concludes: 'women's wages cannot be viewed solely through neo-classical spectacles' and that we must consider 'both capitalism and patriarchy'.⁵⁸² She acknowledges that there are no binding generalities across geographical areas, and that more local studies are needed to understand the effects of local custom and cultural factors in women's employment and wages.⁵⁸³

Women's minority status in Sheffield's metal trades means that their experiences provide a distinct perspective with respect to debates concerning the extent of and reasons behind women's lower wages compared to those of men. It has been suggested that women in Sheffield were well paid compared to women in other locations and trades, but poorly paid in comparison to men. Joyce Burnette provides a comparison of men and women's wages in Sheffield's cutlery and plating trade in 1770, for which women were paid 4s per week whilst men were paid 13s 6d.⁵⁸⁴ The ratio of women's to men's wages in Sheffield was 30 per cent, which was the bleakest outcome for women workers in Joyce Burnette's data collection. However, the evidence was selected from Arthur Young's travel narrative, and consequently reflects only a snapshot of a particular trade (plating and cutlery) in 1770. It is interesting to note that Arthur Young commented that women were employed in various branches of manufacturing in Sheffield and

⁵⁷⁸ J. Burnette, 'Reply to comments', *Social Science History* 33.4 (2009), p. 496.

⁵⁷⁹ P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (London, 1996), p. 150.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-63.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 150-2.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁵⁸⁴ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 78.

received better wages than men in spinning wool, which is at odds with Joyce Burnette's sample.⁵⁸⁵ There is a need to consider women's wages in comparison to men's, but also to women's wages in other trades and locations.

There is also a need to consider a broader time period. For example, agricultural employment just outside of Sheffield indicated 'the relative female wage was lower in the 1831 to 1845 period than in [the period] 1772 to 1775.'⁵⁸⁶ There is a need to go beyond one particular metal trade, given that chapter one and chapter two showed women could potentially participate in a wide range of metal trades, for which roles clustered in the finishing processes of metal goods, but not exclusively so. Maxine Berg found that, although women's wages were typically lower than men's wages, 'relatively high earnings for women in manufacturing were to be found in areas of the North and the Midlands where textiles, metalwares and potteries were expanding rapidly'.⁵⁸⁷ Therefore, this chapter will investigate women's wages in a range of metal trades between 1786 and 1864, a broader period than previously undertaken in research on women's wages in Sheffield's metal trades, using comparative data on male wages in Sheffield's metal trades as well as women's wages in this and other trades and locations.

Words commonly used by historians to characterise female employment during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries include: 'inexpensive', 'adaptability', 'elasticity', 'seasonality' and 'irregularity'.⁵⁸⁸ It has been argued that gendered wage differences can be partially explained through measurement errors in the data on women's wages; 'women often worked fewer hours per day than men, so the ratio of daily wages understates the ratio of hourly wages'.⁵⁸⁹ Yet Penelope Lane challenged this claim: 'even if we deduct two hours from an adult female spinner's working day, she still received only about three-quarters of the

⁵⁸⁵ A. Young, *Northern tour* (2nd edn), vol. 1, p. 123, cited in I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 275.

⁵⁸⁶ J. Burnette, 'Labourers at the Oakes: Changes in the Demand for Female Day-Laborers at a Farm Near Sheffield during the Agricultural Revolution', *The Economic History Review* 59.1 (1999), p. 58.

⁵⁸⁷ M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 158.

⁵⁸⁸ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1780* (London, 2000), p. 12.

⁵⁸⁹ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 93-4; J. Burnette, 'An Investigation of the Female-Male Wage Gap During the Industrial Revolution in Britain', *The Economic History Review* 50.2 (1997), p. 262.

wage of a male spinner [...] the gap that remains cannot be accounted for by differences in productivity'.⁵⁹⁰ Particularly married women did not work the same hours in a day as men in order to undertake domestic tasks.⁵⁹¹ The implication from this is that the regularity of employment for women needs to be considered. The census enumeration reflects women's regular employment.⁵⁹² Studies using census data have demonstrated that women in regular employment were consistently enumerated regardless of their marital status.⁵⁹³ The regularity of women's employment is important given that research has shown how women working in unskilled roles on a casual basis, earned less than those working under long-term contracts during the period of industrialisation.⁵⁹⁴ The wage books used in this chapter provided an overview of the workforce over a prolonged period. The census is the only other source that provides this type of information for women employed in the metal trades but is restricted to the period between 1841 and 1861, whilst the wages books reflect a significant proportion of the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century (1786-1846).

An understanding of the wages women received in the Sheffield metal trades relates to a broader consideration of the standard of living, a debate that, it has been argued, often ignores the presence of women.⁵⁹⁵ Women's wages contributed to the family income, and therefore had implications for their standard of living. A consideration of women's wages also relates to debates associated with the role of the male breadwinner during the Industrial Revolution. During the process of

⁵⁹⁰ P. Lane, 'A Customary or Market Wage: Women and Work in the East Midlands', in P. Lane, N. Raven and K. Snell (eds), *Women, Work and Wages in England, 1600-1850* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 111-12.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 110-14.

⁵⁹² S. McGeevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), pp. 489-512; A. Wilkinson, 'Women and Occupations in the Census of England and Wales: 1851-90', Ph.D. thesis (University of Exeter, 2012); A. Wilkinson and E. Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work, in the Victorian Censuses Revisited', *History Workshop Journal* 81 (2016), pp. 17-38.

⁵⁹³ S. McGeevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), p. 507.

⁵⁹⁴ J. Humphries and J. Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England, 1260-1850', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.2 (2015), p. 432.

⁵⁹⁵ J. Humphries and J. Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England, 1260-1850', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.2 (2015), pp. 405-47; J. Humphries, 'The Lure of Aggregates and the Pitfalls of the Patriarchal Perspective: A Critique of the High wage economy interpretation of the British Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review* 66.3 (2013), pp. 693-714.

industrialisation there was a transition from a family economy in which family members contributed their income collectively towards a waged economy whereby men supported their wives and children who were dependent on them. This was known as the male breadwinner ideology.⁵⁹⁶ Sara Horrell and Jane Humphries argued that female economic dependency was certainly apparent, but that it was 'conditional' in its origins. Some women could not afford to stop work completely, or had to support their family through the loss of the male breadwinner, although women's wages were regarded as either supplementary or inadequate.⁵⁹⁷ Dennis Smith suggested that women and children in Sheffield were to a much greater extent dependent on the adult male breadwinners than women in Birmingham due to the norms of masculinity in the local industry.⁵⁹⁸ Sheffield displayed an emphasis on the male breadwinner because of the nature of the industry there, which favoured the inclusion of men over women. Although the available sources, including wage books, insurance claims and commissioner reports are unable to provide an insight into the exact contributions of men and women to the family income, it is possible to gain some insight into the economic importance of women working in a masculine environment.

This chapter will examine how much women were paid using daily and weekly wage records, and how these wages compared to those of their male counterparts and women working in other industries and locations. To determine whether the wages women received were based on custom or the market will require a consideration of the nature of this work, which will be determined by the regularity of their employment, the length of their working day and the roles which they performed in Sheffield's metal trades. I will show that a significant proportion of women in Sheffield's metal trades received a relatively high wage compared to women in other locations and trades. Evidence regarding the regularity of women's employment suggests women could have stable employment

⁵⁹⁶ S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-Breadwinner Family 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 172-206.

⁵⁹⁷ S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'The Origins and Expansion of the Male Breadwinner Family: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Britain', *International Review of Social History* 42 (1997), pp. 25-64.

⁵⁹⁸ D. Smith, *Conflict and Compromise: Class Formation in English Society 1830-1914* (London, 1982), pp. 42-3.

opportunities within particular companies, but that this pattern was not consistent for all workers. Women also worked long hours in the metal trades comparable to men, and still received a lower wage. Women were often, but not exclusively, restricted to certain roles in the finishing processes of metal goods that limited the level of wage they would receive. This clustering in the finishing processes is supported by evidence in chapter one which discussed women's limited opportunities for training in contrast to those available to men. However, there is evidence which indicates that women could undertake comparable roles to men, although they would still receive a lower wage. In contrast, women who were related by family to the business in which they worked received high wages, potentially higher than male workers who were not a family relation. This shows that 'the local cultural differences' regarding the importance of family in Sheffield's metal trades provided some economic opportunities for women to counter gendered economic inequality.⁵⁹⁹ Overall the evidence suggests that Pamela Sharpe is correct to argue that we cannot separate the market and customary forces which dictated the wages women received: both impacted on the predominantly lower wages women would receive for their work in Sheffield's metal trades when compared to their male counterparts.

Methodology

This chapter is based on evidence from four collections: company records of Hague and Nowill, Henry Atkin and Oxley & Co. and Thomas Firth and Company & Sons, together with insurance claims made in 1864 following the Sheffield flood. It is appropriate to begin with a brief description of the companies and insurance claims on which this study is based. Hague and Nowill was a pen and pocketknife cutlery company based on Meadow Street in Sheffield. The company records that are available with evidence of women workers relate to the period 1792-1846.⁶⁰⁰ Thomas Nowill was born in 1758 into a family that had been associated with the cutlery trades for nearly a hundred years. Thomas Nowill went into partnership

⁵⁹⁹ P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (London, 1996), p. 150.

⁶⁰⁰ These company records are not to be mistaken as those of Thomas II who was the Cousin of Thomas who started this company on Meadow Street, who owned Nowill and Kippax Company and was Master Cutler in 1788-9.

with Thomas Hague on 25 March 1786 with a capital of £49 3s 9d and they registered the company trademark as a 'plate worker'.⁶⁰¹ In 1797 when Hague died, the company was subsequently known as Thomas Nowill and Company.⁶⁰² In July 1825 Thomas Nowill retired and his sons William and John took leadership of the company, immediately registering their own trademark. Cutlery products they produced were 'wide but unexceptional' and they also 'sold blankets, wines, spirits, glass, and a large variety of clothing materials, some of which were very expensive [...] in 1817 five workers bought hats costing £1 each'.⁶⁰³ An examination of the records of Thomas Nowill and Company suggests that, while there are no specific records related to women between 31 March 1804 and 27 February 1813, there is evidence of women working and being paid in the company after 1813. The second company researched in this chapter was Atkin, Oxley & Co. which traces its establishment to Thomas Law in 1750, who was a Sheffield plate maker and was eventually succeeded by Henry Atkin and Oxley, Joseph Law and John Oxley in 1824. In 1840 Henry Atkin and Oxley continued the trade as Henry Atkin and Oxley & Co. at 32 Howard Street, Sheffield.⁶⁰⁴

Finally, Thomas Firth & Sons started as manufacturers of crucible steel of the highest quality, specialising in cutlery spear and tool steels. Thomas Firth with his two sons founded the company in 1842, 'Mark taking up the commercial side and Thomas the practical side of the business'.⁶⁰⁵ Interestingly, it was a wage dispute that temporarily dissolved this family business. Initially Thomas Firth paid himself a handsome 70s per week, whilst his two sons received 20s per week after

⁶⁰¹ P. Garlick, 'An Old Sheffield Cutlery Firm: The House of Nowill, 1786-1825', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 7.4 (1955), p. 176.

⁶⁰² P. Garlick, 'An Old Sheffield Cutlery Firm: The House of Nowill, 1786-1825', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 7.4 (1955), p. 176.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁶⁰⁴ Initially the Atkin, Oxley and Co. document was catalogued as a wage book from the Thomas Bradbury & Son silver plating company. However, the Thomas Bradbury & Son mark was first registered at Sheffield Assay Office in February 1832, and the wage book used in this chapter began in 1828. The majority of Thomas Bradbury company records were donated to Sheffield Libraries from 1943-1950 when Bradburys closed down. The Thomas Bradbury company records were acquired by Atkin Brothers in 1943. Therefore, these records are not of Thomas Bradbury, but were donated with Thomas Bradbury records, and are related to the company Atkin, Oxley & Co. which was later known as Atkin Brothers. Between 1829 and 1840 the company was known as Atkin, Oxley & Co. which is the period from which wage books have survived and the period that is researched within this chapter.

⁶⁰⁵ KIM: BN8283, C. Bodsworth, *Historical Metallurgy - Thomas Firth and John Brown Ltd* (1997), p. 1.

completing their apprenticeships, but in August 1842 ‘the two lads were dissatisfied with their wages, and being refused an advance, took the bold step of setting up in business for themselves at Charlotte Street’.⁶⁰⁶ Their father soon re-joined them and the surviving wage books relate to the Thomas Firth & Sons company for the period January 1844-November 1846.⁶⁰⁷ It was stated that ‘after slow beginnings trade expanded, with more than twenty-five employees of Thomas Firth & Sons (as the business was called) by November 1846’.⁶⁰⁸ The firm set out to promote good feeling between employer and employee by acting fairly and considerately, and providing opportunities within the growth of the firm for its workers.⁶⁰⁹ Whether these opportunities extended to female workers will be explored in this chapter.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 show the range of evidence used in this chapter provided from the wage books and insurance claims. The company wage books provide a record of the name of the worker, the date of their payment, and the weekly wages for every week of the year.⁶¹⁰ After the database was created the information was converted into graphs using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme as it enabled a more complex statistical analysis than Excel. For example, SPSS allows a greater number of variables, and consequently different groups of workers could be represented within a graph. Hague and Nowill wage books provided evidence across the longest time period (1786-1850) although with only evidence of women from 1791 onwards, whilst Thomas Firth & Sons, and Henry Atkin and Oxley wage books provided a comparison for wages in the mid nineteenth century. The number of entries totalled 1,526 weekly wage payments and one-off insurance claims to women, and thus the findings are based on a larger collection of evidence than previous studies on women’s wages in Sheffield’s metal trades.

⁶⁰⁶ P. Nunn, Mark Firth, *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (1819-1880), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9483?docPos=4> [accessed 3 July 2016].

⁶⁰⁷ SA: X306/4/1/1/1, Thomas Firth and Company (1828-40).

⁶⁰⁸ P. Nunn, Mark Firth, *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (1819-1880), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9483?docPos=4> [accessed 3 July 2016].

⁶⁰⁹ KIM: BN8283, C. Bodsworth, *Historical Metallurgy - Thomas Firth and John Brown Ltd* (1997), p. 2.

⁶¹⁰ SA: LD192, Hague and Nowill; BR/3/9/1, Atkin & Oxley; X306/4/1/1/1, Thomas Firth and Company.

Table 3.1: Data on female wages, 1786-1864

Source	Date range	Total number of weekly payments to women
Hague and Nowill	1786-1850	1,050
Henry Atkin and Oxley & Co.	1828-1840	439
Thomas Firth & Sons	Jan 1844-Nov 1846	8
Insurance claims	1,864	29*
		Total: 1,526

Source: SA: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1786-1850); BR/3/9, Wage book Henry Atkin and Oxley (1828-40); X306/4/1/1/1, Wage Book Firth Company (January 1844-November 1846); SFC: (1864), <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/> [accessed 22 March 2014].

*Insurance claims were one-off payments, not weekly payments

Table 3.2: Data on male wages, 1801-1864

Source	Date	Total number of weekly payments to men
Hague and Nowill	1801	1,450 ⁶¹¹
Henry Atkin and Oxley & Co.	1829	764
Thomas Firth & Sons	1846 (Jan-Nov)	1,459 ⁶¹²
Insurance claims ⁶¹³	1864	45*
		Total: 3,718

Source: SA: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1801); BR/3/9, Wage book Henry Atkin and Oxley (1829); X306/4/1/1/1, Wage Book Firth Company (January-November 1846); SFC: (1864), <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/> [accessed 22 March 2014].

*Insurance claims were one-off payments, not weekly payments

The records for these three companies were selected because they provided evidence of women working in Sheffield's metal trades. Other company wage books available such as those from Marshall and Mitchell, Sheffield Smelting

⁶¹¹ Including second payment for employees on 24 December.

⁶¹² Including overtime payments (1,373 without).

⁶¹³ The same individual flood claims as the female data.

Company, Joseph Wilks, and Spear and Jackson provided no evidence of women workers. This could indicate the limited number of women working in Sheffield's metal trades, and possibly the casual nature of women's employment. However, it must be noted that the workers' information in these records was often limited, making it impossible to define a worker's gender.⁶¹⁴ In contrast, the three company's records that were selected for this chapter provided a full name for each worker. Although the exact role of women within each company record was not indicated there were occasional references to female workers such as 'girl' or 'woman', or roles such as 'buffer' or 'burnisher' which are typically associated with women's work in the metal trades. The wages received by those under these four labels were comparable to those received by women who were identified in the wage books by their name. This evidence supports the notion that women employed by these three companies were performing paid roles in these companies as workers performing tasks in the metal trades. Such sources reinforce the evidence presented in chapters one and two, which demonstrated that women were often clustered in the finishing processes of metal goods, but could also be involved in a diverse range of work in the metal trades.

Table 3.3: Sheffield flood claims, 1864

	No. of claims	Total claimed	Total awarded
Damage to Property	6, 524	£367, 686	£259, 414
Injury to people	347	£21, 467	£5, 029
Loss of life	116	£45, 146	£9, 545
Total	6,987	£458, 552	£273, 988 ⁶¹⁵

Source: SFC: (1864), <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/> [accessed 22 March 2014].

The insurance claims have been catalogued and a full text is available online. This database provides a valuable resource for research into economic aspects of women's lives associated with Sheffield's metal trades by offering incidental evidence of their presence within the industry. Table 3.3 shows that not all claims were awarded, some were withdrawn and others were awarded at a level lower

⁶¹⁴ SA: MD 6175/1,2,3,4,5, Joseph Wilks, Iron Mongers; WOXR, George Wostenholm & Son; SJC/7, Spear and Jackson; SSC2/3/3, Sheffield Smelting Company.

⁶¹⁵ SFC: <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/aboutClaims.cfm> [accessed 21 August 2014].

than the original claim figure.⁶¹⁶ The data used for this chapter only includes those claims that were successfully awarded. Some wage figures in a claim were indicated with items lost and medical costs. The wages could not be separated from these claims as the exact amount of the collective claim had to be successfully received to be included in the data collection for this chapter, otherwise the wage received may have been inaccurate. On occasion, the insurance body disagreed with the wage requested by the claimant and awarded a lesser amount. Given that it would be difficult to establish the correct wage (the claimant or the insurance body), these claims have not been included. This was done to provide the most accurate wage figures for women working in Sheffield's metal trades.

The forthcoming analysis will only focus on monetary payments made by each of the companies. Wages could be paid by means other than money such as rent, board, food, clothes etc. Henry Atkin and Oxley & Co. wage books had two columns for payments to employees: the first appears to be the amount an employee earned before any deductions were made, and the second is what was taken home after deductions were made. Many of the female workers only had the second column completed, and therefore their monetary wage had no deductions in arrears or for in-kind payments. The Hague and Nowill, and Thomas Firth wage books only had one column for payment, indicating no deductions were made to the wages of their workers. Joyce Burnette provided limited data on women's wages in domestic and agricultural work that includes in-kind payments to argue that, 'ignoring the in-kind portion of the wage will bias the wage ratio down'.⁶¹⁷ However, aside from this small discussion in her book, she does not use this data within her analysis. She later acknowledged this omission: 'while I agree that my evidence relies on cash wages and usually ignores the in-kind component of wages, I do not think this creates a serious problem for my results.'⁶¹⁸ Previous research on wages in Sheffield's metal trades indicated that the wages analysed were also 'the gross earnings of adults i.e. before the deduction of rents and other

⁶¹⁶ SFC: Around $\frac{3}{4}$ of claims were awarded (by agreement); a considerable number were withdrawn (perhaps to be submitted by employers, or already beneficiaries of the Relief Committee, who had disbursed £20,000-worth of aid); and a small number were dismissed.

⁶¹⁷ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 95-6.

⁶¹⁸ J. Burnette, 'Reply to comments', *Social Science History* 33.4 (2009), p. 503.

payments'.⁶¹⁹ Furthermore, Leonard Schwartz and Penelope Lane argued, 'the money wage rate was probably the major component in the income of many urban dwellers as well as being a good indicator of what was happening with non-monetary forms of remuneration'.⁶²⁰ Therefore, the following analysis will not consider the limited evidence of payments in kind, but will consider the weekly and daily monetary wages women received for working in Sheffield's metal trades.

Whilst establishing wage levels it needs to be appreciated that it is not known whether weekly wages were based on the time worked or items produced within a given week. Joyce Burnette's analysis of women's wages indicated she was unsure if workers in Sheffield's metal trades were paid by piecework or by time.⁶²¹ It is argued that most male workers were paid by piece, although not always.⁶²² For example, in Britannia Metal company records, men were paid weekly and not by piecework.⁶²³ In saw manufacturing those paid by the day or week earned between 24s and 32s per week, whereas piecework was dependent on departments, ranging from '35s to 45s per week, whilst others restrict the earnings between 28s to 30s'.⁶²⁴ Therefore workers in saw manufacturing had the potential to earn higher wages through piecework although being paid weekly provided a more stable income and guaranteed form of employment. Larger manufacturers had a fixed minimum of work to offer their employees when trade was bad, particularly for the forgers and the grinders and less commonly for the cutlers, 'what is virtually a minimum wage is thus set, the scale varying with several occupations'.⁶²⁵ It is therefore important to consider how much women were paid, but also if women received the same stability in their employment that their male counterparts experienced. Commissioner reports will show the length of the working day for women, and the company wage books will show the employment

⁶¹⁹ S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 61.

⁶²⁰ L. D. Schwarz, *London in the Age of Industrialisation* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 166; P. Lane, 'A Customary or Market Wage: Women and Work in the East Midlands', in P. Lane, N. Raven and K. Snell (eds), *Women, Work and Wages in England, 1600-1850* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 105.

⁶²¹ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 74-8.

⁶²² S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 59.

⁶²³ J. E. Tyler, 'Wages and Hours in the Britannia-Metal Trade at Sheffield 1857-8', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 5 (1938), p. 33.

⁶²⁴ G. Holland, *Vital statistics of Sheffield (1843)* (London, 1843), p. 169.

⁶²⁵ G. Lloyd, *The Cutlery Trades: An Historical Essay in the Economics of Small-Scale Production* (2nd edn, London, 1968), pp. 255-6.

history of each woman and the regularity of weekly payments within this timeframe.

Women's wages in Sheffield's metal trades

Graph 3.1 below shows the mean weekly wage of 42 women workers, together with a buffer which was typically a female role. This data was collected from the three company records of Hague and Nowill (1786-1850), Henry Atkin and Oxley (1828-40) and Thomas Firth Company (January 1844-November 1846). The 43 weekly wages reflect a real variety in the wages women received. Out of the 43 women identified, 32 were paid under 12s per week (144d), although eight women received more than £1 for a weekly wage. This shows a significant range in the mean weekly wages women received. Graph 3.1 also shows that 28 women in graph 3.1 were paid under 8s per week (65 per cent). Significantly, the remaining 15 women (35 per cent) were earning a mean wage of at least 8s (96d) each week. This compares with observations made by contemporary commentators in Birmingham who considered those women earning wages 8s and over as high for women in Birmingham: 'in addition to being tolerably well paid with earnings of approximately 8s. to 10s. per week, girls and women gained some degree of independence [...] despite laboring twelve hours per day'.⁶²⁶ Carol Morgan stated that for nailors in 1866, 'the minimum rate was perhaps 7s, earned by youths and women'.⁶²⁷ Joyce Burnette who indicated that in the Birmingham toy trades women were paid between 7s and 10s verifies these wages.⁶²⁸ However, comparable weekly wages in Sheffield's metal trades for women were considered low compared to the wages men received. Britannia metal was a cheap substitute for silver or Sheffield plate. In a Britannia metal trade, the weekly earning for 'rubbers' (a role predominantly undertaken by women) was the lowest paid by the company, and women received an average of 7s per week.⁶²⁹ Overall, the daily

⁶²⁶ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p.83.

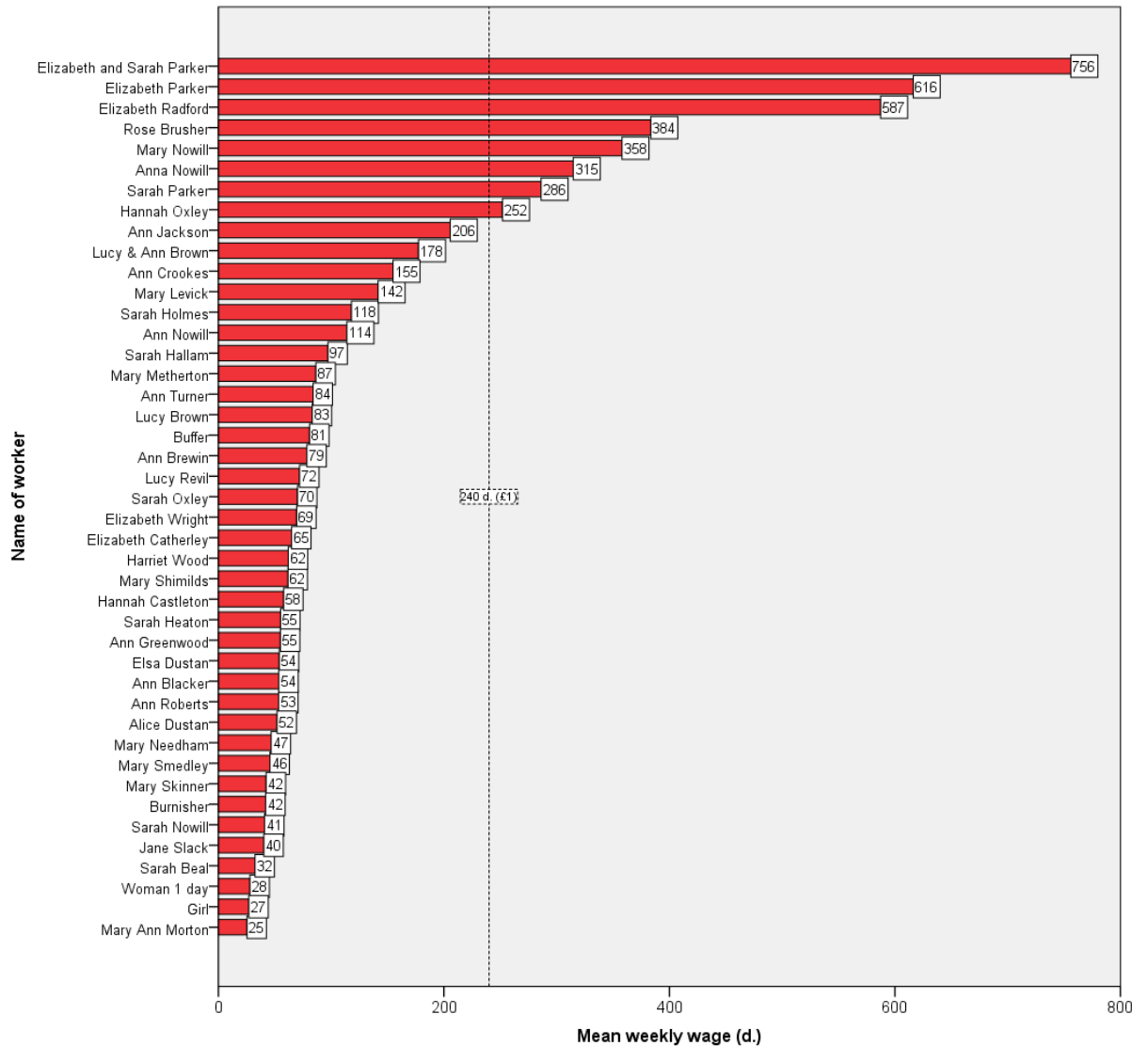
⁶²⁷ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 103.

⁶²⁸ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 77.

⁶²⁹ J. E. Tyler, 'Wages and Hours in the Britannia-Metal trade at Sheffield 1857-8', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 5 (1938), p. 33.

wages evident in the insurance claims show that women in the metal trades in both Sheffield and Birmingham were often highly paid compared to women working in other industries.

Graph 3.1: The mean weekly wage (in pence) for a woman during her period of employment in Hague and Nowill (1786-1850), Henry Atkin and Oxley (1828-40) and Thomas Firth Company (January 1844-November 1846)



Source: SA: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1786-1850); BR/3/9, Wage book Henry Atkin and Oxley (1828-40); X306/4/1/1/1, Wage Book Thomas Firth Company (January 1844-November 1846).

*Elizabeth Parker was the mother and Sarah and Elizabeth her two daughters.

Individual wages varied too. For example, Mary Levick received a large payment of £2 3s 9d on the 24 December 1835, whereas her third payment in the company records drops to 2s 11d on 16 September 1837. This was also the case for Elizabeth Radford and Rose Brusher, and it has not been possible to identify the reasons for this. Furthermore, Ann Jackson was paid £12 6s ½d on 21 September 1793, which slightly skews her average wage. There are several possible reasons why individual women's wages might vary. Seasonal demand for cutlery and opportunities for women to obtain casual employment as a result is one possibility. Associated with this is the prospect that some women were paid for multiple weeks in a single payment. However, this would not explain why some women received large amounts of money when they had just started employment in the company. Peter Garlick indicated that large payments given to male workers at the start of employment in the Hague and Nowill records were to pay off debts to a previous employer.⁶³⁰ What seems more likely in the case of Ann Jackson, given that Joshua Jackson left the company, is that Ann (presumably his wife) was paid his remaining wages or was given a pay-out from the company (perhaps for an accident in the place of work).

An examination of surnames of the women workers indicated that typically women linked to the company owners received the highest wages. Graph 3.2 divides the women workers into two categories –women who were linked to the family business, and all other women working in the company. Several women, including Anna Nowill, Elizabeth Parker, Sarah Parker, Hannah Oxley and Mary Nowill all received over £1 (240d) each week. These women were all related to the owners of the company. Elizabeth and Sarah Parker are significant for receiving the highest wages, albeit on one occasion – 24 December 1816. Elizabeth Parker appears in the wage list in 1824 with two girls, Elizabeth and Sarah (presumably her children), who worked during the profitable week before Christmas called the 'Bulls week'.⁶³¹ Graph 3.1 is based on the assumption that the daughters Elizabeth and Sarah Parker shared a wage, whilst their mother Elizabeth Parker had a

⁶³⁰ P. Garlick, 'An Old Sheffield Cutlery Firm: The House of Nowill, 1786-1825', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 7.4 (1955), p. 178.

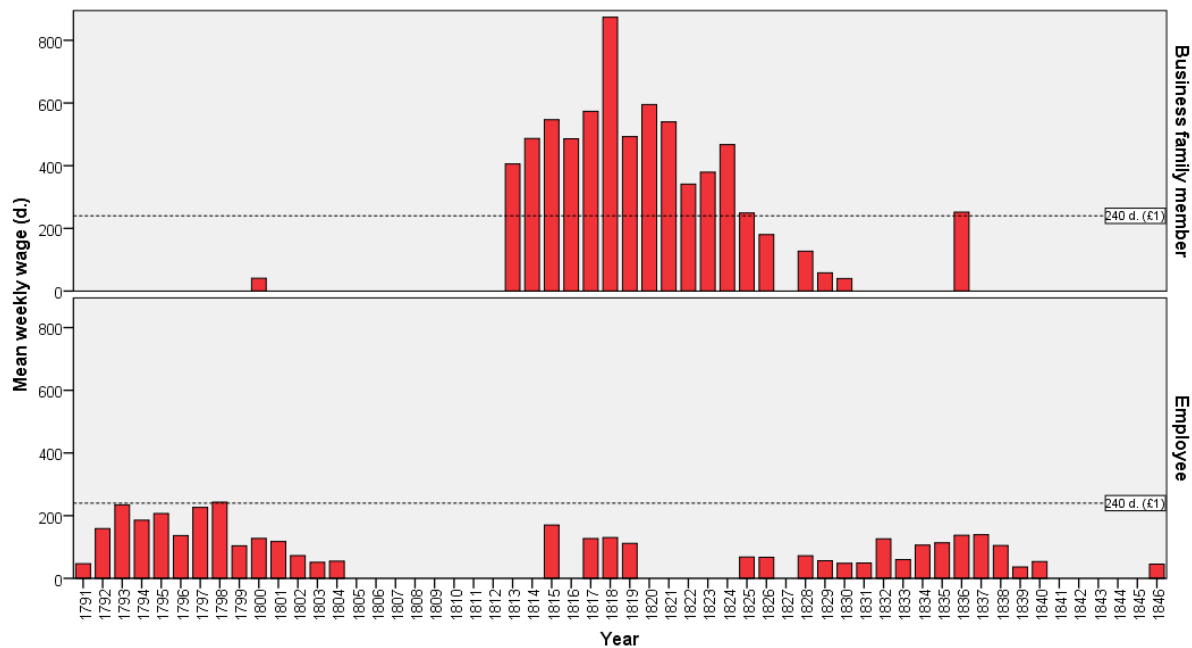
⁶³¹ SA: 04/2002, G. Nowill, *The Nowill Family and Gronvald Families: A History of Nowills, Cutlers of Sheffield* (1994), p. 14.

separate wage. Their employment indicates that women could be employed on a casual basis when the need arose, such as the period before Christmas when the workforce was increased. Johnson argued that, 'most successful Sheffield cutlery firms in the nineteenth century followed a well-trying recipe: set up family business (with an energetic head and plenty of off-spring), pay attention to quality, establish a well-recognised mark, and hit the road in search of orders'.⁶³² The detailed nature of the tasks women undertook in family businesses are not known. Thomas Nowill died on 28 December 1836 and in his will he made sure that female members of his family who had worked in his company received substantial payments: 'I give and bequeath unto my Granddaughters Elizabeth Parker and Sarah Banks, the wife of Matthew Banks late Sarah Parker spinster, the sum of fifty pounds each to be paid at the end of twelve months next after my decease.'⁶³³ This demonstrates that there were clearly economic advantages for women who were related to the owner of a metal trades company.

⁶³² M. P. Johnson, 'The History of Grinders' Asthma in Sheffield', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 11 (1981), p. 65.

⁶³³ National Archives (Public Records Office) [hereafter N.A. (P.R.O.)]: PROB 11/1704/200, Will of Thomas Nowill, Gentleman of Sheffield, Yorkshire, (9 October 1825).

Graph 3.2: The mean weekly wage in each year for women who were linked to the family business compared to the remaining women workers, 1786-1846



Source: SA: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1786-1850); BR/3/9, Wage book Henry Atkin and Oxley (1828-40); X306/4/1/1/1, Wage Book Firth Company (January 1844-November 1846)

* The number of women linked to a family business and women employees in each year:

Business family member: 1800 (1), 1813 (1), 1814 (2), 1815 (3), 1816 (4), 1817 (4), 1818 (1), 1819 (2), 1820 (1), 1821 (1), 1822 (1), 1823 (1), 1824 (2), 1825 (1), 1826 (1), 1828 (1), 1829 (1), 1830 (1), 1836 (1)

Employee: 1791 (1), 1792 (1), 1793 (1), 1794 (1), 1795 (1), 1796 (2), 1797 (1), 1798 (1), 1799 (2), 1800 (2), 1801 (3), 1802 (2), 1803 (1), 1804 (2), 1815 (2), 1817 (2), 1818 (2), 1819 (2), 1825 (3), 1826 (1), 1828 (5), 1829 (5), 1830 (2), 1831 (2), 1832 (1), 1833 (2), 1834 (3), 1835 (3), 1836 (1), 1837 (1), 1838 (1), 1839 (2), 1840 (4), 1846 (3).

How did women’s daily wages in Sheffield’s metal trades compare with those working in other parts of the country? Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf provide a useful overview of daily wages in England for unskilled women workers from 1260 to 1850. For the purpose of my study it is appropriate to focus on the period after 1740. The data presented on women’s average wages in England distinguished between women in casual work and women in long-term contracts. The mean daily wage for women in casual employment during the period 1740-1750 was 7.09d per day, and whilst during the period there was some fluctuation in daily wages for women, by the period 1840-1850 women’s daily wages had

decreased to 6.66d per day.⁶³⁴ In contrast, the mean daily wage for women in long-term contracts rose from 8.19d per day between 1740-1750, to 17.87 per day by 1840-1850.⁶³⁵ Hence, it can be seen that being in long-term contracts for women workers in Great Britain was both more secure and more financially rewarding. The insurance claims from 1864 provided daily wages. The types of jobs that were available to women could also explain women's low wages. It has been argued that, 'confining large numbers of women to a small number of occupations would lower the marginal product of labour in those occupations, decreasing women's wages without wage discrimination' – this type of discrimination is 'occupational crowding'.⁶³⁶ Women sometimes benefited from occupational crowding as it allowed them to work in roles that maximised their income as well as their output for the work undertaken.⁶³⁷ It is therefore important when considering wages to also consider the types of roles women and men were undertaking in the metal trades. Of the sources used in this chapter, only the insurance claims in 1864 provided information on both the wages of women and the types of metal trades and roles in which they participated in Sheffield's metal trades. It is therefore useful to compare the 29 women's wages from the insurance claims with the average daily wage for women in England for between 1840-50, which this was the closest decade average available in the data collection and is sufficiently close to 1864 to be relevant.

Evidence in Graph 3.3 below is based on wages received in individual claims by 29 women. The number of women engaged in each of these metal trades roles is identified in Table 3.4, below Graph 3.3. Evidence in Graph 3.3 below shows there was a distribution in the roles that women undertook in the metal trades based on insurance claims made in 1864. This data also showed the mean wages received by women for each of the roles they performed. The range of wages received by women can exemplified by comparing spoon rubbers who received a mean wage of

⁶³⁴ J. Humphries and J. Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England, 1260–1850', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.2 (2015), p. 432.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 432.

⁶³⁶ J. Burnette, 'An Investigation of the Female-Male Wage Gap During the Industrial Revolution in Britain', *The Economic History Review* 50.2 (1997), pp. 261-2.

⁶³⁷ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 142-45.

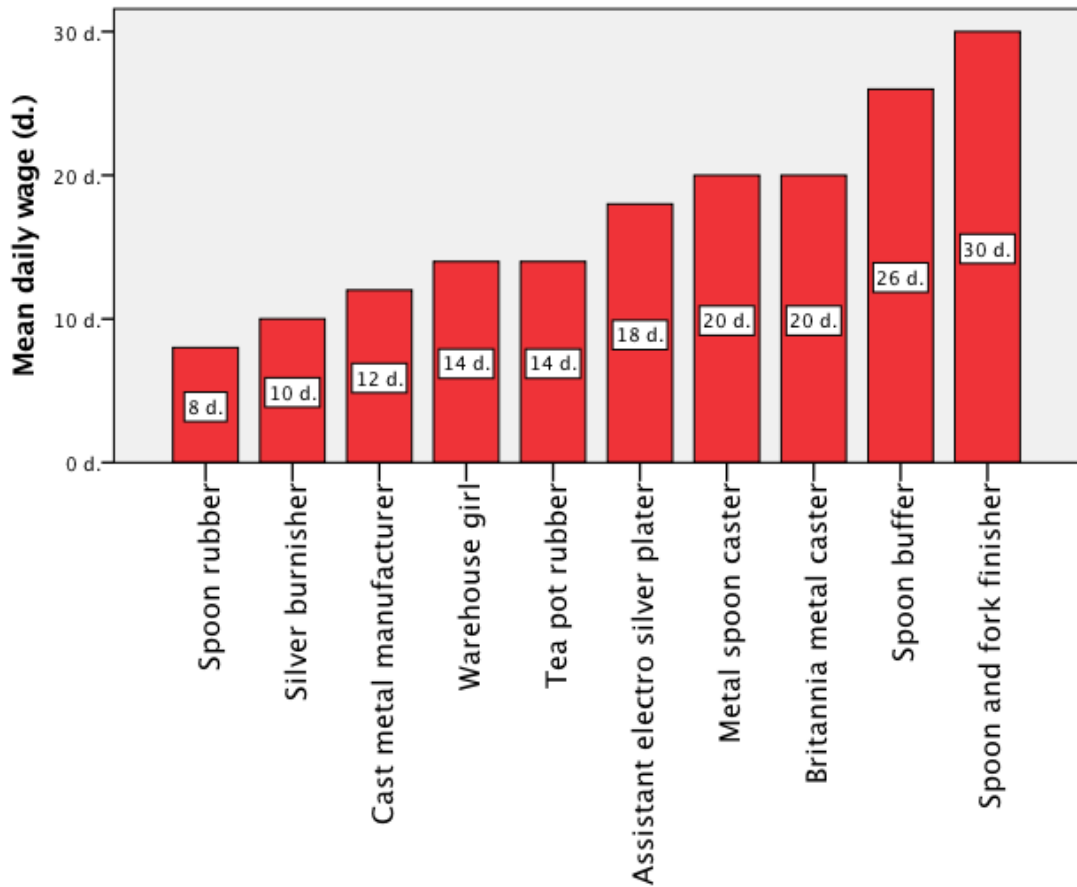
8d a day with spoon and fork finishers who received 30d each day, with the remaining trades falling between these two extremes.

Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf commented: 'we understand daily and weekly payments as remuneration for casual work.'⁶³⁸ Given that the data from insurance claims were one-off wage payments, it is impossible to determine if these daily wages reflect casual work or long-term contracts for women workers. However, by combining Graph 3.3 and Table 3.4 it is possible to compare the mean daily wage received by women in the metal trades with a mean 6.66d per day for female casual work and 17.87 for long term contracts between 1840 and 1850.⁶³⁹ Graph 3.3 shows that all 29 of the women in 1864 in Sheffield's metal trades received more than the mean for casual work. Graph 3.3 also shows that female assistant electro platers, metal spoon casters, Britannia metal casters, spoon buffers and spoon and fork finishers earned over 18d per day. Reference to chart 3.4 indicates that these metal trades (shown in bold italics) accounted for 9 (31%) of the 29 women. This suggests that women in Sheffield's metal trades had the potential to be highly paid compared to other women in other industries and locations in England. It remains to be established in this chapter if this work was on a regular basis and how women's wages compared to their male counterparts.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 410.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 432.

Graph 3.3: Daily wage (in pence) of women working in various metal trades indicated in the flood claims, 1864



Source: SFC: (1864), <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/> [accessed 22 March 2014].

* The number women undertaking each role were as follows:

Spoon rubber (3), Silver burnisher (9), Cast metal manufacturer (1), Warehouse girl (4), Teapot rubber (3), Assistant electro silver plater (1), Metal spoon caster (1), Britannia metal caster (1), spoon buffer (4), Spoon and fork finisher (2).

Table 3.4: Male and female roles indicated in the insurance claims, 1864

<u>Female role</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Male role</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Spoon Rubber	3	10.3%	Spoon and Fork Finisher/Filer	3	6.7%
Silver Burnisher	9	31%	Warehouse Manager	1	2.2%
Cast Metal Manufacturer	1	3.4%	Errand Lad	1	2.2%
Warehouse Girl*	4	13.7%	Britannia Metal Manufacturer	5	11.1%
Teapot Rubber	3	10.3%	Britannia Metal Smiths	11	24.4%
(Assistant) Electro Silver Plater	1	3.4%	Electro Plater	8	17.8%
Britannia Metal Caster	1	3.4%	Cast Metal Manufacturer	8	17.8%
Metal Spoon Caster	1	3.4%	Britannia Metal Spinner	5	11.1%
Spoon Buffer	4	13.7%	Britannia Metal Stamper	1	2.2%
Assistant Spoon & Fork Finisher	2	6.9%	Awl Blade Finisher	1	2.2%
			Book keeper	1	2.2%
Total	29	100%	Total	45	100%

Source: SFC: (1864), <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/> [date accessed 22 March 2014].

* Including an assistant warehouse girl

Table 3.4 also shows that women and men often performed different roles in the metal trades. Table 3.4 confirms that which the preceding chapters have shown – that women were more likely to perform the finishing roles and less likely to receive training for a skilled role, which illustrates that occupational crowding of women in the metal trades was certainly apparent. There were clearly factors

other than a gendered wage discrimination that impacted on a worker's wage. Five female roles were indicated as finishing roles, such as buffing, for which there is only one instance indicating the participation of a man, as a fork and file finisher. Thomas Firth's wage book revealed payments in nine instances to an undisclosed worker labelled by their role as 'Buffer' and three to a 'Burnisher' between 1833 and 1838. An average weekly wage was 3s 5d for a 'Burnisher' and 6s 5½d for a 'Buffer' (Graph 3.1). If these weekly wages are divided by five to calculate a daily wage a 'Burnisher' received 8d a day and a 'Buffer' received 15½d a day. The evidence suggests that women were generally paid less for the finishing roles in the metal trades, and perhaps these two cases refer to more than one week of work.

Women could be assistants to men, as in the case of Richard Beedham and his workers, discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Another example included George Wright, who was a 'warehouse manager', and in the same claim Mary Marsland was identified as a 'warehouse girl'.⁶⁴⁰ Three of the roles undertaken by women as indicated in the insurance claims were assistants (assistant electro plater, assistant warehouse girl, and assistant spoon and fork finisher), suggesting a hierarchy in the workplace in which women were at the bottom. Women who were assistants in the metal trades were paid less than men, although the more highly skilled electro silver plater assistant earned most in what was regarded as a 'highly labour intensive' role in the metal trades.⁶⁴¹ There were four notable roles indicated in the insurance claims that women performed: a Britannia metal caster, a metal spoon caster, an assistant electro silver plater and a cast metal manufacturer. These four roles were not in the finishing processes commonly associated with women's employment in Sheffield's metal trades as indicated in chapter one and chapter two. However, there was only one women in each of these four categories, and therefore they were the exception rather the norm. This evidence underlines that women had the potential to perform a range of roles in the metal trades, although the majority of women did cluster into the finishing

⁶⁴⁰ SFC: Claim 1585, Certificate Granted 14 June 1865.

⁶⁴¹ AO: Martha Barber, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; D. Higgins and G. Tweedale., 'The commercial development of the Sheffield silver and electro-plate industry 1840-1914', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 19 (1997), p. 64.

processes. Joyce Burnette raised the possibility that women could work outside their gendered roles, undertaking 'male jobs' determined by individual ability rather than dictated by gender.⁶⁴² Generally, women worked in certain roles that limited the wage they received. Yet even if women did not always experience these limitations in the work they undertook, they always received a lower wage than men, which suggests that women's wages were dictated by custom.

Male and female wages in Sheffield's metal trades

An understanding of the differences between male and female wages can be determined by analysing company records for 1801, 1829 and 1846.⁶⁴³ These years were selected according to the highest number of female entries in each company, and provide a monthly overview of the average female and male wages (aside from the Thomas Firth company for which December 1846 records did not survive). All three companies show slight variations in wage payments from month to month, although the only emerging seasonal pattern is in the month of December. Thomas Firth's wage books were not available in December 1846 but records from the other two companies reveal an increase in the wages being paid at this time. This reflected the fact that the Christmas holidays were preceded by 'a few weeks of hectic work called "calf", "cow", "bull" weeks, to accumulate wages which would last into the New Year'.⁶⁴⁴ The findings suggest that the mean average wage for women and men was maintained throughout the year.

The wage records confirm findings from chapters one and two that women were significantly outnumbered by men in Sheffield's metal trades. In the wage data for 1801, 1829, and 1846 men appear considerably more often than all available wage data for women for the much longer period 1786-1864 (as shown in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2). Another example includes the wage book for the Hague and Nowill Company on January 17 1801, in which 27 males were paid, whilst Elizabeth Catherley and Ann Jackson were the only two female employees paid

⁶⁴² J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 163-5.

⁶⁴³ SA: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1801); BR/3/9, Wage book Henry Atkin and Oxley (1829); X306/4/1/1/1, Wage Book Firth Company (January-November, 1846).

⁶⁴⁴ S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 62.

that week.⁶⁴⁵ Within the surviving wage books only three women worked in the Thomas Firth company, whereas 24 women worked for Hague and Nowill, and 12 for Henry Atkin & Oxley. The size of the workforce is reflected in the number of women who were working in each company. Hague and Nowill paid the largest outgoings for wages for men and women, which in 1801 amounted, on average, to £37 each week, followed by the Thomas Firth company in 1846 at £31 each week. It is these two companies which had the larger workforces, whilst Henry Atkin & Oxley, a much smaller company, in 1829 only averaged wage payments of £11 per week. In order to appreciate how economic conditions interacted with gender, it is important to compare women's and men's wages in Sheffield's metal trades. I will consider men's and women's pay generally, men's and women's pay for the same metal trades, and consider the different roles in the same metal trades undertaken by men and women.

The daily wages for men confirmed that women received from a third to half of the wages received by men.⁶⁴⁶ Graph 3.4 below shows that men were consistently earning more than women in the three companies, but that the extent of the gender wage gap varied between the companies across the period 1801-46. The Hague and Nowill company had the highest average wage for men and women despite this being the earliest wage data from 1801. This data confirms men's high wages in Sheffield's metal trades, as in 1764, 'a common laborer 1/ per diem; a carpenter 1/6; a journeyman cutler he said could earn 12/ a week and in certain businesses good workmen sometimes made 20/'.⁶⁴⁷ The evidence from 1801 suggests that male workers in the metal trades were on average earning over one pound every week, but men experienced a drop in wages to under one pound in the nineteenth century, whereas women's wages remained at a level well below one pound throughout the period. In November 1790 a convention was signed

⁶⁴⁵ SA: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1801).

⁶⁴⁶ J. Humphries and J. Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England, 1260-1850', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.2 (2015), p. 432; J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 72; M. Berg, 'What difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 31; P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (London, 1996), p. 146; K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialization in England, 1700-1780* (London, 2000), p. 54.

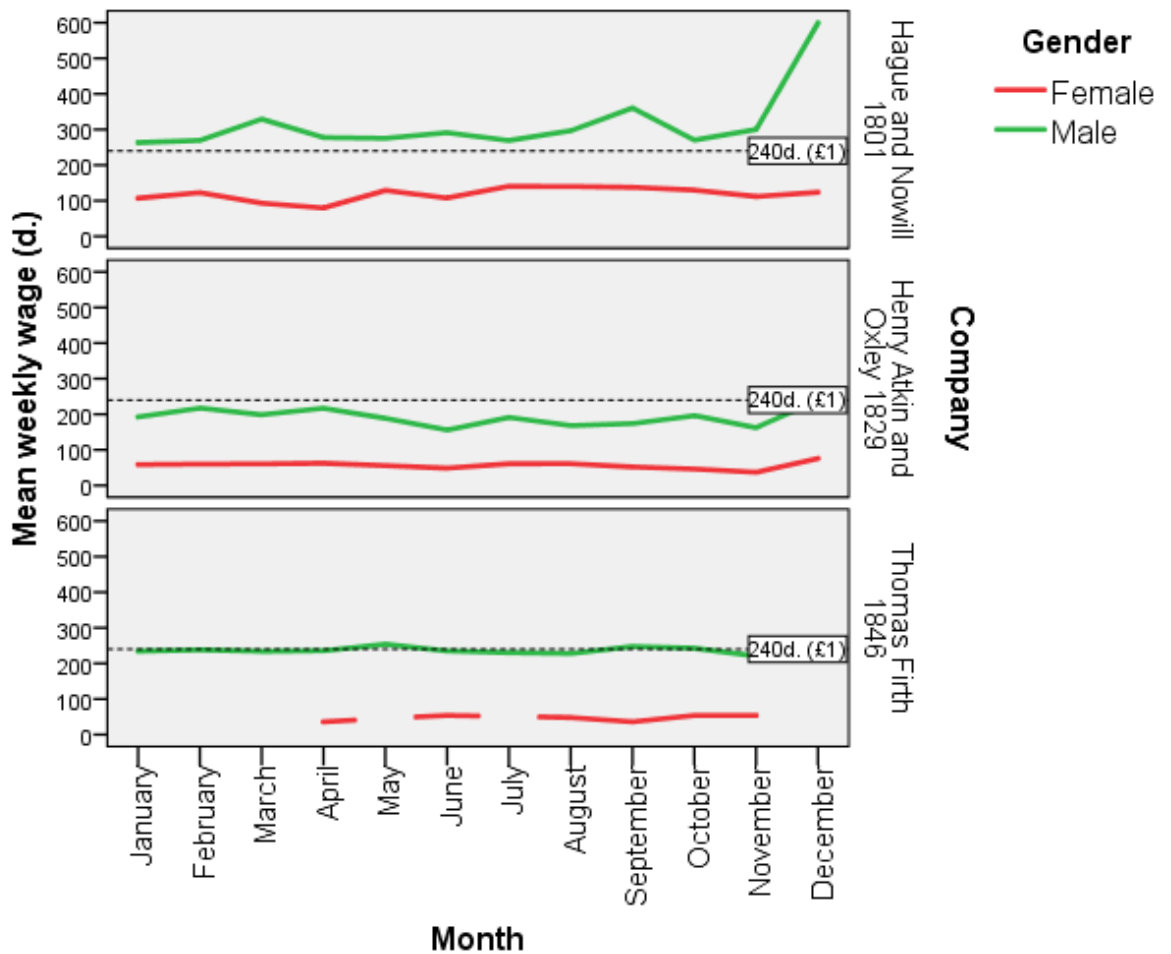
⁶⁴⁷ R. E. Leader, *Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century* (Sheffield, 1905), p. 5.

between Spain and England and the *Sheffield Register* expressed the hope that Sheffield manufacturers would 'flourish free and uninterruptedly to a greater degree than had been lately experienced'.⁶⁴⁸ Prior to the outbreak of war in 1793, Sheffield's exports of cutlery to France appear to have ceased with the French imposing a tariff in 1791. Nevertheless, Britain's total exports to Germany increased sevenfold between 1790 and 1800.⁶⁴⁹ It appears in 1801 that it was men who benefited economically from this prosperous time in the metal trades rather than women.

⁶⁴⁸ *Sheffield Register*, November 1790.

⁶⁴⁹ P. Garlick, 'An Old Sheffield Cutlery Firm: The House of Nowill 1786-1825', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 7.4 (1955), p. 176.

Graph 3.4: The mean weekly wage for men and women each month during the years 1801, 1829 and 1846



Source: SA: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1801); BR/3/9, Wage book Henry Atkin and Oxley (1829); X306/4/1/1/1, Wage Book Firth Company (January 1846-November 1846).

* The number of men (M) and women (W) working in each company on a monthly basis:

Hague and Nowill, 1801: Jan (M: 37, W:2), Feb (M: 33, W:2), Mar (M: 33, W:2), Apr (M: 34, W:2), May (M: 36, W:2), Jun (M: 37, W:2), Jul (M: 33, W:2), Aug (M: 36, W:2), Sep (M: 36, W:2), Oct (M: 34, W:2), Nov (M: 34, W:2), Dec (M: 37, W:2), Total for 1801 (M:50, W:3).

Henry Atkin and Oxley, 1829: Jan (M: 30, W:4), Feb (M: 21, W:3), Mar (M: 24, W:4), Apr (M: 18, W:4), May (M: 23, W:3), Jun (M: 16, W:4), Jul (M: 17, W:3), Aug (M: 16, W:4), Sep (M: 15, W:3), Oct (M: 17, W:4), Nov (M: 17, W:3), Dec (M: 21, W:2), Total for 1829 (M:50, W:5).

Thomas Firth, 1846: Jan (M: 40, W:0), Feb (M: 43, W:0), Mar (M: 41, W:0), Apr (M: 46, W:2), May (M: 51, W:0), Jun (M: 48, W:1), Jul (M: 48, W:0), Aug (M: 46, W:1), Sep (M: 37, W:1), Oct (M: 46, W:1), Nov (M: 34, W:1), Total for 1846 (M:127, W:3).

Graph 3.4 also shows that in 1829 the wage gap between men and women was

less pronounced than in 1801. The data in Graph 3.4 concerns three women workers in 1801 and 1846, but six women workers in 1829. In contrast, in 1846 the wage gap between men and these three women workers was the most extensive, with men receiving over three times the amount of that received by women, whilst women received the lowest wage out of the three companies despite it being the latest year in this sample. Historians have observed in other trades that the entry of women into an industry previously restricted to 'skilled' men prompted a rapid decline in the wage rate: 'it was not so much that women were getting the same wages as men, as that men were receiving the same rates as women'.⁶⁵⁰ It could be argued that as more women entered the workforce this limited the wages men received, thus reducing the wage gap between men and women. Thus, women's wages did not significantly change throughout the period and remained consistently lower than men's, confirming Pamela Sharpe's statement that women's wages were 'highly inelastic'.⁶⁵¹

Graph 3.5 below has grouped the roles women and men performed, as indicated in the insurance claims in 1864, into their specific metal trades and the finishing processes, providing a comparison of male and female daily wages, to show men were paid significantly more than women on a consistent basis. Women were earning between 9d less than men (mean daily wage in electroplating for men 27d and 18d for women) to 34d less than a man each day (mean daily wage in cast metal manufacturer for men 50d and 16d for women), with other metal trades falling between these two extremes. Robert Shoemaker argued that 'markedly lower wages received by women suggests that they performed less skilled tasks'.⁶⁵² The wage women received for performing the finishing roles in the metal trades was generally less than half the wage men received in the finishing roles category, this can also be explained by the types of skilled finishing roles men were performing and the metal trades in which they were involved. William Howson

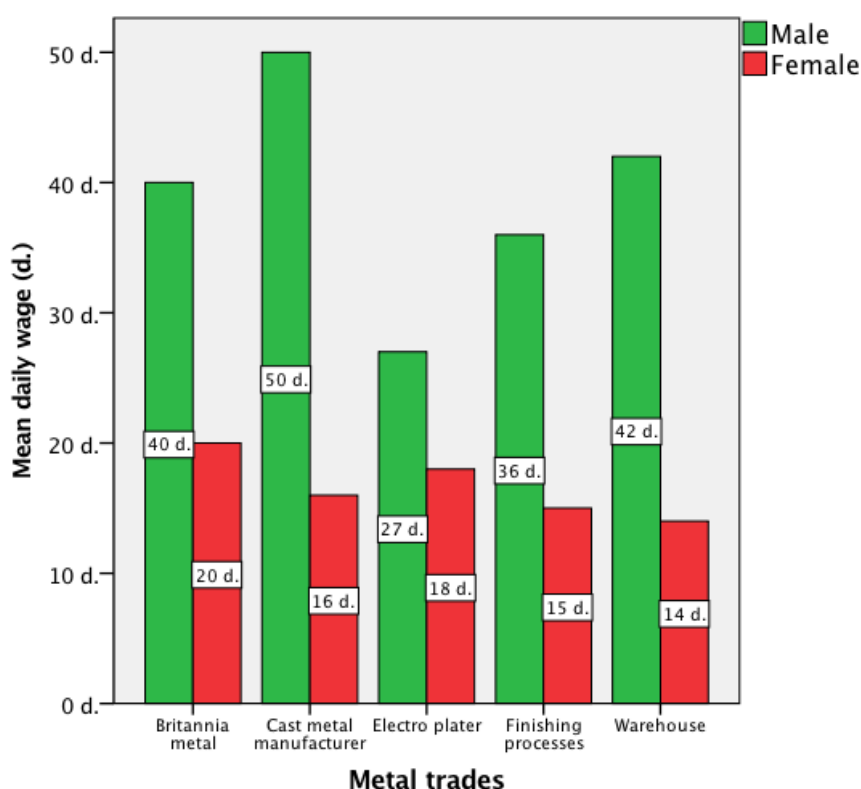
⁶⁵⁰ P. Lane, 'A Customary or Market Wage: Women and Work in the East Midlands', in P. Lane, N. Raven and K. Snell (eds), *Women, Work and Wages in England, 1600-1850* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 114.

⁶⁵¹ P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (London, 1996), pp. 145-6.

⁶⁵² R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London, 1998), p. 164.

was an ‘awl blade finisher’ who was paid 24d per day, 9d more than women’s average wage in other finishing processes.⁶⁵³ The only wage which was low for men in the data collected from the insurance claims in 1864 was for the ‘errand lad’ who claimed only 2s 11d for seven days loss of employment, which indicates both his age and the lack of skills required for this work.⁶⁵⁴ This wage was comparable to the female role of the ‘assistant warehouse girl’ who also earned 2s 11d for seven days of work.⁶⁵⁵ However, overwhelmingly men’s wages were consistently high compared to those received by women.

Graph 3.5: Wage comparison between men and women in similar metal trade roles indicated in the flood claims, 1864



Source: SFC: (1864), <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/> [accessed 22 March 2014].

* The number of men and women undertaking each role were as follows:

Men: Britannia metal (22), Cast metal manufacturer (8), Electro plater (8), Finishing processes (4) and warehouse (3).

Women: Britannia metal (1), Cast metal manufacturer (2), Electro plater (1), Finishing processes (21) and warehouse (4)

⁶⁵³ SFC: Claim 2289, Certificate Granted 8 June 1865.

⁶⁵⁴ SFC: Claim 1585, Certificate Granted 14 June 1865.

⁶⁵⁵ SFC: Claim 1585, Certificate Granted 14 June 1865.

The data in Graph 3.5 reflects the diverse nature of the roles undertaken in different metal trades in Sheffield, and the difficulty in grouping these occupations. George Holland observed in 1843: 'there is so great a difference in the work, and such diversity of talent in the workmen, that it is scarcely possible to give an average.'⁶⁵⁶ Both men and women performed a diverse range of roles (often in the finishing processes for women) helping to produce a range of metal goods, but when women and men were working in the same metal trades, men consistently earned more than women reflecting the different roles they undertook. The evidence from the insurance claims in 1864 show that women were limited to low paid roles, which supports the argument that both customary and market forces can explain the gendered wage gap.

Graph 3.5 also shows the average wages in the finishing process for women was 15d per day, which was slightly lower by 2.87d than the norm of 17.87d daily wages for women in other locations who were in long-term contracts for unskilled work, but over twice the amount compared to that received by women in unskilled casual employment.⁶⁵⁷ Variation in pay according to the role undertaken by women was also the case in other industries. For example, cotton pickers in Manchester received '4s to 8s per week' and 'the highest paying job employing women was that of stretching the yarn paid piecework, in which women could average 17s 6d per week'.⁶⁵⁸ Sidney Pollard provided some information on wages in Sheffield's light metal trades in 1850 revealing that women's wages could range between 5s and 11s per week, dependent on the role undertaken.⁶⁵⁹ These included burnishers and filers, and those who could earn the most at 11s were finishers in the Britannia metal trades. Chapters one and two have shown that women most commonly undertook work performing the finishing roles of metal goods production.

Wages could depend on the skill of the worker as well as the superiority of the

⁶⁵⁶ G. Holland, *Vital statistics of Sheffield (1843)* (London, 1843), p. 170.

⁶⁵⁷ J. Humphries and J. Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England, 1260–1850', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.2 (2015), p. 432.

⁶⁵⁸ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), p. 22.

⁶⁵⁹ S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 60.

manufactory. For example, wages of spring knife cutlers ranged 'for the best workers from 30s to 40s and for inferior work from 12s to 16s'.⁶⁶⁰ Furthermore, in the spring knife trade a 'few superior men may earn from 30s to 40s per week. In the first manufactories of the town, the average is from 16s to 25s. But in many of the inferior manufactories, the workmen are receiving no more than 12s or 16s'.⁶⁶¹ It has been argued that, due to the variety in the work and skill of the workers, making an assessment of their wage is 'vague and inadequate'.⁶⁶² However, the evidence presented here indicates that men were paid highly in Sheffield, and considerably more than women on a consistent basis, although women had the potential to be paid highly compared to women in other industries.

The regularity of women's work

The economic fortunes of women working in the metal trades were determined not only by their rates of pay but also by how regularly they worked in order to receive a monetary payment for this work. The company records used in this chapter only indicate a weekly payment, and therefore provide no insight into variation of work within each week but do show the length of service in each company and consequently the stability of women's work. Therefore, the regularity of women's employment will be determined by the proportion of weeks worked within a woman's employment history. The daily wages collected from the insurance claims do not provide the hours worked within the day, however commissioner reports include interviews with workers with evidence of the length of their working day.

Although female family members working in the company were receiving extraordinarily high wages during the nineteenth century, they were not consistently employed. Women workers (unrelated to the company owner) were more consistently employed across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and their wage levels were lower. Joyce Burnette acknowledged these difficulties,

⁶⁶⁰ G. Lloyd, *The Cutlery Trades: An Historical Essay in the Economics of Small-Scale Production* (2nd edn, London, 1968), p. 209.

⁶⁶¹ G. Holland, *Vital statistics of Sheffield (1843)* (London, 1843), p. 182.

⁶⁶² G. Lloyd, *The Cutlery Trades: An Historical Essay in the Economics of Small-Scale Production* (2nd edn, London, 1968), p. 209.

stating that 'while differences in productivity are sometimes difficult to estimate, we must attempt to do so if we wish to draw the correct conclusions from the wage gap we observe'.⁶⁶³ Maxine Berg also indicated the importance of not just understanding the data collected from weekly wages, but also the nature of that employment for individual women. She argued that, 'high earnings required not just high wage rates, but steady employment over the week, the seasons and the economic cycle'.⁶⁶⁴ She has stated that women's wages were higher in the newer industries, but that this came at a price, 'they were also volatile, or the wages of relatively brief "golden ages" [...] good fortune might be precarious and was frequently short-lived'.⁶⁶⁵ Understanding the regularity of women's work is essential to understanding the economic opportunities that arose from their employment.

This section will consider the regularity of women's work first by using the data from the three companies to determine women's length of service. Analysis of the weeks worked within women's employment in the companies will determine the level of stability this work offered them. Second, analysis of the commissioner reports will show the length of the working day for women employed in the metal trades. The evidence from Sheffield's metal trades suggests that although women could be highly paid, this was not always on a regular basis, and therefore indicates women's economic vulnerabilities.

Women's work has been regarded as highly sensitive to fluctuations due to a range of factors. We can see this in Sheffield, too. The company records from Hague and Nowill show that women were often a reserve army of labour. The numbers of both women who were family members working in the business and women workers employed in each year, reveals that women remained present in the workforce during the eighteenth century despite the French Wars which broke out in 1793. There was evidence of dissatisfaction in wages in Sheffield from 1796. The *Sheffield Iris* in 1796 revealed that the 'Master Manufacturers of Table Knives and

⁶⁶³ J. Burnette, 'An Investigation of the Female-Male Wage Gap During the Industrial Revolution in Britain', *The Economic History Review* 50.2 (1997), p. 272.

⁶⁶⁴ M. Berg, 'What difference Did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 158.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

of Spring Knives' declared that they could not accept the workman's demand for a wage increase, and among those signing the 'Spring knife Manufacturers' resolutions was the firm Hague and Nowill.⁶⁶⁶ There was a reduction in women's wages in Hague and Nowill in 1796, and one could wonder whether both the male and female workers were dissatisfied with these lower wages. Alternatively, it could have reflected dissatisfaction from male workers, which resulted in a decrease of women's wages in the company although it seems unlikely because women's wages increased after 1796.

However, no women were employed in Hague and Nowill between 1805 and 1814, which also coincided at a time when fewer men were being employed in the company, however, women's total absence shows their employment opportunities were more precarious than those of men. The American cutlery market was of great importance to Sheffield. The Peace of Amiens brought a brief period of prosperity in 1802-3, however the embargo from 1812 to 1814 destroyed the American market for Sheffield goods until 1815. After the boom following the peace of 1815, there was, on the whole, a general fall in the prices of cutlery until the boom of the early thirties.⁶⁶⁷ It is no surprise to find that women were the first to lose work in times of hardship in the metal trades.⁶⁶⁸ The wage books certainly reveal a decrease in male workers during this period, but it was women who were first to exit the companies.

The different economic experiences of the two types of women workers prevailed, with those associated with family companies remaining in work while other women metal workers were less fortunate (refer to Graph 3.2). Women linked to family companies appear to have entered those companies with relative ease from 1814. Women workers linked to a family company also remained in employment in the 1820s, whilst other unrelated women employees appear to have no employment opportunities in the three metal trades companies from 1820

⁶⁶⁶ *Sheffield Iris*, 14 October 1796.

⁶⁶⁷ P. Garlick, 'An Old Sheffield Cutlery Firm: The House of Nowill 1786-1825', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 7.4 (1955), p. 178.

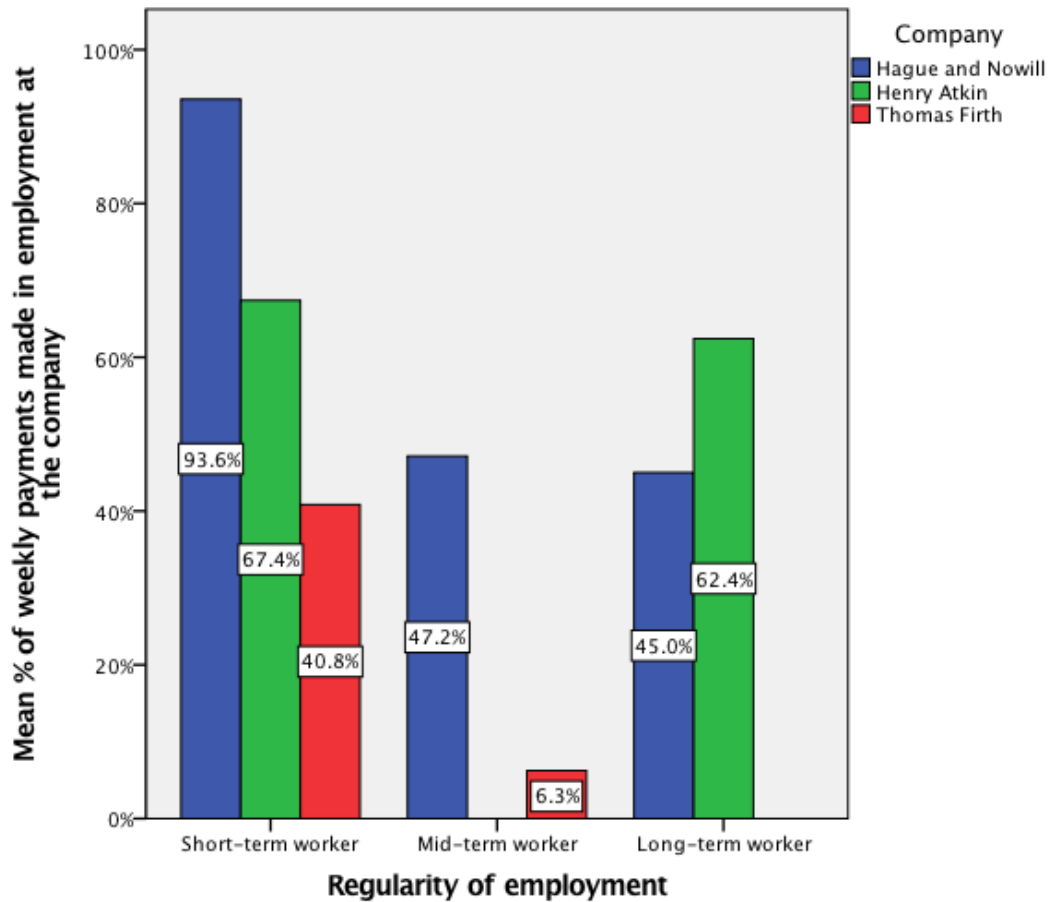
⁶⁶⁸ K. Honeyman, *Women, Gender and Industrialisation in England, 1700-1780* (London, 2000), p. 12; M. Berg, 'What Difference did Women's Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?', in P. Sharpe (ed). *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), p. 158.

to 1825. However, the disparity between the two groups of women was neither consistent nor enduring. Even women linked to a family company were unable to escape the difficulties the metal trades would face by the 1830s. The Hague and Nowill company records provided evidence of wages to 1850 although no female, family or other, was employed after 1838. This might be explained by the fact that 'between 1837 and 1843 the town underwent its most severe industrial and trade depression'.⁶⁶⁹ Sidney Pollard has estimated that during 1842-3, 18 percent of the town was unemployed, and 63 per cent partially unemployed.⁶⁷⁰ Again it can be concluded that women did not experience a stable form of employment in Sheffield's metal trades.

⁶⁶⁹ I. Inkster, 'Social Class and Popularized Culture in Sheffield During the 1840s', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeology Society* 11 (1983), pp. 82-3.

⁶⁷⁰ S. Pollard, 'Labour', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993*, vol. 2, *Society* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 265.

Graph 3.6: The percentage of time worked in the period of employment for short, mid and long-term women workers, 1786-1846



Source: SA: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1786-1850); BR/3/9, Wage book Henry Atkin and Oxley (1828-40); X306/4/1/1/1, Wage Book Firth Company (January 1844-November 1846).

* The number of short-term workers, mid-term workers and long-term workers in each company:

Short-term workers: Hague and Nowill (10), Henry Atkin (6), Thomas Firth (1).

Mid-term workers: Hague and Nowill (5), Henry Atkin (0), Thomas Firth (1).

Long-term workers: Hague and Nowill (11), Henry Atkin (6), Thomas Firth (0).

It is necessary to consider the regularity of employment over a prolonged period. This is an important consideration given that the usefulness of census abstracts in researching women's work is limited only to those in regular employment, which subsequently skews our understanding of the precise extent of women's participation as seasonal, part-time and casual workers.⁶⁷¹ This was calculated by collecting data on the duration of each worker's employment, using

⁶⁷¹ S. McGeevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), p. 507.

their start and finish dates to ascertain the number of potential weeks they could have worked, and relating this to weekly payments given in the wage books. All women in the three company's records have been divided into three groups for the following section: short-term workers were employed 0-3 months, mid-term workers 3-6 months and long-term workers for more than 6 months, which could exceed a year in employment.

The instability of women's work in the companies is clear when looking at the data provided by the company records. Out of 40 women indicated in the company records displayed in Graph 3.1 (excluding 'woman one day' 'buffer' and 'girl'), 17 were short-term workers, six were mid-term workers and 17 were long-term workers. Long-term women workers were the highest earning group and had the security of long-term contracts but they only worked on average for 48-63 per cent of the weeks indicated in the wage books. Penelope Lane undertakes the same process of examination for seasonal agricultural workers, finding that during the 1755 hay harvest at Welbeck, 'only 71 per cent of the 31 working days available were worked by any woman, while in the corn harvest of August and September a maximum of 55 per cent saw women in the fields'.⁶⁷² This suggests that women in the metal trades in long-term employment were in a better position than some other working women, as their work was a similar level of consistency and sustained throughout the year, as opposed to seasonal agricultural work. Short-term workers appear to have been working on a more regular basis at each company. These women may have been brought in for a short period of intensive activity at the company and were therefore likely to be employed for more of their time. Furthermore, short-term workers had a higher average wage than mid-term workers, although there were nine instances where a short-term woman worker was paid a sum of money in isolation, suggesting this may have been a form of settlement (for a work related injury, for example) with the company as opposed to being paid for work.

The regularity of women's work is significant not only in terms of how often

⁶⁷² P. Lane, 'Women in the Regional Economy: The East Midlands, 1700-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 1999), p. 150.

they were paid, but also in terms of how much time each working day they were able to undertake paid labour: 'for those women who were unable to commit to full time annual work, industrialization offered few gains.'⁶⁷³ In contrast 'women who were able to commit to long hours of continuous work outside the home [...] saw their relative position improve'.⁶⁷⁴ Thus, women working in Sheffield's metal trades were not working, or being paid, each week of the year. Women working in more than one company or being paid on a fortnightly basis could explain this. However, it is evident that women in Sheffield's metal trades were often casual employees, indicated by the significant number of short-term workers. In contrast, some women could seek work for a prolonged period but this did not necessarily provide them with the economic security of a weekly wage. Women were often entering a potentially precarious form of employment in this respect.

Women in Sheffield's metal trades were not protected by legislation with respect to the hours they could work until a later date when compared with other industries. The relative precariousness of women's work can also be related to the shorter hours they worked and limits on their ability to undertake paid labour in order to undertake unpaid domestic tasks. Joyce Burnette argued that, as well as differences in productivity, measurement error can partly explain the wage gap between men and women.⁶⁷⁵ Local factories were brought under legislation in the 1860s, but small workshops and home workers were not covered until 1878. The early Factory Acts were concerned only with the textile industries and coal mining. Women, and girls and boys under the age of ten were prevented from going underground in 1842 and this age was raised to 12 in 1860. This impacted upon the local mining industry, but all the legislation limiting the hours of children's labour in the textile mills was largely irrelevant to Sheffield. In almost all branches of local industry, especially in the insanitary workshops in the little masters courts, Sheffield's children remained unprotected until the end of the period under consideration. The Factory and Workshops Act 1867 limited a working day to 12

⁶⁷³ J. Humphries and J. Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England, 1260–1850', *The Journal of Economic History* 75.2 (2015), p. 430.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 430.

⁶⁷⁵ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 93.

hours for young people and women.⁶⁷⁶ The company records and insurance claims for workers in Sheffield's metal trades did not indicate the number of hours worked within a day, however, commissioner reports showed evidence of the long hours women worked.

The evidence from commissioner reports suggests that women did work long hours in the metal trades, following the same patterns of work as men. Geoffrey Tweedale stated that 'working hours [in the cutlery trade] were irregular, depending on the state of trade. In some of the domestic trades (where women and children were employed) a working day could last over 12 hours'.⁶⁷⁷ Women and girls made comments about their working hours that show the routine of their daily working lives. Evidence provided by 12 female metal workers indicated that ten of them started work between six or seven o'clock in the morning, while two started at nine o'clock. All 12 women worked until at least seven o'clock in the evening although one female stated that she 'generally goes [to work] about eight in morning, and works very often while 10 or 11 at night, and she stated she had done so from the first'.⁶⁷⁸ The role of a buffer, which was typically associated with women, often involved working 12-hour days.⁶⁷⁹ Girls in the workshop claimed they worked the same hours as the boys.⁶⁸⁰ Thus, girls were treated to the same working conditions in the hours they worked as boys in the workshop. Long hours could have implications for girls attending school with one interviewee commenting that, 'I have been to Queen Street night school a little. I don't go now, because the school begins at 6 and I don't leave work till 7'.⁶⁸¹

Women were clearly working long hours in Sheffield's metal trades. Elizabeth

⁶⁷⁶ M. P. Johnson, 'The History of Grinders' Asthma in Sheffield', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 11 (1981), p. 73.

⁶⁷⁷ SA: 19/2012, G. Tweedale, *Tweedale's Directory of Sheffield Cutlery Manufacturers 1740-2010* (2nd edn, 2014), p. 14.

⁶⁷⁸ SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. C. Symons, *Children's Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners, Trades and Manufacturers* (1843); SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. E. White's *Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission, Fourth Report* (London, 1865).

⁶⁷⁹ SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. C. Symons, *Children's Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners, Trades and Manufacturers* (1843), p. 25.

⁶⁸⁰ SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. E. White's *Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission, Fourth Report* (London, 1865), p. 42.

⁶⁸¹ SLL: 331.3 SQ, J. C. Symons, *Children's Employment Commission: Second Report of the Commissioners, Trades and Manufacturers* (1843), p. 35.

Watson commented she generally worked an 11-hour day as a buffer, 'I come generally at 8 in the morning and leave off at 7 in the evening, except on Thursdays, when we work til 8. I have 6s 6d a week, and work for one of the journeymen'.⁶⁸² Whereas a mother of two young girls revealed that 'buffing is men's work; it's very hard work; children under 13 couldn't do it; they work about 12 hours a-day at buffing'.⁶⁸³ Thus, women were regularly working a 12-hour day, which limits Joyce Burnette's argument regarding the affects of women's shorter working days on the ratio of the wage gap.⁶⁸⁴ This evidence on long hours is complicated by Sidney Pollard's argument that for both male and female hours of work in Sheffield's metal trades were irregular.⁶⁸⁵ For example, research on the Britannia metal manufacturers shows hours of work for men displayed with the possibility of a 58-hour week, although the information on weekly wages compared against yearly rates indicates that this was not regularly fulfilled.⁶⁸⁶ Furthermore, many Sheffield workers in the metal trades are noted to follow the 'Saint Monday' rule in which this day was taken off.⁶⁸⁷ Women appear to have worked the same long hours as men and in fact were perhaps working longer hours than other working women due to a lack of legislation and a six-day working week.

The significance of these findings for women is that despite work often being irregular, long hours meant women had to accommodate their domestic and work duties. There was some evidence to suggest a difference between the working patterns of girls and women who had domestic responsibilities. Women enjoyed a degree of flexibility to meet their families' domestic needs during the working day. For example, chapter two discussed evidence from commissioner reports to show that women would often stop work for two hours 'for meals and doing things in the

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶⁸⁴ J. Burnette, 'An Investigation of the Female-Male Wage Gap During the Industrial Revolution in Britain', *The Economic History Review* 50.2 (1997), p. 268.

⁶⁸⁵ S. Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield* (Liverpool, 1959), p. 61.

⁶⁸⁶ J. E. Tyler, 'Wages and Hours in the Britannia-Metal Trade at Sheffield 1857-8', *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 5 (1938), p. 33.

⁶⁸⁷ N. Thrift, 'The Geography of Nineteenth-Century Class Formation', in N. Thrift and P. Williams (eds), *Class and Space: The Making of Urban Society* (London, 1987), p. 35.

house, and on Thursdays and Fridays generally work until 9-9½pm'.⁶⁸⁸ Thus, women's other form of (unpaid) work in relation to domestic duties fitted into their working day. The commissioner reports also showed that long hours could require childcare arrangements between family members with one woman working at two in the afternoon until nine or ten at night, while her sister began at seven in the morning until two, so they could look after her baby.⁶⁸⁹ Joyce Burnette has argued that women were less productive as they worked fewer hours than men.⁶⁹⁰ This may be true of some women whose role as mothers and wives had to be accommodated alongside their role as producers of metal goods. The evidence from commissioner reports on women in Sheffield's metal trades predominately shows the working demands placed on women meant that they had to balance responsibilities associated with domestic and industrial work alongside one other.

Conclusion

Women in Sheffield's metal trades were overwhelmingly paid less than men. However, despite women working in Sheffield's metal trades being a minority in the workforce, a workforce of highly skilled well-paid men, the daily wage records suggest that some women experienced better financial opportunities than other women in more typical forms of women's work. Furthermore, a significant finding of this chapter is the differences in wages received by women workers who were a relation of the company owner, compared to those received by other women employed to work in the company. The difference in wage levels received by these two groups of women shows that women were not always confined to a lower wage dictated by their gender. It also reflects the importance of family in this working context. However, the payments these women received were often irregular and they appear to reflect the exception rather than the rule.

Although occupational crowding was apparent in most of the roles women undertook, there was some evidence that women could participate in a more

⁶⁸⁸ SLL: 331.3 SQ, *J. E. White's Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (London, 1865), pp. 24-5.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶⁹⁰ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 93.

varied range of roles than current literature suggests. The roles women often performed in the metal trades show that female labour was typically associated with the lower paid finishing roles or through a hierarchal system based on skill in which women were assistants to men. A comparison with men's work suggests that through structural inequality, women did not receive as many opportunities to perform skilled work compared to their male counterparts. This confirms findings in chapter one which showed limited training opportunities for women in Sheffield's metal trades. However, the insurance claims indicated a variation in the gender wage gap, suggesting that there were some opportunities for women to perform highly skilled work in order to gain a higher wage, although evidence of this kind was limited. Thus, discrimination took the form of limiting the skills women could acquire and constraining them to less skilled and lower paid forms of employment in Sheffield's metal trades.

This chapter challenges the argument presented by Joyce Burnette that women worked shorter days and were thereby less productive than men, which resulted in a lower wage received by women. Commissioner reports reveal that women worked long days and a lack of legislation meant these working days could be longer than those worked by women in other trades and localities. However, women's employment could be precarious in Sheffield's metal trades and this feature of women's work may have produced a lower market wage for their labour. Women could work in companies for prolonged periods, although they did not always work consistently throughout the year. Working in Sheffield metal trades could be financially profitable for women but it was also a precarious form of work.

Thus, women appear to have earned less than men both because of a lack of employment opportunities and because their wage was dictated by customary practice that awarded lower wages to women than to men. Women in Sheffield's metal trades had to contend with a range of constraints to their work in the metal trades and their lower wages were shaped by both custom and market forces. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, chapter one has shown a slight increase in women entering this form of work as a proportion of the growing population

during the mid nineteenth century. What remains to be established is how women employees and those women who had family links to the metal trades used their income derived from the metal trades, and a consideration of this will be the focus of chapter four.

Chapter four
Women and their money: Inheritance, savings and charity in Sheffield's
metal trades.

Figure 4.1: Portrait of Elizabeth Parkin, 1766



Source: Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham: Artist Unknown, Oil on Canvas, 125 x 97 cm, (1766).

In the mid eighteenth century the portrait of Elizabeth Parkin hung in the entrance of her home at Ravenfield Hall. It depicts her with 'an astute expression and a slight smile, wearing a rich blue velvet gown, gracefully holding a red flower, against a landscape background'.⁶⁹¹ The portrait depicts a woman who, through inheritance from a metal trades business and her own economic endeavours, became a prominent and wealthy figure in Sheffield. In 1729, Thomas Parkin, bequeathed his entire personal estate, including his ironmonger business, to his

⁶⁹¹ Clifton Park Museum Website (<http://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/9920/portrait-of-elizabeth-parkin-english-school>), [accessed 22 February 2015].

granddaughter, Elizabeth.⁶⁹² Although Thomas had three sons, one died prematurely, and two established their own businesses, while his grandsons moved out of the area, leaving Elizabeth as heir to his metal trades business. In 1748, Elizabeth also inherited the gunpowder manufacturing business near Bath belonging to her father and uncle.⁶⁹³ Thus, Elizabeth inherited substantial wealth, property and business assets from her family.

However, Elizabeth's economic prominence in Sheffield was not solely due to inheritance. Joseph Hunter reported that Elizabeth managed an extensive mercantile concern 'with a masculine spirit and uncommon ability'.⁶⁹⁴ A stocktaking book taken shortly before her death makes reference to metal trades goods she traded in such as, 'Hardware (mainly cutlery), "Shop stock" (quantities of steel and iron), Furnace utensils, Iron and Steel at Furnaces, Debts and credits in Cutlers ledger', revealing the involvement of Elizabeth Parkin with the metal trades.⁶⁹⁵ During her life, she invested in transport improvements such as a Turnpike Road, had shares in the Darnall colliery and was the treasurer of the proprietors of the River Donn, which was leased to 'Messers' Atkinson, Broadbend and Smith'.⁶⁹⁶ She also lent money to metal trades workers, evident from a list of cutlers in debt to her that included five 'widow cutlers'.⁶⁹⁷

The success of the business enabled Elizabeth to venture into other forms of wealth creation, such as new business in the coal industry, investment in turnpikes, and money-lending to the people of Sheffield. Elizabeth's wealth is evident from her purchase, in cash, of Ravenfield Hall for £28,000 and her loan of £11,000 to John Spencer of Cannon Hall for a house in Hathersage, for which he paid her, in addition to interest of four per cent, £220 each year between 1749 and

⁶⁹² West Yorkshire Archive Service (Wakefield), [hereafter WRY]: X591/773, BB 445/596, Thomas Parkin Deeds, (1729).

⁶⁹³ B. A. Holderness, 'Elizabeth Parkin and her Investments, 1733-66,' *The Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 10 (1973), p. 86.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁶⁹⁵ SA: OR2, Stocktaking Book, (31 May 1766-January 1767)

⁶⁹⁶ SA: OR3, Walter Osborne and Thomas Gunnings' accounts as partners in trade settled and signed by the partners at Ravenfield, (9 February, 1768).

⁶⁹⁷ SA: OR2, Stocktaking Book, (31 May, 1766-January 1767). Debts in cutlers' ledgers including five women working as cutlers: Widow Bildon £2 18s 8d; Widow Loy £6 17s 2d; 96; Widow Brightmoore £3 17s 2½d; Widow Taylor Smith 16s 3d February 1764; Widow Ibbison & son were in credit £2 10s 11d.

1766.⁶⁹⁸ Elizabeth Parkin never married, and her will revealed that she bequeathed to her cousin, Walter Osborne, her business ventures, and also requested that '£500 to be distributed yearly, every 21st June, amongst such of the poor of and belonging to the town of Sheffield as they should think fit'.⁶⁹⁹ Although Elizabeth's financial position was not typical of women engaged in Sheffield's metal trades, her case indicates some of the ways women might engage financially with the metal trades: notably inheritance, investment and charity.

The preceding chapters have highlighted women's potential to earn high wages, particularly for those employed in a family business. Although women workers in the metal trades had the potential to be well paid compared to other trades and locations, this form of work was precarious in its nature and, therefore, it is important to consider how women dealt with financial difficulties when work was scarce. This chapter considers the attempts women made to deal with the consequences of their working conditions by managing their own finances.

The scarcity of sources means that women's role in the economy has often been overlooked.⁷⁰⁰ However, the sources used here demonstrate that it is possible to explore women's economic agency independently from that of men. A range of documents have been used to provide evidence of the role of women in the local economy, including court records, probate inventories, insurance claims, poor law records, workhouse records, and archives of friendly societies and religious groups.⁷⁰¹ However, there are difficulties concerning the access to, and survival of, some important local sources. The issues of workhouse records and court records were discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Some documents reveal much

⁶⁹⁸ SA: OR1, Ledgers or receipts and cash payments relating to Elizabeth Parkin's Ravenfield estates, apparently kept by Thomas Birchby, steward to Madam Parkin, (1734-66).

⁶⁹⁹ NA (PROB): PROB 11/231/316, Elizabeth Parkin Will, (19 January 1763).

⁷⁰⁰ W. D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain Since the Industrial Revolution* (2nd edn, London, 2006), p. 38.

⁷⁰¹ J. Spicksley, 'Usury Legislation, Cash, and Credit: The Development of the Female Investor in the Late Tudor and Stuart Periods', *Economic History Review* 61.2 (2008), pp. 277-301; J. Maltby, "'The Wife's Administration of the Earnings'?" Working-Class Women and Savings', *Continuity and Change* 26.2 (2011), pp. 187-217; E. Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 2012); D. Green, 'To Do the Right Thing: Gender, Wealth, Inheritance and the London Middle Class', in A. Laurence, J. Maltby and J. Rutterford (eds), *Women and their Money 1700-1950: Essays on Women and Finance* (London, 2009); A. Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2015).

about the economic lives of women in Sheffield, but do not specify whether they were metal trades workers. The Sheffield and Hallamshire Bank account records from 1831 provide details of money moving in and out of individual accounts, yet these accounts were identified only by a name, without reference to address or occupation, in contrast to the records available from 1857. Finding references to women can prove time consuming and they are often difficult to access. It is important to use all the sources at our disposal, however patchily they survive.

Prior to the census of 1841, locating women metal trades workers in sources is not helped by limited occupational information, which primarily takes the form of trade directories. This is evident in Julie Banham's research on eighteenth-century probate inventories from Hallamshire, which included only 17 women, of which one woman identified her occupation as a grocer, while the remaining 16 were identified by marital status.⁷⁰² Julie Banham's research did not go beyond 1788, as the detail in probate inventories diminished after this and there was no legal requirement for this form of document after 1830.⁷⁰³ Penelope Lane suggests cross-referencing probate inventories with trade directories 'to pinpoint those different economic interests that formed the backbone of "middling" women's wealth and methods of earning income'.⁷⁰⁴ Trade directories used in this chapter provide information on only a limited number of women in the metal trades who had a probate inventory, as trade directories were only produced in Sheffield from 1774 just as probate inventories were becoming less frequent and less detailed. Evidence is also drawn from individual charities such as the William Parkin Charity and Mary Parsons Charity, a case study of the Sheffield Hallamshire Bank, a collection of wills from both men and women in the metal trades, and two probate inventories. In order to gain an insight into women's economic opportunities it has been necessary to draw upon and cross-reference a range of sources and, where possible, to build up case studies in relation to women in Sheffield's metal trades.

⁷⁰² J. Banham, 'Politeness in Eighteenth-Century Sheffield; Practices, Accoutrements and Spaces for Sociability', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2011).

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁴ P. Lane, 'Women in the Regional Economy: The East Midlands, 1700-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 1999), p. 25.

The disappearance of probate inventories in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is offset by the use of wills. Wills can describe property, bonds, a business, moveable goods, and the personal details to whom these assets are passed. However, this only related to women who had financial means to require a will, and therefore omits poorer women whose experiences are reflected in a later section of this chapter concerning charities and savings. Penelope Lane investigated patterns of inheritance of widows in a small industrial town in the East Midlands, in which both women and men's wills were examined. She argued that the provision men made for their wives, family members and other kin frequently obviated any idea that their widows would become economically inactive.⁷⁰⁵ In Sheffield, the family was important in running and maintaining the business. Geoffrey Tweedale states that in Sheffield this was partly a reflection of the father-to-son nature of the cutlery trade, with apprenticeship often the route into the industry, and was also a reflection of the small size of many firms, with female family members providing both a workforce and managers.⁷⁰⁶ This chapter supports his argument and shows that women could participate in a family business when a wife acquired it from her late husband. David Green showed that many men made attempts in their wills to safeguard their own reputation beyond the grave, and it is important to consider if this had implications for women in Sheffield's metal trades.⁷⁰⁷

Discussions of women's economic lives during this period have often focused on poverty, powerlessness, a lack of money and of work which received a wage and domestic work which was unwaged.⁷⁰⁸ Alexandra Shepard's recent study of people's self-description of their 'worth' in court sees women as agents rather than victims in economic trends. Shepard states: 'this is not to suggest that gender inequality is an unimportant aspect of economic history, but to argue that we need

⁷⁰⁵ P. Lane, 'Women in the Regional Economy: The East Midlands, 1700-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 1999), p. 57.

⁷⁰⁶ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), pp. 875-91.

⁷⁰⁷ D. Green, 'To Do the Right Thing: Gender, Wealth, Inheritance and the London Middle Class', in A. Laurence, J. Maltby and J. Rutterford (eds), *Women and their Money 1700-1950: Essays on Women and Finance* (London, 2009), p. 133.

⁷⁰⁸ A. Laurence, J. Maltby and J. Rutterford, 'Introduction' in A. Laurence, J. Maltby and J. Rutterford (eds), *Women and their Money 1700-1950: Essays on Women and Finance* (London, 2009), p. 1.

to explore women's impact in the early modern economy as much as the early modern economy's impact on women.⁷⁰⁹ It is also important to consider marital status in a study regarding the economic life of women. The marital status of a woman is significant in a discussion concerning the form and extent of women's economic agency, which this chapter will focus upon. Despite the 'the persistence and power of coverture' recent studies have acknowledged ways in which married women negotiated around these restrictions.⁷¹⁰ Eleanor Hubbard states that concerns about economic order often conflicted with sexual anxieties 'creating unexpected opportunities for women'.⁷¹¹ My thesis concerns a male dominated working environment in which both gender and class shaped different economic prospects for businesswomen (and women working in the family business) and female employees in Sheffield's metal trades, and this chapter will show that there were 'unexpected opportunities' for women and that they exercised some economic agency.

This chapter will also consider charity as an economic activity. It has been argued that charitable work was, for many women, a defining feature of urban life.⁷¹² During the period, charitable work was often regarded as 'women's work' for middle-class women.⁷¹³ Charity therefore provides a useful way to evaluate women's economic agency. Indeed, it has been suggested that, 'women might have more influence in shaping welfare provision in a philanthropic, local system than in a state-directed system which gave more power to male policy-makers and marginalized women.'⁷¹⁴ Frank Prochaska calculated that in the nineteenth century half a million women in England devoted nearly all their leisure time to charitable work, and another 20 thousand did full-time professional work for

⁷⁰⁹ A. Shepard, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy', *History Workshop Journal* 79 (2015), p. 2; A. Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2015).

⁷¹⁰ T. Stretton and K. Kesselring, 'Conclusion', in T. Stretton and K. Kesselring (eds), *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World* (London, 2013), p. 264.

⁷¹¹ E. Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 2012), p. 2.

⁷¹² S. Pinches, 'Women as Objects and Agents of Charity in Eighteenth-Century Birmingham', in R. Sweet and P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 65.

⁷¹³ Western Bank Library, Sheffield: 3B 305.4209410903 (B), C. Balfour, 'Women the Pioneer of Progress', in C. Balfour (ed.), *Working Women of this Century: The Lesson of Their Lives* (3rd edn, London 1868), pp. 1-2.

⁷¹⁴ M. Daunton, *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London, 1996), p. 12.

charities.⁷¹⁵ Furthermore, Sylvia Pinches stated that ‘during the long eighteenth century bourgeois women, circumscribed by law and convention, often treated as objects by their men folk, could only express agency in relation to objects more powerless than themselves’.⁷¹⁶ Did women and men who gained wealth from the metal trades support women ‘more powerless than themselves’?⁷¹⁷

Charity was of particular importance to working women when times were hard. Findings in Chapter three which stated that women experienced precarious employment opportunities, suggest there may have been a need for financial support for women in the metal trades. Charitable organisations were ‘part of the urban environment’ which had an, ‘especially important’ impact on working-class women and children.⁷¹⁸ Peter Mandler argued in 1990 that accounts of charity had focused on the giver rather than the receiver, limiting understanding to a cultural history of the upper classes.⁷¹⁹ Charitable assistance from the rich to poor was an essential way to preserve social order.⁷²⁰ Thus, many women in Sheffield’s metal trades were either agents or objects of charity, depending on their social status and wealth. With this theme in mind, and given that inheritance is more likely to refer to businesswomen, savings accounts will be included in this analysis. Josephine Maltby has shown that savings accounts provide the opportunity to uncover working-class women’s economic lives.⁷²¹ Sheffield and Hallamshire Bank was one of the largest British savings banks of the period, and records have been researched to determine the age, marital status and role of women from the metal trades who had a savings account in this bank. This will provide insight into the financial activities of women workers as well as businesswomen in Sheffield’s metal trades.

⁷¹⁵ F. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*, (Oxford, 1980), p. 21.

⁷¹⁶ S. Pinches, ‘Women as Objects and Agents of Charity in Eighteenth-Century Birmingham’, in R. Sweet and P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 85.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷¹⁸ J. Kleinberg, *The Shadow of the Mills: Working-Class Families in Pittsburgh, 1870-1907* (Pittsburgh, 1989), p. 268.

⁷¹⁹ P. Mandler, ‘Poverty and Charity in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis: An Introduction’, in P. Mandler (ed.), *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 1; H. Cunningham, ‘Introduction’, in H. Cunningham and J. Innes (eds), *Charity, Philanthropy and Reform from the 1690s to 1850* (Basingstoke, 1998), p.11.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷²¹ J. Maltby, ‘“The Wife’s Administration of the Earnings”? Working-Class Women and Savings’, *Continuity and Change* 26.2 (2011), pp. 187-217.

I will show how some women in Sheffield's metal trades actively took control of their money. Whilst chapter one has shown the limited opportunities for women to enter the metal trades, inheritance could involve substantial sums of money and assets related to the business which women actively sought to protect. Charitable help was available to, and sought by, women who had family involved with the metal trades in Sheffield. Finally, savings accounts were opened by female metal trades workers irrespective of their marital status. These findings build upon chapter three, which demonstrated the economic opportunities experienced by some women in Sheffield's metal trades, showing that despite being a minority group, women in Sheffield's metal trades could be agents managing their own economic stability.

Inheritance

Inheritance provides an opportunity to consider both the material wealth of women associated with the metal trades and their position within the family business. The documents included in this analysis are probate inventories and wills, and analysis of these is followed by a discussion on the inheritance of trademarks. Wills refer to property rights and/or land, whereas probate inventories include moveable goods in a home. Not many men and even fewer women made a will and those who did were undertaking requirements of *bona notabilia*.⁷²² These requirements included the possession of personal goods valued at five pounds or more, and estates worth at least five pounds. For those who had not made a will (termed intestate) their family still had to seek probate in a church court, which in turn appointed administrators to execute the disposal of the estate.⁷²³ The proportion of wills which were made by women could be as much as

⁷²² Research in Stockport revealed around five per cent of dying adults made a will. An additional 2.5 per cent died intestate, with enough personal property to qualify for letters of administration, in A. Owens, 'Property, Gender and the Life Course: Inheritance and Family Welfare Provision in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Social History* 26.3 (2001), p. 306.

⁷²³ D. Green and A. Owens, 'Middle-Class Metropolitan Estates, 1800-50: Probates and Death Duties Revisited', *Historical Research* 70.173 (1997), p. 295; D. Green and A. Owens, 'Gentlewomanly Capitalism? Spinsters, Widows, and Wealth Holding in England and Wales, c. 1800-1860', *Economic History Review* 3 (2003), pp. 510-16.

33.9 per cent in London in 1850⁷²⁴, whilst 28 per cent of all wills made in Birmingham and Essex were made by women between 1780 and 1850⁷²⁵, and significantly Maxine Berg found in the late eighteenth century 22.8 per cent of wills made in Birmingham and 18.1 per cent in Sheffield were made by women.⁷²⁶

Using wills to investigate women in the metal trades is challenging given that very few females recorded their occupation.⁷²⁷ Maxine Berg's research found that between 1700-1800, 329 wills were made by women in Sheffield, a figure slightly higher than elsewhere in the country, but that many women did not identify an occupation.⁷²⁸ In comparison, her sample indicated that 25.3 per cent of men in Birmingham and 41.1 per cent in Sheffield who left a will worked in the metal trades. This chapter will uncover what the wills, which were left by women engaged in the metal trades, tell us about women's financial and economic experiences. Hannah Barker and Mina Ishizu's sample included four per cent of wills written by women: 'married women rarely made wills in this period and those widows and spinsters who did were described according to their "civil status" rather than by occupation.'⁷²⁹ However, they do suggest cross-referencing trade directories with wills to address this issue, which will be applied in this chapter.⁷³⁰ The following analysis based on inheritance therefore reflects a selective group of seven females who both met the requirements of *bona notabilia* and also provided occupational information linked to the metal trades based on the trade directories database used in chapter one. George Levick's will, alongside his wife Ann's will, has also been included as a case study to provide information on how women inherited and bequeathed a business. Together this produced a sample of seven documents related to women in the metal trades (four wills, one

⁷²⁴ D. Green and A. Owens, 'Middle-Class Metropolitan Estates, 1800-50: Probates and Death Duties Revisited', *Historical Research* 70.173 (1997), p. 295.

⁷²⁵ L. Davidoff. and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (2nd edn, Oxon, 2002), p. 273.

⁷²⁶ M. Berg, 'Women's Property and the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24.2 (1993), p. 237.

⁷²⁷ D. Green and A. Owens, 'Middle-Class Metropolitan Estates, 1800-50: Probates and Death Duties Revisited', *Historical Research* 70.173 (1997), p. 307.

⁷²⁸ M. Berg, 'Women's Property and the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24.2 (1993), p. 236.

⁷²⁹ H. Barker and M. Ishizu, 'Inheritance and Continuity in Small Family Businesses During the Early Industrial Revolution', *Business History* 54.2 (2012), p. 229.

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

probate inventory and two administrative bundles of intestate documents which included inventories), and a case study of the Levick family business.

Research on inheritance and gender has often focused on the property rights of women indicated in wills. Amy Erickson has shown that single and widowed women who were not constrained by coverture rights had virtually the same property rights as men, the extent of which was unlike elsewhere in Europe.⁷³¹ It has also shown that real estate was considered a secure funder of *rentier* incomes while businesses were not.⁷³² Some attention has been given to the inheritance of businesses in the context of family. Hannah Barker and Mina Ishizu found evidence that family firms in Liverpool and Manchester were reluctant to dispose of a business upon the death of the proprietor, and Geoffrey Tweedale refers to the importance of women within family businesses in Sheffield's cutlery trade after the death of their husbands.⁷³³ The focus of this chapter relates to the inheritance of a metal trades business and its associated assets. What were the opportunities for women inheriting a metal trades business in Sheffield, and how did a woman who owned a metal trades business bequeath the business and its associated assets? The type of assets predominantly bequeathed in relation to the metal trades include the control of the business, stock, working tools, the workshop and cash. The following section is organised by a discussion on each of these assets in wills and then probate inventories, followed by a discussion on the informal inheritance of trademarks and reputation.

Women who inherited a business in Sheffield's metal trades could successfully continue this business. This success can be measured by both the length of time a woman ran the business and the expansion of the business output during her tenure, both of which were discussed in chapter two. Women living in Burgess Street were not the exception to the rule, and the following case study of George

⁷³¹ A. Erickson, 'Coverture and Capitalism', *History Workshop Journal* 59 (2005), p. 3.

⁷³² A. Owens, 'Property, Gender and the Life Course: Inheritance and Family Welfare Provision in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Social History* 26.3 (2001), p. 306.

⁷³³ H. Barker and M. Ishizu, 'Inheritance and Continuity in Small Family Businesses During the Early Industrial Revolution', *Business History* 54.2 (2012), p. 239; G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 883.

and Ann Levick reflects the experiences of women inheriting and bequeathing a metal trades business. The will of George Levick stated that he left his metal button-making business to his wife until his son Edward was 21 years of age.⁷³⁴ A newspaper advertisement in 1815 notified George's customers that Ann would be taking over the business: 'A. Levick continuing scale pressing and horn button business; thanks for past custom to late husband and self; moving from Hollis Croft and Solly Street to Pond Street.'⁷³⁵ Ten years later, a trade directory reveals that Ann Levick was running her late husband's button-making business and had expanded the products they manufactured to include haft and scale pressers. Furthermore, the entry revealed that the business was an agent for the brass founders Hoddinott and Everitt in Birmingham.⁷³⁶ Pamela Sharpe's case study of Hester Pinney in the seventeenth century has shown that inheritance for the 'older, unmarried women could [enable her to] occupy an intriguingly powerful economic position'.⁷³⁷ It was not just Ann Levick's role that was paramount to the success of the business in Sheffield, but also her daughters', as George's will stated that the children were to be maintained by Ann, as long as they 'continue to reside with her and attend to the said business'.⁷³⁸ It has been argued that those who inherited businesses were likely to be much less successful than those who founded them, but the experience of Ann Levick shows that women who inherited their businesses could be very successful, as together with the help of her daughters Ann Levick expanded their production by linking with related metal trades businesses outside Sheffield.⁷³⁹

Women in Sheffield's metal trades remained in the business for a significant time. Ann Levick's will and her trade directory entry reveals she continued the business for at least 16 years after George Levick's death in 1812, until 1828 when

⁷³⁴ BL: vol. 157, f.171, Will of George Levick, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (1812).

⁷³⁵ *Sheffield Iris*, 14 March 1815.

⁷³⁶ SLL: R. Gell, *Directory of Sheffield*, (1825).

⁷³⁷ P. Sharpe, 'A Woman's Worth: A Case Study of Capital Accumulation in Early Modern England', *Parergon* 19.1 (2002), p. 180.

⁷³⁸ BL: vol. 157, f.171, Will of George Levick, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (1812).

⁷³⁹ M. Rose, 'Beyond Buddenbrooks: The Family Firm and the Management of Succession in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in J. Brown (ed.), *Entrepreneurship, Networks and Modern Business* (Manchester, 1993); M. Daunton, 'Inheritance and Succession in the City of London in the Nineteenth Century', *Business History* 30.2 (1988).

her son joined the business.⁷⁴⁰ These findings are in contrast to those of Alistair Owens, who stated that family firms were 'disposable' and well over two thirds of businesses taken over by a widow in each sector continued for less than five years after a testator's death.⁷⁴¹ Hannah Barker stated that only '10 per cent of businesses headed by women lasted over a decade',⁷⁴² although more recently she argued that family businesses were often continued after initially being inherited as they were considered as valuable going concerns.⁷⁴³ Chapter two showed evidence to support women's continuation in the running of a family business, but also revealed businesswomen in Burgess Street whose sons' nearby expanding businesses were in contrast to their mothers' weakening financial position, evident by a growth in debt.

During the period women were much more likely to inherit a business on a time-limited basis, limiting the opportunities for businesswomen in the favour of male heirs, a pattern that was also evident in Sheffield's metal trades.⁷⁴⁴ However, evidence from Sheffield also showed that the inclusion of a child in a business did not necessarily mean the widow lost her business. In 1828 Ann Levick and her son entered their business into a trade directory; however, by 1833 it appears the son had left the business and Ann was left in control.⁷⁴⁵ Women often worked alongside their sons and remained active in the running of a metal trades business once their son became of age, and could even continue their business if their son decided to leave the business. When a business became a partnership with a child, women's names remained as the business name, suggesting that their reputation in the trade and their skills were still required for the success of a business. Maxine Berg concluded that women were important in decision making regarding the disposition of their family wealth and that women in Sheffield's metal trades

⁷⁴⁰ SLL: J. Pigot, *Yorkshire Directory* (1828).

⁷⁴¹ A. Owens, 'Inheritance and the Life-Cycle of Family Firms in the Industrial Revolution', *Business History* 44.1 (2002), pp. 29-31.

⁷⁴² H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 129.

⁷⁴³ H. Barker and M. Ishizu, 'Inheritance and Continuity in Small Family Businesses During the Early Industrial Revolution', *Business History* 54.2 (2012), p. 239.

⁷⁴⁴ A. Owens, 'Property, Gender and the Life Course: Inheritance and Family Welfare Provision in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Social History* 26.3 (2001), p. 311.

⁷⁴⁵ SLL: J. Pigot, *Yorkshire Directory*, (1828); W. White, *History and General Directory of the Borough of Sheffield* (1833).

were not only important in decision making, but could override their late husband's decisions in the best interests of a family or the business.⁷⁴⁶ Geoffrey Tweedale stated that although widows in Sheffield's cutlery trade 'could be vital to the succession' of a business, they only stepped forward if their family lacked a male heir.⁷⁴⁷ Family ownership in Sheffield's cutlery and metal trades was 'particularly persistent' which, it has been argued, was due to the father-to-son nature of the trade. Yet this also enabled women to gain skills and a reputation in this form of work, which might explain why a number of women had longer periods in business than we might expect.⁷⁴⁸

Despite evidence of some women's success in taking over a metal trades business, there were restrictions that favoured men in relation to inheritance. Maxine Berg found that a re-marriage attachment to legacies was not widely practiced in the metal trades community in contrast to some other seventeenth century communities.⁷⁴⁹ However, George Levick's will indicated that if Ann Levick remarried this would prohibit her ownership of the business. Also, if George's daughters were to marry, their husbands were to have no control over the business.⁷⁵⁰ George Levick clearly regarded his business to be a blood family affair. Furthermore, if the son Edward or Ann Levick were to die before Edward reached the age of 21, then the business was to be sold and profits split between the remaining family members in equal shares.⁷⁵¹ A number of widows and children in Sheffield would not have had the opportunity to run a business as it was sold immediately upon the death of the husband. This was common in other trades and locations in order to provide money to support families.⁷⁵² Charles Hall passed on his entire silversmith company to two men who were entrusted to see that the business was sold and converted into money (£100) to help his widow, Sarah,

⁷⁴⁶ M. Berg, 'Women's Property and the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24.2 (1993), p. 248.

⁷⁴⁷ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 883.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 881.

⁷⁴⁹ M. Berg, 'Women's Property and the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24.2 (1993), p. 248.

⁷⁵⁰ BL: vol. 157, f.171, Will of George Levick, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (1812).

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵² R. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780–1870: A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies Amongst the Leeds Middle Classes* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 149.

through her life, and for the maintenance and education of his children.⁷⁵³ When businesswomen died intestate, the remaining female members voluntarily gave the power of the business to the male in the family. Hannah Patten had four daughters who granted permission for their brother, William, to take over dealing with their mother's possessions, including the business.⁷⁵⁴ Hannah Wilde did not make a will so, she being intestate, her goods alongside £330 of cash were, by permission of her daughter and son, to be released to their brother George Wilde.⁷⁵⁵ However, the case of the cutlery business owner Hannah Broomhead indicates that bequeathing a business was not always governed by gender. In 1778 Hannah bequeathed her cutlery business to her two daughters and son, giving equal shares of her land and business to each of them to 'share and share alike'.⁷⁵⁶ Thus, Hannah Broomhead did not place any importance on gender roles in the workplace, but focused instead on dividing her different assets equally regardless of gender.

My findings concerning the inheritance of a workshop also provide insight into gendered roles in Sheffield's metal trades. Ann Pass was a scissor smith who passed on her dwelling house and a workshop in Trippet Lane to Joseph Pass, her son. Although the house, 'the hearth of working tools being in the workshops' and 'two workshops situated and standing within the yard adjoin the aforesaid dwelling house' went to the son Joseph, 'I do hereby direct and declare that the monies arising from the said two last mentioned workshops for rents shall be paid into the proper hands of her my said daughter to and for her own sole and separate use and benefit'.⁷⁵⁷ Ann's daughter was married to the silversmith Thomas Rufter but if Ann's son were to die, then the property would be passed onto whomsoever he chose rather than to the daughter, possibly indicating that neither the daughter nor her silversmith husband were involved in the family business. Ann Pass found a way to evade the laws of coverture when she

⁷⁵³ SA: SY183/F5/1, Charles Hall Will, (6 December 1782), Proved at York, (6 February 1783).

⁷⁵⁴ BL: vol. 127, f., Administration Bundle with Inventory of Hannah Patten, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (September, 1783).

⁷⁵⁵ BL: vol. 121, f., Administration Bundle with Inventory of Hannah Wilde, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (August, 1777).

⁷⁵⁶ BL: Will of Hannah Broomhead, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (September 1792).

⁷⁵⁷ BL: vol. 149, f.123, Will of Ann Pass, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (March, 1805).

bequeathed the rental income of her workshops to her daughter, by legally declaring that the rental income was for her daughter's 'sole and separate use and benefit' which meant that it was designated as her 'separate property'.⁷⁵⁸ This was a legal means of protecting a woman's property or income via a trust, regardless of her marital status. It was not uncommon for women to seek ways of protecting financial assets and 'abandoning the application of strict legal rules and resorting to concepts of natural justice.'⁷⁵⁹ Nicola Phillips has argued that coverture was by no means a universal block to married women's trading activities, and 'within equity married women could contract on the basis of their separate property'.⁷⁶⁰ The example of Ann Pass shows the ways in which women involved in Sheffield's metal trades also protected their financial assets through inheritance.

The ironmonger Mary Truelove also conformed to gendered roles, as her daughter was bequeathed the shop, whereas to her son she left, 'all my working tools now used in the business [...] and being in and about the smithy and workshop in high street in Sheffield aforesaid'.⁷⁶¹ This suggests that the children performed specific roles in the business prior to the death of their mother, with the son producing goods and the daughter selling them. Maxine Berg found that men in Birmingham were more likely than those in Sheffield to leave their workshop and land to their wives and daughters, due to more women participating in Birmingham's metal trades and the more complex social and occupational structures there.⁷⁶²

Hannah Green and her son, who lived in Burgess Street, continued running their business together for 40 years. When she died the remaining personal estates and the value of the personal effects of Hannah Green totalled £140 and was to be shared between her children. They included 'household goods, wearing apparels, book debts and other debts' and, interestingly, included no tools, suggesting that as

⁷⁵⁸ BL: vol. 149, f.123, Will of Ann Pass, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (March, 1805).

⁷⁵⁹ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 69.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁷⁶¹ BL: vol. 154, f.35, Will of Mary Truelove, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (May, 1810).

⁷⁶² M. Berg, 'Women's Property and the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24.2 (1993), p. 244.

the business was in partnership, these went straight to her son, John Green.⁷⁶³ However, when there was only a female heir who was a blood relation, then women experienced no such restrictions on inheritance of a workshop. In May 1791, the scissor smith Mary Redfearne bequeathed her daughter 'all that Messuage Or tenement wherein I now dwell together with the workshops smithies and appurtenances thereunto belonging and all and every other my leasehold messuage and tenements and premises with their appurtenances and also all the rest residence and remainder of my estate'.⁷⁶⁴ Thus, women were often constrained by gendered roles in the inheritance of the property associated with work in the metal trades, unless they were the only remaining heirs who were a blood relation to the family business.

Inheritance of a business could result in the accumulation of large amounts of money and businesswomen sought to protect their daughters' inherited assets from their husband in relation to coverture rights. Hannah Patten was clearly a successful and wealthy businesswoman in the cutlery trade, indicated by a bond left to her son William to 'the sum of two thousand pounds', which was high compared to 76 per cent of a sample of wills taken from Manchester and Liverpool that were worth less than £500.⁷⁶⁵ Hannah Green's sons (who did not inherit the business) and each of her four daughters received £20. Hannah ensured the money did not go to her daughters' husbands, and 'that the several legacies so given to them respectively shall not be subject or liable to the control of debts or engagements of their respective husbands'.⁷⁶⁶ This was not unusual and women often had their inheritance protected in relation to coverture in a will, particularly in a will from another woman.⁷⁶⁷ Women could also limit the opportunities of men, as exemplified in the case of Mary Redfearne's son-in-law George Vickers. George

⁷⁶³ BL: vol. 135, f.225, Will of Hannah Green, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (May, 1791).

⁷⁶⁴ BL: Vol. 135, f.225, Inventory of Mary Redfearne, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (May, 1791).

⁷⁶⁵ H. Barker and M. Ishizu, 'Inheritance and Continuity in Small Family Businesses During the Early Industrial Revolution', *Business History* 54.2 (2012), p. 229.

⁷⁶⁶ BL: vol. 135, f.225, Will of Hannah Green, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (May, 1791).

⁷⁶⁷ A. Erickson, 'Coverture and Capitalism', *History Workshop Journal* 59 (2005), p. 13; M. Berg, 'Women's Property and the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24.2 (1993), p. 248.

and Mary were both scissor smiths, but in Mary's will, George only received money for his children at £25 apiece for when they were 21 years old. The wills that have been examined suggest that patterns of inheritance were not affected by gender but more by family ties and they served to provide a means of financial security and independence for the women who received the bequests. Women also used wills to control their resources and retain them within the conjugal family.

One could not run a metal trades business without tools, and the monetary value of these objects in the two probate inventories of businesswomen in the metal trades is striking. Hannah Barker notes the little attention businesses are given in wills, with only 40 per cent of wills from Manchester and 26 per cent from Liverpool discussing this; however, a business can usually be implied by the transfer of stock and/or tools.⁷⁶⁸ Furthermore, Maxine Berg stated that workshops and tools were bequeathed 'to some extent' to wives and daughters, and this is evident in Sheffield's metal trades.⁷⁶⁹ Mary Redfearne's inventory of goods, personal estate, household goods and stock-in-trade totalled £80 and a leasehold and smithy tools were valued at £95 10s.⁷⁷⁰ Hannah Wilde was a silversmith in 1781 and her probate inventory gives a detailed account of the property, household goods and tools, revealing their worth. In the smithy there were itemised smithy tools, hammers, weights, scales and instruments to undertake the business totalling £30 16s 9d.⁷⁷¹ The significant findings from this are the extent of the list of work related items, and that the tools from the business comprise nearly half of the estimated wealth of Hannah Wilde. Furthermore, the number of tools suggests that Hannah had several people working for her. Julie Banham's research on inventories in Hallamshire during the eighteenth century found several male metal trades workers' inventories had greater sums of inventoried wealth invested in husbandry implements than in metal-work tools, whereas my findings show that the majority of the value of women's inventoried goods were related to the metal

⁷⁶⁸ H. Barker and M. Ishizu, 'Inheritance and Continuity in Small Family Businesses During the Early Industrial Revolution', *Business History* 54.2 (2012), pp. 231-2.

⁷⁶⁹ M. Berg, 'Women's Property and the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24.2 (1993), p. 248.

⁷⁷⁰ BL: vol. 135, f.225, Inventory of Mary Redfearne, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (May, 1791).

⁷⁷¹ BL: vol. 121, f, Administration Bundle including Inventory of Hannah Wilde, Parish of Sheffield, Doncaster Deanery, Diocese of York, (August, 1777).

trades.⁷⁷² Inheritance of a metal trades business and its assets could allow women more economic opportunities, and a greater economic worth.

A large part of the reputation of a business resided in its trademark. Inheriting a business trademark maintained a company's reputation and profits. Marks were used to identify a craftsman's work and to preserve the reputation of Sheffield's goods.⁷⁷³ For example, Elizabeth Whiteley supervised 20 scissor-smiths in 1851 and insisted on stamping the firm's products with the name 'E. Whiteley'.⁷⁷⁴ Trademarks were granted to individual craftsmen after each had completed an apprenticeship and had become a freeman of the company. These enabled consumers to know who had produced the goods, and producers could subsequently demand high prices if the company recognised by trademark had a good reputation. It was not until the Trade Marks Registration Act of 1875 was introduced that the formal definition of a mark was afforded, which made it illegal for the false marking of goods or imitation of trademarks where it was 'with intent to defraud or to enable another to defraud'.⁷⁷⁵ David Higgins noted that a mark granted by the Company of Cutlers' was different to other trademarks: 'these marks could be sold as personal property, the current holder did not have to be the same person originally awarded the mark by the Company [...] consequently, from a consumer perspective, there was no guarantee that marks awarded by the Company of Cutlers' indicated trade origin.'⁷⁷⁶ This issue had particular consequences for women.

Following the Third Act of Parliament in 1801, women were officially prohibited from using their late husband's trademark. It was possible for women to try and circumvent this restriction and in April 1801, the filesmith Martha

⁷⁷² J. Banham, 'Politeness in Eighteenth-Century Sheffield; Practices, Accoutrements and Spaces for Sociability', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2011), pp. 159-60.

⁷⁷³ J. Unwin, 'The Marks of the Freemen of the Cutlers' Company, 1924-91', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 40.

⁷⁷⁴ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 883.

⁷⁷⁵ J. Mercer, 'A Mark of Distinction: Branding and Trade Mark Law in the UK From the 1860s', *Business History* 52.1 (2010), p. 21.

⁷⁷⁶ D. Higgins, "'Forgotten Heroes and Forgotten Issues": Business and Trademark History during the Nineteenth Century', *Business History Review* 86 (2012), p. 282.

Wilkinson was alleged to have been illegally using a trademark.⁷⁷⁷ However, no will of a metal trades worker indicates the inheritance of a trademark alongside a business. Hannah Cadman shows that a woman could successfully defend her rights to use a trademark even if this meant challenging the Cutlers' Company. Hannah was a widow and owner of an internationally successful razor blade company, Cadman Razors. Geoffrey Tweedale acknowledged an incident in which she attempted to defend the family's trademark through a dispute raised with the Cutlers' Company.⁷⁷⁸ After the death of her husband in 1817, Hannah inherited the business and used her husband's trademark, which had been granted in 1788.⁷⁷⁹ This led to a legal dispute with the Cutlers' Company on the grounds that another company was using a trademark very similar to the Cadman's, which was 'BENGALL'.⁷⁸⁰ Hannah brought the matter before the magistrates, who had suggested that legal opinion be sought, and the case was presented to W. C. Tindall at Lancaster Assizes.

Hannah not only defended her right to use of the trademark, but also challenged Charles Hammond and George White who were using the similar mark of 'BENGOL' to the detriment of her company's reputation and who had 'obtained a considerable repute in some foreign market.'⁷⁸¹ The dispute was resolved in Hannah Cadman's favour and her claim to the trademark was authorised. She continued to trade under the mark and is included in the 1822 and the 1828 trade directories.⁷⁸² The fact that the magistrates were neither freemen nor members of the Cutlers' Company may be significant, as chapter one showed how this organisation excluded women from gaining apprenticeships and progressing in the metal trades. David Higgins claimed the earliest reported cases of a dispute over a trademark in Sheffield from a man was 1833, and concerned the trademark J. Wilson and resulted in an injunction on the defendants to use the mark on their

⁷⁷⁷ *Sheffield Iris*, 30 April 1801.

⁷⁷⁸ G. Tweedale, *Tweedale's Directory of Sheffield Cutlery Manufacturers 1740-2013* (2nd edn, 2014), pp. 141-2.

⁷⁷⁹ Company of Cutlers' Archive [hereafter CC]: K/01/07, The Legal Opinion of W. C. Tindall on the infringement of a trade mark, (1788).

⁷⁸⁰ CC: K/01/07, The Legal Opinion of W. C. Tindall on the infringement of a trade mark (1788).

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸² SLL: E. Gell, *Sheffield General and Commercial Trade Directory*, (1822); R. Bennett, *Commercial Directory Sheffield*, (1828-9).

metal goods.⁷⁸³ This dispute between Hannah Cadman and the Cutlers' Company suggests that it was possible for a woman associated with the metal trades to have her trading rights within a business setting recognised by the Cutlers' Company, despite the organisation's disapproval and attempts to restrict this.

In 1828 a similar case regarding a widow's use of a trademark was brought to the attention of the Cutlers' Company. The legal advisor suggested that in future the Company of Cutlers' should follow a different procedure by ensuring that 'the grant of the mark is made to the person named, absolutely... to hold to him during his life'.⁷⁸⁴ This would have clearly impacted on the rights of widows being able to take on their husbands' trading rights. The Cutlers' Company did not take this advice, as reflected in a letter between Hannah Bates and Mrs Barber written in 1869 regarding the rights of a widow over her husband's mark. The letter stated that a 'widow is entitled to it [the trademark] for life but she can't dispose of it in her lifetime or by will.'⁷⁸⁵ Women in Sheffield's metal trades were able to establish their position with respect to trademarks, which was based on recognition of rights passed on to widows by virtue of their husbands. This policy resonates with guilds elsewhere in which, 'widows could inherit privileges from their husband, but always with significant limitations'.⁷⁸⁶ Rosemary Sweet argued that although guilds were typically male dominated institutions, 'there is no shortage of evidence to show that women belonged to guilds and craft companies and could wield influence within these organizations'.⁷⁸⁷ Although women did not belong to the Company of Cutlers', it is apparent that they could have influence within this setting in order to maintain the success and economic growth of their businesses.

Furthermore, women could 'inherit' their late husbands' reputation in the

⁷⁸³ D. Higgins, "Forgotten Heroes and Forgotten Issues": Business and Trademark History during the Nineteenth Century', *Business History Review* 86 (2012), pp. 268-89.

⁷⁸⁴ CC: U/23/01, Bundle of Papers Relating to John Barber, William Tyzack and the Rights of a Widow to Dispose of Her Husband's Mark, (1828).

⁷⁸⁵ CC: U/23/01, (8), Letter from Hannah Bates to J. & Mrs Barber Regarding the Rights of a Widow Over Her Husband's Mark, Cutlers' Company, Sheffield, (10 May 1869).

⁷⁸⁶ C. Crowston, 'Women, Gender and Guilds in Early Modern Europe', Paper given at Utrecht University (5-7 October, 2006), p. 19, <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/papers/guilds-crowston.pdf> [accessed 31 July 2016].

⁷⁸⁷ R. Sweet, 'Women and Civic Life in Eighteenth-Century England', in R. Sweet and P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 22.

metal trades. Elizabeth Tucker's entry in a trade directory in 1862 drew attention to her late husband George Tucker when advertising her 'old-established wire and metal warehouse'.⁷⁸⁸ This reference to men was not unusual and Hannah Barker noted that 'reputations – by their very nature – were strongly associated with the person who ran a particular venture, it was also something that new businesses might inherit'.⁷⁸⁹ However, two years later once Elizabeth had established herself as a business owner her advertisements removed reference to her late husband.⁷⁹⁰ Likewise, women in Birmingham during the late nineteenth century used trade directories and newspapers to create their own business identities, quite separate to those of their late husbands.⁷⁹¹ Although women in Sheffield's metal trades were limited by the ways they could enter this form of work, it is evident they protected their inherited assets and reputations in order for their businesses to survive to provide economic stability for themselves and their families.

Charity

The preceding section on inheritance focused on the lives of businesswomen and, while the proportion of women who made wills was small, it captures those who might be described as 'middle-' or 'lower middle-class' and consequently reflects the lives of only businesswomen.⁷⁹² The following section will focus on charity and will explore how far the Cutlers' Company and women who had inherited wealth from their family metal trades businesses, financially supported men and women working in the metal trades and widows of workers in Sheffield's metal trades. This analysis provides a broadly-based consideration of women associated with the metal trades – those acting as agents and objects of charity – in order to establish an understanding of the lives of women employees and those otherwise associated with a metal trades business. Working in

⁷⁸⁸ SLL: J. S. Morris, *Business Directory of Sheffield Morris*, (1862); *General Directory of Sheffield, Part 2*, (1856), p. 70.

⁷⁸⁹ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2005), p. 81.

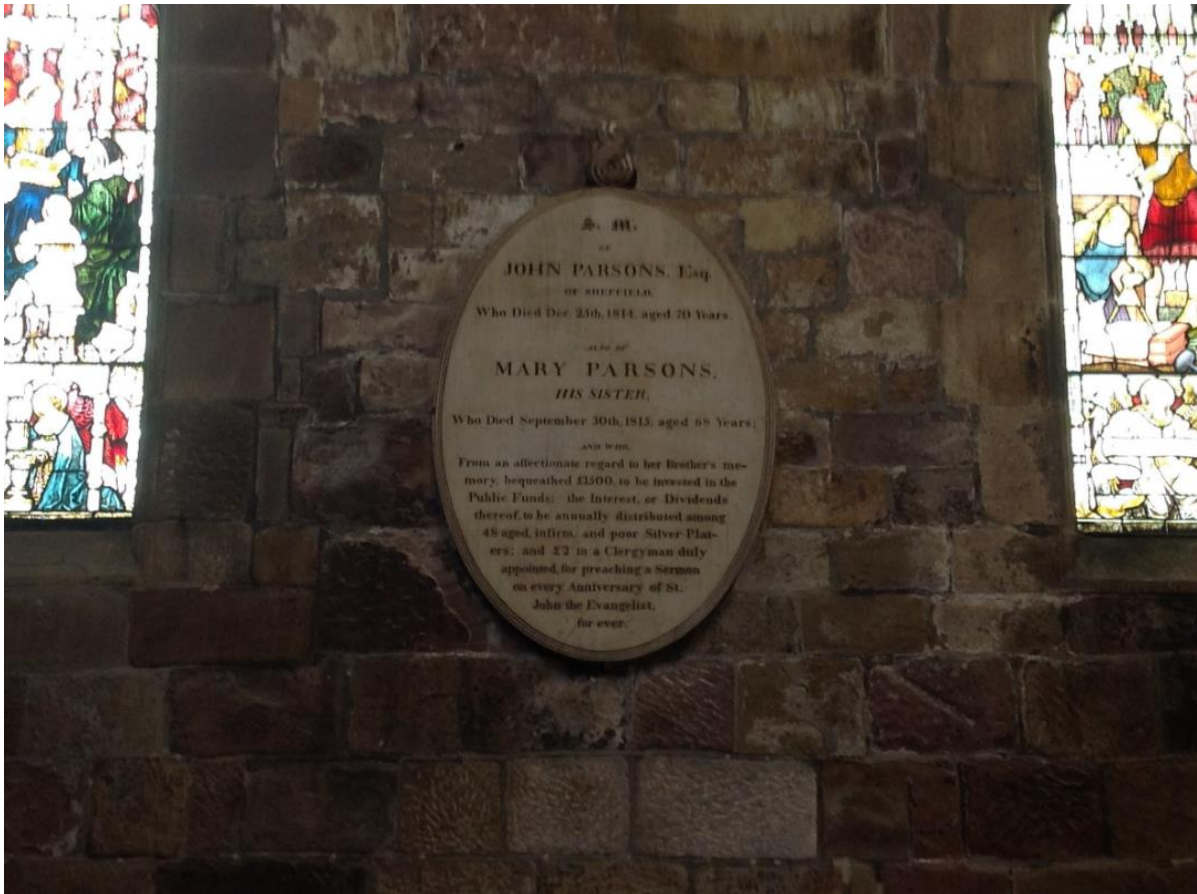
⁷⁹⁰ SLL: *White's Directory of Sheffield*, (1864).

⁷⁹¹ J. Aston, 'Female Business Owners in England, 1849-1901', Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 2012), p. 148.

⁷⁹² A. Owens, 'Property, Gender and the Life Course: Inheritance and Family Welfare Provision in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Social History* 26.3 (2001), p. 302.

Sheffield's metal trades, or having family which did, could have positive implications for women by providing a financial resource which they actively sought in later life.

Figure 4.2: Mary Parson's Plaque, Sheffield Cathedral



Source: Sheffield Cathedral, Church Street, Sheffield S1 1HA: Mary Parson's Plaque.

Elizabeth Parkin, whose experiences were considered at the beginning of this chapter, was a wealthy and philanthropic businesswoman who provided charity for the local poor. She was an exceptional woman by the level of wealth she possessed but she was by no means unique in financially supporting the people of Sheffield. Furthermore, evidence of charitable support for the people of Sheffield often related to the trade which dominated the area, and presented a form of financial resource from which women could benefit. Mary Parsons and her charity also demonstrate the importance of family and the metal trades. To this day, a large plaque hangs in Sheffield Cathedral, dedicated to Mary Parsons and her

charity, reflecting the significance of her charitable endeavours.⁷⁹³ Mary bequeathed £1,500 in memory of her late brother John Parsons to 'forty-eight poor men to be chosen from amongst the old and infirm silversmiths in the town and parish of Sheffield'.⁷⁹⁴ Her brother was a local silver and plated goods manufacturer, and the benefits of the charity were confined to those who had served their apprenticeship in Sheffield, and regularly worked at their business in 'branches of candles stick makers, pierce worker and braziers'.⁷⁹⁵

It was not unusual for women to demonstrate economic substance by public displays of moral worth such as philanthropy.⁷⁹⁶ Charitable collections were a 'highly visible activity'.⁷⁹⁷ Although there is no evidence that Mary Parsons acquired her brother's metal trades business, she demonstrates how a woman could use her wealth to support people working in Sheffield's metal trades. It was often the case with agents of charity that their choice of recipients was influenced by their own circumstances.⁷⁹⁸ The recipients of Mary Parson's charity were clearly stated as 'poor men' and the list of potential recipients did not include any women workers, and only in recent years has the charity benefited the widows of silversmith workers who can now receive up to five-years' worth of relief.⁷⁹⁹ It was not unusual for charities in Sheffield to support male workers in the metal trades. For example, 'Boughton's Gift' supported male cutlers and scissor smiths in the town of Sheffield.⁸⁰⁰ In the early nineteenth century, Hudson's charity gave 10s each to poor, male file strikers.⁸⁰¹ Mary Parsons reveals a woman who had the financial means and social desire to support male metal trades workers, but what were the opportunities (if any) for women to receive charitable support that was

⁷⁹³ Sheffield Cathedral, Church Street, Sheffield S1 1HA, Mary Parson's Plaque.

⁷⁹⁴ NA: PROB 11/1575/367, Mary Parsons Will, (22 December 1815); SA: BR299, R. M. Hirst 'The First Silver Platers', in R. Hirst (ed.) *A Short Account of the Founders of the Silver, & Plated Establishments in Sheffield*, Part 1, (1820-32), pp. 28-9.

⁷⁹⁵ NA: PROB 11/1575/367, Mary Parsons Will, (22 December 1815).

⁷⁹⁶ C. Wiskin, 'Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826', Ph.D. thesis (Warwick University, 2000), pp.128-38.

⁷⁹⁷ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (2nd edn, Yale, 2005), p. 103.

⁷⁹⁸ S. Pinches, 'Women as Objects and Agents of Charity in Eighteenth-Century Birmingham', in R. Sweet and P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 78.

⁷⁹⁹ Assay Office Archive Sheffield [hereafter AOS]: WP 29/30 MP1-5, Mary Parsons Accounts.

⁸⁰⁰ SA: *Endowed charities of the west riding Yorkshire*, vol. 1, *Southern Division*, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, (5 August 1897).

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*

available to workers in the metal trades?

Table 4.1: William Parkin Charity recipients, 1823 - 1828

Date	Number of women	Mean age of women	Number of men	Mean age of men
1823	22	64	15	66
1824	22	64	14	66
1825	17	64	19	66
1826	14	61	22	66
1827	18	62	20	66
1828	16	61	16	65
Average	18	63	18	66
Total number of payments	109		106	

Source: CC: TT/4/1/8, Accounts of William Parkin Charity, (1823-8).

There were opportunities for widows of metal trades workers to receive financial support in the absence of their husbands' income, which reinforces the importance of the family in this working context. The Cutlers' Company could administer charitable donations, several of which supported metal trades workers. John Roach stated that the Cutlers' Company would financially support master cutlers and their relations who faced financial difficulties, including their wives and widows.⁸⁰² Hollis' charity indicated a preference for the widow of a cutler (as opposed to other women).⁸⁰³ The Cutlers' Company administered the William Parkin's Charity and supported metal trades workers and their families, namely filesmith widows. The charity paid 2s 6d each to 36 poor file smiths or their

⁸⁰² J. Roach, 'The Company and the Community: Charity, Education and Technology, 1624-1914', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 243.

⁸⁰³ SA: *Endowed charities of the west riding Yorkshire*, vol. 1, *Southern Division*, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, (5 August 1897).

widows each year. Surviving accounts from the period 1823-1828 identified the name, age and gender of the recipients of this charity.⁸⁰⁴ Table 4.1 shows that between 1823 and 1828 there were 215 payments made by the charity. There was a list of 58 individuals receiving charity on a yearly basis from William Parkin between 1823 and 1828, although some died during this period, and others received relief intermittently. Surviving accounts indicate that male filesmith workers were not favoured over women; out of the 58 individuals receiving charity from William Parkin, 31 were men and 27 were women, which shows that the charity was for the benefit of 'poor files smiths' as much as their 'widows'.⁸⁰⁵ The average age of the recipients was 64 years old for women, and 66 years old for men, showing that financial support from William Parkin was for older men and women who were perhaps unable to work and so were more likely to draw on charitable support. This suggests the charity was a form of reward to those men who had stayed within the filesmith trade throughout their working lives. There was no means of determining whether the widows who received charitable support were actively engaged in the metal trades, as they were unlikely to be recorded in trade directories if they were seeking financial support, and census returns only included female occupations from 1841.⁸⁰⁶

Family was not only important to women in the metal trades as a means of inheriting a business or receiving informal training and routes into the trades (as discussed in the preceding chapters) but also because the family provided financial support to women irrespective of their own position in this workforce. This finding is significant given that during the process of industrialisation there was a move away from a family economy, in which family members contributed their income collectively towards a waged economy, whereby men supported their wives and children who were dependent on them, an argument reinforced by the male-breadwinner ideology.⁸⁰⁷ The census abstracts in chapter one (table 1.1) shows that women in the metal trades accounted for 5.5 per cent of the workforce, 10.1%

⁸⁰⁴ CC: TT/4/1/8, Accounts of William Parkin Charity, (1823-8).

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁷ S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'Women's Labour Force Participation and the Transition to the Male-Breadwinner Family 1790-1865', in P. Sharpe (ed.), *Women's Work: The English Experience, 1650-1914* (London, 1998), pp. 172-206.

in 1851 and 11.4 per cent in 1861, whereas women accounted for 18 per cent of the metal trades workforce in Birmingham in 1851.⁸⁰⁸ However, Sylvia Pinches argued that there was a distinct lack of endowed charities in Birmingham because ‘there were few “natural leaders” of local society’ in which charitable work could play a part.⁸⁰⁹ In Sheffield the situation was markedly different: metal trades dominated the town and the Cutlers’ Company remained significant into the nineteenth century, whilst in other locations trading guilds lost much of their power and influence during the eighteenth century.⁸¹⁰ A woman seeking charitable support in the absence of her husband could suggest that without his main income she would be destitute, although male workers in the metal trades were also receiving this charitable support.

John Roach stated that donations to the Cutlers’ Company’s ‘own poor’ continued but a good deal was given to the poor of the parish outside the limits of the metal trades.⁸¹¹ The Cutlers’ Company may have acknowledged women in some of its social functions outside the realms of work. However, the dearth of archival evidence for businesswomen associated with the Company’s charitable work suggests that their opportunities were otherwise limited. Furthermore, findings in chapter one demonstrated that it was impossible for women to obtain training through the Company. It was evident that recipients of charity from the Company had to adhere to requirements, yet this was often regarding their behaviour: ‘working-class women had to contort their needs and behaviours to suit middle-class prejudices.’⁸¹² What remains to be established is how far financial relief provided by the Company for women was associated with metal-trading families, and whether the significance of the metal trades to the town influenced the financial relief that the trading organisation administered. This will be

⁸⁰⁸ C. Behagg, *Politics and Production in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1990), p. 48.

⁸⁰⁹ S. Pinches, ‘Women as Objects and Agents of Charity in Eighteenth-Century Birmingham’, in R. Sweet and P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 83.

⁸¹⁰ P. Corfield, *The Impact of the English Towns 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982), p. 86.

⁸¹¹ J. Roach, ‘The Company and the Community: Charity, Education and Technology, 1624-1914’, in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 245.

⁸¹² P. Mandler, ‘Poverty and Charity in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis: An Introduction’ in P. Mandler (ed), *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 22.

examined by focusing on the Hanbey Charity, which was administered through the Cutlers' Company and has surviving documents for a prolonged period. Thomas Hanbey was born in Sheffield and was a partner of an iron merchant company in London. He founded the charity in 1782. He bequeathed £5,000 to the Cutlers' Company which was to be given under the following conditions:

The gift between poor and worthy householders in the parish of Sheffield, who were members of the Church of England. This was to take place on Hanbey's birthday, 29 June. The recipients were to be aged over 50 and two thirds were to be men. The men received a blue cloth coat, a black hat and 20 shillings; the women a blue cloth cloak, black hat and 20 shillings.⁸¹³

Thomas clearly wanted to support men in particular, but also specified women were to be included, and his association with the locality remained despite his business being elsewhere. However, he did not specify those to be gifted from his money were to be associated with his own trade.

Although 76 women were identified as having received charitable support from the Thomas Hanbey Charity across all three year dates 1841, 1851 and 1861, only 41 women could be identified in the individual census returns. This disparity can be explained by the accuracy (or otherwise) of the sources, the recipient having moved locations or the recipient having died between the time the charitable donation was received and the date on which the census was taken. Nevertheless, the sample of 41 women identified as receiving financial support from the Thomas Hanbey charity and who were located in the census, illustrates a number of financial opportunities of which women linked to the metal trades could take advantage. Table 4.2 presents the findings from cross-referencing the census material and charity accounts from the sample of 41 women recipients. The raw numbers have also been converted to the nearest half per cent to make comparisons in the data clearer. In order to examine the impact charitable help had for women associated with the metal trades, recipients' households of the Thomas Hanbey charity have been distinguished between women who lived alone, in metal trades households or in non-metal trades households. This analysis will

⁸¹³ 'Portrait of Thomas Hanbey': <http://www.cutlers-hallamshire.org.uk/portrait-of-thomas-hanbey> [accessed 8 June 2015].

demonstrate whether charities organised by the Cutlers' Company favoured recipients linked to the metal trades. The actual number who received support from the Thomas Hanbey charity was relatively small, totalling 41 women. The average age of all 41 recipients was 70 years old. The findings show that 15 (36.5 per cent) of these women had a male member of their household working in the metal trades. A further 11 (27 per cent) women were living alone and did not work in the metal trades, although they may have been previously married to a metal trades worker. This is supported by evidence of one female recipient who labelled herself in the charity accounts as a 'saw grinders widow'.⁸¹⁴ However, the remaining 15 (36.5 per cent) of women from the sample were not living with someone who worked in the metal trades, did not work in the metal trades according to the census, and therefore had no identifiable link to the metal trades. Three female recipients of Hanbey's charity were identified in the accounts as paupers, suggesting that the charitable provision was an extra financial support for women outside the more formalised methods of welfare for the poor.⁸¹⁵ A number of women receiving charitable support from the Hanbey Charity were in employment, although there was no evidence of these women working in the metal trades. Overall, the evidence from the Thomas Hanbey charity shows that the benevolence of the Cutlers' Company's went beyond the needs of those engaged in the metal trades. Indeed, it was only in 1851 that over half of the charitable support was given to families for which census data confirmed that they lived in metal trades households. However, the number of charities in Sheffield which supported metal trading families reflects the dominance and importance of the trade to the locality, and this financial support could rebound onto women in the absence of a metalworking male-breadwinner.

⁸¹⁴ CC: E 01/08/02, Hanbey Charity - List of Recipients, (1838-1923).

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Table 4.2: Women who received charity from the Thomas Hanbey charity, 1841-61

Female recipient of charity	1841	1851	1861	Total
Average age of female recipients of charity identified in the census	68	71	71	70
Number of women who received charity identified in the census	19	13	9	41
Women receiving charity who lived alone	8 (42%)	0	3 (33.5%)	11 (27%)
Women receiving charity who lived in metal trades households	6 (32%)	7 (54%)	2 (22%)	15 (36.5%)
Women receiving charity who lived in non-metal trades households	5 (26%)	6 (46%)	4 (44.5%)	15 (36.5%)

Source: CC: E 01/08/02, Hanbey Charity - List of Recipients 1841, 1851 and 1861; AO: Individual Census Returns, (1841-61) www.ancestryonline.co.uk [accessed 14th November 2014].

Whilst charity provided women related to men employed in the metal trades with financial support, women related to business owners in Sheffield's metal trades sought financial security in more informal ways. A case study of Mary Ann Rawson (née Read) illustrates both the social prominence and economic frailties of businesses in Sheffield's metal trades, and how this influenced the lives of women who were not directly involved in them. Mary Ann Rawson has often been discussed in relation to her important political activity during this period; however, the following case study will focus on her economic position in later life.⁸¹⁶ Mary was born in 1801 and had links to the family business, *The Sheffield Smelting Company Ltd*, which was formed in 1760. Previous research has shown the importance of family in the metal trades, particularly in cutlery businesses: 'the family was virtually synonymous with the firm', and Mary Ann Rawson shows the

⁸¹⁶ A. Twells, 'Missionary Domesticity, Global Reform and "Woman's Sphere" in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Gender & History* 18.2 (2006), pp. 266-84.

significance of this to women.⁸¹⁷ Rawson's father, John Read, managed the company, and bank details from 1840 for the company reveal that John Read financially supported Mary Ann Rawson in buying Wincobank estate, with £4,000 being paid out for the purchase, whilst Mary was paying into the account £689 for the 'part purchase' of the estate.⁸¹⁸ However, in 1846 John faced the threat of bankruptcy and his son-in-law, William Wilson, who was married to Mary's sister, agreed to buy the business. There is evidence to suggest that business relations between Mary's father and her brother-in-law were strained at this time. A letter from John Read to Mary on 28 June 1846 described his annoyance during the sale of the metal trades business when he complained, 'I'm being ill-used by them'.⁸¹⁹ Following the death of her husband, who was a businessman from Nottingham, Mary's inheritance enabled her to clear her father's debts from the metal trades business. This reveals that although Mary did not have a formal role in the business, she had the skills and financial acumen to clear her father's debts in the business.

However, Mary Ann Rawson eventually required support from male family members based on profits from the metal trades business. Towards the end of her life Mary required financial support from her nephews, John Wycliffe Wilson and Henry Joseph Wilson, who acquired the *Sheffield Smelting Company* business from their father in 1862. On 7 September 1883 Mary received a loan from Henry of one hundred pounds at five per cent annual interest.⁸²⁰ This shows that the money was a loan to Mary which she would eventually have to pay back with interest. However, she wrote to John on 1 April 1884 requesting more money stating 'my house is empty, and there are the last months bills for milk, meat etc. to be paid',

⁸¹⁷ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 875.

⁸¹⁸ SA: SSC/56, Account of Read & Luca and Read & Co. with the Sheffield Banking Co., (1818-46).

⁸¹⁹ SA: SSC/775, Letter to Mrs Rawson from John Read describing his annoyance at the way William Wilson and Edmund Read had acted during the sale of the business. A draft of the beginning of the letter, (28 June 1846).

⁸²⁰ SA: SSC/806, Receipt by Mrs Rawson for a loan of £100 made to her by the Sheffield Smelting Company and further letters from her describing her financial difficulties and asking for small loans, (1883-86); This had a note attached by Henry to indicate 'the receipt you sent the other day was worded as though the advance was made by me individually and so perhaps it was at the moment for John was not here to consult. But we have arranged to enter it as a joint affair in our private account books, so that John is as much concerned in it as I am, and equally glad to be of use to you' from Henry Wilson to Mary Ann Rawson.

and also claimed 'I am annoyed and ashamed and indeed sad about asking for money', further mentioning that her bank account was already overdrawn.⁸²¹

Two days later she wrote again to thank them for receipt of a cheque of £25 that was paid into her account on 5 April.⁸²² A further letter portrayed an even more desperate financial situation for Mary:

I feel so sorry and ashamed to write to you that I scarcely know how to express myself - though I try to be as economical as I possibly can, I am now absolutely without money and have received several small monthly bills to pay ... can you lend me £25 or even £10 would be a comfort in notes or sovereign, not a cheque, as I want £10 at once.⁸²³

She received this money with 'hearty thanks' for the 'kindly lent' money a few days later.⁸²⁴ Her nephew John's reply reveals they both wanted to help their Aunt, 'Henry is out the country at the moment, but we would be happy to help'.⁸²⁵ Mary's experiences demonstrate the significance of the family business which provided an informal form of financial support from her male relatives who organised the business. The desperation in these letters and the dire financial situation in which Mary found herself is reminiscent of the collapse of her own father's metal trades business that she had financially rescued several years earlier. Margaret Hunt has shown the frailties and 'the highly unstable setting in which early modern business endeavour took place.'⁸²⁶ Hannah Barker also noted the 'individual fallibility and the vicissitudes of economic life' of women in business, indicating a woman in Sheffield's metal trades who had gone bankrupt in 1817.⁸²⁷ Chapter two identified several businesswomen located in Burgess Street who faced financial difficulties. The metal trades provided lucrative opportunities for men and women and also financial security to women from a family involved in this local industry.

⁸²¹ SA: SSC/806, Mary Ann Rawson Letters, (1 April 1884).

⁸²² SA: SSC/806, Mary Ann Rawson Letters, (3 April 1884).

⁸²³ SA: SSC/806, Mary Ann Rawson Letters, (1883-6).

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁶ M. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (London, 1996) p. 217.

⁸²⁷ H. Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England 1760-1830* (Oxford, 2006), p. 130.

Savings

The two preceding sections of this chapter have focused on women of wealth through the inheritance of a family metal trades business, whilst women of lower financial means have been considered only as objects of charity. It would be inaccurate to portray women employed, or related to workers, in the metal trades as mere dependents on financial relief. Chapter three showed that women in Sheffield's metal trades could potentially earn relatively high wages in contrast to other trades and locations, but to what extent were these women active in saving their money independently from men?

Opening a savings account suggested that a person was actively taking control over their money. It is important to acknowledge that the following study uses depositors' declarations from the Sheffield and Hallamshire bank, and this data did not show individual's account transactions, which were only available for an earlier period where occupations of account holders were not identified. For the period December 1857 to December 1863, women's accounts could be identified as being linked to the metal trades by their own occupation or their marital status in relation to their husbands' occupations. This collection of documents was examined in 1843, which indicated that 38 per cent of adult savers were women, including five individual women identified as burnishers.⁸²⁸ More recently, Josephine Maltby showed that a high proportion of women in Sheffield were savers compared to women in Huddersfield which she described as 'surprising' given that a lower proportion of women were working in the metal trades in Sheffield compared to textiles in Huddersfield.⁸²⁹ She also found a significant proportion (56.2 per cent) of female savers were identified as married women, and that these married women were more likely to open an account on their own rather than jointly with their husband. This section will try to establish the relative opportunities of women married to metal trades workers and single women workers in the trades in managing their own financial resources.

⁸²⁸ G. Holland, *Vital statistics of Sheffield (1843)* (London, 1843), p. 134.

⁸²⁹ J. Maltby, "'The Wife's Administration of the Earnings'? Working-Class Women and Savings", *Continuity and Change* 26.2 (2011), p. 210.

Table 4.3 below shows that 1,708 females associated with the metal trades opened, or had opened for them, a savings account. This figure included children, wives and widows of male metal trades workers, as well as single women who worked in Sheffield's metal trades. I will first consider those women and girls identified in relation to a man's occupation in the metal trades. A limited number (four) of widows associated with the metal trades were identified as having opened a savings account at an average age of 48 years. Daughters were a significant proportion of those women opening savings accounts, with 254 accounts opened on their behalf, at an average age of seven years old. It is possible that this reflects sufficient income to warrant opening a savings account, but also a range of other factors. Parents were providing for their children, wives probably wanted to give financial security to their families, and young single women had a need or desire to provide for their own financial independence. Single women working in the metal trades who opened savings accounts were a significantly smaller proportion than wives and daughters of metal trades workers. The average age of single women savers was 25 years old. The average age of wives who were savers was 38 years old. You can only speculate why women saved at particular points in their life, but the savings accounts do show that this financial activity was considered important by metal trades families and women workers, from childhood onwards. Widows were the exception to this rule, which may have reflected their lack of surplus income to save.

Table 4.3: Savings accounts opened by women linked to the metal trades,

1857-63

Year		Daughters of male metal trades workers	Single women working in the metal trades	Wives of metal trades workers	Widow of a metal trades worker	Total
1857	Total number	6	2	25	0	33
	Average age	6 years	20 years	43 years	0	
1858	Total number	32	11	189	0	232
	Average age	9 years	22 years	37 years	0	
1859	Total number	50	4	269	1	324
	Average age	9 years	27 years	38 years	30 years	
1860	Total number	47	4	224*	0	275
	Average age	6 years	33 years	38 years	0	
1861	Total number	26	8	193**	1	228
	Average age	6 years	23 years	37 years	71 years	
1862	Total number	36	8	235***	0	279
	Average age	5 years	23 years	36 years	0	
1863	Total number	57	19****	259****	2	337
	Average age	8 years	25 years	37 years	44 years	
Total		254	56	1,394	4	1,708
Average Age		7 years	25 years	38 years	48 years	

Source: SA: BUS7/1, Sheffield and Hallamshire Depositors' Declarations, (December 1857-May 1860); Lloyd's Bank Archive London [hereafter LB]: Sheffield Savings Bank depositors' declarations, (May 1860–December 1863).

* 21 out of 224 (nine per cent) were joint accounts.

** 23 out of 193 (12 per cent) joint accounts.

*** 37 out of 235 (16 per cent) were joint accounts.

**** 28 out of 259 (11 per cent) were joint accounts.

***** One out of these 19 women one woman was stated as single and separated from her husband.

Wives of metal trades workers accounted for 1,394 out of 1,708 of the women associated with the metal trades opening a savings account, which represented 82 per cent of the sample, and by far the largest group of women. These account

holders could be labelled as 'cutler's wife' but the occupation of the female saver was left ambiguous. Indeed, chapter two showed that women often identified themselves in relation to their husbands' occupations in individual census returns, which was explained by a misunderstanding of census instructions.⁸³⁰ This could mean that many of the wives who identified themselves with the occupation of their husband were also working in the metal trades. Accounts opened between 1860 and 1863 showed that only 109 of 1,394 (eight per cent) of accounts opened by married women with a husband working in the metal trades were joint accounts. A joint account with a husband would suggest that they were at least saving in partnership, which raises the question as to why more women did not open accounts with their spouses. It is impossible to determine whether this reflects independence or, as Josephine Maltby suggested, that this task was undertaken on behalf of their husbands.⁸³¹ The accounts opened by women independent of their husbands suggest a degree of financial independence for these married women.

Table 4.3 shows that 56 out of 1,708 (3.3 per cent) accounts opened by women associated with the metal trades were identified as single women who were working in the metal trades. Josephine Maltby's sample also indicated only 2.7 per cent of women who opened a savings account also had an occupation listed.⁸³² The saving accounts opened by single women who worked in the metal trades may reflect the relatively high wages women received in Sheffield's metal trades compared to other trades and locations, which was discussed in chapter three. Chapter three also showed that women's employment could be precarious, and it appears women undertook ways to manage this economic instability. Most women opening a savings account who were identified with the metal trades were wives of metal trades workers (1, 394 accounts out of 1, 708). The significance of these married women opening accounts is that they reflect the economic stability that

⁸³⁰ S. McGreevor, 'How Well Did the Nineteenth Century Census Record Women's "Regular" Employment in England and Wales? A Case Study of Hertfordshire in 1851', *The History of the Family* 19.4 (2014), p. 506.

⁸³¹ J. Maltby, "'The Wife's Administration of the Earnings'? Working-Class Women and Savings', *Continuity and Change* 26.2 (2011), p. 208.

⁸³² J. Maltby, "'The Wife's Administration of the Earnings'? Working-Class Women and Savings', *Continuity and Change* 26.2 (2011), p. 208.

women could attain through being part of a family of workers in the metal trades.

Table 4.4 shows the occupations of the 56 women workers who identified themselves by their occupation in the metal trades. The 56 occupational labels provide some insight into the types of roles women savers undertook in the metal trades. This group of women represents those whose occupations are conclusively known, but clearly other women who were wives, widows and daughters could also have worked in the family business. Of those 56 women who were single, worked in the metal trades and opened a savings account, 25 were burnishers and 13 worked in a metal trades warehouse. These two occupational categories taken together account for 68 per cent of single working women in the metal trades who opened a savings account. Significantly, chapter one and chapter two showed that women were predominately working in the finishing processes, including work such as warehouse work and burnishing. Chapter one also showed that these two occupational roles were advertised more prominently than other forms of female employment in the metal trades. However, women were also involved in a range of metal trades, undertaking such roles as file cutters, cutlery manufacturers, and a manufacturer and pen knife grinder. Three women who were listed as manufacturers are notably older (33, 40 and 35 years old) than the other women in this group (which averaged 25 years old), which may reflect the personal circumstances of widowhood which led to the inheritance of a metal trades business and assets which enabled the opening of a savings account. As the account details have not survived, one could surmise that they may have inherited wealth or possibly deposited money to support their business cash flow. The savings accounts have shown the economic activities of women of both married and single women, as well as showing the importance of family in the metal trades for providing financial opportunities for women. This data has also confirmed the roles women undertook in the metal trades were predominately, but not exclusively, in the finishing processes.

Table 4.4: Occupations of single women opening a saving account, 1857-63

Occupation	Number of single women
Silver burnisher/ rubber/ buffer	25
Warehousewoman	13
Scissor dresser	2
Spring knife whetter	2
File cutter	2
File cutler	1
Spring knife cutler	1
Scissor grinder	1
Manufacturer and pen knife grinder	1
Manufacturer cutler	1
Manufacturer white metal smith	1
Engineer tool fitter	1
Comb bender	1
Saw handle maker	1
Electro plate finisher	1
Britannia metal cutter out	1
Nail cutter	1
Total number	56

Source: SA: BUS7/1, Sheffield and Hallamshire Depositors' Declarations (December 1857-May 1860); Lloyd's Bank Archive London [hereafter LB]: Sheffield Savings Bank depositors' declarations (May 1860–December 1863).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the financial resources that were available to women who worked in the metal trades, as well as those who had family connections to the trades. Inheritance, charity and savings were ways in which women accumulated or distributed their wealth, sought financial support and protected their money. Chapter one showed that women working in Sheffield's metal trades only accounted for (at most) four per cent of the female population in contrast to 35 per cent of the male population working in the trades. It is evident that –despite being in a minority – women in Sheffield's metal trades took advantage of the

several possibilities to alleviate the economic vulnerabilities that may have arisen in this working context.⁸³³

Elizabeth Parkin represents a woman of power and wealth who had a significant place in Sheffield society that was supported by her association with the metal trades. She was exceptional with respect to her level of wealth. However, evidence from the wills of businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades has shown that women were able to bequeath large amounts of money, own expensive sets of tools and own workshop space. The substantial wealth and assets evident in the wills of businesswomen suggests that the business remained an important way of supporting women and their families in the absence of a man. However, women's involvement in business was only an option in the absence of a suitable male. The inheritance of a trademark by a woman was disputed, and although there was never the opportunity for a woman to establish her own trademark, businesswomen were able to manoeuvre around these difficulties and continue the use of their husbands' trademarks. Businesswomen were not entering an environment that was easy for them, yet they managed to assert themselves and support their families through this work. This supports Penelope Lane's argument that the provision men made for their wives, family members and other kin frequently obviated any idea that their widows would become economically inactive.⁸³⁴

Given that so many men worked in the metal trades, by implication, many households included women who were related to a man working in the trade. Having family members working (or having worked) in the metal trades could present to women opportunities for financial relief. Charitable relief to the wife (or widow) of a metal trades worker is based on the premise that without his source of income she would be destitute. Mary Ann Rawson's financial opportunities and struggles reflect a woman involved in the metal trades as neither a worker nor business owner, but someone whose inheritance from the family business

⁸³³ P. Mandler, 'Poverty and Charity in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis: An Introduction', in P. Mandler (ed.), *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 5.

⁸³⁴ P. Lane, 'Women in the Regional Economy: The East Midlands, 1700-1830', Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 1999), p. 57.

provided opportunities to become engaged both in clearing her father's business debts and also with charity in Sheffield. The significance of the family to women's experiences in Sheffield's metal trades not only concerned their routes into the trade, but also the resources subsequently available to them, for businesswomen and women employees, but also the wives and widows of male employees. Women could also be agents within this context and provide economic relief to metal trades workers. Family was fundamental to women accumulating or distributing charitable money in relation to the metal trades.

The savings accounts of single women showed that women were working in a range of roles in the metal trades, although burnishing and warehouse work were dominant, which supports evidence found in chapter one, and in Burgess Street (chapter two) and the insurance claims made in 1864. Chapter three has shown that women in Sheffield's metal trades could potentially earn relatively high wages compared to women in other trades and locations. In 1996 Margot Finn argued that married women during this period had 'substantially more economic authority than the literature on coverture would suggest'.⁸³⁵ Recent work by Tim Stretton and Krista Kesselring has argued that from the medieval period, coverture for women 'proved flexible in practice and its rationales adaptable to different contexts [which] contributed to its longevity.'⁸³⁶ The majority of women who opened a savings account were wives of metal trades workers, and a significant proportion of these women opened an account separately from their husbands. Independent savings accounts for married women suggest they had a degree of autonomy over their own money, which was separate to the finances of their husbands. Even those married women who opened an account with their husband were identified in joint ownership. These findings are important additions to the current understanding on coverture as despite this masculine working environment, in which the industry was dominated by men, there is evidence that married women still exerted their economic autonomy.

⁸³⁵ M. Finn, 'Women, Consumption and Coverture in England, c. 1760-1860', *Historical Journal* 39.3 (1996), p. 706.

⁸³⁶ T. Stretton and K. Kesselring, 'Conclusion', in T. Stretton and K. Kesselring (eds), *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World* (London, 2013), p. 264.

Despite the marked differential in wages between men and women, and the limited opportunities for women to enter the trades, women in Sheffield used the resources available to them to help secure their own economic position and independence. Alexandra Shepard's study on the early modern period saw women as agents rather than victims in economic trends.⁸³⁷ Overall, this chapter supports this view during the process of industrialisation. Whilst some women received money or assets through inheritance or charity, and although there were obstacles to their economic independence because of their gender, women associated with the metal trades were actively engaged in controlling their finances. Due to the disparate nature of the sources related to inheritance, charity and savings, it is inappropriate to use them to identify changing trends of women's agency in the economy throughout the period of my research. However, by examining inventories and wills for the eighteenth century, charities and the roles of particular individuals in the nineteenth century, and savings accounts for the mid nineteenth century, provides evidence of women controlling their finances throughout the period. The significance is the economic opportunities available to women despite the metal trades being a predominately masculine working environment.

⁸³⁷ A. Shepard, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy', *History Workshop Journal* 79 (2015), p. 2.

Conclusion

This thesis began with three extracts representing contemporary perceptions of Sheffield's metal trades during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Daniel Defoe visited the town in the early eighteenth century and identified the metal trades with reference to men but not women.⁸³⁸ However, in 1770 Arthur Young noted that women and children were participating in the metal trades in Sheffield, and that they were being paid well to do so.⁸³⁹ The third extract, from 1865, by a male employer described the work undertaken by women in the metal trades as 'more suitable for men'.⁸⁴⁰ These extracts reflect the difficulty in locating women in Sheffield's metal trades, together with some of the benefits and difficulties women may have experienced if they did work in the industry. My findings support established understandings with respect to the small proportion of women who were engaged in Sheffield's metal trades. Women remained outnumbered by men in this workforce throughout the period of this research. This contrasted with women's roles in other industries, notably textiles. The proportion of women in Sheffield's metal trades workforce was also lower than was evident in Birmingham's metal trades. The contribution women made as a minority group in Sheffield's metal trades also varied among those who were employed, those who inherited a business and those who were a member of a family involved in the metal trades.

A key aim of my thesis has been to reflect upon the diverse experiences of businesswomen and women as employees within this working context. My findings support Nicola Phillips argument that, 'while gender remains a useful analytical tool it needs to be considered in conjunction with other social, economic

⁸³⁸ D. Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, Vol. 2, Visiting Sheffield 1710-1712*, (1962), p. 183, cited in D. Hey, *The Fiery Blades of Hallamshire: Sheffield and its Neighbourhoods, 1660-1740* (Leicester, 1991), p. 2; D. Hey, 'The South Yorkshire Steel Industry and the Industrial Revolution', *Northern History* 42 (2005), p. 91.

⁸³⁹ A. Young, *A Six Month Tour Through the North of England (1770), Vol. 1, Northern tour*, (2nd edn, 1770), p. 123, cited in I. Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850* (3rd edn, London, 1981), p. 275.

⁸⁴⁰ SLL: 331.3 SQ, *J. E. White's Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (1865), p. 39.

and racial hierarchies of difference.⁸⁴¹ The number of businesswomen in Sheffield's metal trades remained relatively static between 1774 and 1861, whilst women's business opportunities in other industries increased. In contrast, my findings show that the total number of women (who were employed and owned businesses) in the metal trades increased between 1841 and 1861, and as a proportion of the metal trades workforce, women accounted for up to 11.4 per cent by 1861. The increasing visibility from 1840 of newspaper advertisements for women to be employed in the metal trades could be one explanation as to why women were more likely to enter the metal trades during this particular period. Individual census returns from Burgess Street between 1841 and 1861 also showed that although men numerically dominated the industry, women were increasingly engaged in the industry and performed a variety of roles.

The introduction to my thesis considered the issue that women were hidden in visual representations of Sheffield's metal trades, but my thesis has shown through the examination of other historical evidence that women were present in this form of work. Pat Hudson recognised that 'samples are forced upon historians because of the non-random survival of evidence or by the practical exigencies of collecting a data set' and suggested 'the best practice to adopt is to examine the sample closely and openly to discuss the degree to which the sample is representative.'⁸⁴² Chapter one showed that women were increasingly engaged in Sheffield's metal trades, however, of businesswomen who entered into trade directories only 17.3 per cent were also enumerated in the census material as working in the metal trades. This disparity can partly be explained by the nature of the different sources being unable to provide an accurate comparison of a particular moment in time; trade directories were published sporadically whilst census material was collated in 1841, 1851 and 1861. However, those women who worked part-time, in multiple jobs, or contributed on an informal basis to work in the metal trades, reflect the incomplete coverage attainable in historical research for this period, particularly with regards to the census.

⁸⁴¹ N. Phillips, *Women in Business 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 255.

⁸⁴² P. Hudson, *History by Numbers: An Introduction to Quantitative Approaches* (London, 2000), p. 184.

Furthermore, by examining the individual census returns alongside the trade directories it was evident that women faced difficulties in a masculine trade. Chapter two showed that in 1851 this was the case for Hannah Roberts' scissor manufacturing business in Burgess Street. Census returns and trade directory entries showed that Hannah was involved in the running of this metal trades business, but the public identity of the business remained under John's name despite Hannah running the household and being listed as a scissor manufacturer in the individual census returns.⁸⁴³ Thus, given the nature of sources and the public representation of a metal trades business, married women's occupations were not always evident in the records. Numerous sources were utilised in my thesis to help capture women in Sheffield's metal trades. For example, charity records exposed women workers who sought financial support whereas wills and probate inventories showed the financial assets of businesswomen. Whilst it is realistic to acknowledge that many women who worked in the metal trades were not identified, my findings have shown the minimum number of women who participated in Sheffield's metal trades and the nature of their employment.

The small number of women compared to men in the metal trades may explain why there was a lack of defined gendered space. The workshop space was typically a mixed-gender environment, although larger firms that employed a greater number of women attempted to create a separation of space between men and women. The situation in Sheffield's metal trades contrasted to other locations and trades where men and women were totally separated through space.⁸⁴⁴ The situation with respect to the living and working spaces in Sheffield's metal trades was somewhat different, in that the workshop was regarded as 'synonymous with the home', with working space and the street described as 'porous'⁸⁴⁵ and

⁸⁴³ AO: John Roberts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1841; AO: Hannah Roberts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851; AO: Henry and George Roberts, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1861; SLL: *White's Trade Directory of Sheffield* (1845), p. 193; *Post Office Directory of Sheffield* (1854), p. 13.

⁸⁴⁴ C. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gender Identities, 1835-1913: The Cotton and Metal Industries in England* (London, 2001), pp. 67-80.

⁸⁴⁵ G. Tweedale, 'Backstreet Capitalism: An Analysis of the Family Firm in the Nineteenth-Century Sheffield Cutlery Industry', *Business History* 55.6 (2013), p. 885.

Sheffield's cutlery industry as 'homely'.⁸⁴⁶ The impact of this working environment for women as employees and businesswomen was significant, but contrasting.

Women employees often experienced a clearer separation between their living and working spaces by undertaking work in an employer's workshop away from where they lived. Women leaving the home to go work in the metal trades threatened patriarchal order and separated the spaces of the home and workshop.⁸⁴⁷ Businesswomen in Sheffield also experienced a separation of living and working spaces; however, in contrast to women employed in the metal trades, the spaces of home and work for businesswomen were in close proximity to one another. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both the meaning and organisation of the space in the home was changing. John Tosh associated domesticity in the nineteenth century with a separation from the workplace.⁸⁴⁸ There was limited evidence to show that women in Sheffield's metal trades would have undertaken work related tasks within the living space. The evidence suggests that neither 'synonymous' nor a 'separation of space' describe the experiences of living and working spaces for women involved in Sheffield's metal trades.

A second key aim of my thesis has been to reflect upon the experiences of woman as a minority group within a particular working context, and the ways in which they impacted upon women's lives. Peter Mandler drew attention to the vulnerability of single-industry towns in relation to maintaining economic stability for the household income.⁸⁴⁹ I have shown that, despite being in a minority, women in Sheffield's metal trades took advantage of opportunities available to them to alleviate the economic vulnerabilities that may have arisen in this working context. Wage records showed that despite being a minority group in the workforce, a number of women working in Sheffield's metal trades experienced better financial opportunities than other women workers in more typically

⁸⁴⁶ R. Leader, *History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire, in the County of York* (Sheffield, 1905), p. 287.

⁸⁴⁷ D. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 198.

⁸⁴⁸ J. Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (London, 2007), p. 4.

⁸⁴⁹ P. Mandler, 'Poverty and Charity in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis: An Introduction', in P. Mandler (ed.), *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 5.

feminine forms of work. However, women were consistently paid less than men. By implication, given that so many men worked in the trade, many households included women who were related to a man working in the industry. Women in these households were able to find financial support through charitable trusts in the absence of the male worker. Women across a range of ages were involved in Sheffield's metal trades, in which they had the potential to undertake a range of roles, which could require expertise and skill. Women could work in companies for prolonged periods, although they did not always work consistently throughout the year. This raises the question as to why more women were not involved in Sheffield's metal trades?

Women were faced with a situation where the interests of men drove the organisation of the industry. Throughout the nineteenth century the Cutlers' Company remained significant in Sheffield, which had implications for women as both business owners and as employees in the metal trades.⁸⁵⁰ The Cutler's Company limited women's role in the organisation, which was confined to specific areas typically associated with the Cutlers' Feast.⁸⁵¹ However, in 1801 the Cutlers' Company turned its attention to businesswomen's involvement in the metal trades and tried to restrict widows inheriting a trademark. The inheritance of a trademark by a woman was disputed, and although there was never the opportunity for a woman to establish her own trademark, businesswomen were able to manoeuvre around these difficulties and continue the use of their husbands' trademarks.

Access to apprenticeships available outside the Cutlers' Company was also limited for women, providing only a three-year term, compared with seven to ten years for those offered to men. Examples of women employees who managed to obtain contracts were limited, and in the single three-year contract identified in my research, the woman's husband financed the contract. Therefore, examples of

⁸⁵⁰ R. Grayson and A. White, "More Myth than Reality": The Independent Artisan in Nineteenth Century Sheffield', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 9.3 (1996), p. 339; R. Childs, 'Sheffield Before 1843', in C. Binfield, D. Hey, R. Childs, D. Martin, R. Harper and G. Tweedale (eds), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993, Vol. 1. Politics* (Sheffield, 1993), p. 16.

⁸⁵¹ J. MacDonald, 'The Cutler's Feast', in C. Byfield and D. Hey (eds), *Mesters to Masters: A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire* (Oxford, 1997), p. 225.

women who managed to obtain contracts in Sheffield's metal trades were the exception rather than the norm. In contrast, Birmingham had no guild and women consequently women had more employment opportunities available to them.⁸⁵² In addition to these formal restrictions, the newspaper evidence of male file-workers attempting to restrict the inclusion of women, and of the Sheffield Outrages attacks coupled with a lack of protection of women's working rights, show the ways in which women were restricted in this working context. These many factors show why opportunities for women in Sheffield's metal trades compared unfavourably with those in the cotton industry and in Birmingham's metal trades.

The lack of training in the metal trades is significant given the wide range of ages involved in the industry, with young girls receiving little training and therefore entering unskilled roles. The age profile of women identified in the census abstracts from 1841 to 1861 indicates that, predominantly, Sheffield's metal trades employed women over the age of 20, although a significant and growing proportion of women and girls under the age of 20 years were entering the metal trades. Between 1857 and 1863, 56 women workers in the metal trades who were single had the means to warrant opening a savings account. Evidence of women employees also showed some women working and supporting themselves and their families in a male dominated trade, whilst two women included in the analysis worked and lived independent of family. Despite training for women being restricted, the findings based on newspaper advertisements showed that experienced women in the metal trades were requested more frequently than young women and girls. The implication from this evidence is that some women in Sheffield's metal trades were required to have a degree of skill based on maturity and prior engagement with the metal trades. This skill is acknowledged only on an informal basis, but nevertheless reflects the fact that women had some level of skill in the metal trades.

There is further evidence that, despite forming only a small proportion of the workforce, women of different ages undertook a broader range of roles than

⁸⁵² M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain* (2nd edn, London, 1994), p. 276; R. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London, 1998), p. 164.

current literature suggests, which could require expertise and skill. Some women undertook less typically feminine roles in Sheffield's metal trades. They included skilled roles such as a steel roller, scissor manufacturer and a silver plater, which were roles often linked to the family. The roles women undertook as indicated in the flood claims suggest that women worked alongside men but performed roles that were less well paid than those undertaken by men. Predominately women performed a variety of finishing processes of particular metal goods. Many women undertook roles involved in the finishing processes of metal goods, and the location of Burgess Street was conveniently close to where goods could leave the town. These roles were typically associated with lower pay than the types of work undertaken by men. However, women working in the metal trades were often well paid in comparison to women in other industries, and women involved in a family metal trades business had particularly good economic opportunities, although women nearly always received lower wages than men. It is difficult to argue that women received a lower wage based on custom or on market forces, as evidence suggests that women in Sheffield's metal trades had to contend with a range of constraints to their work impacting upon the wage they received.

As women were a minority in the workforce they faced additional constraints compared to those women in Birmingham's metal trades, receiving opposition from male workers but also authoritative organisations in the town. Commissioner reports reveal that women worked long days, and that through a lack of legislation these working days could potentially be longer than those worked by women in other trades and localities. Their work was described as hard and physically demanding.⁸⁵³ Therefore, Joyce Burnette's argument that women working fewer hours than men overemphasised the gendered wage gap and is not sufficient to explain the extent of the gendered wage gap in Sheffield's metal trades.⁸⁵⁴ However, there was some evidence that women worked part-time with other family members in order to accommodate childcare and work. Women's employment could also be precarious in Sheffield's metal trades, which was

⁸⁵³ SLL: 331.3 SQ, *J. E. White's Report on Metal Manufacture, Children's Employment Commission: Fourth Report* (1865), p. 39.

⁸⁵⁴ J. Burnette, *Gender, Work and Wages in Industrial Revolution Britain* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 93-4; J. Burnette, 'An Investigation of the Female-Male Wage Gap During the Industrial Revolution in Britain', *The Economic History Review* 50.2 (1997), p. 262.

evident in the relative infrequency of payments in the wage books, which was in contrast to those recorded for men. This suggests that working in the Sheffield metal trades could be financially profitable, but was a precarious form of work for women.

Even though women faced a difficult working environment, family could alleviate the difficulties they faced and could present significant, informal or unexpected opportunities to women. For businesswomen, the significance of the family was imperative for inheriting a business. For women employed in the metal trades, wives and widows could identify themselves in relation to their husbands' occupations, and thereby indicating their involvement in the metal trades as an employee. There were some opportunities for young girls, although not to the same extent as in the cotton industry, where young girls were in demand.⁸⁵⁵ For example, evidence on Burgess Street showed two daughters who were able to learn their trade informally in the context of the family, whilst mother and daughter Hannah and Emma Cocking lived alone and supported themselves through performing identical roles, thus also illustrating the importance of female family members in providing opportunities for women in the metal trades.⁸⁵⁶

Several female workers in the metal trades, irrespective of their marital status, opened savings accounts independently from men. The majority of women who opened a savings account were wives of metal trades workers, and a significant proportion of these women opened separate accounts to those of their husbands. This suggests that married women had a degree of autonomy over their own money, supporting the established understanding that the status of coverture did not always restrict married women's economic opportunities. Predominantly single and widowed women worked in the metal trades, although married women were increasingly likely to participate during the mid nineteenth century despite the fact their activities may have been under-represented in individual census returns for Burgess Street. Whilst some women received money or assets through inheritance or charity, and although there were obstacles to their economic

⁸⁵⁵ M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation and Work in Britain* (2nd edn, London, 1994), p. 141.

⁸⁵⁶ AO: Hannah and Emma Cocking, Burgess Street Individual Census Returns, 1851.

independence because of their gender, women associated with the metal trades were actively engaged in controlling their finances.

The substantial wealth and assets evident in the wills of businesswomen suggests that the metal trades business remained an important way of supporting women and their families in the absence of a man. Having family members working (or having worked) in the metal trades could present women with opportunities for financial relief. Family was fundamental to women accumulating or distributing charitable money in relation to the metal trades. Mary Ann Rawson's financial opportunities and struggles reflect a woman involved in the metal trades as neither a worker nor a business owner, but as someone whose inheritance from the family business provided opportunities to become engaged both in clearing her father's business debts and also with charity in Sheffield.

This thesis set out with the intention of understanding how the lives of women were affected by their involvement in a form of work in which they were not generally expected to be found. This had different outcomes for women who were linked to a family business; women could inherit businesses or could demand higher wages by their employment in the family business. Other women employees did not have these benefits, yet they still earned relatively high wages, and exhibited a degree of economic independence. Women in Sheffield's metal trades faced many restrictions through a lack of training, discourse against them, and a lack of organisational change by the Cutlers' Company which enabled men to continue their dominance. However, family was a key factor determining how, and why, a woman would enter this male dominated trade. The metal trades offered women relatively high wages, with some variety of roles undertaken, and an environment within which their domestic and working roles could potentially be combined. The significance of these women is not in their number but the way in which they successfully engaged in this form of work against many restrictions. In order to understand the extent to which the role of women was socially constructed, experienced and contested, it is important to examine the limits within which they operated. It is also important to recognise the contribution that women made to Sheffield's famous industry in order not only to understand their

significance in a local context, but also to show how women succeeded in entering and participating in a working context in which men vastly outnumbered them.

My findings demonstrate how women contributed to Sheffield's metal trades throughout the period associated with industrialisation. This was an industry that was characterised by traditional workshop production rather than a move to factory based production prior to the introduction of the Bessemer Converter. Although women were a minority in the workforce, they were engaged in a traditional organisation of work which was only gradually displaced in favour of the factory based production. However, caution is needed when trying to ascertain continuity and change in women's role over the course of industrialisation. Whilst the use of census material provides detailed evidence of women's engagement in Sheffield's metal trades, this evidence only refers to the mid nineteenth century and in any case is far from comprehensive. The trade directories that reflected the period 1774-1865 showed that the number of women remained static throughout this period, but with a notable rise in 1865, which could be the result of the particular characteristics of that directory. The census abstracts show that the number of women increased between 1841 to 1861. Unfortunately, the census returns only record women's occupational information from 1841, and the data consequently does not provide the opportunity to understand changes in the female workforce during the whole process of industrialisation. However, trade directories are limited by the unsystematic compilation of each directory and only refer to businesswomen. The wage books provided an overview of the period 1791-1846 and show that women's wages did not significantly change throughout the period and remained consistently lower than men's, confirming Pamela Sharpe's statement that women's wages were 'highly inelastic'.⁸⁵⁷ However, the wage books from the three companies only reflect a small sample of individual women workers, and therefore do not provide sufficient evidence on employment patterns over time. The nature and survival of historical records on women engaged in Sheffield's metal trades has made it difficult to determine evidence of change during the period of industrialisation.

⁸⁵⁷ P. Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy, 1700-1850* (London, 1996), pp. 145-6.

To sum up, this thesis has shown that women in a particular metal trades in a specific location could have a diverse range of experiences dependent on their position in the workforce. However, these women were all engaged in an industry in which they faced difficulties. A lack of training and limitations to establish their own businesses due to local restrictions was evident, yet women's families provided opportunities to work, run businesses and become economically independent from men. My study provides a detailed analysis of the diverse experiences of women operating as a minority in a masculine trade during the process of industrialisation. As such, my thesis provides a distinctive contribution to the understanding of women's lives, building on studies that have set out to draw examples of the role of women in different working contexts, either locally or nationally.

There are two potential areas of research that build upon my current study. First, the period of change for the industry is associated with the introduction of the Bessemer converter in the 1860s. Whilst I have alluded to the impact this had for women, including a growth in the number of women in the metal trades, a study of this transitional period from the late 1860s to the late nineteenth century would allow a more thorough investigation. This study would examine what changes occurred through the reorganisation of the labour workforce into larger production units alongside the growing number of women in the metal trades. This provides a natural development from my current study and would consider how far the growth of large scale production affected women in the industry. The rise in the number of women in the trade directories in 1865 also raises pertinent questions with respect to a shift in women's increased involvement in the metal trades alongside women becoming more visible in visual representations in this form of work.

A second area for research would be a comparative study between the experiences of women in the metal trades and other areas of employment dominated by men. For example, 'masculine trades' located in Great Britain included work on the docks, which could include locations such as London, Bristol

or Liverpool. Some of the earliest evidence of women working in the Liverpool docks is located in a collection of merchant papers belonging to William Davenport, a leading merchant engaged in the slave trade in the eighteenth century. The collection includes reference to work carried out on ships by women, such as fitting them out and cleaning them on their return from sea.⁸⁵⁸ I have shown in my own research how our questioning of the assumptions of 'masculine trades' can allow historians to locate evidence of women workers.

Collaborative doctoral award

My findings also drew upon and contributed to my collaborative doctoral award with Kelham Island Museum. The final section to this conclusion will consider the manner in which this collaboration was undertaken and the ways in which it could be built upon in the future. Kelham Island Museum is an example of a museum that represents the working lives of people and encapsulates Sheffield's identity as an industrial centre. The location and aims of a museum is a significant part of the analysis of museum displays. The core audience at the museum was identified as local schools within the region and local adult visitors, although due to the specialist nature of Sheffield's industrial storyline it also has a number of international visitors who have either steel working or engineering backgrounds.⁸⁵⁹ Evidence derived from chapters one and three of my study related to a general overview of women's role in the industry during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and extended the museum's existing displays. Two new panels and one display cabinet have now been designed and are due to be finalised, produced and displayed in the museum by December 2016.

The relationship between academic research and public history needs to be explored. My role at Kelham Island Museum has provided me with opportunities to attend workshops and gain skills in museum displays, which has also created

⁸⁵⁸ National Museums Liverpool, 'Maritime Archives and Library Information Sheet 67 - Women in Maritime Records', <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/archive/info-sheet.aspx?sheetId=70> [accessed 12 June 2016].

⁸⁵⁹ Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust [hereafter SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016)].

opportunities to network with archivists, museum curators, and local historians.⁸⁶⁰ The collaborative partner lead was Alison Duce, who is the Museum Services Manager (collections and interpretation) at Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust (hereafter SIMT), which includes Kelham Island Museum, Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet and Shepherd Wheel. I interviewed her at the final stage of this collaborative partnership to provide some reflections with regards to presenting history for the general public, and a voice for the collaborative partner for this Ph.D. scholarship.

There are debates regarding whether a museum should be considered a place of factual knowledge, and whether the objects and the information within them should be considered as accurate to the historian. A museum is created for public use; it needs to be appropriate to the targeted audience. Museums have been regarded as an important part of a 'political agenda of lifelong learning, diversity, access and education'.⁸⁶¹ However, heritage has been discredited as information about the past that is turned into 'tourist kitsch'.⁸⁶² Tony Bennett noted the risks inherent in sentimentalising the lives of ordinary people from the past in a museum.⁸⁶³ For example, there is a tension between presenting an accessible and sanitised image of people working in the metal trades in a comfortable environment, and presenting a perhaps more accurate image that provides a critically informed understanding of the realities of their lives. With respect to Kelham Island Museum, Figure 5.2 provides a model of a woman buffing, wearing very clean clothes in a context in which it is not possible to appreciate the noise, the dirt, and the social context of her working environment. Furthermore, the current display focuses on the numbers and roles of men to reflect the significance of the trade in Sheffield (Figure 5.1). Existing displays only made reference to women from the late nineteenth century. Alison Duce stated the reasons behind the decision to include the story of women in Sheffield's metal trades were:

⁸⁶⁰ Exhibition and Display Training, Barnsley Museum, (29 June 2015); Collections Trust Workshop, York, (13 January 2015).

⁸⁶¹ J. de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture* (Oxon, 2009), p. 236.

⁸⁶² R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London, 1994), p. 259.

⁸⁶³ T. Bennett, 'Museums and the People', in B. Lumley (ed.), *The Museum Time Machine* (London, 1988) p. 63.

With the industrial storyline a lot of it is focused on the male perspective [...] just by the very evidence that we've got and the way things came into the museum, that we tell the male perspectives more than the women's perspectives. It's important to actually address the balance [...] so when we have our visitors, we have something for everyone, it's not just a case of telling one side of the story.⁸⁶⁴

There were several important considerations when designing the panels for the new displays on women. These impacted upon what was included and the way this information was to be conveyed, which differs to an academic text. Alison Duce stated that, 'it's all about making it accessible [...] you're actually stood [...] surround[ed] by other people and noises so it's different [to] reading [an academic text]'.⁸⁶⁵ The word count for each panel was a maximum of 150 words and, whilst normally the reading age of museum displays is aimed at ten years of age, due to the specialist and often scientific and technical nature of the displays, the panels at Kelham Island Museum are aimed at around age 14.⁸⁶⁶ This presents a tension between the requirements of an academic historical study which focused on complexity, detail and academic debate, and the public needs of the museum displays which need to be accessible to all people. At the same time, it is important to appreciate that the people using the museum may be diverse with respect to their knowledge and expertise. For example, my collaboration at the museum also involved providing a public talk based on my findings at Kelham Island Museum to a local history group of over 50 people. This difficulty in audience engagement was supported by the following comments from Alison Duce:

A lot of our audiences know more than we do, so we have to provide some information that is useful to them as well rather than the basic historic storyline [...] they [visitors] gain from the experience by seeing everything together, so they might be a specialist in one area, but not on how that fits into the wider context of Sheffield industries [...] it's about giving them the context

⁸⁶⁴ Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016).

⁸⁶⁵ Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016).

⁸⁶⁶ Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016).

but also setting it within that regional and local storyline.⁸⁶⁷

Despite the tensions between pursuing an academic study and providing for a multifaceted audience that have been outlined above, the gaps and silences which are evident with respect to the role of women in the metal trades c.1742-1867 are a feature common to both levels of appreciation of the subject. This gave a central purpose which drove both my research and my association with Kelham Island Museum. In my introduction I reflected upon how women's history has evolved into gender histories that identify the need to understand the lives of women not in isolation, but in relation to men.⁸⁶⁸ In order to understand the lives of women in the metal trades, it is necessary to appreciate 'masculinity's power to shape [women's] experience'.⁸⁶⁹ Within my thesis I have attempted to understand the lives of women within a male dominated context, such as including a comparison of women to the number of men in the metal trades, the wages men received and the gendered context of Burgess Street during the period. In deciding what to include in the museum displays, I had to consider the story the museum currently represented and what my findings could add to these museum panels. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show the two current displays that include several panels. Figure 5.1 shows four panels, which only described the working lives of men in the metal trades. This included information on their roles, types of metal trades in which they were involved, and images of men performing in the metal trades. Figure 5.2 refers to women in the metal trades, but only in the roles of the file trade or buffing, and only in relation to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Significantly, these displays on women also made no reference to men.

⁸⁶⁷ Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016).

⁸⁶⁸ L. Downs, *Writing Gender History* (2nd edn, London, 2010), p. 88.

⁸⁶⁹ J. Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain', *History Workshop* 38 (1994), p. 198.

Figure 5.1: Current displays at Kelham Island Museum including the story of male workers in Sheffield's metal trades



Source: L. Bracey, Personal photograph record (6 September 2016).

Figure 5.2: Current displays at Kelham Island Museum on women working in Sheffield's metal trades representing the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries



Source: L. Bracey, Personal photograph record (6 September 2016).

The intentions of the museum with respect to my contribution to these current displays (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2) were not to consider these stories separately, but to blend the histories of women and men in the metal trades.⁸⁷⁰ The funding for Kelham Island Museum, and the two panels produced as part of this collaboration, come from an annual budget from Sheffield City Council. The constraints of limited funding impacted upon how far the aim of linking the histories of men and women in the metal trades could be achieved. Only two panels could be made, which meant that the story of women during the period c.1742-1867 was treated in isolation and was incorporated into a particular section of the museum. Figure 5.1 shows the section of the museum regarding Sheffield's light-metal trades and a panel will be replaced to include information derived from chapter one of this thesis. This panel will include information regarding the numbers of women in the metal trades, and the types of metal trades and roles that they commonly undertook. Figure 5.2 shows the panels reflecting women in the metal trades for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whilst an additional panel curated by me will include the wages women received in the metal trades. This section will also provide the opportunity to use the one available display cabinet. This cabinet will hold a wage book from 1881 of women working in a scissor factory, and a borrowed document from Sheffield Archives of the earliest wage document identifying women's wages used in this thesis from Hague and Nowill Company.

The second objective set by the museum was to catalogue a large collection of material that had been left to the museum. Catherine Ross considered how the representations in museums are largely established by the collection used and whoever is creating the display.⁸⁷¹ This is particularly pertinent to the objects available to the museum. There was the expectation that I would find material in the museum's collections for the museum display on women working in the metal trades. Unfortunately, no documents related to the period of my research made

⁸⁷⁰ Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016).

⁸⁷¹ C. Ross, 'Collections and Collecting', in G. Kavanagh and E. Frostick (eds), *Making City Histories in Museums* (London, 1998), p. 125.

reference to women in the metal trades. This lack of evidence of women during this period in the museum's own archive goes some way in explaining the practical reasons behind why the story of women's working lives during the period c.1742-1867 has so far been downplayed. However, there were documents in the material that I catalogued which related to the late nineteenth century period and made reference to women. The wage book for a scissor company from 1888 provided information of the name, wage, company and, significantly, the roles women undertook. The women located in the documents all performed finishing roles, such as burnishing. The document will be used in the permanent display to reflect the lower wages women received than men and the types of work women predominately performed in the metal trades. The museum also had a collection of trade directories deposited which will be also be in the display cabinet, with a note to make visitors aware that these documents are available for research from several locations in Sheffield.

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show the extent of the material that has now been catalogued. I was able to detail the documents into an excel database, and order the documents so that visitors to the museum archives are aware what documents are held and are able to access them efficiently. Alison Duce commented that the cataloguing will be 'a real benefit' to the museum: 'it was as if they [the uncatalogued documents] didn't exist before, so it really provided the key, so that we can actually either use them in the displays, use them to inform learning sessions or actually make them available to researchers.'⁸⁷²

⁸⁷² Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016).

Figure 5.3: Archival material at Kelham Island Museum that has been catalogued by Laura Bracey (section one)



Source: L. Bracey, Personal photograph record (6 September 2016).

Figure 5.4: Archival material at Kelham Island Museum that has been catalogued by Laura Bracey (section two)



Source: L. Bracey, Personal photograph record (6 September 2016).

This collaboration resulted in valuable outcomes both for my own research, and for the museum. The value of this collaborative work for my own research was the ways in which the museum provided a stimulus for my own findings. I was able to discuss my findings with the museum staff throughout the course of the Ph.D., on which they were able to provide detailed reflections. For example, several metal trades that businesswomen were involved in were 'lancet and phelm makers'. I was not able to identify through any local history books what a 'phelm' was. However, together with advisors at the museum we were able to establish that 'phelm' was most likely a different spelling of the object 'fleam', which was a surgical instrument that was used on animals, whilst a 'lancet' was used on humans. I was also able to visit the Ken Hawley Tool Collection archive, where I was able to hold different tools that metal trades workers would have used, and from which I was able to identify the items which were more suitable for large (and probably male) hands. I also presented my findings at a public talk for a local History Group 'South Yorkshire Industrial Society' at Kelham Island Museum, and their questions allowed me to develop my own arguments. For example, a question was raised regarding the role businesswomen undertook, and whether this was managerial or involved production tasks. I was able to articulate that, whilst I will never know the true extent and nature of women's involvement in their own businesses, the evidence shows that home and work were physically close, and further, that the small-scale nature of these businesses suggests these women would have had at the very least an awareness of, and interaction with, the production of metal goods. Producing the final display panels allowed me to consider the core arguments that I made in particular chapters, and articulate these findings in a more precise manner.

It is equally important to consider the ways this collaboration benefited the museum and the public. In order to understand the role and experiences of women in the metal trades it was necessary to go beyond the archives, data and information at Kelham Island Museum, and use material located in Sheffield Archives, Sheffield Local Studies Library, Assay Office archive, Cutlers' Company Archive, The British Library, Lloyds Bank Archive and the Borthwick Institute

Archives. Whilst anyone can visit and access these archives, my work on this thesis allowed me the time to explore in detail the materials held at locations, and my access through the University library led me to particular documents in these institutes. By synthesising evidence from all these archival institutes, I was able to draw upon a multitude of sources that not only supported my research but also contributed to the displays at Kelham Island Museum. This was particularly helpful to those from the South Yorkshire Industrial Society, who often had expertise in particular sources, such as trade directories, but could identify in my presentation a range of evidence, based on documents from several archives. This enabled me to make local researchers aware of the range of sources available to them. The impact of this research will ultimately reach many people who visit the museum who might otherwise never engage in the topic of women working in Sheffield's metal trades prior to 1867, whilst my thesis will also be available to researchers at the museum to offer additional insight.

This collaboration also promoted relationships between public bodies in the community and in the local region, which can be built upon in the future. Developing new education sessions, particularly for secondary and sixth form schools is a key area to be developed by the museum, and one on which this thesis has already impacted. Alison Duce commented that as a result of chapters being passed onto the educational team throughout the process of the Ph.D., 'there's been gender reassignment within the way the school sessions are delivered'.⁸⁷³ The learning team has noted that 'it has fed into some of the changes in the way the munitions sessions are presented, although from a different era [...] the character that leads that session is now a woman and it's from the woman's story rather than looking at the male story'.⁸⁷⁴ The collaborative doctoral partnership will be sustained through the completion of the permanent museum displays that are based on the research in my thesis. These displays will sustain impact by engaging with all future visitors to Kelham Island Museum. The museum displays will also be supported by evidence located through the cataloguing of material at the museum's archive. The cataloguing of previously unknown material will have long-

⁸⁷³ Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016).

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

term implications for future researchers. The museum will also receive a hard copy and computer disc version of my thesis, which will be available in the museum library to volunteers, researchers and employers at the museum. There is potential for my thesis to impact on work undertaken by the educational team at the Kelham Island Museum. It has been suggested that the approaches used in the study of Burgess Street in chapter two could be incorporated into an educational package to facilitate independent study on a particular street in any location. If this educational package was available to schools in Sheffield, this would encourage schools to return. Whilst the collaborative partnership has an end point, the outcome of the research and collaborative work will enable the impact of this partnership to continue.

It is possible to build upon the research findings from my thesis and its contribution to the local community through continued collaboration with Kelham Island Museum. Laura King and Gary Rivett argued that public engagement provides ‘a relational model of how academics’ impact should be valued, in which research is not only disseminated – nor is it the only outcome – but is used to create sustained and mutually beneficial relationships between researchers and members of the public’.⁸⁷⁵ Alison Duce commented that displays in the museum offering information from the 1950s onwards are still focused on male engineering and there is a need to expand the story of women’s input across the timescale reflected by the museum.⁸⁷⁶ A funding application could be made to refocus the mock workshops within an indoor street displayed in Kelham Island Museum (Figure 5.5). The current display of a male watchmaker (Figure 5.6) requires a revision to reflect the dominant industries in Sheffield. This could include a businesswoman such as Hannah Shaw and her magnet-making business to reflect the contribution of women to the metal trades within the museum displays.

⁸⁷⁵ L. King and G. Rivett, ‘Engaging People in Making History: Impact, Public Engagement and the World Beyond Campus’, *History Workshop Journal* 80 (2015), p. 229.

⁸⁷⁶ Alison Duce, Museum Services Manager (Collections and Interpretation) at SIMT, Audio Recorded Interview with Laura Bracey (6 September 2016).

Figure 5.5: Current display at Kelham Island Museum of a typical street in Sheffield



Source: L. Bracey, Personal photograph record (6 September 2016).

Figure 5.6: Current display at Kelham Island Museum of a watchmaker's workshop



Source: L. Bracey, Personal photograph record (6 September 2016).

My study of Burgess Street presents the findings to create an imagined space in which women such as Hannah Shaw worked. She was a businesswoman who is also part of a display in the Ken Hawley Tool Collection Museum, in a display cabinet of the less common metal trades in Sheffield. Displaying a woman alongside the other mock metal workshops would help visitors to visualise women's presence in Sheffield's metal trades, with the existing workshop providing a starting point for reinventing the display. By drawing upon my research it would be possible to demonstrate how the space was used, showing for example the fluidity of space between the home and workshop. This could potentially involve developing a role-play enactment on film. The presence of a workshop that is still functioning as a business would reflect the continuity of the workshop-based production in Sheffield until the present day. Furthermore, chapter two showed the close proximity of the living and work spaces for businesswomen and many women employees, which provided an ease of movement in contrast to other locations and forms of work.⁸⁷⁷ It has been argued that the streets in Sheffield 'became extensions of the house and workshop in which business transactions were openly made'.⁸⁷⁸ This environment in which women were present could be reflected by the use of sound, where visitors would hear metal goods being produced in the workshop, the movement of goods between specific rooms in the house to the workshop, and the trading by men and women of metal goods in the street.

The issues raised in my thesis remain important today with respect to some occupations that are more difficult for women to enter than their male counterparts. Although my study relates to women during the process of industrialisation in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the themes and issues that it raised relate to a broader understanding of women in Sheffield's metal trades in the twentieth century. Given this, it is appropriate to consider that on the 17 June 2016, a celebration of women's contribution to the steel industry

⁸⁷⁷ J. Cattell, 'The Workshops of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter', in P. S. Barnwell, M. Palmer and M. Airs (eds), *The Vernacular Workshop: From Craft to Industry, 1400-1900* (York, 2004), p. 163.

⁸⁷⁸ P. Bedford, 'Work, Space & Power in an English Industrial Slum: "The Crofts", Sheffield, 1750-1850', in A. Mayne and T. Murray (eds), *The Archaeology of Urban Landscapes: Explorations in Slumlands* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 110.

during World Wars I and II was commemorated (Figure 5.7). This event involved the unveiling of a statue and the awarding of medals made by Sheffield's Assay Office to those women who worked in the metal trades during the two World Wars. The statue has purposefully been designed to allow visitors to link arms with the two women workers to create photo opportunities (and therefore publicity) but also a sense of a shared identity between the women of the past and the general public today.

This 'Women of Steel' project received funding from Sheffield City Council but was financed largely through fundraising by the women who had previously worked in the industry. As public fundraising for the statue exceeded the £150,000 needed, the project also issued commemorative medallions to the surviving 'Women of Steel' and the families of those who are deceased. Women who worked in the city's steelworks, or their family representatives, attended the unveiling of the statue at Barker's Pool. The designer of the statue, Martin Jennings, stated in his rationale for the design:

I want the statue to represent both the camaraderie that helped these young women triumph over the exceptionally difficult task allotted to them and the pride they felt in achieving expertise in an industry that was traditionally the preserve of men. I have modelled a welder and a riveter to stand for the many roles required of them. They are jauntily marching along arm in arm with their heads held high.⁸⁷⁹

Martin Jennings' comments with regard to the statue of the two women workers are poignant in the light of my research, which showed women working in a range of metal trades, who were also surrounded by men, but who successfully integrated themselves into this working environment. In a coincidental but fitting manner, the eyes of one of the 'Women of Steel' look towards Burgess Street, the focus of the study of her predecessors in chapter two of my thesis.

⁸⁷⁹ M. Jennings, 'Women of Steel Project', (7 February 2013), <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/urban-design-conservation/public-art/women-of-steel/the-project.html> [accessed 21 July 2016]

Figure 5.7: 'Women of Steel' statue and the fundraisers of this project



Source: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/urban-design--conservation/public-art/women-of-steel/the-project.html> [accessed 10 September 2016]

Appendices

Appendix one: Non-metal trades and metal trades in trade directories (including trade and commercial sections), 1774-1865

Year of trade directory	Number of women in the metal trades	Number of women in non-metal trades	Total number of women in trade directories	% of women in the trade directories in the metal trades
1774 (trade)	16	0	16	100.00%
1774 (commercial)	17	10	27	62.96%
1781	5	0	5	100.00%
1787 (trade)	32	2	34	94.12%
1787 (commercial)	22	42	64	34.38%
1792	1	3	4	25.00%
1797 (trade)	14	4	18	77.78%
1797 (commercial)	12	63	75	16.00%
1809	4	2	6	66.67%
1814 (trade A)	2	24	26	7.69%
1814 (trade B)	19	1	20	95.00%
1816	20	39	59	33.90%
1817 (trade)	14	13	27	51.85%
1817 (commercial)	10	48	58	17.24%
1822	17	319	336	5.06%
1825 (trade)	5	94	99	5.05%
1825 (commercial)	16	125	141	11.35%
1828-9	20	410	430	4.65%
1838	26	70	96	27.08%
1854 (trade)	24	781	805	2.98%
1854 (commercial)	23	766	789	2.92%
1865	54	1,501	1,555	3.47%

Appendix two: Occupation key code and the types of metal trades in which women in Sheffield participated as identified in census abstracts and trade directories, 1841-1861

Occupation	Key
Cutlery (knives and blades)	C
Flatware	Fl
Scissor maker	S
File trade	F
Manufacturing tools	M
Personal tools and goods	P
Agricultural and medical tools	Ma
Traders	T
Finishing roles	Fi
Others, and duplicate trades	O

K e y c o d e	Occupation	Census Abstracts									Trade Directories
		1841			1851			1861			
		Un. 20 yrs of age	20 years of age and up	total	Un. 20 yrs of age	20 years of age and up	total	Un. 20 yrs of age	20 years of age and up	total	
O	Anchor, chainsmith								1	1	
C	Awl-blade maker	4	3	7							2
P	Bit brace maker		1	1							
O	Blacksmith		2	2		2	2		1	1	5
C	Blade maker (cutter)										2
O	Bow, bat tackle							1	1	2	
O	Brass &c.							239	285	524	2
O	Bricklayer, cast steel and										1

	converting furnace builder										
O	Britannia metal manufacturer	4	5	9						2	
Fi	Burnisher	10	11	21							
P	Button dealer and maker (metal)				68	48	116			3	
P	Button mould maker		1	1						6	
O	Case maker for knives and razors									1	
M	Chain maker									1	
P	Clasp manufacturer	1	2	3						4	
O	Comb and edge tool maker									1	
O	Comb maker	15	21	36				54	48	102	8
C	Cutler	14	49	63				180	327	507	14
C	Cutler, other										1
C	Cutler and plated manufacturer										1
C	Cutlery caster										4
T	Cutlery dealer										1
C	Edge tool maker										4
C	Edge tool maker and shears										2
M	Engine tool maker										1
F	File maker	28	78	106				214	375	589	16
O	Fishing tackle maker										1
Fl	Fork maker	10	31	41							3
O	German silver manufacturer		2	2							
P	Goldsmith, jeweller							293	264	557	

P	Goldsmith, jeweller, other							4	5	9	
M	Grinder	2	6	8							1
M	Haft and scale presser	1	7	8							11
M	Hammer maker										1
O	In iron and steel							8	10	18	
T	Iron and steel merchant										1
O	Iron founder										3
O	Iron manufacturer		3	3					2	2	
T	Ironmonger							3	9	12	13
C	Jack and springknife cutler										1
Fi	Japanner	1	3	4				7	2	9	
O	Jeweller, goldsmith and silversmith		3	3							
C	Knife maker	1	4	5							2
C	Knife maker (pen)	1	3	4							
C	Knife maker (spring)		2	2							1
C	Knife maker (table)	5	6	11							3
Fi	Lacquerer							2	1	3	
M a	Lancet and phelm (fleam) maker										1
M a	Lancet maker										3
O	Magnet maker		1	1							2
O	Manufacturer of Arms					2	2	12	7	19	
P	Medals, &c.							1	1	2	
O	Metalworker	37	44	81							

M	Nail maker and nailor/ nail manufacturer		49	49	18	38	56	12	30	42	
M	Needle manufacturer	1		1		2	2	2		2	
O	Other dealer in brass and mixed metal				146	139	285				
O	Other worker and dealer in iron and steel				342	642	984				
C	Pen (steel) maker		1	1							
C	Pen and pocket knife cutler										46
M	Pin manufacturer				2		2	2		2	
O	Plater (silver)	1	1	2							
Fi	Polisher	2	3	5							
Fi	Polishing paste maker										1
Fi	Razor case maker	3	4	7							
C	Razor maker	3		3							16
Fi	Saw handle maker										1
C	Saw maker										6
S	Scissor maker	47	101	148				138	193	331	33
Fi	Scourer				1	5	6				
M	Screw cutter, maker							35	32	67	
M	Screw maker	6	11	17							1
C	Shears maker										2
C	Sheath maker (knives)										1
C	Sheep shears and edge tool manufacturer										1
M	Sickle maker		1	1							7

a											
O	Silver plated manufacturer										2
O	Silver worker	21	33	54							
O	Silversmith										3
Fl	Spoon maker	27	34	61							9
C	Spring knife cutler										13
O	Steel manufacturer										1
O	Steel carver and ornament manufacturer (all branches)		1	1							
M a	Surgeons' instrument maker						5	6	11		1
M a	Scythe maker										7
C	Table knife cutler and factor										1
C	Table knife cutler										10
C	Table knife cutler and victualler										1
O	Tin manufacturer, other				96	51	147	4	2	6	1
O	Tin plate worker and tinman	1	1	2							2
C	Tool (edge) maker		2	2							
M	Tool maker		1	1							
O	Toy maker, dealer	1	2	3		3	3		2	2	7
O	Umbrella and	3	4	7	8	5	13	5	5	10	6

	parasol maker										
Fi	Warehouseman or woman	62	100	162	350	420	770	396	490	886	
P	Watch maker										3
P	Watchmaker, clockmaker, other										1
P	Watchmaker, clockmaker							20	16	36	
M	White-lead maker (metalsmith and worker)	3	2	5							
M	Whitesmith		2	2							1
O	Wire worker	1	1	2							1
C	Wool shears and edge tool maker and factor										3
O	Worker and dealer in gold and silver				140	128	268				
	Total	316	642	958	1171	1485	2656	1637	2115	3752	317

**Appendix three: List of women working in the metal trades on Burgess Street
in individual census returns, 1841-1861**

Name of woman worker	Census year	Age	Head of house	Household	Occupation
Mary Cooper	1841	20	William Cooper	Mother, father and sister	Silver burnisher
Mary Hingham	1841	45	Mary Hingham is put first	Son and lodger	Fork filer
Elizabeth Ridgway	1841	20	John Ridgway	Father, mother and a man	Silver burnisher

Hannah Shaw	1841	45	Hannah Shaw is put first	Son, daughter-in-law and grandson	Magnet maker
Ann Harrison	1841	35	Martha Wardley is put first	Two daughters and mother	Silver burnisher
Ann Smith	1841	18	Ann Smith is put first	Mother, husband or brother James, and three lodgers	Table knife cutler
Martha Haywood	1841	14	Ann Haywood is put first	Mother and two brothers	Spoon buffer
Ann White	1841	40	Ann White is put first	Daughter and two men	Scissor filer
Mary Naylor	1851	47	James Naylor	Husband and servant	Silver polisher
Emma Semanson	1851	20	Philip Hunter	She is a lodger with others in a family home	Silver buffer
Caroline White	1851	17	Ann White	Mother, brother, female relation and lodger	Silver burnisher
Charlotte Middleton	1851	17	Mary Middleton	Mother and two brothers	Silver burnisher
Martha Barber	1851	51	William Barber	Husband	Silver plater
Mary Urwin	1851	39	Mary Urwin	Daughter and son	Silver buffer
Ann Urwin	1851	20	Mary Urwin	Mother and brother	Umbrella handle maker
Hannah Cocking	1851	53	Hannah Cocking	Daughter	File scourer
Emma Cocking	1851	17	Hannah Cocking	Mother	File scourer
Mary Ann Windley	1851	27	Thomas Windley	Father, mother, brother, two lodgers with	Silver burnisher

				their two children	
Elizabeth Hopkins	1851	29	Charles Unwin	She and her five children are lodging with a couple	Silver burnisher
Hannah Roberts	1851	56	Hannah Roberts	Two sons and a young girl	Scissor manufacturer
Elizabeth Harrison	1851	16	Martha Wardley	Grandmother, mother, uncle, sister and brother	Silver burnisher
Charlotte Chatterton	1851	21	Abram Chatterton	Husband	Spoon buffer
Anna Croucher	1861	29	George Croucher	Husband, two children and a lodger	Fork filer
Elizabeth Platts	1861	32	George Croucher	Alone, lodger in a house	Fork filer
Mary Walker	1861	63	Mary Walker	Daughter, son and grandson	Steel roller's widow
Mary Ann Turner	1861	39	Mary Walker	Mother, brother and son	Needle grinder's widow
Emma Burkinshaw	1861	21	Charles Burkinshaw	Father, mother, two sisters and a brother	Works with father, a saw handle maker
Charlotte Marsden	1861	52	William Marsden	Husband, servant and three lodgers	Inn keeper, manufacturer (table knife), employ hands
Harriet Boddington	1861	30	James Boddington	Husband and daughter	Comb manufacturer's wife
Harriet Fill	1861	17	John Hill	Mother, father and two brothers	Works with father, a table knife cutter
Sarah Warriss	1861	53	Edwin Smith	Sister, brother-in-law, sister, two nieces and	Silversmith's widow

				two nephews	
Mary Ann Cowin	1861	52	Edwin Smith	Sister, brother-in-law, sister, two nieces and two nephews	Silver burnisher
Martha Martin	1861	67	Thomas Elliott	Son-in-law, daughter and six grandchildren	Table knife cutter's widow
Ann Hoyle	1861	40	Henry Hoyle	Husband and two daughters	Silver burnisher
Sarah Hague	1861	43	Sarah Hague	Two sons and a lodger	Silver polisher
Mary Ann Hartley	1861	23	Dennis English	Lodger in a house with husband	Comb stainer
Mary Sellars	1861	49	Dennis English	Lodger in a house with husband	Cutler's wife
Mary Broomhead	1861	41	Mark Broomhead	Uncle	Furnaceman's widow

Appendix four: Number of male and female rate payers for Burgess Street, 1756-1861

Year of rate book	Total number of people renting property on Burgess Street	Number of women renting property on Burgess Street	Number of men renting property on Burgess Street	% of female rate payers compared to male rate payers
1756	40	2	38	5%
1764	56	4	52	7%
1771	63	8	55	13%
1782	84	11	73	13%
1791	38	4	34	11%
1801	109	13	96	12%
1811	108	12	96	11%
1821	75	17	58	23%
1831	124	11	113	9%

1841	99	17	82	17%
1851	115	15	100	13%
1861	85	16	69	19%

Appendix five: Note on method

The following list provides details of three databases compiled and analysed for this thesis.

Chapter one:

EXCEL database on women who entered a metal trade business into a trade directory, 1774-1865. The sources for this database were located at Sheffield Archives and Sheffield Local Studies Library: Sheffield trade directories, (1774-1865). Information compiled included a woman's name, business address, business type. The EXCEL file was converted into SPSS to present findings graphically.

EXCEL database on women who had an occupation in the metal trades identified in census abstracts, 1841-61. The sources for this database were located at Sheffield Reference Library: 1841 Census Microfiche 48.225; 1851 Census Microfiche 57.648; 1861 Census Microfiche 69.426. Information compiled included occupation, number of women involved in a particular metal trades, age of women (under or over 20 years of age). The EXCEL file was converted into SPSS to present findings graphically.

Chapter three:

EXCEL database on women who received a monetary payment from wage books and insurance claims. The sources of this database were located at Sheffield Archives: LD 192/3, Wage book Hague and Nowill (1786-1850); BR/3/9, Wage book Henry Atkin and Oxley (1828-40); X306/4/1/1/1, Wage Book Firth Company (January 1844-November 1846); SFC: (1864), <https://www2.shu.ac.uk/sfca/> [accessed 22 March 2014]. Information compiled included the names of women workers, date of payments and the amount paid. The EXCEL file was converted into SPSS to present findings graphically.

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