

THE INDUSTRIAL SUBURBS OF LEEDS IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY: COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS
AMONG THE SOCIAL CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

The changing relationship between community and class has been a subject generally neglected by historians. Marxist social theory provides little framework for the examination of the significance of community in capitalist society. This study of the industrial suburbs of Leeds indicates the importance of community consciousness, both as a force moulding class relations in Victorian society, and as a cognizance itself shaped by class relations.

It is argued in chapter two that the relatively monolithic culture of the clothing villages was, by the 1830's, cracking under the pressures of factory capitalism. Suburban attitudes towards community institutions and traditions became permeated and modified by class interests. Chapter three shows how deference and paternalism were fashioned in the factory politics of the 1820's and 1830's, while suburban autonomy came to be threatened by municipal centralization. Chapter five examines the changing role of patronage in suburban religion and education, and analyses petty-bourgeois perceptions of community.

However there was much continuity as well as change. Chapter two argues that several characteristics of clothier culture survived industrialization. Chapter three shows how national political divisions were often subsumed by local loyalties. The long tradition of labour radicalism was partly preserved by the mid-Victorian labour aristocracy. It is argued in chapter four that their labour consciousness was firmly rooted in the local community. Petty-bourgeois community sentiment, examined in chapter five, developed from the traditions of sectarianism and localism. Deference and paternalism revived after 1848 and remained important throughout the century. However there was never a factory culture in Leeds suburbs to match that of Lancashire. In chapter six it is argued that few of the institutions of social control, constructed by patronage from the 1830's, ever gained popular acceptance. There were other 'community institutions', from dame schools to friendly societies, which were of greater importance to the fabric of out-township life.

It is concluded that community consciousness was preserved by the working class both in the sense of place and of past. As class conflict developed in the industrial suburbs, so the struggle to appropriate local traditions, the sense of history, of 'milieu', and of community itself, became part of this conflict.

PREFACE

Much of the research and writing of this study has been undertaken in the isolation familiar to many postgraduates. Nevertheless, during the several years it has taken to completion, a number of personal and academic debts have been accumulated.

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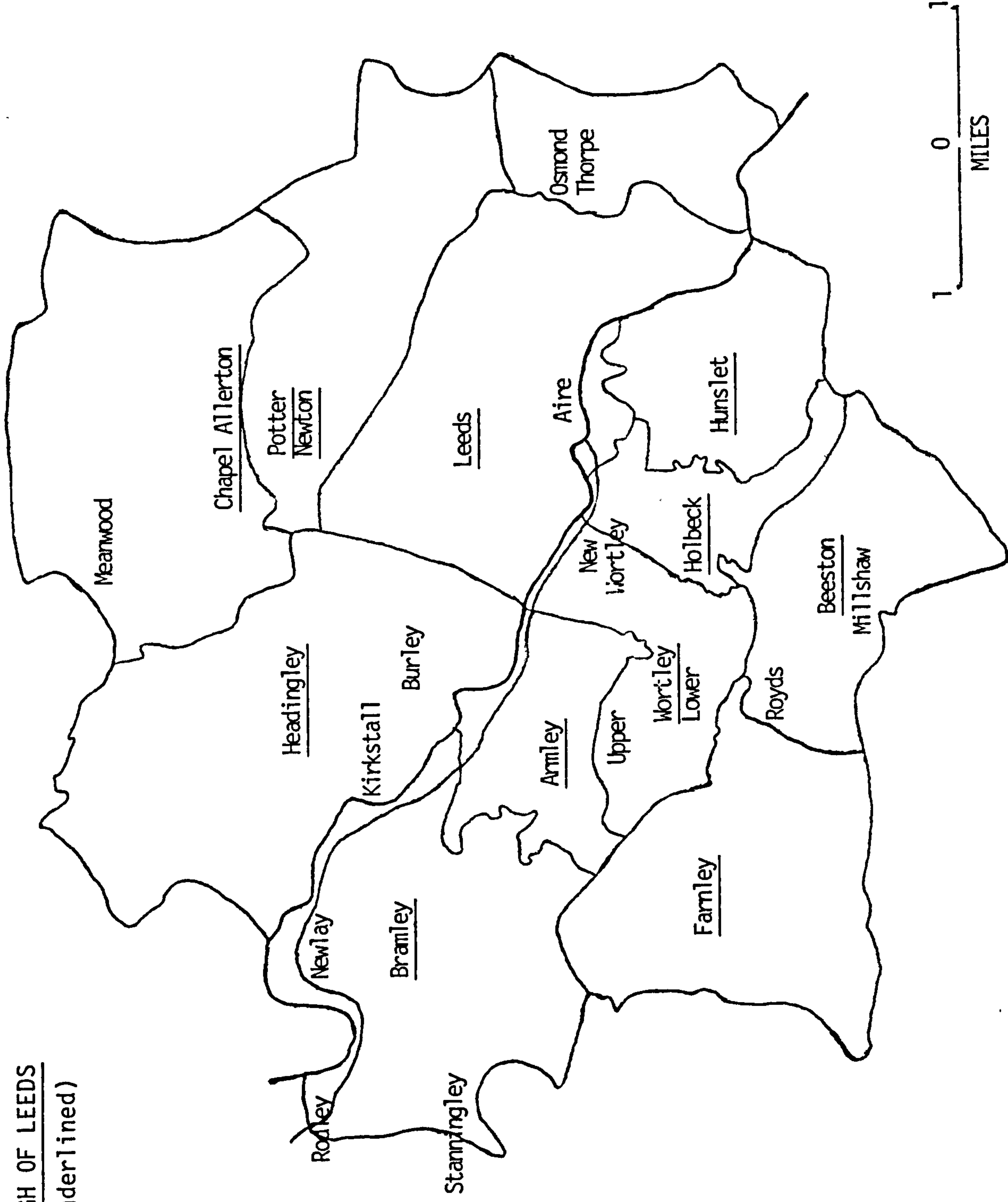
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Abbreviations

BAAS	British Association for the Advancement of Science
EcHR	Economic History Review
Jl.Hist.Geog.	Journal of Historical Geography
JSSL	Journal of the Statistical Society of London
LCA	Leeds City Archives (Sheepscar)
LCR	Leeds Central Reference Library
LI	Leeds Intelligencer
LM	Leeds Mercury
LMILS	Leeds Mechanics' Institute and Literary Society
LT	Leeds Times
MCCE	Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education
NAPSS	National Association for the Promotion of Social Science
NS	Northern Star
PP	Parliamentary Papers
PRO	Public Record Office
RC	Royal Commission
RDBE	Ripon Diocesan Board of Education
SC	Select Committee
TSP	Publications of the Thoresby Society
UHY	Urban History Yearbook
YEP	Yorkshire Evening Post
YFT	Yorkshire Factory Times
YP	Yorkshire Post
YUMI	Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes

(Note that in all footnotes and in the bibliography the place of publication is London, unless stated otherwise).

MAP OF THE BOROUGH OF LEEDS
(Townships are underlined)



CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

Suburbs or Suburbia?

Q. When is a suburb not a suburb?

A. When it is a slum.

When we think of a suburb, we generally envisage middle class 'suburbia', with its quiet roads, trim lawns, rose bushes and garden gnomes. In fact, from a historical point of view what comes to mind is only a particular type of suburb, one which has its origins in the late nineteenth century urban crisis in England and the United States. This crisis concerned the growth of the white collar sectors in those economies and lower middle class demand for cheap, comfortable housing away from inner city slums. It led in turn to the Garden City movement and the concept of the redeeming role of the suburb in society.¹ This type of suburb, planned, residential and largely middle-class, has so coloured the outlook of those writing on the urbanisation process, that it is hard to conceive of the word 'suburb' denoting anything else.² It is implied that the suburb is a modern phenomenon, an idealised 'rus-in-urbe' conclusion to the late Victorian crisis of inner city congestion.³

"To define the suburb is in fact rather like defining the middle classes who virtually created the first of them in their modern form." 4

A reference to one attempt to establish a typology of the suburb will illustrate the potency of the 'myth of suburbia'. David Thorns compiled a list of possible types of suburb, from the middle class, planned, residential suburb, 'which is the closest approximation to the popular image of the suburb', to the working class, unplanned, industrial suburb, 'closest to the idea of the preindustrial faubourg'.⁵ If any antecedents to the modern suburb are acknowledged by the typology, they are to be found in the Georgian villa dwellings

1 A.F.Weber, The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century (1899, reprinted, Ithaca, NY, 1963). Town planning was for a while, 'virtually synonymous with suburban layout on garden city lines', W.Ashworth, The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning (2nd edn. 1972), p.164.

2 Although still explicitly writing about the 'classic' commuter residential suburb, Binford has recently made an important contribution to US suburban history by highlighting 'community building' and 'localism' as features of Boston's early suburbs. Henry C.Binford, The First Suburbs (Chicago, 1985).

3 The concept of the civilising effect of fresh air and open country was a trademark of Victorian critiques of the city. See J.P. Hulin, 'Rus-in-Urbe: a key to Victorian Anti-Urbanism?' in J.P. Hulin and P. Coustillas eds., Victorian Writers and the City (Lille, 1979), pp.9-38; B.I. Coleman ed., The idea of the city in nineteenth century Britain (1973).

4 H.J.Dyos, Victorian Suburb (Leicester, 3rd edn. 1973), p.62.

5 David Thorns, Suburbia (St. Albans, 1972), p.82.

of wealthy urban merchants. The nineteenth century, according to Thorns, saw a 'change in function' of suburbs, which became 'increasingly of one type', that is middle-class and residential.¹ The great majority of works cited by him deal with this type of suburb.² Yet when Leeds is specifically mentioned, an ambiguity appears.

"In 1858 there were five omnibuses daily leaving the centre of the city for the suburbs, which Asa Briggs notes were 'areas of opulence and prosperity' in contrast to the industrial suburbs which developed to the south of the city at Hunslet and Holbeck."

The latter Thorns suggests, had more in common with the medieval faubourgs and south London suburbs of the sixteenth century, 'than with the more usual middle class suburbs of the nineteenth century.'³

If it was only a question of semantics, the term 'suburb' could be discarded and the search begun for more meaningful labels. However this word has long since acquired a class meaning which cannot so easily be ignored. Those who have talked of the levelling or convergence of class differences in modern mass consumer society have looked to the suburb for confirmation of their theories. Suburbia has been accredited with 'taming the radicalism' of the English working class before 1914.⁴

Dyos described the 'game of social leapfrog' in which the lower classes sought respectability by moving out from slums to suburbs. It was, he claimed, a product of 'romantic idealism and social realism.'⁵ Pahl believed 'the leapfrogging suburban development implies a general acceptance of the middle class way of life as a common aspiration for all sections of the population.'⁶ When Dyos examined the working class Sultan Street area of Camberwell, he designated it slum rather than suburb. 'Suburbs beget slums', he wrote elsewhere, but suburbs by definition cannot be slums or they

1 Ibid. p.59.

2 Since 1972 little apparently has changed. Most of the contributions to F.M.L.Thompson ed., The Rise of Suburbia (Leicester, 1982), deal with middle class, residential suburbs.

3 Thorns, op.cit. p.52, my italics. See Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (Harmondsworth, 1963), ch.4.

4 Ruth Glass, 'Urban Sociology in Great Britain', in R.E.Pahl ed., Readings in Urban Sociology (1968), p.69. For another standard identification of the suburb with middle class prosperity and the rise of mass urban society see J.Roebuck, The Shaping of Urban Society (New York, 1974). Cf. also, 'the classless class' in Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (Harmondsworth, 1977), p.343.

5 Dyos, op.cit. p.22.

6 R.E. Pahl, Patterns of Urban Life (1970), p.62.

lose their suburban character.¹

American writers, especially since 1945, have increasingly regarded the suburb as the symbol of the move towards the new classless society, 'where everyman's dream is to plant his own garden.'² Lampard followed Weber in seeing the industrial-urban transformation as involving 'the embourgeoisment of virtually the entire population.'³ The suburb, and the attainable affluence associated with it, are seen as the vehicles by which middle class values permeate other classes in society.⁴

This popular concept of the suburb is inadequate and unhistorical. Suburbs are as old and varied as cities themselves, and frequently the opposite of middle class and respectable. For centuries there had been extra-mural settlements outside many of the larger European walled cities. Traditionally, though not exclusively, faubourgs contained the homes of the poorest sections of the population, beggars, paupers, vagabonds, the 'Lumpenproletariat.'⁵ In addition, domestic servants, day labourers and those whose jobs required more space than was cheaply available within the walls, such as weavers and smiths, or whose work might be deemed an environmental nuisance, such as tanners and dyers, found homes more readily in the suburbs.⁶

Their more plebian social structures alone would have been enough to make such suburbs a source of concern for city fathers, but often these suburbs were actively radical in supporting both urban craftsmen and small traders against rich merchant oligarchies in urban political conflicts, and peasants and small farmers against feudal landowners in the neighbouring countryside.⁷ The threat to open the

1 H.J.Dyos and D.A.Reeder, 'Slums and Suburbs', in H.J.Dyos and M.Wolff eds., The Victorian City, Vol.2, (2nd edn.1978), p.360.

2 A.Pizzorno, 'Three Types of Urban Social Structure and the Development of Industrial Society', in G.Germani, ed., Modernization, Urbanization and the Urban Crisis (Boston, 1973), p.134. For such symbolism, cf. Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman (Harmondsworth, 1972).

3 E.L.Lampard, 'The Urbanising World', in Dyos and Wolff, op.cit. vol.1 (2nd edn., 1976), p.40.

4 B.Berger, 'Myths of American Suburbia', in Pahl, Readings, 95-118; G.H.Singleton, 'The Genesis of Suburbia', in L.H.Masotti and J.K.Hadden eds., The Urbanization of the Suburbs (Beverly Hill, 1973), 29-50.

5 John Merrington, 'Town and Country in the Transition to Capitalism', in R.Hilton et.al., The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism (2nd edn., 1978), p.182.

6 Karl Czok, 'Vorstädte: Zu ihrer Entstehung, Wirtschaft und Sozialentwicklung in der älteren deutschen Stadtgeschichte', Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig (Berlin, 1979), Phil.hist.Kl., vol.121, 1, 25.

7 Ibid. 28.

gates to the suburban poor was used more than once by factions in inner-city quarrels, and the reputation for volatility of the Parisian crowd owed much to the extra-mural poor.¹ Faubourg St. Antoine was regarded as the 'traditional hearth of revolution.'²

This suburban radical tradition was carried on well into the nineteenth century. The terms 'faubourg' and 'banlieue' took on a 'pejorative and threatening sense' for the French bourgeoisie. The Lyon uprisings began in the silk weavers' suburbs of Croix Rousse and La Guillotière. The final resistance of the Paris Communards was crushed in the suburb of Belleville.³

"When their petit bourgeois and proletarian masses became the decisive motive-force in revolutions, spreading fear and horror among the rulers and the rich, then suburbs became factors in the class struggle and their names often a byword for revolution." 4

Clearly urbanisation determined the proletarianisation of the working class in a suburban as well as an urban context. Just as poverty and social and political isolation shaped the experience of suburban dwellers in medieval and early modern times, so the impact of rapid industrial growth, migration and social segregation shaped the experience of close knit suburban communities in the nineteenth century. Thus working class suburbs such as the out-townships of Leeds provide the ground in which to examine the tensions which traditional social relationships were to undergo at this time. In the Leeds context of semi-rural clothing villages rapidly changing into densely populated industrial suburbs, was suburban growth a radicalising force in the continental tradition, or a process leading to the harmonisation of class relationships in Victorian society?

(ii)

Suburban Growth and the Leeds Woollen Industry

Most of the Leeds out-townships began as medieval weaving and farming villages or hamlets dotted along the ridges and becks of the

1 Richard Cobb, The Police and the People (Oxford, 1970), pp241-2, 265-6.

2 David Harvey, Consciousness and the Urban Experience (Oxford, 1985), p.215. In the myth of a 'golden age', which caught hold of the French working class during the post-war depression, Bonaparte became known as 'l'empereur des faubourgs'. Albert Soboul, 'La Reprise économique et la stabilisation sociale, 1797-1815', in F.Braudel and E.Labrousse eds., Histoire Économique et Sociale de la France, vol.3 (Paris, 1976), 65-136.

3 John M.Merriman, 'Introduction: Images of the Nineteenth Century French City', in idem. ed., French Cities in the Nineteenth Century (1982) pp.11-41; R.J.Bezucha, The Lyon Uprising of 1834 (Cambridge Mass. 1974).

4 Czok, Vorstädte, 28. (My translation).

Aire valley. Several were entered as manors in their own right in the Domesday Book.¹ The out-townships were, however, always within the boundaries of the medieval parish, and thus also came into the borough when the parochial boundaries were adopted by the municipal charter of 1626. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, in the following pages therefore, when referring to Leeds, the term 'suburb' is completely synonymous with 'clothing village' and 'out-township'.

Township self-government via the vestry, the churchwardens, poor law guardians and highway surveyors, remained fairly intact until the nineteenth century. The extension of municipal powers mainly through the numerous improvement acts of that century began to encroach upon out-township autonomy at the same time as rapid population growth and industrialization was changing the face of the suburbs.

Suburban growth, however, long remained essentially non-contiguous with the urban core of Leeds in-township. The industrial suburbs had a dynamic of their own. They were not characterised by any of the accepted 'ring', 'ribbon' or 'nodality' models of urbanisation, nor were they stimulated by the expansion of an urban transport network until the twentieth century.² Only Hunslet and Holbeck, the two largest suburbs, had physically merged with Leeds before the 1880's, and as late as 1878 they can still be found listed separately with the other out-townships in a trades directory. In the directories, Armley, Beeston, Bramley and Wortley continue to be described as villages up to 1872, and only cease to be listed apart from Leeds after 1883.³ The interchangeableness of the terms 'village', 'suburb'

1 James Wardell, The Municipal History of the Borough of Leeds (1846) App.1. See also H.C.Darby and I.S.Maxwell, The Domesday Geography of Northern England (Cambridge, 1962).

2 Such 'ribbon' development as there was, occurred along the old turnpike roads out of Leeds, but it was a case of 'transport following development.' G.C. Dickinson, 'The development of suburban road passenger transport in Leeds, 1840-95', Journal of Transport History, 4 (1959-60), 222. The classic model of 'ring' development was Chicago, R.E.Park et.al., The City (Chicago, 1925). Cf. also, Cologne, K.Jasper, Der Urbanisierungsprozess dargestellt am Beispiel Köln (Cologne, 1977). For 'ribbon' development see David Ward, 'A comparative historical geography of streetcar suburbs in Boston and Leeds 1850-1920', Annals of the Association of American Geographers 54(1964)477-89; J.T.Coppock and H.C.Prince eds., Greater London (1964). On nodality see Louis P.Cain, 'William Dean's Theory of Urban Growth', Journal of Economic History 44 (1985), 241-9, and more generally, Harold Carter, The Study of Urban Geography (1972); A.E.Smailes The Geography of Towns (3rd edn., 1958).

3 W.Parson and W.White, Directory of the Borough of Leeds (Leeds, 1830); T.Porter, Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds (Leeds, 1872); McCorquodale and Co., Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds (Leeds, 1878); E.R.Kelly, Post Office Directory of Leeds (1882).

and 'out-township' in the directories between 1830 and 1880 reflects contemporary doubts as to where to catalogue these communities. This inconsistency of usage is symbolic of the transitional nature of the suburbs in this period.

The growth of the out-townships from clothing villages to mass industrial suburbs was intimately connected with the development of the woollen industry. Its expansion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries increased the number of small clothiers throughout the West Riding, and encouraged local specialisation in products which became characteristic of an area, kerseys and narrow cloth in the uplands, broadcloth in the Leeds district. The advantages Leeds possessed over rival cloth making centres included cheap labour, the low cost of living, the abundance of fulling mills and a ready supply of water.¹ In the fertile lowlands of the Aire valley, where tenancies were larger than in the uplands due to greater traditional manorial control, the arable harvest created a high seasonal labour demand. This was met by a pool of cottager-weavers who would turn back, after harvesting on the larger farms, to their own small-holdings and to broadcloth production.² By the late sixteenth century there existed in the Leeds area a number of large clothiers who had capital enough to exploit this situation.

The key to the formation of this group of clothier-capitalists lay partly in the economies of scale in broad-cloth production, partly in greater rental income from sub-letting, and partly in the agriculture of the area. The fertile land near Leeds allowed the largest tenants to accumulate a little surplus from corn and dairy production.³ This in turn allowed them to spend cash on a broadloom or two, dyeing pans, walker shears and a wooden tenter frame.⁴ They could also afford the wages of journeymen weavers and spinners, and to

1 In 1561 York Corporation noted with dismay the cheapness of corn and coal in Leeds. Herbert Heaton, The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries (Oxford, 1920), p.55. Nearly 150 years later Fiennes also remarked on the cheapness of Leeds; 'they have provision soe plentiful that they may live with very little expense and get much variety.' C.Morris, ed. The Journeys of Celia Fiennes (2nd edn. 1949), p.220.

2 Pat Hudson, 'Proto-industrialisation; The Case of the West Riding Wool Textile Industry in the 18th and early 19th centuries', History Workshop 12 (1981), 34-61.

3 In Hunslet before 1560 there had been regular stock-raising of cattle. Later in the century sheep grazing increased. By 1612 almost half of the land in Hunslet had been turned over to pasture and meadow, and the area of land in use had more than doubled since 1570. G.G.Gamble 'A History of Hunslet in the late Middle Ages', TSP 41(1947), misc. 12, iii, 222-58.

4 Heaton, op.cit. p.96.

take on apprentices. The result of this capitalisation of a small section of the out-township industry was that the number of wage-dependant journeymen grew in relation to the small independent masters, although the latter remained the overwhelming majority.

A similar process of capitalisation occurred in the preparatory and finishing branches of the industry. The big master cloth-dressers were the wealthiest and most skilled of all artisans in the woollen industry and, together with the master dyers and large clothiers, they provided recruits to the Leeds merchant class of the eighteenth century.¹ By the beginning of that century an established order of clothier, cloth dresser/finisher/dyer and merchant had developed in Leeds.²

The organisation of the woollen industry as it existed in the out-townships in the early nineteenth century derived from this process of capital accumulation, specialisation and partial division of labour between 1550 and 1700. During this period a number of workers in the clothing villages became alienated for the first time by capital from their means of production, from their tools, their materials and from their land.³

It is important to understand the limited nature of this alienation process. Capital penetrated the domestic system earliest and deepest in the upland districts of the West Riding at the end of the seventeenth century. Kerseys declined and the worsted industry was established on the same putting-out, piece-rate basis as it was organised in Norfolk, where wage dependent domestic workers owned neither material nor tools. However there was no widespread proletarianisation of woollen workers on a putting-out basis in the Leeds area. In the out-townships only a minority were involved. For the rest of the farmer-clothiers, the constant division and subdivision of land may even have allowed them to consolidate their holdings, and consequently their economic position, though some may have slipped from owner to tenant status. Leeds broadcloth was less bound to the fashions and fluctuations of foreign markets, required

1 R.G.Wilson, Gentlemen Merchants (Manchester, 1971), pp.30-1.

2 W.B.Crump, 'The Leeds Woollen Industry 1780-1820', TSP 32(1929).

3 The concern with the regulations of journeymen's wages from the sixteenth century is one indication of the extent of capitalist relations within the industry. Heaton, *op.cit.* pp.110-17. On alienation, see Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (Moscow, 5th edn., 1977), pp.66-80. On the phases of production relations, see J.Schlumbohm, 'Relations of production-productive forces-crises in proto-industrialization', in P.Kriedte et.al., Industrialization before Industrialization (Cambridge, 1981), pp.94-125.

less stock to be kept and therefore less credit, and demanded less capital investment in machinery and labour than worsteds. The fertile soil and good grazing in the Aire valley, the cheap coal and abundant water, allowed the artisans in the Leeds out-townships to continue using their own raw materials and tools, operating all the processes of production (except fulling), and selling their finished product for cash. The independent farmer-clothiers remained a majority in the out-townships throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹

Before the industrial revolution the most important divisions were not between waged labourers and their employers, but between the mass of small clothiers, and the wealthy merchants and large clothiers. The latter wielded the power of Leeds Corporation and were interested in regulating broad-cloth manufacture to aid urban manufacturers and to restrict rural competitors. Several guilds were formed for this purpose in the 1630's and the 1660's.² For their part the smaller clothiers wanted some regulation of the broggers who controlled their supply of wool, but were against medieval restrictions on the processes of manufacture.³ Their agitation usually took the form of mass petitions, and was also reflected in the antagonism between the out-township clothiers and the oligarchic Corporation.⁴ The conscious puritanism of the out-township chapelries from the 1590's reinforced feelings of local autonomy.⁵ Even the take-over of the Corporation by Parliamentarians during the Civil War made little difference to the grievances of the small suburban clothworkers.

The greatest difficulty both the urban oligarchy and the Church faced in the out-townships was the relatively rapid increase in population. Hunslet had 200 families in 1650, "chiefly clothiers",⁶

1 'Yeoman-clothiers' made up 80 per cent of the fathers recorded in the Hunslet baptismal register for 1718-23. W.G.Rimmer, 'The Industrial Profile of Leeds, 1740-1840', TSP 50 (1967) misc.14, 130-57.

2 Heaton, op.cit. pp.216-47.

3 E.M.Carus-Wilson, Medieval Merchant Venturers (1954), pp.211-28.

4 P.J.Bowden, The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England (1962), pp.174-5; Heaton, op.cit. pp.216-47.

5 Clair Cross, 'The Development of Protestantism in Leeds and Hull, 1520-1640: The evidence from Wills', Northern History 18 (1982), 230. Lollardy and early Protestantism had been disseminated by travelling cloth-workers in the Leeds area much earlier however. See A.G.Dickens, The English Reformation (1964), p.33, and idem., Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York 1509-1558 (1959), pp.224, 247.

6 Ralph Thoresby, Ducatus Leodiensis (2nd edn., 1816), p.177.

and 600 families by 1743. Armley and Bramley had less than 100 each in 1663, but 350 and 266 families respectively by 1764. Holbeck's population increased from about 730 in 1663 to nearly 2000 80 years later. This population growth was sporadic until the 1770's. It was probably made up of some natural increase, and rather more near-migration from either small clothing-farming settlements in the West Riding, or from Leeds itself.¹

Migration was encouraged by the progress of woollen manufacture. This had stagnated in the early eighteenth century due to the rise of European woollen industries,² but experienced export-led booms in the 1730's and 1740's in trade with Spain and Portugal and after 1750 with North America.³ The growth of the clothing villages as centres of industry probably occurred to some extent at the expense of the in-township of Leeds. After mid-century there was an increasing tendency among the Leeds merchants to finish the cloth themselves. This required larger and more opulent premises and a proportionately smaller workforce. The relations between the master dressers and dyers and the merchants grew closer with the latter gradually taking over the functions of the former.⁴ Rents and land prices in the town rose and drove out some poorer clothiers and small dressers and dyers to the suburbs. Leeds increasingly became a finishing centre, a financial centre, and a market place for livestock and raw materials, cloth and food.⁵ By the end of the eighteenth century, with cloth halls, banks and merchant houses in Leeds, the distinction between urban trading centre and the suburban manufacturing communities was quite marked.⁶

¹ C.J.Morgan, 'Demographic Change', in D.Fraser, ed. A History of Modern Leeds (Manchester, 1980), 46-71. A shifting balance of natural increase and migration would appear to account for most of the industrial out-township growth rates. Rural out-townships such as Headingley and Farnley would appear to have relied more on migrants for their modest growth rates. Frank Beckwith, 'The Population of Leeds during the Industrial Revolution', TSP 41 (1948), misc.12, 118-96.

² Although this was more the fate of the Kersey areas than of Leeds broadcloth. See Bowden, op.cit. pp.54-5, and Heaton, op.cit. pp.267-8.

³ R.G.Wilson, op.cit. pp.37-52. Arthur Young noticed that Leeds had "flourished greatly" during the seven years war but suffered in the post-war depression. Arthur Young, A Six Months Tour Through the North of England (2nd edn. 1771), vol.II, p.139.

⁴ R.G.Wilson, op.cit. 69-70.

⁵ Heaton, op.cit. pp.284-9. William Marshall, The Rural Economy of Yorkshire (1788), vol.I, p.409, vol.II, pp.22, 47-8, 192, 217.

⁶ Kevin Grady, 'Commercial Marketing and Retail Amenities, 1700-1914', in Fraser, op.cit. pp.177-99. Also Eric Sigsworth 'The Leeds Cloth Halls', Leeds Journal 25 (1955), 3-5; idem., 'The Industrial Revolution', in M.W.Beresford and G.L.Jones eds., Leeds and its Region (Leeds, 1967), pp.146-55.

Class and Community Consciousness

'Community' has become one of the most ill-defined and widely used words in modern parlance. There is the 'international community', the European Economic Community, the 'diplomatic community'. Nationally and locally there is 'community policing' and 'community housing'. 'Community-based resources' are offered as alternatives to detention centres for rehabilitating juvenile offenders back into the 'community'.¹ 'Community' has become a politically loaded metaphor which can be applied in various ways to a wide range of issues. Its popularity lies in the fact that it almost always carries positive, seldom negative, connotations.²

A sense of community was thought to have been destroyed by the Industrial Revolution and the urbanisation which accompanied it. According to classic community theory, Gemeinschaft, the traditional organic, collective life-style of rural societies was replaced by Gesellschaft, everything modern, mechanised, transitory and superficial.³ The close-knit communities and 'face to face' relationships of pre-industrial society were lost in the anonymity and alienation of city life.⁴ Urban society in the early twentieth century was condemned in America from the standpoint of a folk-rural idyll, while poets in Europe depicted the city as a monster bringing war and degradation, or an automated structure crushing the human spirit.⁵ Such images remain powerful, even in the prosperity of the last quarter of this century. The concrete high-rise blocks have become a symbol of urban alienation.

"Living Standards may be higher than they were in the back to back houses, but the community spirit has disappeared. People are locked away from each other watching TV in their boxes." 6

Since 1945, however, others have rediscovered community life in the city. Sociologists in the early 1960's defined the class character of 'sociability' and 'neighbourliness' in a number of urban areas, and

1 The Guardian, 4 June 1986.

2 Raymond Williams, Keywords (Harmondsworth, 1976).

3 F.Tonnies, Community and Association (1955).

4 L.Wirth, 'Urbanism as a Way of Life', American Journal of Sociology 44 (1938), 1-24.

5 R.Redfield, The Folk Culture of Yucatan (Chicago, 1941); Georg Heym, 'Die Stadt' (1912); T.S.Elliott, 'The Wasteland' (1922); Fritz Lang, 'Metropolis' (1926).

6 Beryl Bainbridge on her home town, Liverpool, Radio Times, 3-9 May 1986.

argued the need for planners to take this into account.¹ Hoggart and Roberts illustrated the importance of community life in working class areas of Leeds and Salford in the 1900's and 1930's.² Historians of nineteenth century society, however, have largely neglected the relationship between community and class. Those who have attended to the notion of community have come up with widely differing interpretations of its importance to social change.

Frankenberg's 'operational definition of community' as 'an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence' can be loosely applied to the industrial suburbs of Leeds - Armley, Beeston, Bramley, Holbeck, Hunslet and Wortley. 'The bases of community are locality and community sentiment.'³ As localities these suburbs are easy to define. Thanks to non-contiguity and long established township boundaries it is quite clear where Armley ends and Wortley begins. However size, kinship and marriage patterns, co-residence and face to face relationships, the proliferation of special interest groups within a locality, and all the other 'indices' of sociologists, geographers and anthropologists do not necessarily amount to a sufficient and unambiguous definition of community.⁴ It is the existence of community 'sentiment' or consciousness which is empirically the most difficult and most necessary to prove. This study of the industrial suburbs of Leeds attempts to follow through the territorial community in all its social, economic, political and cultural manifestations, in search of that other basis of community.⁵

- 1 P.Willmott and M.Young, Family and Class in a London Suburb (1960); P.Willmott, The Evolution of a Community (1963); B.Jackson and D.Marsden, Education and the Working Class (Harmondsworth, revised edn., 1966).
- 2 R.Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (Harmondsworth, 1958); R.Roberts, The Classic Slum (Harmondsworth, 1973).
- 3 R.Frankenberg, Communities in Britain (Harmondsworth, revised edn., 1969), p.15.
- 4 P.Worsley et.al., Introducing Sociology (Harmondsworth, 1970), pp.277-8; A.Macfarlane, 'History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities', Social History, 2 (1977), 631-52; C.J.Calhoun, 'History, Anthropology and the study of communities: some problems in Macfarlane's proposals', Social History 3 (1978) 363-73; J.D.Marshall, 'The Study of Local and Regional Communities' Northern History 17 (1981), 203-30; R.J.Dennis and S. Daniels, 'Community' and the Social Geography of Victorian Cities', UHY (1981), 7-23.
- 5 Cf. Bohstedt, who restricts his discussion of community to that of clearly defined localities, and then examines their 'degree of cohesion' in relation to riots. J.Bohstedt, Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales 1790-1810 (1983). A much broader historical trawl of social relations is needed to establish community consciousness.

One difficulty is that community behaviour patterns, obviously forming much of the empirical evidence, will not necessarily be expressions of community consciousness. Behaviour patterns are often unconscious products of evolution and the struggle for survival. Consciousness and self-consciousness, on the other hand, might be defined as the highly articulated, but sometimes introverted or internalised grasp of what others think of us, a social as much as a natural phenomenon.¹ A question mark might therefore be placed against the coupling of community and consciousness. Is community a conscious collective expression, or a localised behaviour pattern not itself dependant on consciousness? Hoggart believed that the 'neighbourliness' and the 'not very self-conscious sense of community' he found in Hunslet in the 1930's, 'in most people did not develop into a conscious sense of being part of the working class movement.'²

Class consciousness has received substantially more attention from historians.³ Thompson described two aspects of the new working class consciousness of the 1830's as, firstly, 'the consciousness of the identity of interests between working men of the most diverse occupations and levels of attainment', and secondly, 'the consciousness of the identity of interests of the working class as against those of other classes.'⁴ Class consciousness is the way in which experiences determined by the relations of production 'are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas and institutional forms.'⁵ Other Marxists have defined class as a 'dialectical unity', a 'living structure' of economic, political and social relationships.⁶

The important point appears to be that class is best regarded as a historical relationship between and across groups and individuals in society, a relationship which is determined by the different phases in the development of the capitalist mode of production.⁷

1 Class consciousness might be regarded as the highest stage of this evolution among humans, although Lenin, not surprisingly defines it in more overtly political terms. W.I.Lenin, Ausgewählte Werke, vol.1 (Berlin, 1970), p.163.

2 Hoggart, op.cit. pp.81-3.

3 R.J.Morris, Class and Class Consciousness in the Industrial Revolution 1780-1850 (1979); R.S.Neale, Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century (1972).

4 E.P.Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Harmondsworth, revised edn., 1968), pp.887-8.

5 Ibid. pp.9-10.

6 Zwaar, op.cit. pp.14-17. Cf.Balibar's 'structural causality' in L.Althusser and E.Balibar, Reading Capital (2nd edn., 1977)p.224.

7 Cf. Marx's famous letter to Weydemeyer, 5 Mar.1852, in Karl Marx and F.Engels, Letters on 'Capital' (1983), p.33.

As St Croix has re-emphasised, what characterises a society is the principal 'method of appropriation' of surplus labour, not which groups are most numerous in society.¹ In nineteenth century England capitalist factory and workshop-based production was increasingly becoming the dominant method of that appropriation and exploitation. Moreover this exploitation, or 'real' subordination of waged labour to capital, rested on the character of the labour process itself, not just on the structure of ownership of the means of production.² As will be argued below, before 1850 whole branches of woollen manufacture in Leeds out-townships survived outside the mills, but the time - and work - discipline, the price-cost-structure and pace-making associated with machine-orientated factory production, slowly reshaped and eventually dominated customary work relations and the labour process in the domestic system.

Class, therefore, is most fruitfully perceived as the 'collective social expression' of the 'relationship of exploitation' between labour and capital.³ Authors such as Glen and Calhoun completely miss the mark when they argue that divisions within the working class 'make it well nigh impossible to talk about class solidarity and class conflict' in the early nineteenth century, and then proceed to dismiss the existence of class.⁴ Both the internal status divisions, and the absence or presence of 'class solidarity' are functions of the relationship of exploitation. Class exists because of this relationship, whether or not it is expressed in 'populist radicalism' (Calhoun) and a 'conflict mentality' (Glen), or in the values of respectability and independence, 'self-generated' by a Victorian labour aristocracy.⁵ As Foster has demonstrated for Oldham, it is the 'logic' of the industrial structure itself which exposes the capitalist mode of exploitation.⁶ How different socio-economic

1 Geoffrey de St.Croix, 'Karl Marx and the interpretation of Greek and Roman History', Isaac Deutscher Memorial Lecture, 28 Nov.1983.

2 G.Stedman Jones, Languages of Class (Cambridge, 1983), pp.12-14. Jones explains his use of Althusser's distinction between 'formal' and 'real' subordination in the same essay.

3 St. Croix, op.cit.

4 R.Glen, Urban Workers in the Early Industrial Revolution (1984), p.277; C.J.Calhoun, The Question of Class Struggle(Oxford, 1982).

5 G.Crossick, An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society (1978), p.254.

6 J.Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution (1974). Cf. also G.McLennan, Marxism and the Methodologies of History (1981), p.216.

groups relate and react to this exposure determines the strength and viability of class consciousness. Such consciousness, however, as Thompson and others insist, can find social and cultural expressions as well as political-ideological manifestations in the form of a revolutionary working class vanguard. Class is determined by the dominant mode of production in a particular historical epoch, but it is not mechanistically reducible to that mode of production.¹

If both class and community continue to be defined and re-defined, the relationship between the two has been less well explored. To say that the English working class originated in communities and struggled in communities may sound commonplace, but it can hardly be overstated, and indeed has scarcely been stated at all by some historians.

Thompson wrote of a plurality of communities in the 1830's, dominated by collectivist values, the ethos of mutuality and self-discipline best represented in weavers' box clubs, trade unions and friendly societies. These values were produced by the conflict between alternative cultures brought about by different modes of production co-existing. They were held together in the 'collective self-consciousness' which was 'the great spiritual gain of the Industrial Revolution', and distinguished the nineteenth century working class from the eighteenth century mob.²

As will be shown below, much of this interpretation can be applied directly to Leeds. The plight of the domestic clothier had a great deal to do with where he found himself viz. a viz. this 'collective self consciousness'. However Thompson has tended to telescope matters by neglecting the importance of the interaction of other social classes, of paternalistic millowners, of small employers, tradesmen and property owners within predominantly working class communities like the industrial suburbs. Moreover, Thompson implicitly treats community as a structure, or as the 'product of working class endeavour', rather than as a historical relationship between classes in time, the very relationship he uses to define class itself.³

Foster also seems to reduce community to something one-dimensional when he writes about illegal trade unionism and 'coercive occupational

1 R.Q.Gray, 'Religion, Culture and Social Class in late 19th and early 20th century Edinburgh', in G.Crossick ed., The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914 (1977), pp.134-58.

2 E.P.Thompson, op.cit. pp.457, 463, 913.

3 Ibid. p.457.

solidarity' 'compelling the formation of the labour community'. More explicitly than Thompson, Foster sees the growth of working class consciousness as involving a move away from older forms of 'community based discipline' towards the industrial organisation of the 1830's, where working class consciousness and middle class 'authority-systems' were based on the workplace.¹ To sum up therefore, it seems that the role of community was to be the birthplace of the working class, and goes no further than that.

This is perhaps not surprising given that there is so little about community life in Marx's analysis of capitalist society. In 1844 and again, more explicitly, in 1857 Marx wrote that 'real community' in pre-capitalist societies is 'dissolved' by private property, by primitive accumulation, and finally by the alienation of labour from the objective conditions of production.² Thus for instance, in the clothing villages from the late sixteenth century the transition of some independent producers into a 'free fund' of waged labour involved more than just the dissolution of the relations of property and other objective conditions of production. It also involved the dissolution of their relation to the community. This relation was mediated firstly by the farmer-clothier's membership of a uniform unit of production, the household, and secondly by the communal features of woollen manufacture, the beck, the meadow, the tenter ground, the fulling mill. If the individual changed his relation to the community, he undermined its economic premiss. Conversely, if the economic premiss of the community was modified, if its relations of production were altered, the individual's relation to the community was itself undermined. The modification of this economic premiss was produced by its own dialectic. The basis on which such pre-capitalist communities evolved was the

"reproduction of relations between individual and community ... and a definite, predetermined objective existence, both as regards the relations to the condition of labour, and the relation between one man and his co-workers... Such evolution is from the outset limited, but once the limits are transcended, decay and disintegration ensue".³

- 1 Foster, op.cit. pp.43, 72, 223-4, 254. Perhaps indicative of the very limited examination of 'community' by Foster, is the fact that Stedman Jones, in his lengthy and searching critique, scarcely mentions the word. G.Stedman Jones, 'Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution', in idem., *Languages of Class*, op.cit. 25-75.
- 2 Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 84, 99-100; idem., *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (1964), 83, 88, 90. Marx refers to 'community', *Gemeinde* and *Gemeinwesen*. Cf. Karl Marx and F.Engels, *Werke*, vol.42 (Berlin, 1983), 383-421.
- 3 Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, 83.

When the small farmer-clothier, either tenant or landowner, exchanged independent production for waged labour as a journeyman weaver in the Leeds broad-cloth industry, or as an out-worker in the putting-out system appearing in Halifax and Bradford, he introduced an alien mode of relations which eventually destroyed the community to which he belonged.

Given, therefore, the implication in Marx that community life has no real basis and no concrete function in capitalist society, it is not surprising that non-Marxist historians like Calhoun have attempted to posit community and class in opposition.

In The Question of Class Struggle Calhoun argued that class society did not exist before 1830 because the social foundations of collective action were based on traditional communities of artisans and handworkers resisting economic change.¹ Class struggle only emerged when new groups of factory workers with much weaker community foundations fought for reform within the capitalist social order. In an earlier work Calhoun considered community and class 'as possibly, though not necessarily, interrelated modes of social organisation'.² In The Question of Class Struggle however such doubts have gone. The foundation of popular radicalism was in local communities, and 'the vocabulary of class action is stretched unduly if one attempts to account for them within it.'³ Class and community as foundations of collective action are therefore mutually exclusive.

Calhoun's cellular view of early nineteenth century society is unrealistic and unhistorical. In the West Riding, factory workers, artisans and outworkers continued to mingle and intermarry in the same communities long after 1830. Moreover to view class society as not having a community base is surely wrong. Luddism and Radical Reform did overstep the boundaries of local communities in their collective actions.⁴ Later working class movements, Chartism and the Reform movement of the 1860's, for instance, thrived on their community roots in northern England. English society continued to be permeated by community life until well into the twentieth century.

Since Thompson, the only historian to have examined the concept of community consciousness in a broad and solidly empirical work is

1 Calhoun, op.cit.

2 C.J.Calhoun, 'Community, Class and Collective Action: Popular Protest in Industrializing England and the Theory of Working Class Radicalism', (unpublished D.Phil.thesis, Oxford, 1980), p.16.

3 Calhoun, Class Struggle, p.34.

4 Ibid. pp.60-72, 77-94.

Patrick Joyce.¹ Joyce's 'community consciousness' is severally described as an awareness or a feeling of neighbourhood and locality, 'local patriotism' or 'communal sociability'.² This is believed by him to underpin the working class deference he found in the mill-towns of South-east Lancashire. Deference refers to the dominance of the workplace and the factory owner in a community. Thus deference shapes the community and the community produces deference. Joyce argues, in other words, that instead of an awareness of community becoming an assertion of working class independence and the 'product of working class endeavour', it becomes in late nineteenth century Lancashire, a medium of social control and factory paternalism.

However, having tied deferential behaviour to community or neighbourhood feeling, Joyce then posits both deference and community consciousness as opposites or alternatives to ideological hegemony and 'negotiated' social control by employers via the labour aristocracy. This has interesting implications for the concepts of social control, embourgeoisment and bourgeois hegemony in nineteenth century society. If we accept Gray's definition of hegemony as a 'mode of organising beliefs and values',³ it is clear, according to Joyce, that such a mode could only exist within the structure of community. Control and deference could not be imposed from outside nor via the 'false consciousness' of a labour aristocracy, but had to be mediated through the whole working class community.

Joyce has rightly indicated the need to understand class relations in the context of the historical development of communities. In the Leeds clothing villages which were socially heterogeneous, but predominantly working class, was community simply a product of working class endeavour or occupational solidarity, or a medium of deference and social control, or was it itself a relationship of conflict between the classes, and between different class perceptions of community? The following study attempts to show that community consciousness was the 'collective social expression' of the way the middle and working classes related to each other, to the locality, and to the processes of industrialization and urbanization which affected them both.

1 P.Joyce, Work Society and Politics (1980).

2 Ibid. pp.105, 116.

3 R.Q.Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh (Oxford, 1976), pp.1-8.

CHAPTER 2 : THE SUBURBS AS CLOTHING VILLAGES:
COMMUNITY AND THE DOMESTIC CLOTHIER

Woollen cloth had been manufactured in the Leeds area since at least the 13th century.¹ For nearly 800 years this remained the most important source of non-agricultural employment in the out-townships of Leeds. During the second half of the nineteenth century its importance declined, but the structure of the industry continued to determine the social characteristics of the out-townships long after the numbers it employed had begun to fall.

The domestic system of cloth manufacture was still predominant in 1800. It had kept the same basic tripartite structure for over 200 years.² This consisted of firstly small, independent farmer clothiers employing only their own families, and owning a few acres and some livestock. They had the status of masters but did not live much above subsistence level. Secondly there were those slightly larger master clothiers who employed up to a dozen persons, their own families; apprentices, journeymen and their families, either in one house, or with the work shared out to be done at home and paid for by the piece. These clothiers often worked alongside their journeymen at the loom, and dyed the wool or piece themselves. Lastly there were the largest clothier-manufacturers, who had up to a dozen looms in their loom-shops, employed many more outworkers spinning and weaving at home, and sometimes also operated a scribbling and fulling mill.³

The most remarkable feature about the organisation of the woollen industry up to the mid-nineteenth century is the survival of all three of these types of clothier in the Leeds out-townships. This had important consequences for the development of class relations within these communities, as important as the growth of the factory system itself. The origins of these clothiers have been outlined in the previous chapter. This chapter examines the culture of the clothing villages and the impact of the factory system on that culture.

1 G.C.F. Forster, 'The foundations: from the earliest times to c1700', in Derek Fraser, ed., A History of Modern Leeds (Manchester, 1980), pp.2-23.

2 Herbert Heaton, The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries (Oxford, 1920), pp.291-301.

3 See the Select Committee on the Woollen Manufacture of England, PP.(1806) III, for examples of these different types of clothier in the Leeds area.

(i)

Community Life and Clothier Culture in 1800

Despite the accelerating process of capital accumulation in the late eighteenth century, the community life of the out-townships in 1800 was still dominated by the culture of the small clothier. There were several cultural characteristics which ensured this dominance. Firstly there was the organisation and custom of the workshops, with the stress on the clothier's training, the intimate relationship of master and journeyman, and the central importance of the family unit of production. In addition, there operated both family and community controls of the local labour supply. Secondly the cloth halls protected the marketing side of the clothier's business and provided a facility for social intercourse. Thirdly, the clothier's close relationship with the land, and family and community control of land distribution offset some of the effects of the open market. Fourthly, the political structures of out-township government ensured the clothiers an administration independent of the Leeds oligarchy. Fifthly, the strength of methodism and puritanism in the religious life of the out-townships reinforced the clothier's dual values of individualism and communal consciousness. Lastly, the dominance of this system of dual values was preserved in the self-help and educational efforts of the eighteenth century, as well as by the leisure patterns of the out-township inhabitants which were neither wholly rural nor urban in their nature.

Family life and woollen cloth making were inextricably linked in the eighteenth century out-townships. Household and workplace made-up common units which fashioned the fabric of the community.

The size of the establishments of the small master clothiers varied from one or two to a dozen workers. Most employed a mixture of journeymen outworkers and their families, journeymen and apprentice boys living in, and apprentices working in the shop but living at home. Workshops were smallest in outlying towns and villages such as Pudsey. Closer to Leeds, where cloth-making was of a better quality and on a larger scale, relatively more journeymen were employed.¹

Both in terms of their relation to the production process, and in terms of social status within the out-townships, the journeyman and the

¹ S Cotton Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of Joseph Coope, p.67. See Derek Gregory, Regional Transformation and Industrial Revolution (1982), pp.89-92.

small master clothier were very close. Most masters worked alongside their men in the shop. In Armley in 1806 there were 120 master clothiers, defined as those "who purchase raw material and sell the finished cloth." Twenty-two of these however made cloth partly for other masters, and in doing so were not dissimilar to the piece-worker journeymen.¹

Often the latter, like the masters, owned the implements of production, if not the raw material.²

For both the master and the journeyman clothier, the family was the central unit of production. The several processes of manufacture were in effect sub-contracted to the wives and children of the clothiers. During most of the eighteenth century wool-dyeing, scribbling, carding, winding and spinning were done at home by families.³ The relationship between journeyman and master clothier was a relationship between families, not just between individuals.

Family networks and loosely applied apprenticeship regulations largely contained the flow of labour to the domestic industry. Family control was most in evidence in the training of clothiers and in the inheritance of their businesses. James Ellis of Armley was bound apprentice to his father-in-law at 15, and later to his brother-in-law. He set up alone at the age of 21.⁴ James Walker of Wortley learnt spinning, weaving, and a little scribbling from his father until he began working for himself in 1788, aged 19.⁵ In Holbeck Robert Cookson learnt to wind bobbins, spin by hand wheel, card, and from the age of 13 to scribble and weave. When his father died he carried on the family business in his mother's name. In this he was helped by two neighbours, "who used to go with me to purchase wool and used to come and sit with me in the evening." He finally took over the business when he reached 18, in 1777⁶. In 1794, aged 19, Joseph Coope left his apprenticeship and sought in vain for work throughout Pudsey, Stanningley and Bramley. In the end he set up by himself with money inherited from his father, taking over his father's stand at the Leeds mixed cloth hall. "I was a hebrew of the hebrews, as I may call myself; my father had been a clothier, I had been brought up and worked under him, and I was entitled to the cloth hall in consequence of working under him."⁷

1 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of James Ellis, p.102.

2 Ibid. evidence of William Child, p.103.

3 Ivy Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850. (1930, 2nd ed. 1969) p.122.

4 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture op.cit. evidence of James Ellis, p.9.

5 Ibid. evidence of James Walker, pp.174-6.

6 Ibid. evidence of Robert Cookson, pp. 67, 81.

7 Ibid. evidence of Joseph Coope, pp. 31, 44, 53.

Some form of apprenticeship, and the broad training in most of the processes of domestic manufacture was something journeymen and small masters had in common. Although the Elizabethan regulations had ceased to be effective by the mid-eighteenth century, clothiers still regarded their training as an important means of controlling entry to the trade. The official seven year period of indentured apprenticeship was infrequently enforced. It was widely accepted that about four years was sufficient to train a weaver, though longer was required if all the processes were to be learnt.¹ By the 1790's mill-work was also regarded as an acceptable training, as long as it was not in a finishing mill.² What counted among the clothiers was that a man had been "brought up to the trade", not whether he had been legally indentured or not. In Armley in 1803 over 40 per cent of clothiers there had not been indentured.³

The most important feature of the clothier's apprenticeship was that all the skills were to be taught. The youths and older journeymen were to be given a sense of command of the production process whether or not they were eventually to become masters in their own right.

"It is our common practice for the youths or men that work with us to see the process at one and the same time; for instance, my men that I employ, I am so friendly with them, together with the boys that I have had, that I have frequently told them what price my wool is, particularly those who were inquisitive and want to know for instruction; all my men go with me to serve my leads, that is to dye; boys and men all go, and all see it." 4

Half a century of technical innovations and improvements had however reshaped and ultimately diluted the clothier's apprenticeship experience. The generations born before 1770 remembered hand-scribbling "laborious and very dirty"⁵ - and carding. By the late 1770's and early 1780's carding was being increasingly mechanised, firstly within the domestic system in the form of horse-drawn carding machines and billies for slubbing,⁶ and later as a fully fledged service industry

1 Ibid. evidence of Robert Cookson, p.69.

2 Ibid. evidence of James Ellis, p.11.

3 Ibid. pp. 63-4.

4 Ibid. evidence of Robert Cookson, p.69.

5 Ibid. evidence of James Walker, p.177; see also evidence of William Child, p.102, Robert Cookson, p.68, and John Hebblethwaite, p.165. All were born between 1744 and 1767.

6 Both Joseph Coope of Pudsey, born 1775, and James Ellis, of Armley, born 1778, learnt carding and slubbing in their masters' houses.

appended to both domestic and factory manufacture, in the form of water-driven mills.¹ This process thus disappeared from the domestic training of a clothier.

Spinning also changed in the course of 30 years. Robert Cookson, born in 1759, remembered spinning by hand-wheel as a child, and witnessed the riot in Hunslet in 1780 at the introduction of jennies.² In Holbeck in the 1760's, "almost all the children used to spin." By 1806 however, many children were unemployed, and those working in the mills filling carding machines and piecing for slubbers were "not half that used to be employed in spinning."³ Although the jenny reduced the demand for female and child labour in spinning, it increased the demand for weavers. Because it was relatively small, cheap, and could be kept in a bedroom and hand operated, it was not in itself contradictory to the domestic system and soon came into widespread use by the clothiers. Jennies however allowed spinning to be done productively on a large scale, and as spinning mills emerged in the 1790's a further process was removed from the clothier's domestic apprenticeship.

The major improvement in weaving also provided a mark by which clothiers could measure the developments in manufacturing during their lifetime. The flying shuttle was introduced into Yorkshire about 1763-4. John Hebblethwaite, a Leeds merchant who had served a clothier's apprenticeship in the 1750's, had never worked with one.⁴ Robert Cookson remembered weaving with the old shuttle and a man and a boy at either end of the loom in the 1770's.⁵ In Pudsey in the 1780's Joseph Coope "never saw a square loom",⁶ and Kay's invention was probably also widely used in the Leeds out-townships by this time.

Carding and scribbling machines, jennies, shuttles, winding-frames and other innovations acted to trigger the historical consciousness

1 D.T. Jenkins, 'Early Factory Development in the West Riding of Yorkshire 1770-1800,' in N B Harte and K G Ponting eds., Textile History and Economic History (Manchester 1973), pp.247-80. Also W.B. Crump, 'The Leeds Woollen Industry 1780-1820', TSP, XXXII(1929), 11-16.

2 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of Robert Cookson pp. 67, 81. On the riot, see J L Hammond and Barbara Hammond, The Skilled Labourer 1760-1832 (1919) pp.149-51. On Hargreave's invention see Paul Mantoux, The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century (1928, revised ed. 1948), pp.220-4, 270.

3 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of Robert Cookson, p.73.

4 Ibid. evidence of John Hebblethwaite, p.166.

5 Ibid. evidence of Robert Cookson, p.81.

6 Ibid. evidence of Joseph Coope, p.31.

of the small clothiers and journeymen. They saw such changes in their industry occurring within and between generations. They witnessed the declining quality of apprenticeship training from the 1770's till it became in many cases little more than a crash course in weaving.¹ They saw journeymen migrating into the townships from the poorer, more rural areas of the clothing district, particularly in the 1790's under the demand of larger clothiers and millowners for cheap and unrestricted labour.² Even the physical appearance of their environment was transformed before their eyes, not just as a result of population growth, but also because of technological change. When carding moved from the ground floor of cottages into mills, clothiers' children were put to work weaving. New types of cottages were built with more airy upper rooms to accommodate the increased number of looms, and families took their beds downstairs to make way.³

Of all these developments the clothier was acutely conscious, but it was the changes in the organisation of the industry which most threatened the position of the small masters. The rapid accumulation of capital from the 1780's by middling and large clothiers "in the factory line", their use of technical innovation and new scales of production to divide labour within the manufacturing process, and their manipulation of the employment market to create a permanent labour surplus within the out-townships,

attacked the roots of the domestic system. Robert Cookson claimed that there was not half the cloth manufactured in the domestic system in Holbeck and Hunslet in 1806 that had been made in the mid-1790's.⁴ William Child had not noticed a great decrease in the number of master clothiers in Wortley, but some families had "branched out", and wealth had "gone more into lumps."⁵

A few of these clothier-employers were merchants and master finishers who expanded into manufacturing, but these were mostly outsiders, and this seldom occurred amongst the Leeds merchant community.⁶ More numerous were independent clothiers who had moved out of central Leeds in response to rising land prices. They were encouraged by out-township landowners such as James Graham, who developed purpose-built clothier allotments on his Bramley estate in

1 *Ibid.* evidence of James Ellis, p.9.

2 *Ibid.* p.64.

3 *Ibid.* evidence of Joseph Coope, p.45.

4 *Ibid.* evidence of Robert Cookson, p.75. See Gregory, *op.cit.* p.10

5 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, *op.cit.* evidence of William Child p p. 105, 107, See Gregory, *op.cit.* pp.93-4.

6 R.G. Wilson, Gentleman Merchants: The Merchant Community in Leeds 1700-1830 (Manchester, 1971). pp.52-60.

1796.¹ The bulk of the capitalists however probably came from within the ranks of the out-township clothiers themselves. James Walker of Wortley set up in business in 1788 employing one journeyman hired by the piece, working at home. Eighteen years later he owned 21 looms and gave work to over a dozen weavers' families, in his loom-shop, at his scribbling mill, and by putting-out.²

The larger clothiers brought looms and jennies together in one building, with a dye-shed attached. This was the normal means of increasing the scale of production in the 1790's, not the application of power or increased productivity from greater mechanisation.³ Within such small mills however the division of labour had only been carried out to a limited extent. In James Walker's mill when busy most would weave and take it in turns to dye. Sometimes, when out of webs, they would spin on a spare jenny.⁴ Although Walker thought that "some people would style it a factory", his mill did not yet bear the features of fully-mechanised factory production. Walker still relied a great deal on the varied skills acquired in the broad training of domestic clothiers, on the ability of his journeymen to move quickly and efficiently from process to process as the superfine broad cloths were woven from Spanish wool.

Such an organisation of production was, neither in its structure nor its content, a direct contradiction to the domestic system. It did however contain the elements of alienation which offended the sensibilities of those older journeymen who regarded themselves as craftsmen with a responsibility for their product. William Child objected to the discipline at Walker's proto-factory in Wortley, the regulated hours, and the work routine that was dictated by the bell and the clock. He objected to the poor working conditions, the cramped space and ineffective heating. Above all he thought it was unjust that "the persons who work there are obliged to do all kinds of work, such as tentering and preparing the cloth for the fulling mill, and cuttling, whether they are weavers or spinners, which amounts upon an average to one day in eight without any pay for it."⁵

1 Heaton, op.cit., pp.290-1; Eric Sigsworth, 'The Industrial Revolution', in M.W.Beresford and G.L.Jones eds., Leeds and its Region (Leeds, 1967), p.147. What became of Graham's estate can be seen in the Bramley Survey and Valuation of 1823, LCA, Leeds Parish Records, LO/B5.

2 S.C.on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of James Walker, pp.174-6.

3 Herbert Heaton, 'Benjamin Gott and the Industrial Revolution in Yorkshire', ECHR III(1931) 1st series, 45-66. D.T.Jenkins The West Riding Wool Textile Industry 1770-1835 (Edington, 1975), pp.82-5.

4 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of James Walker, p.211.

5 Ibid., evidence of William Child, pp.108.

In addition to alienating the workforce, the increased scale of production allowed the large clothiers and manufacturers to bypass the markets of the small masters and sell by direct order.¹ The marketing expenses of the middlemen could be cut and more capital put back into manufacturing. The biggest merchant-manufacturers were able to go beyond the boundaries imposed by local specialisations. The domestic coarse woollen industry at Pudsey, for instance, was invaded by Leeds manufacturers whose own industry was normally concerned with fine woollens. "I know when they have coarse orders, they come into our market for them," declared Joseph Coope. "I have sold more cloth to Mr Gott than any other man I ever sold to in my life."²

The insularity of local cloth-making was broken down by the wider range of goods produced by the large manufacturers, by the demand for cheap labour to support the increased production, and by the population movements such demand stimulated. Their scale of production allowed the large employers to manipulate the labour market in a way that was impossible for those weaving only one or two pieces a week. In Wortley William Child believed that "the opulent clothiers have made it a rule to have one-third more men than they could employ."³ The creation of a labour surplus allowed the clothiers to reduce wages and increase the work-load, particularly of weavers. The larger clothiers in Wortley had reduced prices paid on all sets four times in the 1790's, by one shilling a string altogether. The small masters in Armley, Holbeck and Wortley had not followed suit, so that they continued to pay 2/6d - 2/8d per string for the most common sets, while the mills paid their weavers 2/-.⁴ Moreover, during the same period, some masters in Wortley had lengthened their strings by a few inches, making their weavers work more weft into the cloth for less money. This was to become the favourite cost-reducing tactic of the employers of handloom weavers in the 1820's and 1830's.

To what extent this particular evidence of falling wage-rates can be related to the overall standard of living in the out-townships is difficult to assess. In the 1790's domestic cloth making increased rapidly as the whole woollen industry expanded, but the greater amount of work was spread among more workers, many of whom were subject to the cost-cutting of the larger clothiers. Generally average wages rose

1 By 1806 Walker sold more cloth directly than he took to the cloth halls. Ibid. evidence of James Walker, p.211. See R.G.Wilson, op.cit. pp.90-108.

2 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of Joseph Coope, p.48.

3 Ibid. evidence of William Child, p.111

4 Ibid. p.105

from the 1760's to the 1800's. All the evidence points this way.¹ The prices per string quoted in 1806 were certainly higher than weavers were receiving ten years later, although lower than the rates for the 1790's.² In the mid-eighteenth century wages in Leeds were consistently higher than elsewhere in the West Riding, particularly in comparison with the worsted districts, and had probably doubled since the starvation levels of the early seventeenth century.³ Food prices also rose after the 1760's, particularly dairy products, but food was still cheaper and more varied in Leeds than in other West Riding towns, as it had been for at least two centuries. On the other hand rents rose substantially and land was dearer at Leeds than elsewhere.⁴ What the small masters and journeymen agreed upon however was that work had become more irregular and incomes more insecure. Seasonal fluctuations in demand were not accommodated outside the domestic system, and increasingly less so within it.⁵ Technological unemployment had become permanent or semi-permanent within many families, particularly among women and children, reducing family incomes severely. James Ellis refuted the idea of prosperity in Armley. "I know of many who have been obliged to go to a factory to work, who used to work in their own houses... The men may earn something more, but I believe the income to the family is not as great as when they were employed in their own houses."⁶

There was some attempt to tempt the best workers away from the small masters, or even to attract the masters themselves into the mills by offering high wages. Overlookers could earn a guinea or 25/- per week and were promised regular employment. These were the exceptions however. The large clothiers operated the labour surplus to keep workers on the move. In Wortley from the mid-1790's domestic

1 Weavers from under 12/- per week to between 15-20/- per week. Increases of 30-50 per cent are also recorded for dressers between 1768 and 1795, and male spinners and slubbers 1795-1805. See Edward Baines, The Woollen Manufacture of England (Newton Abbott, 1970), p.94; James Bischoff, A Comprehensive History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries (1842), Vol.II, p.272; F M Eden, The State of the Poor (1928), pp.358-61; E Lipson, The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries (1921), Appendix I; Robert Brown, General View of the Agriculture of the West Riding of Yorkshire

(1799), Appendix I; Arthur Young, A Six Months Tour Through the North of England (2nd edn. 1771), vol.2, p.139.

2 Bischoff, op.cit. p.418.

3 Heaton, 'Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries', op.cit. pp.110-17.

4 Eden, op.cit. pp.358-61; Young, op.cit. pp.130, 319; Brown, op.cit. pp.180-1.

5 Gregory, op.cit. pp.104-6.

6 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of James Ellis p.22.

weavers worked in rotation, on a 'first come, first served' basis, as the larger masters had so many looms. This applied to those working in the loom shops as well as those working out. If trade was slack everyone was laid off except overlookers and dyers.¹

This was the direct antithesis of everything the domestic system stood for - close relations between the families of journeymen and masters, a steady income, identification with the manufacturing process, and security of job tenure. In 1800 it was still the custom for a journeyman to work for only one master, and for the small clothiers to try to keep on their journeymen even during bad trade. In Holbeck, "among those who have credit they keep them on as long as they can get wool, and make cloth as long as they can get credit."² Among the smaller masters in Wortley, "it is very rare, unless sickness or death removes a man, to get a vacancy there."³ "It is almost a thing unknown to discharge a workman in Pudsey."⁴ Regular wages were also paid regardless of the state of trade. "I always pay one price in times of prosperity and in times of adversity of trade; it is different with the factory men..."⁵ When a master guaranteed a job and a wage to his journeymen, he was preserving the social fabric of the clothiers' community, as well as keeping a whole family off the out-township poor rates. The large clothiers did not see any need for apprenticeship or job security. James Walker's attitude to his workmen was, 'we try them, and if we don't like them we discharge them.'⁶ A purely commercial relationship based on the cash nexus dictated the employment of women, children and men.

So powerful was this capitalist penetration of the labour market, that even those small masters who were most acutely aware of the interest of the community of domestic clothiers could not avoid responding to the changing relations of production. They were prepared to sack men during bad trade, though they attempted to keep stocks of wool so as to avoid this. They divided their workforce into a minimal number of hired servants, the best journeymen living in and paid by the year, and the more dispensable majority hired by the piece as ordinary outworkers.⁷

The small or medium sized clothier was pressed on the one

1 Ibid. evidence of William Child p.104, James Ellis, p.17.

2 Ibid. evidence of Robert Cookson, p.70.

3 Ibid. evidence of William Child, p.112.

4 Ibid. evidence of Joseph Coope, p.33.

5 Ibid. evidence of Robert Cookson, p.76.

6 Ibid. evidence of James Walker, p.176.

7 Ibid. evidence of James Ellis, pp.14-15.

hand to compete with the larger employers, to reduce costs and keep labour mobile, cheap and plentiful. On the other hand, keeping labour static, expensive and in carefully controlled supply also helped reduced costs where poor rates were concerned. In the competition to reduce labour costs the small master could never win. In cutting wages and maintaining a labour surplus, the cost of the ensuing unemployment fell most heavily on the small masters themselves, as the majority of ratepayers in the out-townships. The primary complaint against factories was that they raised the poor rates by throwing people out of work more often, and creating a permanent pool of unemployed or underemployed labour.

The practical solution was for the small masters to attempt to control the labour supply to reduce costs. Where family controls failed, community controls were applied. In 1800, at a time of particularly high corn prices, Armley clothiers met and agreed to employ Armley workers in preference to outsiders. "Let them come from where they would (from factories or workshops), if they were our own townspeople we agreed to employ them in order that we might have less to pay."¹ Based on individual self-interest, this was nevertheless a communal answer to the problems posed by capitalist competition.² In the face of the violent trade fluctuations of the 1800's such an answer could only be a temporary solution, but strong community controls may have been partly responsible for keeping the number of outsiders setting up businesses in the townships to a minimum.³

The small clothiers recognised an obligation to keep their men off parish relief, not just because of enlightened self-interest with regard to the rates, but also because of a conscious rejection of the political economy of the 'factory gentlemen'.⁴ They did not feel the profit motive or the drive to concentrate production in the way

1 Ibid. p.28

2 Even the Select Committee of 1806, though strongly pro-factory, admitted that the domestic system had the advantage of being able to spread trade losses and unemployment over a wider area than that covered by large manufactures. Unemployment black-spots could thus be avoided and the social effects of bad trade mitigated, something of which the Committee were particularly appreciative. Ibid. Report, pp.10-11.

3 Ibid. evidence of James Ellis, pp.63-4

4 Ibid. evidence of Robert Cookson, pp.76-7

their wealthier contemporaries did.¹ They regarded the monopolistic tendencies of capitalism as endangering the state, not fostering it.² These were not men who much believed in the ideology of a burgeoning national bourgeoisie, but local men of the type admired by Defoe, of forthright views and a practical analysis of what was good or bad for their own community.³ For instance they asserted that the restriction on the number of looms in a household, for which the clothiers petitioned in 1805, would only be legalising what most had already done by choice. They no more adhered to an egalitarian creed than they followed the 'true principles of commerce,' but the custom of having no more than two or three looms in a clothier's own house had made some wealthy while keeping the majority in employment. The system benefitted all the community. There was no practical reason to change it, but every reason to defend it.⁴

The sense of community found in the customary relations of domestic manufacture was expressed both informally in familial bonds and neighbourliness, and also in the more formal organisation and traditions of the cloth halls. The building of the white cloth halls in Leeds in 1711, 1756 and 1776, and the mixed cloth hall in 1758, merely institutionalized the much older customs of the cloth market on Briggate, as described by Defoe.⁵ The ritualized transactions served to emphasise the independence of the clothier businessman, his commercial connexions, and his control of his own marketing and selling. Cloth hall-stands were passed down from father to son, and often they were shared with relatives who lived locally.⁶ Thus the network of families within an out-township could control not only the labour supply, but also the marketing outlets for prospective clothiers. As the woollen industry expanded in the late eighteenth century however, the demand from newcomers for retail outlets increased. In 1806 James Ellis estimated there were about 3500 coloured and white clothmakers

1 Ibid. evidence of James Ellis, p.30

2 Ibid. evidence of Robert Cookson, p.79.

3 See the introduction by G.D.H. Cole to the 1928 edition of Daniel Defoe, A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain (1928).

4 S.C. on Woollen Manufacturers, op.cit. evidence of James Ellis pp.57-9.

5 Defoe, op.cit. ii. pp.204-8. See also R.G. Wilson, op.cit. pp.74-5. On the buildings, see Kevin Grady, 'Commercial Marketing and Retail Amenities, 1700-1914' in Fraser, op.cit. pp.177-99.

6 In the Huddersfield cloth hall a village would have a small clan of clothiers related to each other, sharing stands and each calling themselves a manufacturer. W.B. Crump and Gertrude Chorbal, History of the Huddersfield Woollen Industry (Huddersfield, 1935), p.67.

in the Leeds district, employing about 60000 people. Space was limited. There were 1800 to 1900 stands in the mixed cloth hall in 1806, not many more than the 1770 stands which it had originally contained in 1758.¹ The price of stands therefore rose rapidly, in the white cloth hall from about 30/- to £5 or £6 in this period.² The average price of stands in the mixed cloth hall in 1806 was between £12 and £14.³ Many who were not able to get a stand in the mixed cloth hall paid a 6d fee to sell there.⁴ Only bona-fide clothiers were allowed in to either hall. When the white cloth hall was in Meadow Lane 1756, non-indentured weavers came to sell cloth in a room across the road in Potters' Field.⁵ Finally in 1796, to meet this demand, an irregular cloth market was established in Albion hall in central Leeds, and was quickly nicknamed 'Tom Paine Hall'.⁶ "Shoemakers and tinkers, and any persons who were not brought up in the trade had a right to show cloths there."⁷ The Tom Paine Hall represented a threat to the control of the retail trade by the established Leeds halls, not because it allowed itinerants to sell their pieces there, but because outsiders to the trade who were potential entrepreneurs were also admitted.⁸

The cloth halls were "shrines of the domestic industry."⁹ The large clothiers and manufacturers lived in an uneasy co-existence with them. The halls were important as social, civic and political as well as commercial centres for the domestic clothier.¹⁰ The trusteeship of a hall was a thankless task, "more cumbersome than advantageous", and there was no great eagerness among the clothiers to get elected.¹¹ The trustees had frequently to act as spokesmen

1 S.C. on Woollen Manufacturer, op.cit. evidence of James Ellis p.9; Gregory, op.cit. p.115.

2 Edward Baines, History of the County of York (1823).

3 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of Robert Cookson, p.72.

4 Ibid. evidence of James Ellis, p.9.

5 Ibid. evidence of Joseph Stancliffe, p.201.

6 Ibid. evidence of James Ellis, p.10.

7 Ibid. evidence of Samuel Waterhouse, p.101.

8 For instance, Denton Walker of Wortley, the son of a doctor; Ibid., evidence of James Walker, p.211. In 1803 the white cloth hall eventually agreed to admit non-indentured men after vainly attempting to set up a rival market to the Tom Paine hall, Ibid. evidence of Joseph Stancliffe, p.202.

9 Crump and Ghorbal, op.cit. p.64.

10 Gregory, op.cit. p.111. E M Sigsworth, 'The Leeds Cloth Halls' Leeds Journal 25 (1954), 415-18.

11 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of Joseph Coope, p.43.

for the clothiers in their township, and as guardian of their interests. They fought hard to protect the Tudor apprenticeship regulations up to 1750, and then again with renewed vigour at the end of the century.¹ Meetings were held and subscriptions raised in the out-townships as the trustees, under popular pressure, organised the petition of 1803 and assisted the clothiers' expenses out of the cloth hall's stamping fund.² The trustees were at the centre of the debate about how the whole community was to deal with the crisis of competition facing the domestic industry. Some wished to meet competition by change. Others, perhaps the majority, stood behind the cloth hall regulations, and the custom and traditions of domestic manufacture to defy or ignore competition. Certainly the clothiers were portrayed by those opposed or indifferent to their protective network of regulations as stubborn, staid, and even petty-minded. Joseph Rogerson in 1810 predicted the demise of the Leeds cloth hall, to be superseded by the direct marketing of millowners. For the clothiers "indeed this deserves to be the case, for they are an arbitrary set of men."³

As well as the customs of work and the cloth halls, a third characteristic of the out-township way of life which ensured the cultural dominance of the domestic clothier was the continuing importance of their connection with the land. Holdings remained small and demand forced prices and rents up quickly during the 1790's. In 1795 Eden gave a figure of £2-£5 per acre, and claimed that rents were as much as £300-£1000 per acre "in the skirts of the town."⁴ The value of out-township land increased rapidly towards the turn of the century. The average rent in Armley was £6 per acre in 1806, though some long-standing tenants paid only £3-£4.⁵ Land prices in Armley and Wortley doubled between 1796 and 1806.⁶ Rents in Pudsey

1 Heaton, op.cit. p.310.

2 1½d-4d. was charged to manufacturers by the Leeds halls to stamp pieces at the fulling mills. S.C. on Woollen Manufacture op.cit. evidence of James Ellis, pp. 20, 23-4. For details of the clothiers' demands see Report on the Clothworkers' Petition; PP.(1805) III, 123-5.

3 'The Diary of Joseph Rogerson'; eds. Emily Hargrave and W.B. Crump, TSP XXXII (1929), entry of 22 Dec.1810, p.109.

4 Eden, op.cit. This compares with upland rents such as at Settle of only 5/- to £3 per acre.

5 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of James Ellis, p.14.

6 Ibid. evidence of James Walker, p.182.

increased from 10/- per acre in 1768 to between 30/- and 50/- in 1793.¹ Generally the farther out from the town centre the cheaper the land became,² but land values in the out-townships were less a function of the distance from Leeds than a reflection of the fortunes of the woollen industry.

The demand of clothiers for land kept pace with the demand for their broadcloths.³ In 1793 Robert Brown noticed that broadcloth manufacture had increased rents. Any pretensions of clothiers to be full-scale farmers had disappeared. They required enclosed plots of 5-8 acres and had little use for anything larger.⁴ Enclosures had long been common in the Leeds area. As Celia Fiennes passed down the Elland road in 1698 she had noticed that "the country is much on enclosures good ground."⁵ There was some sporadic building on common land in the out-townships in the early eighteenth century, but it was in the late 1770's that a wave of purchases of common land began. Bramley Town book recorded how small parcels of common ground were acquired by leading townsmen to consolidate their holdings. Usually it was to straighten a fence or realign a wall. Such purchases were part of an age of improvement in which roads were built or turnpikes repaired,⁶ waste ground cultivated and chapels and schools built or enlarged. Via the vestry and township offices the leading clothiers could control at least the flow of public land into private hands. As with the supply of labour, family and community controls existed which checked the operation of the open market. The larger clothiers were often frustrated in their attempts to accumulate property by the extent to which land-ownership in the townships was dispersed. In the land market community interests and family associations sometimes co-operated to make access difficult to outsiders. Joseph Coope admitted that land was hard to get in Pudsey;

"If I would give twice the value of land I could not get an acre of it, the domestic manufacturers are so fond of land that there is no such thing as getting any without great favour; if a man dies who has some, his relations immediately get it among them."⁷

1 Hammond, op.cit. p.139.

2 This was also true elsewhere in the West Riding. Rents in Halifax were £3-£5 per acre, but nearby at Southowram land was let for 10/- to £1 per acre. Ground rents in Skipton were £3 in the town, but 18/- at a distance. Eden, op.cit.

3 See Gregory, op.cit. pp.98-106, for illustrations of trends in broadcloth production and a discussion about the accuracy of the aulnage returns.

4 Brown, op.cit. p.229, and Appendix I, pp.12-14.

5 Celia Fiennes, *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (2nd edn, 1949), pp.220-1.

6 Bramley Town Book 1685-1816, LCA, Bramley St Peter's Chapelry, Leeds Parish Records. Also Beeston Town Book 1711-1823, LCA, Beeston St Mary's, Leeds Parish Records.

7 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of Joseph Coope, p.33.

For two important elements of production, therefore, land and labour, the process of capitalist accumulation was interjected by the more traditional features of the communal economy. Despite the increasing capitalization of the industry, the clothier's income was still in many cases supplemented by farming. About half the clothiers in Armley in 1806 had small plots of their own, "some have only half a rood to hold tenters or something of that sort, and others two or three acres, those that can keep a cow or a galloway."¹ There were plenty of clothiers therefore who were farmers of sorts, but very few farmers who did not have another source of income.² Dairy farming was most common nearest Leeds. There was a great demand from the town for milk, cheese and butter, and milch cows could be kept profitably on grass in the summer, and brewers' grains, turnips and oat-straw in winter with a minimum of pasturing.³ Some poultry and pigs were also kept, often in the most densely populated parts of the town and most clothiers kept a horse on pasture. In the townships to the west of Leeds, wheat, barley, oats, beans, rape, turnips, and "large quantities" of potatoes were grown. Both grass and fallow land was dunged with manure got from sizing boilers' waste. Ploughs were few, but those that existed were pulled by the horses of the clothier-farmers.⁴ Much of the tillage and cultivation of grains was haphazard and on a small scale, but it had been carried on for generations and was intimately connected with the work-cycle of domestic cloth-making. At harvest-time masters, journeymen and apprentices would leave their looms and workshops to reap either on their own or on neighbours' farms.⁵ Equally, when trade was depressed, farming provided an alternative employment for those who had some land. When his scribbling mill stood still from lack of orders, Joseph Rogerson turned to his farm on which he grew oats and wheat for clothiers' horses. Rogerson's unfailing interest in the weather, the

1 Ibid. evidence of James Ellis, p.13.

2 Ibid. evidence of James Walker, p.182.

3 It was claimed by a Leeds correspondent in 1794 that the cost of keeping a cow "in house" was about £6 p.a. If the cow produced between two and three gallons a day at the current wholesale price of 5½d a gallon, it would take the cowkeeper four months to recoup his costs for the year. By 1799 milk prices had risen by two or three pence a gallon. Brown, op.cit. pp.180-1.

4 Ibid. Appendix I, pp.12-14.

5 Ibid. p.225. Brown noted however that in 1792, at the peak of demand for woollen cloth, no harvesters could be found.

most noticeable feature of his diary, reflects the close relationship between farming and domestic woollen manufacture.¹ Grains for the clothiers' horses, milk and potatoes for their families, sizing boilers' waste for manure, pasture land used as tenter grounds were all features of that relationship. The prominence of farming in the world of the out-township clothier facilitated the emergence of a communal identity. This farming bore communal characteristics. It was neither highly capitalized nor on a large scale. It relied a great deal on the seasonal labour released from the domestic industry. It involved highly particular modes of agricultural production which complemented the requirements of woollen manufacture. In short it stamped its mark on both the environment and the work-cycle in the out-townships and gave them an identity distinct from urban centres or rural areas.

A fourth characteristic of the out-townships was the way the local political and administrative institutions provided a vehicle for clothier values. Leeds was a manorial borough in which the municipal boundaries were coextensive with those of the parish. In neither of the Stuart charters of 1626 and 1661 was there any mention of the out-township chapelries.² Although clearly subject to the parochial authority of St Peter's and the municipal authority of Leeds Corporation, in practice their position was much more ambiguous. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the out-townships retained a high degree of independence in the administration of their own affairs. They fixed their own rates for the four parochial offices of chapelwarden, constable, overseer and surveyor. They organised their own poor relief, road repairs, chapel maintenance and extension. They sold common land, fined for bastardy, distributed pauper apprentices among local clothiers, and negotiated between themselves on issues such as bridge building, road extensions and township valuations.³ In effect within the parish, each out-township chapelry acted as its own vestry or town meeting - both terms were

¹ Hargrave and Crump eds., op.cit. pp.61, 84.

² The charters of 1626 and 1661 are translated in James Wardell, The Municipal History of the Borough of Leeds (1846), appendices VII and XIII respectively. For an outline of the Corporation's powers, see G.C.F. Forster, 'The Early Years of the Leeds Corporation', TSP LIV (1979), misc. 16, 251-61.

³ See Beeston Town Book 1711-1823 and Bramley Town Book 1685-1816. Also Sidney and Beatrice Webb, English Local Government: vol.1, The Parish and the County (1906, 1963 edn.), pp.15-32.

used - independently of Leeds vestry, which looked after the affairs of Leeds township, but still under the overall jurisdiction of the Corporation.

For the independent clothier working with a small turnover, extended credit and minimum profit margins, the question of rates was crucial. There was a constant tension between the desire for economy and cheap administration, and the concern for the institutions of the community, the chapel, the charities, highways and common land, and the relief of the poor. The administration of township property, roads, bridges and charities, and even the supervision of ale-houses and maintenance of public order could all be carried out at a price determinable by the vestry meeting. That is why the chapelwardens', constables' and surveyors' assessments shown in Table 2.1 rose only moderately in Beeston and Bramley for most of the eighteenth century.¹

Poor relief however was a task to a great extent forced on the townships by external circumstances, above all by the price of food and the state of the woollen industry. While other rates were collected annually or biennially, the overseers' rate was fixed every six months and was carefully gauged to the number of sedentary poor in the township and the monthly relief required by each individual. It was therefore a sensitive indicator of the amount of poverty in each township. Table 2.1 shows the volume of overseers' assessments rising rapidly in the eighteenth century, easily outstripping the population growth rates. Such a rise cannot be explained by increases in the poor rates themselves. The evidence is that they remained remarkably level throughout the century, being temporarily increased only in particularly bad years.² The growth in the amount collected by the overseers was a reflection firstly, of the increasing prosperity of the townships, and secondly, of a greater level of permanent poverty there. The two were not unconnected. Capital accumulation and the emergence of pockets of wealth went hand in hand with the increase in the number of township inhabitants, including many migrants, who, from the 1780's, were solely dependent upon

1 Table 2.1: Beeston and Bramley Rates Assessments; Annual Averages 1700-1801.

2 Beeston overseers' rate was 7d in the £ in 1711, 6d in 1714, 4d in 1719, 9d in 1730, 10d in 1752 and 1817-18.

TABLE 2.1: BEESTON RATES ASSESSMENTS - ANNUAL AVERAGES (£)

<u>OVERSEERS</u>		<u>CHAPELWARDENS</u>		<u>CONSTABLES</u>	
1712	35	1711/13	15	1709/10	11
1719/20	39	1719	17	1719	9
1729/30	44	1729	17		
1739	65	1737/9	29	1739	8
1749/51	86	1748	24	1749/50	10
1759/60	123	1760/1	25	1758	14
1769/71	134	1770/1	29		
1780/81	150	1781/2	20	1779/81	22
1789/91	262	1790/1	87*		
1799/1801	635				

- * Chapel extension partly financed from a rate.
- There are insufficient references to compile a table of surveyors' rates.

BRAMLEY RATES ASSESSMENTS - ANNUAL AVERAGES (£)

<u>OVERSEERS</u>		<u>CHAPELWARDENS</u>		<u>CONSTABLES</u>		<u>SURVEYORS</u>	
1700	14	1699/1700	9	1700	8	1699	6
1710	26			1710	8		
1721	35						
1731	49			1730/1	9	1729/31	17
1740	53	1739/40	17	1739	9	1739/40	39
1749/51	65	1749/51	15	1749/51	12	1749/51	18
1759/60	116	1759	29	1759/61	20	1759/61	36
1769/71	147	1769/71	15	1769/71	28	1769/71	32
1779/81	338	1779/80	18	1779/81	33	1779/81	48
1790/91	343	1791	23	1789/91	23	1790/91	40
1799	737					1800	119

Population Growth and Poor Rates
(% growth per annum)

Bramley

Population		Poor Rates	
1697-1743	2.8	1700-40	7.0
1743-75	0.5	1740-81	13.1
1775-1801	3.3	1781-99	6.6

Beeston

1663-1775	1.4	1712-81	4.8
1775-1801	2.5	1780-1801	15.4

Sources: Poor Rates from Beeston Town Book, 1711-1823 (LCA, Leeds Parish Records, Beeston St. Mary 10); Bramley Town Book, 1685-1816, (Ibid. Bramley St. Peter., 371).

Population figures from James Wardell, The Municipal History of the Borough of Leeds (1846), p.35; B. Wilson, Our Village (Bramley, 1860), p.25; A. Dobson, A History of the Ancient Chapel of Bramley (Leeds, 1964); F. Beckwith, 'The Population of Leeds during the Industrial Revolution' TSP 41 (1948) misc. 12, 118-96.

employment offered by millowners and large clothiers. Figure 1 shows that the pattern of steady growth of eighteenth century poor relief was rudely broken up in the mid-1790's by a rapid rise and violent fluctuations in the amount disbursed.¹ It would seem sensible to point to the huge convulsions in the woollen trade during the 1790's for an explanation of these new levels of relief. In addition, as competition sharpened between factory and domestic production, the willingness of clothiers to finance communal provision for the poor diminished. There was a rapid increase in the number of refusals by clothiers to take parish apprentices in Leeds from the 1780's.² In Beeston between 1796 and 1806, for every two town apprentices successfully bound out, one master was prepared to pay the £10 fine to avoid taking one on.³ There had already been grumbling about some inhabitants not pulling their weight as regards rates. In Bramley in 1759 those defaulting on poor rates were threatened with a fine, and eight years later the more drastic threat of physical expulsion at the township's expense was tried.⁴ By the end of the century the vestry meetings of most of the townships were intent on reducing rates. Relief became entangled in the conflict between the clothiers and the factory system. The vestry meetings and the overseers' assessments were drawn as a line of defence, both being closely linked as they were with the economic survival of the independent clothier and the cultural survival of his community.

The intense economic pressure on the clothiers, the political defeat of their parliamentary campaign in the 1800's,⁵ and the individualism inherent in their mode of production contributed towards the undermining of the collective response towards the problem of the poor. Joseph Rogerson was shocked by the quixotic refusal of the new Bramley overseers in 1809 to distribute relief.

"I believe there is the meanest, lowest, dirtiest, dishonourablest, selfishest set of what is called above the Common level of Men in Bramley of any town in the Kingdom; act any kind of meanness if it only saves their pockets."⁶

1 Figure 1: Poor Relief in Bramley and Beeston 1790-1813: Overseers' Annual Disbursements.

2 Gregory, op.cit. pp.135-6, and fig . 3.17.

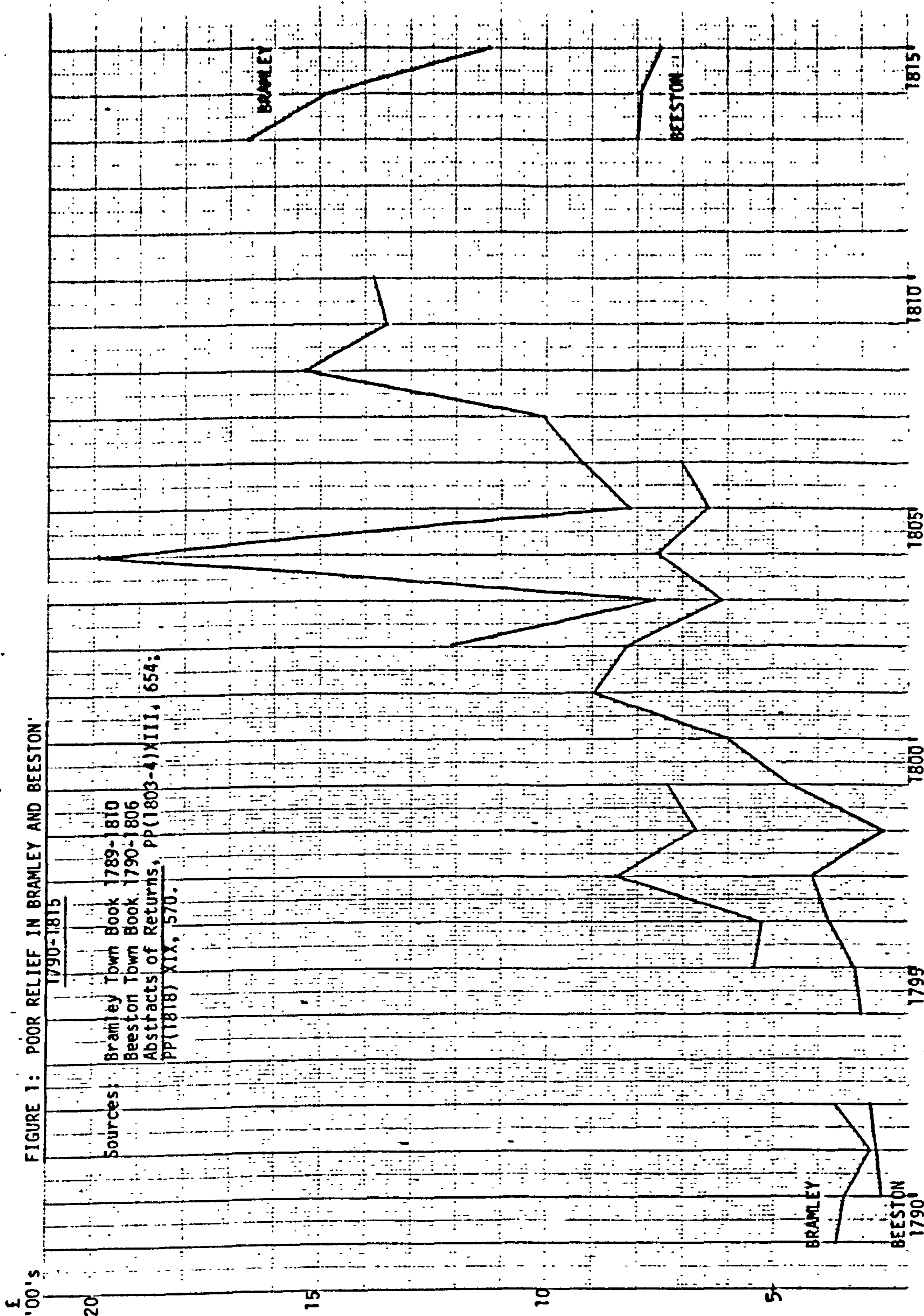
3 Beeston Town Book 1711-1823.

4 Bramley Town Book, 1685-1816, entries for 30.4.1759, 1.6.1767.

5 Gregory, op.cit. pp.121-38.

6 'The Diary of Joseph Rogerson', op.cit. 3.11.1809.

FIGURE 1: POOR RELIEF IN BRAMLEY AND BEESTON



Sources:

1790-1815
 Bramley Town Book 1789-1810
 Beeston Town Book 1790-1806
 Abstracts of Returns, pp(1803-4)XIII, 654;
 pp(1818) XIX, 570.

BRAMLEY

BEESTON

1790-1815

1799

1800

1805

1810

1815

£ '00's

20

15

10

5

By the 1820's the vestries were becoming politicised, town meetings dragged into the arena of middle class politics, and later into the conflict between the newly arrived municipal bourgeoisie and the nascent working class. In 1800 however the township meeting lay at the core of a community still relatively uniform in its social structure, surviving as the preserve of clothier interests.

Those interests were expressed as much through local religious as secular institutions. While the vestry, via the chapelwarden, was responsible for the physical maintenance of the chapel, the curate tended its spiritual upkeep. The out-townships were fortresses of the puritan evangelical tradition. The struggles of the chapelries against what they perceived as "popish corruption" within the church at Leeds were as crucial to many clothiers as the question of rates and poor relief.

The chapelries' right to nominate their own curates independent of the Vicar of Leeds was defended at Hunslet in 1747-9, at Holbeck in 1754, Bramley in 1758, and Armley in 1761.¹ The contests were genuinely popular affairs. At Hunslet a petition against pluralism and non-residency was raised, and at one point 300 assembled in the chapelyard to shout the Vicar's nominee out of the pulpit. At Holbeck a mob assaulted the curate, and it took 50 dragoons to give him access to the chapel. Acts of sabotage, in which there was suspicion of Methodist complicity, included breaking into the chapel, where the common prayer book was cut to pieces and the seats smeared with excrement. Armley lost its right of nomination by a court decision of 1766 in which the Lord Chancellor denounced the inhabitants as being "infected with sectarianism".

There was in this violent opposition to the Leeds vicarage more than religious sectarianism, or even the attempt to protect a privilege which had been granted to the chapelries by the consecration deeds of the previous century.² These conflicts must be seen as part of the out-townships' struggle to preserve their religious and secular independence from Leeds, from its Corporation and its

1 This paragraph is based on two articles by R J Ward, 'Leeds Church Patronage in the 18th century', TSP XLI (1945) misc. 12, 102-13, and 'Further notes upon Leeds Church Patronage in the 18th century', TSP L (1968) misc. 14, 193-211.

2 Chapels were built at Bramley in 1631, Hunslet in 1636, at Armley between 1645 and 1649.

Anglican merchant oligarchy. The gentrified aspirations of the Leeds ruling class had nothing in common with the hard-nosed, hard-working out-township clothiers. Where the church did not match their expectations, they turned to methodism.

The first methodists appeared in the out-townships as converts after John Wesley's first visit to Leeds in 1743.¹ The tiny groups of worshippers met in private houses amidst the noisy and sometimes violent hostility of their neighbours.² The Wesleyans however were not just a sect on the fringe of the community. At Bramley, for instance, they counted two overseers, a township constable and the wife of a "respectable cloth manufacturer" amongst their earliest members.³ Methodism established itself quickly, so that the class meetings were moved from private houses to barns or other more spacious accommodation. Wesley visited Armley and Hunslet three times and Bramley four times between 1745 and 1780. He preached to a large and attentive congregation at Bramley in 1749, though he perceived "no shaking among the dry bones yet."

At Hunslet, where Wesley had a good relationship with the puritan curate Henry Crooke, he preached to "a vast congregation" in 1747. When Crooke was ill in 1769, Wesley took over the sermon in his church. He returned to Hunslet in 1780 to open a new meeting house.⁴

By 1770 methodism was ready to embark on a programme of chapel building. By 1800 Beeston was the only township south of the Aire without one.⁵ As Elliott has pointed out, for the methodists, a chapel

1 Wesley did stay at Cottingley Hall in Beeston in June 1742, but only used it as a base from which to preach at Birstall. John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock, Vol III (1912), pp.15-17.

2 Joseph Hill, *Memorials of Methodism in Bramley* (Bramley, 1859). Wesley himself was pelted with dirt and stones by the Leeds mob in 1745, Wesley, op.cit. III, p.209.

3 William Hardaker, overseer in 1772; George Beecroft, a wealthy local farmer, overseer in 1753; Joseph Haley, constable in 1751; and Mrs Hall, wife of John Hall, overseer in 1761. Offices and dates from Bramley Town Book, 1685-1816; on Hardaker, Beecroft and Haley see Hill, op.cit. pp.8, 12-13; on Beecroft also see *Methodist Magazine* (1834), p.481.

4 Wesley, op.cit. III, pp.174, 209, 279-80, 291-3, 402, IV, p.472, V, p.330, VI, p.273, VIII, p.223.

5 Charles M Elliott, *The Social and Economic History of the Principle Protestant Denominations in Leeds, 1760-1844*, (unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford 1962), p.107.

was the result, not the start, of flourishing society. They were financed almost wholly by subscriptions, collections, and money borrowed from a wide range of creditors.¹ The trustees of such chapels were solidly respectable and reasonably prosperous. At Armley in 1784 they included three clothiers, a gentleman, a grocer, a tailor, a yeoman and a corn miller. All eight new trustees of the second chapel built there in 1795 were clothiers.²

It has been argued that the rapid growth of methodism in the out-townships owed much to the weakness of the Church of England there.³ This may be true for the early nineteenth century, but before 1800 it must be qualified. There was no deficiency of church accommodation in the out-townships in 1775, and despite rapid population growth, by 1801 only Wortley and Holbeck had serious shortages of sittings.⁴ Although the attendances recorded at the 1743 and 1764 visitations were low⁵, by the second decade of the eighteenth century the chapels had become firmly established as the places where the out-township inhabitants baptized their children and buried their dead. They continued, however, to patronise the parish church for marriages.⁶

The extent and intensity of the disputes over the right of nomination indicates that if the hierarchical church organisation had been able to tolerate an independent puritan evangelism within the chapelries, they may have survived the eighteenth century in better shape.⁷ Instead it was the methodist meeting houses and chapels which became the foci of religiosity in the clothier communities. This was less a result of the astute selection of central sites⁸ - distance was not a problem for the devout clothier who would travel miles to

1 Ibid. pp.113, 122-7.

2 Greaves, op.cit. p.122.

3 Ibid. pp.118-19, 120-1.

4 Elliott, op.cit. Appendix II, pp.65-7.

5 About 10% of those eligible attended communion in Holbeck, Hunslet and Bramley in 1743. A similar proportion was recorded for Bramley, Farnley and Holbeck in 1764. Brian Greaves 'Methodism in Yorkshire, 1740-1851', (unpublished PhD thesis, Liverpool, 1968), pp.117-18.

6 'Leeds Parish Registers 1695-1722', TSP XIII (1909), 'The Registers of the Chapels of the Parish Church of Leeds 1724-63, TSP XXIII (1916).

7 The only new church built in the out-townships in the eighteenth century, Wortley Chapel of Ease, fell into the hands of Dissenters until 1813, because its benefactor, the Lord of the Manor, was unable to wrest the patronage from the Archbishop of York. Elliott, op.cit. p.47; Greaves, op.cit. p.119.

8 Greaves, op.cit. pp.338-9.

hear a favourite preacher - rather more of the attraction of the methodist creed itself. The simplicity and directness of the exhortations to thrift, hard work and prudence, the strong image of life as "a dreadful conflict with the powers of darkness",¹ all made more sense to the small clothier than the impressions received from the Established Church of pluralism, non-residency, and competition for fatter livings. The independent path to God accorded with the out-townships' desire for an independent chapelry life. Methodism was both collective in its witness - the rapturous exultation of belonging to the chosen few - and individual in its appeal to the soul, and in its emphasis on the act of conversion and the final reward.²

In time the individualism in wesleyan methodism was to become a reactionary social force and the collective features submerged in a rigorous bureaucracy aligned to middle-class interests. In the eighteenth century however, methodism at times perfectly coincided with the life-style of the clothier communities, which was both individualist in content and collectivist in its design. This gave it an influence extending far beyond its members.³

Methodism itself contained impulses which derived from and contributed to the communal nature of social reproduction in the out-townships. Its own circuit organisation demanded a strong sense of local responsibility which township life fostered. Methodism also encouraged the collective self-help which was a feature of clothier culture. Patterns of leisure, the time outside work devoted to charitable and educational efforts and to local modes of recreation and social intercourse, were other characteristics of out-township life which ensured the dominance of this culture.

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there had been numerous gifts of doles and allotments to alleviate hardship in the out-townships.⁴ In the mid-eighteenth century a new type of collective relief appeared in the shape of benefit societies.⁵

1 Hill, op.cit..

2 John Walsh stresses the optimism of methodism, and believes that "its vitality lay primarily in its spiritual message." John Walsh, 'Methodism at the end of the 18th century', in Rupert Davis and Gordon Rupp, eds., A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain vol.I (1965), pp.313-4.

3 Only between one in 10 and one in 25 out-township inhabitants were methodist by 1811. Greaves, op.cit. p.120.

4 15 such charities were still traceable for the southern out-townships in the 1890's. Return of Endowed Charities (City of Leeds), PP (1898) CXVI, 367-621.

5 Benefit societies existed in the seventeenth century in the form of 'box clubs', but I have found no evidence of any in the Leeds out-townships. see Dermot Morrah, A History of Industrial Life Assurance (1955), pp.14-15.

A clothiers' loyal and friendly society was established at Armley in 1760, and another at Bramley in 1765.¹ Both were immediately popular and survived over a century. The society at Bramley was begun by an overseer as a 'union society' to relieve the sickness of members. Each paid one shilling per quarter and was to spend twopence "for the good of the house". For this he was entitled to receive 3/6d per week while ill, and on his death £10 would be paid to surviving relatives.² Further benefit societies appeared during the boom and slump of the 1790's. A provident society was founded in 1794 at the hamlet of Rodley, and a new amicable society in 1796 in the industrial village of Stanningley, both on the outskirts of Leeds parish. There were at least four other societies founded in Leeds between 1795 and 1805, and probably many more for which no trace has survived.³ For the out-townships, such organisations were particularly suited to the values of independence, respectability and communal concern for those in need cherished by most clothiers.

Education was also valued by the clothier. There were several doles for teaching poor children in the early eighteenth century, and town schools at Wortley, Bramley, Hunslet and Holbeck.⁴ By the 1780's, however, literacy rates had fallen from their mid-century levels.⁵ Day and Sunday schools before 1800 appear to have been largely a collective response to the social problems caused by a rapidly growing population and structural change in the local economy.

Sunday schools sprang up after 1784 and were sometimes supported by out-township meetings. The Beeston vestry in 1790 decided to defray the expenses of the schools there, over and above the subscriptions,

1 These were quite separate from the Foresters for whom Leeds was the headquarters in the 1740's. T.B. Stead, A Short History of the Chief Affiliated Friendly Societies (Leeds, 1881), p.15.

2 No early records of the Bramley society survive. Details are from the Bramley Almanac for 1865.

3 Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, pp (1887) LXXVII, 476-537, Yorkshire Returns for 1885.

4 W.B. Stephens, 'Elementary Education and Literacy 1770-1870', in Fraser, op.cit. p.224. Return of Endowed Charities, op.cit.

5 From an average of 66.7 per cent of grooms signing their names on marriage at Leeds Parish Church 1760-9, to 55.7 per cent in 1781/4/7. Brides were largely illiterate. 70.4 per cent made marks on marriage 1760-9, and 72.4 per cent 1781/4/7. Stephens, op.cit. pp.224-5.

out of the overseers' fund.¹ The enclosure act for Armley in 1793 provided two acres for a school-house which could accommodate 50 children. The Bramley enclosure of 1789 set aside an allotment to finance the teaching of girls in a day school.² Numbers in these schools however made an insignificant impact on the problem of illiteracy. Methodists, perhaps hampered by lack of funds and the influence of Wesley's teaching that "social evil was the result of sin", were slow to join the educational effort in the out-townships.³ One of the earliest Methodist schools was at Wortley Greenside, where a Sunday school was established in the old town school in 1802. It used "the Lancastrian plan of teaching on sand desks and slate writing was allowed, but without much good effect."⁴ Another Sunday school was set up at Kirkstall in the summer of 1801 by a group of benefactors who hoped to clear the woods and fields around the abbey of forge-workers' children.⁵

Social problems required communal discipline as well as education. The Leeds magistrates complained of being occupied by apprentices causing difficulties for their masters, attempting to break contracts and running away to the army and militia. They were "very troublesome" in the villages close to Leeds, particularly at Armley.⁶ Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the leisure activities of some of the out-township inhabitants also appear to have caused increasing concern to those in authority. There was much cock and dog fighting at lower Wortley, in an area known locally as Sodom. Organised bull-baiting was also carried out on feast days in a crude amphitheatre at the bottom of Wortley moor, with the rules fixed by a bull-ring committee.⁷ There was poaching in Farnley Wood, and and possibly a general increase in burglaries. In the summer of 1783

1 Beeston Town Book, 17.6.1790.

2 Return of Endowed Charities, op.cit.; Select Committee on the Education of the Poor (1818), pp (1819) IX, 2, Digest of Parochial Returns: St Peter's, Leeds.

3 Elliott, op.cit. p.465; see also H F Matthews, Methodism and the Education of the People 1791-1851 (1949), pp.34-70.

4 'A Short account of the Wortley Methodist Sunday School' (1821) in Wortley Greenside Sunday School Attendance Book 1822-39, (Leeds West Circuit Methodist Records, 40).

5 'Extract from an account of a Sunday school at Kirkstall, nr Leeds', by Mrs Carr, in Reports of the Society for bettering the condition and increasing the comforts of the Poor, vol.IV (1805), no.CX.

6 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of William Cookson, p.172.

7 John Stones, Wortley: Past and Present (Leeds, 1887), p.16.

Bramley town meeting formed a committee to deal with "the many felonies, misdemeanours and mischiefs committed... and also the great drunkenness and irregularity in this town." Those found guilty of "tipling, drunkenⁿness, swearing or irregularity" were to be prosecuted, and the expenses met out of the poor rates. A reward was offered to the first whose information led to a conviction. Ale and liquor sellers were to be closely monitored, and a general warning was given to the inhabitants,

"that they at all times behave themselves in a sober, decent and orderly manner which will greatly be to their present and future happiness and be of the greatest benefit to Society in General." 1

Out-township life in 1800 in all its facets - the workshop, the field and farm, the house, the chapel, the township meeting, the Sunday school, the alehouse and gambling pit - revealed that blend of the individual and the collective experience which was the trademark of the culture of the domestic clothier. This culture was severely undermined by the arrival of the factory system.

1 Bramley Town Book, 6 July, 7 July, 12 July, 13 Nov. 1783.

(ii)

The Factory System

Mills were not new to the out-townships in the 1780's. Leeds had long been established as a finishing centre for broadcloth, and the eighteenth century returns of fulling mills show the concentration in the Leeds area.¹ Eight of the twenty mills recorded for the Aire valley in 1780 were situated in Leeds parish, six in the out-townships south of the river.² The small, public, water-powered fulling mills were fully integrated into the domestic system of manufacture.³

When scribbling machinery began to be introduced into the fulling mills in the late 1780's, it was regarded as an addition, not a detraction from the domestic system.⁴ The new combined scribbling and fulling mills provided a service, preparing and finishing the cloth spun and woven in the weavers' homes or the clothiers' loom sheds. They were distinguished by contemporaries from 'factories', where manufacturers used machinery to make up cloth from their own raw materials. Gott's Park mills was the earliest and largest example of such a factory in the Leeds woollen industry, combining manufacturing, as well as preparatory and finishing processes under one roof.⁵

The average woollen mill was quite small, 68 employees in the 1835 returns.⁶ Many mills had less than 50 workers. One spinning and fulling mill in Bramley in 1833 employed only 11 workers.⁷ By the 1830's the largest woollen mills tended to be those in which vertical integration of the various production processes had been taken furthest.⁸ Haley's Waterloo mill, with 91 workers in 1833 the largest mill in Bramley, began as a scribbling mill in 1816, included spinning and weaving by 1833, and had a new room attached for 61 power looms by 1835.⁹ Millshaw mills in Beeston was a complete

1 M.J.Dickenson, 'Fulling mills in the West Riding Woollen Cloth Industry, 1689-1770', Textile History 10 (1979), 127-39.

2 Calculated from Jenkins, West Riding Wool Textile Industry, Table 1, p.7.

3 Ibid. pp.6-10.

4 Crump, op.cit. pp.4-5.

5 Heaton, 'Benjamin Gott', op.cit.

6 Jenkins, West Riding Wool Textile Industry, p.68.

7 R.C. on the Employment of Children in Factories; Supplementary Report pt.2. pp.(1834) XX, cl, no.56. (hereafter known as Suppl. Rpt.).

8 R.M. Hartwell, 'The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industry, 1800-1850', (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1955), p.328.

9 Suppl. Rpt., op.cit. cl, no.57.

manufactory with 181 workers in 1833, as was Willan s' factory in Holbeck with 473 employees. However mills purely devoted to preparatory and finishing processes could also employ large numbers, such as 189 in Armley mills in 1833. Indeed, in the early 1830's the majority of millworkers were still employed in those processes which were the first to be mechanised and worked collectively in mills.

While water-wheels in fulling mills were being applied to the new scribbling and carding machines, hand and horse-powered mills were set up by out-township clothiers in increasing numbers in the 1790's.¹ Almost simultaneously, new steam-powered fulling and scribbling mills were being built.

It is now clear that Leeds was an important centre of early factory development.² However, it is striking that most of the early mills in Leeds were located not in the central township, but in the clothier-dominated out-townships. Five of the six mills operating in Leeds in 1790 were in townships south of the Aire. Of the 40 Leeds mills traced by Jenkins for 1785-99, 27 were in these townships.³ Table 2.2 shows how fully each out-township participated in the first phase of mill-building. Half of the 56 out-townships recorded as working between 1785 and 1835 were built by 1800. Of the 16 mills in Bramley in 1835, 7 were built by 1800, 10 by 1807, and 12 by 1816. Only with the second building cycle in the 1820's did the central township overtake the out-townships in the number of wool-textile mills.⁴

The reasons for the early proliferation of mills in the out-townships are clear. Builders found land cheaper and manufacturers found labour cheaper than in the town centre. For owners of existing mills, or prospective builders looking for suitable tenants, the out-townships had plenty of moderately wealthy domestic clothiers who had the capital to invest in gears and machinery. As tenants, clothiers avoided many of the fixed capital costs of setting up as

1 Jenkins, *West Riding Wool Textile Industry*, pp.71-5.

2 Gregory, *op.cit.* p.190.

3 Jenkins, *West Riding Wool Textile Industry*, Appendix I.

4 Table 2.2: *Leeds Woollen, Worsted and Flax mills 1785-1871*. Local research has shown Jenkins's survey to be nearly, though not totally, comprehensive as far as the out-townships are concerned. There are several minor mistakes however in the location of mills, which have been taken into account in Table 2.2

TABLE 2.2 contd.

Leeds Flax Mills

estd.	Leeds	Holbeck	Hunslet	Leeds Boro'	Yorks
1785-99	1	1	-	2	
1800- 9	2	1	-	3	
1810-19	3	-	1	4	
1820- 9	9	1	-	10	
1830- 3	2	-	-	2	
Cumulative Totals	17	3	1	21	
1832				"not quite 20"	
1835	21	4	-	25	64
1838*				44	60
1843				30	
1856/8				32	60
1871				29	70

Sources: Wool Textile mills, 1785-1835, calculated from D.T. Jenkins, The West Riding Wool Textile Industry (Edington 1975) App.1; E.T. Carr, Industry in Bramley (Leeds, 1938); Bramley Township Survey, 1823 (LCA, LO/B5). Flax Mills, 1785-1833, calculated from Leeds evidence to Children's Employment Commission, First and Supplementary Reports, PP(1833) XX, PP(1834) XIX, PP(1834) XX.

Other sources are as follows:

- 1832 - Children's Employment Commission, First Report, op.cit. evidence of R. Baker, CI, 116.
- 1835 - 'Returns of mills in Leeds', in Report of H.M.I. Rickards, PP(1836) XLV, 103-5.
- 1838*,
1856, 1871 - Factory Returns, PP(1839) XLIII; PP(1857) XIV; PP(1871) LXII. *Nb. 1838 returns probably recorded firms not mills.
- 1843 - Report of H.M.I. Saunders, PP(1843) XXVII, App.3.
- 1855/
1858 - R.Baker, 'On the Industrial and Sanitary Economy of the Borough of Leeds', JSSL 21 (1858), 427-43.

millowners. Alternatively, the costs of site preparation and mill construction could be avoided by purchasing an existing mill. Neither of these options were uncommon. Of the 13 mills working in Bramley in 1823, only 7 had been built by their owner-occupiers. Three of the mills had existed as fulling and corn mills before 1783, and four were occupied by tenants.¹ With williers costing about £30, billies about 10 guineas, and gears, scribblers and carders between £100 and £200, a clothier could probably begin business in a scribbling mill for less than £300.² Of 12 Bramley mills rated in 1823 and 1826, only one was valued above £200, and four below £100.³

The local water supply was more of a problem. Sites by the Aire were at a premium. In many places in Bramley and Armley the river bank was steep and unsuitable for any extensive millsite. Away from the river, the becks of Wortley, Farnley, Stanningley and Holbeck were small with a highly irregular flow. Steam power therefore was a major consideration of anyone building or rebuilding an out-township mill in the 1790's. Virtually all of the mills built before 1800, which did not have riverside sites, had steam power at, or shortly after, their erection. Five of the eight mills in Bramley in 1800 had steam engines. 26 Leeds mills were among 81 Yorkshire mills which had steam power before 1800. 22 of these mills were in the out-townships.

The out-township mills, therefore, took a lead in establishing steam power in the Leeds woollen industry. Once steam driven machinery was installed, however, there was little scope for major expansion during the early nineteenth century. There was just over 100 horsepower in the eight Bramley mills of 1800. By 1823 in 11 steam and 2 water mills there was about 250 horsepower. Four mills recording 82 horsepower in 1823, recorded only 109 horsepower in 1833.⁴ Before the 1830's the quantity of water or steam powered spinning machinery was limited. Even at Bean Ing hand-operated jennies were the norm until the late 1820's.⁵ A few out-township

1 Bramley Valuation of 1823.

2 Prices based on Heaton, 'Benjamin Gott', op.cit. p.52; Jenkins, West Riding Wool Textile Industry, pp.72-4.

3 Jenkins, West Riding Wool Textile Industry, table 11, p.84; Bramley Poor Rates, Dec.1823, Highway Rates, 1826(LCA, LO/B1-4), LH/B4).

4 Bramley Valuation of 1823; Suppl. Rpt.op.cit. Cl nos.55-7, 185.

5 Heaton, 'Benjamin Gott', op.cit. p.56.

mills also used steam to heat their drying houses, but most remained purely scribbling and fulling mills until the 1830's.

The indications are that these early millowners acquired a steam power capacity somewhat in excess of their requirements. Most of the engines were small, costing less than £100, but an engine was scarcely economic below 10 horsepower, and there are several instances of power being let to other manufacturers in the same or in an adjacent building.¹ In 1833 19 out-township cloth firms and 10 in-township firms gave the former an average of 35 horsepower against 26 horsepower of the latter, despite the Leeds firms being marginally larger in terms of the workforce.² It would seem the main reason for this was a historical overcapacity caused by the earlier development of most of the out-township firms.

The rapid proliferation of mills and machinery in the out-townships produced a new source of demand for labour. James Walker, for instance, had already 31 scribbling and carding engines, and 4 willeys powered by a 20 horsepower Boulton and Watt engine in his Wortley mill in 1794.³ In contrast with the old fulling stocks, these machines were labour intensive. For every loom Walker installed, he needed five carding, scribbling and slubbing millers. With 11 looms by 1801, about 55 of his 100 millworkers were millers. The four fulling stocks he hired out employed just four millers.⁴

In 1800 probably about one in ten textile workers in the out-townships were employed in mills. By 1835 this proportion had reached one in four, and more than one in three in some townships.⁵ In accordance with the long tradition of Leeds as a finishing centre, most of the finishing mills appear to have been located in the in-township. Consequently the employment structure of the out-township woollen mills was established at an early date by the scribbling and carding processes which relied above all on a workforce of children and adult males. Males outnumbered females by about two to one in the out-township mills, and this ratio was similar to that in the West Riding woollen industry as a whole. However, the proportion of children employed in the out-township mills was substantially greater than the industry's average, and this was due chiefly to the

1 Suppl. Rpt. op.cit. Cl, nos. 178, 179, 183, 190. This may have been more frequent in the densely-built urban centre, than in the out-townships.

2 Calculated from Suppl.Rpt. op.cit.

3 Jenkins', West Riding Wool Textile Industry table 13, p.98.

4 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit. evidence of James Walker p.211.

5 Table 2.3: Millworkers as a proportion of out-township textile workers, 1835.

TABLE 2.3: WOOL TEXTILE MILLWORKERS AS A PROPORTION OF OUT-TOWNSHIP TEXTILE WORKERS, 1835

	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Beeston</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Wortley</u>	
1835 Returns	445	174	672	107	Woollen millworkers
1841 * Census	2090	557	1830	2043**	Textile workers
Estimated textile workers 1835	1994	530	1680	1878**	
% woollen millworkers	22	33	40	6	

* figures taken from 10% samples of census households. 1835 estimates obtained by reducing 1841 figures proportionately to total census populations 1831 and 1841. This will probably underestimate the numbers working in textiles in 1835, as the woollen industry was very depressed in 1841 and the numbers recorded as employed, particularly in Bramley, seem rather low.

** includes 10% flax workers.

Sources: 'Returns of mills in Leeds', Report of H.M.I. Rickards PP(1836) XLV, 103-4; 1841 Census Enumerators Books.

demands of the scribbling and carding processes. Where a mill was fully integrated, such as Bean Ing, more than 50 per cent of its workforce might be adult males.¹ The proportion of adults to children in the finishing shops was also greater than in the scribbling mills.² Here a distinction must be made between the southern out-townships. The most densely populated and urbanised townships, Hunslet and Holbeck, contained mills which were more integrated as complete manufactories than those in the more outlying townships of Armley, Bramley and Wortley. Beeston's Millshaw mills falls into this category. Consequently the division of labour by age in the Hunslet, Holbeck and Beeston mills resembles that of Leeds mills more than that of their out-township neighbours. Table 2.4 illustrates these differences.³ The averages and totals given in the factory returns hide important structural and regional differences within the woollen industry in the organisation and distribution of factory labour.

The out-townships led the early development of mills, machinery and steam-power in the Leeds woollen industry. Out-township mills were mainly scribbling and fulling mills, and a clear geographical division can be observed between these mills in Armley, Bramley and Wortley to the west of Leeds, and the finishing and spinning mills and complete manufactories in Hunslet, Holbeck and Leeds itself. The organisation and division of factory labour in the western out-townships was therefore mostly determined by the scribbling and carding processes. However, these factory based preparatory processes continued to absorb only a fraction of the suburban labour force. In 1841 scribbling, carding and slubbing employed only 5.7 per cent of woollen workers in Wortley, 9.5 per cent in Bramley, 16.1 per cent in Armley. Other branches of textile production were of greater importance.

1 Heaton, 'Benjamin Gott', op.cit. p.56.

2 Baines, Woollen Manufacture, table P, p.96, gives the division of labour in a 24 gig finishing mill as 88 men, 41 women, 64 children. Finishing shops used almost exclusively young boys in their juvenile workforce. The low proportion of young girls in in-township mills in Table 2.4 reflects the predominance of finishing in Leeds. Out-township mills had more use for girls.

3 Table 2.4: Females and Children in Leeds and West Riding woollen mills, 1833-71.

TABLE 2.4 Females and Children in Leeds and West Riding Woollen Mills 1833-71

	Mills	Total Employees	% Female	% Children < 18 yrs	% Males < 18 yrs
<u>Armley/Bramley</u>					
<u>Wortley</u>					
1833 Sample ¹	9	551	27.9	68.5	40.9
1835 Returns	16	1224	26.4	61.8	39.5
<u>Hunslet/Holbeck</u>					
<u>Beeston</u>					
1833 Sample	8	1545	31.5	31.7	17.1
1835 Returns	13	1663	31.6	37.3	23.9
<u>Leeds township</u>					
1833 Sample	10	1106	20.9	41.2	31.9
1835 Returns	42	5420	25.0	34.0	25.3
<u>Leeds Borough</u>					
1835	77	9445	26.7	37.9	26.4
1838	106 ²	9738	27.9	39.1	26.4
1871	130	8556	37.1	?	15.9
<u>West Riding</u>					
1835	402	25764	37.0	45.9	26.7
1838	543	26180	31.9	49.6	?
1847	-	38737	36.5	45.3	25.8
1850	880	40611	34.5	?	25.5
1856	806	42982	38.5	?	21.4
1861	924	50473	37.8	?	17.9
1867	818	59602	44.7	?	14.9
1871	954	70625	44.8	?	14.3

Notes :

- 1 One Bramley firm did not return an age breakdown of children in 1833 and is therefore excluded from the sample.
- 2 The returns of 1838 probably counted firms not mills.

Sources: Figures for 1833 calculated from Children's Employment Commission Reports, and for 1835, 1838, 1856, 1871, from Factory Returns, see above Table 2.2. Other sources are the factory returns for 1847, 1850, 1861, 1867, PP(1847) XLVI; PP(1850) XLII; PP(1862) LV; PP(1867-8) LXIV.

Most woollen workers in these three townships in 1841 were employed in woollen weaving which was still largely unmechanised and outside mills at this date. A number of major out-township cloth manufacturers employed weavers in loom sheds and weaving shops which did not qualify as factories or mills in 1835.² Finishing mills may not have been numerous in the out-townships, but finishing processes were significant sources of employment - 13 per cent of woollen workers in Bramley, 21 per cent in Armley, 31 per cent in Beeston, 41.4 per cent in Wortley. This suggests there were a large number of dressing shops, especially in townships closest to Leeds such as Wortley, which were not returned as mills in 1835. It is also possible that many finishers worked in Leeds itself, or travelled to Holbeck and Hunslet to work. The two most important branches were dressing for adult male workers and burling for women and older girls. In Bramley and Armley worsteds gave employment to sizeable groups of workers, wool combing for men in the former township, stuff weaving for women and older girls in the latter. As there were no worsted mills south of the Aire, except at Stanningley, the girls from Armley probably walked to Stansfield's mill at Burley or perhaps Hindes and Derham's large mill of over 300 workers at Leeds. It is possible, but unlikely, that they worked at home. It was a broadcloth area, few households would have had worsted looms, and the majority of the girls were single, between 15 and 19 years, and free to travel to work. Flax mills were also major employers in Holbeck, Hunslet and Beeston, and not unimportant in Wortley. In Beeston over 40 per cent of textile workers in 1841 were in flax mills, in Wortley over 10 per cent, rising to 17 per cent by 1851: There were also a handful of children from Armley working in flax mills in 1841.

1 These figures however, do not include those returned as 'piecers' in Wortley and Armley, about whom it is impossible to tell whether they belong to spinning or slubbing, and undefined 'mill labourers' in Bramley.

2 For instance Benjamin Wainman and John Oddy of Armley, William Bentley and Joseph Howgate of Bramley all employed a number of spinners and weavers in the 1830's. (LM 2 June, 28 July, 11 Aug. 1832, 16 June 1838); Benjamin Hargreave and Joseph Nussey, whose firm was manufacturing cloth in Wortley in the 1820's, probably established Silver Royd mill in 1836; James Hargreave, who owned Mill Garth mill in Leeds, also ran a "weaving shop" in Upper Wortley. He won the title of clothmaker to the Duke of York in 1821.

The organisation of textile labour in the out-townships was therefore much more complex than it appears at first to be from the predominance of scribbling mills. The specific experience of employment in one type of woollen mill is insufficient to describe the whole range of working environments in the out-township textile industries. The census illustrates the need to place the mills in their local context. It also identifies which occupational groups within textiles are numerically most important for each township. The impact of mills and machinery on the clothier communities is assessed in three areas; firstly, the working environments of these groups; secondly, women and children's factory work and its effect on the family; thirdly, the decline and survival of the domestic clothier, and the largest occupational group of all, the hand-loom weavers.

The old fulling mills scattered through the out-townships in the eighteenth century gave work to only a handful of men who supervised the milling of the cloth. The process required little labour other than to occasionally turn over the heavy cloth and check how far the cloth had felted. Clothiers often helped with their own cloth or even did the work themselves. Fullers were notoriously lazy. Their casual work-routine contrasted sharply with that of the businessman clothier, and often led to acrimony between the two. Fullers were also small businessmen, being mostly tenants of the mills they occupied, and were dependent on the custom of the clothiers.¹ They were widely regarded as either corrupt or inefficient², but being few in number and occupying a critical position in the manufacturing process - the final composition of the cloth would depend on their skill and they could easily ruin the clothier's work - they could dictate the conditions and pace of their work.

The new scribbling and carding engines in fulling mills, and gigs and shears in finishing shops created a different class of manual or semi-manual worker from the fulling millers. Machinery determined the organisation and division of labour along factory lines, whether the labour was directly involved with machinery or not. It provided the *raison d'être* for the collective work of large groups of slubbers, spinners, croppers, dressers, combers, burlers, piecers and doffers.

1 Dickenson, *op.cit.* pp.134-6

2 B Wilson, Our Village (Bramley, 1860), pp.43-5; S.C. on
 Woollen Manufacture, *op.cit.*: evidence of Joseph Coope, p.48.

The work relations of these groups became a characteristic feature of the clothier communities between 1780 and 1850.

Many of the new factory jobs for adults were occupied by men who had learnt their trade in the domestic industry. Some of them; sorters, slubbers, dressers, croppers and combers, from their neighbours' perception as well as their own, were regarded as early labour aristocrats within the mills. Others, such as scribblers, carders, steamers and brushers, had a lower status and were little more than machine-minders or supervisors of children. For all of them, however, machinery dictated the pace and quality of work, their hours and incomes, and conditions in the workplace. In various degrees, their control over these factors was challenged by the latest machinery that was available to be introduced.

To some labour aristocrats in the woollen industry, that challenge remained minimal for a very long time. Slubbers for instance had a high regard for their own status. They were portrayed as clever, skillful workers, fond of drink and feasts, cruel towards their billy-boys, and haughty in their attitude to their weaver neighbours.¹ Joseph Rogerson, who employed about 20 in 1813, called them "unreasonable dogs but very good workmen".² Little had changed by 1833. Long intervals for drinking were still taken at random by slubbers regardless of the effect on the machinery or the rest of the mill. There seems to have been little attempt made to regulate slubbers' hours or speed of production, beyond an acceptance that time would be made up by running later, or through the night.³

Slubbers found themselves in this advantageous situation because they were relatively few in numbers, and they occupied a crucial manual position between two fully mechanised and largely power driven processes, carding and spinning. The weight of slubbings was crucial to the small manufacturers who patronised the scribbling mills. If the slubbed wool yielded less weight than was expected there would be fewer strings to weave and fewer yards of cloth to sell.⁴

Although wages had fallen since the war, slubbers remained expensive to the millowner. Slubbers' wages accounted for 60 per cent of

1 Baines, *Woollen Manufacture*, p.164. Joseph Lawson, Progress in Pudsey (Stanningley, 1887), p.35

2 Rogerson, *op.cit.* 27 Dec. 1808.

3 R.C. on the Employment of Children in Factories; First Report PP (1833), XX, (hereafter known as *Children's Employment Commission*), evidence of William Hebden, C1 pp.88-9.

4 Lawson, *op.cit.* p.31.

total expenditure in Belleisle mill, Bramley, in 1813, and 80 to 90 per cent of scribbling expenditure in Armley mills between 1847 and 1858. This contrasts with the much less labour intensive milling process, where wages were only 23 to 34 per cent of total expenses at Armley mills, 1847-1858.¹

The gradual introduction of the condenser machine in the late 1840's dispensed with the need for the billy-frame, and for slubbers as a class of worker. Most, though not all, of the billies at Armley mills were replaced by condensers between 1846 and 1856.² The threat of the 'perpetual carding machine', originally an American invention, had been posed since the early 1830's, but technical difficulties delayed its introduction.³ In the late 1850's the condenser was still regarded as an alternative, not as a necessary replacement for the billy.⁴ The shadow of technological unemployment however rapidly reduced the slubbers' status in their communities to that of the hand loom weavers, although wage levels appear to have been generally maintained by those who remained in the occupation.⁵

In spinning and dressing, men were subjected more directly to machinery than slubbers, but nevertheless were also able to maintain the status and income of skilled artisans well into the 1830's. Dressers composed one in five woollen workers in the Wortley census of 1841, one in six in Beeston. They were mostly adult males, and the term included those raising the nap of the cloth dressing proper, and those shearing or cropping the cloth.⁶ The story of the croppers' long, much publicised and sometimes violent resistance to gig-mills and machine-shears is well-known.⁷ Gig-mills had existed in Yorkshire since the mid-eighteenth century, although the croppers successfully delayed their adoption in Leeds until the

- 1 Gott Ms.219, 'An account of scribbling at Armley mills 1847-58. Rogerson, op.cit.. 'Statement of accounts for 1813'. Between 30 and 44 slubbers worked at Armley mills, 1847-58, and Rogerson employed about 20 in 1813.
- 2 Gott Ms.193/207, 'An account of work done and wages at Armley mills 1846 and 1856.
- 3 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of Jervase Walker, C2 p.61.
- 4 Baines, Woollen Manufacture, p.64.
- 5 Lawson, op.cit. pp.35-6.
- 6 'Moising' is raising the nap in one direction, 'raising' is applied to the same action in both directions. 'Cropping' refers to the first cut of the nap when the cloth was wet, 'shearing' is the second cut when the cloth had been boiled, brushed, pressed and dried. Crump, op.cit. pp.40-1, Baines, Woollen Manufacture, pp.71-3.
- 7 Hammond, op.cit. pp.169-98; E.P.Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (revised edn. Harmondsworth, 1968), pp.569-79; Gregory, op.cit. pp.121-38.

1820's.¹ By 1830 Leeds dressing shops and finishing mills contained a wide variety of machinery, including gig mills, dry-beating gigs, Lewis cutters, hydraulic presses and steam brushing mills. Although raising, cropping and brushing by hand was still common, it was the machines which determined the work relations in dressing.²

Hand croppers were characterised as rumbustious, intemperate, independent and well-organised. They proved capable of defending apprenticeship and their trade over a long period of time.³ They were the first to succumb to machinery, but were still required to operate the heavy Lewis cutting machines. As with spinners, wages for dressers fell from about 30 shillings at the end of the war to about a guinea a week in the 1830's. The machinery in dressing was inefficient, however, and took a long time to perfect. Gig-mills produced an uneven nap and were only suited for certain qualities of cloth. Shears cut unevenly and bad work could prove costly. Cloth manufacturers were looking for a high quality gloss, and turned to boiling to make up for some of the inefficiencies of the early gigs.⁴ Thus, although machinery may have reduced the croppers' need for beer,⁵ it did not immediately reduce their status in the dressing shop. Skill remained an asset where hand and machine processes operated side by side. In 1825, for instance, David Brook was regularly working 11 hours a day as a hand cropper at Gotts, and 3 nights a week at the machines.⁶ In 1824 Gott still gave his cropper apprentices a suit of clothes each year, and operated a rigid wage ladder, beginning with 5 shillings at 14 years, and rising by one shilling annually till the last year of apprenticeship when 14 shillings would be given.⁷

- 1 One Leeds clothworker had come across gig-mills for the first time as an apprentice in 1755. S.C. on the Bill respecting the Laws relating to the Woollen Trade PP(1802-3) VII, evidence of Daniel Whitworth, p.226. Between 1806 and 1817 the number of gig-mills in Yorkshire rose from 5 to 72, and machine-shearing from 100 to 1462. Hammond, op.cit. p.189.
- 2 Hand-frames continued to supplement the gigs well into the 1850's but brushing and cutting were fully mechanised by 1858. Baines Woollen Manufacture, p.152; Samuel Jubb, The History of the Shoddy Trade (1860), pp.74, 76.
- 3 E.P. Thompson, op.cit. pp.571-2, Jubb, op.cit. p.74.
- 4 William Hirst, History of the Woollen Trade for the last 60 years (Leeds, 1844), pp.25-6.
- 5 Jubb, op.cit. p.74.
- 6 S.C. on the Bill to regulate the labour of children in the mills and factories of the UK PP(1831-2) XV, (hereafter Sadler's Commission) evidence of David Brook, Q.1574.
- 7 Ibid. evidence of William Swithenbank Q.1924. Children's Employment op.cit. evidence of William Swithenbank, C1, p.71.

More so than slubbers, however, machinery did at once seriously alter the croppers' ability to control the pace of production and the length of their working day. The capacity of gig mills to raise large quantities of cloth when demand was high determined the hours worked by croppers and their assistants. Where a millowner dressed his own cloth, as did James Brown at Bagby Mill in Leeds, hours worked at gigs and in the steaming department were considerably longer than at other processes.¹ Generally gigs ran behind the other machines in a finishing mill, and night shifts were common.² Well over 100 hours a week were worked by several witnesses from Leeds before the Children's Employment Commission in 1833. These hours included some very long shifts with minimal rest periods. While the men would remain at one process, the boys would be moved from machine to machine and from room to room, cutting, brushing, steaming, boiling and gigging. The longest hours recorded in the Leeds evidence of 1833 were worked by David Bywater aged 18 in Brown's steaming mill. For two months he worked 97 hours with 16 hours rest, a total of 113 hours a week in the mill. One fortnight he spent 120 hours a week there, which included a 43 hour shift from Monday at five till Tuesday midnight with 6 hours rest divided into 9 intervals of one hour or 30 minutes. The workforce nicknamed Brown's 'Hell Bay' after the supposed destination of Bonaparte in exile.³

Mills and machinery therefore brought together groups of adult

- 1 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of James Kirk, C2 p.30. In 1832, 4892 hours were worked in Brown's steaming department, 3432 hours at the gigs, 3248 with shears. Two sets of children worked 10 hour shifts in steaming. Suppl. Rpt. op.cit. C1 no.29.
- 2 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of William Swithenbank C1, p.71, John Hannam C1 p.86. In the 1820's, with the volume and value of broad cloth exports declining, and the competition intensifying between large manufacturers attempting to sell their own cloth, in shrinking foreign markets, India increased in importance in relation to more developed markets. The long hours recorded for Brown and Gott were both attributed to East India orders. Françoise Crouzet, 'Towards an Export Economy', *Explorations in Economic History* 17 (1980) 48-93. R G Wilson, op.cit. pp. 121-7. Hartwell op.cit. pp.387-91.
- 3 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of A Hargraves, C1, p.68, James Kirk, C2, p.29, William Cooper, C1, p.66, David Bywater, C2, p.31, John Sunderland C1, p.95, Edward Gordon, John Richardson, C2, pp. 54-5, William Wade, C1, p.98, Nicholas Culloden, C1, p.98.

male workers who were able to maintain some superiority and independence within the mills, and the status of skilled artisans within their communities. This was due to the piecemeal nature of technological innovation in the woollen industry and the inadequacy of existing machinery, particularly in fine cloth production. It had also to do with the efficiency of the traditional methods of manufacture in the clothier out-townships, and the maintenance of traditional skills.¹ At the same time it is clear that men who found themselves doing manual skilled work between or alongside processes which were being fully mechanized were in a precarious position. The amount of power employed, the speed of an engine, for instance in carding, dictated the speed of the manual process, slubbing. Where economy dictated that engines be run longer, the hours of labour would be lengthened accordingly. If engines stopped, or lost time, the length of the working day would also be changed. When machinery stopped earnings ceased. The efficiency of machinery would also affect adult wage-levels in piece-work. The weight of slubbings would relate to the state of the cardings, the thickness of yarn would depend on the tension and speed of the spindles, the amount of burrs after dressing would determine how much cloth a woman could bur1. The quality of work experience suffered as skill was diluted by the breakdown of production processes into mechanised actions. There was still considerable job satisfaction among some adult workers, for instance croppers, but like weaving, many previously manifold processes were reduced to the monotonous repetition of the central action, at an imposed speed under a mechanical taskmaster. Finally, machinery determined the conditions in the workplace, the health and safety of the workforce, in an unregulated manner for at least 40 years after the first mills appeared in Leeds.

All these effects were seen earliest and most clearly in the largest and most vulnerable sections of the factory workforce, women and children. In the scribbling mills girls and boys in roughly equal numbers worked as scribbler-feeders and carder-fillers, their job being to lay the wool evenly across the revolving drums of the machines.² This task was relatively "easy work", except where children

1 Factory discipline remained a problem for so long because of the resilience of traditional work relationships to the "new culture". Sidney Pollard, 'Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution', ECHR XVI (1963-4), 254-71.

2 For a description of the difference between scribbler-feeding and carder-filling see Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of Joshua Drake, Qs. 950-1.

were required to feed two machines at once, which prevented them sitting down while the wool was being run into the machine.¹ While one filler could feed two carding machines, it took 3 piecers, usually young boys, working alongside a slubber to serve a billy of 60 spindles.² Billy-piecing was "the hardest work children have".³ The action of splicing and twisting the ends of the cardings left some children with bleeding hands after a few days work.⁴ The pace of their work was determined by the speed and regularity of the carding engines which delivered the slivers of wool. More often than not it seems the engine outpaced the billy spindles and the cardings had to be stacked by one child while the other two children in the room continued to piecen. In some mills when six stacks had been accumulated the carding engine would be stopped.⁵ The children were worked hard, often missing the usual half-hour breaks for breakfast or drinking in the afternoon, in order to stack, piecen or clean the spindles.⁶

Both machinery and the nature of the work determined the age and income of child millworkers. The height of the carding drums required older children as ~~servers~~ and fillers, and consequently their wages were better than those of piecers although hours were slightly longer.⁷ Some employers preferred piecers as young as six or seven, and it was generally the first task a child was given in a scribbling mill. Some parents, keen to gain an early start in the competition for millwork, would place their under-aged children under a slubber

1 Ibid., evidence of William Kenworthy, Q.2002.

2 Baines, op.cit. p.94. Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of William Hebden, C1, p.78.

3 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of Joshua Drake, C2, p.41.

4 Ibid. evidence of Matthew Crabtree, E1, pp.90, 92.

5 There were about 20 dozen cardings in one stack. 6 stacks could accumulate in one hour if no slubbing was done. The engine therefore produced 24 cardings per minute. Working his piecers "very hard and sharp", about "twice as quick as usual", the slubber could get rid of 6 stacks in an hour and a half. This was at the rate of 16 cardings per minute. This illustrates the differential between the power-driven carding process and the manual process of slubbing. Ibid., evidence of William Hebden, C1. pp. 78-9.

6 A billy-set of children was kept in some mills to relieve the piecers who tired. Ibid. evidence of Joshua Drake C2, p.41.

7 Ibid. evidence of Benjamin Bradshaw, C2, pp.3344, evidence of Joshua Drake, C2, p.42. Later in the century women were increasingly used in these jobs. J H Clapham, The Woollen and Worsted Industries, (1907), p.178.

as non-earning 'learners'.¹

Children's wages for such tasks were almost too small to calculate on an hourly basis. They were either subcontracted or paid weekly by the millowner. In the 1833 sample of Leeds Woollen mills about half (13 out of 27) contained some form of subcontracting. The "usual custom" was for piecers to be hired by the slubbers themselves, and paid weekly like the carder-fillers although the slubbers themselves were paid by the piece.² Children were also hired as doffers and piecers by adult male jenny and mule spinners. There was less subcontracting in the finishing departments, although some skilled handle-setters paid their boys.³ Wherever the subcontracting of children's labour existed, the children were not only more alienated from the production process as workers, but were also more vulnerable to the cruelty of their employers. In departments such as cropping the children were the first to suffer at the hands of adults frustrated at their inability to keep up with the machines.⁴

The absolute subjection of children to machinery found its classic form however not in the woollen industry, but in the giant flax mills of Leeds and Holbeck. These mills dwarfed all the woollen mills except Gott's, and all but the largest worsted mills. Marshall employed over 1000 workers as early as 1803, and had a workforce of over 2000 in 1842.⁵ About half the Yorkshire flax industry, counting both mills and workforce, was situated in Leeds between 1835 and 1870. In the same period Leeds firms accounted for 60 to 70 per cent of all horsepower and in 1858 for 70 per cent of all

1 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of James Empson, C2, p.62, John Sunderland, C1, p.96.

2 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit., evidence of Jervase Walker, C2, p.61, William Hebden C1, p.78, Matthew Crabtree, C1, pp.90-1. Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of Daniel Kenworthy Qs.2096-2100.

3 There was some sub-contracting in pressing, setting and drawing in the finishing shops, though this generally only involved adult males working under a foreman.

4 On factory cruelty, see F. Engels The Condition of the Working Class in England (1969), pp. 198-9; E. J. Hobsbawm, 'History and the Dark Satanic Mills', in the author's Labouring Men (1964), pp. 105-19.

5 W. G. Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds (Cambridge, 1960), p.56; Marshall's Papers, Ms 200/15/42/1. List of Leeds Flax Spinners, Employees and Spindles, June 1842.

spindles used in Yorkshire mills.¹ The industry in Leeds was dominated by the five largest firms who owned 53 per cent of the spindles and employed 64 per cent of the flax workers in the borough.² Three of these firms were located south of the Aire.

The flax workforce, unlike woollens, was predominantly composed of women and children. In 1833 the three Holbeck firms had a combined workforce of over 1900, of whom 60 per cent were female and 60 per cent were children under eighteen. The figures for the whole Yorkshire industry are similar, and show an increasing proportion of children employed from the 1840's.³ Marshalls employed about two females to every male at their Water Lane mills in the 1830's, and about three to every male after 1847. They also freely tapped local reserves of child labour whenever it was necessary to rapidly increase output cheaply. The proportion of children at the Holbeck mills rose from 62 per cent in 1832 to 67 per cent in 1836, as productivity fell and wages rose.⁴ Similarly in the 1850's and 1860's Marshalls raised output by increasing their numbers of very young girls. High labour costs by employing cheap, unskilled female and child labour became their substitute for capital investment.⁵

The youngest children worked as doffers, piecers and hecklers, girls with women in the spinning room, boys being preferred for heckling. Doffers worked to the whistle of the overlooker whose cruelty appeared to increase with the volume and speed of the machinery.⁶ They were frequently strapped for leaving sides standing when the pace of yarn production overtook them, and for 'not looking sharp'.⁷ The use of unskilled overlookers working for low wages as mere policemen also increased the frequency of the beatings.⁸ Moreover factory discipline was also maintained by regulations, fines, and the threat

1 See Table 2.5: Females and Children in Leeds and West Riding Worsted and Flax mills 1833-71; Factory Returns 1835-71; Robert Baker, 'On the Industrial and Sanitary Economy of the Borough of Leeds', JSSL XXI (1858), 427-43.

2 W.G.Rimmer, 'The Flax Industry', Leeds Journal 25 (1954) 175-8

3 See Table 2.5

4 Calculated from Rimmer, 'Marshalls', op.cit. Table 9, p.316.

5 Ibid., pp.195, 262.

6 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit., evidence of William Hebden, C1, p.79. Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of James Carpenter, Q.5008.

7 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of Stephen Binns, C2, p.36, Elizabeth Bentley, C2, p.39, John Dawson, C2 p.43, Mark Best, C1, pp.74-5.

8 Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of Stephan Binns, Q.4888.

TABLE 2.5: Females and Children in Leeds and West Riding Worsted and Flax Mills 1833-7;

Flax	Mills	Total Employees	% Female	% Children < 18 yrs	% Males < 18 yrs
<u>Holbeck</u>					
1833 Sample	3	1922	59.1	60.3	21.5
1835 Returns	4	2853	61.0	59.6	21.7
<u>Leeds township</u>					
1833 Sample	5	1346	64.1	55.6	15.9
1835 Returns	21	3927	64.1	59.0	20.1
<u>Leeds Borough</u>					
1835	25	6780	62.8	59.2	20.8
1838	44 ¹	6430	66.9	57.1	20.3
1871	29	7650	73.5	?	9.0
<u>West Riding</u>					
1835	64	9378	61.6	57.9	22.1
1838	60	7573	67.1	55.8	?
1847	-	12842	63.3	45.3	16.9
1850	60	11515	68.6	?	14.6
1856	60	11853	68.5	?	13.6
1861	70	12562	71.7	?	10.4
1867	61	12507	70.3	?	10.0
1871	70	11479	67.3	?	10.9
<u>Worsted</u>					
<u>Leeds township</u>					
1833 Sample	5	572	53.3 ²	50.0	16.6
1835 Returns	7	787	72.4	58.2	16.1
<u>Leeds Borough</u>					
1835	10	1395	70.9	56.8	16.8
1838	13	2149	75.2	55.0	13.1
1871	4	777	72.8	?	5.7
<u>West Riding</u>					
1835	199	15124	66.1	64.4	23.5
1838	342	26234	73.7	60.7	?
1847	-	47299	71.1	44.4	15.5
1850	418	70905	66.5	?	15.4
1856	445	78994	66.1	?	14.0
1861	443	76483	63.3	?	15.7
1867	626	121117	65.7	?	16.5
1871	516			?	

Notes: 1. The returns of 1838 probably counted firms not mills.
 2. Two mills in the sample belonged to worsted dyers and did not employ any females. The proportion of females in the 3 spinning mills was 64.1%.

Sources as in Table 2.4

of instant dismissal.¹ In some mills spinners were not allowed to talk to each other on pain of a fine. At Marshall's and Hives and Atkinson's spinners and doffers were fined for sitting down, though seats were provided at other mills. At one mill visits to the privy were limited to three a day, and a doffer had to wait till a jobber was available to take his or her place before going.² The work was heavy and exhausting. Bobbins were hugged in a basket held on the back and tied with a belt across the forehead.³ At meal times the engines would be stopped for cleaning by doffers, or jobbers or both.⁴

After wet spinning was introduced to Leeds mills in 1826, steam and damp workclothes caused by spray from the spindles were major hazards until the water troughs were boxed in in the late 1820's. Doffers however still had to immerse their arms frequently into very hot water as part of their job.⁵ Conditions in the carding and heckling rooms were even worse. The dust from the flax, tow and line forced children to wear handkerchiefs over their mouths.⁶ Heckling machines, in general use by 1816, were believed to have improved the dust problem. Old hand-hecklers, who were still working in mills in 1830, were badly asthmatic. Yet several machine-hecklers also suffered breathing difficulties.⁷ Conjunctivitis was also caused by exposure to flying particles of flax, and some children wore protective glasses at work. Parents of carders and hecklers frequently gave their children camomile tea to make them vomit up the

- 1 Punctuality at the start of the working day and at meal times was the primary concern of Marshall. See Marshall Papers, Ms. 200/15/33, 'Eleven Hours Time: Notice to the Workpeople of Messrs Marshall & Co., March 1846.
- 2 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit., evidence of Mark Best, C1, p.75, John Dawson, C2, p.44, John Hannam, C1, P.85, Charles Burns, C1, p.77.
- 3 Ibid., evidence of John Dawson, C2, pp.40, 44, James Carpenter, C1, p.75, William Hebden, C1, p.80.
- 4 Ibid, evidence of Charles Binns, C1, p.77. Sadlers Commission, op.cit., evidence of Charles Binns, Qs 4357-8.
- 5 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit., evidence of Mark Best, C1, p.74, John Hannam C1, p.89, Sadler's Commission, op.cit., evidence of Mark Best Qs.4489-4514, John Hannam, Q.6935.
- 6 A B Reach, The Yorkshire Textile Districts in 1849 (Helmshore 1974), pp.27-8.
- 7 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of Mark Best, C1, p.75, John Blakey, C1, p100, William Price, C2, p.52, Ann Moss C1, p.98, John Baxter, C2, pp.49-50, Ann Wood, C2, p.50, John Hannam, C1, p.86. Sadler's Commission op.cit., evidence of John Hannam, Q.6842, Mark Best, Qs.4572-85. On the introduction of the machines see J G Marshall, 'Sketch of the History of Flax Spinning in England', BAAS Report for 1858 (1859) Notes and Abstracts, pp.184-8.

dust.¹ In addition to the harsh environment, the card-room frequently worked longer hours than in spinning, and violence against children was no less unusual.²

Both in flax and woollen mills it was clearly the children who suffered most under machine production and its effect on work conditions and relationships. But what of women? By 1841 the three main sources of employment for female textile workers in the suburbs were burling, stuff weaving and flax spinning. Each of these developed its own set of work relationships according to the stage of mechanisation and factory organisation which had been reached.

Burling was the main occupation for women in the out-townships. In Armley, Bramley and Wortley in 1841 between one-half and three-quarters of adult women woollen workers were burlers. Although some burling was done at home by married women,³ where they were brought together by a manufacturer in burling sheds, a high degree of group consciousness was sometimes achieved by the collective work. Lawson described burlers as the gossips of the community at Pudsey.⁴ The burling-house was a "great institution of itself", where girls and women would mix and exchange news and opinions on local and domestic affairs, prices, fashions, scandals. The work was wholly manual, and without noisy machinery to interrupt them or to dictate the speed of production, they could converse freely. With the increased use after 1815 of foreign wool in bad condition, particularly Australian and Cape wool from the 1840's, large numbers of burlers were needed.⁵ Proper burling ensured a clean cloth which would enhance its value. Thus, like slubbing, and to a lesser extent, cropping, burling survived in a technological time warp. Wages, however, were low, five to seven shillings a week, hardly changing between 1830 and 1870. With

1 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of Joshua Drake, C2, p.42. Examples of herbalism were also common in Lancashire Textile districts, see Marjorie Cruickshank, Children and Industry (Manchester, 1981), pp.62-72.

2 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit., evidence of John Hannam C1, p.86, William Cooper, C1, p.65. The most serious local case of maltreatment of children by an overlooker occurred in the heckling room at Walker's mill in Leeds. In March 1833 a 14 year old heckler was beaten and hung by an overlooker, and died from his injuries. The overlooker was convicted of manslaughter at York spring assizes the following year and sentenced to 12 months hard labour. LM, 5 April 1834.

3 Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby, Life and Tradition in West Yorkshire (1976), p.40.

4 Lawson, op.cit. pp.33-4.

5 Ibid., pp.32-3. Hartwell, op.cit. p.46.

the introduction of the moting machine in the 1850's and the decline of fashionable demand for fine broadcloths in the 1860's, burling gradually disappeared as a process of woollen manufacture.¹

One-quarter of all female wool-textile workers in Armley in 1841 were worsted weavers, and there were also some in Bramley and Wortley. Power-looms were well-established in the worsted industry by the 1830's and it is likely that most of these women worked in the worsted mills at Stanningley, Burley or Leeds.² Females outnumbered males by between two and three to one in Yorkshire worsted mills.³ Outside the mills some out-township women may have woven worsteds at home, but there is little evidence for this. All the worsted hand-looms recorded in Leeds in 1838 were in the intownship, where the Irish community at Bank wove for poverty wages.⁴ 75 stuff looms were also recorded at Pudsey, and these were probably in the homes of out-workers from the mills at Stanningley.

Most work for women in flax mills was in spinning, drawing, roving and twisting, where they were supervised by men earning over three times their wages. Wet spinning in the 1820's brought an increased workload for the women. Finer yarn could be spun in greater quantities, the number of spindles one woman had to mind was

- 1 Lawson, op.cit. pp.85-6. In his account of scribbling at Armley mills, Gott first lists moting costs in 1857. Baines mentions moting by machine in 1858, although there is very little information on these machines. Gott, Ms193/219. Baines, *Woollen Manufacture*, p.71.
- 2 Varley had 28 power-looms in his worsted mill at Stanningley by 1835, Stansfield at Burley had 479. 'Power-loom Returns' PP. (1836) XLV, 150-1. Jenkins, *West Riding Wool Textile Industry*, table 16, pp.126-7, has wrongly attributed 97 looms belonging to Haley of Bramley and Hargreaves of Wortley as worsted instead of woollen. His totals must be altered accordingly. See also Bischoff, op.cit. pp.271-4; John James, History of the Worsted Manufacture in England (1857), p.549.
- 3 See Table 2.5. Only 17 of the 225 weavers at Black Dyke mills near Bradford in 1844 were male. Eric Sigsworth, Black Dyke Mills (Liverpool, 1958), p.193.
- 4 Reports from Assistant Hand-loom Weavers Commissioners, pt.III, PP(1840) XXIII, H.S. Chapman, 'Report on the Hand-loom Weavers of the West Riding', 529-90 (hereafter, Chapman's Report); James, op.cit. p.627. The Irish also wove canvas and sacking. For a description of their community see Reach, op.cit. pp. 36-41. On the plight of Leeds stuff weavers see S.C. on Hand-loom Weavers Petitions PP (1835) XIII, evidence of Edward Baines, 250-3.

increased, and their speeds increased.¹

Adult women spinners were the best paid female workers in the flax mills. Young girls who began as doffers, piecers or carder fillers would hope to progress, via line-spreading, to take charge of their own spinning frames, if they remained in mill work beyond adolescence. Some spinners also acted as overlookers to their own piecers and doffers. The domestic virtues of working class housewives were mirrored in the attempts of spinners to keep the 'territory' around their machines as clean and neat as possible. The keenness of the women to maintain a respectable appearance in the workplace was actively encouraged by employers such as Marshall, hoping it would have a salutary effect on the younger girls in the mill.²

Efforts to make flax mills more comfortable places to work came only slowly. By 1849 for instance, Marshall was providing boxes under his spinning frames in which the women could keep a change of clothing. 15 years earlier there was no such provision.³ For those involved in the Yorkshire factory reform movement of the early 1830's the Leeds flax mills were characteristic of all that was repulsive in the factory system - long hours, harsh working conditions determined by machinery, and the cruel exploitation of women and children under the millowner's regime, destroying family life and the traditional social values preserved in local communities.⁴

Women's and children's work in factories was believed by some contemporaries to undermine parental control over children, the patriarchal structure of the family, and to encourage the neglect of housewifely skills and domestic duties. The separation of family members at mealtimes, poor diets, long hours and overtime wages were all related to the physical and moral welfare of the working class.⁵

1 Wet spinning resulted in just under a fourfold increase in the number of bundles of yarn spun from a ton of flax. J.G.Marshall op.cit. On the increased workload and resultant redundancies see Sadler's Commission, op.cit., evidence of Stephen Binns, Qs.4746-8, 4787-90. Children's Employment Commission, op.cit., evidence of Stephen Binns, Cs, pp.55-6, Margaret Layton C2, p.51 Mark Best C1, p.74, John Blakey, C1, p.101.

2 Reach, op.cit. p.29.

3 Suppl. Rpt. op.cit. C1, No.51. Marshall's efforts to socialise his workforce in the 1820's to 1840's, his mill school, library, sick club, are discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

4 The accommodation of these values and paternalistic social relationships under the new order imposed by capitalist manufacturers is the culminating dream in Charlotte Bronte's Shirley, (Hammondsworth, 1974), p.598.

5 J.F.C. Harrison, Early Victorian Britain 1832-51 (1979), pp. 99-106.

The independence from the parental household which millwork gave teenage girls, and the complaints of immoral behaviour in the mills caused particular concern.¹

As regards the effect of married women's work on the family, these complaints appear exaggerated. In the out-townships between 1841 and 1871 the proportion of working wives never exceeded one quarter, and was generally much lower. Although the number of adult women in factories increased from the 1830's, these were usually single women and most girls continued to leave millwork after marriage.² The number of children in factories was however large. Tables 2.4 and 2.5 indicate that out-township mills employed a relatively high proportion of children, and an analysis of children's employment at the 1841 census confirms their importance in the local labour force.³ Children made up about one-third of the occupied population and up to 42 per cent of textile workers. One-half to three quarters of children between ten and nineteen were in paid employment.

Despite the number of working children, there is plenty evidence of parental control in the factory commissions of 1832/33. Both fathers and mothers would send their children to work. They applied for mill vacancies to overlookers, whose acquaintance was assiduously sought for this purpose. They got their children up in the night or early morning and ensured their punctuality and cleanliness. If a child was beaten unfairly or too harshly, an angry parent would descend upon the overlooker or millowner. Some fathers, often working in the same mill, would beat their children as freely as the overlooker. Others, perhaps the majority, had a bad conscience about subjecting their children to the long hours, the tiring and dangerous work, and the lack of opportunity for rest and schooling.⁴

1 Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Barton (Harmondsworth, 1970), p.43.

2 Pinchbeck, *op.cit.* pp.198-200

3 Table 2.6: Children's Employment in the Out-townships in 1841.

4 Sadler's Commission, *op.cit.*, evidence of David Bywater, Qs. 700-1, Elizabeth Bentley Q.5211, William Hebden, Qs.5940-1. Children's Employment Commission, *op.cit.*, evidence of Elizabeth Bentley, C2, pp.39-41, John Dawson, C2, p.43, Benjamin Bradshaw, C2, pp.33,35, Joshua Drake, C2, pp.41-2. Walvin understates the extent of communal and parental pressure on overlookers not to maltreat mill children. James Walvin, A Child's World (Harmondsworth, 1982), p.52.

TABLE 2.6: Children's Employment in the Out-townships in 1841
Numbers in Census Samples

Aged	7 - 9	10-11	12-14	15-19	Totals	
<u>Wortley</u>						
dependent	54	28	22	27	131	
occupied	<u>1</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>97</u>	
	55	45	53	75	228	
no. in textiles	1	15	24	33	73	
<u>Beeston</u>						
dependent	6	6	3	3	18	
occupied	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>40</u>	
	7	12	13	26	58	
no. in textiles	1	3	7	12	23	
<u>Armley</u>						
dependent	30	19	12	9	70	
occupied	<u>1</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>88</u>	
	31	33	27	67	158	
no. in textiles	1	14	14	51	80	
<u>Bramley*</u>						
dependent	53	35	44	45	177	
occupied	<u>-</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>59</u>	
	53	42	54	87	236	
No. in textiles	-	7	9	23	39	
<u>Children 10-19 yrs</u>						
	occupied children	total children	occupied as % of total children	total children as % of popn.	occupied children as % of working popn.	textile children as % of textile workers
Wortley	96	173	55.5	24.6	32.2	35.6
Armley	87	127	68.5	22.2	31.6	37.4
Beeston	39	51	76.5	19.4	37.5	42.3
Bramley*	59	183	32.2	21.1	19.7	21.3

* Careless or lazy enumerating clearly occurred at Bramley and seriously understates the number of children at work.

Sources: 10% samples of Census Enumerators' Books, 1841.

The physical condition of children in mills was the subject of much medical controversy.¹ Whatever the accuracy of the reports of deformed and stunted children which shocked contemporaries, there is no doubt that the shafts, wheels, gears and spiked drums of mill machinery were a constant peril for young children. Boxing off dangerous machinery was begun by most millowners in the early 1830's as a direct result of the agitation for factory reform.² These measures probably resulted in a decline in the frequency of mill accidents. Samuel Smith, who had earlier testified to the poor health and injuries of millworkers, remarked in 1837 on their improved appearance since the factory acts.³ The factory inspector for Leeds in 1838 noticed better age certification of mill children, annual white-washing of factories, ventilation, protection from machinery, cleanliness, and waste disposal.⁴ In 1841 evidence was given by a number of flax spinners, cloth makers and machine manufacturers from Leeds, Holbeck and Hunslet of the measures they had taken to fence off machinery.⁵

Despite this, it is clear from elsewhere in the inspectors' reports that there continued to be much short-cutting of factory safety and avoidance of legislation well into the 1850's. Taking Leeds

- 1 'Knock-knees' was regarded as the most common disfigurement of factory children, due to long hours standing. Children's Employment Commission, op.cit., evidence of Samuel Smith, C2. p.45. Much of the medical evidence against factory work is collected in Charles Wing, Evils of the Factory System (1837), which also abridged Sadler's evidence.
- 2 On the Tory-Radical alliance in Leeds and the political context of the factory reform movement, see J.T. Ward, The Factory Movement 1830-55 (1962), and Derek Fraser, 'The Fruits of Reform: Leeds Politics in the 1830's', Northern History 8 (1972), 89-111. As a leading Leeds liberal, Marshall particularly came under heavy criticism from the Tories for conditions in his mills. See his exchange of letters with Samuel Smith in LM, 21 March 1832.
- 3 His Majesty's Inspectors of Factories Reports (hereafter HMI Reports) pp (1837) XXXI, Report of Leonard Horner (18.1.1837) p.93. A brief history of the acts to 1844 is given by Engels, op.cit. pp.197-204, and to 1864 by Karl Marx in Capital I (Harmondsworth 1976), pp.389-411.
- 4 HMI Reports, pp. (1839) XIX, Report of R.J.Saunders for quarter ending 30.9.1838, p.442.
- 5 Special Reports of the Inspectors of Factories on the practicality of legislative interference, to diminish the frequency of accidents to the children... employed in factories, arising from machinery PP(1841) X, Reports of R J Saunders, Robert Baker, 240-66.

prosecutions alone, the abuses of the factory acts were numerous. Between 1835 and 1838, 68 charges were brought against 53 offenders, one-third of whom were from the out-townships.¹ Overworking children was the chief offence. Fines were trivial, rising from a guinea per offender in the 1830's to 2 guineas by the 1850's and 1860's. Inspectors in Leeds expressed their frustration at the frequent mitigation of penalties on offending millowners by magistrates, and at the continuing number of accidents from machinery.² Mill accidents remained a problem in the late 1850's with the new fashion for expansive crinoline dresses adding to the old danger of handkerchiefs being caught up in gears and cogs. Illegal overworking and the difficulty of age verification also continued to plague the inspectors.³

Factory inspectors, as well as parents therefore, were relatively powerless to control working conditions in the mills. Some parents felt that the physical and moral welfare of their children had been taken out of their hands by the factory system.⁴ Even the conditions under which their children rested and ate was beyond parental control. In the carding and heckling rooms of woollen and flax mills much food was lost, or spoilt from dust and passed on to the overlookers' pigs. Food might be eaten sitting or standing, or snatched while working in ventilated, dusty or steamy rooms, and the lack of a communal family meal on weekdays contributed to the loosening of familiar bonds.⁵

1 Calculated from HMI Reports, 1834-8.

2 HMI Reports, PP (1837) XXXI, 'Report of Leonard Horner for half year ending 31.12.1836', p.100; PP(1843) XXVII, 'Report of R.J. Saunders for half year ending 30.6.1843', p.356. Test cases were occasionally brought to court by inspectors to establish a particular principle in a district. Thus Baker attempted to establish the law regarding relays in Bramley in 1848, in the face of the magistrates' opinion that the law was too harsh on manufacturers. LM, 10 June 1848.

3 HMI Reports, PP (1860) XXXIV, 'Report of Alexander Redgrave for half year ending 31.10.1859', p.431; PP (1854) XIX, 'Report of Alexander Redgrave for half year ending 31.10.1853', p.298; PP (1851) XXIII, 'Report of R.J. Saunders for half year ending 31.10.1850', p.263.

4 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of Benjamin Bradshaw, C2, p.33.

5 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of David Bywater, C2, p.31, Elizabeth Bentley, C2, p.39, Margaret Layton, C2, p.52, William Cooper C1, p.67, John Hannam, C1, pp.88-9. Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of Stephen Binns, Q.4913.

The moral welfare of mill children was also under question. The image of factories as "nurseries of vice", offended the methodist sensibilities of local domestic workers as well as alarming middle-class critics of the factory system.¹ Factory girls were thought "the lowest class of the working population," and mill labourers were thought to be either from the workhouses of the south, or from families of unskilled labourers, "an unfortunate and degraded class, inferior in morals and domestic culture."² Outside the mills, the unemployment of young girls caused by the oversupply of labour was suspected of tempting many into prostitution. Inside the mills, children were trained in indecent behaviour, which led to intercourse, bastardy and eventually prostitution.³

In fact this was a distorted picture as far as Leeds was concerned. There were few bastards in Leeds mills.⁴ Certainly pamphlets on birth control were passed around, phallic symbols were chalked on walls, and in the flax carding rooms, 'obscene images' were made out of tow.⁵ However these may be regarded as fairly commonplace examples of adolescent behaviour. Actual prostitution by mill girls was probably rare in the out-townships. Indeed in 1839 the 'decorous deportment and civility' of country mill girls from 'within three or four miles of Leeds' was contrasted with the immorality of those from the town.⁶

More serious than prostitution or illegitimacy was the general independent behaviour which characterised mill children. Even the youngest children were allowed to keep any overtime pennies they had earned. Once they were earning upwards of five shillings a week, about 14, they usually kept some or all of their wages for themselves. Food and lodgings were still supplied by the parents, but money for

1 Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of Benjamin Bradshaw, Q.3508. Engels, op.cit. pp.144-51, 171-7.

2 NS, 12 Oct. 1844. This is a review of an article in 'The New Edinburgh Review', October 1844, by a Holbeck worker, entitled 'Autobiography of a living writer'.

3 Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of John Hannam, Qs.6865-7, William Osburn, Q.9905.

4 Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of Richard Morley, C1, p.127, Matthew Crabtree, C1, p.92. The official number of illegitimate children registered at Leeds bastardy office 1821-30 was 570 in a township population growing from 48603 to 71602. Ibid. evidence of Robert Baker, C1, table 8, p.122.

5 Ibid. evidence of John Hannam, C1, p.87, Samuel Smith, C2, p.47, John Dawson, C2, p.44, Stephen Binns, C2, p.38. Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of Benjamin Bradshaw, Qs.3468-70.

6 'Report upon the Condition of the Town of Leeds and its Inhabitants', Statistical Committee of the Town Council, JSSL II (1839-40), 397-424.

clothes and leisure was found by the children themselves.¹ Final independence from the parental household brought children an overall increase in spending power, if they were able to maintain a mill job. Otherwise, especially for young men, independence could bring an initial period of hardship as casual labourers.²

Another feature of children's independence was their mobility between jobs. To some extent this reflected the general mobility of millworkers, the crises of overproduction in the Leeds textile industries, and the creation of a semi-permanent pool of unemployed labour. The situation regarding child employment was however ambiguous. There is evidence from 1832-3 that parents and their children were clamouring for positions in the mills, as flax doffers, wool primers and billy piecers. At one woollen mill it was claimed there were up to 50 applications a day for jobs as piecers.³ There is also evidence, particularly in the less popular flax mills, that as they began to experiment with a system of relays they were restricted by a lack of children, although the largest mills attracted workers from a wide area around Leeds.⁴ A similar ambiguity is found in the power loom returns of 9 Leeds woollen and worsted firms in 1836, where only half complained of difficulty in obtaining hands.⁵

The 1832-33 evidence illustrates that many mill children in their mid-teens had partly broken free of parental control regarding the choice of workplace, wages, and conditions of employment. Certainly family employment was also a feature of mill life in 1833. Mobility sometimes meant the movement of groups of relatives from one mill to the next.⁶ Generally, however, critics stressed the damage done by children's factory work to the cohesion of the working

1 Ibid. evidence of John Yewdale, C2, p.59, Matthew Johnson, C2, p.57, John Rawlings, C2, pp.56-7.

2 Ibid. evidence of Margaret Layton, C2, p.51, William Hebden, C1, pp.80-1, Charles Binns, C1, p.78, William Cooper, C1, p.66.

3 Ibid. evidence of John Sunderland, C1, p.96, John Askwith, C1 p.116, John Blakey, C1, p.101.

4 Ibid. evidence of John Elliott, C2, p.47, Mark Best, C1, p.75. At least 14 Leeds mills were operating relays by August 1836, including the largest woollen mills in Armley. Marshall had experimented with 6 hour shifts for children in the mid-1820's until the slump of 1827. The scheme was reintroduced in 1832 with 8 hour shifts. Generally relays increased the demand for child labour until the total number of mill children began to be cut back in the late 1830's. Factory Returns PP (1837)L, 'Mill occupiers who employed children by relays', 194. Rimmer, op.cit. p.169. HMI Reports, PP (1837-8) XXVIII, Report of Leonard Horner, 83-4; PP (1843) XXVII, Report of R.J.Saunders 329-30, 373; PP (1845) XXV, Report of R.J.Saunders, 466.

5 Power loom returns, op.cit.

6 Sadler's Commission, op.cit. evidence of David Bywater, Q.633.

class home , and employers complained of the inconvenience of having 'wild' children freely wandering from mill to mill. In 1839 some flax and woollen mills in Leeds began issuing 'testimonials of character' to their employees who were about to leave. These were certificates of good conduct, to be recognised by other employers, and were combined with a fortnight's notice of leaving. The flax spinner John Wilkinson announced himself pleased with the scheme.

"We find the workpeople generally much more manageable and much more willing to do their duty than they were before. Formerly we were very much annoyed by a disposition of roaming; some boys and girls would scarcely stop a fortnight without a change, without any real reason but the desire of going from one mill to another." 1

The impact of mills and machinery in the out-townships was clearly profound, changing the work environment and relations of production for a range of skilled male occupations, and providing the raison d'etre for the collective work of large numbers of women and children in both hand powered and machine related processes. Machinery increasingly dictated the pace and quality of work, hours and incomes and conditions in the workplace. New scales of production and changes in industrial organisation undermined the family unit in domestic manufacturing and increased the mobility of labour, particularly of children. The domestic system survived however, and to put the impact of factory production in its community context requires an examination of the fate of the hand loom weaver and the independent clothier.

In Armley, Wortley and Bramley in 1841 weaving was still the single most important occupation in the woollen industry. In Wortley one third of all woollen workers and almost half the household heads so employed were weavers. In Armley these proportions were one-half and three-quarters respectively. In Bramley, though only 10 per cent of all woollen workers described themselves as weavers, 57 per cent used the old titles of clothmaker or clothier, which by this time for many usually meant weaving.

It seems the number of independent master clothiers in the out-townships declined from 1800 to the 1840's, and that this decline coincided with a general expansion in the numbers employed both in weaving and in the textile industries as a whole.² In Armley the decline was slow until the mid-1830's when it began to accelerate. In Bramley and Wortley there was a rapid halving of numbers in the 1810's, with some recovery in the late 1820's and early 1830's, before further decline in the 1840's.

1 S C on Mills and Factories, PP. (1840)X, evidence of John Wilkinson.

2 Table 2.7: Clothiers and hand-loomers in the out-townships 1800/53.

TABLE 2.7: Clothiers and Hand-looms in the Out-townships
1800-53

	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Beeston</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Wortley</u>
<u>Ellis</u> ¹ 1800 masters	183			
1803 clothiers	526			
1806 masters	120			
<u>Tottie</u> ² 1812 masters	120		300	150
(after orders in Council)	(98)		(220)	(100)
working manufacturers	520		1200	600
(after orders in Council)	(390)		(900)	(400)
<u>Directories:</u> ³				
Cloth hall manufacturers				
1817B	111	8	111	46
1822B	111	4	107	56
1834 B+N	54	5	101	73
1826P	84	7	127	53
1830 P&W	82	6	95	58
1837 W	67	6	90	56
1843 W	56	4	79	53
1847 W	44	6	69	42
1853 W	45	5	64	33

Hand looms

	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Beeston</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Wortley</u>	<u>Holbeck</u>	<u>Hunslet</u>
Tottie 1812	186	-	600	470	167	250
(after orders in C)	(100)		(450)	(300)	(100)	(30)
Chapman ⁴ 1838	674	69	870	764	285	115

Notes:

- 1 Ellis - see S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, PP(1806)III, evidence of James Ellis.
- 2 Tottie was the counsel for the coloured cloth hall trustees. These figures are based on their tabulations contained in a letter from Tottie to Fitzwilliam 13.4.1812., used by Gregory op.cit., p.147.
- 3 The two series are drawn up according to the compilers, Baines (B) or White (W); for the sake of consistency. Full references in the bibliography.
- 4 Chapman's Report, op.cit.

While the numbers of masters fell, the numbers of textile workers increased. In 1812 master clothiers accounted for 20 to 40 per cent of total household heads in the above three townships. By 1841 although the number of clothiers had been halved, textile workers headed over half the households. Much of this expansion was in weaving and most of the weaving was done by hand-loom. The number of hand-loom looms increased in Bramley, Holbeck and Wortley between 1812 and 1838, and more than tripled in Armley. Only in Hunslet did the numbers fall. Overall there were between two and five out-township looms to every Leeds cloth loom in 1838, and eight to ten inhabitants per hand loom in Bramley, Armley and Wortley, compared with 28 in Beeston, 46 in Holbeck, 66 in Leeds and 137 in Hunslet.¹

The period from the late 1820's to the 1840's witnessed the collapse of some small clothiers into the wages status of journeymen weavers, and the reduction in status of journeymen weavers to that of hired, sweated outworkers. There were over 4200 looms in Leeds borough in 1838. In February 1831 at least 1742 hand looms were employed by 13 of the largest woollen millowners. By the late 1830's the proportion of Leeds hand-loom looms directly employed by the factories was probably nearly half.²

The reasons for the collapse of woollen weaving as an independent and respectable trade are well known. Above all they were the dramatic fall in wages and the standard of living. In Armley between 1817 and 1837 money wages were more than halved.³ Improvements in jenny spinning created a finer, stronger yarn, which allowed heavier, better quality cloths to be woven. Mules later accelerated this process, and as steam power was applied many spinners were thrown out of work, who then competed with those already on hand looms.⁴ Master status became irrelevant as clothiers had to compete on their own looms with journeymen weavers who were having to weave more and more yards of weft into each string of cloth for the same amount of money. The final remnants of apprenticeship regulations were abandoned, and, particularly in cotton and worsted weaving,

1 Chapman's Report, p.529. Gregory, op.cit. p.249.

2 LM, 10 May 1834. Chapman however thought the majority of weavers still worked at home. Chapman's Report, p.532. A witness in 1834 said that most weavers in the neighbourhood, but not in the town of Leeds, wove at home. S.C. on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions, PP (1834) X, evidence of David Brook, Q.498.

3 Chapman's Report, p.554.

4 Ibid. pp.579, 586. Thomas Barlow, A Few Remarks addressed to the Manufacturers, Shopkeepers and Operatives of Yorkshire on the subject of Trade Unions (Leeds 1832), p.3.

children were also taught to weave to supplement a family's income.¹ The oversupply of labour, falling profits and fierce competition among manufacturers for foreign markets ensured that what had become children's work was rewarded by children's wages for all.²

In 1837 the average net earnings of over 60 per cent of hand-loom weavers in Holbeck were seven shillings per week. They were nine shillings in Armley and ten shillings and sixpence in Bramley. Barely six months were worked that year. In 1835 stuff weavers at four Leeds firms worked between six and ten months. Seasonal fluctuations and the general depression of demand in the 1830's kept weavers from earning even the pittance they were paid for cloth. The lack of work was one of their main grievances and the blame was placed squarely on the manufacturers' overproduction and the capitalist system itself.³

There was of course much debate as to whether real wages and the standard of living had fallen. Chapman believed that because of the fall in prices of foodstuffs since the war, real wages were higher.⁴ Baines professed amazement that weavers earning 14 shillings a week with wheat at 7 shillings a bushel could claim to be scarcely able to exist.⁵ The price of flour and bread had undoubtedly fallen. Indeed one argument for the repeal of the corn laws was that the price of wheat could hardly fall below its existing level.⁶ However, excepting bread, a Leeds cloth dresser in 1834 had noticed "no material difference" in the cost of what he consumed.⁷ A report in 1835 confirmed that weavers were both materially and morally worse off than in 1820. Wages were lower, clothing and furniture were poorer, there was an increase in dram-drinking and a decline in school and church attendance.⁸ The superintendent of Zion school, New Wortley observed that "to preach contentment to potato-fed people is to preach perpetual degradation. No people can be morally

1 Bischoff, op.cit. p.419. Chapman's Report, pp.581-2.
2 Bischoff, op.cit. pp.194, 219. Chapman's Report, pp.584, 586. S.C. on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions, PP.(1834) X, evidence of David Brook Q.506.
3 Chapman's Report, p.535. S.C. on Hand Loom Weavers' Petitions PP (1834) X, evidence of David Brook, Q.800. Leeds stuff weavers' money wages were reduced by 20 per cent between 1828 and 1835. In the latter year 105 out of 762 in Leeds were unemployed and their families starving, ibid., evidence of Edward Baines, 250-3. A Table of seasonal wages for several Leeds trades in 1838 is given in E.J.Hobsbawm, "The British Standard of Living 1790-1850", in Hobsbawm, Labouring Men, op.cit. pp.64-104.
4 Chapman's Report, p.556.
5 LM, 27 Feb. 1830.
6 One of the arguments which converted Peel to the side of repeal according to John Morley, The Life of Richard Cobden(1906)p.216.
7 S.C. on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions PP(1834)X, evidence of David Brook Qs.444-5.
8 Ibid., PP(1835) XIII, Report.

raised until they cease to be contented with a low condition...."¹
 The Leeds hand-loom weavers themselves declared in a petition of
 1843 that "the domestic manufacturer is gradually sinking to a level
 with the distressed operative."²

The loss of status of the independent weaver, the slide into
 poverty was a family experience. The poverty cycle was perfectly
 observed among out-township weaving families by Chapman in 1838.³
 A Bramley millowner, in a letter to the local weavers' committee in
 1831, accepted that after paying three shillings a week in rent and
 coals out of an average wage of fourteen shillings, a weaver with
 four children could scarcely feed or clothe his family.⁴ David
 Brook found that 23 shillings a week was not enough to keep his wife
 and three children in comfort. "I spend little, and I wish to live
 as well as I can, and ^{not} live like a beggar."⁵ The petition of 1843
 noted that with parents increasingly dependent on their children's
 earnings, "the natural order of the home" was inverted. Weavers,
 who had to pawn their clothes, could not afford to send their children
 to chapel and were "deprived of the consolations of religion."⁶
 The degradation of the weaver was completed outside the home with
 indebtedness and eventual application for poor relief. A Bramley
 weaver in 1838 who owed money to his employer and local shopkeepers
 claimed there were many like him in Bramley, "or I might be ashamed
 to speak of it."⁷ In 1842 Leeds magistrates ordered another Bramley
 weaver, found guilty of fraudulently claiming relief, "to defray the
 expense of printing and posting a placard on the walls of the town
 asking pardon for the shameful fraud of which he been guilty."⁸

Although Leeds was a classic early factory town, the out-township
 woollen industry was only partially affected by the factory system
 before 1840. Wages in the Leeds area remained relatively higher

1 Chapman's Report, p.545. Cobden echoed these words 3 years
 later in the House of Commons. Morley, op.cit. p.223.

2 NS, 25 Feb. 1843.

3 Chapman's Report, pp.540-1.

4 LM, 22 Jan. 1831.

5 S.C. on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions, PP(1834) X, evidence of
 David Brook Qs.834, 639.

6 NS, 25 Feb. 1843.

7 Chapman's Report, pp.538-9.

8 LM, 12 Mar. 1842.

than in the countryside,¹ and woollen weavers survived the lean years better than those in worsteds, cotton, silk or linen.² Power-looms scarcely gained a foothold in the Leeds woollen industry before 1850. Five Leeds woollen mills and four worsted mills returned 213 and 846 power looms respectively in 1836.³ Stuff weavers in Leeds were already suffering technological unemployment and petitioning for a tax on power-looms in 1830,⁴ though worsted weaving by hand did not seriously decline till the 1840's.⁵

The factory-related problems of truck and tied rents also had a very restricted impact on the out-townships. John Walker operated a truck system from his mill at Beeston in 1838 by paying about 20 to 30 hand weavers in cloth.⁶ Six years earlier, John Varley of Stanningley ran a truck shop, partly in an attempt to divide the Bramley weavers' union. A local tailor claimed that Varley "so rules the town and the men are so under him, that the men dare hardly take their hats up without permission."⁷ Truck, however, was relatively rare at Leeds. It flourished in industrial settlements like Stanningley and Millshaw, Beeston, where one large millowner was the major patron, and where there was limited alternative employment. The same was true of tied rents. Of 16 Leeds firms which replied to the central commissioners in 1832, only 7 had any tied cottages, and only two employers held a substantial number of tied rents.⁸

- 1 Out-township wages however were closer to those in the large villages around Leeds, than to Leeds itself. The average net wages calculated from a list given by Chapman for eight of these villages was 10s 1d. Chapman's Report, p.550. In town and country however, averages hid great differences in weavers' earnings which could vary even from house to house. Reach op.cit. p.30.
- 2 J H Clapham, 'The Decline of the Hand-loom in England and Germany,' The Journal of the Bradford Textile Society (June, 1905), 40-7.
- 3 3 of these mills were in the out-townships. Power-loom returns op.cit. 150-1. At a ratio of one power-to three hand-looms, it was calculated in 1830 that 123000 hand looms had been displaced, while power-looms in England and Scotland increased from 14000 to 55000. S.C. on Manufacturers' Employment, PP (1830)X, Report, 221-33.
- 4 S.C. on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions, PP (1835) X111, evidence of Edward Baines, 250-3.
- 5 Foster at Queensferry employed 700 hand weavers in 1836, but only 59 by 1849. Sigsworth, Black Dyke Mills, op.cit. p.193
- 6 Chapman's Report, p.552
- 7 LM, 22 Jan. 1831. Sadler's Commission, op.cit., evidence of Samuel Coulson, Qs.5080-4, 5111.
- 8 These were Holdforth, cotton and silk spinner, and Stansfield, worsted spinner. Stansfield owned "about 70 cottages", with a workforce of about 500. His Burley Mill was in a similar isolated settlement as Varley at Stanningley and Walker at Beeston-Millshaw. Suppl.Rpt., op.cit. C1, no.39.

Half the mills listed in the Bramley rates assessment of 1823 had some cottages attached, but none more than eight. The valuation shows some millowners to have been local landlords. Varley's 31 cottages at Stanningley were very likely rented to his employees. However, none of the Bramley manufacturers were substantial landlords, and several were tenants, not only in their mills, but also in their homes.¹

The limited introduction of machinery in the woollen manufacturing processes, and the restricted development of capitalist relations of production along factory lines was both the cause and consequence of the survival of the independent master clothier in the out-townships. It was no coincidence that the hand-loom weavers' commissioner of 1838 retraced the steps of the select committee of 1806, for the out-townships to the west and south of Leeds were still clearly economic and cultural strongholds of the domestic clothier. There were several reasons why the master clothiers were in a better position to survive the competition of the factories than the weavers. Firstly, where the problem was to weave more yarn into the same piece, their skill as masters kept down the amount of weaving time and kept up the level of earnings. Skill remained important in fine broadcloth manufacture in the 1830's and 1840's. Even apprenticeship had not entirely vanished, although there were few traditional 'living-in' indentures by then.² Apprenticeship was found in 1838 in Bramley, Armley, Guiseley, Yeadon, Horsforth and Farsley, and it was rightly assumed it would continue as long as the double inducement of profit to master and parent existed.³

Secondly, where a clothier was hard-pressed by the "slaughter-house" price-cutting, which Oastler condemned so vigorously, he could pass the reductions on to his weavers in their piece-wages.⁴ This itself seriously threatened the domestic system with its close bond between the families of journeyman and master. The safety valve was the clothiers' own regulated market place, the cloth halls. By

1 John Haley, owner of four Bramley mills, occupied a farmhouse and 44 acres belonging to Lord Cardigan, the Lord of the Manor, although he also let out 5 cottages himself. Bramley Valuation 1823, op.cit. Of the 40 largest landowners renting property to 612 tenants, (about 62 per cent of the families counted in 1821), at least 12 were cloth manufacturers.

2 The apprentice to Benjamin Lee, a Bramley clothier, was under this sort of indenture in 1838. Chapman's Report, p.542.

3 Ibid. p.543.

4 S.C. on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions, pp.(1834) X, evidence of Richard Oastler, Q.3788. Barlow, op.cit. p.5.

a contemporary estimate, the numbers using the Leeds cloth halls fell from 3000 in 1800 to 1500 by 1830.¹ However, as Thomas Barlow remarked, the number using the halls was still large, "notwithstanding those whom the stream of competition has swept away."

Recognising some antagonism between clothiers and millowners, Barlow's answer to the "slaughterhouse" was trade unionism to prevent wage cuts.² Oastler still felt the domestic system to be sufficiently intact for him to appeal to the small masters on behalf of the men.

"Masters, don't you see who it is that is your Enemy? It's not the 'Union' - it's that bloody monster CAPITAL; he rides a black horse and carries a bloody knife - he tramples on your profits in every market - in every mill - in every warehouse, in every shop - he it is who bleeds you to the death! He is that great disgusting Harpie, the keeper of a 'Commercial Slaughter-House...'" 3

Oastler acknowledged the continuing importance of domestic clothiers as employers in the townships and villages between Leeds and Huddersfield. When stocks in the cloth halls were low, the country weavers worked.⁴ A third feature of their manufacture which aided the survival of the clothier, was their relationship to the land. Where the problem of unemployment was dependancy on cloth making, their small plots of land would keep them above subsistence level and maintain a certain amount of independence. The farmer-weaver tradition continued. Caird's description of West Riding clothiers in 1851 differed little from that of Defoe's.⁵ At harvest-time in Bramley and Holbeck clothiers would call off their weavers to make hay on their land in return for some bread, cheese and beer.⁶

Another important means of survival were joint-stock or 'company' mills. Generally such mills were confined to preparatory and finishing processes. They reflected the persistence of the domestic clothier in the woollen industry. Partners usually numbered between 10 and 50.⁷ In a company of 40 shareholders, each would initially

1 Parson's Directory (1834), quoted in Hartwell, op.cit. p.329.

2 Barlow, op.cit. pp.5-6. Most large manufacturers such as Gott, however, had agents who purchased cloth in the bulk state in the halls in order to dye, finish and resell it themselves. This applied particularly to low or middle quality cloths. Thus local, national and international markets functioned on two levels, side by side. Children's Employment Commission, op.cit. evidence of John Hopps, 61, p.124.

3 Richard Oastler, A serious address to the millowners, manufacturers and cloth dressers of Leeds (Huddersfield, 1834).

4 LM, 18 Dec. 1830.

5 James Caird, English Agriculture in 1850-51 (1851), p.287. See the Agric. statistics for Beeston, 1854 in its Town Book.

6 Chapman's Report, p.536.

7 S.C. on Joint-Stock Companies, PP (1844) VII, appendix 5, 'Statements as to Joint-Stock woollen mills in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 348-52.

subscribe 10 shillings to purchase the land and mill buildings. The smaller the numbers, the larger the subscriptions. Clothiers who were not shareholders would also use the mills, paying a small fee per pound weight of wool to be slubbed.¹ The mill companies were fully liable and vulnerable to fraud. Often partners were illiterate and relied greatly on the honesty of their book-keepers. Because of this, partners were usually concerned to keep shares among themselves or among other clothiers in the district familiar to them. The first joint stock mill near Leeds was established at Stanningley in 1813. The best known local mill was Allan Bridge mill at Pudsey Town end on the parish boundary. It was established in 1830 as a scribbling and fulling mill by a partnership of over 40 clothiers, with a 20 horsepower engine and 43 employees.² In the Bramley revising court during the 1832 reform elections it became a liberal cause célèbre when all the partners gained the vote in the face of Tory claims that the mill was not worth £400 and therefore its partners did not qualify for the £10 franchise. Two years later they were toasted as "the 40 heroes of Allan Bridge mill" at an election dinner for Baines in Bramley.³

Company mills were seen by middle-class observers as "a singular instance of energy amongst the smaller capitalists of the manufacturing districts."⁴ They undoubtedly helped some small clothiers survive by furthering their transformation into capitalist manufacturers. However it would also seem reasonable to assert that these modest joint-stock ventures were formed as much out of the collective tradition of local clothier communities as out of the legal and economic structures of the capitalist state. Company mills were another means by which the cultural values of the domestic clothier survived, while at the same time representing an embourgeoisment of those values.

The small master clothiers, though declining in numbers, continued to dominate the out-townships in the 1830's. Despite the factory system and the severity of capitalist competition, clothiers continued to maintain the traditional collective culture of their communities. Workshop customs, though deteriorating under the

1 Ibid.; Hartwell, op.cit. p.349.

2 Suppl. Rpt., op.cit. Cl, no.59.

3 LM, 10 Nov. 17 Nov. 1832, 8 Mar. 1834.

4 S.C. on Joint Stock Companies, op.cit. letter from Robert Baker, 349.

pressure of savage wage cuts, survived, and with them, the close relationship of the smallest clothiers and their weavers. Of 14 clothiers in Wortley who returned the number of their employees in the 1851 census, 8 employed between 10 and 29 workers each. There were at least 5 cloth makers in 1851 and 8 in 1861 who employed less than 7 men, and trebling the 1851 figures and doubling 1861 might give a better impression of the actual numbers involved. The family unit of production remained important despite the number of women and children drawn into mills. Of Wortley household heads employed in woollen cloth making in 1841 who had working children living at home, 85 per cent had at least one child, and 70 per cent had all their working children employed in woollens. Many, though not all, would have been domestic workers. These proportions fell only to 78 per cent and 59 per cent by 1851. By 1861, however, just 35 per cent of such household heads had all their occupied children working in the woollen industry.

Domestic production of cloth undoubtedly declined well before 1841. However, impressed by the advance of mills and machinery, some have underestimated the strength of the domestic industry.¹ Even in Leeds, a centre of factory growth, the spatial distribution of the woollen industry acquired intimate local variations which made the borough a stronghold of 'mixed' production. In relatively nuclear, factory bound industrial settlements such as Beeston-Millshaw, Stanningley or Burley, the clothier vanished, the out-worker was proletarianised, and the millowner became increasingly aloof from his community. In the urban centres of Leeds, Holbeck and Hunslet, the giant mills stood amongst narrow streets of back-to-back and slum courts, where skilled, well-paid factory hands lived alongside sweated garret out-workers in rag-picking, canvas weaving and other offshoots of the staple textile industries.² In the spacious, semi-rural suburbs of Bramley, Armley and Wortley, small clothiers still had much in common with the weavers and spinners they employed. Their modes of living differed only by degree. The West Riding weavers' cottages of 1842 were not more modest than the weaving houses occupied by Bramley clothiers in 1823.³ The relationship

¹ Gregory, op.cit. p.252

² Reach, op.cit. p.30

³ Description of a weaver's cottage by the Mines Commission, quoted by Pinchbeck, op.cit. p.181. Bramley Valuation 1823, op.cit..

with the land that was such an important feature of the clothier communities in 1800, was no less important in 1840. Features of the self-help movement grew out of the collective culture of the clothiers. Masters and weavers mixed in benefit societies, sick clubs, chapels, Sunday schools, and temperance halls, as well as in pubs and beer-shops.¹ The dichotomy of methodist respectability and rustic leisure habits, of sobriety and drunkenness, continued to be found in the out-townships. Clothiers shared the weavers' suspicion of the factory owners, their dislike of the competition created by overproduction, and their attitude to the mills. In 1806 the mills were accused of breaking up domestic life and injuring the morals of the young. A Wortley clothier "thought them an evil to the community."² The years gave domestic manufacturers plenty opportunities to become better acquainted with the mills. It seems from the analysis of the 1833 evidence that millchildren were becoming increasingly mobile. Many of the second generation of factory children had parents who had been brought up in both the domestic and factory systems. Some of the children themselves spent their earliest working years in mills before moving into domestic woollen manufacture in their early teens. Despite the familiarity with the factory system, out-township clothiers continued to share many of the same values and attitudes as the impoverished hand-loom weavers. Foremost in the consciousness of both groups was the pride and independence of domestic manufacture, Yorkshire "clean pride", echoed by Bronte, and the spirit of which was captured by Lawson in his remembrance of Pudsey weavers of the 1820's.³ A general egalitarianism continued to hold that, regardless of skill, "every man ought to have what will make himself comfortable."⁴ Given the feeling against large manufacturers who speculated on prices by building up stock, most clothiers probably also agreed that such speculators be made subject to majority opinion. "I would think it better for the benefit of the country that the individual should suffer, and not the whole community."⁵

Many of the collective traditions and the community consciousness

- 1 Chapman's Report, 531-40, 544-5, 547-9. These aspects of community life in the 1830's and 1840's will be dealt with in Chapters 5 and 6.
- 2 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of Joseph Coope p.49, Robert Cookson p.79, William Child, p.111.
- 3 Charlotte Bronte, Shirley, op.cit. p.319. Lawson, op.cit. p.23.
- 4 S.C. on Hand loom Weavers Petitions, pp. (1834)X, evidence of David Brook, Q.639.
- 5 Ibid., Q.660.

of the out-township clothier had survived the introduction of the factory system. However, the strains on this consciousness and the contradictions of the clothier's position in his community were plain to see. The largest clothiers had become capitalist manufacturers in a process already underway in the 1790's. The small and medium sized clothiers however had generally continued to identify with the interests of their journeymen and families, their apprentices, and the community as a whole. By the 1830's the contradiction in their cultural tradition of collectivity and individuality which had gelled together in the domestic system before 1800, began to be forced to the surface. In many ways the 1830's in the out-townships witnessed the making of the petty bourgeoisie. The economic pressures of capitalist competition in a mature economy on the one hand, and the rigours of increasing poverty and degradation on the other drove a wedge into the community of master clothiers and weavers. The proletarianised domestic workers looked to the collective traditions of the clothier community for support. The clothiers, where they did not become successful capitalists, merged into the largely radical petty bourgeoisie which interpreted those collective traditions in their own way. Community consciousness became for the first time a product of class, to be defined in class terms.

Derek Fraser has shown that politics pervaded Leeds life at all levels.¹ Repeatedly political divisions cut through economic, social and religious groupings. The party political lines were drawn as firmly, perhaps more firmly, in the out-townships as in Leeds itself. However there are important qualifications to be made to this.

Firstly, parties represented political divisions within the Leeds middle-class and the upper-layer of the petty-bourgeoisie. Where party politics infiltrated the ranks of the working class there was a consistent tendency for political divisions to be rearranged along class lines. It is true that generally the disenfranchised population of the out-townships either stood outside politics or faithfully reflected the party politics of the middle-class. Nevertheless the tendency towards independent political activity of the working class was never far below the surface during the early Victorian period. On several occasions it emerged in various guises. The consequence was either to open up the divisions between middle-class Whigs and Radical-Liberals, as occurred in 1837-41, or to frighten the normally antagonistic Tories and Whigs into a class alliance, as occurred in 1842 and 1848.

Therefore although mainstream politics in early Victorian Leeds can be perfectly well explained in terms of party divisions, it must be made clear that these were the politics of one class only. That they could afford the luxury of bitter party political wrangling is an indication of the strength of middle-class ascendancy in Leeds. Despite the deep political and religious rifts, the economic interests of the town's leaders were similar. Tory manufacturers believed as much in economic laissez-faire as their Liberal counterparts. As in other Victorian industrial towns Leeds worthies formed a social elite, relatively fluid, but generally recruited from within the bourgeoisie. It was not an oligarchy, but it might be described as an 'urban squirearchy'.²

Fraser denies the importance of class because he regards the social structure of Leeds and other cities as being essentially in a state of equilibrium.³ Politics were based on politics in Leeds.

1 Derek-Fraser, 'Politics in Leeds 1830-1852', (unpublished PhD thesis, Leeds, 1969).

2 John Garrard, Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns 1830-80 (Manchester, 1983), p.5.

3 Derek Fraser, Urban Politics in Victorian England (Leicester, 1976), pp.15-18.

They were above all the politics of opinion.¹ But whose opinion counted? The exclusion of the vast majority of the adult population from the parliamentary and municipal franchise inevitably meant that the representation in party politics of the interests of all classes was impossible. In the out-townships from the 1800's popular participation in the affairs of the clothier communities gradually gave way to a partially constructed system of dependancy and the patronage of the larger clothiers and millowners. This in turn, by the 1830's, succumbed to the bourgeois framework of two-party politics, led by an urban squirearchy, which attempted to embrace all ratepayers. At municipal level it partly succeeded. It was within this framework that the 'politics of opinions' operated. However, the working class and large sections of the petty bourgeoisie frequently stood outside this framework, and their opinions must be sought elsewhere. Class conflict not social equilibrium formed the backcloth to much of what was happening in Leeds during the 1830's and 1840's. Certainly wherever political issues touched the interests of working men and women, the tendency was for political affiliations to divide along class rather than party lines. Class politics were not entirely subsumed by party politics in Leeds and its out-townships. On occasions the reverse was true.

Secondly, if class was an element in the political life of the out-townships, the labour movement cannot be ignored. Industrial conflict and the political struggle of labour were intertwined throughout the period. Particularly after 1819, when Radical Reform burst onto a Leeds workforce oppressed by mass unemployment, starvation and the break up of trade unionism among the croppers, the labour movement tended to oscillate at times of crisis between industrial and political militancy. Certain activities, such as the Ten Hours campaign, manifested themselves most directly in workplace politics. Class struggle in the 1830's and 1840's was characterised both by the continuity of the radical tradition (since at least the 1810's), and also by this alternation and overlap of trade union and political agitation. Neither Chartism, nor Leeds Liberalism and Toryism can be understood outside the context of the industrial strife and economic developments of the 1840's. This context has not been properly presented by either Fraser or Harrison.² Indeed there has

1 Fraser, *Politics in Leeds*, op.cit. pp.519, 525.

2 J.F.C. Harrison, 'Chartism in Leeds', in Asa Briggs ed., Chartist Studies (1959), 66-97.

been no detailed study so far of the labour movement in Leeds in the first half of the nineteenth century. Harrison's conclusion that Leeds Chartism was essentially a petty-bourgeois exercise in municipal democracy is inadequate. Certainly the Chartist leaders in Leeds were largely recruited from the ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie. Given the property qualification required to sit on the council this is hardly surprising. But rank and file Chartists in Leeds and out-townships were of a humbler stock. Both factory proletarians and small artisans and retailers, the bulk of whom could hardly be described as other than working class, formed the backbone of Leeds Chartism. Women, probably the most disadvantaged section of the working population, played an important role in local Chartism. In 1844 and 1847 with the flax strikes, they also led the labour movement in the struggle for shorter hours. Such political and industrial campaigns might be seen as responses to economic crises, poverty, technological and structural unemployment. Certainly radicalism and trade union agitation raised local awareness of a labour community and stirred class consciousness in Leeds out-townships. It is clearly important to relate bourgeois politics to the labour movement and the continuity of the radical tradition.

This, then, is the third qualification to the politics of opinion in Leeds. It is that middle class politics and class relationships must be placed in a community context. This is also neglected by Fraser and Harrison. Fraser's analysis of Leeds politics is founded on electoral ward divisions. It is shown below that ward divisions sometimes conceal as much as they reveal. Community politics were organised by township not by ward. Political allegiance could vary widely between townships which composed a ward. The overall pattern of electoral politics of a ward disguises such township variations. Moreover it was at township not ward level that the politics of patronage operated, and this appears to have been more extensive than Fraser suggests. Finally, even within ward parties, candidates and their supporters organised by township, and allegiance was to the township not to the ward party. Thus within the Holbeck ward Liberal party, Wortley Liberals and Holbeck Liberals could be at loggerheads, while each was opposing Radicals, Chartists and Tories within their respective townships. Community consciousness permeated the political system in the Leeds out-townships and produced divisions and alliances inexplicable by an analysis of the ward organisations.

Community could give men an identity besides that of party, economic, social or religious group. Because of this, political

developments in Leeds acquire a new dimension when examined from the perspective of the out-township. At the micro-level of township government it is possible to follow individuals and groups representing economic, political and religious interests as they move into and out of the public arena. This in turn illuminates aspects of local politics previously neglected, particularly class relationships, the labour movement and the radical tradition. In searching for a consciousness of community, the political life of the out-townships must be seen in the light of its past experience as well as of its present condition. The building bricks of community, individual and family histories, their economic interests, political and religious affiliations, the social and cultural bonds of patronage, the changing structure and composition of community institutions, both formal and informal, all come under the closest scrutiny when community politics are examined.

(i)

Poverty and Labour Radicalism, 1790-1848

There were several strands of labour activity in early nineteenth century Leeds which are often difficult to separate. Firstly there was the prolonged industrial action of the croppers. Secondly there was the broader labour and trade union movement in other local textile and non-textile trades. Resistance to machinery by flax hecklers in the 1800's for instance echoed the various protests of stuff weavers, woollen spinners, cloth drawers and others in the eighteenth century. Leeds ironfounders, wheelwrights, tailors, shoemakers, cabinet makers, brushmakers, linen and cord weavers as well as most of the skilled occupations in the building trades were all at least partially unionised or actively engaged in industrial agitation by the 1810's. Thirdly there were various popular manifestations with only tenuous or no links at all to trade unionism. These include displays of economic grievances such as food riots, or of religious fervour such as Southcottianism or Methodist revivals. There was also a loyalist constitutionalist tradition which found its popular resonance in some out-township mobs. Finally there was a solid, radical, political tradition in Leeds, both of a public reformist and revolutionary underground nature. Within the clothier communities these movements sometimes co-existed, sometimes replaced one another.¹ Such alternations between different forms of labour activity typified and to some extent handicapped labour radicalism through to the end of the Chartist period. However there can be no doubt firstly, that the early nineteenth century witnessed the making of a labour consciousness among the clothing villages, and secondly that the radical tradition extending even beyond Chartism, drew immense reserves of energy from and owed a great debt to the culture of these clothier communities.

The croppers' union was in the vanguard of the early labour movement in Leeds. Its conflicts and organisation permeated through to the out-townships and was intimately bound up with the fate of the domestic industry there. Its activity reveals important forces and trends in the evolution of class relationships in Leeds between 1790 and 1820.

The struggle over gig mills in Leeds was marked firstly by the public declaration in 1791 of the merchants' determination to intro-

1 E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (revised edn., Harmondsworth, 1968), ch.12.

duce the machinery, and secondly, by the destruction of Johnston's mill at Beeston in 1797.¹ The latter heralded the intensification of this phase of the struggle, which culminated in the successful strike at Gott's in 1802. There was virtually 100 per cent unionization among the 1500 Leeds croppers during the 1790's, and, as both the Beeston incident and the strike at Gott's showed, no lack of community sanction for their actions in the out-townships, despite the general absence of finishing mills there.² The strike brought to an end any attempts to introduce finishing machinery in Leeds for a decade. It also proved the strength of union to Leeds textile workers. Gott's strikers were able to go

"from shop to shop to see their friends, and they give them victuals and drink; there is a spirit of unanimity rests among them, that they do not wish to see one another want."³

The machine-breaking phase of Yorkshire Luddism occurred mostly outside Leeds because of the continued strength of the croppers' union within the borough. Even after 1812 finishing machinery was only cautiously introduced by Leeds millowners, who continued to face strong cropper opposition till the early 1820's.⁴

With its travelling cards, correspondence secretaries, workshop delegates, local societies and central committee in Leeds, the 'Clothworkers' Brief Institution' was one of the best organised trade unions of its day, extending its activities far beyond areas of immediate sectional interest. Its sick benefit fund financed several petitions to Parliament which raised support throughout the clothier communities by submitting a wide range of grievances such as the enforcement of laws on apprenticeship, the number of looms and jennies in one house, gig mills, truck, and cloth inspection.⁵

1 Ibid. pp.572-3.

2 Herbert Heaton, 'Benjamin Gott and the Industrial Revolution in Yorkshire', ECHR III, 1(1931), 1st Series, 45-66.

3 S.C. on the Bill respecting the laws relating to the Woollen Trade, PP(1802-3) VII, evidence of Daniel Whitworth, p.226. Gott did not introduce gigs till 1824, machine shears till 1826.

4 Hirst claimed to have seen some gigs working again in Oatlands mill in 1813, and was using them himself in 1815. Fenton and Murray were making hydraulic presses again for cloth finishers by 1816. William Hirst, History of the Woollen Trade for the last sixty years (Leeds, 1844), pp.8, 16, 19-20; D.T. Jenkins, The West Riding Wool Textile Industry 1770-1835 (Edington, 1975), pp.130-1. Shearing by machine only really became efficient and competitive with the Lewis cutters, widely introduced in the early 1820's. S.C. on the Bill to regulate the labour of children in Factories, PP (1831-2)XV, (hereafter, Sadler's Commission), evidence of David Brook, Q.1566.

5 Report on the Clothworkers' Petition, PP(1805)III, 123-5.

The croppers' own struggle went beyond resistance to gig mills and machine shears. It also concerned apprenticeship regulations, restricting other finishing machinery such as steam presses, the maintenance of a closed shop and the survival of trade unionism itself.

The croppers' struggle was essentially about work control. Leeds finishers were able to coexist for so long with the union because they had the option of sending cloth outside the borough to be machine-dressed. With the restrictions on illegal combinations, croppers had to rely a great deal on community sanctions to enforce the anti-machinery campaign and their closed shop. Beyond the local community their union was over-stretched and unable to organise effective collective bargaining other than by the traditional methods of riots and machine-breaking. Within their local context however, considering the issues involved in their struggle, the croppers could claim to be a group with the interests of the clothier communities at heart.

In 1802-3 the clothiers imitated the croppers by setting up their own union, 'the Clothiers Community'. The authorities were clearly confused about the two. The committee of 1803 referred to a pamphlet from the 'Clothiers' Brief Institution'. The committee of 1806 talked of "a society among the woollen manufacturers consisting chiefly of clothworkers."¹ There may have been a great degree of convergence of the two organisations by 1806, but the clothiers' union was distinct. Its rules, printed in Leeds in 1803, were drawn up on an entirely different basis from those of the croppers'. The 'Clothworkers' Brief Institution' was based on tramping and on closed shop trade unionism. Croppers were journeymen, completely subject to capitalist relations of production. Their's was effectively a service industry, with croppers moving freely between the different workshops of master finishers, who were usually large or middling capitalists. Although some croppers employed their own sons as preemers and carpers, there was no family production, little work for girls and less for women in cropping and shearing. The croppers' struggle was for control of their work processes within capitalism. The clothiers' struggle was for control of the means of production outside, or near the fringe of

1 S.C. on the Woollen Manufacture of England, PP(1806)III, Report, p.16; S.C. on laws relating to the Woollen Trade, op. cit., evidence of John Taite, p.220. Thompson does nothing to clarify this by referring to the croppers' institution as the 'Clothiers' community', Thompson, op.cit. p.573.

industrial capitalism. Amongst clothiers, the journeymen were usually fairly sedentary, in small loom shops or working at home where the development of capitalist relations of production was limited and where there was some opportunity to advance to master status and complete ownership of production. Their union, as its title suggests, attempted to be a 'community' of interests between masters and journeymen within the domestic industry.

The 'clothiers' community' devolved a considerable autonomy on the workshops. This was consistent with the non-hierarchical spirit of the union and reflected the values of the local clothier communities. Within the framework of these values however, there were considerable contradictions in the position of the master clothiers. The orthodoxy was that men and masters were 'as one in interest', 'in general so joined together in sentiment and...love to each other, that they do not wish to be separated if they can help it.'¹ However when the time came for action, views within the 'community' differed. Some masters left the union at the time of the Gott dispute. When the strikers looked to the union for support,

"there was a desire among the men that something should be done out of the country to support them which we (the master clothiers) utterly denied and would not do it."²

Many masters wanted nothing to do with a union of journeymen to operate a closed shop. If it was designed to raise wages rather than just provide sick benefit, some masters were actively against it.³ Generally the small clothiers were happiest with campaigns organised through legal channels. The watchwords of the clothiers' petitions of the 1790's and 1800's were 'security' and 'independence' of employment, and 'comfort' and 'decency' of living.

Within the ranks of the clothiers there were considerable differences of opinion. Those who were under the most intense capitalist competition, and who had tended to become employers of out-workers or shop-workers in the capitalist rather than the traditionalist sense, were most likely to be anti-union and anti-petition. Particularly in the white cloth district around Huddersfield, 'the more respectable part of the clothiers' disapproved of union restrictions on trade.⁴ In the mixed cloth areas such as the out-

1 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of Joseph Coope, pp.43, 67.

2 Ibid., p.41.

3 Ibid., evidence of James Ellis, p.26.

4 Ibid., evidence of Joseph Stancliffe, pp.193, 198, Robert Cookson, pp.202-5.

townships of Leeds, older relations of domestic production survived in better shape, and here the small clothier gave at least passive support to the union, or at worst took an ambiguous stance.

The crucial role of the small clothier in the out-township economies determined the nature of labour consciousness. Suburban communities were permeated with the values and ideological outlook of the independent clothier and only partially identified with illegal trade unionism. Nevertheless the agitation in the early 1800's, the network of shop delegates, the secret meetings, the hostility on the street toward anti-union clothiers,¹ do indicate that the clothiers' union was one of the earliest expressions of a labour community consciousness in the industrial suburbs.² The union itself embodied the ambiguous position of small masters as employers of labour yet antagonists of factory capital. It attempted to embrace the contradictory interests of clothiers and journeymen within a common culture and local identity.

In the post-war decade this unity of interests persisted. When Leeds spinners and weavers struck work against wage reductions in 1819, a clear distinction was made between the smaller clothiers in the domestic industry and the largest millowner-merchants.

"There was a difference between what we called little masters; that is masters who keep 3, 4, 5 or 6 looms, or so on; they were willing to give the wages provided the gentlemen who had factories would give these wages likewise, so that an equalisation of wages might be given amongst all the master manufacturers, according to the quality of work." 3

The 'slaughterhouse' of price cutting which Oastler later attacked clearly was present in 1819, and had also existed to some extent in 1806. Journeymen were reluctant to turn out against the small clothiers with whom they still felt some affinities. The latter continued to defend desperately the domestic system, mainly by petitioning, while the journeymens' strike enlisted a great deal of support locally. Subscriptions were raised in mills which had not turned out, and in Holbeck, Armley and other townships among 'both masters and men'.⁴

Most trade unions before 1819 were combinations against wage cuts

- 1 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of Joseph Stancliffe, pp.187-9.
- 2 A 'labour community' in the sense adopted by Foster for Oldham. John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, (1974), p.72.
- 3 S.C. on Artisans and Machinery, PP(1824)V, 6th Report, evidence of Joseph Oates, 533-4.
- 4 Ibid.; LM, 10 July, 17 July, 24 July, 31 July, 14 Aug.1819.

or technological unemployment, that is they represented sectional interests or a particular occupational group. Only the croppers' and clothiers' campaigns attempted to take up the grievances of the domestic manufacturing communities as a whole. Nevertheless, illegal trade unionism was an important formative experience, even if it only expressed an occupational solidarity. In 1819 however, political radicalism was able to attach itself firmly to labour organisation for the first time on a large scale.

The cut-off point for many clothiers in the transition from unionism to radicalism may have been the issue of legality and the threat to social - not political - order. The benefit societies on which the textile unions were based were rooted in the workshops of the domestic industry and drew support from both masters and journeymen. Official repression drove the labour organisation underground and attacked the communal consensus under which it sheltered. With only their labour to sell, it was easier for the mobile journeyman to resort to political sedition than the established clothier-businessman. The latter had more to lose, and, as already pointed out, preferred to uphold legality through the recognised channels such as cloth hall meetings and petitions.¹ Constitutionalism and legality lay after all at the heart of their campaign against the factory system. While crises in the woollen trade undermined the economic basis of the clothier communities, political pressures drove a wedge between masters and journeymen.

Important changes were occurring in the local woollen industry in the 1820's. Having conceded the repeal of the ban on the export of wool in 1824, manufacturers were free to import foreign wool in greater quantities than ever before. Germany was replacing Spain as the major supplier.² Markets and demand were also changing. There was a general decline in broad-cloth exports and an intensification of competition in the existing areas. The markets shifted away from Europe and North America to Asia, Africa and Latin America.³ The US cloth market collapsed in 1825 as the financial crisis hit England. Many local cloth manufacturers faced bankruptcy between

1 The Leeds petitions against the Cornbill and against wool taxes raised 24000 and 17000 signatures respectively. LM, 11 Mar. 1815, 27 Apr. 1816.

2 R.M. Hartwell, 'The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industry, 1800-1850', (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1955)pp.41-6,109-28.

3 R.G. Wilson, Gentleman Merchants (Manchester, 1971), pp.121-7; F. Crouzet, 'Towards an Export Economy: British Exports during the Industrial Revolution', Explorations in Economic History 17 (1980), 48-93.

1825 and 1827 as their credit failed.¹ The export-conscious manufacturers reacted to a lack of competitiveness abroad, the devaluation of stocks and rising debts, by cutting prices and aiming for a low wage economy. The rise of the shoddy trade in the 1820's along with an increased demand for cheaper woollens and worsteds helped them achieve this. John Varley at Stanningley for instance, began using shoddy in his duffils to keep his prices competitive abroad.²

All this had important consequences for woollen workers in the out-townships. Increasing competition in distant markets implied greater fluctuations in employment at home for those directly or indirectly working for the merchant manufacturers. Low prices, the introduction of machinery, and the shift towards cheaper quality woollens squeezed the small clothiers out of the markets. Working up foreign wool usually meant greater percentage loss of weight by waste and dirt, increased expense in cleaning and preparing, and thus less earnings per piece. The use of machinery and the tendency to make cheaper cloth from wool-shoddy or wool-cotton mixtures also implied a certain de-skilling in various processes, not least in weaving.

The political and economic position of the domestic clothiers was extremely ambiguous by the early 1830's. Although they were attracted by the political economics of the Tory-radicals, and sympathetic to their anti-capitalist arguments, the main effort of Sadler's campaign was directed at enlisting the support of factory workers. A paternalist philanthropy did not suit independent minded small businessmen. The call for the protection of labour also left clothiers on the political sidelines. Talk of reducing taxes and public expenditure, and opening up trade touched their interests more directly. The Whig-liberals however were so clearly the party of big business and the Leeds millocracy that many small clothiers scarcely felt comfortable under its wing. Moreover, in every neighbourhood and at every juncture, the spectre of poverty faced them in the shape of destitute hand-loom weavers, and former masters and journeymen reduced to sweated outwork.

The Allen Bridge mill dispute during the 1832 election campaign appeared as a milestone in the embourgeoisment of the independent clothier.³ It certainly cost the Tories many votes in the out-townships. The enfranchisement of the 43 joint-owners of the mill,

1 Hirst, op.cit. vol.II, pp.10-16, vol.III, pp.10-14.

2 Hartwell, op.cit. pp.417-19.

3 See above ch.2, p.84.

whose ratings had been contested by the Tories, caused great celebrations and torch-light parades by the small manufacturers of Pudsey and Bramley.¹ A blow had been struck for the small capitalist, and all but the most impoverished clothier might have reason to look on the Liberals as their possible benefactors after the decision. It brought home to the out-townships that franchise reform worked for some in their community, and might work for more. Many of those small ratepayers who gained the municipal franchise in 1835 may have been attracted to Baines' party by this success in 1832. It was a step towards the political reconciliation of the small employer with the party of industrialism.

By the 1840's many of the political, social and economic contradictions of the clothier's position in his community had been resolved. Suburban clothiers were mostly pillars of Leeds liberalism. The dual values of collectivity and individuality which had gelled together in the domestic system before 1800 had been forced apart. The economic pressures of capitalist competition on the one hand, and the rigours of increasing poverty and degradation on the other, fragmented the communities of master clothiers and journeymen weavers.

Between February and March 1843, 9000 signed the Leeds hand-loom weavers' petition. Their condition was 'wretched in the extreme', and afflicted the whole community.

"The use of excisable articles has materially diminished and the same may be said of Agricultural produce: cottage property has nearly become valueless, the poor man's rent remaining due without any prospect of payment. The Shopkeepers and Butchers are suffering privation, and the Domestic manufacturer is gradually sinking to a level with the distressed Operative."²

The weavers recalled that the expectations raised by the Select Committee of 1834-5 had been disappointed, and proceeded to launch a full scale attack on factory production. Machinery which replaced manual labour was an evil striking at the 'actual existence of the working classes'. They employed protection from the power loom, 'that engine of misery'. The great increase in exports of manufactured goods contrasted with a similar increase in distress, ^{and} proved that 'the interests of the labouring classes in the manufacturing districts are but little attended to in their production.' Finally the petitioners pointed to the millowners' considerable advantage over domestic manufacturers and hand-loom weavers,

1 A.S.Turberville and F. Beckwith, 'Leeds and Parliamentary Reform 1820-32', TSP XLI (1946) misc. 12, 1-88.

2 Petition of the Hand-loom Weavers of the Borough of Leeds, NS, 25, Feb. 1843. See also LM, 18 Feb., 25 Feb., 4 Mar., 11 Mar. 1843.

"in so far as the piece produced by the power-loom bears no comparative proportion of the burdens of the State and of the Poor Rates to that wrought by manual labour".

Many of the complaints against the factory system were familiar from ten or forty years previously. The gap however between mills and domestic manufacture was no longer filled by numerous large independent clothiers. There was no more room for a perspective which tried to embrace millowners and master weavers in one system of production. One important sign of class antagonism was the attack launched by the Northern Star on the '40 Thieves of Pudsey'.¹ The joint-stock partners in Priestley mill were accused of ignoring educational provision for their 45 mill children. The factory inspector found the mill school 'books' to be scraps of old newspaper and the book-keeper was the schoolmaster, 'with no power to amend what his masters ordered'.²

The development of the small clothier-businessman from domestic master to petty capitalist was virtually complete. He had come full circle within the emerging structure of class relations in the out-townships. In the 1800's clothiers had stood with their journeymen against the dismantling of trade regulations. In the 1810's and 1820's radicals could call on clothier support in the campaigns for political reform and trade unionism. As late as 1830-4 Tories and petty bourgeois radicals such as Oastler and Barlow appealed to clothiers to defend the interests of domestic industry and traditional work relations against the encroachment of industrial capitalism. In the local context a symbolic turning point was the enfranchisement of the joint-stock partners at Allan Bridge mill in 1832. This marked the acceptance of the small mill occupier into the main body of Liberal factory capitalists. It was a short step from the '40 Heroes of Allan Bridge' to the '40 Thieves of Pudsey'. The Chartist attack on the occupiers of Priestley mill in 1844 signified the final alienation of the small clothier from the ranks of the proletariat. Now these clothiers were guilty of the same exploitation the industrial barons had been accused of ten or fifteen years before. The Joint-Stock Companies' Act of 1844 formalised the class nature of company

1 NS, 11 Mar. 1844

2 Inspector Saunders found that the neglect of education in the Pudsey, Batley and Stanningley areas was the result of a large proportion of millowners and occupiers being small clothiers who could not afford to finance a school. Religious sectarianism was also a problem. See Her Majesty's Inspector of Factories Reports, PP(1843)XXVII, Quarterly Report of R.J.Saunders, 31.12.1842, appendix III, Robert Baker to Saunders, 329-30; and Report of R.J. Saunders upon the establishment of schools in the Factory Districts in February 1842, 385-99.

mills. Radicals could no longer expect support from that quarter in the struggle against factory capitalism.

The alienation of the independent clothier from the emerging labour communities indicates the growing importance of class divisions and class relations in the political and economic life of the out-townships. This was to some extent a direct consequence of the violent economic fluctuations of the period. Economic crises drew responses from all sections of suburban society. These responses were increasingly differentiated by their class character. As the reaction to poverty and mass unemployment was determined by class interest, so the parameters of the community in which such crises occurred varied according to the perspective of class. Thus the impact of the labour movement in the out-townships, the significance of trade unionism and political radicalism, and the role of patronage and township loyalties in middle class politics require interpretation from the overlapping and interlocked perspectives of community and class. Indeed suburban labour and politics can only be interpreted in this way.

The poverty which underpinned the labour movement, from afflicting a minority in the out-townships, had, by 1819, spread through large sections of the working population until the numbers overwhelmed the capacity of traditional communal relief. During the late 1790's poor relief expenditure in Beeston and Bramley for instance, had increased rapidly to reach unprecedented levels.¹ In 1803, the only year in the 1800's for which there are detailed returns, about 12 per cent of families in Armley and Bramley, and about 20 per cent in Beeston and Wortley were on the poor rates.² 1803 was a relatively good year.

During the 1811-12 depression the local domestic industry shrank in Armley and Bramley by about one-quarter, in Wortley by one-third. In the villages to the west of Leeds the effect on trade of the Orders in Council was even more severe. In Hunslet domestic cloth manufacture was almost wiped out.³ The townships of Armley and Farnley raised subscriptions to purchase bacon, wheat and oatmeal to sell cheaply to their poor.⁴ There were corn riots in Leeds,

1 Figure 1: Poor Relief in Bramley and Beeston, 1790-1815.

2 Table 3.1: Numbers relieved in Leeds out-townships, 1803, 1813-15.

3 Derek Gregory, Regional Transformation and Industrial Revolution (1982), pp.147-9.

4 LM, 27 Apr., 1 June 1812.

TABLE 3.1: Numbers relieved in Leeds out-townships 1803, 1813-15.

Number of Families on Poor Relief, and as a Percentage of
Estimated Total Families in

	<u>1803</u>		<u>1813</u>		<u>1814</u>		<u>1815</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Armley	62	11.1	154	23.3	147	21.3	143	19.9
Beeston	60	21.6	97	37.0	93	33.8	83	28.8
Bramley	65	11.9	146	19.3	142	18.1	141	17.4
Wortley	81	20.3	87	17.8	65	12.9	85	16.3
Hunslet	120*	9.4	291	20.1	236	15.9	201	13.3
Holbeck	144*	14.7	233	18.8	228	17.9	196	15.0

* includes children in workhouse

Total receiving relief (in, out and occasional) excluding
children

	<u>1803</u>	<u>1813</u>	<u>1814</u>	<u>1815</u>
Armley	77	282	243	228
Beeston	95	111	110	98
Bramley	114	222	279	248
Wortley	105	145	122	114

Sources: Abstracts of Poor Relief
 PP(1803-4) XIII, 654-5
 PP(1818) XIX, 570-1

and in Bramley Luddite letters threatened 'to pay those a visit who did not settle their meal'.¹

In 1813, after an upturn in trade, 17-19 per cent of families in Bramley and Wortley were on the rates, 23 per cent in Armley, and 37 per cent in Beeston.² In Bramley numbers relieved doubled between 1803 and 1813, in Armley they multiplied nearly fourfold. Moreover, although wheat prices dropped dramatically between 1813 and 1816, the numbers being relieved did not. If expenditure plummeted it was because less money was required to feed the poor. In 1815 with wheat prices and relief disbursements near to levelling out, 15-20 per cent of families in most out-townships continued to require relief. By the end of the war a permanent band of poverty associated with the crises of industrial capitalism had been created which stretched right through the clothier communities in a way it had never done before. A 'Holbeck villager' reported in March 1819, "a great deal of distress amongst us at present and increasing every day".³ This new mass poverty, related to the cyclical crises of industrial capitalism, induced a horizontal rather than a vertical split in the clothier communities. It divided the population crudely into the have's and have-not's, the ratepayers in charge of township funds, and the propertyless, whose poverty or unemployment dragged them into a dependent, rather than a reciprocal relationship with their neighbours.

Religious revivalism might be seen as part of the popular reaction to economic distress and political crises. There is no doubt that at times a mood of 'chiliastic despair' could be found in the clothier out-townships. The Methodist revival in Bramley circuit in 1819 for instance coincided with the arrival of the Ranters. Wortley 'at that time was visited by a most marvellous outpouring of the spirit.'⁴ The revival was above all a young working class phenomenon. Its purpose was to capture the souls of the out-township population for the faith. The sin of the whole was to be redeemed by the grace of each individual who achieved righteousness.⁵ The souls most open to grace and most exposed to

1 Joseph Rogerson, 'The Diary of Joseph Rogerson', in W.B.Crump and E.Hargrave eds., The Leeds Woollen Industry (Leeds, 1931), pp.59-76, entry for 15 Apr. 1812.

2 Table 3.1.

3 LM, 20 Mar. 1819.

4 John Stones, The Veteran Preacher (Stanningley, 1887).

5 Sermon by Rev. W. Atherton of Bramley, based on Romans V, 21, at the 2nd anniversary of Leeds Methodist Missionary Society, LM, 1 May 1815.

temptation were those of the young. There was an almost feverish urgency about the methodist struggle for the redemption of children, both in the chapels and at home. Joseph Barker remembered the fierce discipline and strict sabbatarianism of his father, a Bramley clothier, in the 1800's.

"I recollect him once beating one of my elder brothers with a rope on his naked back most awfully, for having spent a portion of the Sunday previous in walking about in the fields instead of going to the chapel. My poor brother cried most piteously but the word of God as my father supposed rang in his ears; 'beat thy son while there is hope, and let thy soul spare not for his crying'." 1

The fear of God's wrath and the fear of death without salvation was drilled and beaten into children by parents and teachers. A religious revival against a backcloth of poverty, unemployment, economic insecurity, and political and social upheaval, could focus these fears and emotions most intensely. Surveying 20 years work with over 1400 Wortley children, the managers of the Greenside methodist school had

"reason to believe that the Spirit of the Lord does at many times strive with the children. The greatest visible proof of this was in the year 1819 when for several months together an uncommon religious impression rested on the whole school, many of the scholars were then (at least for a time) changed from the errors of their ways, and some have departed this life in the full Triumph of Faith." 2

Like revivalism, popular loyalism might also be regarded as a response to economic and political crises. In autumn 1803, for instance, the croppers' campaign melted away in patriotic fervour as volunteers enlisted for the war against France. In Bramley, particularly, there seems to have been some continuity to the loyalist tradition. Paine's effigy was ceremoniously burnt there in December 1792 after a loyalist crowd

"manifested their devotion to the King and their detestation of Paine's infidel writings, by singing the National Anthem as they proceeded along." 3

The suspension of the Orders in Council was celebrated by Bramley clothiers with another procession through the village which 'closed by drinking health to the King and the Prince Regent, and success to our Arms by sea and land.'⁴ The entry of the Allies into Paris

1 The People, III (1850-1), no.153, 369-70.

2 'A Short Account of the Wortley Methodist Sunday School' (1822), in Wortley Greenside Methodist Sunday School Admittance Book, 1822-32, (LCA, Leeds West Circuit Methodist Records, 40).

3 B. Wilson, Our Village (Bramley, 1860), p.49.

4 LI, 22 June 1812.

in 1814 was celebrated in Bramley 'like as if all was mad'.

"Mr Woodhead going about on Horseback dress'd in Soldier's cloths representing General Blucher with a sword in his hand and cock'd hat on his head with all the Music they could collect playing God Save the King thro' the town." 1

The paternalism of non-conformist Liberal employers was increasingly linked to this loyalist tradition. These were royalist mobs rather than 'Church and King' mobs. Bramley developed into a Whig-liberal stronghold and was always recognised as such by Leeds middle-class electioneers from 1832 onwards.² Yet the popular loyalism of journeymen and labourers was volatile. The boundaries between radicalism and constitutionalism were vague, especially as reformers evoked the moral right of the people to a 'pure' constitution free from 'old corruption'.³ Even in Bramley, radicalism existed side by side with loyalism, reflecting divisions within the community. On the same evening as Paine's effigy burnt on Stock's Hill, a haystack belonging to a leading Bramley loyalist was destroyed by arson.⁴

Clearly however, the most significant response to economic crises, to the emergence of factory capitalism and the formation of an industrial bourgeoisie in the out-townships was political radicalism. The croppers' campaign of 1816-19 illustrates how widespread familiarity with poverty could be used to activate a mass of workers in industrial agitation against the factory system and eventually political agitation for radical reforms.⁵

In 1819 for instance, the unemployed were the first to organise and demonstrate. Clothiers and small manufacturers were also organising opposition to the repeal of the Stamping Laws and the threat of new taxes on imported wool.⁶ From this a major reform campaign emerged in June 1819. By the end of November there had been seven large reform meetings on Hunslet moor and two smaller meetings in Armley and Bramley. The whole Leeds reform campaign was framed and interwoven by industrial agitation. Immediately before Peterloo

1 Rogerson, op.cit., entry for 11 Apr. 1814.

2 In 1834 Baines paid tribute to the 'true hearted and high minded independent cloth makers of Bramley', whose interests 'were wound up with the interests of the merchants of Leeds'. LM, 8 Mar. 1834.

3 Thompson, op.cit, p.133.

4 B. Wilson, op.cit; For an example of the loyalist press in Leeds, see The Domestic Miscellany and Poor Man's Friend, nos. 1-7 (Sept. - Dec., 1819).

5 In Sept. 1816 only 922 of 3345 West Riding croppers were fully employed. LM, 21 Sept., 28 Sept. 1816.

6 Minutes of Examination taken before the Committee of Privy Council for the Affairs of Trade, regarding the Wool Tax, PP (1820) XII, 75; LM, 1 May, 12 June 1819.

the weavers and spinners' union struck against wage reductions. In November 8000 colliers with six military-style music bands paraded the streets to defend their union and protest against a lock-out.

The reform agitation, like the early trade union campaigns and the fervent religious revivals of the sects, must be seen in a local communal, as well as regional and national contexts. In 1819 the out-townships gave important support to the radicals, as they had done for the campaigns of croppers and clothiers. Hunslet played host to thousands of men and women marching for political reform in these months. At the third Hunslet meeting in August, over 3000 turned up, despite heavy rain, 'with drums and bands of music to which they marched from the adjoining townships'. A month later, 'male and female reformers poured in from the surrounding villages with standards'. 'Large detachments from the adjoining townships.... moved on with music bands and a great variety of flags with various mottos'.¹ All the ritual and paraphernalia of the reform movement was found to the full in the out-townships, where the colour and the symbolism struck a chord in communities used to the secret and public ceremonies of trade unions and friendly societies. At Bramley, where 2-3000 turned up despite bad weather, 'the procession advanced to the ground preceded by a band of music and there were upon the ground no fewer than 17 flags'.²

Unlike the agitations of 1811-12, 1816-19, 1830-4, 1841-2 and 1847-8, the labour agitation of the mid-1820's was set against a background of relative prosperity in the local economy. The issues involved during the Leeds strikes of 1824-5 were mostly about wages and de-facto union recognition. There was scarcely a mention of the threat of unemployment. Indeed a 'general prosperity' was remarked upon, which the unions took advantage of to press wage claims.³ The building workers, particularly, were concerned to achieve higher wage levels to compensate for seasonal fluctuations in their trade.⁴ Two indicators of hardship, expenditure on poor relief and wheat prices, were at their lowest levels since the war. Poor rates in the out-townships were under two shillings in the pound 1822-5, and only began to rise in 1826.

The 1820's, however, were also years of increasing tension and job insecurity for the majority of Leeds workers. The tendency to

1 LM, 25 Sept. 1819.

2 LM, 25 Sept. 1819; Papers relative to the internal state of the Country, PP(1819-20)IV, 215, no.60.

3 LM, 30 Apr. 1825.

4 LM, 31 July 1824.

overproduction characterised the local wool textile industries after 1820, during a period of accelerating technological innovation and higher levels of fixed capital investment. This coincided with a decade of rapid urban growth and speculative building, and the creation of a semi-permanent pool of under-employed mill labour. A Leeds cloth dresser claimed in 1834 that he could not recall a single year of full employment since 1820, and that generally unemployment had increased.¹ When the labour movement re-emerged in 1830 there had already been several years of rising poverty in the out-townships. The poor rate in Beeston rose from 1/6d to 2/6d, 1825-6, and doubled to 5/- in 1827-8. For 1830-35 it remained at four shillings. In Bramley in 1827 unemployed labourers were set to work on the roads at 1/6d a day.² The memory of living off nettles and dock leaves in 1826 enraged political reformers in 1830, and hardened the resolve of strikers in 1834 when long-term unemployment again looked imminent.³

From the late 1830's and through most of the 1840's poor relief and the new Poor Law were the main preoccupations of many out-township workers. Expenditure on relief, which in the West Riding in 1836-7 had dropped to its lowest level since the war, began climbing again during 1837. In Leeds borough the increase was more than twice, in Beeston and Bramley almost three times that of the county.⁴ In other out-townships the rise was modest but, as in the county, it presaged much worse to come in the levels of Poor relief. In Holbeck the weavers' were 'not above half-employed' during 1837.⁵ Even in Bramley where weavers' wages held up marginally better than in neighbouring townships, unemployment and rising bread prices hit hard.

As the Liberal parliamentary candidates, Baines and Molesworth, canvassed through Bramley, Pudsey, Armley and Wortley in 1837 these were the subjects raised at their meetings. Molesworth was asked

1 S.C. on Hand-loom Weavers' Petitions, PP(1834) X, evidence of David Brook, Q.448.

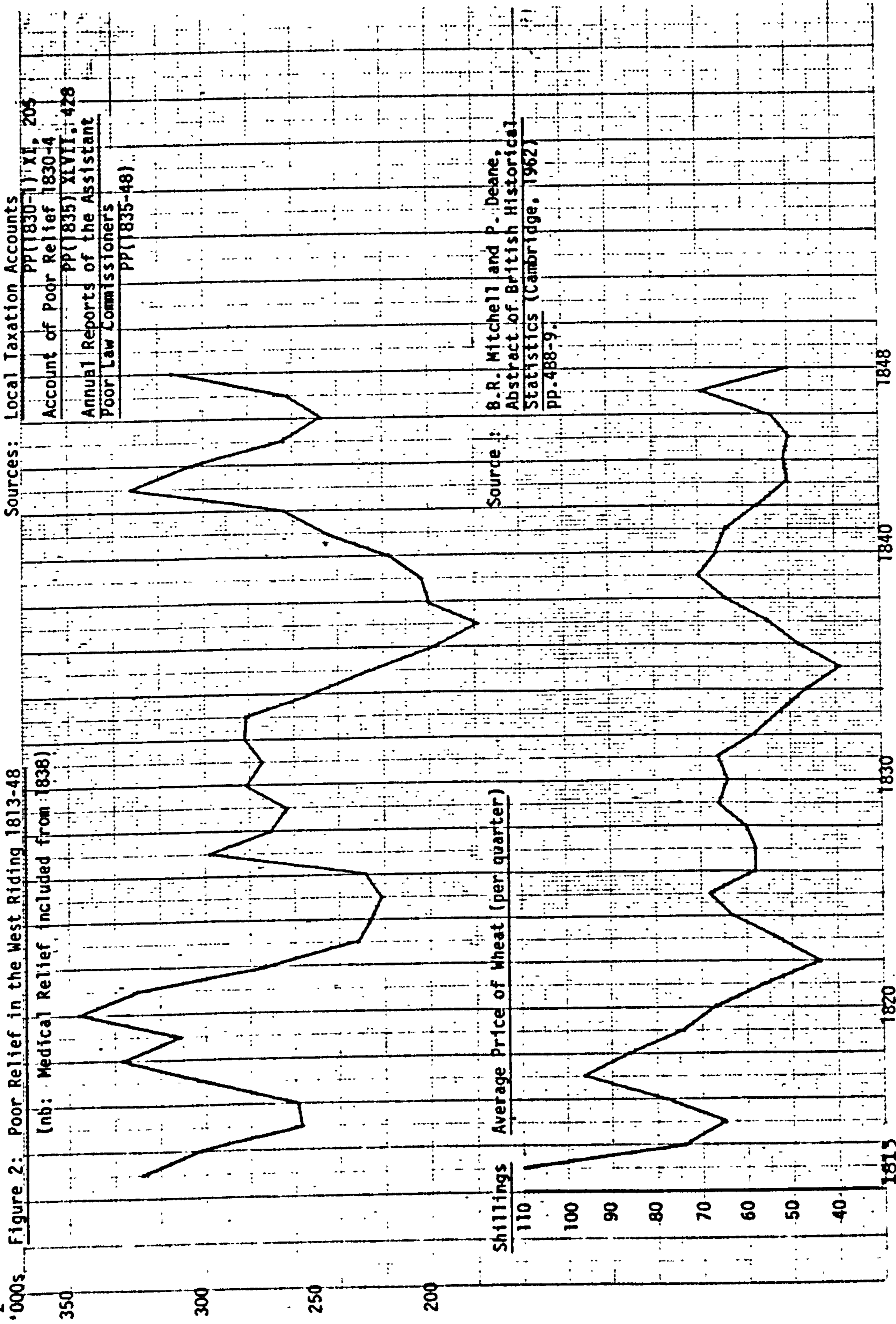
2 M.E. Rose, 'The Administration of the Poor Law in the West Riding 1820-1855', (unpublished D.Phil.thesis, Oxford, 1965), p.31.

3 LM, 5 June 1830, 7 June 1834.

4 The percentage increases between 1836/7 and 1837/8 were West Riding 11.8, Hunslet 3.0, Armley 8.5, Wortley 13.3, Holbeck 26.4, Leeds 28.0, Bramley 29.5, Beeston 33.9, Leeds Borough 24.4. See Figure 2: Poor Relief in the West Riding 1813-48; Figure 3: Poor Relief in Leeds Township and Borough 1813-48; Figure 4: Poor Relief in Beeston and Bramley 1813-48.

5 H.S.Chapman, 'Report on the Hand-loom Weavers of the West Riding of Yorkshire'. (here-after, Chapman's Report), in Reports from the Assistant Hand-loom Weavers Commissioners, part III, PP (1840) XXIII, 527-90.

Figure 2: Poor Relief in the West Riding 1813-48



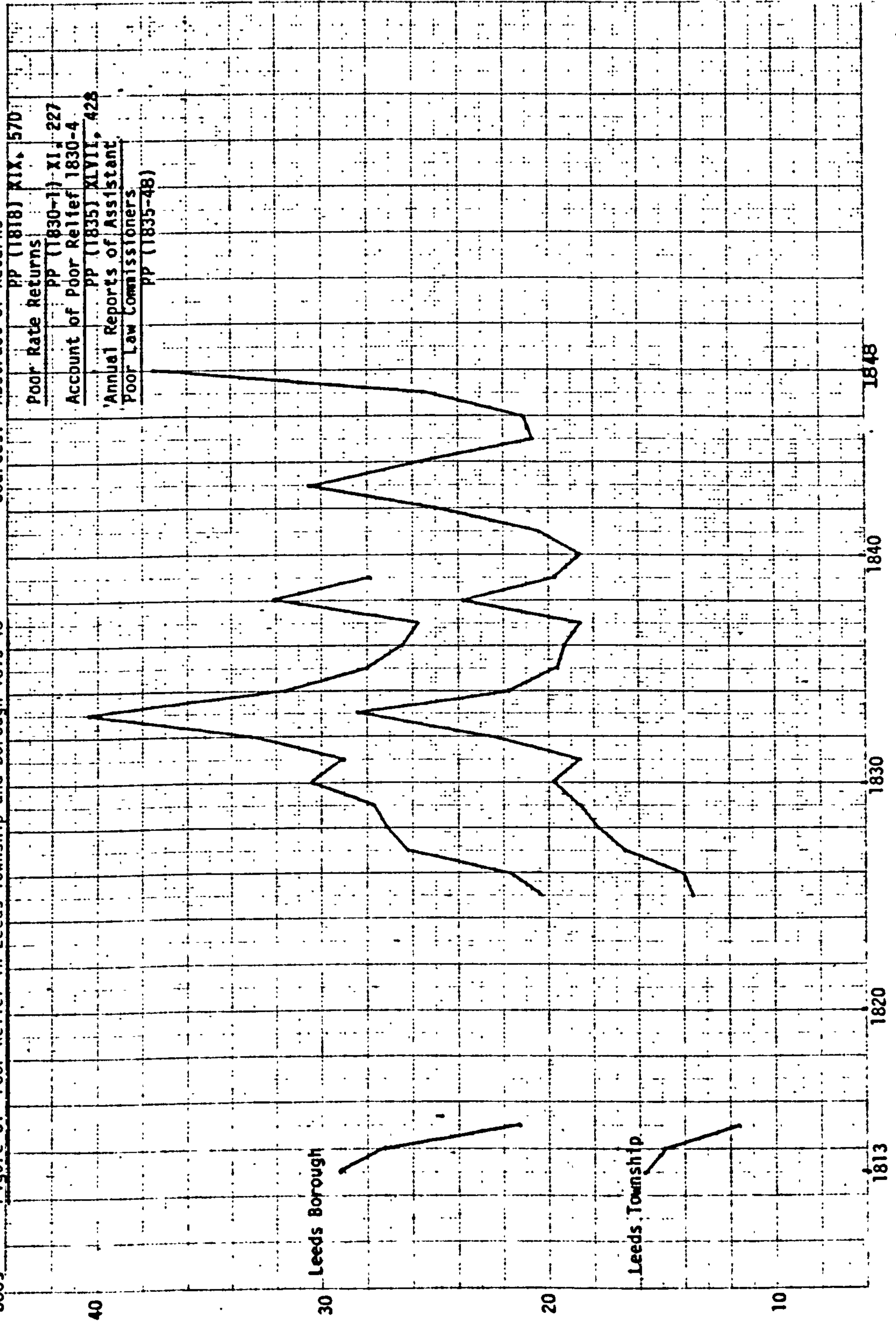
Sources: Local Taxation Accounts

- PP(1830-1) XI, 205
- Account of Poor Relief 1830-4
- PP(1835) XLVII, 428
- Annual Reports of the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners
- PP(1835-48)

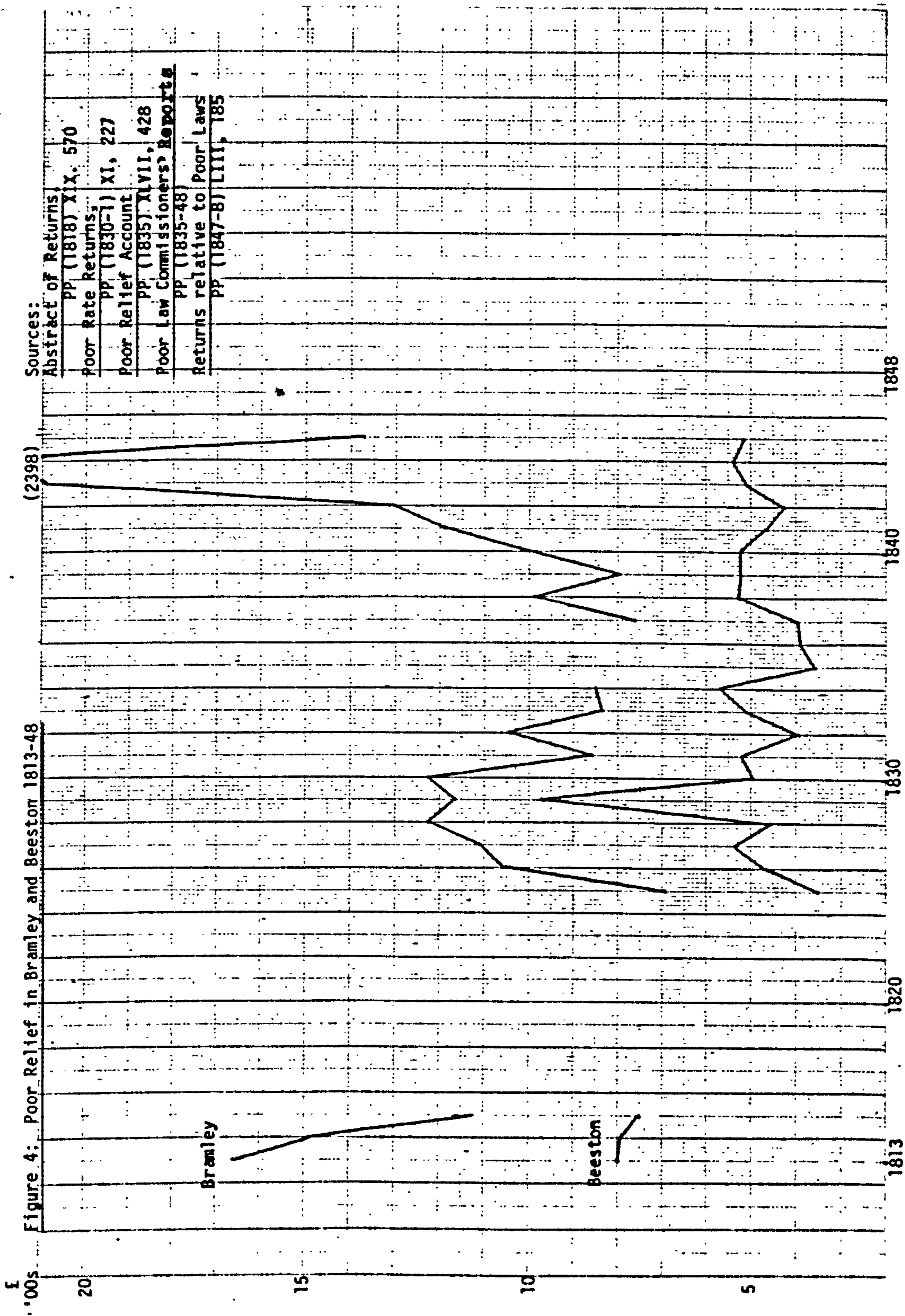
Source: B.R. Mitchell and P. Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics (Cambridge, 1962) pp. 488-9.

(Years ending 25 March, re. Poor Relief)

Figure 3: Poor Relief in Leeds Township and Borough 1813-48



Sources: Abstract of Returns
 PP (1818) XIX, 570
 Poor Rate Returns
 PP (1830-1) XI, 227
 Account of Poor Relief 1830-4
 PP (1835) XLVII, 428
 Annual Reports of Assistant
 Poor Law Commissioners
 PP (1835-48)



by a Wortley weaver, Abraham Worsnop, his opinion of outdoor relief.¹

"I am a weaver and have been so for several years; I have a large family and a well-furnished house; now if I fall out of work...would you think it right that I should have my goods and chattels sold up and be taken into the workhouse, or have temporary relief afforded me until I could get employment again?" 2

Molesworth replied that he was against outdoor relief as being wasteful. Worsnop retorted that local people knew best the hardships occurring in their district and the amount of relief required. This exchange illustrates the mood of the out-township domestic workers in 1837 and their opposition to the Poor Law and centralised authority.³ Neither candidate was able to capture this mood in their canvassing. At Bramley Baines was careful to express regret at local unemployment but was optimistic about a revival of trade. He was confident of the political ground on which he stood.

"If there be any of the large villages in this immense Borough in which Liberal principles are pre-eminent, it is the township and village of Bramley." 4

Again, however, the Poor Law was raised by someone in the crowd who asked him "if the tories had ever passed a worse Bill than the Poor Law Amendment Bill." Baines' answer was drowned by shouts of "we want none of 'em - we want nought but a bit of work."

The preoccupation of Worsnop and other suburban workers with bread and butter issues in 1837 indicates that middle-class political life operated for the most part on an entirely different plane from that of working class concerns. Just as religious revivalism, loyalism, workplace agitation and political radicalism might be seen as responses to the crises of emergent industrial capitalism within the out-townships, so the very nature of these responses and the act of responding gave shape to the labour movement itself. Equally, as the working class by definition only existed through a 'relationship of exploitation' with the capitalist class, so the bourgeois response to poverty and mass unemployment itself was a formative influence on class relations. Within the suburban communities, the lessons learnt from the years of distress, 1812, 1819, 1834, 1842, 1848, were fully integrated into the radical tradition, and fostered class consciousness at all social levels. Two sequences of events, from 1819 and 1841-2 will illustrate the consequences of the relationship of exploitation at times of economic crisis.

1 Worsnop, aged 34, earned an average of 9/7½d a week net in 1837. In 1844 he became deputy constable of Wortley. See his evidence in Chapman's Report, op.cit..

2 LM, 1 Apr. 1837.

3 See M.E.Rose, 'The Anti-Poor Law Movement in the North of England', *Northern History* I (1966), 70-91.

4 LM, 22 July 1837.

In 1819 for instance, working class consciousness was clearly raised by an understanding of the class nature of the reaction of those in authority to the depression. By August 1819 it was estimated that 2000 individuals were starving, and the soup kitchens in Marsh Lane and Briggate had closed for lack of funds.¹ There was vague talk of alternative labour for croppers, roadworking or agriculture, but only platitudes were offered. There was an element of vindictiveness in the bourgeois reaction to the croppers' plight. It was senseless to keep able and willing men on the poor rates, and croppers had been notoriously 'inflexible' in their approach to work, their habits having 'quite disqualified them for any other mechanical art but their own.'² It seemed the croppers' union had at last been broken. Those, who in 1815 had sworn they would murder the man who introduced machine finishing in Leeds, appeared after three years of unemployment thoroughly contrite.³ A deputation of the unemployed wrote to the Mayor urging a public relief fund be set up, disclaiming

"any disposition to disturb the public tranquility, labour and bread being all they required... Their objection to work with machinery, which had once been so strongly felt by the croppers, now no longer existed, and they had seen their error and would be glad to correct it." 4

A proposal to combine machine and hand-raising under one roof according to the quality of the cloths dressed came to nothing. The workers were clutching at straws. The mayor advised them not to meet in large bodies and to seek relief from the parishes or the magistrates. An ill-fated emigration scheme proved the last attempt by the croppers to activate the liberal conscience of the Leeds Middle class. At the end of May news of the petition of 1400 Carlisle weavers reached Leeds.⁵ The text of their address was printed and quickly distributed. It transformed the situation. The long, industrial phase of cropper agitation ended by being swept up in a new vortex of political activity.

In 1842 the coincidence of working class political organisation, and the middle class reaction to severe economic distress, soup kitchens, allotment schemes and benefit loans, was reminiscent of 1819.⁶ Poor relief rose continuously in most out-townships from 1838-9 and peaked

1 LM, 15 May, 22 May, 29 May, 7 Aug. 1819.

2 LM, 20 Mar 1819.

3 Hirst claimed he was obliged to carry a brace of loaded pistols on him for over a year because of these threats. LM, 16 Jan. 1819.

4 LM, 1 May 1819.

5 LM, 5 June 1819. For the changed atmosphere in Leeds and the new sense of urgency among the bourgeoisie in the week following the Carlisle address, see LM, 12 June 1819.

6 Suggestions made by J.G. Marshall, LM, 18 June 1842.

in 1843-4. In Holbeck, Bramley and Wortley the peak levels of expenditure exceeded those of previous crises, of the early 1800's, 1811-12 and 1818-20.¹ In the autumn of 1841 Holbeck Operative Enumerative Committee visited 4752 families comprising 19,936 individuals, of whom 16,156 were unemployed.² Calls were made for a 'large and discriminating exercise of public benevolence', and committees were formed for the 'Relief of the Distressed Poor' in Leeds and each 'manufacturing out-township'.³

In Holbeck Benyon and Marshall organised the charitable effort. £200 was immediately subscribed at a meeting of 'most millowners and respectable inhabitants'. A soup kitchen was opened and flour, meal and potatoes distributed.⁴ In April the Holbeck Poor Fund was terminated. £489 had been subscribed, representing only 13.7 per cent of Poor Relief.⁵ The Wortley Poor Fund reached £217, 18.2 per cent of relief.⁶ In Bramley several families left for America.⁷ It is true that the distress of 1842 was very localised, even within the borough. While Bramley, Holbeck and Wortley suffered, the situation in Beeston actually improved as the number receiving relief fell from its level of 1838, and the average amount given per head increased. Nevertheless even Beeston put its able-bodied poor to work stone-breaking or repairing roads, and the overseers admitted that without this labour casual relief in the township would double.⁸ By June 1842 in Leeds 150,000 tons of unwanted stone had been broken by paupers. In many cases the overseers arranged to pay six shillings for doing nothing rather than seven shillings and sixpence for breaking stones.⁹ The whole system of relief had virtually broken down. Leeds overseers resorted to simply removing whole families, where it was suspected that other townships had dumped their paupers on Leeds.

- 1 Poverty however seems to have become increasingly an urban phenomenon, related to the most densely populated, insanitary areas within the borough. From the mid-1780's to the mid-1830's the amount of poor relief spent on Leeds increased from 48 per cent to over 70 per cent of borough expenditure. Calculated from Abstract of Poor Rate Returns, PP(1803-4)XIII, 654; Account of Poor Relief, 1830-4, PP(1835) XLVII, 428.
- 2 Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.72. On the committee, see R.J.Morris, 'Organization and Aims of the Principal Secular Voluntary Organization of the Leeds Middle-Class, 1830-51', (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1970), pp.128-9.
- 3 LM, 22 Jan., 29 Jan. 1842.
- 4 LM, 29 Jan. 1842.
- 5 LM, 30 Apr. 1842.
- 6 LM, 19 Mar. 1842.
- 7 LM, 26 Feb. 1842.
- 8 Return to Magistrates of Beeston Poor Relief, dated 2 July 1842, in Beeston Township Minutes, 1821-60, LCA LO/BE1.
- 9 LM, 25 June 1842.

100 paupers came to the Workhouse Boardroom to plead for advance payment of their wages for stonebreaking. Thereafter police were posted at Board meetings to maintain order.¹

The various Poor Funds suffered as they had in earlier years from sectarian rivalry between Anglican and Methodist voluntary societies.² Nevertheless the real failure was one of individual charity. The Leeds bourgeoisie simply did not meet the demand for relief. In the wake of the failed voluntary effort, Marshall and a handful of other suburban employers, parcelled off land as allotments and drained it for sowing. The tenants however were to be 'well conducted poor, not paupers, but independent labourers who have endeavoured to keep themselves above that conditions.'³ Holbeck township itself followed Marshall's lead and provided eight acres of township land as allotments to be linked to a labour test.

Working class reaction to distress and the relief schemes of the bourgeoisie resembled 1819 and 1834; firstly the urge to emigrate, but then the organisation of the unemployed, workplace agitation and political mobilisation. In April Chartists lectured on distress in the townships and took over Holbeck vestry at a long and 'very uproarious' ratepayers' meeting.⁴ From May they organised weekly meetings of several hundred unemployed in Leeds.⁵ In June the unemployed took to the streets in protest demonstrations. In July 4000 gathered to remonstrate with Parliament about distress and to memorialize the Queen.⁶ By the late summer, Chartism was still 'progressing gloriously in Holbeck and its neighbourhood'. At a camp meeting in Beeston it was claimed the neighbourhood 'abounds with "good men and true", very many of them having already joined in the struggle.'⁷ Flax workers were active in the renewed ten hours campaign. In August several thousand plug rioters swept like a whirlwind through the out-townships stopping mills, demanding food and wage increases, and leaving the military authorities acutely aware of the strategic significance of the industrial suburbs as the gateway to Leeds.

These events provide some illustration of the main points being made here about the suburban labour movement; that is firstly, that

1 Ibid.

2 Morris, op.cit. pp.88-90.

3 Ibid., p.142; LM, 6 Aug. 1842.

4 NS, 30 Apr. 1842; LM, 23 Apr. 1842.

5 LM, 14 May, 28 May, 4 June 1842.

6 LM, 11 June, 2 July 1842.

7 NS, 13 Aug. 1842.

the class nature of the bourgeois response to poverty and mass unemployment was a formative experience for class relations and labour consciousness in the out-townships; and secondly that political radicalism and industrial agitation overlapped and nourished each other. Such an interlocking of various campaigns came to characterise the labour movement and stimulated an awareness of a labour community in the industrial suburbs.

Actually placing the labour movement in a community context is difficult. Any social and political movement such as Chartism, which encouraged popular mobilisation through a raising of class consciousness, inevitably wrestled with the contradiction between the bonds of local identity and the need for a national class interest to transcend those bonds. The oscillation between political radicalism and industrial agitation - anti-Corn Law, factory reform, Ten hours, trade union recognition and enforcement of wage lists - and the overlapping of sectarian concerns such as revivalism and loyalism, and in the 1840's, temperance, anti-State Church and voluntarism, were all experienced as community events, and were part of the fabric of an intensely local milieu. Community played a part in the Leeds radical tradition, but its influence is more difficult to discern and measure than in the more visible political life of the middle class.¹

Trade unions naturally organised by district, township and lodge. This was especially the case in the woollen industry where the workforce was scattered, where many small shops and mills predominated, and where townships were identified by specialised products. For instance, although there was a great deal of centralised power in the Leeds Trade Union Committee of 1832-4, which almost succeeded in enforcing the Gott wage list as a standard for the mixed cloth district, local variations in products and relations of production always determined the outcome of negotiations and strikes. By its nature the Ten hours movement of the 1830's and 1840's was more centralised, helped by the concentration of the factory workforce and the weak organisation of women and children. Nevertheless, short-time delegates in out-township flax and worsted mills were also fairly autonomous. Trade unionism and labour consciousness did have deep roots in the out-townships, but the unity of the illegal and legal traditions of radicalism, of secret workers' societies and of public campaigns for constitutional reform, was severely eroded by the decline of the domestic industry. The resolution along class

1 On the role of localism and township identity in middle class politics see below, Ch.3/ii.

lines of the conflict engendered by this decline, meant that the concept of community itself became ambiguous for radicals in the clothier out-townships. It took some time for them to work out a new class definition of community, and this could only be done by methods of trial and error in the political arena.

The great strengths of the suburban labour movement and the radical tradition, whether in workshop organisation or in political agitation, were threefold. There was firstly the continuity of labour consciousness, embodied in a core of Leeds radical leaders. Secondly there was a radical political economy which articulated the values of the emerging labour community. Thirdly there was the ability of the labour movement to draw on important elements within clothier culture. These strengths were most evident when labour radicalism, whether in an economic or political form, was at its most powerful, in 1842, 1848, but above all in 1831-4.

The labour leaders in Leeds fell clearly into several categories. Firstly there were the middle class Tory radicals of national stature, Oastler, Sadler, Bull, who were mostly associated with factory reform and the Ten hours bill. Though anti-capitalist, they were also against political rebellion. Their support for the workers' right to combine against wage reductions continued throughout the 1830's. Secondly there were some middle class radicals who consistently supported the labour movement either in its political agitation or its trade unionism.¹ This group was very small however and heterogenous in its political views. The great majority of middle class Liberals rapidly ceased to identify with any working class agitation after the 1832 Reform Act. Thirdly the leaders of the working class political and trade union movements came from mills, shops, pubs, and some from the domestic woollen industry. Some, like Thomas Roberts and Thomas Buckley, the leaders of Gott's weavers in 1831, helped organise the Leeds clothiers' union after the experience of leading a successful strike. Others became involved in the trade union struggle in 1834 after being political radicals in 1830-1 or factory reformers in 1832-3. A handful of leaders in 1830-4 themselves embodied the radical tradition of the past. John

¹ For instance the surgeon T.T. Metcalfe, who spoke at the Hunslet Tolpuddle meeting in April 1834, who backed the unions but was 'glad the meeting wasn't political'. At the same time there was the solicitor who was fined for leading a strikers' 'riot' in Morley. LM, 12 Apr., 19 Apr., 1834.

Smithson was a radical reformer in 1819 and again in 1830-1. Joseph Oates represented the out-township clothiers as a trade unionist in 1824-5 and was a political radical in 1830. Thomas Mason was a radical in 1819, supported the 1824-5 union campaign, and was a radical reformer in 1830. The outstanding leader of the Leeds radicals was the cloth dresser turned bookseller James Mann. Possibly a Luddite in 1812, Mann was arrested for sedition in the abortive uprising of 1817, led the Leeds reformers in 1819 and 1830-1, and established the Leeds Radical Political Union in 1831, a year before his death from cholera.¹

Other labour leaders did not achieve Mann's level of political awareness. Nevertheless they did indicate a considerable degree of trade union consciousness which had developed far beyond the old concepts of illegal or semi-legal combinations to protect individual trades. Behind the calls for 'fair remuneration' lay the accumulated political economy of the labour theory of value, aspects of which had much in common with the political economy espoused by out-township clothiers in the early 1800's. 'Unions were the order of the day', proclaimed the hatter-shopkeeper Thomas Barlow at the Hunslet Tolpuddle meeting. 'Why should there not be a union of operatives to protect the only rents they could claim, the rents of their hands?'² Barlow, like many artisans and petty-bourgeoisie within the labour movement, saw a unity of interests between shopkeepers and workers.

"Let the Trade Unions say no unprincipled man shall undersell the fair dealer, by making a profit out of the wages of the poor. This principle will stand the test of reason and Christianity."³

This idea of fairness and rational egalitarianism also lay at the root of the clothiers' concept of how the domestic woollen industry should function. It was built into the structure of clothier culture in the townships and villages of the West Riding. By 1834 however, trade union consciousness itself had gone beyond this. Amidst calls for 'nothing short of a General Union of the Working Classes',⁴

1 See my entry on James Mann in the Dictionary of Labour Biography, vol.VIII (forthcoming, 1986), eds. Joyce Bellamy and John Saville.

2 LM, 19 Apr. 1834.

3 Thomas Barlow, A Few Remarks addressed to the Manufacturers, Shopkeepers and Operatives of Yorkshire on the subject of Trades' Unions (Leeds, 1832). This echoed the attack on the inconsistency of capitalist monopolies in the clothiers' petition of 1794. Journal of the House of Commons XLIX(1794), 431-2.

4 Resolution at the Bradford Trade Union meeting of worsted workers, LM, 2 Nov. 1833.

Leeds workers realised that they stood alone and shared no common interest with the Whig-liberal bourgeoisie. A speaker at Hunslet noted that

"a few years ago the unions were taken by the hand by the leading men in this country, in fact they were brought into power by unions, and having served their purpose they wanted now to do away with them." 1

As the cloth dressers' strike wore down the union in the summer of 1834 loyalty to the cause became more intense among those who were most labour conscious. Thomas Buckley attacked the 'tyrannical will' of the 'aristocratic mill-lords'. 'Stand by the union' and 'stand as we are' became the rallying calls, and those who advocated mediation from the platform were denounced from the crowd.² Former leaders like the Leeds secretary Ralph Taylor, and the spokesman of the Bradford woolcombers in 1825, John Tester, who had come out publicly against the union in 1833-4, were bitterly attacked as traitors.³ The Leeds Union Committee stood by the strikers till the end, and there was nothing but praise for their tireless secretary, Simeon Pollard, even though he found himself advising the men to sign the employers' document. The penultimate meeting of 1500 on Hunslet moor applauded a vote of thanks to their committee, and

"concluded by singing the hymn 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow', during which Mr Pollard, who is in a very declining state of health, appeared much affected."⁴

Divisions among the leadership may have weakened the union. In 1834 there were already plenty advocating co-operative remedies instead of the 'competitive strike system.'⁵ However, there is considerable evidence of the solidarity of workers in the face of media slander implying the corruption of their leaders and employers' pressure on landlords and shopkeepers not to give strikers and unionists credit for food and rent.⁶

By 1830 the principle of co-operation between trades, and within trades, between regions was also well-established. Darlington and Barnsley linen weavers co-operated with those at Leeds to draw up wage-lists.⁷ The Leeds union, first under John Powlett and then under Simeon Pollard, helped organise slubbers in more than 15 townships in 1832, slubbers, weavers, spinners and cloth dressers at

1 LM, 19 Apr. 1834.

2 LM, 17 May, 14 June 1834.

3 LM, 21 June 1834.

4 LM, 14 June 1834.

5 Poor Man's Guardian, 21 June 1834; The Crisis, 21 June 1834.

6 The Crisis, 31 May 1834; Richard Oastler, A Serious Address to the Millowners, Manufacturers and Cloth-dressers of Leeds, (Huddersfield, 1834).

7 LM, 3 Aug. 1833.

Farsley and Morley in 1833, machine makers at Horbury and woollen mill workers at Batley in 1834. In each of these places the union became a major feature of working life, an integral part of the community. The out-townships were thoroughly involved in the labour movement, not just in the weavers' committees and the union, but also in popular support for strikers and for factory reform. The tensions relating to class conflict were in consequence not far below the surface. Industrial and political issues, trade unionism, factory reform and the social relations of production became inseparable in the local context. It was therefore not only the labour leadership, but also the close-knit character of the local communities which encouraged the cross fertilisation of the different campaigns.

Local conditions also lent particular characteristics to the strike movement. Each township being fiercely independent, the divisions between communities added an extra dimension to industrial conflict. Thus it was possible to find workers in Pudsey willing to blackleg strikers in Wortley and Holbeck, and the fierce hostility between such groups must also be seen in its communal, not simply its economic context.¹

When trade unionists and employers did get together during a lull in the industrial conflict, to combat the 'depredations and outrages' which it was claimed accompanied strikes, the results could be successful. This happened at Morley in 1833 and 1834 when a committee of three workers and three manufacturers was formed to appoint special constables to settle disputes and to control the carrying of fire-arms in the village.²

Although strikes were at first about the enforcement of wage lists (1831-2) and about union membership and the closed shop (1833-4), the motive force continued to be the campaign against machinery, industrial capitalism, and the effort to protect the domestic system. This helps explain the support given to both trade unionism and factory reform in the out-townships. Domestic weavers and clothworkers in the shops of small clothiers benefitted directly from the strikes of factory workers in those brief periods between 1830 and 1834 when demand was not flat.³ Merchants would then turn to the cloth halls for their purchases, and the extra earnings of the domestic workers would filter back to the factory strikers via the union funds. That is why it was so important to the employers to drive a wedge between

1 LM, 25 Nov. 1833; 11 Jan. 1834.

2 LM, 7 Sept. 1833, 8 Mar. 1834.

3 LM, 11 May 1833.

the domestic weavers and the millworkers, and equally important to the unions to ensure that subscriptions were kept up and the number of non-union workers in the district was at a minimum. Local shopkeepers played a crucial role here and both sides needed their support. In 1832 some Leeds shopkeepers met to complain of union attempts to extort subscriptions. Trade unionists packed the meeting and called for the shopkeepers to support the union's struggle against low wages, the more the worker earned the more he could expend on the shopkeepers.¹

Both short-timers and trade-unionists believed that a reduction in hours would raise wages by decreasing the quantity of goods on the market and by raising prices. Profits might be squeezed, but generally manufacturers would increase prices to compensate for lost production.² Most importantly the political economy of shorter hours was seen by its supporters as giving the domestic manufacturer a chance to compete. A flax overlooker believed, 'the shorter time a man works the more he will get for his labour for that time in proportion.' The consequent increase in expense of investing in machinery to work shorter hours would encourage employers to turn again to hand labour, whose hours would not be restricted.³

Thus at the very heart of the Leeds labour movement lay the political economics and cultural values of the clothier communities, whether expressed by middle-class Tory radicals, working class factory reformers, or trade-unionists and their supporters. Barlow accused the capitalist manufacturers of several crimes. They squeezed out woolstaplers from the markets, and master dyers from production. They brought sorters, dyers and weavers into their factories on reduced wages, and broke up domestic establishments. They made spinners redundant by the introduction of mules, and contracted out finishing at fixed rates which led to more children and juveniles on low wages and long hours displacing adults.⁴ Oastler attacked the unrestricted use of capital, appealed against wage reductions, and called for a 'universal union of all classes.'⁵ His vision, like that of many radicals, was one of a community of small freeholders. Oastler thought in terms of a petrification of

1 LM, 6 Oct. 1832.

2 R.C. on the Employment of Children in Factories, First Report, PP(1833) XX (hereafter, Children's Employment Commission), evidence of William Osburn, C1, p.93.

3 Ibid., John Hannam, C1, p.88.

4 Barlow, op.cit..

5 Richard Oastler, A Few Words to the Friends and Enemies of Trades' Unions (Huddersfield, 1834).

patriarchal class relationships.¹ His poor were the 'original free-holders', taking 'the precedence of Princes in their title to the soil.'² Owenites and Co-operationists stressed the independence of the individual and the natural, God-given rights of labour to justice, freedom and equality. Moreover the industrial struggles of 1830-4 taught some trade unionists and political radicals, Mann, Rider, Pollard and others, to think in terms of class conflict both in the workplace and in political debate. Before 10,000 on Hunslet moor Thomas Buckley warned manufacturers that the workers were capable of producing without them, of shutting the cloth halls and selling their own produce.³

The early 1830's clearly witnessed the emergence of class conscious labour communities in Leeds and the West Riding, yet suburban trade unionists, factory reformers, political radicals, Owenites and Co-operationists to varying degrees all felt some attachment to the clothier milieu from which most of them came. In appealing for a restriction of machinery, Rev. Bull echoed the sentiments of many.

"The small manufacturers or employers of hand-loom weavers are the only remaining hope of this community - they form a link between labour and independence. Let them be destroyed by Capital and Steam, and we shall drive the labour to despair. There is not a steady and clever hand-loom weaver who does not hope to become at some day a small employer. IS THIS BRIDGE TO BE BROKEN UP?" 4

Finally, in two important ways, the labour movement absorbed features of clothier culture which virtually ensured that it would become a mouthpiece for these values. Firstly the organisation and ritual of the Leeds union appears to have been liberally borrowed not only from the tradition of radical and illegal underground associations, but also from the benefit and friendly societies which abounded in the out-townships.⁵ Even the first title, the 'Leeds Clothiers' Union', seems to have been a deliberate reminder of the Clothiers' Community of 30 years before. After Tolpuddle the press made much of gruesome rituals and secret oathtaking. Pollard himself defended the Leeds union's right to administer secret oaths to members, and when the union lodge on the Kirkstall road was dissolved in June 1834 the emblems sold to raise money for the strikers

1 British Labourer's Protector, no.7 (2 Nov. 1832).

2 Oastler, A Serious Address, op.cit..

3 LM, 7 June 1834.

4 Rev. G.S. Bull, 'The Cause of Industry' (Bradford, 1835), quoted in Rose, op.cit. pp.135-6.

5 See ch.6.

included a bible, a sword, and surplices worth over £6.¹ The fact is that ritual and symbolic ceremonies had long been an important part of clothiers' benefit societies, and that this was reflected in many activities of the whole labour movement. The flags, banners, music bands and formal processions which accompanied the great political or factory reform meetings was the public face of this cultural tradition, and was directly inherited from the reform movement of 1819. It was the same popular love of noise and colour which the local bourgeoisie of both political persuasions harnessed at their election meetings from 1832 onwards. The secret world of oath-taking and illegal organisation in public or private houses however was one which employers and magistrates alike found difficult to penetrate.

The second feature of clothier culture assimilated by the labour movement of 1830-4 was methodism. In 1831 a Bramley shoemaker resolved to remission his township for the Ranters.

"We took a lantern and went to the bottom of the village and began to sing. 'We are bound for the Kingdom'. 300 accompanied us to the chapel. I preached to them but not with my usual liberty, yet the revival began that night, and in a short time 40 or 50 persons found the Lord."²

Once again a methodist revival coincided with a period of intense radical labour agitation. As in 1819 a chiliastic mood swept the working population of the out-townships. Between 1831 and 1834 this mood shifted from optimism in a rational course of events, to despair or to faith. 'The times', observed James Mann in 1830, 'were pregnant with events and some great change must soon take place'.³ Universal suffrage was 'a right which God and nature proclaim to belong to the people'. 'Reason and Christianity' were the watchwords of trade unionists and political reformers.⁴ Employers' resistance to workers' demands for fair wages and political enfranchisement was both irrational and morally unjust.⁵ Yet an even more chiliastic note was sometimes struck. When Rev. Bull preached to the Stanningley Orange lodges in 1832 he chose his text from Micah, on

1 LM, 19 Apr., 21 June 1834.

2 W. Beckworth, Records of Leeds Primitive Methodism (Leeds, 1911), p.63. This revival continued with chapel building and preaching stations in Bramley and Wortley (1832-3) and the first Ranters' Sunday schools in Holbeck, Armley and Wortley (1831).

3 LM, 5 June 1830.

4 Barlow, op.cit. p.7.

5 See for instance John Polti's letter on the dyers' strike, LM, 24 Aug. 1833; E.P.Thompson, op.cit. pp.599-601.

the moral corruption of Israel, a direct call to the city and the curse of the urban rich.¹ It was claimed that Psalm 94 often formed part of the Leeds union's admission ceremonies, with its address to the God of vengeance and its attack on 'wicked rulers', 'who frame mischief by statute'.² The union condemned in prophetic terms a Leeds carpet manufacturer for bringing in foreign blacklegs after a 17 week strike by his weavers.

"...he wants to keep up wealth in abundance and to rejoice alone in the possession thereof, which is drawn out of the sinews and nerves of the bodies of his employed. But 'woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong; that grindeth the face of the poor and considereth not the sweat of their brow. He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things; moving his lips, he bringeth evil to pass, and the anxiety of his mind and the rapacious desires of his soul, will take vengeance upon him ..." 3

The unchristian behaviour of millowners was contrasted with the righteousness of the labour movement. A Holbeck factory worker and local methodist preacher, who had been sacked for his support for factory reform, considered himself 'a martyr in the 10 hours cause.

"Yet I will plead for the factory children until the time that God, whose I am, and he whom I serve, shall wrest the reins from the hands of the tyrant, and in spite of all opposing powers, deliver from slavery the British Factory Child." 4

The sense of mission and justice reached a climax of intensity during the final croppers' strike of May-June 1834. Thomas Buckley declared emphatically at the outset of the struggle, that 'the voice of the people was the voice of God, and they would ultimately gain the victory'. He warned however that if they gave way, the defeated would be made to pay.⁵ As the strike entered its fourth and critical week, the Ranters held a camp meeting on Hunslet moor immediately before the largest union meeting.

"Upwards of an hour was spent in singing hymns and prayer, and various quotations from scripture were made to bear upon the present situation of the working classes." 6

Hope turned to faith, and faith to despair, but the trade unionists faced defeat with a pure conscience and a belief in the historical inevitability of their cause. In its assimilation of the religious as well as the cultural, political and economic values of clothier communities, the labour movement carried forward these values into the era of politically mature class conflict.

1 British Labourer's Protector no.13 (14 Dec.1832). See Micah 6.8.

2 E.C.Tufnell, Character, Object and Effects of Trade Unions(1834) p.75.

3 LM, 7 Sept. 1833; Letter from John Potter.

4 British Labourer's Protector, no.19 (25 Jan.1833).

5 LM, 17 May 1834.

6 LM, 7 June 1834.

Class, Community and Politics 1832-55

The main points about the suburban labour movement may be summarised as follows. Firstly it was argued that economic fluctuations and the competitive pressures accompanying the emergence of factory capitalism drove a wedge into the heart of the domestic system, and resolved the political, economic and cultural contradictions facing the small clothier in his community. Secondly, that, principally as responses to poverty and economic instability, industrial conflict, religious revivalism, loyalism and political radicalism intertwined and overlapped in the out-townships. In years like 1819, 1824-5, 1830-4, 1841-2 and 1847-8, these responses are almost inseparable. Thirdly, out of this tangle of threads making up the web of the labour movement, and from an understanding of the class nature of the bourgeois response to poverty and the crisis facing the domestic system, emerged some awareness of a labour community in the industrial suburbs. This class-based community consciousness took shape within the radical tradition, which in turn drew on important elements within clothier culture.

Middle-class politics of opinion, therefore, needs to be viewed in the context of a labour radicalism firmly rooted in the out-township communities. By the 1830's, largely due to the alienation of clothiers from the labour community, and as the logical consequence of the divisions between Capital and Labour, community became increasingly defined by class. In the 1840's class consciousness was sharpened and defined in both political and industrial conflict. This culminated in the events which began with the Hunslet flax strike of 1847, continued with the renewed organisation of the unemployed in the spring of 1848, and climaxed with revolutionary agitation as physical force Chartism swept through Leeds and its suburbs. The flax reelers' strike committee contained some vociferous and angry young Chartists, thrown up from the rank and file. The worker who chaired one meeting announced himself as,

"a man of charity with everything but oppression...He was for the working classes having plenty of food and clothing; if there was anything to spare he would let the masters and parsons have it, and the rest he would give to those that would not work."

A former Chartist lecturer from Armley, and a member of the strike committee dubbed the employers

"scoundrels and creeping and crawling sycophants, and called upon the people no longer to kneel at their lordling's feet but to act an independent part for themselves." 1

In the aftermath of the French Revolution these sentiments developed with revolutionary fervour as the West Riding was proclaimed the 'cradle of liberty', with Leeds as its centre.² A massive 54,000 signed the Leeds Chartist petition, one third of the borough population. At Skircoat Moor on Good Friday 1848, 90,000 heard Joseph Barker of Wortley announce 'they had outlived the dark midnight of oppression. They had seen the dim light of liberty - the day of freedom was partially advancing.'³

In a sense, however, what were some of the strengths of the labour movement, its radical leadership and its community loyalties, also proved to be its greatest weaknesses. If not in 1834, then certainly in 1848 divisions among labour leaders proved fatal to hopes of revolutionary change, when physical force Chartists ceded the political arena to moral force and 'New Reform'.⁴

The second weakness of the suburban labour movement was that community consciousness could prove to be a Gordian knot in the class struggle. Sectarian or minority issues in the 1840's, which broached large in the out-townships, acted as distractions from the political struggle for universal suffrage or revolutionary change.

It was a fact that in a community environment the labour movement could not remain entirely independent of the disputes which racked middle class politics in Leeds. Nor could it bypass the patronage, the religious and political sectarianism, and the intense local patriotism which dominated out-township affairs.

Patronage played an important role in both Tory and Liberal election campaigns in the 1830's, less so in the 1840's. Patronage was distributed at the level of township politics. There was consequently a mixed assortment of forms and modes of patronage reflecting different social structures between townships. As the 1830's progressed, the gentry and millowners sometimes failed to match the influence wielded by suburban tradesmen, corn millers and farmers.

1 On the strike see LM, 1 May, 8 May, 15 May, 22 May, 12 June, 26 June 1847. The reelers, who operated hand-powered reels not regulated by steam, were among the best paid of female flax workers. Their defeat however resulted in reduced wages. From an average of about 9/- before the strike, top wages a year later were 8/-. A.B.Reach, The Yorkshire Textile Districts in 1849 (Helmshore, 1974), pp.24,28.

2 NS, 4 Mar. 1848, quoting George White.

3 NS, 22 Mar., 29 Apr. 1848.

4 On the New Reform movement see LM, 17 June 1848.

Whatever the source however, the patronage and political affiliation of leading local families continued to determine the political colouring of individual townships.

A stand off, for instance, between the Liberal stronghold of Bramley township and the Tory townships of Armley, Farnley and Beeston, and the resultant Tory-Liberal agreement, ensured that there were only three contested municipal elections in Bramley ward between 1841 and 1855. When there were fierce contests, deference and patronage were clearly important. In 1840 for instance, the Liberals mobilised in Beeston, while the Tories 'brought up their forces from the mills at Armley where no man in the employ of a Tory master durst vote otherwise than as the Blue despots told him.'¹ In Bramley, Haley's, the largest employer in the township, was also accused of forcing their men to vote Tory, notwithstanding that a written permission had been given by Joseph Haley, one of the partners, for the men 'to vote as they thought proper'. John Haley had traditionally been the backbone of the Reform party in Bramley. In the late 1830's however it seems that the firm was divided up amongst brothers and sons with William Haley and Brothers operating from Wellington mills and John Haley and Son from Waterloo Street. Within the family political differences seem to have simmered till election time, but a number of the Haleys were Tories and keen to exert pressure on their Liberal minded employees.

Despite these tactics the Liberals won in 1840, but it was their last triumph for four years. In 1841-2 Tories were returned unopposed, and in 1843 another victory left them with all six ward seats on the council. The Leeds Mercury reiterated earlier accusations of Tory bribery, but was careful to distinguish between townships. Beeston was,

"one of the most discreditable districts of the ward, the gratuitous supply of Blue roast beef and ale in the open houses being immensely abundant." 2

Bramley on the other hand, where Liberal voters outnumbered Tories, had 'acquitted itself honourably.' The problem for Liberals in Bramley was that although Bramley township had the most voters and was safely Liberal, they were outnumbered in the ward by the electors of Beeston, Farnley and Armley who were predominantly Tory. In 1843 Bramley Liberals attempted to mobilize support in Armley as they had tried in Beeston in 1840, but without success. In fact the

1 LM, 7 Nov. 1840.

2 LM, 21 Oct. 1843.

victorious Tory candidates were both Armley cloth manufacturers.¹

In assessing the 1832 parliamentary election in Leeds, Derek Fraser pinpointed the alienation of Tory manufacturers by factory reform as the main reason for Sadler's failure.² He argues that the working class only supported Sadler for his philanthropy not his politics.³ Sadler's 'personal canvas' was mocked by the Leeds Mercury, but his readiness to visit workers in their homes and shake hands with Hunslet washerwomen introduced a new element into the election, and must have earned him much sympathy in some quarters.⁴ It is just as likely however that much of Sadler's out-township support was due both to trade union backing, and to the fact that the political economy espoused by himself, Oastler and Bull, identified with the conceptions of domestic workers, small manufacturers and shopkeepers.

On the other hand it is clear that patronage and traditional political affiliations greatly determined communal voting patterns. This is only revealed by an analysis of the election results by township. Though losing the southern out-township wards decisively, Sadler in fact topped the poll in Armley and Farnley, was just edged into third place in Beeston with 48 per cent, and gained the support of 45 per cent of the voters in Wortley. Only in Bramley, Holbeck and Hunslet was he soundly beaten.⁵ Despite radical support, Sadler did best in those townships which were consistently or predominantly Tory in elections after 1832, and in which there were substantial Tory industrial families, the Armitages in Farnley (iron), the Gotts in Armley (wool), the Leathers and Hills in Beeston (coal).

The four elements in Sadler's campaign were therefore firstly his philanthropy, secondly Tory political economy, thirdly patronage, and fourthly working-class support from trade unionists and factory reformers. The last two were probably the most important. However Sadler's support for trade unions may have caused some retailers and dealers to turn away from him despite vigorous campaigning in the out-townships, therefore the second and fourth elements may have cancelled each other out. Certainly Sadler must have lost some Tory manufacturers because of his unionist friends. In Armley and Bramley Sadler polled the lowest Tory percentage of the vote at any election before

1 John Oddy and John Wilson.

2 D. Fraser, 'The Fruits of Reform: Leeds Politics in the 1830's', Northern History 8 (1972), 89-11.

3 Fraser, Politics in Leeds, op.cit. p.81.

4 LM, 15 Sept. 1832.

5 Table 3.2: Percentage Conservative Share of the Poll in Leeds wards and townships, Parliamentary Elections 1832-68. These percentages are calculated using the Fraser method of comparing leading Liberal with leading Tory. The method is described in his article, 'Politics and Society in the Nineteenth Century', in Derek Fraser ed., The History of Modern Leeds (Manchester, 1980), pp.270-300.

TABLE 3.2: Percentage Conservative Share of the Poll in Leeds Wards and Townships: Parliamentary Elections 1832-68

	1832	1834	1835	1837	1841	1852	1857 (1)	1857 (2)	1859	1865	1868
<u>HUNSLET WARD</u>	30.8	37.6	32.7	33.0	35.7	22.1	44.2	45.0	42.6	41.0	27.0*
<u>HOLBECK WARD</u>	39.6	42.8	40.3	36.8	37.9	20.5	48.4	44.7	45.9	46.3	29.5
Holbeck	36.1	46.3	36.6	35.1	40.7	22.0	48.4	45.4	42.5	48.4	31.9
Wortley	44.7	41.1	45.1	40.7	34.5	18.6	48.4	44.0	50.0	44.2	27.1
<u>BRAMLEY WARD</u>	42.1	50.1	54.2	49.4	51.0	35.3	46.7	42.3	50.9	51.7	41.5
Armley	54.6	65.8	68.3	63.4	70.9	47.9	59.2**		65.3	53.1	37.5
Beeston	48.1	52.5	39.1	50.0	56.0	56.1			58.0		46.4
Bramley	28.7	37.1	46.1	36.4	37.4	23.2	37.1**		41.3		39.1
Farnley	76.9	74.5	79.1	79.6	74.4	63.9			55.6		56.5
<u>LEEDS BOROUGH</u>	44.1	49.6	51.8	46.5	50.4	32.6	48.9	50.1	49.6	51.4	37.2

Notes and Sources :

* The ward and borough figures have been taken, with adjustments, from Fraser Politics in Leeds, op.cit., Table III, and Fraser, Urban Politics, op.cit., Table 23. The Hunslet figure for 1868 given in the latter source was 37.02%. This is either a miscalculation or a misprint.

** All township figures are calculated from the Pollbooks of Leeds elections, 1832-68. For the elections of 1857 breakdown by township is scarcely possible as polling districts crossed township boundaries. The 1857 figures for Armley and Bramley are taken from the revised figures provided by B. Wilson, LM, 2 Apr. 1857.

1852. In both these townships there were several influential mill-owners who had been in conflict with the union in the 12 months prior to the election.¹ At the same time there were other important mill-owners, such as Abraham Farrar at Bramley, who backed Sadler's campaign with active support. The situation was certainly more complex than has previously been suggested. The Tory-radical alliance in the out-townships was shaped not only by the social structure of each community, but also by relations at the workplace and between families, and by the degree of industrial conflict and indigenous radicalism present.

Liberals used patronage to great effect in 1832, despite the persistent divisions in their ranks. Moreover patronage was used to cultivate township and workplace loyalties, where such loyalties could be identified with the Liberal cause. Joshua Bower's Leeds Political Union for instance was aimed at skilled mechanics in the Holbeck and Hunslet machine-manufacturing and flax industries. The first meeting of 200 'respectable mechanics' was chaired by a partner in Taylor, Wordsworth and Co., the machine firm which had been prominent in supporting the first reform campaign. 1200 attended the meeting to elect the first committee of the 'Holbeck union'.² The LPU therefore cultivated not only a social and occupational identity, but also a deliberate township identity among its reformers. In this it possibly had more success than its Tory or Radical rivals. Certainly the success judging by the achievements of the reform campaign in the early summer of 1832 was considerable. The reform meeting at Armley - "the first political meeting ever held in that place" - attracted 1500, and 800-900 names were signed on the township petition. This was exceptionally comprehensive given that the number of adult males in Armley was only 1260 in 1831. However, of the nine speakers present, only four were recognisably Armley men.³

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties of recruiting local Liberals of sufficient social weight in Tory Armley, there was more township success for reformers in the celebrations of June. Bainesocrats in Bramley sat down with 60 gentlemen to a reform dinner in the Cardigan Arms. The Liberal elite of Bramley, led by the millowner William Musgrave, and the spirit merchant Richard Wilson, conducted the

1 Wainman, Oddy, Gott, Eyres in Armley. Lister, Barker, Haley in Bramley.

2 LM 5 Nov., 19 Nov., 17 Dec. 1831. Fraser, *Fruits of Reform*, *op.cit.* p.93.

3 LM 12 May 1832. Three of the Armley men had been township constables between 1817 and 1832.

celebrations and toasts.¹ It had some of the character of a communal festivity for the Bramley bourgeoisie, with the Bramley band in attendance, and glasses being raised to "The Town and Trade of Bramley". Following this John Haley, "the oldest and most extensive" cloth manufacturer in Bramley, organised a public celebration of reform.² He gave a mass dinner for all his employees, 450 of them, made the afternoon a holiday, and organised a public procession through the village of banners, music, with glasses of ale for refreshments. The procession included 'farmer-men, 100 women and girls, wool sorters and engineers, slubbers, children etc., weavers, cloth millers and night-watchmen, each body bearing a handsome banner.'³ A hymn was sung before the dinner of roast beef for the men, and tea and spice-cake for the women. The festivities were finished in the evening with a concert by the Bramley band.³ This ritualised celebration on a grand scale was not just an instance of ostentatious patronage by the largest employer in the township. It was a sign of the gentrification of the local millocracy. Such patronage had little to do with the values of collective self-help traditional among small clothiers. It signalled the ascendancy of the largest manufacturers over the domestic industry, long an economic fact, and anticipated the patriarchal-type of community celebrations held in the townships after 1848. Above all it showed that capitalists such as Haley were seeking to legitimise a right won by their economic power, the right to represent and articulate the consciousness of the whole community in their own terms and their own language.⁴

Patronage remained an important element in the township elections of the 1830's. With Sadler gone, Tories were abandoned to the traditional paternalism of the old party under Beckett. In this they not only reverted to form,⁵ but also actively copied the Liberal

1 LM 16 June 1832. Musgrave had been a mill occupier in Bramley since about 1812. He occupied a mill at Newlay, and from 1823-39 was a partner with the Tory John Barker in Wellington Mill. He owned his own house. Richard Wilson's father, Benjamin, was a grocer and maltster who had accumulated 39 cottages and 42 tenants by 1823, making him the largest owner of cottages in the township. He also owned his own house, comprising wine cellars, and a malt kiln. Bramley Survey, 1823, LCA, L0/35.

2 Haley owned three mills in 1823, all steam powered, for fulling scribbling and corn grinding. He also owned a farm-house and 44 acres at Swinnow, and 5 cottages with 9 tenants. Bramley Survey, 1823, op.cit.

3 LM, 23 June 1832.

4 Asa Briggs, 'The Language of Class' in early nineteenth century England', in Asa Briggs and J Saville, eds., Essays in Labour History (2nd edn., 1967), 43-73.

5 Fraser, Fruits of Reform, pp.96-7; idem, Politics in Leeds, pp.105-9.

example of 1832, with some success in 1834 and a victory in 1835.

Patronage also continued to work for the Liberals. In March 1834 the victory celebrations in Bramley were again led by Haley with Baines as guest of honour. Two dinners were held on consecutive evenings for 200 male electors, their wives and children. Only 176 actually voted for Baines in Bramley, so once more Haley's generosity probably spilled over the township boundary. The election committee of 1832 was present, more or less intact. Apart from imported Liberal notables such as John Wilkinson and Samuel Clapham, the main table was filled by local cloth manufacturers, Joseph and Matthew Gaunt, Joseph Wood, William Roberts. The Gaunts were from a modest clothier family who did not buy their first mill till after 1836, but later owned several in Bramley. Wood was also from clothier stock. He owned Swinnow mill by 1835 and was a Liberal councillor for Bramley 1838-40. Roberts occupied a weaving and spinning shop at Stanningley worth £20 in 1823, but by 1826 had moved into Cape mill let by the Hainsworths at Farsley. These were all men who had experienced some degree of social mobility as a result of success in cloth manufacturing. The memory of 1832 was deliberately invoked with a senior partner in the mill presiding "over a table which was occupied by the 40 heroes of Allan Bridge mill". Baines aimed straight at clothier constituents when he praised as "true-hearted and high-minded", the "independent cloth makers of Bramley". Wilkinson reminded them that "the interests of the clothiers of Bramley were wound up with the interests of the merchants of Leeds: the merchants were but a component part of the same chain."¹

The Liberal bourgeoisie had clearly found the soil in which to plant their concept of community. Loyalty to community and to the trade of Bramley had become synonymous with loyalty to their class interests. This time there were none of the popular festivities in the township which had accompanied the passing of the Reform Bill. In any case it would have been difficult for Haley to give a dinner for his workers when they were all out on strike. But with riots outside Haley's mill against blacklegs, the Liberals neither needed nor wanted the support of trade unionists and political radicals among the working class. What counted in the out-townships was the backing of the large clothier-ratepayers, the small millowners and occupiers, and the tradesmen and shopkeepers. This they achieved, but only just. Vincent gives an "exhaustive" analysis of all out-

1 LM 8 Mar. 1834.

township votes by occupation for the 1834 election.¹ Shoemakers and tailors, and two out of three shopkeepers were Liberal. A majority of those describing themselves as cloth manufacturers were Liberal, but clothiers were evenly divided. All five flax spinners were Liberal, doubtless a legacy of the Ten hours campaign. It was a sign of how far the Liberals had made patronage work to capture the clothier constituencies that the first municipal elections in 1835 returned a string of economy-minded manufacturers from the out-townships. William Pawson (Stonebridge mill), Matthew Moss (Antwerp mill), and James Hargreave (Mill Garth mill) were all substantial Liberal employers in Armley and Wortley, as were Benyon, Maclea and Musgrave in Holbeck and Bramley.² It was men such as these, by no means the elite of Leeds, but regarding themselves as the leaders of their communities, who brought out their workers to vote en bloc in the hotly contested council elections of 1840. Both Liberal and Tory employers, however, were from the mid-1830's increasingly less able to mobilise their employees for middle-class political campaigns. The main obstacles were distress and unemployment, the revival of an independent working class movement, and the memory of the betrayal of 1834. Only after 1848 did this change and overt patronage return to the out-townships.³

The patronage system operated by Tories and Liberals alike is best understood in terms of township politics and community relations. Age-old township loyalties could not be wiped away by redrawing the electoral map, and this remained true long after 1832. It was townships rather than wards which mattered in party politics. An analysis of municipal elections reveals clear township configurations within the ward parties. Table 3.3 shows that Bramley Tories dominated the leadership of their ward party although most voters probably came from Armley, Beeston and Farnley.⁴ This paradox is difficult to explain.

1 J.R.Vincent, Pollbooks: How the Victorians Voted (Cambridge, 1967), pp.123-4.

2 Pawson, who also had a warehouse in Cheapside, London, became the first man from the out-townships to be Mayor of Leeds, 1841. Moss, like Pawson, was forced to concede wage rises in 1832, and had his mill brought to a standstill by plug rioters in 1842. He and his namesake son were active in Armley politics till the 1860's. Hargreave had been a mill-owner in Leeds since 1816, 15 years longer than Pawson or Moss. He was a leading Wesleyan and very active in Wortley politics, chairing over 20 town meetings between 1831 and 1837.

3 This subject will be examined more closely in Chapter 5.

4 Table 3.3: Bramley Ward Municipal Candidates 1835-55.

TABLE 3.3: Bramley Ward Municipal Candidates 1835-55

1 Political Affiliation and Residence: All Candidatures

	<u>Elected</u>			<u>Defeated</u>	
	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Tories</u>	<u>Chartists</u>	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Tories</u>
Armley	11	3	1	3	3
Bramley	14	13		1	7
Beeston	2				1
Holbeck		1			
Wortley	1				
Farsley				1	
Totals	28	17	1	5	11

2 Occupations: All Individuals

	<u>Liberals</u>			<u>Tories</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Others</u>	
Cloth maker/ merchant	2	3	2	4	4	1	16
Gentleman	1	1		1	1		4
Stone merchant		2			1		3
Spirit merchant		2					2
Brewer/maltster	1				1		2
Farmer		1	1				2
Other merchants ¹					2	1	3
Professionals		1			1		2
Retailers	1						1
Dyer		1					1
Tanner					1		1
Contracter	1						1
Unknown	1				1		2
Totals	7	11	3	5	12	2	40

¹ Includes a drysalter

Source: Leeds Mercury, 1835-55

The loyalist tradition in Bramley and the greater politicisation of its clothiers perhaps made the township a more fertile breeding ground for local politicians than its smaller neighbours. The Liberal leadership was more evenly divided between Bramley and Armley, although the latter was possibly the more tightly-knit body. Whigs generally dominated the ward Liberal party, however the 1848 election shows that some Armley Liberals were not willing to accept the Whig-Tory coalition, and many of these must have voted for the Armley Chartist Waring in 1849.¹

Overall Radicals and Chartists were weak in Bramley ward. Unlike Hunslet and Holbeck, Chartism or labour militancy had not struck deep roots. There was no industrial agitation there after the Plug riots of 1842. Instead there was a great pre-occupation with the demise of hand-loom weaving and the extent of poverty among domestic workers. At least at municipal and parliamentary level there was little political organisation even among shopkeepers and artisans. Big employers and the social elite dominated ward politics through the 1840's, unlike in Wortley and Holbeck, and there was some evidence of paternalism and social and political control of the workforce.

The occupational analysis of 21 Liberals and 19 Tories in Bramley ward, and 27 Liberals and six Tories in Holbeck ward confirms that there was little socio-economic difference between party candidates in the out-townships. Cloth manufacturers ~~represented~~ ^{were preponderant} in both parties in Bramley ward, and in neither was there any significant 'tail' of small retailers and craftsmen. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 also reflect the diversity of the out-township economies.² In both parties the ranks of candidates were made up from various wholesale merchants in spirits, salt, timber, stone, china, as well as brewers, maltsters, farmers, millers, publicans and a handful of professionals. In contrast to Bramley, however, where textiles dominated both parties, among Holbeck Liberals the new industries provided a rich source of leaders. Machine-making and fire-brick manufacture were absent from the Tory lists in Bramley and Holbeck, and the rising brewing industry was much more important among Holbeck Liberals than among Tories of either ward. There is some evidence that the new industrialists and large employers such as Maclea, March, Pollard, Cliff, Ingham, tended to be Liberals. Holbeck

1 George Waring was an Armley shoemaker.

2 Table 3.4: Holbeck Ward Municipal Candidates 1835-55.

TABLE 3.4: Holbeck Ward Municipal Candidates 1835-55

1 Political Affiliation and Residence: All Candidatures

	<u>Elected</u>		<u>Defeated</u>		
	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Chartists</u>	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Chartists</u>	<u>Tories</u>
Holbeck	22	4	2	9	8
Wortley	15	2	3		6
Beeston			1		
Bramley		1			
Leeds		2		1	
	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	37	9	6	10	14

2 Occupations: All Individuals

	<u>Liberals</u>			<u>Chartists</u>	<u>Tories</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>Holbeck</u>	<u>Wortley</u>	<u>Others</u>			
Cloth maker/ merchant	1	2		1	3	7
Machine maker	5					5
Flax spinner	3				1	4
Brewer/maltster	3	1				4
Fire brick maker		3				3
Butcher	1			1		2
Grocer		1		1		2
Drysalter					2	2
Printer/ publisher				2		2
Publican/ beerseller		1		1		2
Other merchants ¹	2	1		2		5
Other retailers ²				5		5
Professionals/ clergy		2				2
Master painter ³				1		1
Cornmilller			1			1
Unknown				1		1
	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	15	11	1	15	6	48

1 Wool, timber, coal, salt, and a commercial traveller.

2 Tobacco, flour, milk, a general dealer and a draper.

3 Small employer

Source: Leeds Mercury, 1835-55.

Chartists however differed sharply from the other two parties, being largely composed of shopkeepers and tradesmen, with a few printers and two small employers.¹

Unlike Bramley ward, where Tories and Liberals usually agreed on electoral spoils, municipal elections in Holbeck were fiercely contested. Political, religious and communal factions within the parties ensured that there were only four unopposed elections in 20 years, with the highest polls being those in which township issues were prominent.

Table 3.4 illustrates the strength of the Liberals in Holbeck, 37 victories out of a possible 43 between 1835 and 1855. Of 27 individuals standing as Liberal candidates, only two failed to get elected at least once during this period. Down to 1842 the Liberals had almost a clean sweep of the Holbeck ward council seats. Only the aberrant victory of a lone radical in 1838 disturbed their sequence of successes. Indeed a total of only six candidates in 20 years indicates the paucity of Tory leadership in Holbeck. From 1842 the main threat to Holbeck Liberals was Chartism. Chartists were elected in 1843 and 1844, and returned every year between 1847 and 1850.

The arrival of the Chartists as the main opposition in the council elections was generally worse for Holbeck Liberals than Wortley Liberals. Between 1842 and 1845, and again 1846-9, no Liberal from Holbeck was returned in the ward. It was left to Wortley to meet the Chartist challenge. Wortley Liberals, only four of whom had managed to get elected in the 1830's against eight from Holbeck, took charge. The pattern of victories was as follows :

Holbeck 9, Wortley 4, 1835-41

Holbeck 3, Wortley 4, 1842-8

Holbeck 5, Wortley 3, 1849-55

Not only did the Chartists aggravate township divisions in the Liberal ward organisation, but within the townships factions of the left and right emerged. Here localist and individual political tendencies became important. In the early 1840's there seemed little difficulty in both Hunslet and Holbeck Liberals labelling their opponents as 'Tory Chartists'.² A Tory-Chartist alliance was still feared in 1846 and it took coach-loads of Wortley Liberals to defeat the Chartists' factory vote on polling day.³ After this close

1 Benjamin Barker, brother of the Republican printer Joseph Barker, was a small mill occupier from Bramley. George Gaunt was a Wortley printer, employing six men in 1851.

2 LM 6 Nov. 1841.

3 LM 7 Nov. 1846.

contest however both parties appeared to unite as 'reformers'. This seems to have been largely the work of some sections of the Wortley Liberal party. Wortley was one of the few places where Baines' voluntaryism had done little harm to party unity. Although the two candidates in 1847, Brook and Gaunt, were both Chartists, Gaunt at least was proposed by a Wortley Liberal, Hepper, and there was no Liberal opposition.¹ It would appear from the comments of the Leeds Mercury, that Brook and Gaunt were more acceptable to the Liberals than 'the cameleon alias pancakes and liberty', Ardill and Jackson, the defeated Chartists of 1846.² Nevertheless the Chartists themselves do not seem to have split. Jackson was among half a dozen speakers at the victory meeting.³

The strain on Liberal unity was at its greatest between 1848 and 1849. In 1848 Hepper refused to stand with his Wortley neighbour Joseph Barker, and preferred to run with John Whitehead, a Holbeck Liberal.⁴ Hepper's rejection of a double ticket with Barker is interesting. It indicates not only how far left Hepper and the Wortley Liberals were prepared to move, i.e.: with Gaunt, but not with the Republican Barker. It also shows that the Chartists initially believed a coalition of Wortley Liberals and Chartists, Barker with Hepper, was feasible. The Liberals clearly had other ideas and thought, mistakenly, that Whitehead and Hepper were strong enough to push out Barker. The Tories merely hoped to pick up any leftovers from a Liberal-Chartist split.

The Liberals were divided in other out-townships too. There was a split between Reformers and Whigs at Armley, where the former were vehemently opposed to a deal with the Tories and successfully drove the Whigs out of the Bramley ward seat. There was a similar split at Hunslet, but there the Whig-Tory alliance defeated the radical challenge. In contrast Chartist organisation in Wortley was solidly behind Barker, whose victory was celebrated by Republican tricolors decorating the streets and houses of New Wortley. Barker polled more votes than any elected Chartist, although this still fell 80 votes short of the vote cast for the unsuccessful Jackson/Ardill team of 1846.⁵

1 William Brook was a cut nail manufacturer from Leeds. George Gaunt was a Wortley painter running his father's business. Edward Hepper was a cloth merchant.

2 LM, 23 Oct. 1847. Ardill was a milk seller and Jackson a flour seller, hence the pancakes.

3 LM, 6 Nov. 1847.

4 Whitehead was a machine-manufacturer. LM, 21 Oct. 1848.

5 LM, 4 Nov. 1848.

Another close election in 1849 provides further evidence of factionalism in Holbeck ward. As in Armley and Hunslet in 1848, in Holbeck in 1849 a group of Whig-Liberals were prepared to do a deal with the Tories to keep out the Chartists. 'A strong contest is expected,' wrote the Leeds Mercury, 'for a section of the Liberals and the Chartists in this ward do not pull together in anything.'¹ The Liberal candidate was Samuel Stead, a 41 year old grocer from Wortley, who was to run with Richard Atkinson a Holbeck Tory mill-owner. It is difficult to categorise these anti-Chartist Liberals. Stead's equivalent in Hunslet in 1848 was Joseph Wilkinson, a substantial flax spinner. Stead however was a small shopkeeper who employed one man and three apprentices in 1851. Stead, and many petty bourgeois Liberals like him, became very active in township politics during the 1850's.²

The Chartists were only finally defeated in 1851-2 when Liberals in Wortley and Holbeck campaigned together, and when divisions appeared in Chartist ranks. Thereafter, the demarcation lines between Chartists and Radical-Liberals, particularly in Wortley, became hazy. In 1853, Robert Carter, who had been a Redemptionist, a Chartist and a member of the Leeds Co-operative in 1848, received the backing of both Holbeck and Wortley Liberals and a record number of 1547 votes. The real contest lay between Robert Armstrong of Wortley, a Sturgite voluntarist and Independent minister, and Richard Coxon, a Holbeck butcher. 'In the person of Mr Coxon', wrote the Leeds Mercury, 'the Holbeck interest triumphed.'³ This geographical split between Wortley and Holbeck Liberals recurred in 1854 with another defeat for Armstrong and Wortley. On this occasion Armstrong was paired with a Chartist butcher from Wortley, Henry Child.⁴ Again, however, the Wortley-Holbeck conflict was not a simple Radical-Liberal split, for the Liberal victor, William Naylor, at first proposed a Wortley-Holbeck coalition of himself and Armstrong, which the latter rejected. Naylor, who had already defeated Chartists in 1851, may have been more willing to fight Armstrong once Child had joined the latter's team.

In Holbeck local grievances and disputes seems not only to have

1 LM, 27 Oct. 1849.

2 Stead was Wortley Overseer in 1850, Surveyor 1853-7 and 1863-6, and Chairman of the Town Meeting four times 1851-6.

3 LM, 5 Nov. 1853.

4 Child had been active in radical politics since at least 1844.

taken priority over political differences, they seem to have attracted enormous numbers of ratepayers to participate in the elections. Well over 2200 voted in 1853 and 1854, four times more than in any other Holbeck elections. Sectarianism and localism drew the crowds in a way that party political electioneering did not. In Holbeck the Leeds Mercury regretted the "difference between Liberals of the same political principles."¹ Such differences were the very stuff of the petty bourgeois community consciousness in the out-townships. It was more often than not through sectarianism that the lower middle class asserted their sense of local independence. Within the ward Liberal party, as the election figures suggest, the Wortley Liberals received much the smallest portion of the political cake. Their attempts to increase this share led to an equally localist response from Holbeck. In 1855 the Holbeck-Wortley battle was terminated by a peaceful coalition. One candidate each was nominated by separate township meetings. Wortley Liberals once again chose Armstrong. However, at the ward nomination meeting Councillor Coxon, objected to Armstrong's renewed nomination 'inasmuch as he was a resident of Wortley. They had decided last year not to have a Wortley man to represent Holbeck.'² Coxon was overruled, and the Wortley-Holbeck team were returned in a no contest. The Leeds Mercury commented wryly,

"The Holbeck and Wortley interests, which have hitherto been regarded as pretty nearly irreconcilable, this year entered into a peaceful compact - the warriors of both townships have for once smoked together 'the pipe of peace'." ³

Particularism and localism created a great variety of divisions within ward parties and between parties. On occasions the strength of township identity overrode political loyalties. The politics of opinion therefore could be subsumed not only by class but also by community consciousness. Sectarianism proved to be a hive of localist sentiments and a vehicle for the development of a lower middle class consciousness in the Liberal out-townships.

The rise of the lower middle class is best examined in the sphere of township government, but it had important consequences in municipal and national politics as well. Religious schisms and temperance campaigns in the 1830's, and the anti-Corn Law protest in the early 1840's had certainly fostered the petty bourgeois element in radical

1 LM, 4 Nov. 1854.

2 LM, 30 Oct. 1855.

3 LM, 3 Nov. 1855.

Dissent and in radical politics. But within the out-townships these had usually been moderated by the Liberal bourgeoisie. In the mid-1840's the lower middle-class took the political initiative out of the hands of the Liberal middle-class and seriously damaged party unity at a critical moment in the class struggle. Baines' voluntarist stormtroopers were to be found amongst the small manufacturers, tradesmen, professionals, and clergy of the out-townships. In 1846-8 the large employers, the Liberal elite, often found themselves alongside some of the working class in following this new radicalism. Such a development also threatened working class solidarity. Voluntaryism, education, anti-State-church, Sabbatarianism, and again temperance all became issues blown up at local township level to such proportions that they threatened to eclipse the suffrage campaign of the Chartists.

The long tradition of sectarianism in the out-township was by its nature localist and strongly opposed to central authority of any kind, whether of town council, state or church. The conflict over the Established Church and State-funded education, for instance, was in local terms a struggle for power and influence in the out-townships and over who was to champion those communities in the fight against the encroachment of outside authority. From the 1830's out-township Dissenters faced an increasingly strident and aggressive Anglican church intent on regaining lost ground in the suburbs.

The temperature rose considerably in the out-townships in 1848 with an aggressive campaign of lectures in Bramley, Armley, Stanningley and Leeds by the British Anti-State Church Association. In Wortley a Branch Bible Society was established at a meeting of Wesleyans, Independents, and voluntarist Liberals and Chartists.¹ In some out-townships such as Wortley this united Non-Conformist stand against state religion papered over earlier sectarian conflict between Dissenters themselves.

All this occurred at the very time Chartists were trying to step up their suffrage campaign. For many out-township ratepayers religious politics were all-consuming. Even for Chartists, Dissenter anti-State radicalism was a great distraction, as were other movements of the late 1840's, the temperance campaigns, and the enormous growth of self-help institutions, mechanics' institutes and friendly societies.

¹ LM, 19 Feb. 1848.

It is easy to regard religious and self-help politics as counter-revolutionary in character. In the year of European revolutions these undoubtedly provided a distraction for the British working class in communities such as the Leeds out-townships which may have been ripe for social upheaval. The local Liberal middle-class were careful to use organisations such as the League of Universal Brotherhood to sap radical energies. An anti-war petition from Leeds in February raised 36,000 signatures to support Cobden's opposition to increases in military expenditure.¹ Dissenter clergy from the Band of Hope and the Anti-State Church movement came together to promote the league. Its pacifist message had important implications for local physical force militants. Proposing a Bramley branch of the League, the Baptist minister proclaimed that there was 'nothing in the physical formation of man to indicate that Nature had designed him for war.'²

In the spring of 1848 the League, the self-help institutions, the anti-State Church movement and voluntaryism all provided a counter to the development of a revolutionary class consciousness among the out-township working class. Yet the seeds of this 'counter revolutionary' tendency were sown deep within the radical labour movement itself. The secretary of the League of Universal Brotherhood was also a leading Leeds Chartist, and the Circuit Secretary of the Bramley Wesleyan Methodists.³ Within the out-townships, as well as on the Town Council itself Chartists stood with one foot inside the bourgeois political system. Religious sectarianism, voluntaryism and self-help gave the working class a radical identity in the context of their own communities. These movements encouraged that radicalism to be directed internally towards localism, rather than externally towards a national class consciousness. Community consciousness provided a container for class consciousness, though it did not dispel it.

Sectarianism and self-help, bourgeois political campaigns and an increase in overt patronage had provided diversions from Radical working-class politics before. In 1847-8 they may well have held back the development of a political radicalism in the out-townships and ultimately weakened working class militancy in the year of revolution. All this however undoubtedly fostered a lower middle-class consciousness in the out-townships, which proved a vital

1 Fraser, *Politics in Leeds*, op.cit. p.469. John Morley, The Life of Richard Cobden, (13th edn.1906), pp.470-80.

2 LM, 4 Mar. 1848.

3 William Barker was a Bramley shopkeeper in 1848. He later became a clothier.

factor in the Liberal unity of 1852. Religious schism and the search for independence of worship, the voluntarist-state education battle over school provision, the temperance struggle for the pocket and soul of the working class, mechanics' institutes, benefit societies and the mutual improvement of the skilled artisan and small shopkeeper, the drive for cheap government of town and state, and the renewed formalisation and ritualisation of patronage, all this nurtured a petty-bourgeois outlook in which the parameters of out-township life were drawn locally and in heavily structured terms.

- The consequence of petty-bourgeois localism was that class consciousness was subsumed to community consciousness. Class distinctions were formalised as strata within the community. The community however as a whole, was recognised as greater than the sum of its parts. This was possible because the thread which held the community together was localism, and its motive force was social mobility within the local context. To be seen to be moving upwards was more important to the individual than the actual achievement of mobility. In local circumstances the historical relations between individuals and families, and the social production of these relations were paramount. Existing relations took primacy over anything which social mobility might produce, for ultimately the prerogative which governed most areas of suburban life, even under the fairly prosperous conditions of mid-Victorian capitalism, was insecurity.

Out-township Government 1820-60

The themes examined in the previous two sections of this chapter, the independence of political life in the out-townships, the importance of patronage, sectarianism and radicalism, and the early development of a petty-bourgeois interpretation of community recur at the level of township government. Close to the ground however these themes become more complex. In examining the social and political structures of township administration, and the issues and conflicts raised at this most local level of government, we are approaching the heart of the out-township communities. Rates and property valuation, the administration of the poor, law and order, township schools, township officers, their salaries, church rates, burial grounds, improvement, turnpikes, railways and industrial pollution, all provided multiple sources both of social conflict, and of a community identity based on a fiercely independent localism.

Nothing seems as clear cut as it does when worked out at the level of parliamentary or municipal politics. Local issues could unify and divide almost in the same breath. Political and occupational patterns revealed in parliamentary and municipal elections did not always resemble those in township government. The degree of internal conflict, social, political or religious, was as much determined by individual interests as by group affiliations. This does not mean there are no lessons to be learnt from township politics. On the contrary it was at this micro-level that participation in the process of decision making was often widest, most intimate and most intense. It was the rough-hewn allegiances, worked out in the sphere of community conflict, which, when finely shaped, determined the political, social and religious divisions drawn in the world beyond the township boundaries.

Within the townships the redefinition of community in terms of class occurred as the domestic cloth industry declined and sectarianism and party rivalry increased. As the township offices, committees and public meetings became politicised they became a vehicle for social conflict. At the same time, however, such conflict was offset by a sense of local identity, cultivated in township government by the need to remain independent of central authority whether of the Parish Church, the Borough Council or the Poor Law Commission.

It was in township government that the development of a petty bourgeois concept of community was most evident from the 1840's. Ideologically this held the notion of communal identity above social, religious and political differences. The lower middle class in government, whether as an improvement or an economy party, were concerned neither with the interests of industrialists nor of the workers except where either were necessary to maintain power. Localism was good for its own sake, as was moral and economic progress and the eradication of the less savoury aspects of working class life. Township independence was the conceptual linchpin of community consciousness, linking the individualism of shopkeepers, artisans, small farmers and millers with their sense of the limitations of individual social progress.

Perhaps the major feature to emerge from the following analysis of township government is this prevailing sense of local identity. The petty bourgeoisie shaped their notion of community during the social conflicts of the 1830's and 1840's. The assertion of their hegemony in mid-century used community consciousness as a substitute for conflict and the insecurity it brought to the structures of township life. Community fitted the lower middle class 'weltanschauung' as it provided a sense of belonging, the security which their lack of class consciousness and their adherence to individualism denied them. At the same time the community was not permanent or stable, particularly in the industrial suburbs. The notion incorporated a sense of transience which the petty bourgeoisie felt most acutely in the last quarter of the century, as most townships became urbanised and their physical independence was threatened by Leeds. Much of this is the subject of chapters five and six, but these arguments can already be developed from the analysis of township government.

The out-townships enjoyed considerable autonomy until the 1860's. The heart of self government was the vestry or township meeting. Strictly speaking the only vestry as such in Leeds was that of the parish church, and the borough was virtually contiguous with the parish. In practice most chapelries functioned as centres of lay politics in the out-townships. Public meetings of ratepayers were called by posting a notice on the chapel door or having it read aloud during the Sunday service. Although the Parish Vestries Act of 1818 restricted vestry meetings to a maximum of 20 ratepayers and a minimum of five, this rule was frequently ignored and the basic

organisation remained in-tact.¹

Township meetings laid poor rates and the minute books recorded the recipients of relief and the amount disbursed. In addition rates for the chapelwarden, the constable and surveyors were also fixed at the meetings. The latter two offices were nominated by the township meeting and submitted to the magistrates who rubber-stamped the appointments.² The chapelwarden was directly responsible for maintaining the chapel in good repair and helping the overseer. The overseers, with the largest portion of ratepayers' funds in their hands, were responsible for the general moral and physical welfare of the town's inhabitants. Township meetings also determined the contracting out of pauper apprentices, and collected fines paid by employers to avoid taking them.

The public meetings and township committees represented the conscience of the ratepayer-clothier communities. They were the local parliaments of the townships. With the decline of the independent clothier from the 1820's and the increasing diversification of the out-township economies, changes in the occupational and social composition of township offices occurred as political patterns began to emerge. An analysis of the minute books of two townships, Wortley and Beeston reveal these developments.

In Wortley from the late 1830's the composition of the boards of overseers and surveyors moved in favour of the small employers, craftsmen and shopkeepers, and away from the larger manufacturers, merchants and property owners. This trend was abruptly reversed in the early 1850's. The resumption of control of these township offices was led by substantial brick manufacturers, machine makers, millowners and merchants. The employers' grip began to weaken again by the end of the decade. The increasing number of surveyors elected towards the end of that board's life was one indication of the declining interest taken in township affairs by large manufacturers.³

These developments were also observed in the other township offices. It is characteristic of the social balance in Wortley that

1 Beeston Township Minutes, 9 July 1823. Fraser, *Urban Politics*, op.cit. p.27. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *English Local Government; vol.1, The Parish and the County* (1963 edn), pp.37-40.

2 In fact both Stuart Charters granted Leeds Corporation the power to elect constables for the borough.

3 This paralleled the pattern on Leeds Council itself. E.P. Hennock, 'The Social Composition of Borough Councils', in H.J. Dyos, ed., *The Study of Urban History* (1971), pp.315-36.

two grocers occupied the post of Poor Guardian from 1844 to 1852, and two gentlemen succeeded them between 1852 and 1860. The chair of the township meeting, the symbolic leadership of the Wortley ratepayers, reveals a similar social pattern.¹ Not a single artisan or shopkeeper chaired a township meeting between 1832 and 1841. In the 1840's this situation changed dramatically. By 1847-51 shopkeepers and craftsmen had achieved a majority among township chairmen. This group was then toppled in the early 1850's as the manufacturers, clergy and gentlemen of Wortley consolidated their return to power. What is interesting is the way both groups, large manufacturers and retailer-craftsmen, used their power. The ratio of chairmen to the number of meetings held shows a trend complementing the results of the social analysis. During the oligarchy of the cloth manufacturers in the 1830's, three millowners alone took 70 per cent of township meetings. In the following decade the average number of meetings per chairman dropped from five to two and no-one chaired more than seven meetings. Thus in the 1840's the township chair was open to a much larger number of ratepayers than before or after. In the 1850's, despite an increase in the number of meetings held, the ratio of chairmen fell as manufacturers regained control.

The attitude of different social and occupational groups to township affairs is further illustrated by the numbers attending various township committees and vestry meetings.² Of 27 meetings recorded in Wortley between 1828 and 1859 merchants and manufacturers had absolute majorities in 20. Generally when economic interests were involved the manufacturers were able to pack the relevant committees, whether it was rates to be discussed in 1837, the future of a turnpike road in 1838, or the arrival of the railways in 1851. Woollen cloth manufacturers with brickmakers, ironfounders and flax spinners dominated most of the financial committees and meetings where expenses were to be examined or township appointments made. Late in the 1830's shopkeepers and artisans gained some foothold in these meetings, particularly where road improvements and turnpike tolls were discussed. This group was also best represented where sanitation, burial grounds and cholera in 1832, or the relief of distress in 1834 were on the agenda. In the 1840's Wortley manufacturers also stayed away from the nuisance committees where their

1 Table 3.5: Social Composition of Wortley Township Chairmen 1832-61.

2 Table 3.6: Social Composition of Out-township Meetings.

TABLE 3.5 : Social Composition of Wortley Township Chairmen 1832-61

<u>Class</u>	<u>1832-6</u>	<u>1837-41</u>	<u>1842-6</u>	<u>1847-51</u>	<u>1852-6</u>	<u>1857-61</u>
I						
Gentry			2	1	2	2
Professional		1	1		1	1
II						
Merchants Textiles	6	6	9	4	3	4
Manufacturers Non- Textiles	1	1	3	4	3	2
III						
Crafts			1	3	1	
Retail			3	4	4	1
IV						
Drink			2	2		
Corn		2	2	1		2
Unknown				1		
Total Chairmen	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>12</u>
Total Meetings	26	25	44	37	40	27
Ratio Chairmen/ Meetings	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4
% of Meetings taken by top 3 Chairmen	76.9	64.0	29.5	32.4	52.5	59.3

Sources: Wortley Township Minute Book 1828-59
Wortley Surveyors' Minute Book 1837-66
Some public ratepayers meetings, 26 out of 208, were recorded in the Surveyors' Book only.

Table 3.6: Social Composition of Out-township Meetings

Beeston Meetings 1823-60

Class	1823-7		1830-5		1856-60	
	Nos.	% Known Occupns	Nos.	% Known Occupns	Nos.	% Known Occupns
I:						
Gentry	1	0.5			5	11.4
Professional	15	7.1			4	9.1
II: Mchts/Mfrs:						
Textiles	66	31.3	14	35.0	6	13.6
Non-Textiles	19	9.0	6	15.0	3	6.8
III:						
Crafts	5	2.4	2	5.0	5	11.4
Retail	20	9.5	5	12.5	8	18.2
IV:						
Drink	30	14.2	5	12.5	4	9.1
Corn	55	26.1	8	20.0	9	20.5
n.k.	23		1		-	
Total	234		41		44	
Total Meetings	17		3		4	

Wortley Meetings 1828-59

Class	1828-35		1836-42		1845-51		1854-9	
	Nos.	% Known Occupns	Nos.	% Known Occupns	Nos.	% Known Occupns	Nos.	% Known Occupns
I:								
Gentry	4	2.6	3	2.6	5	10.9	2	5.3
Professional	1	0.7	3	2.6	4	8.7	4	10.5
II: Mchts/Mfrs:								
Textiles	79	52.3	59	50.9	16	34.8	13	34.2
Non-Textiles	18	11.9	15	12.9	8	17.4	5	13.2
III:								
Crafts	11	7.3	11	9.5	3	6.5	1	2.6
Retails	21	13.9	12	10.3	5	10.9	8	21.1
IV:								
Drink	5	3.3	1	0.9	1	2.2	5	13.2
Corn	12	7.9	12	10.3	4	8.7	-	-
n.k.	6		2		-		4	
Total	157		118		46		42	
Total Meetings	10		10		5		2	

Sources: Beeston Township Minutes 1823-60
Wortley Township Minutes 1828-59

factories were the objects of scrutiny. In the 1850's and 1860's this continued to be a source of friction, especially between the big employers and the highway board.

The take-over of the institutions of township government in the late 1830's by tailors, grocers, joiners, blacksmiths, listing makers, corn-millers and small farmer-clothiers, had important implications for the political balance in Wortley. Whigs and Liberals dominated the township offices in Wortley as they dominated parliamentary and municipal politics in Holbeck ward. However, just as ward politics showed how out-township radicals broke up the Liberal caucus in the 1840's and on occasions forced a class alliance of Whig and Tory manufacturers and gentry, so the political composition of township offices demonstrates that the Liberals did not have it all their own way. Among surveyors, though a Liberal majority was generally the rule, the political balance was usually rather fine. Only twice in 30 years did the Liberals hold a monopoly of board seats. Among the overseers clear Liberal majorities only occurred in six out of 17 years. Among township chairmen Tories increased their numbers 1832-46, and by the late 1850's half the Wortley chairmen were Tory.¹ Indeed, despite the complete failure of their candidates at ward elections, Wortley Tories were well represented at township level. From 1841 there was always at least one Tory among the top three chairmen of ratepayers' meetings. Between 1852 and 1860 Tories held the post of Poor Guardian. Chapel-wardens were usually Tory. Only one Liberal was recorded in that office between 1833 and 1848, and Tory butchers, brewers and corn millers were numerous among the nominees for tax assessor.²

The education issue of 1847 indicates that voluntarists were overwhelmingly Liberal in Wortley, and supporters of state education mostly Tory.³ However, the balance between both groups in township offices was also sometimes fine. Of the 23 chairmen 1842-6, 18 polled in 1847 and seven of these supported state education. The entire board of overseers 1845-6 voted for Beckett and Marshall in 1847. Of 31 overseers who voted in 1847, 16 were voluntarists, 13 were state educationalists, and two voted on strictly party lines. The voluntarist party, which was almost exclusively non-conformist, drew heavily on cloth manufacturers and shopkeepers, while the supporters of state education, who were denominationally varied, drew in equal numbers on manufacturers, artisans, farmers and maltsters.

1 Table 3.7: Political Composition of Township Chairmen, Wortley and Beeston 1823-61.

2 Table 3.8: Political Overview of Township Offices, Wortley and Beeston 1823-67.

3 Table 3.7:

TABLE 3.7 : Political Composition of Township Chairmen:
Wortley and Beeston 1823 - 1861

	<u>Beeston</u>				<u>Wortley</u>			
	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Tories</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Tories</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Total</u>
1823-6	6	7	3	16				
1827-31	8	8	3	19				
1832-6	7	8		15	5	2		7
1837-41	9	9		18	8	2		10
1842-6	6	6	3	15	14	8	1	23
1847-51	4	8		12	15	5		20
1852-6	8	7	1	16	10	5		15
1857-61	6	5	2	13	6	6		12

1847 Education Issue

	<u>Beeston</u>			<u>Wortley</u>		
	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Tories</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Tories</u>	<u>Total</u>
State Education	1	11	12	2	9	11
Voluntarists	8		8	17	1	18

Source: Beeston Township Minutes 1823-60;
Wortley Township Minutes 1828-59;
Wortley Highway Surveyors' Minutes 1837-61;
Leeds Pollbooks, 1832-68.

TABLE 3.8 : Political Overview of Beeston and Wortley Township Offices 1823-67

		<u>Whig-Liberal</u>	<u>Tory</u>	<u>Chartist</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Wortley</u>						
Overseers	1828-59	32	22	1	6	61
Surveyors	1837-66	34	22	1	3	60
Assessors	1845-59	16	9		6	30
Chairmen	1830-66	36	16	1	2	55
<u>Beeston</u>						
Overseers	1823-61	21	32		11	64
Surveyors	1823-52	8	10		3	21
Assessors	1844-60	15	29		6	50
Chairmen	1823-60	22	26		10	58
Chapel Wardens	1823-59	8	6		2	16
Burial Board	1857-68	9	9		2	20

Notes:

Wortley : Overseers - 4 elected annually
 Surveyors - 5 elected annually
 Assessors - 4 elected triennially till 1857, annually thereafter

Beeston : Overseers - 2 elected annually till 1836, 4 thereafter.
 Names missing for 1828, 1832, 1836
 Surveyors - 2 elected annually till 1852. Names missing for 1826-35
 Assessors - 2 elected 1844-5, 6 elected triennially 1845-51, annually thereafter.
 Chapelwardens - one elected biennially
 Burial Board - 9 members, 3 elected annually

Sources: as for Table 3.7.

The religious and political affiliations, occupations and social class of those active in township affairs were thus stamped by the character of the community, not by more cosmopolitan alignments. As the analysis of parliamentary and municipal elections indicated, national political rivalries were not merely reproduced at township level. Rather it was a case of new variations of political activity emerging out of local experience, and this was also true for sectarian differences, class rivalries and the social allegiances of occupational groups.

In the offices of Beeston township, the social and political patterns were very different from Wortley. Farmers, maltsters, victuallers and corn millers dominated the Beeston board of surveyors from the 1820's to 1851. There was also a sprinkling of shopkeepers, artisans, gentlemen, wool merchants and coal masters. Generally the turnover of surveyors declined from the 1820's to the 1840's. The political predominance of the Whigs in the 1820's and 1830's was overturned in the 1840's as Tory representation increased. The result was a split board 1840-7, and eventual Tory control 1848-50.

Farmers were also the most important group among Beeston overseers, and Beeston farmers were overwhelmingly Tory. They were most numerous in the later period, while the cloth trade was well represented in the 1820's but less prominent thereafter. The rise of artisans and shopkeepers from the late 1830's, though not as marked as in Wortley, tended to emphasise Tory superiority. The Whig majority on the overseers' board of the mid-1820's was wiped out by the middle of the next decade. However Tories did not gain control of the board until the 1840's. This was matched by their take-over of the surveyors' board 1848-50, and by record Tory polls at the parliamentary elections of 1841, 1852 and 1859. The continued ascendancy of Tory farmers foiled a Liberal revival in the late 1850's. Indeed their domination of the overseers' board in 1858 followed the Tory takeover of the newly formed burial board in 1857. Liberals had to wait till the late 1860's to see the number of Tory farmers reduced and their own shopkeepers and small employers capture the burial board.

The political structures of other township offices are only partly visible. After six years of a Liberal in the salaried post of Perpetual Overseer, which was effectively the job of township clerk, a Tory, Daniel Webster, was appointed in 1835. Webster remained, despite attempts to get rid of him, in this and several other key township posts until his death in 1864. Liberals occupied the post of Poor Guardian continuously from 1844 to 1860, with the exception of a stray Tory elected in 1856. This was unusual considering that these were the years of Tory hegemony in most other township offices.

Tories controlled the office of chapelwarden 1849-55, and the Liberals from 1857 to 1860. Tories filled the posts of assessor in 1845-8, 1851-3, 1855-6 and 1860, with a Liberal revival evident 1857-9.

Again it is clear that the numerical superiority of Tories in the early 1850s had much to do with the Tory farming and drink interest. Among the assessors six out of seven farmers 1851-5 and three out of four 1856-60 were Tories. The same was true of three out of four publicans 1851-5 and four out of six 1856-60. Of 18 farmers elected as overseers between 1823 and 1860, and whose politics are known, 13 voted Tory.

Among the southern out-townships Beeston had a unique industrial structure of industry, agriculture and mining. Farming remained important in mid-century as cloth making declined and the mining and engineering industries grew. In 1831 104 families, 25 per cent of the total, still worked on the land. By 1851 this number had dropped to about 70. In 1871 farming still employed over seven per cent of the working population, as it had done in 1841.¹ Its importance in Beeston was evident from the faithful recording in the township minutes of the local 'agricultural statistics' for 1854.² This census revealed that, with 430 acres in tillage and 796 acres under grass, no less than 80 per cent of Beeston was still farmland, supporting a population of 104 horses, 188 cows, 83 sheep and 177 pigs. It seems that when the requirement for office was to be 'fit and proper as substantial householders',³ each township could provide different interpretations of a substantial household. In Wortley eligibility for office might come with the corn mill, the private residence, the loom shed, or, increasingly in the 1840s, the grocer's shop. In Beeston from the late 1830s eligibility more often than not came with the barn, the cow shed and the public house.

Another contrast with Wortley is to be seen in the extent of local participation in office holding. Among Beeston overseers and surveyors there was a deceleration in the rate of turnover of office-holders during the 1840's. In Wortley during this period turnover

1 Only 1.9 per cent in Wortley 1871, from 3 per cent in 1841. Figures calculated from 10 per cent samples of the census schedule.

2 Beeston Township Minutes, 19 Oct 1854.

3 Ibid., 20 Mar. 1845.

increased with the rise of shopkeepers and craftsmen to township office. In Beeston this does not appear to have occurred until the late 1850's, when the ranks of cloth manufacturers, coal masters and gentlemen began to thin out. Turnover increased among the overseers, tax assessors and chairmen of the vestry meetings. This was possibly due to the influx in the late 1850's of new rate-payer-residents anxious to participate in township politics. These were often shopkeepers, occasionally farmers or manufacturers in new industries such as leather-making, and sometimes craftsmen. Generally this influx would appear to have benefitted the Liberals more than the Tories in Beeston as the revival of the former's fortunes among the assessors, chapelwardens, guardians, overseers and the burial board indicates.

A further comparison with Wortley is possible from the analysis of Beeston meetings and the social and political composition of township chairmen. The number of meetings in Beeston declined by more than a quarter 1823/6 to 1827/31, and by 45 per cent from 1827/31 to 1842/6. In Wortley the reverse occurred with more meetings in each quinquennium between 1832 and 1846. In the early 1850's both townships experienced a similar growth in the frequency of meetings.¹

The turnover of chairmen was also similar. In both townships the chair changed hands more frequently in the early 1840's. However despite Beeston's higher frequency of meetings, there was actually less spread of chairmen than in Wortley where fewer meetings were distributed amongst more individuals. In Beeston more meetings meant the same men taking the chair more often. A social elite consolidated its hold on ratepayers' meetings during the 1840's. There was nothing to compare with the rise of shopkeepers and artisans in Wortley to challenge the big employers for the leadership of the ratepayers. Farmers were the largest single occupational group among Beeston chairmen 1827-31 and again 1837-56. In the 1850's clergy and professionals were found in increasing numbers among the chairmen of both townships.

On examining the politics of Wortley and Beeston chairmen a sharp contrast is found between the neighbouring townships. In Wortley there were more than twice as many Liberal chairmen than Tories 1830-66.² In Beeston Tory chairmen narrowly outnumbered Liberals 1823-60,

1 Table 3.5; Table 3.9: Social Composition of Beeston Township Chairmen, 1823-60.

2 Table 3.8:

TABLE 3.9: Social Composition of Beeston Township Chairmen 1823-60

Class		1823-6	1827-31	1832-6	1837-41	1842-6	1847-51	1852-6	1857-60
I	Gentry Professionals	1	1	2	2	1	1 2	3	1 3
II	Textiles	6	6	4	3	1	1	2	2
	Non- Textiles	2	2	2	2	2		1	1
III	Crafts				1	1	1	1	
	Retail	2	3	2	3	3	1	3	2
IV	Drink	2	2	2	2			1	1
	Corn	3	5	3	5	6	6	5	3
	Unknown					1			
		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	TOTAL CHAIRMEN	16	19	15	18	15	12	16	13
	TOTAL MEETINGS	91	67	62	50	37	36	45	32
	Ratio Chairmen/ Meetings	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4
	% of Meetings taken by top 3 Chairmen	57.1	40.3	61.3	50.0	56.8	52.8	37.8	50.0

Source: Beeston Township Minutes, 1823-60.

and the parties were fairly evenly balanced for most of the period. Only in 1847-51 did the situation rapidly change, when Tory farmers helped their party to a two to one majority among chairmen. While farmers led the Tories in Beeston, cloth manufacturers predominated among Liberal chairmen in Wortley. However, when in 1847-56 Tory millowners outnumbered Liberals, the increase in craft-retail representation helped maintain Liberal control of the township chair. Among 20 chairmen 1847-51, six out of seven artisans and retailers were Liberals or Chartists. In contrast, the rise of this group in Beeston tended to emphasise Tory superiority.

If there was any occupational bloc voting at Wortley meetings the characteristic groups would be manufacturers and artisans-shopkeepers. In both townships no group other than manufacturers ever achieved absolute majorities in township meetings, despite the strength of the drink-corn interest in Beeston. However from 25 Beeston meetings examined, merchant manufacturers had majorities in only three. This was a very different picture from that in Wortley where, until the 1850's, manufacturers composed more than half of those attending committees and vestry meetings. The situation in Beeston as regards bloc voting by occupation seems much more flexible and volatile than in manufacturer dominated Wortley.

Finally, comparing the composition of township meetings with Leeds Council, it is noticeable how merchants, manufacturers, gentry and professionals were much less represented in Beeston in the early 1830's than on the Council. This was the reverse of the situation in Wortley where textile manufacturers alone composed 50.9 per cent of the vestry 1836-42 compared to 37.1 per cent of Leeds Council. On the other hand the drink and corn interest in Beeston was four times more numerous than in Leeds or Wortley. By the 1850's publicans and farmers were six times more numerous than on Leeds Council and three times more numerous than among the ward municipal candidates.

This analysis demonstrates how township politics were dominated by different groups from those ruling the borough council, and that the relative rise and fall of these groups varied substantially from the pattern revealed by Fraser and Hennock for the council. The conclusion is that the individual economic and social structures of each township were of primary importance in determining who ran the local vestries. Certain general changes in the social composition

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of the council, such as the rise of small businessmen and retailers,¹ were reflected in township institutions. However, the vagaries of communal politics and the workings of the administrative machinery which impinged most immediately on local people cannot be explained solely at the level of municipal government.

The local political arena was the predominant one in a borough which by mid-century could still be described as a collection of suburban nuclear settlements that hardly regarded themselves as satellites around a brighter urban star. Local politics were determined by the socio-economic structures of the townships and by class and kinship relationships in these communities. It has already been seen how important the out-townships were to the labour movement, and to Chartists and Radicals aspiring to political power. Sectarianism and localism during the 1840's were increasingly the province of the petty-bourgeoisie, some but not all of whom were allied to the labour movement. Within localism there was a sense of community, handed down in the clothier-methodist system of values and shared by shopkeepers and artisans, which had to be channelled by Radicals into political action. This was the major problem for the labour Radicals in their challenge to bourgeois hegemony in borough government; how to raise the popular consciousness above the concerns of the locality and sustain it there long enough to mount an effective assault on the strongholds of municipal power and privilege. From his printing shop in New Wortley, Joseph Barker appealed to the voters of Holbeck ward.

"Every Whig and Tory you exclude from the Town Council is a prop withdrawn from the Babel of tyranny. Every Democrat you place there is a piece of artillery planted against that Babel. An enlightened and virtuous assembly of Democrats would long ago have drained and severed the whole borough. They would have paved every street, removed every nuisance, given light to every corner of the borough and effected improvements innumerable... Unite then I say for the thorough popularisation of your local government." 1

Active popular involvement in township affairs however did not produce the results Barker hoped for at municipal level, even though in his own township the radical petty bourgeoisie proved a powerful counter to capitalist interests. The issues raised in the township vestries tended to strengthen the tradition of radical community consciousness,

1 E.P.Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons (1973), p.196.

2 The People II, 59 (1849-50), p.50.

a strong sense of local independence which the shopkeepers, small employers and farmers made their own, rather than creating a political awareness of class interests.

One of the main functions of township meetings was to lay rates. Since at least the early eighteenth century four basic rates had been levied, the chapelwardens', the overseers', the constables' and the surveyors'.¹ Each marked potential areas of religious, political, social and economic conflict within the communities, namely the church and education, the relief of the poor and maintenance of law and order, and the physical control and improvement of the environment.

The assessment of property on which to base these rates was a sensitive political issue among ratepayers. Wortley cloth manufacturers packed a committee on property rating in 1837. A committee to value the township in the same year was formed by three members to represent land, three for mill property and three for general buildings.² Millowners particularly feared over-assessment. At a meeting in 1823 a group of textile manufacturers ensured that the latest mill to be constructed in Beeston would be 'independently assessed.'³ However, even the most influential employers, such as two Beeston colliery owners in 1826, would sometimes have to appeal against a poor rating with which they disagreed.⁴

Township committees were appointed to collect names of cottage occupiers for rating, to inspect the valuation book, to assess miscellaneous unrated properties, a coal pit, a gig house, a gas house, a water wheel, and to chase defaulters and collect rates arrears.⁵ Rates assessment and collection became somewhat more orderly from the mid-1840's with the appointment of regular local tax assessors.⁶ Before then it had been the duty of the township officers themselves to assess and collect rates, although they frequently received the help of co-opted committees, of the township clerk, and sometimes of a salaried rate collector.⁷ When however an outside rate was imposed on a township, ratepayers might quickly unite to oppose it and forget their differences. Thus the question of rates was double

1 Table 2.1.

2 Wortley Township Minutes, 20 Sept., 2 Oct. 1837.

3 Beeston Township Minutes, 12 Nov. 1823.

4 Ibid. 6 Apr. 1826.

5 Ibid.: 18 Feb. 1824, 26 July 1827, 10 Feb. 1830, 23 Apr. 1834, 3 Dec. 1833.

6 Regular annual elections of assessors were held in Beeston from 1844 and in Wortley from 1845.

7 Beeston Township Minutes, 21 May 1828, 28 May 1835, 16 Apr. 1836, 23 Feb. 1837.

edged, both aggravating social, political and economic conflict within the townships, but also providing a point around which a community of ratepayers could rally and assert their independence of central authority. Out-townships often complained they were over-assessed by the council and the magistrates, and made to pay for amenities and services of which they had no benefit.¹ This occurred with parish as well as borough improvement rates. In 1826 Beeston Tories and Whigs joined to complain to the Leeds churchwarden about being overrated compared to other townships for repairs to the parish church.²

Chapel rates however could be a major source of internal conflict. The last church rate was levied in Leeds in 1835 after a 15 year campaign to abolish the tax.³ Liberal Methodist Bramley fixed its last chapel rate in 1836, Wortley in 1837. In Beeston however Anglican curates pushed through regular rates of threepence in the pound during the Tory ascendancy of the late 1840's and early 1850's. The levy was ostensibly for the maintenance and upkeep of the chapel. In many townships the church was thrown entirely upon voluntary donations and central or diocesan finance. In Beeston chapel repairs were regularly paid for by rates until the mid-1850's when non-conformist opposition prevailed. In 1854 subscriptions had to be canvassed for a new chapel clock.⁴ In 1855, after three attempts had failed to lay a chapel rate, 'as the only available method of providing for the legal repairs and expenses of the church and churchyard,' it was resolved that 'a voluntary church rate be laid'.⁵ The distress of the chapelry was further evinced in November 1856 when the new curate found Beeston parsonage 'a perfect ruin'.⁶

The creation of Beeston burial board in 1857 was the result of a complicated dispute about the fate of the old chapel which needed repair after a fire.⁷

- 1 Ibid. 23 June 1817, 16 Dec. 1841, 24 Dec. 1845; Wortley Township Minutes 9 Apr. 1845. Brian Barber, 'Leeds Corporation 1835-1905,' (unpublished PhD thesis, Leeds, 1975), p.63.
- 2 Beeston Township Minutes, 10 Jan. 1826. For a similar complaint from Holbeck in 1819, see LM, 20 Mar. 1819.
- 3 Derek Fraser, 'The Leeds Churchwardens 1828-1850,' TSP 53 (1971), misc.15, 1-22.
- 4 Beeston Township Minutes, 7 Sept. 1854.
- 5 Ibid. 27 Sept. 11 Oct. 1855.
- 6 Bishop Bickerstaff's Primary Visitation Returns for the Archdeaconry of Craven, 1858. (LCA MS, RD/CB3, Beeston)
- 7 Beeston Township Minutes, 22 Jan. 1857.

This dispute crossed political and occupational though perhaps not religious boundaries. Suggestions came from Tory publicans, farmers, craftsmen and small manufacturers and from Liberal retailers and millowners to leave the damage unattended, to repair it or to pull down the chapel and build a new one. The issue appeared to divide an economical from an improvement party. The final committee - on church repairs however consisted entirely of Liberals who appeared not unsympathetic to the needs of the chapel.¹ On the other hand the burial board, with a narrow Tory majority, borrowed £1200 to lay out a new burial ground.² Unlike the chapel, the cemetery was regarded as a public amenity and therefore as another focus of local interests, especially by the economists. Going farther than Wortley had during the cholera of 1832, a Beeston public meeting in 1858 banned the internment in Beeston churchyard of anyone dying out of the township, as the cemetery had been provided at the ratepayers' expense.³

The public provision of education was another source of conflict. Several townships had 'town schools', usually financed by charitable endowments dating back to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁴ These schools were also regarded as public capital and as symbols of township independence. Schoolmasters were public figures, appointed by vestry meetings. Such appointments were hotly contested if thought politically or denominationally controversial. Expenditure on the school-house was as closely scrutinised as that on chapel repairs, and where the teacher was paid out of poor rates, as at Beeston, the township overseers could examine his accounts and inspect his proficiency. The schoolmaster's residence was usually provided free of rents and rates, which permitted some township control over his conduct.⁵ Dismissals for negligence or receiving unauthorised payments were sudden, and elections of new teachers in the 1820's and 1830's were often well-attended.⁶ In 1835 Beeston held a property-weighted public ballot at such an election.⁷

1 Ibid. 8 Oct. 1857.

2 Ibid. 7 June 1858.

3 Ibid. 26 Dec. 1858.

4 Armley 1793, Bramley 1709, Holbeck 1726, Hunslet 1700, and Wortley Free School 1677.

5 Wortley Township Minutes, 20 Dec. 1843. Beeston Township Minutes, 16 Apr. 1824.

6 Beeston Township Minutes, 9 Apr., 23 Apr. 1824, 15 Oct. 1834.

7 Ibid. 12 Feb. 25 Feb. 1835.

Permanent salaried township officials were few. Those who remained any length of time, such as Daniel Webster of Beeston, often held a combination of posts. Honour was bestowed on long-serving officials such as Joseph Brooke of Wortley who retired in 1832 after 21 years as General overseer and surveyor and received £25 by public donations for a silver tankard and 10 bottles of wine.¹ After Brooke's retirement Wortley seems to have had poor luck with its choice of salaried surveyors and overseers. There were no fewer than five appointments between 1839 and 1842, with one surveyor dismissed for dishonesty and another absconding in debt. Only with the arrival of John Stones in July 1842 did Wortley gain some stability in its leading administrative posts. Stones was born in Wortley and educated at Wortley Grammar under Joseph Brooke in the 1810's. Like Webster in Beeston, Stones' appointment as assistant overseer and surveyor marked the advent of a new breed of semi-professional local officials who collected together a wide variety of township posts, concentrating administrative power in their hands.² Stones also became the master of Wortley workhouse and his wife the matron there. He acted as clerk to the highway board, was secretary to the board of health and a nuisance committee 1848-9, to the Patriotic Fund in 1854, was deputed to go to London and check on the progress of the Leeds Improvement bill in 1856, and was elected as an assessor in 1857.

Such men regarded themselves as the spokesmen for their townships and played a leading role in the formation of that awareness of community and local loyalties which was characteristic of the mid- and late Victorian petty bourgeoisie. Stones himself was a local historian and in retirement wrote useful monographs on local personalities. Wortley: Past and Present (1887) was an affectionate look at the history of the township and an expression of pride in locality. In this Stones attempted to define a township in order to illustrate the claim to independence Wortley had over hamlets and settlements like Kirkstall and Stanningley. It is not insignificant that Stones referred to the offices of township government which were the most concrete expression of that historical independence. A township was,

1 Wortley Township Minutes, 26 Sept. 1832.

2 On the role of professional servants in municipal government, see Garrard, op.cit. pp.73-82.

"any place managing its own parochial affairs, appointing its own overseers, making and collecting its own poor rates, maintaining its own poor, either separately, or in union with other townships, and conferring a settlement under the Poor Law Acts." 1

Officials such as Brooke, Webster and Stones were the leading figures in the administration of their townships. They were usually local men whose main qualifications were literacy and numeracy. Their responsibilities far exceeded the low level of remuneration which was the chief reason for their often rapid turnover. The appointment and salary of officials was frequently a source of political and sectarian conflict in the townships.

Given the political divisions in Beeston, the position of Daniel Webster as township clerk, overseer, surveyor and schoolmaster was quite insecure. Webster was a Tory and there was an immediate Liberal attempt to undermine his position. In 1836 a Liberal clothier, Benjamin Wood, was appointed overseer and two public polls were held over whether he should be paid out of the poor rates.² The Tories were defeated each time. Liberals then successfully moved that Wood be paid £25 annually instead of the Tory suggestion of £15.³ After these three victories the Liberals then moved to oust Webster from his job as Township accountant. Tories demanded another ratepayers' poll which they won.⁴ A second attempt in 1851 to oust Webster from all his township offices was defeated. On this occasion however it was the Tory farmers who had turned against Webster and the Liberals who had supported his claim for a salary increase.⁵

Again, the leading township officials provided a focus for both conflict and the new community consciousness evident in the townships in mid-century. Like property assessments and chapel rates, the question of salaries divided Tories and Liberals, economy and improvement parties. At the same time, as with the problem of borough rates, burial grounds and town schools, the sense of localism might be embodied in the figure of the township official, who represented the interests of the community as a whole.

John Stones pointed to the maintenance of its own poor as a key element in the identity of a township. All the Leeds out-

1 John Stones, Wortley: Past and Present (Leeds, 1887), pp.6-7.

2 Beeston Township Minutes, 7 May 1836.

3 Ibid. 12 May 1836.

4 Ibid. 14 May 1836.

5 Ibid.. 10 July, 21 July 1851.

townships avoided being drawn into the Leeds Poor Law Union in 1844. Many of them had joined the Carlton Union under Gilbert's Act when Carlton workhouse was built in 1818,¹ and they stubbornly resisted the Poor Law Commissioners' attempt to reorganise the geography of Poor Relief until their final incorporation into Bramley and Hunslet Unions in the 1860's.² A strong sense of local identity lay behind this opposition to central authority. Traditionally within the clothier townships it was regarded as a communal responsibility to protect the resident poor. Apart from organising the distribution of pauper apprentices, the township overseer would make small payments towards funerals, or a widow's rent, would help weavers pay for a loom, a shuttle or a shirt, would pay midwives or fine for bastardy.³ The Beeston surveyor for 1824 was paid £16 for the year and an allowance of five shillings 'in cases of midwifery'.⁴ In the early 1820's the vestry and township officers were still regarded as adjudicators in personal squabbles, not just between masters and apprentices, but also between tenants and landlords. Committees were appointed to investigate the situation of widows and their families, and township might pay rent arrears out of the poor rates.⁵

As rates rose and the problem of poverty became more intractable, a new attitude towards the poor may be discerned in the townships from the late 1820's, less patriarchal and more utilitarian. The cholera epidemic may have been one turning point in the development of this new attitude. Both Beeston and Wortley formed township committees late in 1831 to examine the state of health of the 'cholera poor'. With the onslaught of the epidemic the poor suddenly became a logistical problem to be solved by decision making and formal organisation, rather than the old informal means of stop-gap provision. Wortley's immediate concern was with the overcrowded burial ground. They enlarged the ground, charged a £5 fee to bury non-residents, and refused to bury outsiders who were cholera victims. The need to organise to meet such crises was further recognised by Wortley ratepayers when they formed a distress committee 'for the operatives' during the severe unemployment of 1834.

1 Ibid., 26 Aug. 1818.

2 Ibid., 17 Nov. 1836, 15 May 1856. On the operation of the Carlton union and its workhouse see Assistant Poor Law Commissioners' Reports, part I, PP(1834) XXVIII, no.20, Report of J.D. Tweedy; see also, Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, PP(1837-8) XXVIII, 151-2.

3 Bramley Bye Bill, 1820.

4 Beeston Township Minutes 17 Nov. 1823.

5 Ibid., 25 June, 9 July 1823.

The out-townships went their own way as regards the administration of the poor, and also in the policing of the poor. Constables elected by the vestries and funded by a township rate dealt with vagrancy, drunkenness, petty theft, and helped the overseers with poor relief. As in the 1780's however there were periods when ratepayers and property owners became anxious about the prevailing state of law and order in the townships. In the mid-1820's Beeston vestry applied to the Manorial Lords for a plot on which to build a lock-up, appointed a special constable, and agreed to a co-ordinated campaign to bring 'deprecators to justice.'¹ Regardless of the difficulties however in policing their own populations, out-townships, as in other areas, were wary of Leeds Council encroaching on their powers or charging them for services from which they did not benefit. In 1837 Wortley petitioned the Council about the expenses of the nightly watch and police.² The maintenance of law and order was regarded as a communal responsibility until the 1850's when the townships finally received the new borough constabulary into their territory.

The conflicts of local independence versus central authority, economical administration versus public expenditure, community awareness versus sectarianism, political and social divisions within the out-townships were most evident in the problems of environmental control. Road and bridge building, repairs, drainage and sewers, lighting, all came under the province of the township and its surveyors. Township minutes of the 1820's are full of references to the great improvement boom of that decade, of alterations to buildings, paving roads, repairs to footpaths, posts and fencing, levelling hills. From the 1820's to the 1840's townships were frequently in dispute with turnpike trusts and commissioners of private roads running through their land. There was for instance a long running dispute between the Beeston surveyors and the commissioners of Dewsbury road during which both sides indicted each other for non-repairs, and the battle was joined

1 Beeston Township Minutes, 17 Sept. 1823, 9 June 1824, 26 Oct. 1825.

2 Wortley Township Minutes, 18 Jan. 1837. The policing of the out-townships is examined more closely in Chapter 6.

by several other townships.¹

Generally, townships, and particularly the manufacturers and tradesmen on their committees, wanted good and efficient roads, but they wanted them cheaply and under township control. Supervision of the cost of construction and repairs was a vital factor in determining the attitude of townships to the turnpike trusts. However, the interests of property owners, and the protection of communal land and traditional rights of way were also important considerations. Opposition to the Leeds-Stanningley turnpike began with a public meeting in Bramley in 1825 and continued with landowners' petitions from Bramley and Armley in 1833-4.² For Armley the main task was to defend the clothiers' right to tenter land held under the enclosure of 1793. The townships fought the turnpike bill through parliament and achieved this and other amendments. Several ancient footpaths were kept open and a bridge toll curtailed.³ In 1838 Wortley joined the opposition to a new turnpike bill in a battle which lasted five years. They even sponsored individuals who refused to pay the tolls.⁴ In 1843 Beeston surveyors demanded that Elland road commissioners should remove a chain at Royds Lane end to allow residents to pass freely.⁵ The township officers saw themselves, at least partly, as the guardians of the customary rights of the inhabitants against outside encroachment. In 1834 a Wortley meeting announced its opposition to the attempt of Leeds and Tong Lane end commissioners to cross the 'privilege land' at Silver Royd hill.⁶

Because of the constant tension between provision and expense, townships often displayed an ambivalent attitude to improvement. Wortley was frequently indicted for not repairing roads, yet road widening, levelling and sewerage were sometimes carried out on its own initiative. Occasionally townships would reach an agreement with the owners of roads. In 1839 Wortley agreed to pay the Leeds-Whitehall road trustees for the use of the highway, as the trustees were to

1 Townships involved in 1839 were Holbeck, Hunslet, Beeston, Churwell, Morley and West Ardsley. Beeston Township Minutes, 7 Feb., 15 Feb. 1839.

2 LM, 5 Mar. 1825, 28 Dec. 1833, 3 May 1834.

3 LM, 10 May 1834.

4 Wortley Township Minutes, 23 Apr. 1838.

5 Beeston Township Minutes, 30 Mar. 1843.

6 Wortley Township Minutes, 17 Dec. 1834.

pay Wortley for its upkeep.¹ Increasingly in the 1840s and 1850s townships would cooperate. In 1845 Wortley and Beeston successfully bid for the tolls on the Leeds-Birstal road, on which they then split the costs and the profits.² More cooperation over tolls was evident between Wortley and Beeston in 1847 and Wortley and Armley in 1853.³ Attempts in 1851 and 1856 to free Hunslet suspension bridge of its toll stimulated other anti-toll campaigns.⁴ In 1864 Armley Surveyors joined those from Bramley and Wortley to try to remove a toll bought by the Hunslet coal owner Bower.⁵ By the mid-century there was a general realisation that strength lay in unity against bureaucratic centralization. This focus for suburban localism was finally removed by the Leeds Improvement Act of 1866 which gave to the Council the powers of township surveyors, and the power to purchase and abolish tolls. The township boards were thus rendered useless and dissolved.

From the late 1840s many of the problems with turnpike trusts were repeated with the railway companies. Firstly out-townships sought compensation for damage done to roads, footpaths and embankments. Following a fatal accident on an unfinished road left by one railway, Wortley surveyors even tried to force the company to gas-light the road at its own expense.⁶ Secondly out-townships negotiated to rate railway lines. London and North-Western was forced in court to accept Wortley's rating of £800 per mile for the Leeds-Dewsbury railway, and Beeston achieved the same for its section of the line.⁷

However the townships were well aware that they needed the railways as much as the companies needed them. In 1858 Beeston memorialised the Bradford, Wakefield and Leeds Railway Company for a station to be built in the township, listing the reasons why they should build it.⁸ They estimated the number that might use the station would be double the township's population of 2000. New coal and iron works in Beeston promised a great volume of traffic. The railway would also

1 Wortley Highway Surveyors' Minutes, 29 Nov. 1839.

2 Wortley Township Minutes, 22 May 1845.

3 Wortley Highway Surveyors' Minutes, 10 June 1847, 29 Nov. 1853.

4 Barber, *op.cit.* p.125.

5 Armley Highway Surveyors' Minutes, 11 Feb. 1864, 13 Dec. 1865.

6 Wortley Highway Surveyors' Minutes, 19 July 1848.

7 Beeston Township Minutes, 26 July 1849; Wortley Township Minutes, 26 July 1849, 18 Apr. 1850.

8 Beeston Township Minutes, 29 July 1858.

have the custom of those travelling to Wakefield, and those travelling daily to Leeds would buy annual tickets. The station was built, but by the Great Northern Railway.

Wortley found itself in a difficult quandry in 1851-2. The township initially supported Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company in getting a parliamentary bill giving them a monopoly over a Leeds-Bradford line to run through Wortley, Bramley, Pudsey and Bowling. To the dismay of the ratepayers this 'West Riding Union Railway' was not built, and the township demanded action. However having backed one company, Wortley then discovered that the Leeds, Bradford, Halifax Junction Railway Company were about to build a station in Armley. The township did a sudden volte face and tried to persuade this company to build in Wortley, but to no avail. Revenge was had in 1859 when Wortley refused to reduce the Leeds-Bradford rating from £800 to £500 per mile.¹

The struggle for control of the local environment was a crucial element in the townships' attitude to turnpikes and railways. Officials' occupations as manufacturers, tradesmen and farmers gave them different economic interests in the internal transport network of the township. For some, better transport meant more business and reduced costs. However as ratepayers they were acutely conscious that such improvements were limited by the need for economy with the township purse. During the 1820s and 1830s highway rates were frequently much greater than in later decades. Rates in the 1840s were relatively high in Wortley, but stable and minimal in Beeston. From the late 1840s and through most of the following decade rates were high, before dropping rapidly at the end of the 1850s.² Both turnpike tolls and railway rates could prove moneyspinners for a township, but they only made sense if township rates themselves were not pushed up by unforeseen costs of repairs or administration. For other suburban inhabitants, roads and railways could be bad news, particularly if there was direct encroachment on building land, or if land and property became devalued as a consequence of development. Township and surveyors' minutes reveal a continual struggle to monitor and control the environmental consequences of the railways. Between 1847 and 1861 Wortley surveyors

1 Wortley Township Minutes, 7 May 1851, 4 June, 23 Dec. 1852, 11 Oct. 1859.

2 e.g.: in Beeston from 3/- in 1823, 1825, and 5/- early in 1836, to 10d, 1840-8, then 1/3d, 1849-58, and 10d, 1859-60; in Wortley rates were 2/- and 1/8d, 1836, 1838-9, 1/- or 1/3d for most of the 1840's, 1/- or 10d, 1852-9, falling to 8d or 10d, 1861-6.

remonstrated with at least seven different railway companies on a dozen occasions, asking them to complete sewers, remove cesspools, repair dangerous bridges, remove screens, and, above all, compensate for damage done to roads and footpaths. There were usually enough traditionalists in out-township government to ensure that the surveyors and committees looked after the interests of the community as a whole, as well as the vested interests of a handful of businessmen.

Nowhere is this consciousness of the community interest better illustrated than in the concern for the environment. The 1848 Nuisances Act and the 1856 Improvement Act undoubtedly encouraged an environmental awareness in the out-townships.¹ This was contained however within the parameters of petty-bourgeois localism. The out-townships for instance launched a campaign, much ridiculed by Leeds, against the Council's purchase of Woodhouse, Holbeck and Hunslet moors. The suburban economists in Wortley complained in 1856 of paying for 'common lands in which they (the inhabitants of Wortley) have no particular or direct interest'.² Wortley, Armley, Beeston, Bramley and Farnley also combined to oppose other clauses in the 1856 bill on rates and smoke pollution.³ One radical satirist proclaimed that the differences with Leeds had been settled as far as Bramley was concerned,

"by an arrangement for clauses to be inserted giving Bramley a separate Corporation, and that 'a numble individual throo Pudsey Taan end is to be t'first mare'."

Rates were to be limited to 'tuppence i't'paund'. If the funds so raised did not cover municipal expenses,

"then the deficiency is to be made up by voluntary contributions and the 'numble member' has promised to head the subscription list with 'something handsome'."⁴

Although the parochialism of Bramley voluntarist-Liberals was an easy target for satire, there was more substance to this petty-bourgeois mentality than mere bigotry. In both Armley and Wortley during the late 1850s and 1860s the economists sometimes confronted, sometimes aligned themselves with the improvement party. Often both found themselves facing the hostility or indifference of local manufacturers towards pollution and environmental hazards. In Wortley

1 Barber, op.cit., pp. 157-8.

2 Wortley Township Minutes, 10 Jan. 1856.

3 Barber, op.cit., pp. 63, 117, 131.

4 The Indicator, no. 4 (2 Feb. 1856).

from the mid-1850s there were plenty signs of new roads being laid, and existing roads widened, many from mills and workshops to stations, chapels, and to public buildings such as Armley gaol. In the early 1860s there were further signs of township expenditure on new roads, drains and a public urinal, but there were also signs of public economy. A sewer was refused for Armley road in 1862 and the resurfacing of Spence lane caused an uproar among the surveyors, some of whom demanded a ratepayers' poll saying that 'to pull up the same would be a breach of public trust and a waste of public money.'¹ Politics made little difference as Tories and Liberals stood together on each side of the argument. What is clear is that the increased awareness of the environment coincided with the recovery of shopkeepers and artisans in township government. The problem took on a social dimension as manufacturers and employers were confronted by shopkeepers on the boards of surveyors demanding pollution controls and the removal of hazards. This first occurred in the late 1830s when radical surveyors in Wortley served notice on a number of manufacturers and farmers to clean their sewers and drain their ditches. One Tory millowner who was obstructive, was accused of interference,

"not springing from any wish to promote the convenience or advantage of the Town but commencing and proceeding from improper, unworthy and factious motives."²

Priorities altered with the changing composition of the surveyors' board. In 1849 the Wortley surveyors themselves were upbraided by Leeds Council for not draining a ditch on the township boundary.³ The concerted effort at improvement in the following decades however brought renewed conflict with employers. Warnings were issued and notices served on brick manufacturers, quarry owners, corn millers and mill-owners about obstructing the highways with ash deposits, carts and boilers, about factory walls encroaching on public footpaths, and about smoke pollution, blocked drains and sewers.

In Wortley in 1851 Tories charged the two leading Liberal firebrick manufacturers with polluting the township with hydrochloric acid vapour emitted from their glazing process. The complaints were taken seriously enough in public to cause the Council to send a deputation to similar earthenware works in Lambeth to investigate

1 Wortley Highway Surveyors' Minutes, 4 Aug. 1862, 30 May 1864.

2 Ibid., 3 June 1839.

3 Ibid., 11 Aug. 1849.

the 'Lambeth fog'. Apart from extracting promises to build taller chimneys however, little was done to solve the problem. Both manufacturers had important contracts to supply Leeds Council with glazed pipes, stench traps and drain inlets for the town's new sewerage system, and influential friends on the Nuisances Committee of the Council made sure these did not come to grief.¹

In the townships however such polluters were harried by members of all parties. As townships invested in new roads and drains, the problem of obstruction and encroachment became greater. Manufacturers regarded the roads as publically provided for their private usage, and treated them accordingly. The type of person however now occupying township posts came equipped with a keen sense of pride in township institutions, of history, and of the popular rights of the community. In 1863 Armley surveyors, mostly small, self-employed masters and shopkeepers, were affronted by a claim by one of the leading Tory mill-owners, Eyres, that a footpath in need of repair was not public as it was on his land.

"The surveyors consider that the repair of the footpath for the benefit of the inhabitants generally is neither aggression nor unlawful. The road itself is not, nor ever was the private property of Mr Eyres and the surveyors cannot allow the statement that it is so to remain undisputed . . . They have every wish to act with courtesy to Mr Eyres, but neither for him nor anyone else will they sacrifice the rights and interests of the Township of Armley."²

Responsibility and duty to preserve the customary privileges of the community transcended economic self-interest. This was the highest expression of the petty-bourgeois concept of community. It resembled a 'civic pride' translated to the suburbs. In 1865 Armley surveyors and overseers decided on new offices for themselves, 'as the Committee Room is both inadequate and unworthy of a Township like Armley'.³ Such expressions indicate that the out-townships were being remodelled in the image of the lower middle class, at least as far as the formal institutions of self-government were concerned. The effect this had on class relations in the out-townships is examined in the following chapters.

1 The debate about the 'Poisonous Nuisances of Wortley' and the business deals of Joseph Cliff and Henry Ingham can be followed in the Scavenging and Nuisance Committee Minutes, 1849-54, and the Street Committee Minutes, 1848-52 of Leeds Council, and LI, 24 Apr., 1 May, 22 May, 3 July 1852, 6 Aug. 1853, LI, 8 May, 15 May 1852.

2 Armley Highway Surveyors' Minutes, 30 Nov. 1863.

3 Ibid., 27 Jan. 1865.

CHAPTER 4: LABOUR ARISTOCRACY AND COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS
IN THE INDUSTRIAL SUBURBS

Having examined the out-townships as clothing villages before 1850, the subject of this chapter is their development into industrial suburbs during the second half of the nineteenth century. Firstly the changes in the industrial structure of the out-townships are described, the decline of the domestic woollen industry and its family unit of production, and the rise of mining, building, engineering, transport, brick making and leather manufacture. Although several of these industries were long established in the clothing villages, they grew on an unprecedented scale after 1850 as alternative sources of suburban employment.

The diversification of the out-township economies created new occupational groups, some largely filled by migrants, and most characterised by internal divisions between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour. The labour aristocrats of the 'new' industries, their relations of production at the workplace, their trade unions and labour consciousness form the subject of the second part of this chapter. How far did residential, migration and family work patterns create distinct occupational identities within the out-townships? How did these groups react to the surviving elements of clothier culture and its radical tradition?

Thirdly, how were these changes reflected in the political life of the out-townships, from the reform Liberalism of the 1850's and 1860's to the political clubs of the 1870's and 1880's? The impact of labour politics, new trade unionism and the rise of socialism on suburban attitudes to community and class is considered against the strength of the existing political and trade union institutions.

Much has been written on the mid-Victorian labour aristocracy, defining it and assessing its role in the stabilisation of class relationships after 1850.¹ The term 'labour aristocracy' is used here in the broadest and most contemporary sense of skilled workers distinguished by the best wages in their trade and district, considerable job status and the workplace privileges accompanying it, and the power to restrict entry to their trade. Trade union membership was not

¹ The most important contributors have been Hobsbawm, Foster, Gray, Stedman Jones, Crossick, Moorhouse, Pelling, McLennan and Tholfsen. Individual references will be given below in full where necessary.

synonymous with the labour aristocracy.¹ Some workers, miners and some ironworkers for instance, who were organised in unions, were not classed as labour aristocrats, either by themselves or by others. Many labour aristocrats were not organised in unions. Some were hostile to trade unionism.

Some unions were even hostile to trade unionism and preferred to regard themselves as friendly societies and clubs.

Between the late 1860's and the early 1890's the proportion of trade unionists in the Leeds male workforce more than doubled. The Webbs estimated there were 16000 trade unionists in Leeds by 1892, 14 per cent of the male workforce. In 1868 there were more than 35 unions with a probable membership of about 4500, or 6.7 per cent of the adult male workforce.² Hobsbawm estimated that nationally about 15 per cent of the workforce were labour aristocrats. Applied to Leeds in 1868 this would mean that somewhat less than half the labour aristocrats were members of trade unions.³

The pyramidal structure of skilled manual labour posited by Gray for Edinburgh appears also to fit Leeds reasonably well.⁴ Most trades had a hierarchy at the apex of which was the supervisory and managerial staff, often functioning as substitute employers. Below these a thin layer of skilled craftsmen earning top rates kept above a broader stratum of ordinary skilled workers.⁵ In some industries a small group of semi-skilled workers earning above average wages was found above the labourers, the unskilled and lowest paid.⁶

There is however no clear answer to the problem of isolating the

- 1 E.J.Hobsbawm, 'The Aristocracy of Labour revisited', in M.W.Flinn ed., Proceedings of the Seventh International Economic History Congress (Edinburgh, 1978), vol.2, pp.457-66; Henry Pelling, Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain (1968), pp.37-61.
- 2 Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (revised edn., 1920), pp.423-7. Hales and Brighty listed 28 unions with 3592 members in 1868 but these figures were serious underestimates. Later authors, such as Woodhouse, have followed them. John Hales and S.Brighty, 'Report on Leeds', in Reform League Election Reports, 1868; T.Woodhouse, 'The Working Class', in Derek Fraser ed., A History of Modern Leeds (Manchester, 1980), pp.353-88.
- 3 Trade union membership of course varied greatly between trades, as will be shown below.
- 4 Robert Q.Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh (Oxford, 1976), pp.88-90.
- 5 Horizontal stratification was the lynchpin of many pay systems. Leeds tanners were divided into three classes of operative. In mines, engineering and boiler shops, skilled workers and labourers were each divided into three classes and pay brackets.
- 6 Railway pointsmen and firemen are good examples of this intermediate group.

labour aristocracy from the mass of workers. The demarcation lines shifted between trades and over time. Evidence from Leeds points in several directions. Some trades displayed a rigid division between skilled and unskilled manual workers. In cloth drawing for instance skilled trade unionists showed only antagonism and hostility towards women workers. In other trades the demarcation was clear, but the hostility was absent. In many cases there were instances of cooperation between the skilled and the unskilled. Bricklayers and their labourers organised in separate unions and strike committees. Even their arbitration procedures were distinct. However the issues in disputes were usually closely related, and one group seldom turned out without the other.

On some occasions not only unionists and non-unionists, but also skilled workers and labourers organised together. This was most noticeable during the ironworkers' strike of 1864 when the only distinction that mattered was that between scabs and strikers. In some industries, especially in mining, workers in various wage categories doing various jobs worked together and belonged to the same union.

Wage differentials may have widened in the half century down to 1890.¹ Certainly the position of unskilled workers in Leeds deteriorated during the Great Depression while wage levels of most skilled workers remained stable. Nevertheless many union disputes encompassed more than the interests of the skilled workforce. This was partly due to the belief that if skilled rates were maintained and hours cut, there would be some 'spin-off' benefits for the unskilled, particularly in piecework and sub-contracting. However popular support for the largest disputes had more deep rooted causes. The labour aristocracy was recognised as belonging to the working class communities, their trade unions stood within the long tradition of independent workers' organisations in the out-townships. The important point, illustrated by the miners in 1858 and the ironworkers in 1864, was to win legitimacy for industrial action from the local community. Small unions could be quite isolated in disputes if they failed to represent the interests of non-unionists or to touch the social nerve of the population. There is an overriding need therefore to study the labour aristocracy in its local context, as part of a community or a neighbourhood; and relate it to other sections of the working class.

1 E.J.Hobsbawm, 'The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth Century Britain', in E.J. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men (1968 edn.) pp.272-315.

(i)

Industrial Change in the Out-townships

In 1841 half the occupied population of Beeston, two-thirds of Wortley and three-quarters of Armley were involved in cloth manufacturing or flax spinning.¹ By 1871 these proportions had been reduced to less than two-fifths in Armley and one-third in Beeston and Wortley. The decline of textiles was balanced by the rise of other industries. Machine-making, engineering and iron works expanded rapidly in all out townships. They employed 17 per cent of all workers in Wortley by 1861. Some industries were particularly important in certain townships, iron-mining in Farnley, coal mining and farming in Beeston, stone quarrying and leather in Bramley, brick making, building, clothing and boot-making in Armley, bricks, coal, clothing and railways in Wortley.

Three points must be made about the post 1850 industrialization of the out-townships. Firstly, amidst the multiplication of new industries there were many interconnections. The demand for textile machinery encouraged foundries and the iron and coal mines which supplied them. Fire clay was a major product of the iron mines and locomotive engines were turned out by the foundries. Many industries were localised, others were common to all townships. Whatever the degree of diversity, the growth of new industries had important effects on the structure of employment in Leeds and its suburbs.

Secondly, industrialization meant urbanisation for the clothing townships. New industrial estates were created, in the grey mass of Hunslet and Holbeck, in the contiguous development of New Wortley, and as a bye-product of the iron mines of New Farnley.

Thirdly, despite the diversity of industrial change and the impact of urbanisation, the small firms and the culture of domestic production survived. Many of the largest firms in the out-townships, for instance in leather and quarrying in Bramley, were old family firms which had a close identification with the neighbourhood. Many of the growth industries post 1850 were themselves long established in the out-townships, quarrying, mining, tool making, glass, potteries, chemicals and paper-making.

Throughout the period most out-townships remained heavily dependent on textiles. The decline of textiles was more noticeable in the townships than in Leeds, because the industry employed a much

¹ Table 4.1: The Industrial Structure of Occupations 1841-71.

TABLE 4.1: THE INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE OF OCCUPATIONS 1841-71
 Percentage of Occupied Population in -

	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Beeston</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Holbeck</u>	<u>Hunslet</u>	<u>Wortley</u>	<u>Leeds Borough</u> ¹
<u>Textiles</u>							
1841	76.7	50.0	61.2	45.9	27.8	67.8	37.8
1851	64.5	35.0	66.0			62.1	34.4
1861	51.5	27.1	56.6			39.2	28.7
1871	38.8	33.1	40.7			30.3	19.3
<u>Iron and Engineering</u>							
1841	1.4	1.9	1.7			4.0	6.3
1851	3.1	2.5	5.7	9.2	16.0	4.4	8.8
1861	10.6	11.9	9.2			16.9	12.4
1871	13.4	4.8	12.2			14.6	14.4
<u>Mining</u>							
<u>Quarrying</u>							
<u>Brickmaking</u>							
1841	1.1	15.4	3.3	5.6	3.7	6.0	1.8(2)
1851	1.6	18.8	3.8			4.9	2.1
1861	5.8	34.7	2.3			9.7	3.5
1871	7.9	34.7	2.7			7.6	3.0
<u>Transport</u>							
1841	1.1	1.9	2.7	3.0	3.9	0.3	2.9
1851	0.9	1.2	2.4			2.5	4.1
1861	1.2	1.7	2.0			5.7	4.0
1871	2.9	3.2	2.7			9.9	5.3
<u>Building</u>							
1841	2.9	-	3.3	5.6	4.2	3.4	5.3
1851	2.8	2.5	3.2			2.8	5.0
1861	4.9	2.5	5.3			4.3	5.8
1871	5.3	2.4	4.4			4.5	7.4
<u>Dealing</u>							
1841	2.2	3.0	2.3	5.6	5.6	4.0	1.8
1851	3.8	11.3	3.8			2.8	1.0
1861	6.1	5.1	3.9			4.9	1.6
1871	5.3	3.2	6.6			4.0	1.9

contd/

TABLE 4.1 CONTD

	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Beeston</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Holbeck</u>	<u>Hunslet</u>	<u>Wortley</u>	<u>Leeds Borough</u>
<u>Agriculture</u>							
1841	2.2	7.7	5.4	1.4	2.0	3.0	2.6
1851	0.6	13.8	1.8			1.8	2.8
1861	1.8	7.6	2.0			1.0	2.8
1871	0.5	7.3	2.9			1.9	2.1
<u>Leather</u>							
1841	-	-	1.7	2.0	3.7	1.0	1.0
1851	2.5	1.2	1.5			0.5	1.2
1861	2.7	0.9	2.3			1.6	1.8
1871	3.4	-	5.4			0.9	2.6
<u>Dress</u>							
1841	4.0	4.8	5.0	6.0	6.7	4.0	8.3
1851	5.7	5.0	4.4			4.6	11.0
1861	4.2	0.9	6.2			4.3	10.0
1871	8.9	2.4	7.5			8.0	10.2
<u>Domestic Service</u>							
1841	4.0	4.8	6.0	6.3	5.8	3.4	10.4
1851	5.7	2.5	4.6			5.4	8.8
1861	6.1	2.5	5.3			4.9	9.3
1871	4.6	6.5	6.6			3.5	9.2
<u>Workforce as % of Total Population</u>							
1841	48.0	51.2	34.5 ³	48.7	46.8	42.5	39.4
1851	54.4	47.9	51.4			49.3	48.8
1861	50.6	47.8	51.8			43.6	47.5 ⁴
1871	47.2	47.1	50.3			44.3	64.9

Notes: 1 The out-townships figures are calculated from 10% systematic samples of the census schedules.
 The borough figures are taken from W.G.Rimmer, 'Occupations in Leeds 1841-1951', TSP 50 (1967) misc.14, 158-80, whose tables are based on the published census summaries. The 1871 figures for Leeds only count workers aged over 20.
 2 The Leeds figures exclude brickmaking.
 3 Careless or lazy enumerating resulted in a serious underestimate of the workforce in Bramley in 1841.
 4 64.9% of the adult population (over 20's) only.

greater proportion of the suburban workforce than in the borough as a whole. However, by 1871, only in Beeston, Hunslet and Holbeck had textiles ceased to be the major employer.

In 1858 Leeds was described as 'the greatest emporium for cloth in the civilised world.'¹ In that year 10193 were employed in woollen cloth manufacture and 9020 in flax.² Although there was some decline in both industries during the next decade, the numbers of workers and mills remained fairly buoyant down to 1871. The only dramatic change came in worsteds where numbers employed were halved between 1838 and 1855, and cut by another quarter by 1871.³

During the third quarter of the nineteenth century Yorkshire woollen mills remained much the same size, but became more powerful and more productive. 'Improved' machinery filled the growing number of factories which combined spinning and weaving under one roof.⁴ Automatic mules replaced jennies, power looms 'invaded' the Yorkshire mills in the 1860's, slubbing condensers were improved and willeying fully mechanised.⁵

Products also changed rapidly. Cotton warp was used from the late 1830's to cheapen and vary woollen cloth products, and this practice extended rapidly after 1850. Leeds became the finishing centre for 'union cloths' produced at Morley, and the rapid rise of the shoddy and mungo trades in Batley and Dewsbury also made an impact on the Leeds woollen industry. Traditional fine broadcloths declined as manufacturers aimed at producing cheap, reasonable quality cloth in huge quantities.⁶ The mixing of fabrics also encouraged the rise of large-scale, machine-combed, power-woven worsted manufacturing. Fashions changed and the demand for tweeds and fine worsteds increased.⁷

1 T Fenteman, An Historical Guide to Leeds and its Environs (Leeds, 1858), p.27.

2 Robert Baker, 'On the Industrial and Sanitary Economy of the Borough of Leeds in 1858', JSSI, XXI (1858), 427-43.

3 Ibid. and see Tables 2.4 and 2.5

4 Edward Baines, The Woollen Manufacture of England (reprinted Newton Abbott, 1970) p.107; Factory Inspectors' Reports; Report of H.M.I. Alexander Redgrave for half year ending 30 April 1860

PP(1860) XXXIV, 488; Table 4.2: Mean size of Yorkshire Woollen Mills 1850-71; Table 4.3: Steam power in Leeds and Yorkshire Textile Mills 1800-71. Greater productivity however was scarcely reflected in the average numbers employed, which was still 95 in Yorkshire woollen mills in 1889, compared with 104 two decades earlier. J H Clapham, 'Industrial Organisation in the Woollen and Worsted Industries of Yorkshire', Economic Journal, XVI, (1906)512-22.

5 Baines, op.cit. pp.71-3, 110; Samuel Jubb, The History of the Shoddy Trade (1860), p.126; Frederick J Glover, 'The Rise of the Heavy Woollen Trade of the West Riding of Yorkshire in the Nineteenth Century', Business History IV (1961) 1-21.

6 Report of HMI Redgrave for the half year ending 31 Oct.1855, PP (1856) XVIII, 242

7 Baines, op.cit. pp.107,111, 113; J H Clapham, The Woollen and Worsted Industries (1907), pp.142-5.

TABLE 4.2: MEAN SIZE OF YORKSHIRE WOOLLEN MILLS 1850-71

	<u>Spinning</u>	<u>Weaving</u>	<u>Spinning and Weaving</u>	<u>Others (inc. Finishing)</u>
<u>1850</u>				
No. of mills	532	9	180	159
\bar{x} employees	38	37	78	38
<u>1856</u>				
No. of mills	482	8	165	151
\bar{x} employees	35	40	114	47
<u>1861</u>				
No. of mills	422	28	275	199
\bar{x} employees	32	39	102	40
<u>1867</u>				
No. of mills	263	35	382	138
\bar{x} employees	43	58	105	43
<u>1871</u>				
No. of mills	274	24	514	142
\bar{x} employees	36	47	104	43

\bar{x} = mean

Source :

Returns of Cotton, Woollen, Worsted, Flax and Silk Factories ,

PP (1850) XLII, 455; PP (1857) XIV, 173; PP (1862) LV, 629;
PP (1867-8) LXIV, 811; PP (1871) LXII, 105.

TABLE 4.3: STEAM POWER IN LEEDS AND YORKSHIRE TEXTILE MILLS 1800-71

LEEDS BOROUGH : WOOLLEN MILLS

	<u>Mills</u>	<u>Horsepower</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>Steam Engines</u>	<u>Water Wheels</u>	<u>Spindles</u>	<u>Power-Looms</u>
		(<u>Steam</u>	<u>Water</u>					
c1800 ¹	26	c	520					
1835	71	1,951	254	2,205	81	9		
1838 ²	106	2,265	115	2,380	97	10		
1858 ²	128	2,924					8,640	952
1871	130	3,560	121	3,631				

West Riding: Woollen Mills

1835	406	6,218	2,672	8,890	308	241		
1838	543	7,492	2,067	9,559	362	191		
1850	880	9,347	2,806	12,153			925,449	3,849
1856	806	12,124	2,724	14,848			992,897	6,275
1861 ³	924	19,639	2,816	22,453			1,296,190	11,405
1867 ⁴	818	21,029	2,774	23,803			2,412,520	20,028
1871	954	36,671	3,131	39,802			1,748,719	24,033

Leeds Borough: Worsted Mills⁵

1835	6	151			6			
1838	13	334	80	414	13	2		
1855	9						9,716	655
1858	4	c120					c 10,000	286
1871	4	605						

West Riding: Worsted Mills

1835	204	3,186	873	4,059	159	102		2,768
1838	342	4,767	929	5,696	225	87		
1841								11,453
1843								16,870
1845								19,121
1850	418	8,397	992	9,389			746,281	30,856
1856	445	11,646	1,077	12,723			1,192,587	35,298
1861	443	23,029	1,455	24,484			1,149,072	40,577
1867	626	40,899	1,595	42,494			2,344,235	69,211
1871	516							

TABLE 4.3: CONTD

LEEDS BOROUGH : FLAX MILLS

	<u>Mills</u>	<u>Horsepower</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>Steam Engines</u>	<u>Water Wheels</u>	<u>Spindles</u>	<u>Power-Looms</u>
		<u>(Steam</u>	<u>Water</u>					
1835	19	915	21	936	24	1		
1838	44	1,259		1,259	44			
1858	32	1,818		1,818			149,454	352
1871	29	3,643	20	3,663				

WEST RIDING : FLAX MILLS

1835	58	1,090	434	1,524	32	47		
1838	60	1,709	32	1,741	59	3		
1850	60	2,168	194	2,362			82,768	991
1856	60	2,184	407	2,590			214,547	1,484
1861	70	5,289	275	5,564			172,272	1,403
1867	61	4,677	559	5,236			211,820	2,425
1871	70	4,924	481	5,405			163,506	2,095

- Notes: 1 26 steam powered wool-textile mills (including worsted in Leeds by 1800 at a average of 20 h.p. per mill gives this estimate.
- 2 The 1838 Factory Returns probably, and Baker in 1858 certainly, counted firms not mills. See D.T.Jenkins, 'The Validity of the Factory Returns 1833-50', Textile History 4 (1973), 26-48.
- 3 The 1861 Returns included woollen finishing and dressing mills previously counted as workshops. Also from 1861 actual not nominal horse-power was recorded, making a comparison of power before and after these returns impossible. Actual or 'indicated' power was frequently greater than nominal because of improved boilers, better gearing and lubrication. D.T.Jenkins 'The Factory Returns, 1850-1905' Textile History 9 (1978), 58-74.
- 4 In 1867 dubious totals for spindles were probably the result of identifying and adding spinning, doubling and billy spindles, Ibid. pp.64-5.
- 5 Worsted power looms are given for Saunder's district of 'London and Leeds', 1836, 1841, 1843 and 1845. The figures for looms and horsepower compare closely but not exactly to the West Riding. They are given here to show the approximate rate of growth of worsted weaving. Report of H.M.I.Saunders for half-year ending 31 Oct.1850, PP (1851)XXIII, 263.

Sources: Figures for 1800 calculated from Jenkins, op.cit. Appendix 1. Sources for all other years are given in Tables 2.2 and 2.4, and footnote 5 above.

Leeds woollen manufacturers altered their spinning machinery to take combed instead of carded yarns. Worsted manufacturers set up spinning and combing mills in the Leeds district.¹ More women were brought into these mills to work the power-looms alongside those already at the mules.² During the 1870's and 1880's prices fell and productivity and profits increased as low-waged female labour produced a wide variety of cheap cloths in what virtually amounted to a new woollen industry in Leeds.³

The structural reorganisation of cloth manufacturing seriously undermined the family unit of production and the domestic industry. Partly because of stricter factory legislation, but more especially because of improvements in machinery, woollen millowners almost gave up recruiting young children in the 1850's. It was estimated in 1858, for instance, that in Leeds spinning mills each new piecing machine replaced up to six half-timers under the age of 13.⁴ Older children, especially boys, also left the mills to work in other industries.⁵ The time was rapidly passing when Leeds children would work in the same industry as their parents, either at home or in the factory. In Wortley in 1841 70 per cent of households, where the head's occupation was cloth manufacturing, had all working children employed in the industry. A substantial number of these 230 households must have been spinning and weaving cloth at home as families. By 1871 the proportion had fallen to 41 per cent.⁶ Nevertheless this was still a relatively large number of households where all the occupied children were employed in the same industry as their father. The figures serve to underline not only the decline, but also the survival of domestic manufacture and traditional structures of production.

Hand-loom weavers clung tenaciously onto their old way of life.

- 1 R.C. into the Depression of Trade and Industry, Second Report, PP (1886) XXI, evidence of C.E. Bousfield, Qs.6292-5, 6357-65; Kenneth. V. Pankhurst, 'Investment in the West Riding Wool Textile Industry in the Nineteenth Century', Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, 7 (1955), 93-116.
- 2 Glover, op.cit. pp.12-13; Clara Collet, 'Women's Work in Leeds', Economic Journal, 1 (1891) 460-73; Eric Sigsworth, Black Dyke Mills (Liverpool, 1958), p.193.
- 3 W.G. Rimmer, 'The Woollen Industry in the Nineteenth Century', Leeds Journal, 30, (1959), 7-11.
- 4 Report of H.M.I. Redgrave for the half year ending 30 Oct. 1858, PP (1859) Sess.1. XII, 185.
- 5 Tables 2.4 and 2.5.
- 6 Table 4.4: Family Employment in Woollens and Worsteds 1841-71.

TABLE 4.4 : FAMILY EMPLOYMENT IN WOOLLENS AND WORSTEDS
1841-71

	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Household Heads Employed in Wool Textiles	77	80	68	73
No. with One or More Children Employed	33	41	26	32
No. with One or More Children Employed in Wool Textiles	28	32	21	21
(%)	85	78	81	66
No. with All Children Employed in Wool Textiles	23	24	9	13
(%)	70	59	35	41

Source : 10% systematic samples of Wortley census enumerators' schedules.

Clapham documented some aged weavers in the West Riding in the 1890's but by that time hand weaving had long been marginal in terms of cloth production.¹ In the worsted centres hand weaving had been virtually killed off in the 1840's by power-looms.² By 1857, according to James, stuff weaving in Leeds was in a state of 'utter decay', though Baker recorded about 200 worsted weavers there surviving on 15 shillings per week.³ In the out-township woollen industry, however, hand-loom weaving survived well into the 1860's. Baines illustrated that a local woollen mill employed almost as many domestic weavers in 1858 as those working on the premises.⁴ More than half the weavers in Bramley at the censuses of 1851 and 1861 specifically recorded themselves as working on hand-looms.

Domestic weavers were largely reduced to a state of dependent out-work by mid-century. While jenny-spinning and some slubbing continued to be done at home, a semblance of clothier independence could be maintained. Even when jennies were displaced some weavers took to spinning on hand-mules, but, as Lawson recalled in Pudsey, 'when both billy, jenny and hand-loom were rendered useless, the old weavers saw nothing in the world worth living for.'⁵ It was reported that some of Gott's old weavers had committed suicide when faced with redundancy.⁶ A mood of resignation haunts the diary of a 40 year old Wortley spinster. Ann Scurr barely made a living during 1872 helping her brother weave pieces at home. The Scurrs did no spinning and took what yarn they could get from the local mills. They were totally dependent on this work, and enmeshed in the hierarchical relations of production which it entailed.

"Dull evening. Sized Robert's last web - full of row, not his fault, he wove the bobbins they gave him. Who will have to pay the piper? I don't know, perhaps Michael Armistead the then bobbin counter. Pinder the regular man was poorly I suppose." (7)

- 1 J.H. Clapham, 'The Decline of the Hand-loom in England and Germany', The Journal of the Bradford Textile Society, (June 1905), 40-7.
- 2 Sigsworth, op.cit. p.192.
- 3 John James, History of the Worsted Manufacture in England (1857), p.627. There were 725 worsted hand looms in Leeds in 1838, ibid. p.483; Baker, op.cit. p.437; Herbert Heaton, The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries (Oxford, 1920), p.357.
- 4 Baines, op.cit. p.96.
- 5 Joseph Lawson, Letters to the Young on Progress in Pudsey during the last 60 years (Stanningley, 1887), p.89.
- 6 John Holmes, 'Summary of the State of the Classes in 1872', in Thomas Porter ed., Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds (Leeds 1872) p.liii.
- 7 Ann Scurr, 'An Old Wortley Diary', in William Benn, Wortley-de-Leeds: History of an Ancient Township, (Leeds, 1926), pp.82-9, entry for 13 July 1872.

In Wortley, weavers like the Scurrs had only recently become marginal. In 1851 at least 18 per cent of Wortley weavers specifically described themselves as working on hand-loom.¹ The total number of weavers increased in the township 1851-71, and while hand-loom weaving may have become a mere appendant to the local cloth industry, it retained an overwhelming cultural significance within the suburban communities.²

The other staple textile industry of Leeds and its out-townships was flax-spinning. This employed 9020 workers in 1858, about 40 per cent more than in the late 1830's.³ However, with strong competition in fine spinning from Belfast, Dundee and Belgium, the Leeds industry began to decline. From 7650 employees in 1871, numbers fell to 1700 by 1890, and to 700 by 1911.⁴ By the late 1850's half the domestic linen market had been lost to cotton and jute products.⁵ In 1866 there were 18 spinners left in Leeds, by 1872 only 10. Hives and Atkinson closed in 1881, Marshall's in 1886.⁶ Marshall's survived so long by using old machinery, cheap labour and an increasing proportion of women. Females composed 56 per cent of the Water Lane workforce in 1831, and 78 per cent by 1881.⁷ They were among the worst paid workers in Leeds. Low wages in the flax industry not only drove men to better paid industries such as engineering, printing, tanning and transport, but also forced many women into the cap and clothing workshops and wholesale clothing factories from the late 1850's.⁸

The dress and clothing industry therefore offered a solution to the potentially disastrous closure of the giant flax mills. Low wages, which had encouraged the retention of female factory work, also allowed the clothing sweatshops to attract the younger generation of female mill-workers. By the late 1880's this industry employed between 10,000 and 12,000 workers in Leeds.⁹ The trade was very localised,

- 1 This figure is calculated from the census sample. The usual job title given was simply 'woollen cloth weaver.'
- 2 This argument will be developed in the final chapter.
- 3 Baker, op.cit. p.437, and see Table 2.5.
- 4 W.G.Rimmer, 'The Flax Industry', Leeds Journal, 25, (1954), 175-8
- 5 W.G.Rimmer, Marshall's of Leeds, Flax Spinners 1788-1886 (Cambridge 1960), pp.239-40.
- 6 Marshall's loom sheds in Holbeck however remained open till 1917, 'Leeds and its History: 300 Years of Achievement', Yorkshire Post, 8 July 1926, Tercentenary Supplement, p.45.
- 7 Rimmer, Marshall's, op.cit. p.249 and Table 9, p.316.
- 8 Ibid. pp.248-52; Collet; op.cit. pp.463-4, 467.
- 9 Collet, op.cit. p.468; Similar estimates in Slater's Royal National and Commercial Directory of Yorkshire - West Riding (Manchester, 1887), and Henry Barran, 'The Manufacture of Ready Made Clothing', in BA Handbook for Leeds (Leeds, 1890), pp.117-18.

with most of the sweatshops and clothing factories being in central Leeds and Leylands.¹ However, also in Wortley and Armley, where the proportion of the occupied population employed in the textile mills had fallen substantially by 1871, dress making and ready made clothing was an important source of employment.

The iron industry and the manufacture of tools and machinery were closely associated with the growth of the Leeds textile industry. Fenton, Murray and Wood's 'Round Foundry' of 1798 in Holbeck, 'the cradle of heavy engineering in Leeds,'² was built next door to Marshall's flax mills. Iron and brass foundries in Holbeck made flax, tow, worsted and woollen machinery.³ Smaller workshops throughout the out-townships also supplied the mills with shuttles, spindles, bobbins, looms, heckles, gills and reeling frames.

The foundries and engine-shops also received an early stimulus from coal mining, and above all from the Middleton colliery railway.⁴ From the late 1830's new locomotive foundries sprang up throughout Hunslet and Holbeck in an atmosphere of fierce rivalry.⁵ By 1840 the Leeds engineering industry had already reached maturity, employing a workforce of 4000.⁶ The following two decades saw an enormous expansion. By 1857 4023 workers were employed making locomotives and railway plant and another 4578 produced machinery and machine tools.⁷

By the 1850's the small workshops and large industrial plants were producing an astonishing variety of engines, tools and machinery which went far beyond the traditional demands of the textile and coal industries.⁸ Sewing and saw cutting machines for ready-made clothing, traction engines, steam ploughs, motor wagons, road rollers, light

- 1 Joan Thomas, 'Early History of the Clothing Industry', Leeds Journal, 25 (1954) 259-62.
- 2 L.T.C. Rolt, A Hunslet Hundred (1964) p.15
- 3 R.C. on the Employment of Children in Factories, Suppl. Report pt. II PP (1834) XX, Answers to the North East District Commissioners, no. 184, Answers to the Central Board of Commissioners nos. 31, 36, 47.
- 4 W.G.Rimmer, 'Middleton Colliery, near Leeds (1770-1830)', Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, 7 (1955) 41-55.
- 5 The most important were the Airedale Foundry (1837), the Railway Foundry (1839) and the Sun Foundry (1844), Rolt, op.cit. pp.18-20.
- 6 W.G.Rimmer, 'Engineering: the Nineteenth Century', Leeds Journal, 26 (1955), 229-31.
- 7 James Kitson, 'On the Iron trade of Leeds', British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report 1858, (1859), Notices and Abstracts, 183-4.
- 8 Indeed Rimmer argued that a lack of interest in new textile machinery among local machine-makers aggravated the decline of flax spinning in Leeds. Rimmer, Marshall's, op.cit. p.235.

railway plant and heavy cement mixing machinery for the transport and building industries, the cross fertilisation between local industries and branches of manufacturing was manifold. In Bramley in 1860 a factory was established to manufacture leather-working machinery which supplied the local tanneries. The plant, composing of cranes, a railway siding, offices, stores, wood-working departments and machine erection shops, itself created a demand for other local products.¹ Neighbouring foundries in Bramley and Stanningley produced railway axles, mill machinery and steel canal boats. The weaving hamlet of Rodley, from the late 1840's, had a least three firms making steam and later electric cranes for the railways and local quarries.²

With over 12000 workers in all branches of the Leeds iron and machine-making trades by 1858, Baker doubted 'whether the prevailing manufacture of Leeds at the present day is Woollen or Machinery.'³ The metal industries urged forward the urbanisation of the out-townships. A 78 per cent increase in the population of Farnley between 1851 and 1861 was explained by the rapid growth of Farnley iron works (1844) and the consequent spate of house-building for its workers.⁴ The increase in the populations of Wortley and Armley in the following decade was 'attributed to the erection of several large iron and other manufactories.'⁵ The open fields and easy access to major roads attracted sprawling industrial plants to the out-townships. Greenwood and Batley built their arms factory on Armley Road. The Leeds Forge Company employed 1200 workers in Armley in 1888 making mild steel, corrugated boiler flues, bricks, soap and sanitary tube machinery.⁶ Machine workshops between the 1840's and 1860's produced a wide range of goods. From the 1870's the trend was for the leading firms to become larger, more capitalized and to specialise, while the number of small firms, both 'jobbing' and specialised, increased rapidly.⁷

The impact of these heterogeneous metal working industries on the urban profile of the clothing villages was profound. Diverse other industries made this impact even greater. Glass, Bottle, and paper factories, timber yards, potteries, printing, chemical, gas and dye works, match-making, candle-making, food canning factories and breweries all

¹ Leeds Contemporary Sketches and Reviews (Leeds 190-?), pp.91-3, Thomas Haley & Co.

² E.T.Carr, Industry in Bramley (Leeds, 1938), pp.46-8.

³ Baker, op.cit. p.435.

⁴ 1861 Census Housing and Population Abstract.

⁵ 1871 Census Housing and Population Abstract.

⁶ Kelly's Leeds Directory (1888), p.xxvii

⁷ James B. Jeffreys, The Story of the Engineers 1800-1945 (1945, reprinted 1970), pp. 53.5

became sources of employment in the largest out-townships after mid-century.¹ Hunslet had over 12,000 inhabitants by 1831, and over 37,000 by 1871. Holbeck had over 14,000 in 1851 and over 19,000 by 1871, and Wortley increased from under 8000 to nearly 19,000 in the same period. Hunslet and Holbeck, already established centres of engineering by 1840, began to merge into the industrial estates of the south Leeds ward, which never had a village identity of its own. The low land between Hunslet and Holbeck moors, across Accommodation, Hunslet and Dewsbury roads and along Jack Lane, became one great manufacturing area, 'grey and uninspiring'.²

While huge industrial plant forced outwards the physical growth of the townships, many small workshops appeared in existing buildings and yards, an industrial corollary to the 'filling-in' pattern typical of much house building.³

Some public buildings, baths, libraries, schools, workhouses, civic rooms, accompanied the industrial and residential development. It was written of Wortley in 1872 that 'buildings are springing up in all directions, many of them being built with remarkable taste, and very gratifying evidences of prosperity are visible on all sides.'⁴ This prosperity was translated into employment in the building trade as the figures for Wortley and Armley in 1871 show.

The development of clothing villages into anonymous industrial suburbs appeared to many middle-class observers as a proletarianisation of the out-townships. Hunslet in the 1880's was firmly 'the labour side of Leeds', and Pottery Fields was 'exceptionally poor', composed chiefly of working people, artisans and labourers, and a very few small shopkeepers.⁵ The curate of Wortley wrote in 1847 that the

1 See Baker, *op.cit.* pp.439-40; J. Buckman 'Later phases of Industrialization to 1918', in M.W. Beresford and G.R.J. Jones eds., *Leeds and its Region* (Leeds, 1967) p.162; Carr, *op.cit.* p.44; *Yorkshire Post*, 'Leeds and its History' *op.cit.* p.110; Eric M Sigsworth, 'The History of Brewing', *Leeds Journal* 27 (1956) 79-81; and the articles by W.G. Rimmer on 'Pottery' *Leeds Journal* 29 (1958) 185-9; 'Printing and Printing Machinery (II)' *Leeds Journal* 29 (1958) 353-7; 'Food Processing (II)', *Leeds Journal* 30 (1959) 173-8.

2 Percy Robinson, *Leeds Old and New* (Leeds, 1926), p.120.

3 E.J. Connell, 'Industrial Development in South Leeds 1790-1914', (unpublished PhD thesis, Leeds, 1975), p.411.

4 Porter (1872), *op.cit.* p.358.

5 Hunslet (St Mary's) National School File, letter of Rev. J. Thompson, 16 Feb. 1882; Hunslet (St Jude's, Pottery Field) National School File, letter of Rev. John Chute 15 Feb. 1887.

township 'consists almost entirely of poor weavers, miners and railway labourers who have been drawn together from all quarters of the Kingdom.'¹ By the 1880's industrialization had created another district of urban sprawl in which New Wortley was indistinguishable from Holbeck, and where all the inhabitants were 'working trades people or railway employees (by far the majority) or operatives at mills or forges.'² The 53 per cent increase in Wortley's population during the 1850's was attributed to the abolition of a bridge toll and the proximity of the London and North Western Railway station.³ Transport workers accounted for 10 per cent of Wortley's occupied population by 1871. Local employment on the railways increased over 15 times between 1851 and 1871.

~~Section.~~

Behind the rapid rise of transport and engineering lay the success of iron and coal mining. For the borough as a whole, local ore supplies were not crucial, however in Farnley, Beeston and Wortley local mines were still important. Iron mines at Beeston dated back to at least the fourteenth century.⁴ The ore deposits at Farnley were intensively exploited from the 1840's and produced 1000 tons per acre by 1858.⁵ There was also a large iron-works at Stanningley from 1840⁶, and by 1874 the Low Moor Iron Company had opened up a colliery in Beeston.⁷

The geological deposits at Farnley illustrate how local industries were interrelated and thrived on a fortuitous combination of natural resources. The Farnley mines, about 150 feet deep, provided, in different strata, the iron ore for smelting, the coal to run the forges, and a bed of quality fire-clay from which the fire-

1 Wortley (Home) National School File, Circular from Rev.H.M.Short, October 1847.

2 New Wortley (St. John's) National School File, letter from Rev. Joseph Mitchell, 23 Nov. 1881. See also the six inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1851, Sheet 217 and the McCorquodale and Co.Ltd., One Foot Leeds Borough Map of 1890, Sheet 10.

3 1861 Census, Abstract.

4 The Beeston Moor iron mine was closed in 1384, 'pro defectu conductorum'. The Victoria History of the Countries of England: A History of Yorkshire, vol.II (1912), p.347.

5 W.J.Armitage, 'On a few facts connected with the manufacture of pig iron in the neighbourhood of Leeds,' B A Report 1858, op.cit. pp.204.5.

6 Employed an average of 800 workers between 1860 and 1890, Carr op. cit. p.49.

7 The Board School plan of 1874 indicates a site in central Beeston owned by the Low Moor Company. Beeston Board School Portfolio 1875-1904 (Leeds School Board, School Portfolios 6/1-2).

brick works of Wortley were supplied.¹ This fire clay was used in the eighteenth century to make tobacco pipes.² Like coal and iron mining it was a traditional industry. It survived through a handful of small firms into the 1820's and 1830's. From the late 1830's fire-brick making expanded rapidly. Of the two leading family firms in Wortley, Joseph Cliff employed 161 workers in 1851, and Robert Ingham 251 by 1861.³ Cliff's firm, with five others, became the Leeds Fireclay Company in 1889, whose works covered 80 acres, operated most of the 12 clay mines in Leeds and had a workforce of over 2500.⁴ The manufacture of glazed sanitary tubes began in 1845, stimulated by the demand from municipal and private sewerage schemes. Bricks, baths, sinks, buff and salt-glazed earthenware, 'in fact almost every article made from clays outside fine art wares and china' were produced.⁵

Coal mining occurred mostly on the southern fringe of the borough, in Beeston and Hunslet. These areas marked the northern tip of the West Yorkshire coalfield and were contiguous with the mining districts of Rothwell, Middleton and Wakefield. Coal mining was traditional in the suburbs. There were at least three coal mines in Leeds in 1384, and a coal pit in Hunslet in 1570.⁶ Celia Fiennes saw the stone quarries and coal pits as she passed down Elland Road in 1698, and Thoresby noted Pit Hill in Beeston, 'of which there's nothing remarkable but only cottages for some of the Subterranean Crew.'⁷ In the late eighteenth century Middleton colliery became the chief source of coal for Leeds, although rival collieries at Beeston and Hunslet offered some competition. By 1817 it was observed that 'Beeston would be a pleasant village were it not for the neighbourhood of the coal mines.'⁸ Coal pits scarred the southern borders of Wortley,

- 1 Armitage, op.cit.; Baker, op.cit. pp.439-40. The iron ore, too, was 'much superior to any other ore in England', Fifth Report of the R.C. Commission on Trade Unions, PP (1867-8) XXXIX, evidence of John Kane Q.9254.
- 2 Baines' General and Commercial Directory of the Town and Borough of Leeds (1817), p.1.
- 3 Information from the census schedules.
- 4 James Holroyd, 'The Fire Clay Industry', BA Handbook for Leeds, op.cit. pp.104-5.
- 5 Industries of Yorkshire, pt.I (1888), John Cliff and Sons, p.162.
- 6 John Le Patourel, 'Medieval Leeds', TSP XLVI (1957) misc.13, pt.1, 1-21; G.C.Gamble, 'A History of Hunslet in the Later Middle Ages; TSP XLI (1947) misc. 12, iii, 222-58.
- 7 Christopher Morris ed., The Journeys of Celia Fiennes (2nd edn. 1949), pp.220-1; Ralph Thoresby, Ducatus Leodiensis (2nd edn. 1816), p.216.
- 8 Baines' Directory of 1817, op.cit. p.43.

Beeston, and Hunslet. 13 used and 15 disused pits were recorded on a map of Beeston for 1890. At mid-century there were 35 collieries in the Leeds district. By 1877 102 collieries in the district produced two and a half million tons.¹ The number of miners in Armley, Beeston and Wortley grew rapidly, particularly in the 1860's. Though several Beeston pits were exhausted by 1851, ten years later over one-third of the township workforce worked in mining. During the boom of the early 1870's, 'whosoever could handle a pick was welcome and set on.'² There were about 2000 coal and iron miners in Leeds in 1858 and nearly double this by 1881.³

Along with the railway sidings which often accompanied them, the coal pits ensured that large tracts of the most accessible townships remained free of dense housing development at least till the end of the century. This was also true of another traditional out-township industry, stone quarrying in Bramley and Armley. Bramley Fall stone had a reputation for excellence dating back to the building of Kirkstall Abbey, and quarrying was recorded in Armley in 1324.⁴ Park Quarries at Hough end had produced stone for paving and road making since the early eighteenth century.⁵ By 1823 at least 23 quarries in Bramley employed more than 60 getters.⁶ As cottages were built, new roads and footpaths laid, highways improved and walls repaired, the demand for stone increased. Numerous small contractors appeared who bought stone in modest quantities to transport by cart to their workplace. The Armley highway surveyors between June 1859 and March 1861 used 15 different contractors, mostly local men, several illiterate, who supplied nearly 1000 tonnes of bluestone, 620 yards of edging, 443 yards of flags and a two and a half ton road roller to build four new roads and a bridge at an estimated cost of £211.⁷ Large quantities were moved by canal and several Bramley quarry owners had wharves near Kirkstall.⁸

1 Rimmer, 'Middleton Colliery', op.cit. p.50; E.J.Connell and M.J. Ward, 'Industrial Development 1780-1914', in Derek Fraser ed., A History of Modern Leeds, (Manchester, 1980), 142-76.

2 John Holmes, 'State of the Classes in 1878', in McCorquodale & Co. Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds (Leeds, 1878), p.57.

3 1851 Census Abstract; Baker op.cit. p.441.

4 Carr, op.cit. p.12; John Le Patourel, 'Documents relating to the Manor and Borough of Leeds 1066-1400,' TSP XLV (1956), p.19.

5 Carr, op.cit. Bramley Fall Company was established in 1811 by John Rogerson, the brother of the scribbling miller and diarist.

6 Bramley Survey of 1823.

7 Calculated from Armley Highway Surveyors' Minutes Book 1859-66. The materials listed cost the Surveyors about £100. From a total of 18 contractors used by Armley 1859-64, seven signed their contracts with a mark.

8 Carr, op.cit. p.13. See also G.Ramsden, 'Waterways in the Economic Development of Leeds' Leeds Journal, 26, (1955), 81-4.

Another traditional local industry, leather-working, grew to factory dimensions from the 1840s. By 1850 Leeds was the second tanning centre in the country.¹ The expansion of Leeds livestock market and the local demand for leather for textile machinery encouraged the growth of the industry. In 1816 there were eight tanyards in the borough, three in Armley and Hunslet. In 1871 there were 23 tanneries. By 1834 bootmaking was also flourishing, especially in Armley, Hunslet and Bramley. During the 1840s Bramley became the boot and shoemaking centre of Leeds, mainly because of a surfeit of male labour from textiles. Bootmaking provided an acceptable alternative to hand-loom weaving. Being organised in small workshops or by domestic outwork, it helped keep family life in the villages intact.

In 1841 the number of workers in the leather industry, tanners, skimmers, curriers, saddlers and shoemakers was 2479. By 1871 this had more than doubled. In 1850 the average Leeds tanner employed 16, by 1870 this too had doubled. Some out-township firms were large, 70 at Cheater's tannery in Armley, 100 at Broadbent's in 1888 making 100000 pairs of heavy boots a year, 550 at Halliday's in Bramley making 7000 pairs a week.² Rivetted boot and shoemaking was established in Bramley during the 1870s and introduced larger, heavily capitalised and mechanised factories. In Armley by 1878 this was making such rapid progress that it was 'superseding the former staple industry of the village'.³ X
There was some vertical integration between currying and tanning, and some bootmakers also ventured into leather manufacture. However the industry as a whole in Bramley and Armley was characterised by the survival of the domestic unit of production and the traditions of family work passed down from the days of the clothier.

The diversification of the Leeds economy from the 1840s occurred with such bewildering speed and involved so many complex changes to old industries and development of new industries that it must be asked, how much survived? The impact of non-textile industrialisation on the urbanisation process in the out-townships was certainly profound. However in 1870, as in 1850 and 1830, cultural longevity was a sign of the times and as important as the changes wrought by industry. The shoemaker at his last in Bramley and the spinster at her brother's loom in Wortley are only the best recorded examples of the maintenance, not only of

1 W.G.Rimmer, 'Leeds Leather Industry in the Nineteenth Century', TSP misc.13, pt.2 (1960), 119-64.

2 Ibid. pp.140, 149-50.

3 McCorquodale's Directory of 1878, op.cit. p.274.

domestic craftsmanship, but also of elements of clothier culture.¹ Elsewhere, Thoresby's 'Subterranean Crew' worked at the narrow, backbreaking coalfaces in a similar way in the nineteenth century as they had in the seventeenth. The iron-miners, quarrymen, potters, fire-clay diggers all must be counted traditional in the out-townships of 1850. The relation of the 'new' labour aristocrats to the suburban communities in which they lived was determined by the cultural legacy passed down in their industries, as well as by changes in the relations of production at the workplace. A sense of the clothier past helped shape their attitudes to the community of the present.

1 The Autobiography of Robert Spurr, (Bramley, 1867).

Trade Unions and the Labour Aristocracy

Using census schedules and marriage registers it is possible to reconstruct the social relations of labour aristocrats in the out-townships in detail. Industrial conflict and trade unionism are examined in the context of these social relations, relations which were shaped by, and in turn determined the profile of the suburban communities.

The analysis of occupational groups by residence, birthplace, migration patterns and children's employment reveals a number of interesting features about the workforce in the 'new' industries. Firstly, among certain occupational groups, railway workers, brickmakers, coal miners and iron and engineering workers, there was a clear tendency to live together in distinct neighbourhoods within the townships. The greatest factor determining residence would appear to have been the proximity of the workplace. However, in some of these occupational groups, families also shared a common birthplace or the experience of migration, as well as a neighbourhood identity. Railwaymen came to Wortley in groups from Derbyshire and Lancashire in the 1850's and 1860's, miners from small West Riding towns arrived in Beeston in the 1860's to work new seams, and there was some migration of middle-aged iron and engineering workers from the West Riding and Lancashire into Bramley, Wortley and Armley. Such migrants may have constituted occupational communities within the out-townships. On the other hand groups of workers who were both residents and natives of a neighbourhood, coal miners in Beeston and Hunslet, some clusters of blacksmiths and forgers in Wortley, Armley, Bramley and Hunslet, and above all the fire-brick makers of Wortley and Armley, were probably most successful in maintaining social cohesion and an occupational community awareness. In both sets of occupational groups, native and migrant, the identification of workers with the neighbourhood and the workplace and the close-knit, face-to-face relationships of 'classic' occupational communities were found to varying degrees.¹

¹ Mining communities are often 'classic' in the sense of being self-contained and socially homogeneous. See Bill Williamson, Class Culture and Community: A biographical study of social change in Mining (1982). For examples from Europe see David Crew, Town in the Ruhr: A Social History of Bochum 1860-1914 (New York, 1979), and Roland Trempe, 'Carmaux, Beitrag zur Genesis der Arbeiterklasse', in Gilbert Ziebura, ed. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Frankreich seit 1789 (Gutersloh, 1975), pp.237-49.

In addition to the common identity of residence and birthplace, the propensity of children within occupational groups to follow their parents' trade also fostered the social cohesion of a community. The diversity of out-township industries by mid-century ensured that children seldom had to enter their father's trade from lack of choice. Some census samples however do indicate that a large proportion of fathers in engineering and metal-working had sons employed in the same industry while their daughters went to the mills.¹ The analysis of occupations from marriage registers confirms the tendency towards continuity of employment between generations of engineering workers. 38.4 per cent of engineers and ironworkers followed their fathers into the industry, a higher level of filial succession than that shown by the sons of miners, builders, shoemakers or railwaymen.²

Other important suburban industries reveal few signs of residential clusters, building, quarrying, leather, clothing and footwear. Migration patterns and the structure of children's employment varied over time and according to township and industry. Suburban builders moved from a local labour supply to a reliance on migrant labour during the 1850's, a trend witnessed in reverse in the stone quarries at the same time. Workers in the leather, shoemaking and clothing industries were largely Leeds-born. In leather, as in engineering, there was considerable local identification with the workplace, especially amongst tanners. Shoemaking and dress-making appear to have partly carried on the clothier tradition of domestic work in family units. In this case family bonds, rather than the cohesion of an occupational group, may have contributed towards a neighbourhood identity and the consciousness of belonging to a community.

Taken in isolation every statistical index of community structure may be ambiguous and together they may be contradictory.³ The impact of community structure is however more transparent when the industrial relations and labour activities of skilled workers are examined in conjunction with the indices of social relations. Four major suburban occupational groups are studied in this context - railwaymen, brick-makers, coal miners, engineering and metal workers. Their status divisions, changes in the relations

1 See Table 4.5: Out-township Children's Employment, particularly Bramley and Wortley for 1871 and Hunslet for 1851.

2 Table 4.6: Marriage and Occupational Mobility in the Out-townships, 1837-90.

3 Richard Dennis and Stephen Daniels, 'Community' and the Social Geography of Victorian Cities', Urban History Yearbook (1981), 7-23.

TABLE 4.5 : OUT TOWNSHIP CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT

	Wortley Railwaymen	Engineering and Iron Workers				
	<u>1871</u>	(Bramley <u>1871</u>	Armley <u>1871</u>	Wortley <u>1871</u>	Holbeck <u>1851</u>	Hunslet) <u>1851</u>
No. of Household Heads	45	28	35	68	34	68
No. with occupied children	14	10	7	27	9	25
<u>No. with children in</u>						
Agriculture						
Mining/ Brickmaking	1		1			1
Building	1		1	2		
Engineering	3	9	1	13	2	13
Leather						
Woodworking				1		
Textiles	6	5	4	11	4	6
Clothing/ Footwear	4		2	2		2
Food/Drink Manufr.						
Transport	4			1		
Wholesale Dealing						
Retailing						
Professional		1		1		
Domestic Service	1		1	1	1	
Labourers				1	1	
Others						3

Source: 10% systematic samples of census enumerators' books.

TABLE 4.6 : MARRIAGE AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY IN THE
OUT-TOWNSHIPS 1837-90

Proportion (%) of Bridegrooms with

<u>Grooms in</u>	<u>Fathers</u>		<u>Fathers in Law</u>		<u>Sample Totals</u>
	<u>(in same industry)</u>	<u>as labourers)</u>	<u>(in same industry)</u>	<u>as labourers)</u>	
Engineering	38.4	7.8	22.0	8.2	255
Mining	35.8	23.0	38.5	7.7	39
Railways	28.0	21.9	9.7	11.0	82
Building	34.4	8.2	4.9	11.5	61
Boots/Shoes	34.6	3.8	11.5	7.7	26
Leather	9.1	18.2	9.1	-	11
Clothing	7.7	15.4	-	15.4	13

Nb: This table is based on the following samples from out-township marriage registers. (All Parish Registers unless stated otherwise); Beeston (LCA 3/1) 1838-48, 1868-78; Bramley St Peters (LCA,19) 1837-47, 1867-9, 1887-9; Farnley St Michaels (LCA,5) 1839-48, 1868-70, 1888-90; Holbeck St Matthews (LCA,14-16) 1838-40, 1848-50, 1868-70, 1888-90; Hunslet Centenary Wesleyan Methodist (LCA, Leeds Sth Circuit Methodist Records 22/2) 1849-51, 1868-70, 1888-90; New Wortley St John the Baptist (in Holbeck St Matthew Registers, 173-6) 1868-70, 1888-90. Wortley-de-Leeds (LCA, 2/1) 1837-47, 1868-70, 1888-90. A total of 1083 marriages were recorded in these samples.

of production, work processes, wages, levels of skill, modes of payment, workplace customs and degree of trade union organisation help build up a picture of the out-township labour aristocrats and their place in the cultural traditions of the clothier communities.

Railway lines from Leeds to Selby, Newcastle, Derby, Manchester, Bradford and Thirsk were open by 1850. From this date local railways were dominated by the big companies, Midland, North-Eastern, London and North-Western, Great Northern.¹ Throughout the 1850's and 1860's these companies were building bridges, digging tunnels, laying tracks, and draining land in the eastern part of Wortley. Railway construction workers migrated to this area of Wortley during the 1840's. By 1851 45 per cent were born outside Leeds and over a quarter came from outside Yorkshire. By 1861-71 two-thirds of Wortley's construction workers were immigrants, a proportion twice the township average.² When the navvies moved on they left behind a residuum of skilled builders and a force of permanent waymen, platelayers and railway labourers.³ The number employed on the railways rose rapidly from about 40 in 1851 to over 800 by 1871, fuelled largely by migration. In 1861 and 1871 less than a quarter of Wortley railway workers had been born in Leeds.⁴

Migrants generally chose to live close to the railway junctions and engine sheds in New Wortley. In 1861 two-thirds of railway workers lived in three enumeration districts covering Armley Old Hall and New Wortley. In 1871 two-thirds lived in five districts out of 17, although the workforce had nearly trebled since 1861. Railwaymen congregated between the gaol, the gas works and the tracks of the GNR in the Old Hall district, and between Copley hill and Wellington Road, near the goods sidings, the cattle market and the abattoir. They found homes in sites such as Wilson's Row and Driver's Terrace, which had been laid out but not yet built upon or filled in by 1850. The rapid influx of railway migrants resulted in the creation of uniform settlements of workers, in terraces of back-to-backs hastily erected and located in a relentlessly industrial environment.⁵

1 Henry Parris, 'Leeds and its Railways', Leeds Journal 26 (1955), 157-60

2 Table 4.7: Birthplaces of Out-township Building Workers.

3 About one in five railway navvies were skilled men, masons, miners, brickmakers and bricklayers. See David Brooke, The Railway Navy (Newton Abbott, 1983). For a distinction between navvies and labourers, see Terry Coleman, The Railway Navvies (1965), pp. 24-6.

4 Table 4.8: Birthplaces of Wortley Railwaymen and Leather Workers.

5 M.W. Beresford, 'The Back to Back House in Leeds 1787-1937', in Stanley D. Chapman, ed., The History of Working Class Housing (1971), pp. 93-132.

TABLE 4.7: BIRTHPLACES OF OUT-TOWNSHIP BUILDING WORKERS

<u>Birthplaces of building workers (%)</u>				<u>Birthplaces of wives (%)</u>		
	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
<u>Armley</u>	55.5	43.7	40.9			
Leeds Boro.	66.7	43.7	68.2			
W. Riding	-	56.3	18.2			
Elsewhere	33.3	-	13.6			
<u>Wortley</u>	(9.0)	(5.0)	(13.0)			
Leeds Boro.	55.0	33.0	32.0			
W. Riding	18.0	43.0	39.0			
Elsewhere	27.0	28.0	29.0			
<u>Bramley</u>	70.0	65.2	42.8	71.4	37.5	40.0
Leeds Boro.	80.0	82.6	52.4	71.4	50.0	40.0
W. Riding	20.0	13.0	28.6	28.6	50.0	60.0
Elsewhere	-	4.4	19.0	-	-	-
<u>Holbeck</u>	35.7			40.7		
Leeds Boro	53.6			66.7		
W. Riding	14.3			18.5		
Elsewhere	32.1			14.8		
<u>Hunslet</u>	39.3			33.3		
Leeds Boro	50.0			51.8		
W. Riding	32.1			25.9		
Elsewhere	17.9			22.2		

Source: 10% systematic samples of census enumerators' books.

Notes:

The Holbeck and Hunslet samples only count building workers who are heads of households. The Wortley enumerators failed ^{to} designate birthplaces by township within Leeds.

TABLE 4.8 : BIRTHPLACES OF WORTLEY RAILWAYMEN

<u>Birthplaces of workers (%)</u>			<u>Birthplaces of wives (%)</u>		
	<u>1851</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
<u>Wortley</u>	-	(5.0)	(5.0)	-	-
Leeds Boro.	75.0	23.0	21.0	29.4	22.7
West Riding		36.0	30.0	41.2	36.4
Elsewhere	25.0	51.0	49.0	29.4	40.9

BIRTHPLACES OF LEATHER WORKERS

	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
<u>Bramley</u>		70.0	53.8		40.0	45.5
Leeds Boro.		80.0	65.4		60.0	54.5
West Riding		10.0	23.1		40.0	36.4
Elsewhere		10.0	11.5		-	9.1
<hr/>						
<u>Holbeck</u>	42.9			16.7		
Leeds	57.1			66.7		
West Riding	14.3			16.6		
Elsewhere	28.6			16.6		
<hr/>						
<u>Hunslet</u>	14.3			27.8		
Leeds	33.3			44.4		
West Riding	23.8			22.2		
Elsewhere	42.8			33.3		

Source: 10% systematic samples of census enumerators' books.

Nb: Hunslet and Holbeck samples count household heads only.

The majority of Wortley railwaymen were married with young families.¹ Many arrived with their wives not only from other parts of Yorkshire but also from the North Midlands and Lancashire.² Owing to the relatively late growth of railway employment in Wortley it is probable that most local railwaymen were already experienced in the industry before coming to Leeds. Although over one in five railwaymen had fathers who were labourers, local recruitment of farm workers was not the main source of Leeds railway labour.³

The earliest arrivals in Wortley sent their eldest children to work in shops, foundries or on the railways. By 1871 a wide variety of industries were open to local railwaymen's children, but most girls worked in hat and clothing factories or small millineries, and most boys went to woollen and stuff mills, or to erecting and machine-tool shops.⁴ Between the adult generations there was considerable occupational and social mobility. Only 28 per cent of out-township railwaymen at marriage had fathers who worked in the industry. The railway companies may have offered jobs for life,⁵ but the continuity of families in employment was greater in other industries. Less than ten per cent of railwaymen married daughters of railwaymen. There was also a great deal of social mobility of railway workers at marriage. Three quarters of the grooms in semi-skilled occupations married wives whose fathers were in a higher social group, typically mechanics, weavers, shoemakers, smiths, builders, joiners, masons and bricklayers. Porters also married mostly above themselves, but 40 per cent of skilled railwaymen, drivers, guards, clerks, pointsmen and signalmen, the labour aristocrats, married below themselves, with fathers-in-law as labourers, ostlers, stuff pressers, dyers, watchmen and gardeners.⁵

The workforce on the railways was wrought with status divisions, which were enhanced by uniforms and a carefully graded ranking system. Company loyalty and a sense of duty characterised the uniformed railwaymen. Some publicity was given to the Armley stationmaster who refused a reward for returning lost money to its owner as 'contrary

1 51.1 per cent of railway household heads in Wortley in 1871 had only dependent children living at home.

2 The Leeds-Derby line, terminating in Hunslet was built in 1836 by the North Midland Company. The line to Manchester was completed in 1841.

3 P.W. Kingsford, Victorian Railwaymen (1970), pp.1-12.

4 Table 4.5.

5 Frank McKenna, 'Victorian Railway Workers', History Workshop 1 (1976), 26-73.

to the regulations of the company'.¹ the small suburban stations did not see much passenger traffic and the station masters, porters, ticket collectors and traffic grades there were not very high in the ranks of supervisory staff.² Most workers were employed on the tracks as platelayers, gangers and labourers, or on the sidings as shunters and enginemen, though there were some railway clerks living in New Wortley by 1871. Wages for the waymen were not particularly high. The top rate for a ganger in the early 1870's was 30 shillings a week, but shunters earned on average only a little over 20 shillings, labourers' bottom rate of 15 shillings, and a lampman might earn as little as 10 shillings per week.³ It was these low paid railway workers who crowded into the back streets of New Wortley and Holbeck, and who helped to make these areas solidly working class and labour conscious by the 1880's.

Locomotive drivers and firemen did have a strong occupational identity, a trade union consciousness, and some attachment to the community. An engine-drivers' society met in the Pack Horse in Briggate in 1861.⁴ In 1866 the Engine-Drivers' and Firemens' United Society held its crowded branch meetings in the People's hall in Holbeck.⁵ They were among the aristocracy of railway labour. With top wages in the early 1870's up to 45 shillings, drivers were better off than most skilled workers in engineering shops. The drivers' engine shed formed a community within a community, and there were several throughout the out-townships, at Farnley, Holbeck, Beeston Royds and Wortley junction. The Farnley shed was remembered as a 'forbidding workhouse type of building', whose greatest asset to weary drivers and stokers was its communal bath. The Midland shed at Holbeck was 'a walled fortress among a complex of working class houses and shops', 'an important clearing house for drivers between trains.'⁶ They crowded into the local brothels and pubs and became

1 LM, 7 Apr. 1859. See McKenna, op.cit. pp.26-7.

2 Kingsford, op.cit. pp.88, 95-6.

3 Ibid.

4 UK First Annual Trades' Union Directory (1861). This was either a branch of the Locomotive Steam Engine Drivers' Society (1839) or of the Enginemen's and Firemen's Association (1860). See McKenna, op.cit. p.55, and Kingsford, op.cit. pp.82-3.

5 LM, 2 Oct. 1866.

6 Frank McKenna, The Railway Workers 1840-1970 (1980), pp.89, 204-5, 207-8.

a familiar sight on the streets of Holbeck.

Drivers were 'clannish' with regard to their unions and fiercely protective about their work privileges, skill and status. However their operational mobility ensured a widening of social relations which was reflected, as we have seen, in considerable social mobility at marriage.¹ Leeds enginemen demonstrated their union militancy in 1867, when 1500 drivers and stokers on the North-Eastern Railway turned out to gain seven shillings for a ten hour day, with a shed day once a week and Sunday work treated as overtime.² In Leeds railwaymen from the five main companies serving the town met in Armley and Holbeck under the banner of the Engine Drivers' United Society. The employers' response was to draft in blackleg drivers and firemen and to prosecute for breach of contract. The union executive prevaricated, firstly threatening a general strike, but then supporting arbitration. The strikers remained resolute. They warned the public that the NER was running trains with unqualified drivers, and urged workers not to blackleg the strike. They used the telegraph system to keep informed about the situation in other districts. Within the month however, the Leeds railwaymen were blacklegged out of their jobs.³ Nevertheless the brief but intensive strike indicated the trade union consciousness and potential militancy of Leeds railwaymen in the local tradition of labour radicalism. Within three years a national union, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, was established in People's Hall, Holbeck, and gained over 17,000 members in its first year.⁴ By 1890 ASRS had 26,360 members nationally, and had branches at Hunslet, New Wortley and Kirkstall in Leeds.⁵

1 Kingsford, op.cit. pp.56-8, 82.

2 The following account is based on LM, 12 Apr. 13 Apr. 15 Apr. 16 Apr. 17 Apr. 18 Apr. 23 Apr. 25 Apr. 1867; Philip S. Bagwell, The Railwaymen (1963), pp.35-44.

3 Bagwell, op.cit., falsely gives the impression that Leeds was against a general strike. In fact strikers' meetings in the People's Hall repeatedly called for "united action".

4 Bagwell, op.cit. p.52.

5 Full membership figures are given in G. W. Alcock, 50 Years of Railway Trade Unionism (1922); see also, Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, Report and Financial Statements for 1889 (1890),..... for 1892 (1893).

From 1881 there was also a local branch of the Locomotive and Firemen's Society.¹ By the time the Leeds ASRS agitated for a maximum ten hour day, guaranteed weekly wages and overtime pay in the winter of 1889, nearly 600 railwaymen in Leeds were members of a union.²

Brickmakers were generally regarded as low-paid, violent men with an undeveloped trade union organisation despite the considerable levels of skill in the trade.³ Amongst the 450 brickmakers in Upper Wortley and Armley there is little evidence of trade unionism. The Wortley brick and sanitary tube makers did strike over wages in the spring of 1858 against a background of agitation in Leeds foundries and a long and violent strike in the local coalfields.⁴ In quieter times however the Wortley brickmakers closely identified with their employers and the community in which they lived. Brickmakers, coal and clay miners preferred living close to their workplaces. Wortley miners mostly resided in the western part of the township. The great majority of brickmakers lived in Upper Wortley, near the firebrick works of Joseph Cliff and William Ingham. 83 per cent of all miners and brickmakers in 1861 lived in four enumeration districts out of twelve. Virtually no miners or brickmakers lived in Lower Wortley which remained largely a clothing village in 1861. Very few lived in the east of the township, near the railway lines and terraces of New Wortley. In 1871 69 per cent were still concentrated in the four districts covering Upper Wortley, and 60 per cent of Armley brickmakers lived on the northern side of Tong road, within easy reach of the Wortley brickworks. At the 1861 census four manufacturers returned nearly 700 employees, and as there were only about 260 brickworkers living in Wortley at the time, hundreds must have journeyed into Upper Wortley each day, not only from Armley (where less than 190 brickworkers lived) but also from Farnley, Holbeck and elsewhere.

Unlike the railwaymen, Wortley miners and brickworkers were largely local men. In 1851 four-fifths were born in Leeds, in 1871 two-thirds.⁵ Their wives were also local girls, mostly from Wortley, Beeston, Holbeck and Hunslet. This close local identity by

1 Yorkshire Factory Times, 25 Oct. 1889. Keith Laybourn, 'The Attitudes of Yorkshire Trades Unions to the Economic and Social Problems of the Great Depression, 1873-96', (unpublished PhD thesis, Lancaster University, 1972), pp.161-2.

2 Yorkshire Factory Times, 29 Nov. 1889. On the ASRS demonstration at Leeds Coliseum in December 1889 see F.R. Spark, Memories of My Life (Leeds, 1913), pp.236-8.

3 R.W. Postgate, The Builders' History (1923), pp.245-50.

4 LM, 8 May 1858

5 Table 4.9: Birthplace of Miners, Quarrymen and Brickmakers.

TABLE 4.9 : BIRTHPLACES OF OUT-TOWNSHIP MINERS, BRICKMAKERS AND QUARRYMEN

	<u>Birthplaces of Workers (%)</u>			<u>Birthplace of Wives (%)</u>		
	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
<u>Wortley</u>	58.0	(32.0)	(44.0)	-	-	-
Leeds Boro.	79.0	70.0	67.0	100.0	63.6	54.5
West Riding	16.0	19.0	13.0	-	27.3	18.2
Elsewhere	5.0	11.0	20.0	-	9.1	27.3
<u>Beeston</u>	57.1	42.1	17.6	33.3	44.4	40.0
Leeds Boro.	57.1	52.6	29.4	50.0	55.6	46.7
W. Riding	43.9	42.1	70.6	33.3	33.3	40.0
Elsewhere	-	5.3	-	16.7	11.1	13.3
<u>Bramley</u>	27.3	66.7		-	50.0	-
Leeds Boro.	36.4	77.8		20.0	66.7	-
West Riding	54.5	22.2		60.0	33.3	-
Elsewhere	9.1	-		20.0	-	-
<u>Armley</u>		23.5	37.5		40.0	33.3
Leeds Boro.		52.9	81.3		60.0	75.0
West Riding		5.9	6.2		-	16.7
Elsewhere		41.2	12.5		40.0	8.3
<u>Hunslet</u>	46.7			60.0		
Leeds Boro.	53.3			60.0		
West Riding	33.3			33.3		
Elsewhere	15.4			6.7		

Source: 10% systematic samples of census enumerators' books.
 Nb: Beeston, Bramley and Hunslet samples are of household heads only.

Coal miners form the majority of Beeston and Hunslet samples,
 quarrymen in Bramley and brickmakers in Wortley and Armley.

occupation, residence, birthplace and marriage facilitated a village paternalism in Upper Wortley. The Liberal employers, Cliff and Ingham, for instance, successfully mobilised their workers in 1853 to protest against Tory attempts to pillory their brickworks for causing acid gas pollution, at a time when there was much public criticism of industrial nuisances.¹ These family firms had been in Wortley for several decades, and the brickworks had become a staple industry in Upper Wortley. Several of the oldest employees of Joseph Cliff had worked for him and his father for over 40 years. Workers identified with the family. The vehicles of patronage, the company band, the dinner given on John Cliff junior attaining his majority, the company day-outings, certainly created the impression of a community spirit fostered by employer paternalism.² The significance of patronage and industrial feudalism will be examined more closely in the following chapter. It is important to note here however how complex and varied the socio-economic structure of the out-townships had become by mid-century. Occupational groups existed in neighbourhood clusters within communities, some marked by adherence to the workplace and the employer, dominated by paternalist social relations, others characterised by the experience of migration, social and occupational mobility, and the ability to organise in trade unions and confront employers. Yet all lived cheek by jowl and shared a common identity in the township. Most were integrated to some extent in the inherited culture and traditions of the clothier past.

Like the Wortley brickmakers, coal miners were mostly natives of the out-townships, living in neighbourhoods with no elite labour aristocracy in their ranks. Status divisions among miners were limited. Demands on life tended to be made by miners as a community, not as individuals.³ Like the brickmakers and the railwaymen, colliers were closely attached to their place of work, to local pits and local employers.

Even in Hunslet, where the majority of households in 1851 were headed by migrants, most miners were born in Leeds. In Beeston, where miners formed the largest occupational group by 1861, migration was more important. Some residential patterns can be discerned. In 1841 over half the Beeston miners lived south of Town Street and east

1 Leeds Town Council, Scavenging and Nuisance Committee Minutes, 14 July 1853. Muriatic gas was emitted during the salting process.

2 LM, 2 July 1853.

3 Williamson, op.cit. p.68.

of Millshaw, in two of the six enumeration districts. Between 1841 and 1871 there were two movements away from this area. During the 1850s, after several old pits were exhausted and some miners had left Beeston altogether, other local mining families moved to the cottages built by the Low Moor company and to pits at Cross Flatts in the east and Parkside in the south of the township. Then, in the 1860s, there was an influx of middle-aged, married miners from the West Riding to the Hall and Beggar's Hill pits north of Town street, to houses west of Crow Nest lane and south of Elland road, and to cottages around Millshaw. However neighbourhood clustering was limited. Generally miners could be found all over Beeston, except in the west where most of the farmland was located.

Children did not automatically follow their fathers down the pits. The flax and woollen mills proved a greater attraction in Beeston in the 1840s and 1850s, though not in Hunslet. The social cohesion provided by a common neighbourhood identity was severely limited by the fluctuating nature of demand for local coal, the relatively short life of some pits, and the availability of other types of work for colliers' children.

Between the older generations however the social cohesion of mining communities was indicated by out-township marriage registers. Over one-third of miners at marriage were sons of miners. While less than ten per cent of railwaymen married daughters of railwaymen, 37.5 per cent of miners married miners' daughters. There was also some upward social mobility between generations - over one in five miners were sons of labourers - but not much mobility in the other direction - only 7.5 per cent married daughters of labourers. Taken together with the birthplace statistics, it does seem to indicate that there was a marriage market within suburban mining communities, something which scarcely existed amongst railway workers.

Marriage, residence and birthplace point to relatively close-knit and stable communities of miners. As with the brickmakers of Wortley, the integration of community and workplace encouraged passive industrial relations in the Leeds coalfield. This was particularly true in the early 1850s with local political and labour radicalism dampened by the Liberal revival. On the eve of the violent strike of 1858, Leeds miners were described as 'generally an orderly class of men'.¹ The leader of the

1 T.Fenteman, An Historical Guide to Leeds and its environs(Leeds,1858).

Hunslet miners, William Brown, believed that 'the interests of labour and capital were identical'. 'The men had a right to share in the profits of a good trade, seeing that the masters always come on the men in time of bad trade.'¹ Indeed in the mining boom of the early 1870's some observers assumed that rising money wages had given coal miners more to spend on food, clothing, furniture and rent. However workers were also accused of living beyond their means, 'horny-handed colliers riding first class and smoking short pipes with their legs out of cabs and carriages.'²

Nevertheless the social gulf between miners and colliery owners was vast and both sides were well organised. From the miners' wage petition of 1853 to their campaign against the sliding scale in 1880, the Yorkshire coalfields were scarred with strikes, lock-outs and disputes. The battle lines of class warfare were drawn firmly by the strike of 1858. Mining communities in Leeds found the paternalist bonds with their employers broken above all by the militancy of the local coalowners' association. Coalowners in Leeds had combined to reduce wages as early as 1855, when prices were still high, and they appear to have reacted particularly strongly to the faltering re-emergence of trade unionism among their workers.³

The 1858 dispute began with a meeting of Leeds colliery owners in February which resolved to cut wages by 15 per cent.⁴ Barnsley employers followed suit, and within a month resistance to the cuts had spread across the Yorkshire coalfields.⁵ In response to the lock-out which followed, miners began to organise into district unions. Each district was permitted up to ten per cent of members on strike at any one time, with a strike fund supplied by other miners working a maximum eight hour day.⁶

- 1 R.C. on Trade Unions, 8th Report, PP (1867-8) XXXIX 331, evidence of William Brown, Q. 16505.
- 2 John Holmes in McCorquodale's Directory of Leeds for 1878, op.cit. By 1860 some Leeds miners already earned up to 36 shillings a week. Returns of Wages published between 1830 and 1886, PP (1887)LXXXIX, 273.
- 3 LM, 17 Mar. 1855. J.M. Ludlow, 'Account of the West Yorkshire Coal Strike and Lock-Out of 1858', in National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences, Report of the Committee on Trades' Societies (1860), pp.11-51.
- 4 LM, 27 Feb. 1858.
- 5 S.C.on Masters and Operatives, PP(1860)XXII 443, evidence of R. Mitchell, Qs. 601-2.
- 6 LM 27 Feb. 13 Mar. 20 Mar. 25 Mar. 17 Apr. 1858. Ludlow op. cit. p.29. When full the fund paid seven shillings a week to strikers, who could earn as much in a day and a half when at work.

The 1858 strike, like most in the Leeds coalfield over the following twenty years, began over wage levels. Usually disputes concerned severe wage cuts, 15 per cent in 1858 and 1863, 10 per cent in 1868 and 1879, and as much as 25 per cent in 1874. These occurred most often in periods of poor trade and falling coal prices. In the West Riding particularly, any sign of a slackening demand for coal and a miners' strike against subsequent wage reductions made local textile and clothing manufacturers extremely fearful of the consequences of a sharp decline in the purchasing power of workers.¹ In years of rising coal prices, partly reflecting an increased demand from the mills and foundries, miners pressed for wage increases. For a brief period between 1872 and 1874 they were successful. However, both in 1858 and 1868 it seems clear that colliery owners demanded wage cuts in an attempt to gain more profit from price inflation. The 15 per cent reduction in 1858 represented about half of the increase in money wages since coal prices began to rise in the early 1850's.² Faced with a ten per cent cut in 1868, the miners' union published evidence to show firstly, that the employers were attacking wages to increase profits, and secondly, that the public could not blame wage increases for expensive coal. From the bottom rate paid in 1857 to the top rate of 1867 wages had risen about 22 per cent. In that time the price of low bed coal rose 47 per cent and best coal by 57 per cent.³

Invariably however the stakes were quickly raised during the course of a strike. In 1858 Leeds coal masters flatly rejected a compromise proposed by temperance leaders in which the miners would return to work with a seven and a half per cent cut in wages.⁴ Blackleg miners and unskilled labourers were brought into the pits. At Waterloo Main colliery in May, a new division of labour was introduced where hurriers had to fill as well as hurry their corves, a job previously done by colliers.⁵ The law was vigourously applied against strikers and pickets. Nearly 30 Leeds miners were charged with intimidation, assault and breach of contract. Some were discharged on condition they returned to work, most were fined, and a few were gaoled.⁶ Finally in October the coal owners decided on a

1 See for instance The Textile Manufacturer, 15 May 1876, 15 Feb. 15 Mar. 15 May, 15 July, 15 Dec. 1877.

2 Ludlow, op.cit. pp.27-8.

3 LM, 17 Mar. 1868

4 LM, 17 Apr. 1858. Mr Cliff, a bookseller, and George Walker, a shopkeeper, had apparently nothing to do with the West Yorkshire Miners' Association established a month before.

5 LM, 29 May 1858

6 LM, 25 Mar. 1 June, 22 July, 31 July, 12 Aug. 2 Oct. 28 Oct. 1858

total lock-out to enforce the wage reduction and break the union and its strike fund. The miners' response was to display the solidarity of their communities and to campaign for public sympathy. Mass meetings of between 800 and 3000 miners were held in Hunslet, Woodhouse, Rothwell and Methley. The employers rejected a request from the Vicar of Leeds for arbitration, however their ranks finally broke at the end of November. Once one coal owner compromised for a seven and a half per cent cut, other pits in the Leeds area soon followed.¹

The breakthrough was achieved by the treasurer of the Methley miners, Richard Bayldon. Bayldon had supported the miners in 1844 and was the defeated Chartist candidate for Hunslet in that year, before he moved to Methley. Capable organisers such as Bayldon, Brown and Toft, with personal memories of the 1844 strike, carried on the miners' traditional labour consciousness into the mid-Victorian years.²

The West Yorkshire miners were extremely fragmented, and nowhere more so than at Leeds.³ Trade unionists were divided into lodges, often with autonomous organisations for each pit. They were also in a minority. 'If every man in the district had been like the 2000 who were in the union', exclaimed William Brown at a Hunslet moor meeting in 1868, 'there would have been no reductions.'⁴ It seems to have been relatively easy for colliery owners to find scabs, and difficult for striking miners to picket them out, particularly with the large-scale policing seen in Leeds.⁵ Nevertheless union member-

1 Ludlow, op.cit. p.37.

2 William Brown was a working miner for over 25 years at Thorp Hall colliery, Hunslet, and he took part in the 1844 strike. During the 1858 strike Brown's family were evicted by his employer, John Fenton, the Chairman of the Leeds Coalowners' Association. Brown was blacklisted with 20 other trade unionists from his next job at Bower's Pepper Hall colliery, but survived as a singer and a greengrocer with the support of the Hunslet mining community until he got his job back at Fenton's. By 1863 Brown was the leading organiser of the WYMA in Leeds. John Toft, a strike leader in 1844, was simply a 'working collier' of Methley in 1858. In 1863 he was secretary of the WYMA. See R.C. on Trade Unions 8th Report PP(1867-8)XXXIX,331, evidence of William Brown Qs.16354-16517, and Ibid., 6th Report, evidence of John Toft, pp.224-6. See also Toft's letter, LM, 20 Mar. 1858.

3 Henry PeTting, A History of British Trade Unionism (1963, 3rd edn. 1976) pp.72-3.

4 LM, 1; Mar. 1868.

5 Laybourn, op.cit. pp.16-17, notes that coal owners were able to play off one group of miners against another even during periods of expansion, due to wage differentials between coal-fields and regions.

ship grew rapidly in the 1860's, early 1870's, and after 1885.¹ The defeats of 1868 and 1870 failed to destroy the union because of its deep roots in the mining villages south of Leeds. Leeds miners were mostly natives of the district, closely attached to local pits and customs, steeped in the tradition of labour radicalism grown out of the culture of the domestic clothier. As with the textile workers, women played a prominent part in the miners' struggles. They led the pickets in Leeds in 1868, and marched with their husbands on the demonstrations. There was a fundamental opposition between the colliery owners' view of their property and labour to be disposed of at will, and the miners' notion of proprietary rights within long established communities. Blacklegs from other districts violated the latter notion and drew hostility upon themselves.² Changes in work routine also undermined miners' prerogatives and were fiercely resisted. Trade unionists, the labour aristocrats of the coal pits, coupled a desire to achieve respectability and independence with an awareness of their class identity and the need to be militant in defence of the customs, privileges and prosperity of their communities.

There is some evidence of occupational communities among metal and engineering workers. In Bramley clusters of engineers and mechanics lived near the foundries and boilerworks of Stanningley and the crane works of Rodley and Newlay. In Armley in 1861 half the ironworkers lived in one enumeration district. Shovel makers, iron turners and forgeworkers resided in houses near the Aire and the canal, by Witham's Forge and the Leeds Forge at Kirkstall. In 1871 69 per cent of metalworkers could be found in this district. In Wortley two-thirds of the metalworkers lived in the New Wortley half of the township in 1861. As in Armley, migrants settled in new housing near their workplaces, in the back to backs between Gelderd road and Mann's Fold, and near the Union Foundry in Armley Old Hall district, alongside railway workers. However by 1871 engineering and iron workers were more evenly distributed across the township. Most were natives of Leeds. In Bramley migrants were older men, 57 per cent were over 40 in 1871 while 83 per cent of locally born engineers were under 40. However, in the larger engineering centres of Hunslet and Holbeck, younger migrants and their wives, particularly from Lancashire, were more numerous.³

1 Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (1894 revised edn. 1920), p.393. WYMA had over 40 branches and 4000 members in 1868, only 6 Lodges and 480 members in October 1870, but 12000 members by 1874.

2 Frank Machin, 'The Yorkshire Miners: A History vol.1 (Barnsley, 1958).

3 Table 4.10: Birthplaces of Out-township Engineering Workers.

TABLE 4.10: BIRTHPLACES OF OUT-TOWNSHIP ENGINEERING WORKERS

<u>Birthplaces of Workers (%)</u>				<u>Birthplaces of Wives %</u>		
	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
<u>Wortley</u>	47.0	(12.0)	(14.0)			
Leeds Boro.	76.0	48.0	52.0			
W. Riding	18.0	35.0	31.0			
Elsewhere	6.0	17.0	17.0			
<u>Armley</u>	70.0	25.7	51.8		33.3	32.1
Leeds Boro.	80.0	57.1	71.4		60.0	71.4
W. Riding	20.0	31.4	21.4		26.7	25.0
Elsewhere	-	11.5	7.1		13.3	3.6
<u>Bramley</u>	42.3	47.5	54.2	33.3	65.0	42.8
Leeds Boro.	61.5	57.5	61.0	44.4	65.0	50.0
W. Riding	30.8	17.5	20.3	33.3	25.0	25.0
Elsewhere	7.7	25.0	18.6	22.2	10.0	25.0
<u>Hunslet</u>	19.1			13.6		
Leeds Boro.	32.4			30.3		
W. Riding	44.1			36.4		
Elsewhere	23.5			33.3		
<u>Holbeck</u>	32.4			21.9		
Leeds Boro.	55.9			46.9		
W. Riding	23.5			21.9		
Elsewhere	20.5			31.2		

Source: 10% systematic samples of census enumerators' books.
 Nb. Holbeck and Hunslet samples are of household heads only.

In the 1850's migrants with young families arrived in Wortley. The 'bulge' of young children reached their teens in the following decade and many were at work by 1871. The proportion of household heads in engineering with occupied children rose from one in ten in 1861 to more than one in three by 1871, and a similar increase was recorded in Armley and Bramley. The result of the migration of older workers into the out-township engineering industries, and the ageing of native workers in those industries was that more children of engineers were entering the labour market in the 1860's than ever before. In Hunslet in 1851 the majority of eldest sons of working age followed their fathers into the engineering industry while their sisters went into the textile mills. This pattern was repeated in Bramley, Armley and Wortley in 1871.¹

Socially and occupationally engineering workers were less mobile than miners and railwaymen. Only one in five engineers were in a higher social class at marriage than their fathers, one in three miners and 40 per cent of railwaymen. Only eight per cent of engineers had fathers who were labourers, over one in five of miners and railwaymen. A larger proportion of engineers followed their father's occupation than either miners or railwaymen. The impression is one of a fairly static industrial group of workers, a large part of which renewed itself by marriage within its own ranks, with little movement up or down the social scale. There were many contacts within the industry between the large number of skilled and semi-skilled workers, but few familial or marital ties with the labouring class.²

The labour aristocrats, turners, fitters, boilermakers, engine-makers, smiths, puddlers, moulders and furnacemen, were rigidly divided by skill and apprenticeship from their assistants and unskilled labourers. Several occupations were organised into craft unions by mid-century, ironfounders (1811), steam engine-makers (1838), boiler-makers (1840), smiths (1849), and turners and fitters in the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (1851). By 1868 tin plate workers, brass founders, hammermen and patternmakers at Leeds had also formed craft unions.³

1 Table 4.5.

2 Table 4.6: cf. Crossick who concludes the same for the artisans of Kentish Town, Geoffrey Crossick, An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society (1978), pp.129-30.

3 Reform League Election Reports, 1868, Report on Leeds by John Hales and S. Brighty.

The division of labour within the foundries, engine-erecting rooms and machine-tool workshops encouraged the specialisation of workers into single branches of the iron, steel and machine-making industries.¹ Unions encouraged the fragmentation of labour by relying on the employers' willingness to accept certain conditions, such as a closed shop, which emphasised the exclusivity of the labour aristocracy, in exchange for their agreement to diluted skills, machine-technology and even wage cuts. There was rivalry both between unions and between crafts within a union. Leeds hammermen and smiths had a number of unions by the 1870's. Leeds patternmakers broke away from the ASE in 1865 in protest at the lack of their representation within the union. Thereafter the ASE was always a potential source of blacklegs during patternmakers' disputes.² Moreover the independence of local branches within the big unions was asserted, particularly at Leeds. Most unions were centred in Holbeck, Hunslet and Leeds with branch meetings in pubs near the workshops and foundries. Their exclusivity at local level even hindered the attempts by national executives to expand union membership.³

Union membership was fairly static during the middle decades of the century. The steam-engine makers had between 50 and 80 Leeds members from the late 1840's to the early 1870's, and then between 120 and 140 members till 1889. Recruitment drives for 'worthy and eligible' engine-makers in 1872-3 and 1878 petered out.⁴ Membership of the ironfounders', the boilermakers' and engineers' unions also rose only marginally between 1870 and 1889. In times of improving trade or price inflation, in the early 1850's, the early 1860's, 1869-74, 1882-3 and 1889-90, when strikes were short and often successful, membership did increase slightly. During periods of depressed demand, short-time and high unemployment, 1858, 1867-8, 1875-81, and 1885-6, union membership slumped, attacks on wage levels and work customs of skilled craftsmen became more frequent,

... strikes became longer and more difficult, and the existence of trade unionism itself was put in question. Serious defeats in

1 James B. Jeffreys, The Story of the Engineers 1800-1945 (1945 reprinted 1970), p.58.

2 W. Mosses, The History of the United Patternmakers' Association 1872-1922 (1927), pp. 36-8.

3 This 'extreme and complicated sectionalism' is described by the Webbs, *op.cit.*, p.358, and local independence by Laybourn, *op.cit.*, p.155.

4 Steam Engine Makers' Society, 48th Annual Report (1873). The Hunslet branch of SEMS, founded in 1874, increased its numbers by only 17 in 15 years.

industrial disputes between 1878 and 1881 made recruitment especially difficult. Leeds boilermakers lost 20 per cent of their members between 1877 and 1880. Less shops contained trade unionists in 1884 than in 1877, though membership per shop had slightly increased.¹ The steam-engine makers felt that the only way to resist threats to wages caused by falling iron prices and the knock-on effect of speculative overproduction during the price inflation of the early 1870's was to reorganise and recruit on a new basis.

"In the past our Society has looked more to its organisation as a benefit society than for disputes in the workshops, but it behoves us to consider whether we are acting true to ourselves in this respect...The secret of success in labour combinations is a perfect organisation in the trade." (2)

As benefit societies, unions operated within communities which identified this function with the traditions of clothier culture.³ Without this identification, trade unionists may well have found themselves on the fringes of community life. In the foundries, crane factories and boiler shops of Stanningley, Rodley, Farnley and Beeston they were in any case a minority among the workforce. When the engine-makers established a branch in Rodley in 1890 they noted that the district, 'being one where numerous engineering firms existed, the number of non-society men extensive, and wages equally low, the latest addition to our branches bids fair to become prominent.'⁴ Attitudes varied between unions as to the importance of organising in small suburban and village communities. In 1876 the South Leeds ironfounders abandoned the case of a member who had been sacked for following the union line in refusing piecework. 'The shop is in an out of the way place and it is of little consequence to the Society.'⁵ On the other hand the engine-makers came to a different conclusion in 1890 about the usefulness of small islands of trade unionism in places like Rodley. The 'friendly society principle', they argued, had retained large numbers of members in isolated localities where industrial

1 United Society of Boilermakers and Iron Ship Builders, 44th Annual Report, 1877 (Liverpool, 1878), 45th Annual Report, 1878 (Liverpool, 1879) 51st Annual Report 1884 (Liverpool, 1885).

2 Steam Engine Makers' Society, 54th Annual Report (1878).

3 On unions as benefit societies and the 'social life of unions', see Patrick Joyce, Work Society and Politics (1980), pp.290-2. The impact of general friendly and benefit societies will be examined in chapter six.

4 Steam Engine Makers, 66th Annual Report (1890).

5 Friendly Society of Ironfounders, Auxiliary Fund Report for 1876 (1877), p.130.

relations were seldom strained and where employment was stable. The subscriptions of these members had helped those in the larger centres where disputes were more frequent.¹

The benefits and financial services were extremely popular aspects of trade unionism in the Leeds district where the friendly

society principle was so strong. The ironfounders and boilermakers provided sick and accident benefit, funeral and emigration expenses, and some form of superannuation. Apart from strike pay, most unions also provided unemployment benefit.² Tramping money was paid by the ironfounders between 1841 and 1847, but 'home donations' were increasingly used by most unions from the late 1840's.³ The Leeds Patternmakers' Association began as a mutual aid society in 1865, and reformed as a sick society the following year. An 'out of work' fund was set up in 1867 by voluntary subscription, and by 1872 the union also paid sick and funeral benefits, superannuation, and a tool benefit for the loss of kits by fire or theft. A system of fines for drunkenness, profanity and misdemeanour kept union discipline.⁴ Because of the lack of protection for union funds, they were frequently subject to fraud. The Leeds ironfounders caught their treasurer tampering with the funds in 1879.⁵ In 1852 Leeds boilermakers entrusted their cash to their landlord, although he was not a union member. He defrauded them of £96 for which he was tried and sentenced to gaol and a flogging, but the union recovered only half its money.⁶

John Burns and the socialist organisers of the general unions in the 1880's believed that the craft unions' function as benefit societies and saving banks impaired their ability to fight encroachments on wages and working conditions.⁷ However in the relatively isolated out-township communities, the friendly society features of trade unions only enhanced the labour consciousness of the members. Craft identity and sectionalism certainly worked to the benefit of employers, and craft pride was encouraged by the most aware managers. Good wages, reasonable conditions and hours kept unrest to a minimum.⁸ Nevertheless the financial strength of a union often related directly to its

1 Steam Engine Makers, 66th Annual Report (1890).

2 The Leeds Boilermakers' Society was formed 'to bury the dead and to relieve the sick and the unemployed', LI, 29 May 1852.

3 H.J.Fyrth and Henry Collins, The Foundry Workers: a trade union history (Manchester, 1959), pp.55-6; R.A. Leeson, Travelling Brothers (1979), p.189.

4 Mosses, op.cit. pp.11-16

5 Friendly Society of Ironfounders Auxiliary Fund Report for 1879 (1880), p.414

6 LI, 29 May 1852.

7 Webb., op.cit. p.385

8 Edwin Kitson Clark, Kitsons of Leeds 1837-1937 (1938), pp.146-7, 166.

power in collective bargaining. Moreover the procedures for participating in benefit schemes run by and for labouring men gave trade unionists and labour aristocrats a point of contact with the working class communities in which they lived.

Throughout the period 1850-90 the main strike issue in engineering was about wage levels. High wages were a necessary part of the skilled workers' status division from that of the labourer. Apprenticeship, personal ownership of tools, opposition to wage cuts, piecework and to the encroachment of unskilled workers or of other skilled workers into a particular trade were part of the maintenance of exclusivity and privilege. However the resistance of the labour aristocracy was also the result of attacks on their unions. In all the largest and most bitter strikes of the period, the recognition of the right of workers to belong to unions and for those unions to negotiate collectively for their members was at stake.

From 1876 till 1881 the Leeds iron industry, like the coal industry, suffered from reduced demand, short time, and unemployment. Over 28 per cent of ironfounders and 19 per cent of patternmakers were unemployed in 1879. Overproduction was blamed for the depression and there was renewed pressure for the nine hour day as the logical solution to unemployment.¹ There was a general attack on wage levels in many branches of engineering. Leeds ironfounders and patternmakers suffered a series of wage cuts between 1876 and 1881 despite their resistance.² Top wages for riveters in boilermaking fell from 32 to 27 shillings between 1877 and 1880.³ In 1879 the ironfounders spent more on disputes per member than in any year since 1844.⁴ Reflecting on these troubles the union wrote,

"We were then passing through a critical period in our history; it seemed as if all the influence and power of capital was being brought to bear upon us to try and crush out our existence as a Society." (5)

Outside of this period, other issues were also crucial to local unions. The Hunslet boilermakers struck in 1851 for equal wages for all workers within a department regardless of skill differentials.⁶

- 1 United Society of Boilermakers, 45th Annual Report, op.cit.; Steam Engine Makers, 55th Annual Report (1879).
- 2 Friendly Society of Ironfounders, Auxiliary Fund Reports for 1876, 1877 and 1879; Mosses, op.cit. pp.48, 50-1, 54.
- 3 United Society of Boilermakers, 47th, 48th and 49th Annual Reports, (1880-2).
- 4 Friendly Society of Ironfounders, Annual Report (1887).
- 5 Ibid. (1879).
- 6 LM, 30 Aug. 1851. J.E. Mortimer, History of the Boilermakers' Society, Vol.I. 1834-1906 (1973), p.54.

In effect this was a fight against the piecework system which set worker against worker in competition. Piecework was also an issue in the 1864 ironworkers' lock-out and in Leeds ironfounders' disputes in 1876, 1879, 1880 and 1886. Puddlers and foundry workers were also opposed to piecework because of the system of 'blackballing', wage deductions and fines for bad iron and bad castings. When castings were broken and black instead of white iron was produced, puddlers by custom received three shillings a ton less.¹ If more than 28 hundredweight of black iron was broken out, they received nothing for the excess. If plates were defective, puddlers, furnacemen, rollers, shearers and shinglers would all lose money. This was the cause of a puddlers' strike in New Wortley in 1858, a Leeds ironfounders' strike in 1877, and another grievance in the 1864 lock-out.² Blackballing and the fines undermined the structure of work control which the labour aristocrats had established in the foundries, but it was 'a custom immemorial' in the district and one which the men had grudgingly accepted.³ The fines and bad iron reduced earnings from piecework so that by the mid-1860's some craft unions were negotiating a minimum wage. The ironworkers in 1865 attempted to achieve a sliding scale, a minimum wage and a procedure for arbitrating disputes.⁴ In 1878 the Leeds smiths also tried to establish a minimum rate and a piecework list.⁵ A minimum rate was the object of a Leeds patternmakers' dispute in 1889.⁶

Work control was also threatened by machinery and by the influx of untrained labourers as machine-hands. The Leeds puddlers were threatened with machine-puddling during the 1864 strike. Leeds boilermakers also struck that year to oppose self-acting machinery.⁷ When the first successful hand-driven moulding machines were introduced in Leeds in 1851, the Leeds moulders accepted them, but kept their operation to themselves. However, in 1874 the ironfounders' union was defeated in a strike to oppose the introduction of non-apprenticed labourers into moulding.⁸

1 Leeds puddlers averaged 6/6d per ton in 1860, Wage Returns. 1887, op.cit.

2 LM, 19 Oct. 1858; Friendly Society of Ironfounders, Auxiliary Fund Report for 1877 (1878), p.129.

3 R.C. on Trade Unions, 5th Report, PP (1867-8) XXXIX 1., evidence of John Kane, Qs 9236-48, 9254-66.

4 LM, 20 May 1865.

5 Angela Tuckett, The Blacksmiths' History (1974), p.72

6 Mosses, op.cit. p.87

7 LM, 27 Apr. 1864, 24 May 1864, 2 July 1864.

8 Fyrth and Collins, op.cit. p.44; Friendly Society of Ironfounders, Annual Report for 1874 (1875), p.130.

Despite the new machinery, skilled craftsmen were still required and apprenticeship retained in many branches of the iron and engineering industries. The extension of piece-work was limited by the individuality of the job. Nevertheless job demarcation by skill did come under attack during the late 1870's and 1880's.¹ Sub-contracting particularly undermined the efforts of trades unionists in the iron foundries.² Even the patternmakers whose trade continued to require a high degree of skill, were threatened with deskilling. Leeds patternmakers successfully resisted attempts in 1882 and 1888 to introduce joiners to their trade. The patternmakers' skill lay in their ability to move quickly between a variety of jobs, understand draughtmanship and work accurately from drawings. Their tools were very personalised and marked both the status and identity of the craftsman. The joiners were regarded as mere manufacturers of standardized products.³

The defence of their unions was primarily the labour aristocrats' effort to control the work process and maintain their privileged position within the relations of production. However, as with the miners, the issues were often broader. Trade unionists among the engineers and iron workers also found themselves defending the independence and respectability of traditional working class communities faced with increasing exploitation by factory capitalism. Blacklegs particularly violated the sense of the community's right to a say in the social reproduction of relations generated at the workplace. As in the textile industry in the past, arbitrary introduction of wage cuts, machinery and migrant labour threatened the social fabric of the out-townships. During the boilermakers' strike of 1851 hundreds came out onto the streets around Kitson's locomotive workshop in Hunslet lane to jeer and catcall the 'blacksheep' and 'knobsticks' he had brought in from Newcastle. As the strike became progressively more violent, both strikers and blacklegs armed themselves. 12 mechanics were charged with intimidation or assault in eight weeks. Five were fined, three released, two gaoled, and

1 Jefferys, op.cit. pp.58, 93; Charles More, Skill and the English Working Class 1870-1914 (1980), pp.155, 184-8; Roger Penn, 'Trade Union organisation and skill in the Cotton and Engineering Industries in Britain 1850-1960', Social History, 8, 1(1983), 37-55. Hobsbawm notes that 'semi-skilled' was little known as a category of worker before 1914. E.J. Hobsbawm, 'The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth Century Britain,' in his Labouring Men (1964), pp.272-315.

2 J.H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol.III (Cambridge, 1967), p.162

3 Mosses, op.cit. pp.64-5, 85.

two charged with attempted murder. The strike was defeated by the blacklegs, though the Leeds Boilermakers' Society survived.¹ Kitson's victory allowed other Leeds employers such as Fairbairn to dismiss trade unionists during the engineers' strike the following year without repercussions, despite public support for the union.²

Blacklegs proved to be the main danger to the National Association of Ironworkers (N.A.I.) during the Leeds lock-out of 1864. This was one of the longest and most bitter disputes in the labour history of Leeds, and a strike of national importance. It began with a threat of ten per cent wage cut, which was countered by demands of puddlers and furnacemen for wage increases. Positions sharpened in April 1864 when the employers united to demand their men sign a document renouncing the union. Puddlers, ball and mill furnacemen, hammermen and rollers all refused.³ The N.A.I. had virtually a closed shop at Kirkstall and the union was also very strong at Farnley, Hunslet, Bowling and Wortley. With the lock-out affecting 10000 men at ironworks between Leeds and Bradford the six-month dispute went far beyond the union membership and hit whole communities.⁴ At the height of the strike about 1300 trade unionists were out, about 500 of these from ironworks in Leeds.⁵

The employers' intention from the outset was to break the national union which had been established in 1863. Belgian ironworkers were brought in to work at cheap rates despite Leeds trade unionists' efforts at international contacts. The lock-out spawned a good deal of violence, although not as intense as in the boilermakers' strike of 1851. At least 22 were brought to court during the strike, 13 of whom were fined or gaoled for assault, intimidation or sabotaging machinery. The secretary of the Leeds puddlers was gaoled early in the strike for demanding the exclusion of non-union men at Kirkstall ironworks. The first month of the strike proceeded with various demands for better piece-rates from puddlers, puddlers' underhands and ball-furnacemen in shops across Leeds. Employers countered with threats of puddling machinery. Solutions proposed by the ASE and the NAI included an emigration fund and a local co-operative rolling mill.⁶

1 LM, 30 Aug. 20 Sept. 4 Oct. 11 Oct. 15 Nov. 22 Nov. 29 Nov. 13 Dec. 1851.

2 LM, 17 Jan. 13 Mar. 1852; LT, 3 Apr. 1852; See Thomas Hughes, 'Account of the Lock-Out of Engineers etc. in 1851-2', in National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, Report of the Committee on Trades' Societies (1860), pp.169-205.

3 LM, 13 Apr. 14 Apr. 15 Apr. 19 Apr. 20 Apr. 21 Apr. 1864.

4 Charles Docherty, Steel and Steelworkers (1983), pp.25-34.

5 Union estimates are given in LM, 26 Apr. 30 June. 18 Aug. 1864.

6 LM, 29 Apr. 2 May, 10 May, 14 May 1864.

In the middle of May the NAI executives seized control of the strike from the local branches.¹ They castigated the Leeds secretary for his militancy and promised the support of the national union only if the Leeds men dropped their wage demands. Once the strike ceased to be about wages, union solidarity was assured for resistance to the employers' document. This was a labour aristocratic union disciplining its heterogeneous membership drawn from different trades and different communities. High wages, skill and trade unions marked the divisions within the workforce. Union loyalty was strongest among foremen and top rate workers, especially puddlers. Their best strike pay was a generous 20 shillings a week, sharply contrasting with the seven shillings afforded by the miners six years earlier.² Trade unionists were adamant throughout the strike that those going to work and renouncing the union were mostly labourers, 'the scum of society - things that after a week's work could not earn so much as the lock-outs were being allowed by the union.'³ Nevertheless the union was also undermined by skilled workers. The tramping system proved a problem for those controlling the strike, particularly towards the end of the lock-out when strikers from other areas, especially Staffordshire, moved into Leeds to take the jobs of local men.⁴ Monitoring the movement of its members between districts as well as between shops became another headache for the NAI on top of the need to resist non-union blacklegs.

Certainly divisions within the workforce helped to ensure the unions' defeat. However these divisions can be exaggerated if too much attention is focussed on workplace relations and not enough on the communities in which these relations were reproduced. It was the employers' widespread use of blacklegs, protected by the police and the courts, which broke the strike and virtually crushed the NAI in Leeds. Although the labour aristocracy led the strike in defence of their union, the dispute reveals the solidarity of whole communities. There was no question of employers playing workers from Low Moor or Bowling off against strikers from Armitage's ironworks at Farnley or Kitson's puddlers at New Wortley. Several groups of

1 John Kane, the NAI president, was chairman of the Gateshead executive, and Mr Perrin was leader of the Brierley Hill (Staffs) executive. LM, 20 May 1864.

2 LM, 20 May 1864. Before the NAI called the strike official, Tock-outs were receiving 13 shillings weekly. By the end of June it was down again to between 10 and 15 shillings. LM, 30 June 1864.

3 LM, 13 Sept. 1864.

4 LM, 22 Sept. 1864.

workers were involved in the struggle, underhands, furnacemen, hammermen, smiths, rollers, refiners, together with their families. Although working labourers were despised as 'scum' by skilled trade unionists, while they turned out the strike was celebrated as a community event, in a manner familiar to the miners. Ironworkers arrived in their hundreds by special train for mass demonstrations in the People's Hall in Holbeck, with bands and banners.¹ Even after the NAI executive took over the strike, it retained a high degree of spontaneity and localism. With the forges at Low Moor, Bowling and Farnley shut, local coal and ironstone miners were also affected yet the district miners' union pledged full support for the ironworkers, as did the Leeds boot riveters and the Halifax wire-drawers.² Publicans and beersellers at Low Moor, Bowling and Farnley provided beer and food for strikers and their families, while the national union leaders exclaimed they were 'the uncompromising enemies of intemperance, idleness and disorder.'³ At a picnic for locked-out ironworkers and their families on Low Moor common, a blackleg passed by as group photographs were being taken. The crowd recognised him as a local man who had worked for 12 years at Low Moor. He was immediately pelted with sods and stones and chased home, where his windows were broken.⁴ This incident, for which six strikers were fined, allows a rare glimpse of how community sanctions could function within the industrial disputes of the mid-Victorian labour aristocracy, as they had done in the local radical struggles of the first half of the century.

A number of conclusions may be drawn from this study of four major occupational groups in the Leeds out-townships. Firstly it is clear that divisions within the mid-Victorian workforce were of great importance. The exclusivity and privileges claimed by the labour aristocracy, the prestige accorded to skill, the cultivation of sectionalism and a craft identity within trades, are all obvious indications of finely gradated status divisions within the working class. Although these divisions are less easy to spot among brick-makers and miners, a labour aristocracy undoubtedly existed among suburban railwaymen, iron and engineering workers, as well as in other major out-township occupational groups, such as building

1 LM, 25 Apr. 1864. This venue was to host the striking engine drivers in 1867.

2 LM, 20 May, 20 July, 20 Aug. 23 Aug. 1864.

3 LM, 3 Sept. 1864.

4 LM, 24 June 1864. A similar incident occurred at Pottery Fields, LM, 4 June 1864.

workers, boot and shoemakers, and leather workers.

Secondly, the importance of trade union branch, lodge and workshop autonomy in negotiations and disputes was demonstrated in the case of the ironworkers in 1864. Despite the struggle to enforce central executive authority, in many unions, regardless of size, industrial relations were largely determined by spontaneous action by the local rank and file. The executive of the plasterers' union had the same difficulty as the ironworkers' executive in controlling its Leeds members during the severe industrial conflict of 1864-6. Like the ironworkers, local autonomy was temporarily crushed, at some cost to the strikers.

It has been argued that this extension of central union control was part of a process of 'liberalisation' after mid-century, the institutional integration of the labour aristocracy into the political and economic life of the middle-class.¹ Some extension of executive control over local branches did undermine work group power, particularly in the building industry where work control was the focus of industrial struggle. In the local context however, at least in most non-textile industries, it is less than accurate to talk of an integration of the labour aristocracy into the authority structure of the mid-Victorian bourgeoisie. Many of the best paid and most skilled workers, particularly in Leeds ironworks, were the most loyal to their union in industrial disputes. The point is that, far from being an age of equipoise, the third quarter of the century was wrought with conflict between craft unions and employers. Most disputes over wages, sub-contracting, piecework, dilution of skill, new technology, and control over the pace and conditions of production were begun and resolved at the local level, scarcely reaching the notice of either press or trade union annual reports. The third conclusion therefore to be drawn here is that the power of work groups continued to be pivotal in industrial relations and that a local workplace identity was frequently the greatest asset of workers in dispute with employers.

Despite status divisions, the clear impression from the Leeds evidence is of a continuous if uneven labour solidarity throughout

1 John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution (1974), ch.7; Richard N. Price, Masters, Unions and Men (Cambridge, 1980), pp.123-8.

the period. Unionist and non-unionist skilled workers of the same trade as well as labourers, sometimes organised in their own unions, would turn out together for better terms and conditions, given some basis of workplace identity.¹ Workers of different skills, status and union affiliation, might unite against an employer's document or against the use of blacklegs in a dispute where the question of trade union recognition was at stake.

Solidarity was based not just on workgroup power, but for the large occupational groups, on a workplace identity within the community. In other words, labour solidarity in disputes such as the ironworkers' in 1864 or the miners' in 1858 might express the solidarity of an entire township or neighbourhood. Particularly in situations where blackleg labour was brought in from outside, the sectional interests of the work groups on strike could quickly become a public concern. If a certain social cohesion already existed through the common bonds of marriage, residence, kinship and birthplace, an 'occupational community' could prove very resilient in a conflict with employers. Indeed the very autonomy of local union lodges drew strength from the independence of the working class suburbs.

Under these conditions the cultural environment and past traditions of the community determined labour aristocratic consciousness as much as a narrower craft identity and the need to defend existing privileges and status. Particularly in the more remote localities in Leeds borough, in Beeston, Rodley, Farnley and Stanningley, the link between trade unionism and clothier culture was maintained through the 'friendly society principle', where the union was a social and cultural, as much as an economic institution.²

Craft loyalty and sectionalism within trades may have softened suburban labour relations in the decades after 1850. Certainly there was plenty of deference and quiescence, especially among textile workers, and particularly in Bramley. But there were two faces to sectionalism. Where the 'friendly society principle' was strong, it could also be a vehicle of labour consciousness for the

1 This occurred in a number of Leeds building strikes in the mid-1860's, see LM, 28 June 1864, 11 May, 16 May, 27 May 1865 (bricklayers and labourers): LM, 6 May, 8 May 1865 (plasterers and labourers).

2 For a detailed examination of the impact of friendly societies in the suburbs, see Ch.6.

whole community. In turning, therefore, to the political activity of the labour movement after mid-century, the primary conclusion here ought to be borne in mind. It is that, despite theories of 'liberalisation' and marginalisation from working class experience, the suburban labour aristocracy was unmistakenly bound by persistent industrial conflict and deep-rooted cultural ties to the community life of the clothier out-townships.

Reform Politics and New Unionism

Radicalism was alive and well in the out-townships in the 1850's, though not generally messianic in tone. Leeds Radicals, ex-Chartists and Owenites regrouped in 1855 as 'advanced Liberals', calling for manhood suffrage, the ballot and shorter Parliaments.¹ Within the framework of 'advanced Liberalism', a wide range of issues caught the interest of suburban workers, while the repeal of stamp duty encouraged a new radical press.² State education, anti-slavery, anti-war, sabbatarianism and Sunday closing, and not least the suffrage reform movement intermingled with and informed trade union agitation in suburban foundries, engineering shops and brick-yards. All these campaigns provided vehicles for continued radicalism with a small 'r' in the 1850's and 1860's.³ As in earlier decades, the issues often merged in working class consciousness. In 1864 for instance striking ironworkers, refusing to sign the document renouncing trade unions, scribbled their replies on the handbills which the employers posted around Leeds.

"Mate have you signed? No, nor never will! - No, nor me neither, for being a free-born Briton and not a Virginian slave, no man shall say 'must' to me." (4)

Precisely because of the continued strength of radicalism and the *mélange* of issues which surrounded it, Liberal unity began to wear very thin by the end of the 1850's.

Between 1857 and 1865 divisions amongst Liberals permitted a Tory to be returned in four successive elections.⁵ The problem was that, as Baines and the Radicals began to compete for the support of the non-electorate from the late 1850's, and positions, particularly on Sunday closing and suffrage reform, were altered under the pressure of popular opinion, some sections of the Whig-Liberal electorate were sufficiently alienated to vote for the Tories

1 LM, 1 Nov 1855; LT, 24 Nov. 1855; J.F.C. Harrison, 'Chartism in Leeds', in Asa Briggs ed., Chartist Studies (1959), 66-97.

2 For examples see The Indicator, nos. 1-8 (1855-6); The Yorkshire Tribune (July, 1855).

3 See D.G. Wright, 'Leeds Politics and the American Civil War', Northern History 9 (1974), 96-122; Irene E. Goodyear, 'Wilson Armistead and the Leeds Anti-Slavery Movement', TSP 54 (1974), misc. 16, 113-29; Royden Harrison, Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics 1861-1881 (1965), pp.55-77.

4 LM, 15 Apr. 1864.

5 The Tory share of the vote in Hunslet and Holbeck was at its highest level in these years, see Table 3.2.

who were much slower to make concessions on reform.¹

To a great extent the competitive bidding for the future working class vote was self generated within the Liberal bourgeoisie. Though Radicals infiltrated the party as advanced Liberals in 1855, most Leeds workers were diffident in their attitude to Liberal franchise promises. Paternalism and localism continued to play extremely ambiguous roles in suburban politics. In 1859 Bramley reformers announced that local candidates were needed who would 'thoroughly understand the manufacture, business and wants of their constituents'.² Forster strenuously attempted to fit the bill;

"he had not come to make a speech, but simply to be 'perched', so that the Bramley voters might see whether or not they like the material of his composition." ³

Localism was always a potent factor at all levels of Leeds politics, but Forster's crude attempt to identify with Bramley clothiers did not result in his election. On the other hand, the Tory Beecroft successfully mobilized his Kirkstall ironworkers in 1857 and 1859 with the old paternalist attractions of beer and ale. Beecroft conceded no more than an eight pound franchise, and dismissed the ballot as 'un-English'. 'The working classes did not want it for they were as independent as their masters.'⁴

The Tories were either more perceptive or more honest with themselves than the Liberals. It was the independence of the non-electorate which was apparent at Leeds elections. Suffrage reform was not meant to result in political powersharing. The Liberals' main concern was to define the limits of the safe and respectable working class. Forster himself backed an extended franchise to control 'the dangerous classes in our large towns.'⁵

The 1859 election revealed the strength of labour radicalism in the industrial suburbs. William Blakey, a 'working man' and leader of Leeds unemployed in 1848, demanded the public accountability of

1 Wright, op.cit. p.122; J.R.Vincent, The Formation of the British Liberal Party 1857-68 (Harmondsworth, 1972), p.222. On the rural Whig-urban Liberal alliance see F.M.L. Thompson, 'Whigs and Liberals in the West Riding 1830-1860', English Historical Review, 74 (1959), 214-39. On reform politics see Richard Shannon, The Crisis of Imperialism (St. Albans, 1976), pp.54-75.

2 LM, 7 Apr. 1859. It has been suggested that this was precisely the reason why Fairbairn was temporarily brought out as an independent Liberal against Forster, W.L.Guttsman, 'The General Election of 1859 in the Cities of Yorkshire', International Review of Social History II (1957), 231-58.

3 LT, 16 Apr. 1859.

4 LT, 23 Apr. 1859.

5 Royden Harrison, op.cit. pp.113-19.

M.P.'s and suggested annual open-meetings for the candidates in Leeds.¹ There were cheers when Baines, while refusing to support legal restrictions on working hours, inadvertently implied his approval of strikes.

"Adult labourers were capable of taking care of themselves and if their hours of labour were too long they should refuse to work." 2

At a 'crowded and enthusiastic meeting of the working classes' in New Wortley, an ex-beerhouse keeper admonished his former colleagues for paying too much attention to the regulation of pub hours, and not enough to the enfranchisement of working men.³

There was however considerable suspicion of Baines' attitude to Sunday closing. In Holbeck Baines was cheered when he agreed not to support any coercion of people to abstain from drink.⁴ At a Wortley meeting, Abraham Worsnop persisted in questioning him on the subject. Was it Mr Baines' intent to destroy public houses? Would Mr Baines stop filling altogether on a Sunday? Would Mr Baines put coffee shops on the same footing as beerhouses?⁵

Independent radical working men in the out-townships, with a labour consciousness cultivated in the 1840's, still asserted the interests of their class. A keen sense of localism characterised the clothier milieu in which they were raised. Abraham Worsnop was a 56 year old Wortley weaver whose family had lived on the bread-line in the 1830's.⁶ He had been staunchly against the New Poor Law because he considered that local people and not bureaucrats best knew the hardships in their district and the amount of relief needed. Twenty years later Worsnop was still broadly Liberal, but for reasons shaped by his own experience and not an assimilated ideology. He was typical of many independent workmen in the suburbs who resisted bourgeois attempts to interfere with their leisure time and who demanded the dignity and respectability associated with the right to a living wage, decent housing and sufficient food.

By 1860 Leeds Liberals were lining up behind Baines' six pound franchise bill and propagating it amongst out-township workers with the Leeds Working Men's Parliamentary Reform Association. Baines-ocracy however never fully got hold of the suburban reform associations. From the outset the local reform movement reflected a

1 LM, 14 Apr. 1859.

2 LT, 23 Apr. 1859.

3 LM, 23 Apr. 1859. The speaker was a non-elect.

4 LM, 16 Apr. 1859. The Leeds Mercury emphasised his 'consistent pragmatism' on the subject, LM, 26 Apr. 1859.

5 LM, 16 Apr. 1859.

6 See above, ch.3, p.111.

wide range of political opinions. On the right were employers like the Armley millowner, Matthew Moss, and the Bramley stone merchant William Winn, who were Liberal councillors and active in township government. Others such as John Compston, Bramley Baptist minister, followed Gladstone's five pound franchise or Bright's call for household suffrage. A number of Radicals however mobilised the suburban reform branches into backing manhood suffrage.¹ William Barker, Bramley clothier, Methodist reformer, moral force Chartist and treasurer of Joseph Barker's Defence Fund in 1848, pressed the reform associations in Bramley and Stanningley into supporting manhood suffrage and the ballot. The reform movement, it was said in 1868, was 'kept secure in Bramley', because it had been 'attentively watched by a fearless Barker.'² William Corker, a former organiser of the unemployed in 1848, was active in the Leeds Reform Conference of 1861. In Wortley, a Methodist reformer and cooperationist, Lawrence Walker, and in Bramley, 'a working man', William Dawson, promoted the local branches of the Reform League. The political balance in the out-townships was sometimes critical between supporters of manhood suffrage and those advocating something less.

At first Baines appeared to carry the out-township Reform Associations with him. Armley Association demanded Sir John Ramsden's withdrawal as county M.P. in 1861 because he had opposed Derby's reform bill, and as late as the spring of 1866 an open-air meeting of Leeds workers backed the six pound franchise.³ By 1863 however there were already signs of both apathy and discontent with the 'shadowy promise' of franchise reform.⁴ In Bramley and Armley Liberal councillors did their best to create enthusiasm for the six pound franchise, but they 'had almost to whip up the working men to their posts.'⁵ Bramley Reform Association was established in January 1865 primarily to counter the success of the Tory 'beef and ale' vote in the municipal elections. The bourgeoisie felt it was fairly safe

¹ Ernest Jones began organising manhood suffrage unions in autumn 1857, which came together in Cowen's Northern Political Union of 1859, F.E. Gillespie, Labor and Politics in England 1850-1867 (Durham, N. Carolina, 1927), pp.153-63.

² The Bramley Almanac for 1868 (Bramley, 1868).

³ West Riding Reform Association 1859-64, Box 17, Public Affairs West Riding, Ramsden Archives; LM, 31 Mar. 1866. For Armley Reform Association's support of the six pound franchise see LM, 13 Apr. 1864.

⁴ 'Lord Palmerston and the Great Reform Humbug', in Charles F. Forshaw ed., Holroyd's Collection of Yorkshire Ballads (East Ardsley, 1974).

⁵ LM, 5 Jan. 1865.

to mobilise local workers, there being 'nothing like class interest at work in Leeds.'¹

Yet reform was a working class interest and it was the synthesis of class struggle and party conflict which ensured its success.² By the autumn of 1866 manhood suffrage associations had been established in Wortley, Holbeck, Hunslet, Woodhouse and Bramley, and reformers held nightly meetings in clothing villages across the West Riding.³ Nothing similar had been seen in the out-townships since 1848. Monster reform demonstrations on Woodhouse moor in October 1866 and April 1867 marked the peaks of popular agitation with up to 200,000 present at each.⁴ Tens of thousands marching, 41 music bands, hundreds of carriages, five platforms of speakers, the demonstrations were also the largest manifestation of popular culture ever seen in Leeds. Dawson led the Bramley reformers with their banner 'Bramley Working Men are all for Reform.' Wortley reformers carried at their head 'a significant looking black box inscribed "Robert Lowe, the reviler of the working classes."⁵

Above all the reformers could count on the support of the trade unions. According to some Tories, 'Dissenters' had formed 'a kind of mutual insurance society with Trades Unions, so that the working man can't vote for one without voting for the other.'⁶ The agitation of 1866-7 was the work of trade unionists organised with their non-union colleagues in local reform associations.⁷ Mills and factories closed as engineers, ironfounders, hammermen, joiners, carpenters, brushmakers, glass bottle makers, masons, miners, cloth dressers and pressers, almost every major union in Leeds, marched in the great reform processions.⁸ Robert Carter attacked the railway companies for refusing to run cheap trains to the demonstrations, a criticism which was embroidered on the banners of the Holbeck reformers during the engine drivers' strike of 1867.⁹ 'God bless

1 Ibid.

2 Royden Harrison, *op.cit.* pp.129-33.

3 LM, 4 Oct. 5 Oct. 1866; Vincent, *op.cit.* p.225; Royden Harrison, *op.cit.* pp.78-113.

4 Bright was the main speaker at the first meeting, Jones at the second.

5 LM, 5 Oct. 9 Oct. 1866, 17 Apr. 1867. Lowe had warned Parliament that the vote of the unskilled labourer would be a vote for Socialism; 'What other aspect can politics bear in their eyes?' R.Harrison, *op.cit.* p.127.

6 T.E. Kebbel, Lord Beaconsfield and other Tory memories (1908),p.258.

7 Led by men such as Joseph Scott, John Toft and William Brown of the miners, and John Mitchell of the Leeds ironworkers. See Gillespie *op.cit.* p.236; Vincent *op.cit.* p.224.

8 LM, 4 Oct. 9 Oct. 1866, 24 Apr. 1867.

9 LM, 2 Oct. 1866, 24 Apr. 1867.

the noble working men' exclaimed the Bramley Almanac in Reform year, for the shopkeepers, innkeepers and master artisans realised that franchise extension could scarcely have been achieved without them.

The Reform movement was therefore fundamentally a working class movement, although local identity was frequently the only factor linking the various activists in the suburban reform associations. Localism continued to be extremely important in the political clubs of the 1870's and 1880's. In the face of disunity and the renewed Tory challenge, the Liberal patriciate set about reorganising the party in Leeds. Political organisation moved indoors as a network of clubs was established in the out-townships. In January 1870 Bramley Reform Club was inaugurated, certainly one of the first in the borough.¹ In 1872 over 100 Liberals rented a hall in New Wortley to form another club. After the defeat of 1874 it became even more urgent to perfect the 'system of ward representation on the Committee of the Liberal Association so as to have feelers in the different districts of the borough.'² By the late 1870's Liberal and Reform clubs were established in all the suburbs. Tories were slower to reorganise their party. Leeds Working Men's Conservative Association was established by 1876 and clubs were founded in Armley by 1878 and in Bramley in 1880. By 1882 there were ten Conservative clubs in the out-townships against eleven Liberal clubs.³

Although the borough associations were organised by polling districts, with a hierarchy extending from the executive committees downwards through the ward representatives and general committees to the rank and file members, the clubs were established on a local township or neighbourhood basis. There were Liberal clubs in Beeston, Kirkstall, Upper and Lower Wortley, Rodley and Farsley Beck, and a Reform club at Stanningley by 1879. In Armley, Radicals and Reformers kept their own separate identities within the Liberal Association. Armley Radical club's premises also housed a mechanics' institute and a co-operative store and warehouse. Relations with the Liberal club were said to be 'neighbourly'.

1 Following the Cobden club in Leeds, William White, Directory of the Borough of Leeds and Clothing District, (Sheffield, 1870).

2 Thomas Marshall quoted by A.W.Roberts, 'Leeds Liberalism and Late Victorian Politics', Northern History 5 (1970), 131-56. See also H.J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management: Politics in the Time of Disraeli and Gladstone (Hassocks, 1978), pp.125-6.

3 Post Office Directory of Leeds (1882).

Beeston Liberal club was 'comfortably housed' in two rooms rented from the Temperance Hall. New Wortley Liberals bought their own premises in 1879 and Joshua Bower paid £1640 to build Hunslet Liberal club. Bramley Liberals bought a draper's shop for £530 in the name of eleven trustees.¹ Armley Conservative club was opened in 1880 by Ernest Denison, treasurer of the Central Association. Denison Hall was

"a good building of brick with a pedimented front and contains a large assembly room with a permanent platform and a gallery holding 800 persons."²

The spatial aspect of political struggle took on a new dimension. Earlier in the century such purpose-built assembly halls had been at a premium in the out-township. The rapid spread of political clubs in the 1870's lessened the problem of accommodating popular politics indoors. The removal of a club to new premises frequently stimulated a growth in membership, from 120 to 320 in New Wortley in 1879, and from 32 to 100 for Stanningley Reform club in 1878. The larger clubs at Bramley, Hunslet and Holbeck had between 200 and 400 members in the 1880's.³

At the top of the Leeds Liberal hierarchy the new party bosses of the 1870's led by Kitson, Reid and Mathers were men of the post anti-corn law generation, hostile to Manchester political economy and strong for the local option.⁴ The suburban clubs too were sprinkled with Liberals politically educated in the reform movement of the 1860's.⁵ Some of the Liberal Sixhundred in the 1880's could look back to a more distant and radical past in the 1840's.⁶ Few of the club leaders in the out-townships ascended like James Kitson to the ranks of the urban aristocracy. Many were 'relatively poor men', cost-conscious, sober and hardworking, reflecting the temperance and thrift party of Scarr and Tatham on the Council. Above all they were men with deep-rooted local connections. Robert Barton, the Upper Wortley Conservative chairman in 1882, was a small corn miller, the son of a Liberal grocer and flour dealer.⁷ The family had been connected with the township for over five decades. The

1 LM, 15 Mar. 1879.

2 Kelly's Leeds Directory (1888).

3 LM, 15 Mar. 1879.

4 Hanham, op.cit. pp.127-8; E.D.Steele, 'Imperialism and Leeds politics 1850-1914', in D.Fraser ed., A History of Modern Leeds, op.cit. pp.327-52.

5 For instance, John Dawson and James Booth of Bramley, Thomas Robinson of Armley, Kelly's Directory of Leeds (1881).

6 William Corker, Central ward representative on the Liberal executive, organised the Leeds unemployed in 1848. George Gaunt from Wortley, was Chartist councillor for Holbeck 1847-9.

7 Barton employed 10 men in 1861.

family of Hubert Vickers, the Tory chairman at Stanningley, had been innkeepers in the village since the beginning of the century. The local lineage of Arthur Greenwood at New Wortley Conservative club dated back to the 1830's. Similar old suburban families provided numerous members of the Liberal Sixhundred in the 1880's. Eddison, Thornton, Gaunt, Walker, Cliff, Hepper in Armley and Wortley, Rawnsley, Threapleton, Varley, Waddington, Waite in Bramley and Stanningley.¹ Most were small employers, maltsters, millowners, builders. Some, like Walter Cliff of Wortley, were exceedingly wealthy.² All counted themselves amongst the social and political elite of their townships, if not of Leeds. They, their fathers and grandfathers had administered the townships before the late 1860's. They were patrons of benefit societies, schools, working men's institutes and Dissenter chapels. A strong sense of local patriotism informed all of their actions.³

For those however who were rank and file members in the suburbs, the clubs of the 1870's were merely additions to a growing list of formal institutions attempting to attract the earnings and leisure time of working men and women.⁴ Some aspects of out-township political life were remarkable, the strong allegiance of many south Leeds workers to Gladstone, particularly on the Home Rule issue with which localists could identify, and the growing strength of middle-class Conservatism in the villas north of the Aire.⁵ Amongst both Liberal and Tory workers the influence of employer paternalism remained strong down to 1890, causing much frustration to Socialist attempts to organise suburban labour. Nevertheless as far as the everyday social functions were concerned, the political clubs competed with friendly societies, mechanics' institutes, mutual improvement, floral and horticultural societies, sports clubs and religious and temperance groups for the custom of the working class.⁶ Most of the suburban clubs had billiard rooms.⁷ Holbeck Liberal

1 Post Office Directory, 1882, op.cit.

2 Walter Cliff, the grandson of Joseph Cliff of Wortley, left a half million pound estate at his death in 1917, William Benn, Wortley de Leeds: History of an Ancient Township (Leeds, 1926).

3 This will be fully examined in the next chapter.

4 There was a working girls' club in Water Lane by 1886, Kelly's Directory of Leeds and its neighbourhood (1886).

5 Roberts, op.cit. pp.139-54; see 'Bramley Home Ruler' and the poems praising Gladstone in Bramley Almanac for 1882 (Bramley, 1882).

6 LM, 15 Mar. 1879. For a poem praising the 'elevating tendencies' of Bramley Liberal club see Bramley Almanac for 1878 (Bramley, 1878).

7 Conservative clubs in Armley and Beeston, Liberal clubs in New Wortley, Holbeck and Bramley.

club also had a refreshment bar, lecture and reading rooms and bath rooms.¹ Billiards were 'especially popular' in New Wortley Liberal club. Alcohol was banned, but workers drank elsewhere. The clubs were open daily till ten or eleven in the evening, and many mixed a game of billiards in a club with a drink in their local.²

Despite the efforts of the party chiefs and suburban employers, political activity invariably slipped into the broader cultural life of the out-townships. Much of the workers' response to bourgeois political organisation was a knee jerk reaction, conditioned by decades of paternalism. Sections of the labour aristocracy were partly responsible for their comfortable accommodation with anti-union employers such as Kitson, Bower, Beecroft and Fairbairn.³ As early as 1851 it became clear that Kitson senior, a former trade union sympathiser and ten hours supporter, was a strikebreaker in the classic mould.⁴ His successors cultivated patriotism, paternalism and a limited deference in order to obtain a politically acquiescent workforce by the 1880's.⁵

Many skilled workers and trade unionists however were neither deferent nor quiescent. Between the 1850's and the 1880's they fought for some control over the production process, higher wages, shorter hours and better conditions in all the major industries. Their affiliation to the political clubs amounted to little more than seizing new recreational opportunities as they arose, though their loyalty to blue or yellow colours in the broadest sense was perhaps a more conditioned response.

This was the ambiguous and complex situation in the out-townships - with some occupational communities based on residence by neighbourhood, with divisions within the working class and some limited social mobility, with apathy, deference and paternalism marking some sets of social relations, and labour aristocratic militancy characterising others. This all posed enormous difficulties for socialists and the organisers of New Unions in the 1880's and for the Labour party in the industrial suburbs of the 1890's.

1 Kelly's 1888, op.cit.

2 On the social life of Lancashire political clubs see Patrick Joyce, Work, Society and Politics (1980), pp.269-88. For a closer examination of working class recreation see Chapter six.

3 Bramley boot riveters for instance met in the Liberal club in 1890. They were not noted for their radicalism.

4 R.J. Morris, 'The Rise of James Kitson: Trades Union and Mechanics' Institution, Leeds 1826-51, TSP misc. 15 (1973), 179-200.

5 Edwin Kitson Clark, Kitsons of Leeds 1837-1937 (1938), p.145.

The primary task was to unionise the huge female workforce in the textile mills and clothing sweatshops. Given the organisation of production in the textile industry the evolution of even male trade unionism was slow and fragmentary, and membership small. Only 300 belonged to the cloth dressers', pressers' and flax dressers' societies in 1868. Less than 19 per cent of Leeds willeyers and fettlers in the 1880's were trade unionists. Before 1875 the warpdressers could claim 67 per cent unionisation in the West Riding, but their society collapsed during the depression.¹

Unions were organised as clubs which acted both to discipline their members and to preserve their sectionalism and exclusivity. Leeds clothdrawers had a rule preventing any member working in a shop where women were drawing. This restricted the employment of women and kept wages up.² Factories were highly regimented and employers emphasised the supervisory functions of a hierarchy of overlookers and skilled male workers over unskilled women and children.³ There was a continual need for efficient and loyal overlookers. In the 1850's employers had some difficulty in getting educated men for these posts, and were forced to maintain a tight managerial control and close personal contact with both factory employees and outworkers.⁴ Later, overlookers became the lynchpin of managerial policy. They were frequently the only workers in a mill who could regard their jobs as reasonably permanent, though even they were considerably mobile in the search for better wages.⁵ In some departments, especially in fulling mills, overlookers were paid a bonus for the work done by the hands they supervised, a 'premium on results'.⁶ During strikes they were 'so completely the agents of the masters in overlooking the people', that they were useless as arbitrators.⁷

Textile workers' terms of employment remained loose and informal and firms seldom kept registers or issued written contracts. Very short notice, often less than a week, was given on dismissal.⁸ Extreme mobility and lack of controls made it difficult for factory inspectors to check overworking and illegal employment of child casuals, or to prevent bullying and maltreatment of women and children

1 Laybourn, op.cit. pp.132-69.

2 YFT, 6 Sept. 1889.

3 S.C. on Masters and Operatives, PP(1856) XIII, 1, evidence of W.E.Forster, Q.1275.

4 Ibid. Qs.1224, 1313.

5 R.C. on the Factory and Workshops Act, vol.II, PP(1876)XXX, evidence of Robert Tennant, Q.13137.

6 Ibid. evidence of John Barran, Q.12919.

7 S.C. on Masters and Operatives, op.cit., evidence of Forster, Q.1254.

8 Ibid. Q.1308.

by male supervisors.¹ Power loom weavers were particularly fearful of male tuners. Fathers bribed tuners to employ their daughters. Selected weavers were favoured with good warps and 'getting everything their own way'. The relationships between weavers and tuners provided an endless source of gossip for the women at the looms. Women who went with tuners were often ostracised by their colleagues.² The system of fines and intimidation by timekeepers and overlookers kept out-township weavers from speaking up. Overlookers in Stanningley and Farsley worsted mills were derided as 'greenhorns' and 'flunky gaffers' who dragged as much work as they could out of the women.³ In Stanningley it was claimed that the fear of gaffers obstructed the advance of trade unionism. The 'abject and servile spirit' of workers there in 1889 was reminiscent of the deference evident 60 years previously.⁴ 3000 weavers in Leeds were dismissed by union organisers as 'either too stupid or too frightened' to join the Power Loom Weavers' Association.⁵

The fear and insecurity were real. Clothing workers and labourers in Leeds engineering shops were also subject to fines, discipline and overlookers' brutality.⁶ The word of a spy could lead to instant dismissal. Two under-tuners were caught spying at an Armley weavers' meeting organised by Socialists in October 1889. In the same month union delegates from Wortley tramwaymen complained that the fear of employers' spies was a major obstacle to recruitment in the township. A spy for the Gas Works interrupted the second Leeds Gas Stokers' union meeting organised by Maguire.⁷

Together with fear and insecurity, paternalism and apathy worked against trade unionism. Company excursions, sports clubs, fetes continued to attract workers to the most benevolent employers. Family firms were especially keen to cultivate ties with the community. Mill girls were sometimes susceptible to displays of favouritism from employers or their sons, the 'rotten system' condemned by Socialists. One result was apathy towards trades unions.

1 R.C. on Factory and Workshops Act, op.cit., evidence of Robert Baker, Qs. 573-4, 579-86.

2 YFT, 30 Aug. 2 Aug. 1889.

3 YFT, 20 Sept. 29 Sept. 18 Oct. 1889.

4 YFT, 30 Aug. 1889. See S.C. on the Bill to regulate the Labour of Children in the Mills and Factories of the UK, PP(1831-2)XV, evidence of Samuel Coulson, Qs. 5041-126.

5 YFT, 25 Oct. 1889.

6 YFT, 20 Sept. 1889. On the widespread use of fines in Bramley mills, see YFT, 6 Sept. 1889.

7 YFT, 30 Aug. 25 Oct. 1889.

This was particularly marked in communities such as Armley, where women weavers scarcely complained about low piece rates, heavy fines, long warp, faster machinery and poor working conditions.¹ Even Ben Turner, after many years of pioneering trade union work amongst power loom weavers, sighed that 'the soul of Leeds never seemed to be aroused.'²

It might be argued that the fragmentation of production into new branches and the dislocation of labour caused by the prolonged and severe trade depression of the 1870's and 1880's retarded trade unionism in the Leeds mills. Only one woollen mill was built in Leeds between 1875 and 1885. Of 57 cloth mills in the borough in 1875, 17 were empty by 1885, and 13 only partially occupied. 205 out of 367 machines survived the decade and between one-third and one-half of the productive power was lost. Dependent trades were also hit. Of 20 Leeds boilermakers supplying textile firms in 1875, eight had closed ten years later. Overproduction, tariffs, lack of demand in Europe, with US, German and French competition, brought about the local crisis.³ Short-time was introduced and many woollen millowners turned their machinery over to different products, worsted coatings and matelasses, or wherever trade was brisker.⁴ French tariffs particularly 'almost paralysed' the out-township manufacturers of low mixed goods.⁵ The depression caused distress on a scale reminiscent of the 1830's and 1840's. By February 1879 over 19,200 people in the out-townships and another 17,300 in Leeds had received relief from Leeds distress fund. Paupers were set to work at New Wortley Recreation Ground, Hunslet moor and Woodhouse Ridge.⁶

The Yorkshire Council of Woollen Operatives noted that the slackness of trade and lack of union organisation caused 'large numbers of our fellow workmen...to submit quietly to many small acts

1 YFT, 30 Aug. 6 Sept. 25 Oct. 8 Nov. 1889.

2 Ben Turner, A Short Account of the Rise and Progress of the Heavy Woollen District Branch of the General Union of Textile Workers (Leeds, 1917), p.83.

3 The Textile Recorder, 15 Dec. 1885, 'Depression in Leeds Woollen Industry'. Barran complained particularly of the low wages and long hours of female labour in Austrian mills, R.C. on the Factory and Workshops Act, op.cit., evidence of Barran, Q.12,902.

4 The Textile Manufacturer, 15 July 1877; Laybourn, op.cit. p.6; Clapham, Woollen and Worsted Industries, op.cit. pp.142-5. See above pp.6-7.

5 R.C. on the Depression of Trade, op.cit., evidence of Bousfield, Qs. 6285-6.

6 LM, 22 Feb. 15 Apr. 24 Apr. 1879.

of injustice and petty tyranny on the part of the employers.¹ Employers seized the chance to attack wage levels. Leeds weavers' wages fell by 30 to 40 per cent per string between 1872 and 1889, while the burden of fines increased.² Unskilled labour was 'at a discount' and moved rapidly between industries, making it difficult to organise.

On the other hand the demand for skilled men in weaving and spinning was fairly constant throughout the slump and their wages remained stable.³ Leeds cloth dressers resisted attempts to increase their hours, and both union and non-union cloth pressers turned out to demand limits on the length of cloth. Trade unionists from several industries monitored the working day in the Leeds Nine Hours Maintenance League.⁴

In fact local agitation and the influence of the weavers' movement in the heavy woollen districts encouraged a tentative step towards the organisation of the unskilled in Leeds mills. By 1884 the Huddersfield and District Weavers' Association was attempting to organise women millworkers in Leeds with the support of least some craft unions, notably David Sheard of the Willyers and Fettleys, John Judge of the Boot and Shoe Operatives, and John Bune of the Leeds Brushmakers. A room was rented, a committee formed, membership books opened and names collected. About 120 girls joined between 1884 and 1885, but little further progress was made.⁵

Clearly some sections of the Leeds labour aristocracy were prepared to encourage the unionization of women workers. Not all displayed the hostility of the cloth drawers or loom tuners. Most Leeds trade unionists in the 1880's were closely affiliated to Liberalism, but it is not true that they all had a deep enmity of Socialists.⁶ Bune and Judge were influential figures in the Leeds labour movement and on the Trades Council.⁷ In the out-townships

1 The Textile Manufacturer, 15 May 1876; Webb, op.cit. pp.342-7.

2 Though the use of different threads and the replacement of woollen by cotton and worsted materials made comparison difficult, it was generally agreed that piece-rates had fallen over the period. YFT, 20 Sept. 1889.

3 R.C. on the Depression of Trade, op.cit., evidence of Bousfield, Qs. 6355, 6379-82, 6519.

4 The Textile Manufacturer, 15 May 1882; LM, 15 Dec. 1879, 6 May 1882.

5 Turner, A Short Account, op.cit. p.40; Ben Turner, Short History of the General Union of Textile Workers (Heckmondwike, 1920), pp.119-20. The Huddersfield Association became the GUTW.

6 E.P. Thompson, 'Homage to Tom Maguire', in Asa Briggs and J Saville eds., Essays in Labour History (1967), 276-316.

7 On John Bune, later secretary of Leeds Trades Council, see YFT, 25 Oct. 1889.

the industrial militancy of skilled workers continued alongside the agitation amongst the unskilled, with strikes by Bramley cloth pressers, Farnley cloth menders and non-union male flax dressers in Hunslet in 1889. There was almost certainly some cross-fertilisation, if not of organisational skills, then at least of ideas. The radicalisation of community politics and a heightening of labour consciousness was common to them all.

A small, heterogeneous but close-knit group of Socialists and trade unionists led by Maguire, Ford, Sweeney, Taylor, Turner, Paylor, Drew, Mattison and Black worked hard from the autumn of 1888 to organise the unskilled in several industries.¹ From the summer of 1889 their work was widely publicised in the Yorkshire Factory Times. After an initial failure in 1888 to organise the resistance of 300 striking weavers at Wellington mills,² three major new unionist successes were achieved in 1889, among bricklayers' labourers and gas workers led by Tom Maguire, and among sweatshop clothing workers organised by Isabella Ford. The most significant of these achievements was the unionization of the gas workers. Two small gas-makers' friendly societies had been established in Leeds and New Wortley since 1872-3, and the first attempt at a new union, the Leeds Gas Stokers' Society, attracted only 150 out of about 1000 workers at the three corporation gas works.³ Their grievances were based on low wages and poor conditions. Stokers received five shillings and labourers three shillings and fourpence for shovelling coal in twelve hour shifts, day and night, into retorts in temperatures up to 150 degrees. 55,000 feet of cheap gas was sweated out of each labourer at every shift. Maguire himself described the Leeds gas works as 'hells upon earth'.⁴ Like other

1 A small socialist club was founded in Leeds in 1885 and quickly affiliated to William Morris' Socialist League. By 1886 a meeting room was rented in Holbeck and lectures and pamphleteering was carried on in the clubroom, the marketplace and on the moors of South Leeds. Links with the Power loom Weavers' Association and with feminist radicals like Clementina Black and the Ford sisters of Adel Grange were established by 1888. Edward Carpenter ed., Tom Maguire - A Remembrance (Manchester, 1885); Barbara Drake, Women in Trade Unions (1984 edn).

2 On this strike see YFT, 26 July 1889: Statistical Tables and Third Report on Trade Unions, PP(1889) LXXXIV 147; Turner, Short History, op.cit. p.121.

3 The New Wortley Friendly Society had only 46 members in 1875. In 1889 there were 400 men at the New Wortley plant, and 350 each at Meadow Lane and York Street. The total workforce comprised 650 stokers, 130 wheelers, 55 purifiers and 165 labourers. YFT 30 Aug. 1889.

4 YFT, 23 Aug. 30 Aug. 18 Oct. 1889.

groups of workers the gas labourers enlisted the help of the Socialists to organise. Despite intimidation and employers' spies, a call for the eight hour day was sufficient to mobilise the gas workers. Once the stokers' union had been transformed into the Gas-workers and General Labourers' Union (GGLU) membership multiplied. It was the Leeds socialists' greatest achievement to create a labourers' union of national standing. 2000 turned up at meetings at Vicars Croft to petition the Corporation for the eight hour day and wage increases.¹ Within weeks the gas workers' agitation spread to Bradford, Dewsbury, Batley and Halifax, supported by the energetic Maguire, a rare instance of radicalism carried westwards across the county. 9000 turned out for a Halifax gas workers' demonstration on the old Chartist rallying ground of Skircoat Moor.²

Urged on by the Socialists, some workers, notably Leeds iron-works labourers and blue cloth dyers, joined the GGLU. Others such as Leeds draymen and tramwaymen organised in unions with the help of the Trades Council and the Socialists, established committees and held meetings to discuss grievances. Leeds Willeyers, Teazers and Fettleers attempted to unionise colleagues in Huddersfield, Batley, Dewsbury and Stanningley, and gained a wage rise for its Leeds members.³ Labourers at Leeds soap works, maltsters, railwaymen and masons presented wage demands. The earnings of girl towel weavers, Jewish slipper makers, engineering labourers, mantel makers, and navvies working on Leeds streets and sewers all came under discussion. Although success in organising millworkers remained limited, Turner's power loom weavers' union resolved to 'mission' Holbeck, Kirkstall and Bank. Worsted menders at Farnley who were dismissed for taking time off to attend a funeral, 'marched in a body from the mill declaring they would not ask for their work back.'⁴ The whole labour consciousness of Leeds and its suburbs was raised to a new level by the new unionism engineered by a small group of committed Socialists. Despite the apathy, fear, insecurity and the paternalist liberalism which was found in most suburban industry, the Socialists, in a short period of time, tapped the communal roots of labour radicalism in the clothing villages.

1 YFT, 20 Sept. 4 Oct. 1889.

2 YFT, 11 Oct. 18 Oct. 1889.

3 YFT, 8 Nov. 1889.

4 YFT, 29 Nov. 1889.

That the new proletariat of the industrial suburbs had inherited the legacy of out-township popular radicalism became clear during the New Wortley gas strike of 1890.¹ The victory heralded the arrival of the unskilled worker as a force in industrial relations, and the Socialists as a force in labour politics. The success was based on the uprising of a whole community against blacklegs, the Liberal corporation and its gas committee. The battle of Wortley bridge saw a crowd of up to 20,000 command the streets and railway bridges around New Wortley gasworks and assault the 'knobsticks' so fiercely that most of them left Leeds soon after. As in the Plug riots, the crowds were angry but organised, with separate attacks on Meadow Lane and New Wortley gasworks occurring simultaneously. Marxists recognised the importance of the Leeds gasworkers' victory. Engels presented Will Thorne with a copy of Capital addressed 'to the victor of the Leeds battle'.² On the home territory of Joseph Barker's Wortley Republicans, James Mann's Radicals, and the clandestine Clothiers' Union of the 1800's, workers again demonstrated their identity of community with class.

Within a few years of the gas strike, Labour clubs and Clarion clubs were being organised by ILP agitators in the out-townships. 'The palmiest days of Chartism', it was claimed, 'can present no parallel to the present movement.'³ The assault on Leeds liberalism was carried by Labour candidates to the municipal elections. Electoral success eluded the Labour party for over a decade, however Socialist agitation and the rise of new unionism all helped politicise industrial conflict in Leeds.⁴ In the out-townships the main feature of the political Labour movement was not any immediate victory over Liberalism. The Labour party scarcely dented the existing political structure in the suburbs and voting remained largely on old party lines.⁵ What mattered was the speed with which Labour activists were fully assimilated to the economic, social and cultural life of the suburbs, in the way the Chartists had been fifty years before.

1 For details of the strike see H. Hendrick, 'The Leeds Gas Strike 1890', TSP 54 (1974) misc. 16, 78-98.

2 Hendrick, op.cit. p.95; Pelling, op.cit. p.97.

3 The Labour Champion, 21 Oct. 1893.

4 T. Woodhouse, 'The Working Class', in Fraser ed., History of Modern Leeds, op.cit. pp.353-88. The first Labour councillor was elected in 1904.

5 The Labour Champion, 4 Nov. 1893.

Despite the persistence of deference and paternalism, and despite divisions within the workforce and local bigotries, class interest was a motive force in the out-townships. Certainly, this was interpreted by many groups of labour aristocrats as keeping their socio-economic hegemony within the suburban working class intact. However class interest could also mean displaying a community solidarity of both skilled and unskilled, unionist and non-unionist labour against the interests of Capital. It was a community consciousness based on class.

Chapter 5: Patronage and the Middle Class

The previous chapters examined the political and economic development of the out-townships from clothing villages to industrial suburbs. This was largely a history of the making of the working class, from the break-up of the domestic system of production to the formation of a suburban factory proletariat and a labour aristocracy. The following chapters focus on the social and cultural relations between the classes in the out-townships.

The suburban middle-class was an important product of industrialization. Some attention has already been paid to the economic formation of the capitalist class in the clothing villages and the ambiguous political and economic position of small clothiers by the 1830's.¹ The importance of political patronage, the voluntary and charitable efforts of the large employers, and the localism and sectarianism of the petty bourgeoisie have also been discussed.² The final chapters attempt to draw together these threads in a study of class relationships in the out-townships. The distinctive notion of community propagated by the petty bourgeoisie is contrasted with the outlook of the suburban elite. The changing size and composition of the middle class, its philanthropy, patronage and paternalism, are examined against the working class response to the institutions of social control.

1 See above, ch.2 pp86-7; Ch.3 pp.130-2.

2 Ch.3 passim.

(i)

The out-township bourgeoisie

The extensive pre-industrial sub-division of land ensured that the manorial history of the out-townships was unusually complicated. The early fragmentation of landownership into clothiers' smallholdings largely determined the nineteenth century pattern of urban development in the industrial suburbs.¹ With the important exception of Cardigan, who owned manorial titles and huge portions of land in Bramley and Kirkstall, none of the great estate owners of northern Leeds had any large holdings in the southern clothing villages.² These townships had their own gentry, who became closely integrated in the commercial and industrial classes during the eighteenth century.

The feudal landmarks decreased rapidly. Armley hall, built by the ancient Hopton family, was 'a spacious place before 26 rooms were demolished to reduce it to a farmer's house'.³ Farnley hall, built in 1586, was replaced by a smaller hall in 1756. In Farnley itself however, where 'the last footsteps of the aristocracy in the parish of Leeds lingered'; the survival of 400 acres of native wood was attributed in the 1830's to the 'aristocratical^(sic) genius of the s.c.!' place.'⁴

Although the great feudal landowning dynasties, such as the Neville's of Holbeck, the Danby's of Farnley, the Ingilby's of Armley, did not survive the eighteenth century, most of the later manorial lords also came from families long established in the out-townships. In Beeston the Hills, listed by Thoresby as local estate owners, made their fortune in coal mining and still occupied Beeston hall as Lords of the Manor as late as the 1870's.⁵ Descendants of John Smith, Lord of Wortley manor in the 1780's, survived as cloth manufacturers and manorial lords well into the 1860's.

- 1 David Ward, 'The pre-urban cadaster and the urban pattern of Leeds', Annals of the Association of American Geographers 52 (1962), 150-66; M.W.Beresford, 'The Back to Back House in Leeds 1787-1937' in Stanley D. Chapman ed., The History of Working Class Housing (1971) pp.93-132; M.J.Mortimer, 'Landownership and urban growth in Bradford and its environs in the West Riding conurbation 1850-1950' Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 46 (1969) 105-19.
- 2 Colin Treen, 'Building and Estate Development in the Northern Out-Townships of Leeds 1781-1914', (unpubd. PhD thesis, Leeds 1977).
- 3 Thoresby, op.cit., p.194. The old hall, still a farmhouse in 1837, eventually became the site for Armley gaol.
- 4 Thomas Allen, A History of the County of York (1831)vol.IV,p.463.
- 5 Thoresby, op.cit., p.209.

The late eighteenth century property market created a number of new family dynasties from the ranks of local clothiers and merchants. Sir John Ingilby's estate at Armley was sold by its trustees in 1781 to several purchasers, including a Leeds merchant, Thomas Wolrich, who contracted the manorial rights. Wolrich in turn rented Armley house in 1790 to Benjamin Gott. Gott bought the house and the manorial rights from Wolrich's estate in 1803. By this time the Gott family had already begun to stamp its character on the township in a way that was to last most of the century.¹ Farnley manor had been in the Danby family for six centuries when it was sold in 1800 to a Leeds merchant, James Armitage, for £49,500.² The Armitages were an old cloth making family with local ties stretching back 200 years. By 1815 Farnley hall, at £17,000, was one of the most highly insured houses in Leeds.³ By the 1840's the grandson of James Armitage had established the Farnley Iron Company, exploiting the largest ironworkings in Leeds and creating the cottage settlement of New Farnley for his miners. The Armitages continued to reside at Farnley hall in the 1880's.

There was within each township by the 1800's, a handful of wealthy families with deep roots in the clothier communities. Allied to this elite by class and social status were dozens of other family dynasties, many of whom could also trace their wealth and position x back to local commerce, industry and agriculture. Scarcely distinct from these was an amorphous middle and lower middle class identifying themselves with the township above all in their capacities as businessmen, ratepayers and voters.

The size of the suburban middle class is difficult to determine and it is uncertain what measurement should be used. The ten pound parliamentary franchise of 1832 was accepted by Baines as a safe and accurate demarcation of the Leeds middle-class.⁴ Alternative measurements might be a social classification of census occupations, the rateable value of property owned or rented, or the employment of domestic servants.

- 1 Allen op.cit., p.450; R.G.Wilson, op.cit., p.206; S.J.Daniels, 'Moral Order and the Industrial Environment in the Woollen Textile Districts of West Yorkshire 1780-1880', (unpubd., PhD thesis, London, 1980) p.66.
- 2 Armitage also owned Hunslet manor, among other estates, R.G.Wilson, op.cit., pp.29-30.
- 3 M.W.Beresford 'Prometheus Insured: The Sun Fire Agency in Leeds during Urbanisation 1716-1826,' ECHR XXXV (1982) 373-89.
- 4 E.P.Thompson, op.cit., pp.899-900.

Between 1832 and 1867 the parliamentary electorate generally comprised between two and four per cent of the out-township populations. In all the out-townships this electorate declined as a proportion of householders over the period.² In Hunslet, the industrial suburb with the most voters, the electorate rose from over 200 to over 600 between 1832 and 1865, while the population increased from 12000 to over 30000. Even in the most enfranchised suburbs therefore, the electorate, and by extension the middle class, was tiny. Bramley had over 300 voters, Holbeck over 200, Wortley and Armley between 150 and 180, and Farnley and Beeston less than 100.¹

The census provides an opportunity to measure the size of social groups classified by occupation. The 1831 census category of 'capitalists, bankers, professionals and educated men' excluded all small employers, clothiers and craft masters in the out-townships. Generally this category appears to comprise about 20 to 25 per cent of the middle-class electorate.²

Householders' occupations from samples of the censuses of 1841 to 1871 have been grouped into five social classes.³ The first two of these classes include landowners, renters and annuitants, gentlemen, clergy, bankers, lawyers, doctors, accountants and lesser professionals such as teachers, large and medium sized employers, merchants and farmers of more than five acres. Taken as a rough approximation of the middle class, the census results have been placed alongside the election lists in Table 5.1 for comparison. In most townships the fit between the electorate and census classes I and II is quite close. Only in Wortley, 1861-71, and in Bramley is there a considerable discrepancy between both sets of figures. In Bramley many small clothiers and retailers, often also property owners, were enfranchised, but were grouped in social class III because there was nothing in the schedules to indicate their status as employers.⁴ In Wortley

1 Table 5.1: Comparison of the Parliamentary Electorate and Census Social Classes I and II. Seven per cent must be deducted from the above figures to allow for the working class electorate.

2 I have no explanation for the unusually low figure for Wortley.

3 This social grading has been based on the five classes used by Armstrong and adapted by him from the Registrar General's classification. W.A.Armstrong, 'The Use of Information about occupation', in E.A.Wrigley ed., *Nineteenth Century Society*, (Cambridge 1972), pp.191-310; *idem.*, 'Social Structure from the Early Census Returns', in E.A.Wrigley, ed., *An Introduction to English Historical Demography*, (New York, 1966), pp.206-37. For my reservations about Armstrong's assumptions, and full references, see the note on the census samples in the appendix.

4 It is clear that Armstrong was wrong to assume that from 1851 the number of employees was returned with sufficient frequency for social classes I and II to be at all comprehensive in their count of employers.

TABLE 5.1: COMPARISON OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORATE
AND THE CENSUS MIDDLE CLASS

		<u>Armley</u>	<u>Beeston</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Wortley</u>	<u>Holbeck</u>	<u>Hunslet</u>
Census	1831	36	13	63	11	38	150
Electorate	1832	153	61	313	136	200	247
	1841	159	62	336	175	237	271
Census	1841	130	50	180	110		
Electorate	1852	123	70	314	190	206	361
Census	1851	140	50	120	160	200	400
Electorate	1859	155	52	298	220	247	473
Census	1861	140	100	150	110		
Electorate	1865	216	71	352	282	263	669
Census	1871	200	50	190	170		

- Sources: 1) The 1831 Census middle-class relates to the census category "capitalists, bankers etc." The middle-class for the censuses 1841-71 has been estimated from 10 per cent samples of the schedules and comprises all those ranked by occupation in social classes I and II. Clearly the official category of 1831 is much narrower than my definition of middle-class.
- 2) The electoral figures are taken from the parliamentary lists of the respective years.
- 3) Census samples of Hunslet and Holbeck were taken only for 1851.

rapid growth in the 1860's appears to have enlarged the pre-Reform electorate without having any significant impact on the size of the census middle class.

Census occupations and electoral rolls generally provide the best guide to the size of the local bourgeoisie. Other means of measurement are more problematic. In the Leeds out-townships domestic servants were found well down the social scale and cannot be taken as an indicator of a middle-class household.¹ The employment of servants and housekeepers was primarily related to the householder's occupation or to his family circumstances and, with the exception of grooms and coachmen, was less a matter of social status or conspicuous consumption.² The enumerators' schedules produced examples of servants to maltsters, common brewers, cloth dressers, foundry strikers and even farm labourers. Indeed, even if all domestics lived in bourgeois households, which they did not, the number of such households was considerably less in all townships than either the census or the electoral middle class.³

The numbers active in township government also did not tally with the size of the middle-class. The largest attendance recorded at a Wortley township meeting was 45 in 1834, which amounted to only a quarter of the electorate. In Beeston it was 31, about half the electorate and 60 per cent of census classes I and II. Clearly only a fraction of the local bourgeoisie busied themselves with the affairs of their township, and ratepayers were not all bourgeois. A political argument over the overseer's salary brought 125 Beeston ratepayers out to vote in 1836, over twice the number on the electoral list, but only 36 per cent of the burgess roll.⁴

The voting list of 1836 permits a closer look at the composition of the Beeston middle class. Two-thirds of the 125 voters had their property valued at less than five pounds. The Tories, who comprised most of the opposition to a public salary for the overseer, were considerably wealthier than the Liberals. One-third of Tory ratepayers were valued at ten pounds or more against only 12 per cent of Liberals. The wealthiest ratepayers on the list were two Tory coal owners and two Tory farmers, whose property amounted to 38 per cent of the total rateable value for which votes were given.

1 H.J.Dyos and A.B.M.Baker, 'The Possibilities of Computerising Census Data', in H.J.Dyos, ed., The Study of Urban History (1968), pp.87-112.

2 J.A.Banks, Prosperity and Parenthood: A Study of Family Planning among the Victorian Middle Classes (1954), pp.87-8.

3 Table 5.2: Percentage of Households with Domestic Servants.

4 Beeston Township Minutes, 6 May 1836. The burgess roll figures are given in LM, 21 Oct. 1837. These of course were subject to huge revisions.

TABLE 5.2: PROPORTION OF SUBURBAN HOUSEHOLDS WITH
DOMESTIC SERVANTS (%)

	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	4.4	3.8	4.0	3.9
Beeston	7.0	-	5.7	1.7
Bramley	6.3	8.0	4.2	3.3
Wortley	5.7	4.8	3.0	2.6
Holbeck		6.1		
Hunslet		4.9		

Sources: 10% systematic samples of census enumerators' books.

Nb: No servants were recorded in the Beeston sample for 1851.

Hunslet and Holbeck were sampled only for 1851.

However there were also six Liberals amongst the ten wealthiest rate-payers. Indeed, political differences aside, a clear elite emerges from the voting list. The ten wealthiest ratepayers held two-thirds of the property valued for the vote in 1836. The top twenty ratepayers owned over 80 per cent. Eleven of these ratepayers were farmers, three were coal owners, two millowners and two victuallers. A rich elite of coal masters and farmer-gentlemen headed the ranks of several dozen families in farming, retailing, brewing, milling and cloth making.¹

Hepworth's survey of Bramley in 1823 also allows a closer examination of an out-township elite, particularly as regards property ownership.² The top 40 landlords owned a substantial part of Bramley. Their cottage property amounted to half the houses in Bramley, and almost two-thirds of householders were their tenants. Excluding the cottages, their most valuable property, mills, quarries, houses and land rated over ten pounds, represented almost 40 per cent of the total rateable value of the township. With a quarter of these landlords being absentees or trustees, the circle of resident wealthy property owners was even smaller.

Five of the ten largest cottage owners in Bramley were also non-residents. However the wealthiest owners of mills, quarries and houses were generally not those with many cottage tenants. Only the estates of Lord Cardigan and a deceased woollen merchant, Joshua Burton, the two largest landowners in Bramley, included substantial amounts of both cottage and non-cottage property. The largest cottage landlord, the wine merchant Benjamin Wilson, was a relatively modest property owner in other respects. Those who specialised in cottage property were not necessarily the wealthiest in the township. They included a dozen textile manufacturers, half a dozen maltsters and victuallers, a joiner, a blacksmith, a slaymaker, a stone merchant and a mid-wife.³ There was only one notable instance of tied rents, that of John Varley, who built 31 cottages near his worsted mill in Stanningley.

Some gentlemen of business origin made a living from land rentals. Tenter grounds were commonly rented. Thomas Rogerson, gentleman stone merchant, sub-let the Intake land he rented from the Bramley incumbent.

1 Riches were of course relative. Benjamin Rogers, a Liberal farmer, the sixth wealthiest voter in 1836 with a rateable value of £95, suffered a fire in 1844. His farm and buildings, implements and 150 loads of unthrashed wheat, all uninsured, amounted to a loss of about £300, LM, 5 Oct. 1844.

2 Bramley Township Survey and Valuation 1823, by Messrs Hepworth and Son (LCA, LO/B5).

3 The development of the industrial village of Kirkstall after 1825 was the product of a similar socially mixed group of speculators. Treen op.cit. pp.96-9.

Thomas Thornhill esquire let some land at canal-side to James Hudson, millowner and himself a large landlord and property owner. In the 1820's there was a substantial trade within the Bramley middle-class in which neighbours could be both landlords and tenants in a complicated network of land and property relationships.¹ Clothiers looking to expand wanted rooms in mills, well-situated tenter grounds, or small warehouses near roads. Stone merchants sought prime sites near the canal. Malt kilns, smithies, stables, cowhouses, barns, granaries, brewhouses, heeling chambers and chandlers' shops were the types of commercial property found in Bramley and its neighbourhood. These buildings could scarcely be separated from residential property. A clothier's home, usually rented, could contain one or all of the following; weaving and spinning rooms, burling chambers, warping rooms, a warehouse, scouring place, moating house, washhouse, perching house, mistall, stables, a cellar and a garden. The descriptions of weaving and spinning shops in Bramley indicate how work and domestic life were still thoroughly integrated in 1823, even amongst the wealthiest clothier-tenants.

There was some concentration of commercial property in Bramley, but as with the cottages, it only underlined the limited nature of any monopolistic trend in ownership. 23 quarries were owned by ten individuals or firms in 1823. Seven of these were worked by their owners. Six of the 12 cloth mills were owned by John Haley and John Pollard, two of the longest established millowners in the township. Twenty years earlier Haley had a share in nearly every mill in Bramley. By the 1860's it was the Gaunts and Hainsworths who were the largest multiple millowners in the township.²

A biographical analysis of over 1200 prominent individuals in four out-townships augments the picture of the middle class provided by the Beeston voting list and the Bramley survey.³ For most of the nineteenth

1 This market had developed rapidly since the 1790's. S.C. on the Woollen Manufacture of England, PP(1806) III, evidence of James Graham, 447; Ireen, op.cit. p.68.

2 E.T.Carr, Industry in Bramley (Leeds, 1938).

3 Biographical information on 183 individuals in Armley, 351 in Beeston, 344 in Bramley and 363 in Wortley was collected in a card index arranged by name and by township. Primary sources for this information were poll books, directories, census schedules, township minutes, rate books and newspapers. Extensive use was also made of local histories and almanacs. Although not exhaustive, the object of the index was to establish the economic and political elite of the townships, and to highlight family relationships and business partnerships. All personal details of individuals and families in this and other chapters, unless otherwise annotated, refer to this card index.

century about two dozen families dominated the Bramley textile industry as millowners or mill-occupiers. Several of the oldest mills in Bramley were passed down the generations of a handful of long-established local families. Belle-isle mill was worked by the Rogersons and the Lords from the 1800's till the 1840's, and then, as Westfield mill, by the Haleys until the 1870's when the Gaunts acquired it. Barker and Musgrave owned Wellington mill from 1823 till 1847. The Haleys took it over till the 1870's when it was sold to James Varley. James' grandfather, John Varley, occupied the company mill at Stanningley from 1794 to 1842 when it was sold to the Waites. They operated it as Temperance mill until selling it to the Hainsworths in 1882.

The past was embodied not only in the walls and beams of the out-township mills, but also in the family names of the descendants of the eighteenth century clothiers and merchants. The legacy was not just one of a particular industry, but of the whole economic and social fabric of the community. The inheritance of family businesses, the multiplicity of trades within those businesses, family ancestry and intermarriage were the foundations on which the collective memory of the local middle class rested.¹

Multiple occupations were found throughout the out-township middle-class and petty bourgeoisie well into the 1860's. Trades were mixed both within families and between generations. In the most notable Bramley millowning families, there were maltsters among the Barkers, Musgraves and Waites, and stone merchants among the Farrars, Myers, Rogersons and Waites. The son of Robert Myers, who built the first horse-spinning mill in Bramley in 1796, was a quarryowner as well as a clothier. The brother of the scribbling miller Joseph Rogerson, was a partner with the maltster John Waddington in the Bramley Fall Quarry Company. Joseph Rogerson's nephews were both Bramley stone merchants in the 1850's. George Pickles was a company member of Allen Bridge cloth mill, while Henry Wheatley was a grocer, druggist and flour dealer. As partners, however, they were joint-tenants of two stone quarries in 1823. In Beeston blacksmiths and grocers were among the wealthiest businessmen, often combining these occupations with farming and innkeeping. Farmers could also be shoemakers, clothiers, horse-doctors, road surveyors, brewers, cattle dealers, corn millers, gardeners, maltsters and stone merchants. A Beeston drysalter

¹ John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution (1974), p. 180.

in the 1830's was at once a cotton spinner with a small watermill, an oil dealer and preparer of peachwood and camwood, and a victualler, the owner of the Drysalter's Arms. Robert Ingham, a Wortley fire-brick maker employing 251 men in 1861, was also a scribbling miller. Another Wortley brickmaker, who employed 42 men, was a woolstapler. A third owned the Albion Inn between 1826 and 1847.

Farms, corn mills, malt kilns as well as loom shops and cloth mills could be passed on through the generations. Inns could also be family businesses, although they often tended to change owners more rapidly. The Punch Bowl in Beeston changed hands four times between 1838 and 1858, and the White Hart three times between 1822 and 1853. Even then memories of past occupants might linger on in pub names. In the 1830's a teazle dealer owned the Pack Horse in Beeston. By the late 1850's, under a new owner, the pub had become the Pack Horse and Teazle Inn.

A family's business interests could change with subsequent generations. Farmers' sons became brewers, grocers' sons became publicans, woolstaplers or flour dealers. William Patchett and his son were gear and slay makers in Bramley in the 1840's. In the 1860's the grandson was a fellmonger. Generally however, especially amongst the more prosperous families, businesses were handed down intact to the younger generations. Where multiple trades were involved, different branches of a family might specialise. Just as the Rogerson brothers divided their attention between the quarries and the scribbling mill, the Farrars in Bramley were split between brewing, cloth manufacturing and quarrying. Most wealthy millowners, however, had their time taken up with cloth making. After 1840 it tended to be only the smaller employers, artisans, clothiers and shopkeepers who continued to diversify. Those who aspired to the suburban gentry usually found the need to concentrate their businesses.

Local ancestry, as well as the legacy of a business, was an important element of social status. A considerable number of the early Victorian bourgeoisie, stone merchants, clothiers, millowners, tanners and farmers could trace their families in the local parish registers and township books back to the seventeenth century.¹ Musgraves,

¹ The lineage of 18 such families from Bramley have been charted, the outcome of an exploratory attempt to trace the geneology of all township overseers in Bramley and Beeston between 1685 and 1775. Sources used were Beeston Town Book 1711-1823 (Leeds Parish Records, Beeston St Mary, 10); Bramley Town Meetings 1684-1814 (Leeds Parish Records, Bramley St Peters, 371); 'Leeds Parish Registers 1695-1722, incl. Armley Chapel 1665-1711,' ed. George D Lumb, TSP XIII (1909); 'Leeds Parish Registers 1722-57,' ed. George D. Lumb, TSP XX (1914); 'The Registers of the Chapels of the Parish Church of Leeds 1724-63,' ed. George D Lumb, TSP XXIII (1916).

Farrars and Listers occupied the office of Bramley overseer as far back as the 1690's. The great-grandfather of the tanner Richard Nickols was Bramley overseer in 1752. In Beeston the grandfather of the gentlemen-chandlers Henry and John Hare was township overseer in 1782. The ancestors of William Dunderdale, a Liberal gentleman active in Wortley politics from the 1820's to the 1850's, were Hunslet clothiers in the seventeenth century.¹ Local lineage could also be claimed by the clergy. The father of the Armley incumbent in 1815 had been curate at Farnley chapel in 1763.

As family ancestry and the inheritance of property helped segregate the upper middle class from the rest of out-township society, marriage, particularly between millowning families, cemented their social and economic bonds. Daughters and sons reinforced the mixture of land and industry or shored up business partnerships in such marriages as the Nusseys with the Hargreaves and Tophams of Wortley and the Varleys of Stanningley, or those between the Oddys and Walkers and the Eyres and Wilsons in Armley.

Within the upper middle class the borderline between manufacturers and merchants and the status of 'gentleman' was scarcely marked.² In many cases there was the familiar story of the gentrification of the youngest generations of industrialists, the retreat from business to a life of leisure without immediately abandoning the neighbourhood where the family wealth had been accumulated.³ All but one of eleven Beeston 'gentlemen', recorded between the 1820's and 1860's, had identifiable ties to industry or agriculture, and only two did not have established family roots in the township. Most were sons and grandsons of men who were active in township government in the late eighteenth century. Several prominent families had made their fortunes by the 1830's as chandlers, millowners, merchants, coal masters and farmers. In the 1840's and 1850's the second and third generations began adopting the title of 'gentleman'. In Bramley 32 gentlemen-rentiers were recorded for the same period, over half of whom were absentee landlords.⁴ The majority of 'gentlemen' came from manufacturing, farming, brewing and quarry-owning families. Socially there was little distinction between them and their fellow employers who did

1 R.G.Wilson, *op.cit.* pp.28-9

2 On the definition of a 'gentleman', see Geoffrey Best, Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-70 (1971), pp.268-78.

3 Martin J. Wiener, English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980 (Cambridge, 1981).

4 From Bradford, Leeds, Adel, Bramhope and Horsforth.

without the title. In Wortley a similar group also had close family connections with township industry. Cloth manufacturers, gear makers and publicans of the 1830's had become gentlemen by the late 1840's.

Not all of the most prominent families of the early nineteenth century produced mid-Victorian gentlemen of independent means. James and George Leather, operating Beeston Park Colliery, were the second wealthiest ratepayers in the township in 1836. The next generation of Leathers however did not rest on their parent's laurels, but stepped into new professional and business careers as manufacturing chemists, civil engineers and railway surveyors. One son, J.T. Leather, doubtless aided by his family's patronage of the Church, went into business partnership with the son of the Beeston incumbent, Joseph Wardle. Wardle and Leather took over the Railway foundry in 1858 and ran the Hunslet engine company from 1864 to 1873.¹

In the upper middle class of every township, amongst the gentlemen, merchants, manufacturers and large farmers, there were a handful of residents, Gott, Marshall, Armitage, Kitson and others, who could regard themselves as members of the 'urban squirearchy' of Leeds, the civic elite of the borough.² Edwin Gaunt of Wortley and James Kitson as successful industrialists received knighthoods to rank alongside Fairbairn and Baines. A methodist clothier from Wortley, William Pawson, became the first man from the out-townships to be appointed mayor in 1841. A former millhand at Marshalls, Henry Marsden, also rose to become mayor in 1873. He retained his local connections as President of Wortley Working Men's Institute.³ Another Wortley resident, the banker Henry Oxley, patronised Wortley Youth Guardian's Society. He also became mayor and a Justice of the Peace, and left £45,000 at his death in 1890.⁴ Charles James Hargreave, of the Wortley mill-owning family, trained as a barrister in London and was appointed Q.C. in 1852.⁵ Such individuals achieved social recognition far beyond the township boundaries, and identified with a national middle-class which sometimes had only the loosest ties to provincial community life.

The horizons of the bulk of the suburban bourgeoisie, the 'serious and steady middle-class', were more bounded.⁶

1 L.T.C. Rolt, A Hunslet Hundred (1964), pp 26-30. Leather paid £2766 in 1864 for the Hunslet site. In 1873 he sold the company he had founded for £25,000.

2 John A. Garrard, Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns 1830-80 (Manchester, 1983), p.13.

3 J.S. Curtis, The Marsden Mayoralty (Leeds, 1875).

4 William Benn, Wortley de Leeds (Leeds, 1926) p.38.

5 Gentleman's Magazine, 220 (1866), 917.

6 Hugh McLeod, Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City (1974), pp.8-15, 147-8.

Their community consciousness was centred on the locality or, at most, the district. They were established men of business, without the education or style of gentlemen, but with a comfortable income, a distinctive residence, and usually a long family tradition of participation in the affairs of their township. 'Provinciality' and a keen sense of localism were the distinguishing features of this 'solid' middle-class. The social gap however was not really between the urban elite and the 'solid' middle-class. Men like Kitson, Gaunt, Pawson, Marsden, Oxley and Hargreaves symbolised the potential social mobility between these two groups. The most significant cleft was between this middle-class and the rising petty bourgeoisie of small employers, lesser professionals, master artisans and shopkeepers.

Those few industrialists such as Gott, Marshall and Armitage, who dominated the economic and social life of the townships, and who, whether as manorial lords or not, aspired to the gentry, shaped the attitudes of lesser families in the upper middle-class to their local communities. In areas of voluntary work, influential capitalists like Gott often led by example. In the self-help organisations and educational institutions the indoctrination was directed by the haute bourgeoisie to ensure an identity of values throughout the middle class.¹ In industrial relations the actions of leading employers like Kitson, Fairbairn or Bowers could prove decisive in unifying the middle-class response to strikes or disputes.

The suburban bourgeoisie was defined in terms of status as well as wealth and occupation, and was marked out by something approaching a common class attitude towards the working class communities in which they lived. The location and style of residence was a material expression of this attitude, as well as an important element of social status. Most of Bramley's grandest dwellings in 1823 were individually named and stood alone. They varied in pretensions from Elm Grange, Westroyds House, Tusculan House and several 'Mansion Houses', to Hill Top Cottage, Eller Cottage, and John Vickers' Round-about-House at Stanningley. The millwright Charles Lord lived in Prospectus House, the wine merchant Benjamin Wilson at Armenian Lodge. In contrast to the largest farms and many of the mills and quarries, most of these

1 R.J.Morris, 'Organization and Aims of the Principal Secular Voluntary Organisations of the Leeds Middle Class 1830-1851', (unpubd. D.Phil thesis, Oxford, 1970), p.337.

residences were owner-occupied. Several were clearly located for easy access to the workplace. The Nickols' cottage was near their tannery at Hill-top. Vickers' house at Stanningley was by their pub, Pollard's house at Newlay was close to his mills. Despite this, certain middle-class residential areas did emerge within townships. In Wortley the 'largest and best houses' were found in the Leys area, including Western Flatts, Fawcett House, Greenhill House, Highfield House and the Vicarage.¹ A pastoral view and an elevated site were preferred. The country a short distance from Armley was still described in 1841 as 'agricultural and pleasing: the immediate neighbourhood is chiefly in fine clear pastures surrounded with good hedges, and the green sward is used by the cloth manufacturers as drying grounds.'² The moorsides in Armley and Bramley were particularly popular. Several leading families in Armley, gentry, millowners and wealthy clothiers lived around the moor in the 1850's, while, not unexpectedly, most of the major shopkeepers and craftsmen resided in Towngate and the built-up area.

Houses, like mills and farms, remained in families for generations. When they were sold it was frequently to another well-established local family. One of the oldest millowning families in Wortley, the Batesons, sold Highfield House in the 1850's to the Cliffs, brick manufacturers in the township since the 1800's. When the sons of an employer came of age, one would often leave the paternal home to reside elsewhere in the neighbourhood. John Gott lived at Wyther in the 1850's, while his brother and widowed mother stayed on in Armley House, regardless of the fact that both sons were jointly managing the family business.³ William Dewhirst Cliff went to live at Highfield House while his father continued to reside at Western Flatts. In another Wortley brickmaking family, the sons of William Ingham lived in Greenhill House till their father's death in 1858 when Henry Ingham moved to Heaton Lodge in Armley. They continued to run the family firm together.

The homes of the gentry and employers in the industrial suburbs had less in common with the rows of 'handsome mansions and neat houses' occupied by Leeds merchants in the northern out-townships, and more

1 John Stones, Wortley: Past and Present (Leeds, 1887), pp.24-5.

2 J Pigot & Co., National and Commercial Directory (1841).

3 John moved back into Armley House in 1858, on the death of his mother. His brother William spent most of his time at his house in Torquay. Daniels, op.cit. p.90.

to do with Gott's concept for 'a country life in business'.¹ Humphrey Repton's original scheme of 1809 for Armley House and Park was for a buffer to urban expansion, where the landscaped estate had a social as well as an aesthetic function. Gott's residence however, in local eyes, presented a very different prospect from that envisaged by Repton. The house was turned away from the clothiers' houses, the noise of the shuttles and the sight of tenter grounds, and looked east towards Leeds, over the smoke of Bean Ing, with the gothic ruins of Kirkstall Abbey to the north. A remodelling of the house in 1816 created a classical mansion with 'a rather chilling image of domination.'

Other local employers could not aspire to the utilitarian landscaping designs of the Gott estate, however their homes could also express an ideology. The absence of an urban entrepreneurial culture was made up for by the suburban-villa emulation of landed estates.² High walls, private gardens and large dark houses turned away from adjacent thoroughfares to views over arable fields, pastures and tenter grounds ~~therefore~~ in some ways represented an imitation in miniature of Gott's symbol of authority.

Middle-class hegemony in the out-townships could take the form of philanthropy, charity, patronage or paternalism. These were the means by which the suburban bourgeoisie organised their beliefs and values in class relations. They were the expression of social status and economic power in a community.³ Philanthropy was characterised by the individual gift, charity by fund-raising committees and subscription lists. During the 1820's and 1830's Gott presented blankets every winter to the poor of Armley, and during the crises of 1832, his example was followed by subscribers to relief funds in Holbeck and Hunslet.⁴ Individual acts of generosity were sometimes spontaneous and not confined to the social elite. In the hard winter of 1842 a Bramley butcher donated three sheep to the local unemployed poor.⁵

1 William White, Directory of Leeds (Sheffield, 1853); R.G.Wilson, op.cit. p.206; The following sentences on Armley House draw on Daniels op.cit. pp.78-86.

2 David Cannadine, Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967 (Leicester, 1980), pp.36-8.

3 Robert Q. Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh (Oxford, 1976), pp.1-8; idem, 'Religion, Culture and Social Class in the late 19th and early 20th century Edinburgh' in Geoffrey Crossick ed., The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914 (1977), pp.134-58.

4 LM, 24 Jan. 1824, 5 Feb 1825, 29 Jan. 1831, 7 Jan. 21 Jan. 28 Jan. 1832.

5 LM, 22 Jan. 1842 .

In Armley the philanthropic and charitable work of the Gott family was pervasive. Gott rescued destitute chimney sweep boys and paid the Church rates of the local poor.¹ In 1832 he built a school near Armley chapel, and almshouses for '12 poor widows'.² From Armley House in the 1840's and 1850's came gifts of clothing, beer, wine, fruit, flowers, buns and beef for the local poor, sick and infirm, and the school and almshouses were regularly visited by the younger women in the Gott household.³

Such 'private initiatives and activities' of the suburban ruling class formed the 'apparatus of their cultural hegemony.' This hegemony however also required that some account be taken of the traditions, the 'interests and tendencies' of the local communities. It did not result in the subordination of the working class, but, particularly during the mid-Victorian years, in a 'compromise equilibrium' in social relations.⁴ Moreover the pattern of social relations in each township varied according to the degree to which the resident bourgeoisie became involved in community life, and the nature of that involvement. In Armley an old-fashioned Tory paternalism characterised the local elite during the first half of the nineteenth century. A substantial group of wealthy millowners and gentlemen lined up behind Gott, the Church and the Tory party. Industry and land were intermingled by marriage and business partnerships amongst the Armitage, Wilson, Eyres, Bateson, Oddy, Wainman and Whiteley families. Liberals, who were numerous among the small manufacturers, had few representatives amongst the elite. The Tory Anglican group was guided in its religious and cultural life by a series of active and capable clergymen.

Patronage however did not extend far beyond the political platform, the township meeting and the church. There was considerable support for Armley St Bartholomew's, its day and Sunday schools, for the Ripon diocesan board of education, and for Armley's Loyal Friendly Society. Bourgeois social relations revolved around the church and Sunday service. The place of worship itself became a shrine to the

1 LM, 20 Dec. 1817.

2 William White, Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire (Sheffield, 1837).

3 Elizabeth Gott's Diary, Gott Ms. 194/3/13-15.

4 Antonio Gramsci, Selections from Prison Notebooks (1971), pp.161, 258. The interpretations of both Gray and Grossick also draw heavily on Gramsci's analysis of hegemony. Gray, Labour Aristocracy, op.cit.; Geoffrey Grossick An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society (1978).

local millowning dynasties. In 1825 Gott erected a chancel aisle for his household. Fonts and a pulpit were donated to the chapel which was enlarged in 1833, memorial tablets to a dozen families decorated its walls.¹ Relations with the community at large were mostly filtered through the church.

Much of the charity and local patronage emanating from Armley House was channelled via the incumbent. The Gotts seem to have considered themselves primarily as patrons of the church and its institutions, and secondly as benefactors of the township as a whole. What is noticeable is the lack of forthrightness in their charitable efforts, the reserved nature of their donations, and, despite the church school and the almshouses, the paucity of links with the local community. There was no rural paternalism in Armley. The Gotts and other Tory families did not make up a squirearchy who dominated all aspects of local life. There was little resemblance to the social relations found in the Liberal-methodist townships like Wortley and Bramley, where the employer class were more actively involved in a wider range of local institutions. Class relations in Armley owed much to Benjamin Cott's concept of 'a country life in business,' a concept which allowed for a certain hegemony but not domination over the local population.² Considerable social distance was maintained between Armley House and Armley township. The Gotts did not share the same inclination to supervise community relations which was felt by millowners, tanners, brick manufacturers, merchants and gentlemen in other out-townships.³

Particularly after Benjamin Gott's death in 1840, there was a certain air of resignation about the time honoured philanthropy of his family. Relations between the township and Armley House grew more distant after 1840. Because of an altercation with the curate in the 1860's the family's support was withdrawn from the church school. The Gotts, Whiteleys, Wilsons, Eyres and Wainmans became more conscious of their isolation as a Tory millocracy amongst a Liberal methodist and increasingly proletarian population. Gott's widow, Elizabeth, who was in her eighties by mid-century, was busy with the rounds of social calls, visiting or being visited, receiving

1 Mark Midgely, Armley Church and Schools (Leeds 1907).

2 Gramsci, op.cit. p.80 n.

3 For a similar Tory view of paternalism, see the comments of the Kirkstall iron manufacturer George Beecroft in 1859, above, Chapter Four, p.226..

presents and giving gifts to a small but constant circle of friends and relatives from Leeds and district. Most of the rest of her time was spent in Armley House or its grounds, keeping accounts, supervising the hiring and firing of staff, the repairs and maintenance of the house, park and woods. She rarely visited Armley. This was not because she was ill or infirm. In three years of the diaries she had no more than a couple of colds, and was capable of walking through the valley to Burley on a fine day, even in winter. Her lack of visits to Armley, apart from to church, suggests she had little or no business there.

Mrs Gott identified with an older view of charity, rather than the aggressive philanthropy of the mid-Victorian bourgeoisie with their aim of increasing social control over a wider section of the population. Charity was part of the social functions and moral obligations of the gentleman-merchant-landowner in whose class she had been raised.¹ Charity was sufficient if it reached the obviously poor and hungry, those needing immediate relief, or the aged, infirm and helpless. She did not consider subscriptions as a means of reaching into the working population.

The distinction between the munificence of individual property owners, and the organised charity of the utilitarian age pervaded social relations in Armley for most of the century. At the rebuilding of the church in 1872, the Vicar of Leeds proclaimed St. Bartholomew's embodied two principles, the older patronage of local property owners—Samuel Eyres Wilson donated £5000 to the building fund - and the modern broad-based subscription.

"They first had a general expression of the will of the people in Armley to have a church. They had subscriptions got together from themselves, and then they had an inheritor of property in the neighbourhood coming forward in the spirit of one of the old church builders and supplying the need, and filling up what was wanted for the completion of the work."²

This seemed to Canon Woodward the perfect expression of a unified community spirit.³ However, in most townships, and indeed in most

1 Compare the patronage of the marchioness of Hertford, as manorial lord of Holbeck. She supported the building of Holbeck Church in 1829 and subscribed to the Holbeck Board of Health in 1832 without ever residing in the township. LM, 28 Jan. 1832; Allen, *op.cit.* p.447.

2 Midgely, *op.cit.* p.10.

3 In London during the 1870's the Charity Organisation Society attempted to reassert such a community spirit through a re-structured charitable effort, in which the 'indiscriminate alms-giver' was replaced by more 'scientific', and business-like approach of social casework. Judith Fido, 'The Charity Organisation Society and Social Casework in London 1869-1900', in A.P. Donagrodzki, ed., Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain (1977), pp.207-30.

of Victorian urban society, it was subscription lists with their hierarchy of benevolence which characterised the bourgeois approach to charity and to social relations in the local communities. Subscriptions to causes such as Irish famine relief in 1831 were carefully graded by the amount given according to the donor's wealth and status.¹ Leading employers might take upon themselves the responsibility of managing a campaign, particularly if it was for the local poor. The largest flax spinners in Leeds, Benyon and Marshall, organised the Holbeck relief fund of 1842 and elicited subscriptions from 'most millowners and respectable inhabitants'. In 1842 however, as in earlier crises such as 1819 and 1834, the money raised scarcely met the demand for relief.²

In later fund raising efforts such as the Patriotic Fund of 1854 and the Lancashire cotton famine relief 1862-5, local committees parcelled townships into neighbourhoods with leading residents given the task of canvassing from door to door.³ Schools, factories, churches and chapels were also committed to the huge voluntary effort for the Lancashire cotton workers in the winter of 1862-3.⁴ The largest subscriptions were prominently advertised in the press and close checks kept on the completeness of the lists and the accuracy of the figures printed, both as to the amounts promised and the sums received. The correspondence and committee books of the cotton relief fund reveal some interesting insights into the attitude of the out-township bourgeoisie towards the act of charity and towards their social standing in the communities.

- 1 LM, 9 July 1831. On the social meaning of the gift see Gareth Stedman Jones, Outcast London (1971), pp.251-3. The subscription fund was also the characteristic middle-class response to epidemics: R.J.Morris, Cholera 1832: The Social Response to an Epidemic (1976), pp.119-20.
- 2 LM, 29 Jan. 1842. See above Ch.3, pp.112-14. On the Leeds Town Fund 1837-42 see Morris, Organization and Aims, op.cit. pp.110-21.
- 3 The Patriotic Fund raised money for families of soldiers and sailors killed in Crimea. See Wortley Town Meeting Minutes, 4 Dec. 7 Dec. 20 Dec. 26 Dec. 1854.
- 4 Lancashire Cotton Districts Relief Fund, Leeds, 1862-6, (Brotherton Ms.1973/1). More has been written on the control and distribution of relief, than on the mechanics of fund-raising and its social implications. See Michael E.Rose, 'Rochdale Man and the Stalybridge Riot', in Donagrodzki, op.cit. 185-206; idem, 'Poor Relief and Scientific Charity: The Elberfeld System and its influences', (unpubd. paper read at a School of Economics Seminar, University of Leeds, 19 Nov. 1980); W.O. Henderson, The Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861/65 (2nd edn. Manchester 1969).

In Wortley Joseph Cliff felt that the house to house canvassing organised by his fellow brick manufacturer, Robert Ingham, as treasurer of the local committee, was inappropriate for him. '..... It is thought desirable that I should pay my subscription through our local treasurer. I intend therefore to do this.....'¹ Cliff had substantial examples of generosity to follow. The Liberal ward councillor promised £20 per month for six months, and the Inghams themselves gave £60 over the same period. Farnley Iron Company donated £100 in a lump sum, and Marshall promised £500.

In Bramley there was early opposition to a canvas of the township. Alderman Richard Wilson, a local wine merchant, was of the opinion that 'very little would be done at Bramley'.² Indeed, when representatives of some of the oldest families in Bramley, millowners, tanners, stone merchants, tailors and butchers, gathered for the funeral of Abraham Musgrave, they voiced their opposition even to a public meeting in support of the fund.³ The Tory tanner, Richard Nickols, thought

"there had been too much made of the matter and that the Poor Rates of the Lancashire Districts ought to have been first taxed before application was made to foreigners." (4)

The incumbent explained to the Leeds Committee that a few months previously Bramley had raised a relief fund for its unemployed. A house to house canvas would only cause hardship to those who were themselves recently on relief.⁵ The alternative was suggested of collections in the various congregations. Two Methodist chapels proceeded to raise £60 this way.

In the summer of 1865, when it was clear that much more had been collected than distributed, a string of letters came in from out-township employers demanding the return of their 'residual subscriptions.' The Armley millowner, Samuel Eyres, wrote in twice objecting to schemes to distribute the surplus money, and demanding that it be left to the individual to decide what to do with it.⁶ Greenwood and Batley wanted their money back, and so did Richard Wilson of Bramley, 'because

1 Cotton Relief Fund, op.cit. 11/16, Joseph Cliff to the Leeds Committee, 5 Dec. 1862.

2 Ibid. 2/1, General Committee Minutes, 6 Nov. 1862.

3 Musgrave (1778-1862), a Liberal millowner and moneylender, the son of a prominent maltster, was himself a benefactor of Leeds hospital, Bramley Church, and the trustee of a township charity. Bramley Almanac, 1881.

4 Cotton Relief Fund, op.cit. 3/62, Samuel Booth to Alderman Wilson, 20 Nov. 1862.

5 Ibid. 3/27, Rev. Samuel Joy to the Leeds Committee, 17 Dec. 1862.

6 Ibid. 8B/14, Samuel Eyres to the Leeds Committee, 16 May, 23 May 1865.

of the very heavy loss I have lately had.'¹ Edwin Gaunt asked for his surplus subscription to be given to the Zion Sunday School in New Wortley where he had been as a scholar and a teacher.²

The reactions and attitudes of the local bourgeoisie to the cotton famine relief fund seem quite different from the philanthropy of the Gotts at Armley. Many gentlemen, millowners, shopkeepers and publicans felt the need to establish a position in the ranking order of benevolence with a donation appropriate to their social status. Months of fund-raising in all the out-townships drew in hundreds of pounds. Every penny however was properly accredited, and the reaction of many to the news of oversubscription indicates how calculated much of the donating was. Notable businessmen like Wilson were not beyond pleading financial hardship to get their rebates. It was the age of thrift and economy in local government, and this philosophy extended even to charity work.³ Nevertheless there was a deeper significance in the bourgeois attitude to charity, philanthropy and paternalism, one which had implications for their relation with their local communities. Just as the Tory elite in Armley felt more comfortable channelling their social activities through the church, in the 1860's many Bramley employers, both methodists and anglicans, Tories and Liberals, preferred to do their fund-raising in the congregation and the workplace, rather than on the streets and in the homes of their workers. It was a feeling of moral obligation to the poor mingled with an awareness of social standing in the community which encouraged the out-township bourgeoisie to donate to relief funds, to subscribe to church building and chapel schools, to organise local clubs and preside over local societies. However; for the suburban elite there was seldom a keen sense of involvement in township life, but rather a self-conscious detachment from the community, an awareness of observing, perhaps guiding, but not participating in popular culture.

The same class conscious detachment occurred in the patronage of educational institutions, in the control of working class recreation, and in the resurgence of employer paternalism after mid-century.⁴ The largest employers patronised the institutions they themselves had designed for the working class. Marshall had his mill school and his

1 Ibid. 8B/21, Greenwood and Batley to the Leeds Committee, 2 June 1865; 8 B/64, Richard Wilson to the Leeds Committee, 26 May 1865.

2 Ibid. 8B/18, Edwin Gaunt to the Leeds Committee, 10 June 1865.

3 For a similar trend in German urban society see Wolfgang Kollmann, Sozialgeschichte der Stadt Barmen im 19 Jahrhundert (Tubingen 1960), pp.107-23.

4 See below, chapter 6/ii.

book club in Holbeck in the 1820's. James Hargreave chaired Wortley Youth Guardian's Society and Joseph Cliff, aided by Samuel Smiles, supervised Armley Literary Society in the 1840's. Baines and Kitson presided at the opening of Hunslet Mechanics' Institute in 1859. From 1848, almost coinciding with the final Chartist upsurge, there was a conscious attempt by local employers to improve industrial relations, and with it class relations, in the out-townships.¹ Five years after his firm was involved in the bitter flax-reelers' strike of 1847, W.B. Holdsworth had successfully organised a popular cricket club among his Hunslet workforce. Fairbairn's engineering workers boasted an 'Operatic band' by 1851. Farnley washerwomen, Wortley millhands, Armley tanners, Bramley quarrymen, Hunslet glassmakers, and Holbeck turners and fitters all had their company treats, teas, dinners, day-outings in the decade after 1848. Such employer paternalism had scarcely been seen in the Leeds suburbs since the heyday of reform politics in the early 1830's.² At that time the sporadic 'beef and ale' paternalism of the Tory and Liberal millocracy had been both a product of party political conflict and a celebration of the economic hegemony of factory capitalism. In the industrial hamlets this had sometimes appeared as the 'chilling image of domination', in Varley's deferent village of worsted spinners at Stanningley, or among Walker's subdued millworkers at Beeston Millshaw, resigned to the truck shop, tied rents and intimidation.³ In the 1850's such paternalism was more regulated, closely aligned with employer patronage of voluntary institutions, churches, chapels, schools and charities, organised in a system of social control which itself was increasingly falling out of the hands of the suburban elite, and becoming the province of the small employers and petty bourgeoisie.

During the 1840's there was a rapid decline in the number of out-township families in the highest social class. Within the middle-class there was a relative shift away from the gentlemen-rentiers and large employers of social class I towards the small employers and lesser professionals of social class II, and this trend continued through the mid-Victorian decades.⁴

Professionals were noticeably absent from the Beeston ratepayers'

1 The reassertion of paternalism was a phenomenon also noticed by Joyce for Lancashire, Patrick Joyce, Work, Society and Politics (1980), p.59.

2 See above Chapter 3, p.130.

3 See above Chapter 2, p.81.

4 Table 5.3: Social Class of Household Heads.

TABLE 5.3: SOCIAL CLASS OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS (%)

	<u>Social Class I</u>				<u>Social Class II</u>			
	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	8.8	4.6	1.3	0.5	2.6	6.2	8.1	9.3
Beeston	2.3	-	-	-	9.3	11.9	18.9	8.6
Bramley	8.5	1.6	-	0.5	1.7	4.8	7.9	8.4
Wortley	2.9	1.8	0.8	0.5	5.0	7.7	3.4	3.6
Holbeck	-	2.3	-	-	-	4.2	-	-
Hunslet	-	1.6	-	-	-	7.8	-	-
	<u>Social Class III</u>				<u>Social Class IV</u>			
	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	58.8	57.7	61.1	57.4	14.9	18.5	18.1	18.6
Beeston	67.4	59.5	41.5	44.8	14.0	19.0	22.6	25.9
Bramley	59.7	61.7	59.7	56.7	22.7	22.3	26.7	21.4
Wortley	59.7	48.8	58.9	55.5	23.7	31.5	26.6	24.2
Holbeck	-	61.0	-	-	-	17.7	-	-
Hunslet	-	52.2	-	-	-	17.6	-	-
	<u>Social Class V</u>				<u>Unclassified</u>			
	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	7.9	4.6	7.4	10.3	7.0	8.5	4.0	3.9
Beeston	4.7	9.5	9.4	13.8	2.3	-	7.5	6.9
Bramley	4.0	6.4	3.7	7.9	3.4	3.2	2.1	5.1
Wortley	4.3	3.6	4.9	12.0	4.3	6.5	5.3	4.3
Holbeck	-	8.4	-	-	-	6.5	-	-
Hunslet	-	13.6	-	-	-	7.1	-	-

Sources: 10% systematic samples of census enumerators' books.

list of 1836, however there was a small corps of schoolmasters, book-keepers, clerks and solicitors active in township politics from the 1820's. In Bramley too there were few professionals among the leading ratepayers in 1823, and many of those who did later make a mark in township affairs had multiple occupations. A prominent surgeon was also a druggist, a schoolteacher owned a barn, an auctioneer was primarily a cabinet maker. In Wortley the educated class consisted of only about a dozen men in miscellaneous occupations, surgeons, teachers, auctioneers, barristers, insurance agents, book-keepers. However, they were disproportionately active in township life, patronising the Co-operative society, the Clothiers' Benefit Society, the Youth Guardians', the Mechanics' Institute and the Zion Sunday School in the 1840's and 1850's.

Many professionals and white collar workers in the out-townships were climbing the social ladder. A Bramley surgeon and Liberal councillor was the son of a grocer, another surgeon in Wortley was the son of a local butcher. The social as well as the geographical mobility of William Ellis, an Armley contractor and Liberal councillor, can be traced by his changing address within the township, from Lee Lane in 1853, to a more salubrious location at Moorside in 1857, and finally to his suburban villa of Rock View in 1864. However the 'status dilemma', the drive to achieve bourgeois respectability within a working class milieu which characterised late nineteenth century petty-bourgeois suburbia, had not yet occurred. In the mid-Victorian townships the new white collar salaried workers were still bound to the Liberal myth of the progress and independence of urban community life. Their orientation was still to 'something irreducibly local.'¹

The middle years of the century witnessed a rapid growth in the size of social class II. This had less to do with the rise of the educated classes than with the increase in economic, social and political importance of the small employers, manufacturers and shopkeepers.

All groups within the suburban petty bourgeoisie were characterised by the inheritance of business property and land over generations. Production units remained small and the traditional integration of

¹ Geoffrey Crossick, 'The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain', in Crossick ed., 'The Lower Middle Class, op.cit. pp.11-60; Richard N. Price, 'Society, Status and Jingoism: The Social Roots of Lower Middle Class Patriotism 1870-1914', *ibid.* pp.89-112.

the workplace and the home enhanced the importance of family ties. In the 1850's there were still many independent clothiers in the out-townships, usually employing less than a dozen men and often combining cloth making with ancillary occupations, farming, shopkeeping, size-boiling. Some who became mill-tenants or partners in company mills began as overlookers. Many were from long-established local families.

Shopkeepers and artisans, employers of just a few men, tradesmen and 'little masters', were of a similar social standing as the clothiers.¹ Family ancestry and multiplicity of trades within business were also features of this social group. Benjamin Fawcett of Wortley was a grocer, a flour and horse dealer, and a corn miller. His neighbour David Newton was a cabinet maker, a wheelwright, an upholsterer, an ironmonger, a flocks dealer and occasionally an auctioneer. Family business' were passed down the generations. The Lawtons in Wortley were grocers, drapers, druggists, flour and oil dealers for over 60 years. Matthew Lawton employed just three men in 1861. Other tradesmen's families rose to greater things. Joseph Broadbent was a grocer and leather cutter in Armley town gate in the 1850's while his brother was a grocer and coal dealer at Ley Lane. Joseph's son, Edward, became one of the largest tanners in the borough, employing hundreds by 1888.

The petty-bourgeoisie played an increasingly important role in township affairs from the 1840's. In Beeston three-quarters of those shopkeepers and artisans who took township office between 1820 and 1860 did so after 1840. Clothiers were active as officials, cloth hall trustees, patrons of Sunday schools and methodist chapels. In most townships, especially after the revision battles of the 1830's small clothiers were generally Liberals. In Bramley and Wortley retailers and craftsmen were overwhelmingly Liberal. The strength of the church and the Tory party in Beeston, firmly based on farms and pubs, was partly undermined by the increased representation of tailors, grocers, masons, joiners, shoemakers and chandlers in township offices.¹ Two generations of the Bellhouse family, Liberal tallow chandlers, leading Wesleyans and patrons of Beeston Mechanics'

¹ Foster, op.cit. pp.166-77.

² Of 16 prominent publicans recorded in the card index for Beeston, 11 were Tories, three were Liberals. Of 39 farmers, 20 were Tories, 11 voted Liberal. Of 39 shopkeepers and artisans, 19 were Liberals and 13 were Tories. The rise of small employers and shopkeepers of course also brought Tory families to prominence, generations of blacksmiths, tailors, grocers, builders and skimmers.

Institute, occupied the burial board and overseers' posts from the 1850's to the 1870's. The Liberal grocer, Horatio Goldthorpe, was guardian and assessor in the 1850's and a member of the burial board from 1857 to 1874. Goldthorpe was typical of many retailers and artisan employers who rose in wealth and social status. He had lived in Beeston since at least 1847 but was only enfranchised in 1859. By 1877 he was President of the Mechanics' Institute.

The petty-bourgeoisie of the industrial out-townships formed a heterogeneous 'middle strata' in society, defined by occupation and the relations of production, by politics and by religion.¹ However, there is little evidence of two distinct cultures of tradesmen and 'little masters'.² The importance of multiple occupations and the communal roots of family businesses reduced the social differences between the two groups. Certainly master artisans, especially small clothiers operating within the domestic system, found themselves drawn to radical politics in the early nineteenth century as they struggled to survive the onslaught of factory capitalism and the slide into the wage-earning class. However their ambiguous position persisted for several decades as they were torn between the interests of capital and labour.³ Several important local Chartist leaders were small employers. George Gaunt, the Wortley Chartist councillor, was a painter, Joseph Barker was a printer, William Barker of Bramley was both a clothier and a shopkeeper.⁴ By the 1850's the contradiction in their relations to the working class resolved itself in a broad petty-bourgeois culture in which allegiance to well-defined community values was the main characteristic.⁵

These values found their expression in the petty-bourgeois patronage of mechanics' institutes, working men's clubs, mutual improvement societies, and in the support of non-conformist congregations. In Armley in 1851, three of the Methodist chapels had grocers as stewards and officers. In Wortley there was a powerful Liberal non-conformist group of maltsters, millers, butchers, grocers, innkeepers, tool-makers

1 Gray, 'Religion, Culture and Social Class', op.cit.

2 As found in Oldham by Foster, 'op.cit.' p.176

3 See above Ch.2, pp.86-7; Ch.3, pp.98-9.

4 George Gaunt, born in Wortley in 1800, inherited his father's painting business, Jonas Gaunt & Son. The firm employed 6 men in 1851 and 13 by 1861.

5 See above, Ch.3, p.170. Hobsbawm has argued that petty-bourgeois radicalism was never a viable political alternative in Britain or Europe. E.J.Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (1962), p.154; *idem, The Age of Capital 1848-1875* (1975), pp.33-5.

and small builders. They were politically conservative but radical in religious temperament. Scotch Baptists or Wesleyan Secessionists, strict sabbatarians and temperance men, they typified the grip puritanism had on the out-townships since the seventeenth century. They contrasted with the local elite of Liberal manufacturers, gentlemen and landowners, who were usually Unitarians, Baptists, Wesleyans, Anglicans and Independents. This group saw in the patronage of the self-help institutions of the 1830's and 1840's, and in employer paternalism, a means to achieve social peace by instilling rational norms of behaviour into what they perceived as a barbarous working class. Middle-class unity in the face of Chartism was necessary if they were to gain social control of their communities. The petty-bourgeoisie regarded the institutes, schools and benefit societies, as embodying the values of perseverance, thrift and self-improvement which Wesley had espoused. Methodist small employers recognised the need for education in the townships. However they did not support the working class search for new forms of recreation, which was engendered by its increasing literacy. For the petty-bourgeoisie, sectarian principles were of primary importance, even if, as with voluntaryism and sabbatarianism, they caused bitter divisions within the local middle class. Indeed as has already been pointed out, it was through political and religious sectarianism that the petty-bourgeoisie asserted their local independence.¹ By the 1850's, with small employers and shopkeepers increasing their influence in the townships, sectarian divisions became rapidly transmuted into a sense of localism. The defensive posture of the 1840's changed to the 'cultural aggression' of the next decade.²

This petty-bourgeois community consciousness was a much tougher creation than the contemporary paternalism of the large industrialists and property owners, for it drew many of its features from the clothier tradition. It thrived on the spirit of individual godliness and religious radicalism, and on the egalitarianism of hard work. Its pride in the community was matched by a belief in the independence of the individual. This view of society was upwards, away from the roots of the collection tradition. Social mobility was the means to transcend the locality, but therein lay the contradiction. Social achievement was to be measured by a yardstick external to communal values, yet the

1 See above Ch.3, pp.139-42.

2 Foster, op.cit. pp.173-4

community marked the limits of success. Social ascendancy was generally only possible within the community.¹ The institutions of out-township government and the patronage of chapels, schools and voluntary organisations embodied this contradiction. They offered a means of limited social mobility to a few, of prominence and public recognition within a strictly local framework.

Except in the most proletarian suburbs, Hunslet, Holbeck and, by the end of the century, New Wortley, the petty-bourgeois strata of small manufacturers and tradesmen was not a marginal class.² Their concept of community determined the political, social and cultural climate of the out-townships in the mid-Victorian years. It also underwent some change. The 1850's and 1860's there was much emphasis on the material and spiritual progress of the community, 'King Progress and the onward march of Improvement.'³ Local traditions and customs were eagerly revived, the 'riding the steng' ceremonies, the village feasts and village bands. Savings banks were opened, chapels rebuilt, friendly societies established, and the history of township institutions and festivities were written down by local enthusiasts.⁴ An upsurge of interest in dialect poetry and prose was encouraged by the publishers of local almanacs. The revival of local language and customs was clearly by popular demand. From 16 feasts and fairs in 1858, Bramley Almanac listed 70 throughout the clothing districts by 1880. About 10,000 copies of the 'almanac were sold every year between 1870 and 1883, chiefly because it was a reliable authority for the dates of the feasts. New Wortley Almanac also sold out for the same reason.⁵ 'Customs, which have existed from our great grandfather's days, are not easily uprooted.'⁶ A sense of history not only led to

1 Ibid. pp.173-6; Geoffrey Crossick, 'La petite bourgeoisie britannique au XIX-siede', Le Mouvement Sociale, 108 (1979)21-62.

2 Crossick, La petite bourgeoisie, op.cit. 61; Gray, The Labour Aristocracy, op.cit. pp.109-11. See the figures for social class III in Table 5.3.

3 Bramley Almanac, 1878. On the intellectual background to this, see Sidney Pottard, The Idea of Progress (1968)

4 See Bramley Almanac 1851-92, New Wortley Almanac, 1875-81. Much of the following analysis of the petty bourgeois consciousness is based on the former source. For examples of histories see Stones, op.cit.; Benjamin Wilson, Our Village (Bramley 1860); Joseph Lawson, Progress in Pudsey (Stanningley, 1887).

5 Bramley Almanac, 1880; New Wortley Almanac, 1876. Bramley Almanac reached an edition of 12000 by 1892.

6 Bramley Almanac, 1880

a greater appreciation of material progress, but also, it was argued, to better relations within the community, between the generations and between the classes. The festivities of Bramley 'Clash' linked 'young and old, past and present', and united the village.¹ The two day ceremony of riding the township boundaries, revived in Bramley in 1862 for the first time since 1832, attracted hundreds of participants and 2000 spectators, and amounted to a patriotic celebration of township identity.² Progress itself was seen as ameliorating the sectarian divisions within the community. In Bramley in 1884 it was concluded that

"a kindlier and more generous feeling has grown up amongst us and that those unseemly political and religious bickerings, which were formerly so common, seldom or ever occur." (3)

The out-townships had always been communities of working people. Work was engrained on their consciousness, it was part of their local identity. Thoresby wryly commented of Wortley, 'this place is by the vulgar frequently called WORKLEY from the Industry of the Inhabitants, as they would fancy...'⁴ Other observers such as Defoe and Fiennes noted the industry and prosperity of Leeds. Wealth born of hard work was admired, but ostentation was frowned upon. Eden, for instance, commented in 1797:

"Although broad cloth purchased in the shops begins now to be worn by opulent farmers and others on Sundays; yet there are many respectable persons at this day, who never wore a bought pair of stockings, coat nor waistcoat in their lives; and within these 20 years a coat bought at a shop was considered as a mark of extravagance and pride." (5)

One of the primary sets of values of clothier society was that a man should be independent and respectable, hard-working and thrifty. Work was a matter of pride in oneself, but such pride must be moderated, and outward displays of prosperity kept to a minimum for the sake of the community as a whole. The male cult of work was particularly strong in the weaving villages, which is why unemployment, particularly in the 1830's, undermined clothier culture to such an extent. Cloth weaving was a man's work, there was honesty and pride in the long dull hours at the loom.⁶ A few viewed it differently. An Armley autodidact

1 Ibid., 1878. On the history of Bramley clash, begun in 1829, see John Dawson, 'Bramley Clash', in Summersgill Collection of Newspaper Cuttings, vol.III, p.61.

2 Bramley Almanac, 1863.

3 Ibid, 1884.

4 Thoresby, op.cit., p.196

5 Sir Frederick Morton Eden, The State of the Poor(1797)vol.1, p.555.

6 H.S. Chapman, 'Report on the Hand Loom Weavers of the West Riding', op.cit., pp.547, 551. On the cult of work see Best,op.cit.,pp.93-7

was driven to sell books for fear of a return to the loom.

"...the horrors of being doomed to weaving began to flash across my mind like the glare of lightning, and the alternate buzzing of the shuttle and the dismal thumping of the loom vibrated in my imagination like peals of thunder." (1)

This was the exception. Generally weaving was regarded as a respectable occupation in the townships. Another Armley book salesman was driven to the loom by his wife who sought 'to maintain the dignity of the family by preventing her husband submitting to so low a calling.'²

This ancient identification in the culture of the clothier communities of hard work, respectability and self-esteem, of the economic independence of the individual and collective social responsibility for norms of behaviour, continued throughout the century. Work was central to the petty bourgeois consciousness. The values of the tradesmen and little masters derived much from the conflict between the domestic system and factory capitalism.³ In this the petty bourgeois could relate to the grievances of the working man.

"It's hard what poor fowk mun put up wi!
 What insults an' snubs they've to tak!
 What bowin an' scrapins expected,
 If a chap's a black coit on his back
 As if clooas made a chap ony better,
 Or riches improved a man's heart,
 As if muck in a carriage smell'd sweeter,
 Nor th' same much wod smell in a cart." (4)

However work was limited by petty bourgeois strictures on the need for humility and caution, 'knowing one's place'. The group pressure on the individual to conform, always a feature of urban working class life, was a powerful weapon of social control in the hands of an articulate lower middle class.⁵

"He may rank wi' his wealthier brother,
 An' rank heigher, aw fancy, nor some;
 For a hand at's weel hooped wi' hard labor
 Is a passport to th' world at's to come.
 For we know it's a sin to be idle,
 As man's days i' this world are but few;
 Then let's all wi' awr lot be contented,
 An' continue to toil an' to tew." (6)

1 Anon, The Unfortunate Genius, by a Factory Girl (Armley, 1852) p.62

2 Ibid. p.82.

3 A similar value conflict sustained the German petty bourgeois 'Mittelstand' in their relationship with heavy industry in the late nineteenth century. For one example see David Crew, Town in the Ruhr; A Social History of Bochum 1860-1914 (New York, 1979), pp.144-5.

4 Bramley Almanac 1881, 'The Honest Hard Worker'.

5 Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (1957), pp.84-6.

6 Bramley Almanac 1881, op.cit.

A pride in one's class was fostered, but not to the point when it presented a danger to the existing status quo. In the boom years of the early 1870's many workers, particularly the young, were condemned for 'getting stuck up', and 'putting on airs'. Security and providence were exchanged for temporary gratification. Any signs of extravagance, particularly as regarded improved leisure facilities for the working class, were quickly attacked by the thrift and economy parties in the out-townships. Bramley's sexton, William Gaunt, reacted adversely to the township's first Art Exhibition in 1872. 'I'm afeered yer goin on sadly ta fast and gettin vary praad.'¹ The reaction to the opening of Roundhay Park was that

"Parks ar'nt for workin men, all they want is a bit ov bacca and sum beer to singe it daan wi, and a dog race nah an' then, and ther all reight." (2)

Such resistance to the 'progress' which had once been welcomed was the product of an increasing sense of insecurity felt by the petty bourgeoisie in the 1870's and 1880's. The middle-class consciousness of community was impregnated by a deep sense of transience felt by bourgeois and petty bourgeois alike. This was an international phenomenon. In northern Europe the overwhelming sense of the past haunted the bourgeois world of such writers as Storm and Fontane.³ In Britain the confidence of the mid-Victorian boom disappeared in the Great Depression. The profound fatalism of a contemporary hero, General Gordon, was in keeping with the Zeitgeist.⁴ In the out-township communities around Leeds this^{was} manifested in the nostalgia for the past, for cultural traditions, for the disappearing features of the rural environment, for the sense of locality itself.

"The place of one's birth possesses a peculiar attraction... Memories strike a chord in the human heart, the vibrations of which and the emotions awakened thereby are better felt than expressed." (5)

An individual carried his community roots with him for the rest of his life.

1 Ibid. 1873

2 Ibid.

3 Theodor Storm, Hans und Heinz Kirch (1882); Theodor Fontane Effi Briest (1895). The import of the bourgeois family legacy for younger generations constrained by tradition was also a theme for later authors, notably Thomas Mann, Buddenbrooks (1922), when writing of this period.

4 Hobsbawm, Age of Capital, op.cit. pp.292-3; Lytton Strachey, Eminent Victorians (1918).

5 Stones, op.cit. p.6.

"...when we come to speak of 'my native village', there is a charm in the very words that excites our admiration and commands our respect; and which seems to exercise an influence over us that we may strive to shake off, but strive in vain." (1)

The 'cherished reminiscences of other days' were captured in poems, articles and books on the community's history, the 'Footprints of Time', 'Old Alic's Farewell to Bramley Band', 'The Song of the Weyver'. Old Bramley was mourned in a poem of 1879, the disappearance of the spring, the stocks, the old church and the lock-up, the cottages on Town Street replaced by modern houses.² By 1890 a generation had passed away.

"Many old and familiar faces are no more but the memory of them still lingers and they, though 'being dead, yet speaketh.'" (3)

A question mark was placed against progress, a gloomy sense of passing pervaded, 'the repose of the grave'.

By the 1850's the social climate was changing rapidly in the townships. The sons of several Beeston manufacturing families were retreating as gentlemen, either behind the walls of a Royds House, a High Villa, a Beeston Park House, or abandoning the township altogether for more salubrious areas of Leeds.⁴ The Walkers, who had operated Millshaw Mills since 1785, moved to Mill Hill in the 1860's. There was some pressure from the railways, coal mining and engineering on the largest farms, and farmer's residences such as Cottingley Hall, New Hall, Raffles House, Red Hall, Groves Hall, had difficulty in surviving the 1860's.⁵ Some Wortley commercial men, such as the banker Henry Oxley and James Whalley the auctioneer, left for Holbeck and Leeds in the 1850's. Some leading millowners, James Hargreaves and the Titley family of Wortley Lodge, were resident in Headingley and Harehills from the 1840's. The Marshall's were generally living as country gentlemen in the Lake District by the 1870's.⁶ By the 1870's and 1880's the curates of the suburban chapelries were complaining of the lack of middle-class subscribers to their schools. In Armley the church found itself in dispute over educational provision with its leading patron.⁷ The third generation of Gott's withdrew to a life of country farming.

1 Ibid.

2 Bramley Almanac, 1879

3 Ibid., 1890

4 Ward has shown a 12 per cent increase in the proportion of upper middle class resident in north-west Leeds, 1851-71. David Ward, 'Environ's and neighbours in the 'Two Nations: residential differentiation in mid-nineteenth century Leeds, Jl Hist.Geog.6 (1980)133-62.

5 These names begin to disappear from directories and maps at this time.

6 Rimmer, Marshall, s op.cit. p294.

7 See below p. X

"You will be glad to hear I am getting on with letting the mills and hope by Xmas all may be going. It has been an anxious and expensive business - but the tenants give me great encouragement - several of them are doing well I think, bad as times are - tho' one here and there drops down certainly." (1)

By 1887 Gott had completely rented out Bean Ing to a single tenant.² Those few neighbours who were still in business reflected on the changing times and increased competition.

"I spent last evening with my old friends the Armitages at Farnley...William was in good spirits that they had succeeded yesterday in rolling a steel plate. He thinks limited liability is the sources of the bad times in his trade - an endless cycle of losing production and overproduction." (3)

Some employers left, some retreated into a private world, detached from the community. However there was also movement the other way. With a low density of population, relatively plentiful open spaces, an elevated situation and easy access to Leeds, several machine manufacturers, pottery owners, glass manufacturers and commission agents moved to Beeston from Helbeck and Wortley from the 1830's. Moreover some of the resident gentry families and their grand houses survived long enough to make a mark on the suburbs of the twentieth century.

"My mother said that there was a lot of gentry in Armley when she was a girl. What's the Conservative club now, it was Mrs Henry Wood used to live there and she used to ride horseback with 'er rounds." (4) X

Lister's Elmfield House of the 1840's was remembered by Bramley residents 140 years later as having 'extensive grounds with a lake on which townspeople skated in winter.'⁵ Ephraim Elsworth's Sandford House of 1823 was occupied by Sir Harold Nichols in 1900. The paternalist ritual of Christmas day had deep historic roots in the community.

"As the bells of Bramley church rang out...children could be seen making their way along the drive to the front door of Sandford House. There they would sing their piece to the village Santa Claus - Sir Harold Nickols of the House. He owned the parklands, and fields on which the Sandford Housing Estate is now built. To each of the children Sir Harold gave a silver threepenny piece and an orange and an apple. Then near noon came the village band playing 'Hail Smiling Morn'. The band was followed by many children in a Pied Piper procession...The band would play their repertoire and then go into the Hall to receive a Christmas Box." (6)

1 Gott's Mss, 194/8/6. W.E.Gott to Francis Gott, 22 Aug. 1879.

2 Heaton, 'Benjamin Gott', op.cit., p.66.

3 Gott Mss, 194/8/5, W.E. Gott to Francis Gott, 26 July 1879.

4 Hall Lane Community Trust, The Armley Album (Leeds, 1980) p.7.

5 YEP, 30 Jan. 1985.

6 YEP, 3 Jan. 1981.

Some features of an older rural style of paternalism persisted. Over 40 years separated the marriage of John Leathley Armitage in Farnley, and the funeral of Lord Wharnccliffe in Wortley, but the ritualistic postures were similar. At Armitage's wedding¹ 1817, '50 respectable tenantry' dined in the town school while mutton, potatoes and ale were distributed among the poor, and 240 local women were 'regaled with tea'.¹ At the funeral of Wharnccliffe of Wortley Hall in 1855, the village 'presented a mournful aspect' to honour the former president of their farmers' club. Shops were shut, blinds drawn, and Wortley was crowded with people from surrounding villages. 'There was scarcely a tenant or dependant of his lordship that did not attend to pay their last token of respect.' Up to 300 tenants and workmen walked in the rain-soaked procession from the Hall to the church.² Neither Farnley nor Wortley were in any sense closed villages, yet they provided the setting for two feudal events which were not out of character with the way class relations had evolved there.³

Nevertheless the trend was for all the townships to become more proletarian after mid-century. The unskilled and semi-skilled classes V and IV more than doubled in Beeston between 1841 and 1871, and also increased substantially in the other suburbs.⁴ The suburban elite had always lived amongst their workers and communal responsibility for the poor had been an important element in the social cohesion of the clothing villages.⁵ However, the industrialization of the townships, the creation of pockets of urban squalor amidst the fields and tenter grounds, the growth of a lumpenproletariat unamenable to employer benevolence or traditional patronage operating through the church or other social institutions, gradually altered the commitment of the wealthiest residents to the locality. In addition, their feeling of moral obligation to the poor and social responsibility to the community diminished as the petty-bourgeoisie and master artisans took over township affairs and many of the duties attached to the patronage of local institutions. A closer examination of the religious, educational and recreational life of the industrial suburbs will illustrate many of the changing attitudes discussed above.

1 LM, 20 Sept. 1817.

2 LM, 30 Oct. 1855.

3 For a discussion of the characteristics of open and closed townships see Dennis R. Mills, Lord and Peasant in 19th Century Britain (1980), pp.60-117.

As Mills correctly points out, simple urban-rural, industrial-agricultural dichotomies are of little use in explaining the urban development of old-'peasant' industrial villages. Ibid. pp.205-21

4 Table 5.3.

5 See above Ch.2.pp.28,35-8.

(ii)

Religion in the Out-townships

Methodism was acknowledged as the 'established religion' of Leeds by the 1830's, yet a few decades earlier Methodists were still a small minority in the clothing villages.¹ In Hunslet, Holbeck, Beeston, Bramley and Armley there were less than 600 members of Methodist societies in the 1790's. By 1809 membership had more than doubled.² Methodism expanded rapidly at a time when the Anglican chapelry system was breaking down. Bramley circuit, formed from Leeds in 1811, had 1469 members by 1825.³ By 1831 there were almost 2000 Wesleyans in the southern out-townships.⁴

A succession of schisms within the Methodist connexion may have added to the total numbers of Dissenters. They certainly raised the public profile of Methodism in the clothing villages. The Ranters began small classes in every township from 1819, and by the 1830's were embarking on their 'chapel-building era'.⁵ The Wesleyan Methodist Association emerged in the 1830's from the Protestant Methodists' experiment in local independence with societies in Hunslet, Holbeck, Armley and Wortley.⁶ The Wesleyan Reformers of 1849 gained many members in Hunslet, Wortley and Bramley, and the New Connexion outnumbered the Wesleyans in Hunslet and Armley by 1851.⁷

Calvinist churches also had their local strongholds. The Baptists had opened a meeting house in Bramley in 1777 and built a chapel in 1807. In 1851 for every five Anglican worshippers in Bramley there were at least four Baptists. The Independents could claim the second

- 1 Nigel Yates, 'The Religious Life of Victorian Leeds,' in D.Fraser ed., A History of Modern Leeds, op.cit. pp.250-69.
- 2 From 572 to 1202. Calculated from Charles M. Elliott, 'The Social and Economic History of the Principal Protestant Denominations in Leeds 1760-1844', (Oxford D. Phil thesis, 1962), pp.114-5, and Brian Greaves, 'Methodism in Yorkshire 1740-1851' (Liverpool PhD thesis, 1968), pp.119-20, Table 23. On the origin of Methodism in Leeds, see above Ch.2, pp.40-2.
- 3 Yates, op.cit. p.252.
- 4 Calculated from Greaves; op.cit., Table 24.
- 5 William Beckworth, A Book of Remembrance: Records of Leeds Primitive Methodists (Leeds, 1911). See above, Ch.3, p.122.
- 6 J.T.Hughes, 'The Story of the Leeds 'Non-Cons'; formation of the Wesleyan Protestant Methodists', Proceedings of the Wesleyan Historical Society 39 (1974), 73-6; Greaves op.cit. p.110.
- 7 D.C. Dews, 'The Ecclesiastical Returns, 1851 - Study of Methodist attendances in Leeds', Proceedings of the Wesleyan Historical Society 39 (1974), 113-16.

largest congregation in Wortley in 1851.¹ The heterogeneous pattern of religious worship and the strength of the different denominations varied substantially from township to township. The common bond between the clothing villages was the dominance of Dissent.

Methodist success owed much to the weakness of the Church of England.² The surplus of Anglican accommodation of the 1770's became a deficit by the 1820's and 1830's, overtaken by the acceleration in the growth of the out-township population.³ On comparing the figures for Church sittings with the census statistics for 1841, the Vicar of Leeds concluded there was 'a fearful amount of spiritual destitution' in the industrial chapelries.⁴ Much of the logic on which both church and chapel building schemes were launched in the 1830's and 1840's was founded on the idea that lack of access to religious services was the problem. If Church accommodation was increased, supply would be matched by demand.⁵ A Chapel of Ease was reclaimed from Dissenter tenants in 1813 in Wortley, Holbeck Church was rebuilt in 1829 and Stanningley St Thomas was opened in 1841. However lack of local sources of finance and the difficulty of levying church rates in the 1830's severely restricted the Church's ability to compete with Non-Conformism.

The new Puseyite Vicar of Leeds, Dr Hook, resolved to divide up the living and create parish churches with resident clergymen out of the perpetual curacies and chapels of ease in the out-townships. This was carried out with some success under the Leeds Vicarage Act of 1844, pushed through in the teeth of Dissenter opposition. Armley chapel was enlarged in 1844. New churches were built at New Wortley, Pottery Field, Little Holbeck and Brewery Field, and new 'parishes' created in Farnley, Holbeck, Hunslet and Wortley between 1847 and 1851.⁶ Much of the building work was assisted by grants from the Ripon Diocesan Church Building Society, established in 1837.⁷ Hook galvanised the

1 1851 Ecclesiastical Census Schedules, P.R.O. H0129/500/2/1/1-10 (Bramley); H0129/500/1/3/12-19 (Wortley).

2 Yates, op.cit. p.252; Greaves, op.cit. pp.120-1; B.I. Coleman, The Church of England in the mid-Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography (Historical Association Pamphlet, 1980).

3 Elliott, op.cit. appendix II, pp.65-7.

4 W.R.W. Stephens, The Life and Letters of Walter Farquhar Hook (6th edn. 1881) p.377.

5 K.S.Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (1963), p.18.

6 Greaves, op.cit. pp.323-8.

7 For instance £500 was granted towards the £2052 cost of a 600 seat church in Brewery Field in 1852. Ripon Diocesan Church Building Society, 24th Meeting of the Central Committee, 9 Nov. 1852, (Ripon and York, YDS/NS/5, Appeals). Most grants were between 10 and 30 per cent of the total building cost, Yates.op.cit. p.255.

Leeds clergy into activity, not by insisting on doctrinal uniformity, but by encouraging 'unity of action' in the struggle against Dissent and 'infidelity'.¹

Well before Hook's arrival, some township curates had planned church extensions. In Bramley a church committee was formed in 1828 to work for the enlargement of the chapel, and successive curates pressed for chapels to be built at Stanningley and Rodley, without any State or Diocesan support. Parishioners began alterations themselves in 1833 when neither funds nor rates could be raised in the township.² By 1848 the Incumbent had successfully enlarged his church, built another, and two National schools 'at some distance from each other'. He concluded satisfactorily that 'Bramley was once looked upon as the hotbed of Dissent, but I am happy to say it is not on the increase.'³

The Non-conformists were also extremely active in chapel building in the 1830's and 1840's. The Wesleyans built new chapels at Hunslet in 1839 and Wortley in 1846, the New Connexion at Hunslet and Hunslet Carr 1846-7, the Protestant Methodists at Hunslet, Holbeck, Wortley and Armley between 1829 and 1839. The Baptists opened chapels at Hunslet in 1836 and Wortley in 1840, the Independents at Hunslet Moorside, Holbeck and Beeston Royds between 1834 and 1844. Even the Ranters, whose informal cottage services and camp meetings attracted working men with little time, money or sympathy for institutionalised religion, began a building programme of 'plain, cosy and substantial chapels' in the 1830's.⁴

For the Methodist sects a chapel was the symbol of an established and successful society. For the Anglicans a new church or church extension was both a sign of progress and of their resolve to match the spiritual provision of their Non-conformist rivals. Generally, however, none of the denominations succeeded in coping with the problems of urbanisation and industrialization. Despite the building programmes, by 1851 total church accommodation in the southern out-townships still only catered for no more than 58 and as little as 31 per cent of the population.⁵ Relatively the most accommodation was available in the

1 Stephens, op.cit. p.432.

2 Alan Dobson, A History of the Ancient Chapel of Bramley (Leeds, 1964), pp.31-2; Elliott, op.cit. p.57.

3 Bramley (Hough Lane) National School File, 1848-89, letter of Rev. Thos. Furbank, 8 Apr. 1848.

4 Beckworth, op.cit. pp.68-9. On the participation of the Ranters in the Leeds labour movement of the early 1830's, see above Ch.3 p.123.

5 Table 5.4; 1851 Religious Census in Leeds Out-townships. On the problems of interpreting the census, see David M. Thompson, 'The Religious Census of 1851', in Richard Lawton, ed., The Census and Social Structure (1978), pp.241-86.

TABLE 5.4: THE RELIGIOUS CENSUS OF 1851 IN LEEDS OUT-TOWNSHIPS

	<u>Accommodation (A1)</u>	<u>Attendance (A2)</u>	<u>Population (P)</u>	<u>A2/A1</u>	<u>A1/P</u>	<u>A2/P</u>
Armley	2879	1705	6190	59.2	46.5	27.5
Beeston	810	445	1973	54.9	41.1	22.6
Bramley	3961	2065	8949	52.1	44.3	23.1
Farnley	1002	629	1722	62.8	58.2	36.5
Holbeck	5742	3878	14152	67.5	40.6	27.4
Hunslet	6158	3521	19466	57.2	31.6	18.1
Wortley	2658	1521	7896	57.2	33.7	19.3

Source: Religious Census 1851: Returns for Hunslet Registration District (PRO HO 129/500). The highest single attendance has been taken whether it is given as an average or as the best turnout on census Sunday, 1851. This, therefore, departs from the methods used by Dews and Yates. As the former points out, the bad weather that day may have reduced attendances. On the other hand, however, to aggregate morning and evening attendances, by whatever formula, must remain speculative and tend to exaggerate the size of congregations.

Tory-Anglican townships of Armley and Farnley where substantial Wesleyan chapels built in the 1780's and 1790's competed with Anglican churches keen to extend their sittings and supported financially by the Manorial Lords and leading employers. The worst situation was in industrial Hunslet and Wortley where population growth had left both Established and Dissenting churches behind.

The outlook in 1851 was particularly bleak for the Church of England. While it had recovered sufficiently for its congregations to outnumber the Wesleyans in all townships except Beeston and Bramley, only in Farnley could its attendances match those of the combined Methodist chapels. The situation was worst in Hunslet where there were over three Methodists for every Anglican churchgoer.¹

'Insufficient accommodation' however was not the reason for the low attendances. Generally neither churches nor chapels were full.² In 1851 between one half and two-thirds of all sittings were occupied, but these congregations represented only a fraction of the population, from 36.5 per cent in Farnley to only 18.1 per cent in Hunslet. Attendances varied greatly between townships and within denominations. Chapels in Holbeck were on average 14 per cent fuller than in Bramley, which in 1851 was particularly badly hit by the Reform schism amongst the Wesleyans. No sect could claim full attendances in all its out-township chapels though both the Kilhamite churches in Armley and Hunslet were nearly full. Several small chapels or schoolrooms used for worship were almost up to capacity. Nevertheless large and spacious churches such as the new Anglican church at Little Holbeck (700 seats) and the old Wesleyan church at Isle Lane (908 seats), also claimed to be nearly full.

Only four of the ten out-township chapels with the best attendances had totally free sittings. Free pews however do appear to have encouraged high attendances. Among the twenty suburban chapels with completely free accommodation, only two, the Independents at Hunslet and the Baptists at Wortley, had less than 60 per cent of their pews occupied in 1851. However, of 17 chapels with less than 30 per cent free accommodation, only seven had under half their seats occupied. Some chapels with only a handful of free pews were more than three-quarters full. Clearly therefore in only a limited number of cases did the lack of access to

1 Table 5.5; Anglican and Methodist Attendances, 1851.

2 Elliott, op.cit. p.39; Greaves, op.cit. p.127.

TABLE 5.5: ANGLICAN AND METHODIST
WORSHIPPERS in 1851

	<u>Anglicans</u>	<u>Wesleyans</u>	<u>All Methodists</u>	<u>As % of all Anglicans</u>	<u>Worshippers Methodists</u>
Armley	501	289	996	29.4	58.4
Beeston	152	163	203	34.2	45.6
Bramley	537	674	1048	26.0	50.8
Farnley	275	220	294	43.7	46.7
Holbeck	1334	1089	1837	34.4	47.4
Hunslet	772	658	2502	21.9	71.1
Wortley	493	270	680	32.4	44.7

Source: Religious Census 1851

church seats affect the level of attendance. In many chapels where members owned or rented seats, they were not left empty.

For a church with a high proportion of rented or private sittings to be full required a stable and loyal congregation, worshippers with strong links to their locality and their religious community. Several Methodist sects clearly built chapels in the 1820's and 1830's on the basis of a regular congregation. The New Connexion in Armley built Bethesda chapel in 1824 with only 50 free seats out of 400, and in Hunslet the Connexion maintained only 250 free seats out of 880. The Ranters' Moriah chapel in Bramley was erected in 1834 with only 40 free pews out of 382. None of the Methodist Association chapels in Wortley, Hunslet and Holbeck had more than one-third of seats free. In the Bull-Ring chapel built in Wortley in 1837, only 10 free seats were maintained out of 140. For all the problems associated with pew rents, the statistics indicate that in many places where stable religious communities were emerging, chapels could be built or enlarged on the basis of closed accommodation.

The worst situation for a church was to have a large building and relatively few free seats. Of the six emptiest churches in the industrial out-townships, five contained more than 500 seats of which less than half were free. The Wesleyans appeared to suffer most from this, building large churches in Armley, Hunslet and Wortley, but failing to fill much more than one-third of the seats.

The question of free pews proved particularly thorny for the Established Church in the suburban chapelries.¹ Disputes over pew rents illustrate the peculiar problems curates faced when trying to finance church improvements in villages where a large proportion of the wealthiest clothiers, tradesmen and millowners were Dissenters. A lack of middle class patrons and a fickle working class attitude to measures designed to attract them into church dogged out-township curates from the 1820's.

In Bramley where a number of old Dissenter families owned pews in the church, the problem was acute. 'Respectable tradesmen' wishing to attend services were turned away because all the seats were 'private property, claimed and closed.'² A new incumbent, Thomas Furbank, attempted to abolish pew rents in the early 1830's with the backing

1 Yates, op.cit. p.259. See also Inglis, op.cit. pp.50-7.

2 Elliott, op.cit. p.41.

of an influential Church Alterations Committee. Furbank's committee included four cloth manufacturers, two stone merchants, two spirit merchants and a solicitor. Politically it was powerful and evenly balanced with three ward councillors among six Tories and four Liberals.¹ The opposition however was formidable. A Liberal maltster took out a suit against Furbank in York ecclesiastical court but was unsuccessful.² The plaintiff invoked a defence of individual property in which the ownership of the pews represented a customary privilege sanctioned by community tradition. It was the tradition as much as the property itself which was under attack. Letters from 'friends of the church', 'inhabitants and pewholders' were sent to the press complaining of Furbank's 'infringement of the rights of those inheriting pews from their ancestors'.

"He has within the last few days taken up most of the pews in the body of the Chapel which are freehold property, attached to freehold houses, and have been held by the owners of those houses for several generations".³

Although Furbank did succeed in creating a small number of free seats, 70 out of 700 in 1837, the victory largely went to the pewholders. The problem remained, with 'numerous applications for pews' continuing in the 1840's. In 1844 a new church was wanted, 'especially for the Poor, as the pews are claimed by Prescription.'⁴

Both rented pews and free seats brought difficulties. Where seats were too expensive, as in a Holbeck Methodist chapel in 1820, potential patrons were discouraged from attending. On the other hand, free seats designed to attract the working class were regarded by them as a form of charity, not as a right of access, and carried some social stigma.⁵ In the late 1850's cold chapels and the lack of decent accommodation continued to make the Church of England unattractive to the out-township poor. The vicar of Holbeck complained that,

"there is a want of better free seats in Church. Many of the present ones are along the side walls - and until there are more eligible free seats, many of the poor will not attend."⁶

¹ LM, 14 Sept. 1833.

² LM, 30 Nov. 1833.

³ LM, 7 Sept. 1833. For other references to the dispute, see LM, 27 Sept. 2 Nov. 9 Nov. 1833; Dobson op.cit. pp.33-4.

⁴ See the entries for Bramley of 1837 and 1844 in 'Diocese of Ripon-Parochial Returns to Bishop Longley till 1856', (Brotherton Library Holden Collection, 3 vols.), (hereafter Longley). All seats were eventually made free by John Gott in 1869, E.T.Carr, The Lands of Bram (Leeds, 1937).

⁵ Elliott, op.cit. pp.42, 110.

⁶ 'Bishop Bickerstaff's Primary Visitation Returns for the Archdeaconry of Craven, 1858' (LCA, Ms.RD/CB 3), (hereafter, Bickerstaff).

As the Established Church attempted to free its seats for the working class, it faced severe financial problems in several townships caused by the absence of a resident Anglican bourgeoisie. Middle-class patronage, it has been argued, formed a part of their 'cultural hegemony' in the local community.¹ The political power and social influence of Tory-Anglican employers was severely restricted in most clothing villages by the strength of Dissent. At Bramley in 1825 Rev. Humphreys complained there was 'scarcely a monied freeholder or other person but is patron of some dissenting concern.'² Thirty years later the lack of patronage continued to plague the church in Bramley.

"It is a place where there has been much neglect in bygone years and much enmity to the church and agitation for Dissent, and where nearly all the willing hearts of moneyed men are given to Dissent. Its upward progress will therefore be slow and as it comes chiefly from the working class, the state of the funds makes the difficulties of expenditure very considerable." 3

In the new ecclesiastical districts established by Hook, the situation was worse, as these tended to be the most urbanised and deprived neighbourhoods in the out-townships. In New Wortley, where the population grew from 4000 in 1851 to about 5500 by 1858, the incumbent's whole time was taken up with ordinary parochial duties, visiting the sick, preparing services, managing the church schools, raising funds to clear debts on his new church and parsonage. He complained he was 'unable to undertake the systematic visitation of the great mass of the people', and blamed 'the richer classes of our large towns', who 'live in the country, and with a few noble exceptions, do literally nothing for the dense masses of districts such as this.'⁴

The residential segregation of the classes, therefore, posed a problem for churches in the newly urbanised districts within the out-townships. Local patrons could not be taken for granted by mid-century, and the resident middle-class frequently belonged to Non-conformist denominations. The Unitarian mission at Holbeck flourished in the 1850's and 1860's, but was supported almost entirely from outside the township, by the charity of the Mill-hill middle class. Without such assistance, according to the mission leader in 1857, the labouring class of Holbeck and New Wortley would be 'left entirely to themselves.'

1 See above p. 258.

2 Quoted in Elliott, op.cit. p.49.

3 Bickerstaff, op.cit.

4 Ibid.

"The rich millowners and machine makers and even the smaller tradespeople, as many as possibly can, live away from their works, and but few of them know more of the real condition of the poor, than they do of the people on the other side of the globe." 1

For many Anglican out-township curates, burdened with the task Hook had entrusted to them of re-establishing the Church as the spiritual and moral guardian of the Leeds working class, the absence of patronage dogged their efforts throughout the century.

Despite the difficulties brought by social segregation and the strength of the Dissenting middle-class, there was a certain amount of special pleading and exaggeration by suburban curates in their letters, visitation returns and grant applications. The experience of the Church was not uniform throughout the suburbs. As with other forms of patronage, much Church patronage had deep historical roots in the community, the traditional assertion of the social hegemony of leading local families. In Bramley, despite the strength of Non-conformism - Methodists outnumbered Anglicans by two to one - the Church was able to count on the support of many of the most important families of capitalist millowners, stone-merchants and tanners, Rogersons, Barkers, Farrars, Listers, Musgraves, Hainsworths, Waites and Nickols.²

In New Farnley a whole church and school community of ironworkers' families, about 650 people in 1858, was created under the supervision of the Armitage family of Farnley Hall. A school-room at their ironworks was licensed for worship in 1849 and a second curate permanently stationed there. Well-paid Yorkshire ironworkers were condemned in the 1850's as being uneducated parents and bad examples to their children, men, whose families were in 'a state of wretched destitution' because of their preference for drink and casinos.³ There was none of this in Farnley. The influence of the Armitages on their workforce appears to have been considerable. Attendances at the ironworks chapel on Sunday evenings could reach 700, contrasting sharply with the 130 worshippers the church in Old Farnley village managed to attract.⁴

1 Quoted in E.A.Elton, 'A Victorian City Mission: The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in Holbeck and New Wortley 1844-78' TSP 54 (1977), misc. 16, 316-32.

2 Table 5.5; Dobson op.cit.; Carr, op.cit. p.20.

3 Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education (hereafter, MCCE), 1854-5 (1855), H.M.I. Watkins' Report, pp.428-9. Watkins recorded ironworkers' wages as ten to fifteen shillings a day.

4 1851 Ecclesiastical Census Schedules, PRO, H0129/500/2/7-11.(Farnley).

In Armley, as shown above, relations of the small and close-knit group of Anglican manufacturers with the community at large were filtered through the church.¹ The church became, in effect, a self-contained community within the township.² As employers' families left Armley middle-class patronage thinned out. However the debt on a new church costing over £20000 was still cleared within only eight years of its consecration in 1877, a testimony to the continuing presence of the traditional Anglican middle-class in the township.³

Overt patronage could also bring problems. When F.G.Hume-Smith, the new Armley incumbent in 1866, attempted to introduce Tractarian innovations in his church, he was heavily criticised for 'Popery' and 'ritualism'.⁴ W.E.Gott, who was financing much of the building of Christchurch in Upper Armley at the time, was Evangelical and clashed frequently with Hume-Smith. The incumbent resigned from the church building committee and ceased to have anything to do with the new church. Even after completion Gott was not satisfied, erecting a screen around his pew to enable him to attend a service without having to view the surpliced choir introduced by the first vicar.

It was such an important part of the social and cultural life of the Victorian bourgeoisie that it was hardly surprising that middle-class patrons could determine the nature of their local church. The approval or disapproval of leading worshippers such as Elizabeth Gott might even shape the service.

"Went to Armley Church morning and afternoon. Mr Knapp the new curate preached his first sermon, the sermon was good but read too quick." 5

W.E. Gott continued to take an active interest in Christchurch even as he retreated from the family business into the privacy of Armley House and his farm. However he was unhappy with the expanding secular activities of the church.

"Our sale was a great success - but the trouble is so great I do not think we shall have anything of that kind again. I certainly sold books and tried to select such as could not but do good. This I liked - but the atmosphere in retrospect in the Parish are (sic) not as I would like - dissatisfaction and excitement! A church is a spiritual work or nothing, and unless it is so treated it is not put in the right place." 6

1 See above, p.258.

2 On the church as a "sub-community", see Mcleod, op.cit. pp.181-5.

3 Midgely, op.cit. p.18.

4 The following paragraph is based on Midgely, op.cit.; Nigel Yates, 'Leeds and the Oxford Movement', TSP 55 (1975), 121.

5 Elizabeth Gott's Diary, op.cit. 10 June 1849.

6 W.E. Gott to Francis Gott, Sept.1879, Gott Ms. 194/8/7, original emphasis. The bazaar, sponsored by Gott in Armley Hall Park, was to clear the debt on Christ Church, see LM, 1 Aug.1879; Leeds Daily News, 1 Aug. 1879.

For a religious community struggling to expand its social base, the presence of middle-class patrons could prove a hindrance rather than a help. A patron's understanding of the social role of religion might be at variance with the changing interests of his church. At Armley Gott's aim was to improve the social control of the working population, or, more obliquely, to create a more spiritual and quietist 'atmosphere' in the community. Ironically, by the late 1870's to insist upon a church confining its work to spiritual and moral guidance was to condemn its congregation to cultural isolation from the suburban working class. In terms of popular acceptance, the effectiveness of church patronage appears in Farnley and Armley to have been closely related to the extent to which that patronage was directed outwards to the community at large. The ironworks church and school at New Farnley was especially fortunate in becoming the social centre of a fairly homogeneous occupational community. However the strength of trade unionism among Farnley ironworkers and their strike of 1864 illustrated that even working class communities most dependent upon paternal provision of facilities were not necessarily deferrent.¹ Suburban workers, standing in the radical, independent clothier tradition, could organise to defend interests opposing those of their employers, while their families benefitted from schools, evening classes and parochial visits financed by these employers.

A dominant patronage was not a problem faced by most out-township chapels. Certainly many of the Leeds elite were members of Non-conformist congregations, and in the suburbs, Dissenters, particularly Methodists, could be found amongst the leading employers from the earliest days of Wesley.² However, most of the early chapels were built without wealthy donors. Not until the 1830's and 1840's did suburban Non-conformism become prosperous, and already some millowners, having made their fortunes, were abandoning the townships. James Hargreave, a prosperous Wortley Liberal millowner donated £3250 to the Wesleyan Centenary Fund in 1840, on retiring to Headingley hill.³ Some congregations waited a considerable time before their wealthiest members could support them financially. In the early 1850's Joseph Nussey, partner in a Wortley millowning firm employing 300, cleared the building debt on Bethel Independent chapel, incurred in 1815.

1 See above, ch.4, pp.219-22.

2 See above, ch.2, pp.40-1.

3 Elliott, op.cit., p.122; Stones, op.cit.

Despite the claims of hard-pressed curates, wealthy millowners were not typical supporters of Dissenting chapels in the out-townships. The mainstay of these congregations in the early nineteenth century were independent clothiers, small businessmen and factory artisans. Three-quarters of the parents of children at Wortley Methodist Sunday School between 1813 and 1826 were clothiers. Another five per cent were employed in factories and workshops preparing and finishing cloth, or in trades ancillary to cloth making such as size-boiling, gear-slaying and shuttle making.¹ Of fathers recorded in the Holbeck Methodists' baptismal register, 1797-1837, 50 per cent were clothiers, 68.8 per cent were employed in textiles, and a total of 82.2 per cent were manufacturing workers.²

By the middle of the century the inheritance of clothier Non-conformism was being preserved primarily in the ranks of the 'solid Middle class' and the petty-bourgeoisie. These made the chapel communities their own. Small businessmen such as Joseph Naylor Gaunt, a Wortley clothier employing 16 workers in 1861, were among the most reliable supporters of Methodist churches in the 1860's and 1870's. Typically such support involved family affiliations. Gaunt's son, Joshua, was accustomed to lending his firm's wagon to the Rehoboth Methodists for their out-door services in the late 1870's. Among the more prosperous middle-class families religious loyalties might be divided. Benjamin Wilson, a Liberal wine merchant, son of a grocer, was steward of Bramley Wesleyan Chapel in 1851. His uncle, also a Liberal and a partner in the family business, was a leading Anglican in the township. Other families who were upwardly mobile might change denominational allegiance between generations. The Cliffs', fire-brick manufacturers of Wortley, had been Baptists from the early years of the century. The family firm expanded rapidly in the 1840's, doing a particularly lucrative trade supplying Leeds corporation with glazed

1 Wortley Greenside Methodist Sunday School Admittance Book 1822-32 (LCA, Leeds West Grant Methodist Records 40). A total of 599 entries occurred in this period.

2 Calculated from Greaves, op.cit., p.123. In Hunslet over the same period only 35.7 per cent of those in the baptismal registers were textile workers, and 17.2 per cent were clothiers, reflecting the decline of cloth making in that township. See above ch.2.pp.76-8.

3 'United Methodist Free Church-Greenside, Wortley, Minute Book 1879-83', (Leeds West Circuit Methodist Records, Book 55), 4 Aug, 1879. Family ties and intermarriage were particularly noticeable among Primitive Methodists.

inlets and pipes for its new drainage schemes. Of the second generation, Joseph Cliff became an important public figure, both in township and in borough politics, as a councillor on the Radical wing of the Liberal party. Following a 'spiritual conflict' in the late 1840's, Cliff left his father's church to join the Unitarian chapel at Mill Hill where so many influential Leeds Liberals worshipped. About the same time he was appointed to the magistracy. At his death in 1879 Cliff was praised for abandoning the Wortley Baptists, that 'sincere and honest, if not very enlightened little community.'¹ By breaking with 'orthodox Dissent', Cliff had achieved 'the earnestness inspired by doctrines of blood and fire in a religion of liberty and love.' He was remembered by others outside his chapel as a cautious man who 'made few mistakes'. One obituary summed up the business achievement which accompanied the religious evolution of this 'self-made man'.

"He was a native of Wortley and succeeded by his admirable business tact and native shrewdness in raising himself from comparative humbleness to a position of great social distinction and in amassing a great fortune." ²

In suburban eyes, Cliff was remarkable because he represented hope for the social aspirations of the 'solid middle-class'. He was the local boy made good. By the 1850's, however, as in other areas of township life, the lower middle class, much smaller businessmen than Cliff, artisans, traders and shopkeepers, were firmly in control of many of the chapels. In 1851 grocers were stewards of the Wesleyan Association chapel at Armley, the New Connexion at Armley and Hunslet, the Wesleyans at Armley, the Unitarian preaching room at Bramley, and the Scotch Baptist chapel at Wortley. Such men and their families, as with members of the more prosperous 'solid middle-class', closely identified with their township institutions. Many of the chapel officials in 1851 held township offices during the 1840's and 1850's. They had come to regard themselves as social, political and religious leaders in their communities.

The controversy surrounding chapel accommodation and free pews, the difficulties of church finance, the restricted and selective nature of middle-class patronage, and the changing social composition of congregations indicate a transformation in the character of religious life in the industrial suburbs. They point in various ways to the establish-

¹ The following is drawn from Biographical Sketch of the late Joseph Cliff J.P. and Funeral Service by Rev. Charles Wickstead...August 10th, 1879 (pamphlet privately printed, Leeds, 1879); LM, 2 Aug. 1879; LT, 9 Aug. 1879; YP, 2 Aug. 1879.

² Leeds Daily News, 2 Aug. 1879.

ment by the early Victorian years of distinctive church and chapel communities in the out-townships on a scale unimagined in the eighteenth century. As the lower middle class emerged to dominate suburban communities, two trends can be discerned within their religious institutions. Firstly there was an increase in sectarian disputes within and between denominations. Secondly there was a determined attempt by several churches to broaden the social base of their congregations, to strike deeper roots in the local community. The contradiction between the individualist and often bigoted sectarianism, and the genuine desire to create popular institutions out of their chapels lay at the heart of the lower middle class notion of community. The tension between individualist and collectivist attitudes to the community had been present in the culture of the clothier townships. The partial resolution of this contradiction in favour of the collective approach ensured the temporary vigour of petty bourgeois community sentiment after 1850.

Victorian shopkeepers and small employers ran their chapels as they governed their townships, with energy, a certain meanness, an inveterate argumentitiveness born of 'schismatical intellects', and an intense local patriotism and loyalty to their religious community.¹ From the 1820's, as denominational rivalry intensified, arguments increased about the proper use of the Sabbath, the voluntary principle in elementary education, temperance and total abstinence, 'popish practices' in the Anglican liturgy, and the morality of Church rates. Chapel rates were fiercely contested in the out-townships, though not abolished in Wortley till 1837, and in Beeston till the early 1850's.² Raising money locally was always the major problem for most suburban curates, and Dissenter protests about the state church were often loudest in the out-townships.³ Armley New Connexion Methodists were the first in Leeds to petition Parliament for church reform in 1833. The following year 570 Bramley Dissenters petitioned Baines to call for an end to the links between church and state, and to demand the abolition of Bishops from the House of Lords.⁴ In 1848 Bramley Baptists and Wortley Independents organised

1 See above ch.3 pp.139-42. The reference to 'schismatical intellects' comes from a letter of Bramley's incumbent to the Church Building Commissioners, 22 June 1825, quoted in Elliott, *op.cit.*, p.56. On petty-bourgeois parochialism see Hugh McLeod, 'White Collar Values and the Role of Religion', in G. Crossick, ed., The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914 (1977), pp.61-88.

2 Leeds abolished church rates in 1835. See above, ch.3, p.159.

3 Elliott, *op.cit.* pp.54-65.

4 LM, 16 Mar. 1833; 3 May 1834.

a series of out-township lectures for the British Anti-State Church Association, attracting 'numerous and attentive' audiences.¹ Baptist ministers, leading Methodist employers and Liberal politicians established a Liberation of Religion Society in Bramley in 1858 to oppose church rates.²

The rift between Church and Dissent was visibly extended by political divisions, particularly in the 1840's.³ Female Methodists and Independents from Wortley and Armley petitioned against the Corn Laws in 1842, and Bramley Baptists and Wesleyans housed Anti-Corn Law meetings.⁴ Congregationalists led the opposition to Graham's Education bill in 1843. In 1844 an indignant Bramley resident produced figures for the Leeds Mercury to disprove a claim that Wesleyans were Tories, and to show that Bramley Wesleyans had voted four to one for the Liberals at the previous election.⁵ Indeed if the correspondent was correct, the polling figures indicated that almost half (48.3 per cent) of the Liberal vote in Bramley was Wesleyan. Another illustration of the relationship between out-township Dissent and Leeds Liberalism was seen at the foundation meeting of the Wortley Branch Bible Society in 1848. One Chartist and two Liberal councillors, a timber merchant, a painter and a brick manufacturer, and the local Independent minister, himself a future Liberal councillor, led the meeting in the Wesleyan schoolroom to preserve 'the Bible alone as the true religion of Protestants.'⁶

Disputes over scripture, liturgy, theology, ministerial training, or the appointment of a new preacher, might confound political alliances or tear congregations apart. Any sign of 'dictation' by Conference or the Circuit always raised the hackles of Methodist opposition in the independent minded clothing townships. Following the controversy in the Wesleyan Conference about the installation of Brunswick Chapel organ in 1827, a number of Dissenters resolved to 'form themselves into a distinct community...under the denomination of the Wesleyan Protestant Methodists.'⁷ The secession reverberated in the out-townships through the 1840's, inflamed by fly-sheets attacking the Conference. Hunslet Wesleyans complained of below average attendances in 1851, 'in consequence of an unholy agitation having for some time being carried

1 LM, 5 Feb. 4 Mar. 1848. See above Ch.3, p.140.

2 LM, 13 Mar. 1858.

3 On sectarian politics see above Ch.3, pp.139-42.

4 LM, 22 Jan. 29 Jan. 1842.

5 LM, 6 Apr. 1844. 117 Wesleyans in 1841 out of a township electorate of 336 (34.8 per cent).

6 LM, 19 Feb. 1848.

7 Hughes, op.cit. p.73.

on in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion by some expelled members of our church'.¹

When Joseph Barker was expelled from the Methodist New Connexion in the early 1840's, 'on account of the liberality of my opinions and my determination to publish cheap religious books', he not only caused a split throughout the Connexion, but also took with him many members of other Methodist sects in the district.² Five of the six Primitive Methodist preachers in Bramley joined Barker's 'evangelical reformers', and this was the first time since 1819 that a Methodist schism had seriously affected their society.³ Most of the Kilhamites in Pudsey joined the Barkerites whose preachers carried their mission into almost every clothing village between Leeds, Bradford and Halifax, holding open-air meetings, publicly arguing New Testament scripture interpretations with Conference Methodists, distributing thousands of pamphlets to encourage popular debate.⁴ What began as another round of Conference expulsions became in effect a working class revivalist movement similar to that of 1819, in which religious fervour was allied to an awakening political consciousness. The demand for independence of faith, the search for new approaches to the Scripture and the worship, paralleled the Chartist struggle to create a political identity for the menu-people of the clothing districts, a struggle in which Barker himself was closely involved. Barker's influence grew as a religious and political leader. The Unitarians supplied him with a printing press on his arrival in Wortley in 1845, but relations with them were strained. Their offer of a £500 a year post as a lecturer at the Holbeck Mission in 1848 was regarded by Barker as an attempt to buy him out. 'I told them that I did not think they would obtain £5 a year for such a purpose among my friends in Leeds.'⁵

The Barkerite schism was perhaps unusual in that it gained such a broad popular base, and was clearly identified with working class political and religious aspirations. The dispute entered the workplace where men were sacked or refused work as 'infidels'. Barker's appeal for a rationalist approach to the Scripture, and his enthusiasm for Radical politics contributed to his successful mobilisation of the working class. Given Barker's role and the political background, it

1 Religious Census 1851, PRO HO129/500/7/1/13; Dews, op.cit. p.114.

2 The People III (1850-1) 149, p.353 .

3 Beckworth, op.cit. p.112.

4 Joseph Lawson, Progress in Pudsey (Stanningley, 1887), pp.94-9.

5 The People I (1848-9), 17, p.135.

was perhaps inevitable that the schism should attain a class character. Certainly the implications for middle-class hegemony in the chapel or the workplace were clear.

"Barker's most difficult work was in getting people to think for themselves...he did much good by way of stirring people's minds, making them exercise their own judgement and teaching them self-dependence." 1

Other sectarian disputes were more orthodox and confined to religious societies and chapel communities while a bemused public looked on. The numbers involved and the bitterness aroused however ensured that such disputes assumed a high profile in out-township life. The secession of Wesleyan Reformers after 1848 'devastated' the Bramley circuit. Bunting's power in the Conference was blamed for the division, and the 'ruthless expulsions' provoked much discussion on the streets and at public meetings.² The Wesleyan Chapel steward remarked in 1851 on a decrease in attendance 'in consequence of the present disturbed state of the society.'³ Figures published by the Reformers in 1852 indicated a loss of over 1000 members in five years, almost 60 per cent of circuit membership. The Reformers began their own chapel in 1855 and celebrated its opening with a tea for 500 in the Baptist school room.⁴

Disputes could also originate in the pastoral office of the local preacher, particularly where the nature of ministerial training was in question. A controversial appointment of a new Independent minister from Airedale college in Bradford brought out 200 to a meeting in Wortley in 1858.⁵ The small Baptist community in Bramley was torn asunder in 1876 when their pastor was forced to resign after criticising the training college at Rawden. One-third of the members joined him to set up a rival Salem Baptist chapel in the township which survived till 1972.⁶

Religious communities frequently proved themselves in schisms loyal to local preachers rather than external authority. The denominational schism itself was a means of asserting local identity and independence. In the Barkerite movement it had serious implications for class relations in the townships, but usually sects became introverted; as with the Salem Baptists in Bramley, 'an introspective and insular fellowship.'⁷

1 Lawson, op.cit. pp.98-100.

2 Beckworth, op.cit. pp.104-5.

3 Religious Census 1851, PRO H0129/500/2/1/7.

4 LM, 17 Apr. 1852; 19 Oct. 1858.

5 LM, 10 July 1858; Carr, Lands of Bram, op.cit. p.22.

6 Roger J.Owen, 'The Baptist Breach at Bramley', TSP 54 (1976)misc.16,230/6.

7 Ibid. p.235.

Sectarianism could also be seen in terms of local power struggles between religious groups for access to the population at large. This was certainly an important aspect of the strained relationship between Methodism and the Temperance movement. Some sects in the 1830's and 1840's regarded Temperance societies, and indeed other self-help institutions, 'as tending to infidelity and as leading people to trust in their own efforts and to being puffed up with self-righteousness and self-conceit.'¹ In Lower Wortley Primitive Methodists and teetotallers literally fought for the pulpit in Bull Ring chapel, the latter protesting against a local custom to give every child in the Whitsuntide service a tot of beer.² In the 1840's a struggle between Wortley chapel trustees who were total abstainers and the Primitive Methodist Circuit leaders who were not resulted in the chapel being firstly closed to appointed preachers, and then seized by the mortgagee.³ The Ranters continued to hold temperance love feasts in the fields, while the chapel was let to the Wesleyan Association. This in turn created a 'bitter feeling' between those two religious communities, which persisted for several decades.⁴

Temperance may have provoked conflict, but it was also the life-blood of several Dissenting sects. The vigour of the temperance movement attracted support far beyond the chapel communities. In 1843 a small group of men and women formed a Christian Temperance Association in a cottage in Lower Wortley, and later joined the Methodist Association.⁵ The first Band of Hope was formed in a Leeds Quaker's house in 1847, and a decade later the organisation had firmly established itself in a number of Dissenting Chapels and Sunday schools.⁶ The Wortley United Methodists were not alone in granting special temperance sermons to the Band of Hope.⁷

Sectarianism was therefore a major element in the religious life of the out-townships. Disputes could be coloured politically with implications for class relations, but generally they were introspective affairs, denominational power struggles in which different groups

1 Lawson, op.cit. p.91.

2 Benn, op.cit. p.47.

3 Most ministers in all denominations were hostile to teetotalism, Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians (1971), p.180.

4 Beckworth, op.cit. pp.100-1.

5 Benn, op.cit. p.47.

6 Brian Harrison, op.cit. p.166. The Band of Hope had branches in almost all Primitive Methodist Sunday schools by 1855 and also at the non-denominational Zion school in New Wortley. Lawson op.cit. p.129; G.O'Keefe, 'The Zion Schools at New Wortley 1837-97', (Liverpool Dip.Ed. thesis, 1979), p.86.

7 Wortley United Methodist Minutes, op.cit. 26 Feb., 20 May 1880.

attempted to assert their own identity and independence of the established leadership. Though inward-looking by nature, the 'schismatical intellect' was far from quietist. Arguments were conducted in public, and differences were proclaimed loudly in the press, at open meetings, by pamphleteering and by revivalist type sermons. A minority of religious activists were involved but sectarianism touched the life of the community at large.

Disputes brought with them grievances and bitterness which were passed down through generations of chapel-goers. They probably had an overall effect of making chapels less attractive to non-members. Larger schisms however, as they frequently involved rebellion against institutionalized authority, often resulted in a public proclamation of local identity and independence, which gained some popularity outside the chapels. This assertion of local patriotism was a particular feature of the community consciousness of the lower middle class who managed the religious institutions by 1850. In a real sense sectarianism enhanced the self-dependence of many chapel congregations while making them more aware of their need to communicate more closely with the local population. The contradiction between the collective and the individual traditions in out-township life, which by the 1840's was so firmly evident in the social relations of the petty-bourgeoisie, recurred in the religious communities.¹

Closely following the increase in sectarianism evident in the 1830's, there was a conscious effort by several congregations to reach out, by camp meetings, love-feasts, cottage services and home missionary work to their fellow residents and to turn their chapels into community institutions. Churches sought to become more 'inviting', welcoming all classes of worshipper, rather than the retreats of the chosen few.² Initially this required chapel-building, but from the late 1840's it also involved broadening the secular activities of congregations to include forms of 'rational recreation', cricket and football clubs, bazaars and flower shows, penny readings, glees, concerts and drama, with which it was particularly hoped to attract young adult workers.

The Unitarian mission at Holbeck formed a Rational Recreation Society and offered cheap concerts, theatre, penny readings, draughts, chess and cricket by the 1870's to combat the influence of local concert halls,

1 On sectarianism, localism and lower middle-class consciousness, see above Ch.3, pp.139-44.

2 Lawson, op.cit. p.91; Inglis, op.cit. pp.19-25.

singing rooms and casinos.¹ Temperance brass bands were called on to support local Sunday schools. Cottage services, extensively employed by the Ranters in the 1820's, were again used to mission neglected areas of the industrial suburbs from the 1850's. Between 1879 and 1883 Wortley United Methodists, sometimes in conjunction with other denominations, repeatedly but unsuccessfully tried to establish regular cottage services in the Oldfield Street area.² They held open-air services every summer, invited local railway workers to conduct their own services in Greenside chapel, pressed for a home mission for Bramley circuit, managed a fund for the local poor, ran a Sunday school and evening classes for over 250 scholars, and attempted to appoint a 'leading singer' to their chapel. The outlook was open and the desire to broaden contacts within the township real, although the response of the working class to the provision of facilities did not match the Methodists' hopes or expectations.

After 1850 Anglican evangelical efforts overtook those of Dissent. Hook's curates in the out-townships undertook lectures, services and prayer meetings in cottages as well as the standard Sunday services. These usually attracted between 20 and 30 people on a weekday evening, but at Armley the curate also held a Sunday evening lesson in a licensed schoolroom 'about a mile from the church' which was attended by over 100 worshippers.³ The home missionary work, the evangelism and 'new tone of voice' of the clergy appears to have resulted in increasing attendance in most out-township churches by the late 1850's.⁴ The greatest impact was made however by the arrival of a number of Tractarian curates in the suburbs, particularly John Gott and F.G.Hume-Smith at Bramley and Armley from 1866, and Nicholas Greenwell at Holbeck St Barnabas from 1856. At Holbeck Greenwell established 'the first outwardly and aggressively ritualist church in Leeds.'⁵ Greenwell succeeded in making ritualism respectable among the Anglican middle-class by combining a vibrant congregational life with relatively successful missionary work among the Hunslet working class. In 1864 he began a series of open air services in the streets around his church, on vacant wastegrounds, or at crossroads. 'Goodly congregations' were reported, marked by 'order, quietness and attention.'⁶ The following year he began the first harvest festival service in Leeds, with hired orchestras, candles

1 Elton, op.cit. On Salem Independents' 'missionary chapel' at Marshall Street, Holbeck, see Elliott, op.cit. p.140.

2 Wortley United Methodists Minutes 1879-83, op.cit.

3 For cottage services see the entries for Little Holbeck, Bramley, Holbeck and Armley in Bickerstaff, op.cit.

4 Inglis, op.cit. p.21.

5 Yates, Leeds and the Oxford Movement', op.cit. p.32.

6 LM, 1 July 1864.

and incense, attracting large congregations.¹

In only six years at Bramley John Gott transformed his church.² He changed the pattern of services, set up a voluntary church council of laymen and clergy, sent curates to Rodley and Hough End, began cottage missions, an adult eveningschool, built an infant school and a church school at Rodley, all with the support of influential local employers such as the Hainsworths. His achievement was remarkable in a township where a previous incumbent had been attacked in 1852 by his curate for the 'popish practice' of carrying collection boxes to the altar during the service. Gott tried to make his church a focal point of religious and social life for the community. He led a successful appeal for a recreation ground in 1869 and initiated an Art and Science Exhibition in 1872, both in spite of the opposition of the local 'economists' and petty bourgeois thrift party.³ He was president of the Horticultural society, began the Church Institute in a loft in 1867,⁴ began lectures in the National school, organised penny readings, concerts, debates, music and drawing classes, and stocked the Institute's library with 500 books by 1873.

Gott achieved this with the support of a substantial Anglican middle-class, and despite the past weakness of the Church in Bramley. There was no dominant patron to limit his innovations, such as Hume-Smith faced at Armley. John Gott had extraordinary energy, but sometimes the creation of a chapel community with a popular appeal demanded too much from the clergy. As in Farnley and Holbeck, where chapels were linked directly to the workplace, incumbents might find their position intolerable.

"The circumstances of the Messrs. Marshalls being the Founders of this Parish and Patrons of the living causes the Vicar of Little Holbeck to have a great deal of extra parochial work. Few of Messrs Marshall's workpeople are parishioners, yet a considerable portion of those non-resident expect and think they have a right to the services, as they expect it of 'Marshall's clergyman' - No man single-handed, however earnest and zealous he may be can satisfactorily discharge the manifold calls and duties devolving upon him." 5

In the most densely populated and industrialized areas of the out-townships, all churches struggled to establish themselves as institutions

1 Yates 'Leeds and the Oxford Movement', op.cit.

2 The following paragraph is based on Dobson op.cit.; Carr, 'Lands of Bram', op.cit.

3 See above p.273.

4 Leeds Church Institute was begun in 1857, Armley Church Institute in 1877.

5 Rev. Joseph P.Ward of Little Holbeck in Bickerstaff, op.cit..

serving the local community. Attendance figures and the muted working class response to home missionary work indicate that the Victorian churches generally failed to make the transition from insular religious societies to popular community institutions. The relative success of the mid-Victorian Tractarians was probably due to the initial attraction of liturgical innovations and to their evangelism. Certainly there is no evidence of any permanent increase in congregations as a result of their work.¹ At most they may have continued the reversal of decay in the out-township chapelries and improve the Church's position viz-a-viz Non-conformism. Dissenters too had to cope with relative failure. Wörtley Methodist leaders in the early 1880's deplored the poor attendances and urged upon every member 'the necessity of a more regular attendance and of more United Christian effort.'²

In some townships however there was an absolute decline in religious life. The Church congregation at Beeston was reduced by more than one-half between 1844 and 1850 and did not recover thereafter.³ A new incumbent in 1855 did little to stop the rot which had already set it. The books were 'hardly decent', baptisms had fallen from 50 to 30 per annum, the number of monthly communicants had been halved since 1847. Robert Poole, who arrived in Beeston in 1856 as the third incumbent in 18 months, found the parsonage house 'a perfect ruin'. After two years of parochial work in which he secured a curate and a schoolmistress, and placed the church school under government inspection for the first time, he still held a poor opinion of his living.

"Beeston can only be looked upon in the light of a missionary station - it is hard to conceive that the people of any Parish can be sunk lower in intemperance, vice and irreligion."⁴

The development of religious institutions in the nineteenth century failed to stem the advance of unconscious secularism, apathy and non-involvement which accompanied urbanisation. Religion in the clothing villages of 1800 was generally a private and individual affair, punctuated by bursts of popular revivalism and by displays of dissension and local self-assertion in the guise of anti-clericalism. The intense church building programmes of the 1830's and 1840's, and the whole debate about church accommodation was, on the face of it, an attempt by the various denominations to institutionalise religious life and to bring

1 Yates, 'Leeds and the Oxford Movement', op.cit. p.35.

2 Wortley United Methodists Minutes, op.cit. 24 June 1882.

3 Calculated from Longley, op.cit.

4 Bickerstaff, op.cit. On the church school, which lasted less than a decade, see M.C.C.E., op.cit. 1858-9.

it into the public sphere. The question of church finance and patronage developed into a power struggle between the sects for a share of the benevolence and resources of the local bourgeoisie.

Religion was the 'mid-wife of class' in as much as the churches depended on the class identity and community sentiment of different social groups in the out-townships for the bedrock of their congregations.¹ Religious sectarianism encouraged group identity above all within the petty-bourgeoisie. This was fuelled by the traditional 'schismatical intellect' and an intense local patriotism passed down through generations of clothier chapel-goers. Secessions ironically encouraged the creation of relatively self-contained and insular congregations, whose limited efforts from the 1840's to expand their social base and extend their activities into the community at large made their isolation all the more apparent.

The suburban working class lost much of the intense puritanism and austere religiosity inherited from the culture of the clothing villages, and their religious beliefs and values were for the most part not channelled into the new chapels of the 1830's and 1840's. Working class consciousness could take a devotional form if the religious message was evangelised and articulated in terms they could relate to. The success of Joseph Barker's evangelical reformers in the 1840's was due not least to his plain-speaking and his ability to identify scriptural interpretation with working class frustrations, grievances and aspirations.

This differed from what the middle class chapel leaders, curates, stewards, trustees, preachers and ministers thought should be the function of religion for the working class. The chapel communities of the mid-Victorian years were created above all in the mould of the petty-bourgeoisie. The religious message, as with their whole concept of community, was directed at a stereotype of the proletarian worshipper which increasingly did not coincide with suburban reality.² The strength of the rational radical tradition in the out-townships, the Painite inheritance, ensured that the working class, led by an articulate, educated and increasingly prosperous labour aristocracy, approached the social consensus implicit in the bourgeois concept of community from a less

1 Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880 (1969), p.346.

2 Morris op.cit. pp.55-9. See also Jennifer Hart, 'Religion and Social Control in the mid-19th Century' in A.P. Donagrodzki, ed., Social Control in 19th Century Britain (1977), pp.108-37.

than deferential standpoint. The growth of the local trade union movement, the persistence of industrial conflict after mid-century, and the rise of the unskilled working class put an increasing emphasis on the out-townships as labour communities.¹ The expansion of public educational and leisure facilities, libraries, recreation grounds, swimming baths, concert halls, as well as pubs, casinos and music halls provided competing attractions for the bulk of the working class. By the late nineteenth century it was the insular 'chapel folks' who had given ground to the secular culture of the suburban working class.² Even within the sects petty-bourgeois bigotry yielded to tolerance and rationalism. By the 1880's there were less expulsions for heresy, less denouncing of opposing creeds, 'a more liberal spirit pervading all'. 'There is more charity than there once was', observed Joseph Lawson of religious sects in Pudsey. The impact of science, the lifting of the ban on any debate on the existence of Hell, the relaxation of Sunday observance and the stress on the humanity of Christ all contributed to the increasing liberalism.³

It is clear that by the third quarter of the century the chapels were institutions of a dominant lower middle class, whose congregational life was bounded by their class concept of community. Sectarianism, bigotry and the contradiction between the individual and collective attitude to community held the chapels back from full participation in suburban working class culture. On the other hand much of the clothier inheritance survived in the Victorian chapels. By the keen preservation of local identity and independence, an element in almost all of the schisms, and by the adoption of a more liberal attitude to religious witness, the various sects were able to continue to regard themselves as the repositories of the conscience and consciousness of the out-townships.

1 See above Ch.4.

2 Mcleod, op.cit. p.282.

3 Ibid. pp.223-45. For a literary treatment of these developments see Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh (1903).

(iii)

Elementary Education in the Out-townships

By their very nature, as institutions communicating the basic skills of literacy to the children of the working class, elementary schools formed the single most important arena for class relations in the out-townships. The potential audience for middle-class religious, cultural and moral tenets was never greater than in Sunday and day schools. The development of educational theory reflected the changing community consciousness of the bourgeoisie and the shifting balance between patronage and self-help in their approach to school provision. Like the religious establishments, the educational institutions of the middle-class were riven by religious sectarianism, political divisions and extreme localism. However schools varied in popularity and function. A number were able, more successfully than the churches, to attract a broad support in the out-townships by good teaching, by an accurate response to working-class needs, and by closely identifying with the locality. Beyond the high attendance rates and the influx of school fees, lay the loyalty of parents and children to institutions which were seen as belonging to the community.

The first Sunday school in Leeds was opened in 1784. By 1817 there were over 4500 Sunday scholars in the borough, and over 35,000 by 1858. The number of Sunday schools increased from 35 to 147 in 35 years. The day school population had still not caught up with Sunday school attendances by 1851, although there were two and a half times more day schools than Sunday schools. Nevertheless the increase here was also remarkable, from 2000 in 37 schools in 1818, to almost 22,000 in 371 day schools in 1851.¹

Two observations may be made about the school statistics for Leeds. Firstly, Sunday schools were only seriously rivalled by weekday schooling from the 1840's. In 1833 there were still almost twice as many children in Sunday schools as in day schools, while by 1851 this gap had been significantly narrowed.² Their strength appears to have been largely

1 See Table 5.6: Sunday and Day School Attendances in Leeds. Full references for these figures are given in this table. See also W.B. Stephens', 'Elementary education and literacy 1770-1870', in Derek Fraser, ed., A History of Modern Leeds (Manchester, 1980), pp223/49.

2 Horace Mann calculated the following increases for Leeds; 1818-33; day scholars 89%, Sunday scholars 225%. 1818-51; day scholars 218%, Sunday scholars 404%. Population growth, 1818-51, was given as 54%. Horace Mann, Report on Education in England and Wales (1854), pp.xviii-xix.

TABLE 5.6: SUNDAY AND DAY SCHOOLS IN LEEDS BOROUGH 1817-72

	<u>SUNDAY SCHOOLS</u>				<u>Day Schools</u>	
	<u>Anglican</u>		<u>Total</u>		<u>No. Schools</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>
	<u>No. Schools</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>	<u>No. Schools</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>	<u>No. Schools</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>
1817/18	12	1445	35	4570	37	2126
1833	-	-	57	11,491	133	6272
1851	46	9292	147	28,761	371	21,834
1858	41	12,593	133	35,022	-	-
1869	-	-	-	-	276	22,932
1872	41	12,820	-	-	-	-

- Sources: 1817/18: T.D. Whitaker, Loidis and Elmete, (Leeds 1816); Digest of Parochial Returns made to the Select Committee on the Education of the Poor (1818), PP(1819)IX, 2.
- 1833 : Abstract of Education Returns, 1833, PP(1835) XLII,3.
- 1851 : Horace Mann, Report on Education in England and Wales(1854).
- 1858 : James Hole, The Working Classes of Leeds (Leeds, 1860).
- 1869 : J. G. Fitch, 'Report on Birmingham and Leeds', in Return of Schools for Poorer Classes of Children in the Municipal Boroughs of Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, PP(1870) LIV, 265.
- 1872 : Thomas Porter ed. Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds (Leeds,1873).

due to child employment in textiles. The Returns of 1818 noted that,

"The woollen manufacture in Armley affords so great a temptation that parents are induced to employ their children at a very early age, consequently they can only take advantage of Sunday schools." (1)

The predominance of the early Sunday schools is further indicated by the fact that their average attendance was more than double that of day schools in 1818. Sunday schools were bigger, more popular and well-attended. Where attached to a church, scholars often outnumbered the congregation in Sunday services. Numerical strength alone demands that Sunday schools have particular consideration in any attempt to assess schools as 'community institutions.'

Secondly, there was a noticeable decline in the growth of school provision during the 1860's. The number of day schools fell by about one-third between 1851 and 1869, and the school population rose by only 1000. Leeds Sunday School Union had over 11,200 children in 77 schools in 1841, and still had 10,800 scholars by 1859. For the Whit Festival of 1864 however it could only muster 7500 from 23 schools.² Even allowing for a low turn-out, there does appear to have been some decline in Sunday schools.

This might appear surprising, especially given the enormous educational campaign by the Leeds Anglican Church under Hook. Church Sunday scholars increased from 3400 in 13 schools in 1837 to 9300 in 46 schools by 1851. Day scholars increased from 1300 in seven schools in 1841 to over 7000 in 39 schools by 1853. In 1851 the Church could claim nearly one-third of Leeds Sunday and weekday scholars. However this effort was almost exhausted by the 1850's. Between 1858 and 1872 the Church Sunday school population hardly changed. Weekday scholars fell by ten per cent in the mid-fifties, and the number of schools dropped from 39 to 36.³

The impression, therefore, from the scattered and patchy education statistics, is of the early importance of Sunday schools, the rapid rise of weekday schooling in the 1840's, and of some stagnation or even decline in educational provision from the mid-1850's. How were these trends reflected in the out-townships? An analysis of school and census

1 Digest of Parochial Returns made to the Select Committee on the Education of the Poor (1818), PP (1819) IX.2.

2 26th Report of the Leeds Sunday School Union (Leeds, 1841); James Hole, The Working Classes of Leeds (Leeds, 1860): LM, 17 May 1864.

3 Sunday school statistics from William White, Directory of the West Riding (Sheffield, 1837); Mann op.cit.; Hole op.cit.; Thomas Porter, Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds (Leeds, 1872) Day schools also calculated from Longley, op.cit., entries for 1841, 1853 and 1856.

statistics produces a clearer picture of the state of suburban schooling.

Firstly the inference that Sunday schools continued to match day schools till after mid-century appears correct. Almost nowhere before 1851 do weekday attendances outstrip those of Sunday schools, and in most townships Sunday scholars were several times more numerous than day scholars.¹ In five out of six townships in 1851 Sunday scholars also equalled or outnumbered those children recorded as 'scholars' in the census. Proportionately, therefore, Sunday schools appear to have attracted not only children who did not attend any weekday school, but also many who attended the non-denominational private and dame schools. Sunday scholars increased from five to 17 per cent of the borough population between 1818 and 1851. Not until 1861 did census 'scholars' in any township reach this proportion.²

Secondly, the census analysis indicates the importance of demographic and economic factors determining the levels of school attendance and the success of educational provision.³ A well-defined pattern emerges in the textile townships of Armley, Bramley and Wortley of a relative fall in the child population during the 1840's and a sharp increase during the 1860's. This may have improved the overall conditions for school provision in the earlier decade and accelerated their deterioration in the latter period. The table showing census 'scholars' as a proportion of children of school age tends to confirm the impression of stagnation or decline in the levels of school attendance in the 1860's. Voluntary schools found themselves unable to reach much more than three-fifths of the child population in the out-townships by 1871, a problem which was bequeathed to the Leeds School Board.⁴ A decade earlier the outlook had been brighter. By the late 1860's the efficacy of voluntary school provision in coping with population growth was again in doubt.

1 Table 5.7: Sunday and Weekday scholars in the out-townships. The exception was Holbeck where by 1833, 2000 had already passed through Marshall's mill school. Rimmer, *Marshalls of Leeds*, op.cit. p.106.

2 Stephens, op.cit. p.226. See Table 5.8: Census 'Scholars' as Proportion of Out-township Population. For a discussion of education statistics in the census see B.I. Coleman, 'The Incidence of education in mid-century', in E.A. Wrigley, ed., *Nineteenth Century Society* (Cambridge, 1972), pp 397-410; M. Goldstrom, 'Education in England and Wales in 1851', in Richard Lawton, ed., *The Census and Social Structure* (1978), pp.224-40.

3 Table 5.9: Out-township Children at Home, at Work, at School 1841-71.

4 See Leeds School Board, *Triennial Report*, (Nov.1876), School Attendance Committee, and also Souvenir of the Leeds School Board 1870-1903 (Leeds, 1903).

TABLE 5.7: SUNDAY AND DAY SCHOLARS IN THE
OUT-TOWNSHIPS

<u>ARMLEY</u>				<u>BEESTON</u>			
DAY	SUNDAY	CENSUS	CHILDREN	DAY	SUNDAY	CENSUS	CHILDREN
SCHOLARS	SCHOLARS	SCHOLARS	3 - 14	SCHOLARS	SCHOLARS	SCHOLARS	3 - 14
1818	130	400	-	130	160	-	-
1833	643	760	-	33	150	-	-
1841	-	-	-	-	(290)	-	513
1851	-	867	805	121	220	200	471
1861	-	-	1145	-	-	309	700
1870/1	649	-	1459	213	-	431	851
<u>BRAMLEY</u>				<u>WORTLEY</u>			
1815	217	-	-	-	-	-	-
1818	-	502	-	224	517	-	-
1833	275	1642	-	360	1054	-	-
1841	-	(785)	-	(249)	827	-	2432
1851	242	912	954	(332)	(619)	995	2187
1861	509	-	1362	(524)	(844)	2072	3304
1870/1	995	-	1462	1567	-	3554	5696
<u>HOLBECK</u>				<u>FARNLEY</u>			
1818	75	620	-	76	327	-	-
1833	646	631	-	72	324	-	-
1851	-	2068	1929	120	337	-	-
1869	2546	-	-	358	-	-	-
<u>HUNSLET</u>				Nb: Figures in brackets are approximations and in some places (Bramley 1841, Wortley 1851) deficient.			
1818	130	-	-				
1833	524	1460	-				
1851	-	2334	2411				
1841	400	1105	-	5197			

Sources: as for Table 5.6

TABLE 5.8:
CENSUS 'SCHOLARS' AS PROPORTION OF
OUT-TOWNSHIP POPULATION (%)

	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	13.0	17.0	15.8
Beeston	10.1	12.1	15.6
Bramley	10.7	15.7	14.8
Wortley	12.6	17.2	18.8
Holbeck	13.6		
Hunslet	12.4		
Leeds	12.7		11.2 ¹

Note:

1. Taken from Fitch's Report of 1869

Sources: as for Table 5.6

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**TABLE 5.9: OUT-TOWNSHIP CHILDREN AT HOME, AT WORK
 AND AT SCHOOL 1841-71**

1 Children of School Age (3-14 years) as % of Sample Populations

	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	27.6	24.5	25.9	26.7
Beeston	23.6	23.9	27.5	30.8
Bramley	30.4	28.9	24.8	27.1
Wortley	34.3	27.7	27.4	30.1
Holbeck	-	28.4	-	-
Hunslet	-	26.7	-	-

2 Children at Work as % of Children of School-Age

	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	19.0	24.1	13.0	15.3
Beeston	33.3	12.5	27.9	17.3
Bramley	(6.1)	25.7	16.3	16.2
Wortley	20.5	21.4	12.4	14.3
Holbeck	-	24.3	-	-
Hunslet	-	17.2	-	-

3 Census 'Scholars' as % of Children of School Age

	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	53.1	65.6	59.3
Beeston	42.5	44.1	50.6
Bramley	36.9	63.2	54.6
Wortley	45.5	62.7	62.4
Holbeck	48.0	-	-
Hunslet	46.4	-	-

4 Children at Home as % of Children of School Age

	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	22.8	21.4	25.4
Beeston	45.0	28.0	32.1
Bramley	37.4	20.5	29.2
Wortley	33.1	24.9	23.3
Holbeck	27.7	-	-
Hunslet	36.4	-	-

Sources: as for Table 5.2

There were economic as well as demographic reasons why schools did not keep pace with the child population. An analysis of Wortley 'scholars' by age-group indicates that it was the ten and eleven year olds who were most rapidly brought into schools during the 1850's.¹ It was also this age-group which suffered the biggest decrease in the proportion at school during the following decade. Children of this age stood precisely at the margin of work, home and school, and were the most vulnerable to the economic pressures on their families. Ten year olds were the first to be taken away from the classroom to join their older brothers and sisters in the mills when times were hard. However they might return to school a number of times before permanently going out to work at the age of fourteen or fifteen.²

There were of course considerable variations between townships in the proportion of children at work at any time.³ Beeston differed from the textile townships by witnessing a sharp decline in child employment during the 1840's as coal mines became exhausted and mills closed. An upswing in the mining industry during the 1850's set the next generation to work. Again, however, a common pattern emerges for Armley, Bramley and Wortley. The substantial decrease in child employment during the 1850's was not maintained in the 1860's, when the relative proportions of children at work levelled off, and absolute numbers increased. In Wortley the number of working children doubled between 1861 and 1871. Moreover, as non-textile industries expanded, the economic upswing affected the education of boys more than girls. In Bramley the relative decline in the school population during the 1860's was almost entirely due to falling numbers of boys at school.⁴ In Wortley, although some young girls worked in flax mills, employment opportunities for others were scarce in the 1860's. In 1861 and 1871 three times as many boys as girls of school age were working.⁵ New employers resorted to child

1 Table 5.10: Census 'scholars' as proportion of different age-groups, Wortley township.

2 Watkins reported that nearly 79 per cent of Yorkshire schoolchildren were under ten in 1855. MCCE (1856), Rev. Watkins Report on Yorkshire for 1855, p.348. See also MCCE (1857), Watkins Report for 1856, p.291; MCCE (1858), Watkins Report for 1857, p.297

3 See Table 5.9

4 % of Children aged 3-14 years at school in Bramley;
1861 Boys 67.0 : Girls 59.8
1871 Boys 52.1 : Girls 57.9

5 Dyhouse has argued that in hard times girls were the first to be kept at home to save school pence. The corollary is that in times of prosperity boys were the first to fill up job vacancies. Carol Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (1981), p.106.

Table 5.10:

Census 'Scholars' as % of Different Age Groups - Wortley Township

<u>AGE GROUPS</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
< 5	11.0	18.1	16.1
5-6	63.4	74.3	78.4
7-9	71.4	81.7	87.5
10-11	45.2	84.6	75.3
12-14	18.9	27.5	27.0
15-19	<u>5.4</u>	<u>1.2</u>	<u>2.8</u>
	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N = 106	N = 199	N = 365

(N = No. of Scholars in Sample)

TABLE 5.11: Church Sunday and Day Scholars
in the Out-townships

	<u>Church Sunday Scholars as % of Children of School Age</u>		<u>Church Sunday Scholars as % of All Sunday Scholars</u>			
	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1818</u>	<u>1833</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>
Armley	24.3	18.8	-	39.9	42.8	33.0
Beeston	27.3	14.0	37.5	-	48.3	30.0
Bramley	6.7	12.9	35.9	12.3	13.4	36.5
Wortley	6.2	6.8	14.5	12.8	18.1	24.1
Holbeck	-	17.4	-	-	-	33.9
Hunslet	-	15.0	-	24.0	-	33.4
Farnley	-	-	15.3	15.4	-	40.1

	<u>Church Day Scholars as % of Children of School Age</u>				<u>Church Day Scholars as % of Census 'Scholars'</u>		
	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Armley	9.6	13.2	14.5	15.1	24.8	22.1	25.6
Beeston	14.4	15.0	5.7	-	35.5	12.9	-
Bramley	3.0	4.9	15.8	19.2	13.3	25.0	35.1
Wortley	4.1	8.4	7.5	7.0	18.5	12.0	11.2
Holbeck	-	4.5	-	-	9.3	-	-
Hunslet	-	2.8	-	-	6.0	-	-

Sources: as for Tables 5.2 and 5.6

labour.¹ Greenwood and Batley employed boys in their cartridge making factory on Armley Road. Other Wortley boys found jobs in coal mines, iron forges, dressing mills, machine and engine shops, and on building sites as apprentices or labourers.

There were therefore a number of sound reasons why schools should struggle in the out-townships of the 1860's. However even taking these into account, the public voluntary and state-aided schools fared badly. Only a minority of census 'scholars' actually attended these schools, even as late as 1871.² The increase in the number of scholars during the 1850's was not matched by a corresponding rise in the denominational school population in any township except Bramley. The extra scholars appear to have been absorbed by those private and dame schools not captured in the education statistics. Even the surveys by Fitch (1869) and Leeds School Board (1870), which included private schools, failed to account for half the census 'scholars' in three townships.³ Only in Bramley, where the proportion of children at home was relatively high, and where there was a lively contest between Church and Wesleyan schools, did the School Board manage to trace more than two-thirds of the scholars. With erratic attendances, it is entirely possible that many more census 'scholars' passed through the public schools than were recorded in their aggregate figures. However the difference between the number of children recorded in the census as 'at school', and the numbers recorded in average attendance at the inspected and uninspected public schools is too great to be explained away by clerical inefficiency on behalf of the teachers. It is very likely that the number of children attending cottage schools and classes in the homes of local people have been seriously underestimated by contemporary educationalists and more recent historians. The impact of private schools is central to my thesis of their significance as 'community institutions'. The position of these schools in working class communities will be examined further below.

1 After the substantial reductions in child labour during the 1850's, especially of girls, textile mills were confronted with a shortage of young people by 1860. See Reports of H.M.I. Saunders for half year ending 31 October 1850 PP(1851) XXIII,263; Report of H.M.I. Redgrave for half-year ending 31 Oct. 1856, PP(1857) Sess. I. III, 631; ...for half-year ending 30 Oct. 1858, PP (1859) Sess 1. XII, 185; ... for half-year ending 30 Apr. 1860, PP(1860) XXXIV,488.

2 Table 5.7.

3 Return of Schools for Poorer Classes of Children in the Municipal Boroughs of Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester, 18 March 1869, PP(1870) LIV,265, Report on Birmingham and Leeds by J.G.Fitch (hereafter, Fitch); Leeds School Board, Report on the Educational Requirements of the Borough of Leeds (Leeds, 1871).

The performance of the Church, under Vicar Hook the largest single provider of elementary education in Leeds, was patchy and generally poor. The success of Church Sunday schools was very variable, containing 40 per cent of all Sunday scholars in Farnley in 1851, but, for instance, only 12 per cent of those in Bramley in 1833.¹ Church day schools could claim up to 35 per cent of scholars in Beeston in 1851 and in Bramley by 1871, consistently about a quarter of the school population in Armley, but as little as six per cent in Hunslet in 1851. Church schools were expanding slowly in Armley and rapidly in Bramley, but declining rapidly in Beeston and Wortley, abandoned in the former by 1867, and overwhelmed by population growth in the latter township.²

As far as weekday schools were concerned, Dissenters were even less successful. Hook argued in 1850 that 'Dissenters have failed miserably in educating. They see that the Church beats them.'³ Among the industrial out-townships in the 1850's, only Bramley had a state-aided Wesleyan school, and only two other such schools appeared in the 1860's, in Hunslet and Holbeck. In 1860 Hole counted four Wesleyan schools in the borough. Fitch in 1869 found only ten uninspected Non-Conformist schools, mostly north of the Aire, to add to eight non-Anglican state-aided schools.⁴ He too concluded that Non-Conformists were disheartened at being unable to compete with state-aided schools, and had, with the exception of the Wesleyans and Unitarians, virtually given up the field of primary education.

Thus far, from the analysis of borough and township statistics, we are able to draw certain conclusions which have a direct bearing on the study of schools, class and community in the out-townships. Firstly it was shown that Sunday schools retained their numerical importance relative to day schools beyond 1850 and could claim a significant role in suburban education. Secondly, economic and demographic factors clearly affected the success of schools as measured by levels of attendance. The educational marketplace was as troubled by trade cycles as any other. Thirdly, the census statistics imply the continuing importance of non-institutional private and dame schools down to 1870. Fourthly, the strength of this informal sector of education was matched by the relative weakness of denominational schooling, particularly of Non-Conformist voluntary day schools.

1 Nationally Church Sunday schools contained 36 per cent of all students in 1851, and 39 per cent by 1881. T.W.Laqueur, Religion and Respectability (New Haven, 1976), p.246.

2 Table 5.11: Church Sunday and Day Scholars in the Out-townships.

3 W.R.W. Stephens, op.cit. p.490.

4 Hole op.cit. p.8; Fitch op.cit. Tables B1, B2.

The importance of education in a rapidly urbanizing environment ensured that schools were in the frontline of the struggle for the social control of working class communities. Middle-class attitudes to education in the out-townships were marked by a familiar pattern of patronage, localism and religious and political sectarianism. These attitudes coloured even the teaching offered to the working class and stamped the character of many local schools.

Early in the Industrial Revolution the suburban middle-class were associating poverty with ignorance, and both with a whole complex of vices, ranging from idleness and rudeness, through profanity, heathenism and immorality, to violence and crime. The first Sunday schools were supported by township vestries and regarded as a possible panacea for the illiteracy and delinquency of local children.¹ In the early nineteenth century a series of middle-class educationalists, factory inspectors, clergy and philanthropists, continued to identify social conflict with the lack of working class education.² Government inspectors were quick to associate good schooling with improved discipline among factory children and to point out the benefits to local employers.³

The need for what James Hole was to term 'preventive education' was most acutely felt, or at least most publicised by the Anglican clergy in the 1840's.⁴ Hook's curate at Farnley, for instance, extolled the socialising function of his new National school, preserving the township from 'the incursions of Socialism, Chartism and infidelity which are striving in the adjoining Chapelries.'⁵ Hook himself voiced his concern specifically over the suburban working class.

"You at a distance cannot understand the savage ignorance, the embittered barbarism of our manufacturing villages; you can have no notion of the ignorance which prevails, and which, being

- 1 See the references to Beeston and Kirkstall Sunday schools above, Ch.2, pp.43-4. Un-employment and poverty brought about by factories was thought to have reduced the amount of education given to domestic clothiers' children in Pudsey in 1806. S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, op.cit., evidence of Joseph Coope, pp.46-7.
- 2 Gott paid his mill children a shilling for regular attendance at Sunday school, duly certified by a teacher. S.C. on the State of Children employed in the Manufactories of the United Kingdom, PP (1816) III, evidence of Joseph Cresswell, 363.
- 3 See Report of H.M.I. Saunders for quarter ending 31 Dec.1842, PP (1843) XXVII, App III, letter of Robert Baker, 329-30; Ibid. Report of H.M.I. Saunders upon the Establishment of Schools in the Factory Districts, 385-99.
- 4 Hole, op.cit. pp.90-2
- 5 Farnley National School File, letter from Thomas Wilson, 3 Feb. 1846.

unchecked by superstition, is ready to break out into terrible acts whenever there is an opportunity. This is it which makes me so anxious about education." (1)

In this period of social upheaval, education occupied a shifting space in the community consciousness of the out-township bourgeoisie. Schools were ascribed different functions at different times according to the state of class relations and the way the middle-class viewed their own status and hegemony in the suburban communities. The moral superiority and importance of the middle-class was the 'strength of the community...the people of the class below are the instruments with which they work.'² The purpose of this work was made explicit by the Utilitarians.

"As all the actions of man are produced by his feelings or thoughts, the business of education is, to make certain feelings or thoughts take place instead of others." (3)

From this viewpoint education clearly had a hegemonic purpose. It required intervention to change the existing forms of working class knowledge and to socialise their children. This meant not only altering norms of behaviour but also creating a new working class morality in the mould of the middle-class.⁴

Some suburban employers regarded schools as a means of extending factory discipline beyond the workplace. Marshall's mill school in Holbeck originated from purely Benthamite motives. From its opening in 1822 the day school was aimed at 'the inhabitants in the vicinity.'⁵ In 1825 Marshall first began to use the school as part of a reward system designed to discipline his youngest workers.

"Continue to select every Saturday morning those hands who have attended well, conducted themselves well, and tried to do their work well; and be extremely particular in examining who are the most deserving hands in each room who should be sent to the school. A great portion of the good will depend on the judgement exercised in the selection of the hands. And send as many as you can spare." (6)

1 W.R.W. Stephens, op.cit. p.465.

2 James Mill quoted in Harold Perkins, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880 (1969), p.294.

3 Mill quoted in Etie Halévy, The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism (revised edn. 1972), p.289.

4 There is a useful body of literature on education and social control. See especially two articles by Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England,' in Peter Stansky ed., The Victorian Revolution (New York, 1973), pp.199-230, and 'Educating the Educators; Experts and the State 1833-9,' in A.P.Donajgrodzki, ed., Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain (1977), pp.77-107. See also Philip McCann ed., Popular Education and Socialization in the 19th century (1977); D.A.Reeder ed., Urban Education in the 19th century (1977).

5 Marshall's Papers, School Prospectus 1822, Brotherton Ms.200/15/30.

6 Marshall's Papers, Register of Employees and Schoolchildren Brotherton Ms.200/27, entry for 8 June 1825.

The moral education of the under fives was to be followed by intellectual education for the most deserving of the older children. The evening school was used in the same way; 'we wish to send no hands but those who have behaved well in the mills and wish to go.'¹

Marshall's workforce was regarded as fairly quiescent. In June 1832, for instance, 964 out of 1304 workers at the Water Lane mills attended chapel.² Munificent gestures in the field of self-help, such as the establishment of a mill library and reading rooms, were coupled with strict discipline inside the factory.

"There must be perfect punctuality of attendance; no time wasted during the hours of work; the machinery must be kept going till the bell rings; no time can be allowed before the bell rings for changing of dress; instead of which suitable places will be provided for all work-people in which to keep their change of dress, and seats for them at meal times." (3)

In the school, such discipline reached children who otherwise had little to do with the mill. 'Excellent order and striking attention' noted Watkins of the children in 1845.⁴

"One cannot speak too highly of the great cleanliness and excellent discipline, and admirable order prevailing there. In a room where 310 boys were present, not one eye was turned on us in idle curiosity, when we went in; all were busy, occupied, and apparently interested, in their lessons. The only noise heard, was the gentle hum of many voices, learning or repeating their task." (5)

The original emphasis was on moral education via literacy. The main aim seems to have been to give a basic literacy course and get the children to attend Sunday school, although geography and arithmetic were also taught to a few. By the early 1850's the subjects had become a little more varied, and included grammar, history and singing. The mill schools were good customers of the training college at Battersea. Four of the seven certificated teachers working in inspected schools in the industrial out-townships in 1855 were teaching at Marshall's.⁶ By 1860 the schools had collected almost £3000 worth of grants to certified, assistant and pupil teachers.⁷

1 Marshall's Papers, Register, op.cit., entry for 16 June 1827.

2 Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds, op.cit. p.110.

3 Marshall's Papers, 'Eleven Hours Time: Notice to the Workpeople of Messrs. Marshall & Co.' (printed, Leeds, 1846), Brotherton Ms 200/15/33. The cleanliness and order impressed Reach when he visited the mill in 1849, A.B.Reach, The Yorkshire Textile Districts in 1849 (Helmshore, 1974).

4 MCCE (1846) Vol.II, Report of Rev. Watkins for 1845, p.169.

5 MCCE (1845) Vol.II, Report of Rev. Watkins for 1844, p.254.

6 MCCE (1855), Table of Merit Certificates.

7 MCCE (1861), p.751.

By any measure, this was teaching on a grand scale, using all the resources available in the existing educational system. That the schools failed to realise their full educational potential was not due, as in the neighbouring Church schools, to poor teaching and dilapidated buildings, but to the high turnover of children. 'The short stay of the children is quite extraordinary', noted Watkins of the girls school, '376 entered and 345 left within the year.'¹ In 1852, 275 boys entered and 273 left from the 400 in ordinary attendance.² With such short durations of stay, the scope and effect of any teaching was minimised, and so, no doubt, was the socialising effect of school discipline.

As local patrons, the Marshalls hoped to demonstrate the harmony of interests of parents and employers with regard to education. The employers would gain a trained, more productive child worker, whose increased earning capacity would benefit the parents. School turnover however shows that parents did not send their offspring there for training, or even with any increased earnings capacity in mind, but rather to give them that small amount of basic literacy and numeracy which any respectable worker required - enough to sign his name, read a newspaper and count his wages. Marshall's message did not appear to be getting through. Yet as a community institution the schools enjoyed some success. There were 300 boys enrolled in 1847, though only 93 (under thirteens) were employed in the mills that year. In the 1850's and 1860's numbers in the school were always nearly double those in the mills.³ The breakdown of school income figures also reveals that the bulk of the funds came from the children's pence. In 1852 the firm supplied only one-fifth of the income of all three schools.⁴

Undoubtedly the schools would not have been so successful without the patronage of the Marshalls, but it seems equally certain that the local community came to regard these schools as their own. They found few other sources of support locally. J.G.Marshall himself blamed property owners for being bad subscribers.⁵ If the schools became a community institution, it was not due to any consciousness on the part of a united body of local middle class patrons in Holbeck.

Patronage varied considerably across the out-townships. Church schools suffered particularly from the increasing residential segregation

1 MCCE (1852), Watkins' Report for 1851, p.523.

2 MCCE (1853), Watkins' Report for 1852, p.537.

3 Rimmer, Marshall of Leeds, op.cit. Table 9, p.316.

4 MCCE (1853), Watkins' Report for 1852, p.537.

5 R.C. on the State of Popular Education (1861) (hereafter Newcastle Commission), Vol.V, Marshall's answers, p.316.

of the classes in the most industrialized and densely populated suburbs. School inspectors in Leeds echoed the clergy's complaints of lack of finance and absence of resident patrons.¹ In Hunslet and Holbeck small numbers of subscribers to the National schools provided up to a quarter of school income in the 1840's.² However patrons responded best when a school was already successful in teaching and attracting working class pupils, or when a particular project such as a classroom extension was proposed. Generally Church schools received little financial support from central organisations and relied almost solely upon the fund-raising efforts of the local clergy.³ Only two small grants were provided by the local Diocesan Board to schools in the industrial townships before 1870.⁴ Furthermore incumbents had to face tremendous hostility from the Non-conformist middle class. In Hunslet local millowners 'coerced' their children to go to Dissenters' Sunday schools rather than the Church day schools, 'on pain of being dismissed from their work if they refuse.'⁵

"...there is not one millowner in Hunslet who is a Churchman and... there has been a determined effort to crush the benefits arising from the National system in Hunslet." (6)

In Holbeck such opposition drove the curate to condemn the unacceptable face of capitalism.

"The mill-owners and opulent capitalists are non-resident in Holbeck, having their place of business in the latter place, but residing elsewhere. Their sympathy is withheld from the cause of Education and while their thirst for gain and gold is gratified in Holbeck, their charitable contributions in the Township are seldom heard of. (7)

School patronage, theories of social control, religious sectarianism, social structure and residential segregation were therefore closely interlinked. The mixture of these elements however differed substantially between townships. In Farnley the Armitages had a long tradition

1 See for example MCCE (1846), Vol.II, Watkins' Report for 1845, pp. 177-8; and Holbeck St Matthews National School File, Rev.J.L.Brown to the Bishop of Ripon, 27 Nov. 1837.

2 Holbeck St Matthew's and Hunslet St Mary's National School Files.

3 Peter Gordon, The Victorian School Manager (1974), pp.9-14.

4 Ripon Diocesan Board of Education (hereafter RDBE), Leeds District Minute Book, 1841-93, Brotherton Ms. RDS 3/1; RDBE, 17th Report 1858 (Leeds, 1859), 23rd Report, 1864-5 (Leeds, 1865).

5 Hunslet St Mary's National School File, letter from Rev. John Clark, 18 Mar. 1844.

6 Ibid. letter from Rev. Clark, 18 Jan. 1845.

7 Holbeck St Matthew's National School File, letter from F.G. Sturges, 26 Oct. 1844, original emphasis.

of supporting local schools. Edward Armitage was patron of the small non-denominational Sunday school in the 1810's.¹ In 1845 the family helped establish a new National school in Old Farnley. In 1850, in response to an enormous influx of labour to the expanding ironworks at New Farnley,² they built their own company school, which quickly rivalled the Church school. All these ventures reflected the traditional, communal character of the family's patronage. Although their status was founded on capitalist wealth accumulated first in clothmaking and then in Farnley ironworks, the Armitages regarded themselves rather as rural gentry whose paternal responsibilities were to all the inhabitants of their manor. Confidentially, the factory inspector informed the National Society,

"Mr Leathley Armitage is named as one likely to forward anything which will improve the condition of the place." (3)

However the ironmasters wanted the Church school to serve all sections of the community.

"The Armitage family wish to secure in the lease, that no Creeds are to be taught, in order that the usefulness of the school may be extended to all the Infant population here."⁴

There was some opposition to Armitage's concept of a non-sectarian school from a succession of incumbents in the 1840's who could only see their flock being 'picked' by the Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists, and themselves unable to stop it. One incumbent took exception to having Baptists and Methodists on his school committee, and, claiming the school could not function under such diverse governments, did his utmost to get rid of them, although this totally contradicted the spirit of the Armitage's trust deed.⁵ This sectarian quarrel typified the struggle of many clergymen at this time to gain control of their school management committees. It considerably weakened the Farnley school.

The Ironworks schools, on the other hand, were non-sectarian and very successful. The excellence of the teaching, particularly under William Barnes, headmaster from 1858 to 1868, added much to the popularity of both day and evening schools. Farnley received six certificated

1 Digest of Parochial Returns (1818), op.cit.

2 Farnley's population almost doubled in the 1840's and 1850's because of 'the establishment of ironworks and the erection of houses for the operatives'. Housing and Population Abstract, 1861 Census of England and Wales. On the New Farnley community, see above p.40.

3. Farnley National School File, letter n.d. (probably early 1846), original emphasis.

4 Ibid. letter from Rev. Richard Evans, 13 May 1845.

5 Ibid. see the letters from Rev. Henry Jones, March-July 1847 and a letter from one of the Farnley trustees, 11 Sept. 1847, explaining that the debt had not yet been cleared because of the 'misunderstanding' between Jones and his parishioners.

teachers from the training colleges at York and Ripon between 1864 and 1871, more than even Marshall's mill school, and at least nine other teachers were employed by the ironworks during this period.¹ Teaching with 'energy and skill', Barnes set high standards in all departments. He tried to develop the full potential of his pupils, 'to change their whole character', by treating them to a wide range of literary subjects including lectures on history, biography, travel and poetry.² Children were taught with 'very great kindness, firmness and intelligence'. There was 'an evident affectionate spirit throughout the school.'³

The result was that the Ironworks schools were well supported. They attracted apprentices and colliers' children from the old village centres of Farnley and Wortley⁴, as well as newcomers from the houses near the ironworks.⁵ By the mid-1860's there were up to 400 children attending the day schools and over 100 boys at the evening school, contrasting with only about 50 at the church school. The latter suffered from a lack of books and pupil teachers, and was actually closed down during the winter of 1852-3, when parents stopped sending their children in protest at a change of masters.⁶

In a decade of considerable tension in local industrial relations, it was clear that the Armitages made a concerted attempt to create a community institution of their ironworks school. Associated with the schools in the 1860's was a cricket club, a reading room and library, a penny savings bank and sickness and burial society.⁷ The firm finally decided to transfer the school to the School Board in 1875 because it was anxious that Farnley ratepayers enjoy the same benefits of the new Education Act as the rest of the Borough.⁸

Because of the status and financial independence of their leading patrons, the company schools in Holbeck and Farnley were able to remain relatively free of local sectarianism. However in both townships, outside these schools, religious bigotry, Non-conformist middle class

1 Calculated from Leeds directories and RDBE, Annual Reports (Leeds, 1861-71), passim.

2 MCCE (1867), Rev. Pickard's Report for 1866, p.171. Pickard is quoting Barnes' own words.

3 Farnley Iron Company's School Portfolio 1858-91, Inspector's Reports 20 July 1866, 9 July 1863.

4 MCCE (1867), Pickard's Report, p.171.

5 The ironworkers' settlement of New Farnley contained about 1500 in 1866, almost half the township's population, *ibid.*

6 MCCE (1852), Watkins' Report for 1851, p.535; MCCE (1853), Watkins' Report for 1852, p.553; MCCE (1854), Watkins' Report for 1853, p.541.

7 MCCE (1867), Pickard's Report, p.172.

8 Farnley Iron Company's School Portfolio 1858-91, W.J.Armitage to the Leeds School Board, 30 Nov. 1875.

opposition, and the struggle of the clergy to control school management and the content of school teaching, could damage paternal efforts at improving class relations in the community.

Patronage and sectarianism were not necessarily at odds. In Armley Gott's divisive paternalism split the local Anglican community in the late 1860's.¹ Gott took a keen interest in education. He had supported the Church Sunday school since 1821. He built a school near Armley chapel in 1832, contributed to the building of York Training College in 1844, and his family were regular donors to the Leeds District Diocesan Board of Education.² Gott's die-hard voluntaryism however also ensured that his Church school at Armley, St Bartholomew's, remained free of any government or National Society grants during a period when school costs, especially those of salaries, were increasing steadily.³

By the 1860's the number of poor in Armley was increasing and the state of schooling was deteriorating into 'neglect' and 'educational destitution'.⁴ The children of young textile migrants from small West Riding townships were forming a larger proportion of the school-age population during the late 1850's.⁵ Their parents were less able to afford Church school fees than locally born residents,⁶ and, coming from the Methodist hinterlands of West Yorkshire, may have also been averse to Church schools for religious reasons.

Gott's conflict with his new Tractarian vicar, F.G.Hume-Smith, in the late 1860's further damaged educational provision in the township. Hume-Smith pressed forward his plan to secure state aid for St. Bartholomew's school. Gott channelled his patronage to the new Christ Church in Upper Armley, donating land and £700 to its schools on condition

1 See above p.287.

2 On Gott's philanthropy see above pp.257-60.

3 For a number of Leeds National Schools, salaries increased from 62.7 to 76.4 per cent of a total expenditure which itself grew more than four times between 1850 and 1874. Calculated from 'Abstracts of Returns relative to National Schools in Leeds aided by the Trustees of the Charity School Funds 1850-84', (LCA, Ms.DB 196/19-55)

4 Upper Armley National School, Grant Schedules and Inspectors' Reports 1871-1904 (Leeds University Education Museum, Ms.A/D 1585), Report of A. Legard, 3 Mar.1871; Upper Armley National School File, Aid Application, Rev.J. Thompson, 22 Dec. 1869.

5 An analysis of the 1851 Census sample shows Armley-born household heads to be predominantly middle-aged (less than one third were below 40), while 62.5 per cent of heads from the rural West Riding (districts of less than 5000) were in their thirties or younger. Only 26.4 per cent of all Armley heads were under 40.

6 26.6 per cent of Leeds born household heads were in semi and unskilled classes IV and V, but 38.4 per cent of West Riding heads and 50 per cent of those born further afield. The township average was 31.7 per cent.

the church raise a similar amount without applying to government.¹

Gott's final break with St. Bartholomew's came in 1874. In November Gott gave the school notice to quite his rented premises by Christmas. In the middle of winter, Hume-Smith was force to move 120 children into temporary rooms. Gott then attempted to carry on a rival school in the vacated building.

"It was discovered on January 8th 1875 that Mr Gott had hired one of our boy pupils to take him round to see all the parents of our pupils in an effort to persuade them to send their children to his school which opened on the 11th January. His efforts were largely unsuccessful. 2

The financial problems of Armley's Church schools worsened in the 1870's and 1880's as patronage declined.³ Gott continued to oppose state and rate-aided education with a fading voice during the Board school period.⁴ The narrow, idiosyncratic and sectarian nature of his paternalism resulted in the hands of successive incumbents being tied and the education of working class children being neglected. Ultimately it forced the church into the arms of the voluntary societies and government aid, thereby alienating its most important patron.

The struggles of the Church in Armley, Farnley, Holbeck and Hunslet to attract patronage but retain denominational control of their schools were typical constraints on educational provision in the out-townships. The sectarian mood of much middle class patronage ensured that many denominational schools never gained popular support in their suburban communities.

Sectarian conflict at this level was about power and leadership in the community, as well as about laissez-faire principles and religious beliefs. Baines had made Leeds a citadel of voluntaryism by the mid 1840's. Government aid was 'a departure from the principles of commercial freedom adopted in this country as the basis of legislation'.⁵ It encouraged dependance in the working class, the very antithesis of self-help.⁶ Non-conformists were convinced the government was doing them

1 Upper Armley, National School File, Aid Application, op.cit.

2 M. Simpson, 'A History of Armley Church of England School 1876-1976,' (unpublished typescript, LCR). Also on the break with Gott see Armley St. Bartholomew's National School File, 'Paper A' by Hume-Smith, 29 Apr. 1875; Midgely op.cit. pp.35-8, 40-1.

3 See St. Bartholomew's National School File, N.S. Caseform 9 July 1888; Christ Church National School File, letters of 14 Sept. 1875, 23 Nov. 1877, aid application form 1876. For the final conveyances of land from Gott see *ibid.* letters of 19 Jan. 1884, September 1896.

4 See the letter from W.E. Gott in LM, 24 Dec. 1875.

5 Newcastle Commission, op.cit. Vol. VI, evidence of Rev. W.J. Unwin. Q.2300.

6 Baines' Papers, Ms.Bundle 57. 'To the Rt. Hon. Visc. Palmerston, 1st Lord of the Treasury; The Memorial of the Committee of the Congregational Board of Education,' (printed, n.d.)

a great injustice by forcing them to support a system of public funding which they declined on principle to benefit from. 'By leaving each religious community to support its own schools, equal justice would be done to all.'¹

Undoubtedly Dissenters feared the success of government-aided Church schools in Leeds. Leeds had a larger proportion of its children in Church schools by 1851 than London, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham.² Hook's motto was 'for every poor man a pastor and for every poor child a school.' Though he considered the working class to be largely indifferent to religious education, Hook hoped schools would restore the influence of the Church, Christianity, 'and even of civilization, in the suburban manufacturing districts.'³

However it was in these industrial suburbs that sectarian power struggles were fiercest. The incumbent at Wortley in 1848 faced public meetings and accusations of 'clerical misrepresentation' when he dared to suggest that voluntary school provision in the township was inadequate.⁴ The struggle between Sabbatarian and non-Sabbatarian trustees of Zion Sunday school in New Wortley in the 1840's was over the increasing influence of Unitarian teaching in the school. This controversy fuelled sectarianism in the township, with Wesleyans locking up pens and books and telling the children to go home, and their opponents attempting to keep the school open on Sundays.⁵

Watkins found the worst schools in Yorkshire invariably in places where the land was 'infinitesimally divided among small freeholders, who squabble about the school as they do about all other parish business.'⁶ Schools, as potential institutions of social control, were one of the few attainable instruments of power in the out-townships. Characteristically, in such socially mixed communities, this source of conflict divided the middle class on sectarian lines. Hook was shouted down

1 Ibid.. misc. notes on education.

2 W.B. Stephens, op.cit. pp.230-1.

3 W.R.W. Stephens, op.cit. pp.347, 465. See also 'The Leeds Deputation upon Education', The Times, 20 Mar. 1847. By 1848 all the industrial suburbs except Armley and Beeston had state-aided church schools.

4 LM, 25 Mar. 1848.

5 B.A. Kilburne, 'Annals of Zion School, New Wortley', c.1898, (Brotherton Ms. 116/2) pp.18-30, see also G. O'Keefe, 'The Zion Schools at New Wortley 1835-97', (Dip.ed. thesis, Liverpool University, 1979).

6 MCCE (1859), Rev. Watkins' Report for 1858.

in Leeds in 1847 when he dared to rationalize the education issue by suggesting it was about the pros and cons of state interference, and not about a battle between Church and Dissent.¹ Baines' uncompromising stance on voluntaryism split the normally invulnerable Liberal party in both the borough and county elections of 1847-8.²

Sectarianism surfaced again in the late 1860's and early 1870's as arguments raged over rate-aided Board schools. The latter were regarded as a threat by the clergy, while the Education Act was denounced by non-conformists as a second Church Rate bill, and by radicals and secularists as a 'mere humbug'.³ In Bramley particularly there was a furious debate between the Church and the Non-conformist supporters of 'unsectarian' schools over the adequacy of voluntary school provision and over religious instruction.⁴ The history of the first 20 years of the Leeds School Board was a catalogue of political interference and sectarian disputes over school provision.⁵

The religious content of education was always a major cause of sectarian conflict. Many clergy of all denominations regarded scholars, especially in Sunday schools, as potential recruits to their chapels. Religious education was given top priority in the curriculum and gradually ousted secular subjects by the 1840's.⁶ Leeds Parochial Sunday schools had stopped teaching writing and accounts by the late 1820's. Bramley's new incumbent banned writing in his Sunday school in 1830, to preserve 'the sanctity of the Sabbath.'⁷ The result was a severe decline in the educational standards of many Sunday schools. At Hunslet Baptist school in 1841, the 'boys' select class' devoted its time to memorising large

1 Education! Education! Public Meeting at Leeds in favour of the Government measure for the Education of the Working Classes (handbill, Leeds, 1847)

2 Derek Fraser, 'Voluntaryism and West Riding Politics in the mid-19th century', Northern History 13 (1977), 199-231; Idem, 'Education and Urban Politics 1832-85', in D.A.Reeder, op.cit. pp.11-26.

3 Erich Rich, The Education Act 1870 (1970); J.S.Hurt, Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918 (1979), pp.79-80. For the various factions see Memorial of the Clergy of Leeds presented to the Leeds School Board (Leeds, 1871); H.A.Pickard, Remarks on Localities selected by the Leeds School Board (1871); Leeds School Board, Report on Educational Requirements, op.cit.; C.M.Buckton, A sketch of the elementary education question and the work of the Leeds School Board 1870 to 1882 (Leeds, 1882).

4 School Board Chronicle, I, 6 (25 Mar. 1871); IV, 45 (23 Dec. 1871)

5 See M.A.Travis, 'The work of the Leeds School Board 1870-1902', University of Leeds Institute of Education, Research and Studies 8 (1953), 82-95; Leeds School Board, Scheme of Education, (Leeds, 1883); Souvenir of Leeds School Board, op.cit.; Leeds School Board, Yearbooks, and Chief Inspectors' Reports, especially the latter for year ending 30 Sept. 1902, which includes 'A Retrospect'.

6 Lawson, op.cit. p.59; Beckworth, op.cit. p.97.

7 Leeds Parochial Sunday Schools, Report for 1829 (Leeds, 1830); Carr, Lands of Bram', op.cit. pp.18-20.

portions of the Scripture. One boy was singled out for learning by heart 700 verses of the New Testament in ten weeks.¹

By the 1840's many middle class congregations shared a sense of urgency about the need for the moral education of the working class. It was agreed that 'give a man knowledge and you impart to him power.'² Anglican clergy saw their schools as buttresses against the 'hard, low, coarse materialism' and 'cold, rationalizing infidelity' of large sections of the working class. The 'inculcation of genuine religion' would preserve 'social order, domestic happiness and peaceful progress.' This was the task of Church schools, 'to roll back the tide of evil' and 'give permanence and security to the institutions...of our country.'³

The 1840's taught clergy, Dissenters and Radical philanthropists alike that the choice lay between 'education or anarchy', and that, to some limited extent, sectarian differences had to be put aside. After 1850 the stress was on the political importance of educating the working class to understand and accept their position in the social consensus of mid-Victorian Britain. Knowledge would teach the worker his duty to God, Queen and Country. The horrific alternative was an ignorance which continued to be associated with poverty, immorality, crime and even disease.⁴ Now, however, it was also seen as preventing the 'masses' from knowing the history of their country, and from appreciating its rapid spiritual and material progress.⁵ This view was based on the persistent bourgeois stereotype, much refined since the 1830's, of a working class incapable of even looking after itself, like savages brought suddenly into civilization, totally lost as to how to make sense of the world.⁶ Workers were 'utterly unappreciative' of the 'daily phenomenon of life' and of the laws of physical science. Their lives were degraded by 'gross sensuality' to 'a state of mere animalism, deficient alike in moral principle and aspiration.'⁷

With the emphasis on the power of knowledge to improve as well as to discipline or reward, the concept of education current in the 1860's had developed considerably from the Utilitarian functions of early factory schools. Partly in response to working class parents, a call for better teaching was taken up by most leading school inspectors.

1 26th Report of Leeds Sunday School Union, op.cit.

2 Ibid.

3 RDBE 10th Report (Leeds, 1851), p.13; 15th Report (Leeds, 1857), p.13

4 See, especially, the arguments for Ragged schools. Anon, Beggars, Criminals, Fevers and Ragged Schools (Leeds, 1847); A Few Plain Facts about the Leeds Ragged and Certified Industrial Schools (Leeds, 1867).

5 Valerie E. Chancellor, History for their Masters (Bath, 1970).

6 Morris, Voluntary Organisations, op.cit. pp.55-9.

7 Hole, op.cit. pp.2-3.

Gradgrindian rote-learning gradually gave way to a vaguely Froebelian approach, typified by Barnes at Farnley, in which the imagination, and also the respect of children had first to be won before 'habits of exact thinking' could be inculcated.¹ Better children's books were demanded, in which teachers might find

"a golden mean equally remote from Goody Two Shoes and from those appalling essays on the graminivorous quadrupeds and the monocotyledonous plants which have so long bewildered the little readers of the Irish books." (2)

Classroom discipline was to be maintained, in theory at least, less by the rod and more by the moral superiority and example of the teacher.³ The successful teacher would raise his labour from 'mechanical taskwork' to 'the dignity of an enabling profession', by gaining 'that ascendancy over the minds of those entrusted to his care which alone gives weight to moral precept.' He would thus contribute both to the 'social amelioration' and the 'intellectual advancement of the industrial masses of the community.'⁴ In the 1860's more emphasis was being placed on the careful selection and training of teachers as agents of social control than at any time since the introduction of pupil teachers in 1846.⁵

After mid-century, therefore, sectarian conflict over the religious content of education became more muted in the out-townships, though it was never far below the surface. Denominational power struggles for the control of working class schooling became exhausted as the supply of patronage dried up and as population growth outstripped even Church school provision. A substantial remoulding was taking place of bourgeois educational theory. Attitudes towards education reflected middle class concepts of how Victorian social relations were to develop. Practical problems as well as ideological principles were at issue in the suburbs. How was middle class patronage to respond to changing

1 Brian Simon, The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870 (revised edn. 1974), p.262; idem, ed., The Radical Tradition in Education in Britain (1972). On Froebel see Elizabeth Lawrence, The Origins and Growth of Modern Education (Harmondsworth, 1970), and on his popularity in Leeds see Charles Dickens in All Year Round, I (1859), 571-3.

2 MCCE (1865), Report of J.G.Fitch for 1864, p.168. The 'Irish books' were non-denominational readers published by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, which the main religious societies copied from the 1840's. J.M.Goldstrom, 'The content of education and the working class child 1830-60' in McCann, op.cit. pp.93-110.

3 On the brutality of local schools in the 1830's see Lawson, op.cit. p.65; Stones, op.cit. pp.28-9.

4 MCCE (1857), Report of J.S.Laurie for 1856, p.576.

5 Johnson, Educational Policy, op.cit.; J.S.Hurt, Education and Evolution (1971), pp.92-136; Brian Simon, Education and the Labour Movement (1965), pp.115-20.

social relations in communities in which a semi-skilled factory proletariat was increasing rapidly in proportion to the traditional class of independent skilled artisans and small manufacturers? Were the suburban elite to join the petty-bourgeoisie in educating their sons in township schools? There remained a noticeable absence of suburban pupils at Leeds Grammar School, even after Barry's reforms of the 1850's. designed to raise numbers and 'bring the middle classes into the school.'¹

Victorian educational segregation had to begin locally. From the 1840s the national debate moved inexorably towards an attempt to grade schools according to class.² As part of an educational system designed to cement social differences, schools could very accurately reflect class divisions in a community. In a system which allocated each class its parameters of educational achievement, finite differences between schools in the out-townships developed into a ranking order in which each school was given its own social classification. Patrons and parents, trustees and managers were thus equipped to decide immediately the extent and nature of their involvement with any particular school - to donate, to subscribe or to ignore it, and where to send one's children. Even Horace Mann was convinced that Britain was not ready for 'such a democratic intermixture' as the classless 'common school.'³

With the petty bourgeoisie dominating the suburbs of the 1860's it was hardly surprising there should be local calls for an education geared to their needs. Particular National schools were advised to raise their standards and supply a commercial education for the lower middle class.⁴ In a similar vein, with an eye cocked upon his continental competitors, James Marshall urged that 'industrial training' replace 'book learning'.⁵ Although there is little evidence of technical or commercial subjects being taught in the out-townships, some

1 Schools Inquiry Commission (hereafter Taunton Commission)(1868), Vol.IV, evidence of Rev.Barry, Qs.5185-5517. See also A.C.Price, A History of Leeds Grammar School (Leeds, 1919), pp.194-203. Only 29 out of 227 pupils admitted to Leeds Grammar, 1850-4, were definitely suburban residents. Only a handful of pupils from Armley and Beeston entered the school after 1856. Calculated from Edmund Wilson ed., Leeds Grammar School Admission Books from 1820 to 1900 (Leeds, 1906).

2 This was the object of the three mid-Victorian school commissions, Clarendon, Newcastle and Taunton; Simon, *Two Nations*, op.cit. pp.320-35.

3 Mann, op.cit.p.xlv.

4 RDBE, 25th Report (Leeds, 1867), p.16

5 Newcastle Commission, op.cit. Vol.V, Answers of J.G.Marshall,p.315.

schools did try to cater for the petty bourgeoisie and labour aristocracy. At Bramley Whitecote in the late 1860's, 'some of the lower middle-class inhabitants of the parish' opened 'a self supporting school for those who were able and willing to pay a reasonable fee, (£1 a quarter being suggested), for their sons' education.'¹ Bramley Wesleyan school also probably catered for the lower middle class. It was the first non-Anglican inspected school to be built in any of the industrial suburbs. This 'orderly, active and generally efficient' school soon secured a reputation for intelligent teaching by a 'well informed, skilful and reforming master.'² In the early 1850's modern methods of 'sectional teaching' in smaller groups replaced the antiquated 'collective lessons' given to huge assemblies of children.³ As well as reading, arithmetic, dictation and composition, some Wesleyan pupils also reached a 'creditable' standard in geography, grammar and history. Moreover the older children displayed 'considerable knowledge of etymology, tracing out the Latin roots with readiness.'⁴ It is difficult to imagine what labourer would pay fourpence a week for his child to trace out Latin roots, and the whole character of the school makes it likely that it served the shopkeepers, artisans and small employers rather than the factory proletariat of Bramley.

The system of grading schools by class permeated the out-townships. Several of the Wesleyan schools found their market among the suburban petty bourgeoisie. Nationally these schools claimed to attract the 'better off' among the working class.⁵ Three out of the four Wesleyan schools in the industrial suburbs charged fees rising from twopence to ninepence. Bramley was the exception, with fees no higher than fourpence and 60 per cent of its children paying only a penny. However most of these were under five, a much higher proportion of infants than the Wesleyan schools in Armley, Hunslet and Holbeck. As at the more expensive school in Holbeck, over a quarter of the Bramley boys examined in 1869 passed in extra subjects, and there was an elite of older pupils who were presented in the top three standards. The rival Church school, with half as many children again presented for examination, could not claim any passes in extra subjects.⁶

1 Return of Endowed Charities (City of Leeds), PP(1898) LXV, 181.

2 MCCE (1851), Report of J.D. Morell for 1850, p.783; MCCE (1853) Morell's Report for 1852, pp.986-7.

3 MCCE (1854), Morell's Report for 1853, pp.1011-12, 1026, describes both methods.

4 MCCE (1852), Morell's Report for 1851, p.941.

5 Newcastle Commission, op.cit. Vol.VI, evidence of Rev.J Scott, Q.2055. Fitch was concerned at the number of grant-aided Wesleyan schools where 'children of the lower middle class' were paying sixpence or more a week. MCCE (1868), Fitch's Report for 1867, p.348.

6 Fitch, op.cit. Calculated from Tables A1 and A2.

However some Wesleyan schools also had 'a great number of extremely poor people.'¹ Indeed the uninspected school established at Beeston in 1866 had no social pretensions. 120 infants paid twopence a week to attend classes in a badly ventilated room under the chapel. Voluntary contributions came to only five pounds in 1870. When the School Board took over in 1874 the first inspector remarked that education in Beeston had been 'frightfully neglected.'²

The class divisions in schooling were fairly clear. Most National schools were left to educate the children of suburban labourers and factory workers. Stanningley National School, built in 1846, was a 'rough factory school' where instruction was 'of the most meagre kind', and 'the religious knowledge is in some degrees below zero.'³ In Hunslet and Holbeck the 'Penny Nashes' were 'aided schools of a lower class', involved in 'a continuing and exhausting struggle with the labour market.'⁴ A penny each was charged for reading, writing and arithmetic and from these minimal fees the schools derived over two-thirds of their income. Thus they depended on the regular attendance of the children for survival. Unimaginative teaching, 'intolerably cold' buildings,⁵ distaste for the discipline of Church schooling and religious education,⁶ and pressure from parents who needed their children at home or at work in times of bad trade, all contributed to some spectacularly low attendances. At Hunslet only about one-fifth of the school roll was in regular attendance over a six month period in 1844. By 1850 there were just 73 children present in a schoolhouse designed for 750. In the same year at Holbeck only 84 children were attending a school built for 500.⁷ As late as 1862 the teaching did not extend beyond the three 'R's', scripture and catechism, and those children who did attend did not learn very much. In 1868 35 per cent of Holbeck Church scholars failed their basic literacy tests.⁸

1 Newcastle Commission, op.cit. Vol.VI, evidence of Rev.Scott, Q.2055.

2 Beeston Wesleyan Methodist School Portfolio (Leeds School Board Portfolios, 6/1-2); Beeston Board School Log Book, entry for 5 June 1874.

3 MCCE (1852), Watkins' Report for 1851, p.535; MCCE (1854), Watkins' Report for 1853, p.541.

4 MCCE (1866), Rev. T.W. Sharpe's Report for 1865, p.207; MCCE (1855), Watkins' Report for 1854, p.428.

5 MCCE (1846) Vol.II, Watkins' Report for 1845, p.145; MCCE (1848), Watkins' Report for 1847, p.167.

6 MCCE (1850), Watkins' Report for 1849, p.187; Fitch, op.cit. p.106.

7 MCCE (1846) Vol.II, Watkins' Report for 1845, p.145; MCCE (1851), Watkins' Report for 1850, pp.286, 300-1.

8 Holbeck St Matthew's Church of England Mixed School, Log Book 1862-91, entry for 12 Dec. 1862; MCCE (1869), Rev. H.Adair Pickard's Report for 1868, p.159.

There seems little doubt that a successful teacher, like Barnes at Farnley, helped attract children to a school. Hook was generally right when he maintained that a good school would draw in working class children regardless of the religious divisions among the middle-class. However in Hunslet by the early 1850's the incumbent had virtually given up managing the school, and most classes were held by monitors. Holbeck school suffered from a succession of idle or incompetent teachers. Other 'Penny Nashes' in Wortley and New Wortley suffered the same problems of poor teaching, bad management and low attendances. Such Church schools patently failed to provide an education worth the weekly pennies parents were asked to pay.

The persistent problems these schools faced seem to indicate that they never secured the acceptance of the working class in the suburbs. A change of teaching staff and greater fund-raising efforts by the clergy led to some improvement in the schools at Stanningley, Hunslet and New Wortley in the 1850's, but where a school with reputable standards was well-established in a neighbourhood, such as Marshall's mill school or Farnley ironworks school, the Church found it hard to compete.

When a 'Penny Nash' was relatively successful, the pressures of class divisions often forced it to compromise its popular base and to 'regrade' itself upwards. The malaise of the self-supporting primary school was a typical suburban problem.

"A large number of persons standing on the verge of the middle classes find it to be the best and most valuable medium through which they can educate their own families: added to which it supplies the want that is felt by the thrifty mechanic to give his child a better education than that which he himself enjoyed, and one more suited to the improved state of his department of labour."

The result was higher fees, and,

"while an improved and improving class of children slip into the school at one end, the poor, ill-clothed, ill-taught offspring of the lowest grades of society slip out at the other." (1)

Bramley St Peter's National school nearly fell into this predicament. Built in 1849 with grants, endowments and subscriptions almost covering the building costs of £1190, the school was the result of a successful mixture of middle-class patronage and working class parental support. Designed as a community service, it was to educate the children 'only of the labouring and manufacturing and other poorer classes in Bramley chapelry.'² By charging twopence for younger children and 'a

1 MCCE (1853), Morell's Report for 1852, p.987.

2 The original committee of managers consisted of the incumbent, three gentlemen, a solicitor, a tanner, a clothier and a stone merchant. Bramley (Hough Lane) National School File, Aid Application, 1 Apr. 1848, Conveyance of Land 22 Dec. 1848.

little more for those who may learn geography, grammar etc.', it hoped to survive on parental fees and subscriptions.¹ During the 1850's it struggled to compete with Bramley Wesleyan school which was clearly geared to a better class of clientele. Nevertheless St Peter's school had the advantages both of continuity of teaching - the master appointed in 1850 remained there 15 years - and of a central location in the township. By 1856 the school was rapidly becoming a community hall holding 'people's concerts', lectures, ratepayers' meetings and horticultural exhibitions. Despite the extra income thus generated, the managers decided to restrict the use of the building. 'After all', they noted, 'the school is very nearly self-supporting and in a thriving condition.'²

While class identity therefore could secure a school its social catchment, a community identity might ensure a broader popularity. Local loyalties could subsume class interests. The endowed 'town schools' in Wortley and Armley, for instance, were clearly regarded as community institutions and stoutly defended from the schemes of the Schools Commissioners in the 1860's and 1870's. Wortley's school endowment dated back to 1677, and provided £41 a year for a master to teach up to twelve local children to read Latin or English. Others had to pay between sixpence to one shilling a week according to the number of subjects taken.³ Despite such high fees, the pupils came from a varied background which mirrored the social structure of the township. They were "sons of artisans and labourers, from distances up to 1½ miles." The only entrance requirement was a knowledge of the alphabet. The subjects taught indicate the type of education expected by the parents. Of 42 scholars present in 1864, 36 were learning basic literacy and numeracy, 15 were learning history, geography and grammar, and four were learning drawing. In other words the curriculum did not extend beyond that of a competent National school.⁴

Indeed the school was 'so managed as to be a dangerous rival' to Wortley National School.⁵ The Trustees were especially aware that the school was regarded by a portion of the community extending well beyond the middle class as their school, and the free places were thus jealously guarded.

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid. letter dated 4 Jan. 1856.

3 Return of Endowed Charities, op.cit. pp.222-6.

4 Taunton Commission, op. cit., Vol. XVIII, J.G.Fitch's Report on Wortley Free School, p.305.

5 MCCE (1853), Watkins' Report for 1852, p.570.

The Taunton Commission, attempting to establish an efficient system of secondary education for the middle class by grading schools according to their function, set out to take-over and utilise all available endowments.¹ Working for the Commission, J.G.Fitch reported that Wortley was ripe for the picking. The free grammar school was both an 'anachronism' and a misnomer.² For most pupils Wortley school was neither free nor more than elementary. The free system actually hindered the development of the Wortley endowment into a good secondary school. Fitch cited the master;

"He has never taught Latin in the school, as the parents evince great apathy, and even reluctance, whenever he attempts to introduce higher subjects. He believes that the more respectable inhabitants, to whose children it would be more appropriate to give advanced instruction, are prevented from sending them as scholars, through an unwillingness to associate them with the free boys." (3)

The school trustees however rejected all the inspectors's arguments and remained stubbornly loyal to the 200 year old township benefaction. Their stock answer was;

"This is an endowment left for free scholars. We administer the trust as we find it; we neither have the power nor the wish to alter it." (4)

A familiar localism is once again evident in Wortley's struggle against the class-based educational system imposed from outside. The objection was not against the principles of such a system. Indeed the petty-bourgeois guardians of the community conscience helped increase the social distance between out-township schools by abandoning most 'Penny Nashes' and dame schools to the lower classes. However, they defended the traditional rights and privileges inherited from the clothier past, and rejected the attempted abrogation of these rights by outside authority.

Sunday schools, it has been argued, were 'creations of the working community'.⁵ In Leeds suburbs, some, such as Wortley Greenside Methodist Sunday School, might instead be regarded as institutions serving more than one class in the community.⁶ With clothiers composing

1 Simon, *Two Nations*, op.cit. pp.320-35.

2 Taunton Commission, op.cit., Vol.IX, J.G.Fitch's General Report on the West Riding, p.152.

3 Ibid., Fitch's Report on Wortley Free School, p.304.

4 Ibid., Fitch's General Report, pp.154-5. See F.C.Bassett, 'The Development of Higher Education in Leeds 1800-1907', (unpublished M.Ed. thesis, Durham, 1965), pp.78-9, 86, for further examples of the resistance of the school's trustees.

5 Laqueur, op.cit. p.241.

6 The following is based on an analysis of Wortley Greenside Methodist Sunday School Admittance Book 1822-39 (Leeds West Circuit Methodist Records, 40).

75 per cent of the school's parents in the 1820's, and a noticeable absence of middle-class, the school's clientele fairly accurately reflected the occupational structure of the township.¹ Secondly, the duration of children's stay at the school was remarkable. Compared to the rapid annual turnover of scholars at, for instance, Marshall's mill school, scholars at Greenside were on average, four years three months on the school roll.² Even allowing for inaccurate registering of entries and departures, the loyalty of Wortley children to the school, particularly between the ages of five and nine, is apparent. 74 per cent of scholars fell into this age category, and only eight per cent of all children left within a year. Thirdly, most of the children lived locally, and neither 'duration of stay', nor 'reasons for leaving' point to a mobile school population or a rapid turnover. Only 15.7 per cent of children were removed by their families either to leave the township or to begin an apprenticeship. This suggests a fairly low level of residential mobility among Greenside children, especially given that only a fraction (1.2 per cent) lived outside Wortley. Few were likely to attend the Sunday school once they had moved out of the neighbourhood. Finally, the sheer numbers of children passing through the school, adds to the evidence of the importance of Greenside Sunday school to the community. About one in four Wortley children attended the Sunday school in 1822. Greenside accounted for 55.9 per cent of all Sunday scholars in the township. It was larger than the Independent and Anglican Sunday schools counted together. In the first three decades of the nineteenth century almost 2500 children were enrolled at the school, from a population which grew from 2000 to nearly 6000.

One must hesitate, however, before deducing from the school's popularity that it was a working class institution. Sunday schools formed the earliest arenas of sectarian conflict in the out-townships. The denominations fell into three competing groups, the Leeds Parochial Sunday schools, the Leeds Sunday Schools Union, and those Dissenting schools, not in the Union. Wortley Greenside itself played its part in the Methodist revival which swept the clothing villages in 1819, 'when for several months together an uncommon religious Impression rested on the whole school.'³ When the new schoolroom, attached to the Methodist chapel, opened in 1822 it was described as 'a permanent, convenient and comfortable place where the poor Children

1 67.8 per cent of Wortley's occupied population were in textile manufacturing, mostly cloth-making, in 1841.

2 This is the median figure, a better measure of 'central tendency' than the arithmetic mean (5.7 years) which is distorted by extreme values at the top end of the frequency distribution. Ten per cent of children, for instance, were on the register for over ten years. Most, doubtless, were pupil teachers.

3 See above, Ch.3. p.103.

of Wortley... may be trained up for everlasting Glory'.¹ For the Methodists, the struggle for the souls of the children was paramount. Hymns were sung at the opening of the school by some scholars,

"Girls dressed in white and elevated on a platform, and their interesting Countenances could not fail to excite Sensations of pleasure in the Breasts of all who beheld them." (2)

It must however be asked whether the obvious popularity of the school among local clothiers and factory workers stemmed from the same source as that which motivated the school managers, the chance of educating their children in 'the Fear of God'. Some devout clothiers may have regarded Sunday schools as primarily religious institutions. There was a persistent and vocal Sabbatarian lobby in the out-townships to restrict secular teaching on Sundays. However, given the evidence we have for later working class attitudes towards denominational day schools, it seems likely that elementary education was the chief attraction of Leeds Sunday schools.

The best schools also functioned as community centres in a period when there were few public buildings in the suburbs. In few places in the North of England was a Sunday school more of a community institution than at Zion school in New Wortley. This non-sectarian school was the only one in the out-townships to be run under the auspices of the British and Foreign School Society. It provided the inhabitants of Wortley and Holbeck with an unparalleled range of activities. The Sunday school attracted 850 children to register on its opening in 1832. It taught basic literacy, despite the opposition of a few Sabbatarian trustees, to those working class children whose parents could not afford to do without their children's weekday earnings. Out of the success of the Sunday school, came the host of adult and youth educational activities which made Zion almost into a community within a community - the 'Zion people' as they called themselves.³ A Youth Guardians Society was established there in 1843, an Adult Mutual Improvement Class was begun in 1845, a reading room was added in the late 1840's, the Zion school mechanics' institute was established to run the evening school which had begun there privately, a Christmas Eve Club was established in 1856. Discussion classes, concerts, drama productions, tea-meetings and exhibitions were all part of the Zion social scene in the mid-Victorian era.⁴

The success of the Zion school undoubtedly consisted in reaching a wide range of the population both as consumers of Zion's activities

1 'A short account of the Wortley Methodist Sunday School' (1822), in Greenside School Admittance Book, op.cit.

2 Ibid.

3 Kilburne, op.cit.; see also Simon Frith, 'Socialization and rational schooling; elementary education in Leeds before 1870', in McCann, op.cit. pp.67-92.

and as its providers and organisers. A school class list of the occupations of masters and parents between 1835 and 1846 shows 64.6% to be in social class III, mostly independent clothiers, mechanics, weavers and over-lookers, but also brickmakers, shoemakers, butchers, tailors and cordwainers. The rest were in semi-skilled and lower paid jobs such as cloth and flax dressing, dyeing and labouring.¹ The social spread of these occupations fairly reflects the social structure of Wortley in 1851, though the lower middle class and the skilled artisans tend to predominate more in the school than they did in the population as a whole.

Middle class Associationists in Leeds in the 1840's saw their model in the Zion school. James Hole lectured at Zion, Smiles taught at the Sunday school in 1842 and drew on his experience there for his 'Self-help' book, and Edwin Gaunt, a future mayor of Leeds, was a pupil and later a teacher there.² It is hard to substantiate the claim that Zion became a totally working class school after the break with Associationism in the mid-fifties.³ Its head teacher attributed the 'gradual falling off' of the school in the late 1860's to a superfluity of resources and finance; 'we appeared to have got nearly everything we wanted, money was not so difficult to get.'⁴ Moreover, the ethics of self-help continued to have a grip on the leadership at Zion, and the Sunday school became increasingly involved in religious and temperance activities rather than education, particularly after the Band of Hope established itself at the school. The success of Zion as a community centre however was assured as long as it remained an energetic pioneer in the field of 'rational leisure'. It became the first school to give concerts in Leeds Town Hall, the first to introduce Penny Readings in the borough, the first to organise cheap railway excursions.⁵ The reading room was crowded out on winter evenings and when the weather was bad during the summer.

Zion maintained its popularity by providing an unsurpassed range of activities, making it far more than a Sunday school. The analysis of census and day school statistics also pointed to the importance of private schools in the out-townships. A large proportion of working class children related to the schools and teachers of their own immediate streets and neighbourhoods.⁶ Various Non-conformists sects did sometimes accommodate a day school under an independent master or

1 Calculated from the list in O'Keefe, op.cit. p.39.

2 Ibid. pp.62-4. On Associationism see J.F.C.Harrison, Learning and Living 1790-1960 (1961), pp.119-37.

3 O'Keefe, op.cit. p.77.

4 Kilburne, op.cit. p.39.

5 Ibid. pp.55-6.

6 On the importance of dame schools in a community see Johnson, Educational Policy, op.cit. p.219.

mistress in their chapel buildings. John Farrar taught in the bottom part of the Primitive Methodist chapel at Lower Wortley on weekdays in the mid-sixties. The United Methodists took over three rooms of an old cloth weaving shop about 1850 and used the top room for a Sunday school, the middle room for a chapel, and the bottom room for an infants' school.¹ In most cases the day schoolroom was rented and the chapel authorities contributed nothing to the maintenance of the school. Poor congregations were willing to let their Sunday schoolroom to anyone who chose to take on a day school on their own responsibility. However these schools, by being identified with a chapel, 'counterfeited the appearance of public institutions' and were 'apt to be mistaken for such.'²

Of the 41 teachers listed in the Wortley directories between 1849 and 1872, only 13 were teaching at government-inspected schools. Some, like the ladies' school at Greenside run by the sisters Holland, were well-established academies, respectable enough for the future wife of the President of the Leeds Property Owners' Association to attend.³ Others, such as the school held by Mrs Fearnley in her cottage on Bull Ring Hill, or the elementary school at Lower Wortley run by the lame ex-coal miner Luke Jowett Townsend and his wife, had less academic or social pretensions.⁴

Fitch thought the popularity of dame schools had much to do with working class anti-clericalism and anti-sectarianism. At a 'large meeting of working people in Leeds', he asked why so many parents seemed to prefer private to public schools.

"One speaker said strongly, 'it was because there was too much religion in the aided school', and the remark was very loudly and generally cheered.

... it is certain that there is a strong and very general feeling amongst the working people against any devices which seem to make the school an instrument for promoting what they regard as clerical or sectarian, as opposed to purely educational interests." (5)

Fitch suggested correctly that 'the mass of children who lie outside the sphere of either clergyman's or Dissenter's influence is far larger than is generally supposed.'⁶

Fitch's own figures indicated that about one in five Leeds children were in private schools.⁷ However in three out of four townships examined, less than half the census 'scholars' of 1871 were accounted for

1 William Benn, Wortley-de-Leeds (Leeds, 1926), pp.46-7; Leeds School Board, Report on the Educational Requirements, op.cit. Schedule E.

2 Fitch, op.cit. pp.92-3.

3 Benn, op.cit. pp.71-2.

4 Ibid. p.67.

5 Fitch, op.cit. p.106.

6 Ibid. p.112.

7 Ibid. p.110.

by the surveys of either Fitch in 1869 or the Leeds School Board in 1870. Certainly many of these 'scholars' were very transient pupils, nominally on a school roll, but usually spending their days at home, at work or on the streets. In a two hour walkabout in Leeds township Fitch himself counted about 900 children, apparently of school age, roaming the streets and courts. Many of these claimed they 'sometimes' went to school.¹

There is much evidence therefore to suggest that the importance of private schools was seriously understated by the official returns. Fitch acknowledged not only their popularity but also their value, at least in keeping the youngest children off the streets.

"Twenty little ones round a fire in a parlour are nearly as well off as six times that number in an infant school..... They are kept warm and safe and are kindly treated; and they generally learn to say their letters and to read a few little words." (2)

The working class support for such schools might be seen as the result of suburban anti-clericalism and the rejection of the institutionalised education provided by the churches. More significantly, perhaps, there was an element of class solidarity about such support, an awareness of community which was at once a nascent form of class consciousness. Private teachers were indisputably working class, more so than the well-educated teachers in large Sunday schools such as Zion, who had been brought up in the self help ethos. Some dames would be real local characters, such as Mrs Hawkins who ran a school 'at the bottom of Wapping Steps' in Lower Wortley, and whose husband, George, was the township 'sparrow catcher'.³ These teachers depended totally on the pence of their pupils. Private classes, for instance, held in the old Wortley National school by a mistress and her daughter, attracted an average of 130 children in the 1860's, including half-timers from the local clayworks and bricksheds. The children brought in a weekly income of about 36 shillings, and this was one of the largest schools, with a 'quasi-public character'.⁴ It was not much to ask mothers to send their younger children to a neighbour's school, if only for a few months. It would help the mistress out, and the children would pick up some education as well, instead of roaming the streets.

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., p.113. Shaw suggests a connection between the tradition of child-minding by dames and the prevalence of domestic cloth making in the out-townships. M.E.Shaw, 'The Childhood of the Working Class in the Leeds Area 1830-71', (unpublished M.Phil thesis, London, 1975), p.169.

3 Benn, op.cit. pp.68-9.

4 Fitch, op.cit. p.98.

Fitch implicitly recognised the real basis of the dame schools' popularity - their synthesis of class and community.

"As the schools are smaller they are more numerous and are also brought closer to the homes of the poor than any large public institutions could ever be. Any measure which interfered with the discretion of parents respecting the use of these little nurseries in their own streets would be felt by many, especially by the more tender and anxious mothers, to be a great hardship." (1)

Support for these schools persisted well into the Board school period. 15 were recorded in Wortley in the early 1880's. In an era of increasing public control of education, the tenacity with which the suburban working class held on to their schools was astonishing. Ann Scurr of Wortley noted in her diary in the summer of 1871;

"Irish Jimmy wife has been keeping a school in the wood, the School Board won't let her keep it, I suppose she is to send her children to school." (2)

In conclusion, it has been the premiss of this study of education, that schools formed one of the most important areas for conflict and consensus in suburban class relations. This study has fallen into three main sections. An analysis of school and census statistics showed, firstly, the continuing importance of Sunday schools well after 1850. Secondly it revealed the demographic and economic factors lying behind the decline of denominational schooling in the 1860's. Thirdly, by demonstrating that the increase in census 'scholars' was not matched by the performance of public voluntary and state-aided schools, it inferred the importance of private schools in the out-townships.

The examination of middle-class attitudes to schools illustrated the development of the theory of 'preventive education', from the factory discipline and rote-learning of Marshall's mill school in the 1820's, to the improved teaching of Farnley ironworks school in the 1850's. The failures of patronage were also noted, of the Church schools in Wortley Holbeck, Hunslet and Beeston through residential segregation and the lack of^a beneficent middle-class, and the divisive and sectarian paternalism of Gott in Armley. The class basis of the national education system was evinced at local level as Wesleyans oriented their schools to cater for the lower-middle and upper working class, and the 'Penny Nashes' educated the suburban poor.

1 Ibid. p.113.

2 Benn, op.cit. pp.68-9.

3 Ibid. p.88 entry for 14 Sept. 1872.

Finally, a number of schools were studied because they offered very different perspectives of themselves as 'community institutions'. Some, like Bramley National School and the Town and Sunday schools at Wortley, were successful in winning middle-class patronage and working class support. The defence of the school endowments in Wortley and Armley was based on a local patriotism cultivated by the mid-Victorian petty bourgeoisie, which genuinely raised the interest of community above class. On the other hand the huge popular success of the Wortley Sunday schools, the firm basis of these schools as community institutions, could not quite disguise the underlying class and sectarian differences between middle-class managers and working class parents. Only the private and dame schools, entirely free of middle class patronage or religious sectarianism, were true schools of the street, paid for and taught by the working class.

There were some very poor schoolchildren in the industrial suburbs. In the 1850's the Primitive Methodist Sunday school at Silver Royd Hill educated a handful of Wortley children whose reasons for non-attendance were regularly given as 'no cloase' and 'no shoes'.¹ The schools of the 1870's, such as those at Rodley and Beeston Hill, all recorded greatly fluctuating attendances affected by bad weather, haymaking, measles and fever epidemics, distances from home to school, dirty or inadequate clothing, and the expense of chalk and slates.²

It has been indicated above, that for crucial age groups, particularly ten and eleven year olds, access to schooling was dictated by family economic circumstances. Conversely, the free trade in education meant working class parents could influence attendance rates, the duration of stay, the quality of teaching and even the shape of the curriculum. Middle-class patronage, theories of education and social control, the deliberate construction of a school system graded by class, the struggle of localism against central authority, and the claims made for voluntary and state-aided schools in the name of religious sectarianism were all secondary to the task of winning working class support for schools as popular, community institutions.

The working class response to school provision was consistent. Parents wanted value for money when they sent their children to school.

- 1 Silver Road Hill Primitive Methodist Sunday School Register 1851-9. (Leeds West Circuit Methodist Records, 69).
- 2 Rodley Wesleyan Day School Log Book 1870-92; Beeston Hill St. Luke's Girls', Infants' and Boys' Schools, Log Books 1873-1914.

Day schools were in a marketplace where children moved freely from one to another. Given the short durations of attendances and the frequent interruptions by work, parents wanted schools which were cheap and easily accessible. The latter was particularly important for working parents with young children. They also demanded teaching of a good quality and a high yield - imaginative and creative, but not fanciful. Older children needed literacy and secular education, not Scripture memory work. Where the teaching was responsive to working class attitudes, however different were the views of patrons, a school might achieve success. But efficiency and good academic standards were not paramount. It is evident that the friendliness, homeliness and adequate instruction of the dame schools proved more attractive than the best organised 'Penny Nashes'. Neighbourliness still counted for much in the mid-Victorian suburbs.

Patronage could be successful where a community life was built up around a school. In Sunday schools, where the average duration of stay was several years, social life could form around the school in a way impossible for most day schools. In the latter, the position of the teacher was very important. He or she had to be preferably a local resident, or at least able to identify with working class parents, to win their loyalty. Schools, even when they were large public institutions generally attracted or deterred pupils on the strength of individual teachers. This was an extension of the principle - in abstract terms, a loyalty to class and community - which made dame schools so attractive.

The real 'success', however, of middle-class school provision, in terms of their educational theory, was the 'extent to which the ideology which the school embodied was accepted by the intended audience'.¹ Both the ideology and the degree of its acceptance, of course, changed as class relations developed. However the suburban working class consistently took what they wanted from school patronage and discarded the hegemonic aspects of education. Social control in the out-townships remained limited by the economic pressures on schools and the need for working class support. The ability to make a school into a 'community institution' lay ultimately in working class hands.

1 David Vincent, Bread, Knowledge and Freedom (1981), p.134.

CHAPTER 6: CRIME, LEISURE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Just as suburban attitudes towards community were being newly articulated in class terms by the 1830s, so too were attitudes towards law and order and social control.¹ If social control is interpreted as the means by which the middle class attempted to convert the working class to its set of values and beliefs, then clearly those means were the products of class relationships.² In the out-townships the most important agencies of social control during early industrialization were the Methodist chapels and Sunday schools. As has been argued above, such institutions were the material symbols of communities of interest within the out-township bourgeoisie.³ They were the channels through which the wealthiest gentlemen, merchants and millowners could exercise their prerogatives of patronage and paternalism. They were also the means by which the shopkeepers and small employers could express their loyalty to a particular religious creed, and to their locality.⁴ For all groups within the middle class these institutions also served as agencies of social control in their relations with the suburban working class. Through chapel worship and school-teaching the middle class found modes of organising and propagating their beliefs and values to a largely working class audience.⁵

The concomitant of this package of values presented for working class consumption was the coercive means by which deviancy from these values or norms was monitored and punished. The agents of coercion, the police, yeomanry, special constabulary and the army cannot be divided from the concept of social control.⁶ Certainly the police were imposing a form of social discipline when they swept the streets for drunkards and raided Leeds lodging houses and dancing rooms on Saturday nights. They were the sharp end of the instrument by which all agencies of social control, both passive and active, voluntary and coercive, attempted to impose new norms of behaviour on the working class.⁷ The degree of coercion required from the forces of law and order was

1 See above, ch.2, p.87.

2 A.P.Donajgrodzki, ed., Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain, (1977); F.M.L. Thompson, 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', ECHR XXXIV (1981), 189-208.

3 See above, ch.5, p.288.

4 Ibid. p.290.

5 R.Q. Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh (Oxford, 1976), p.8. On education and social control in the out-townships, see above ch.5, pp.313-19.

6 Thompson, op.cit., appears to make this division.

7 Robert D. Storch, the 'Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880'. Journal of Social History Vol.9 (1976), 481-509.

ascertained by the degree to which the working class deviated from these norms. The degree of deviancy reflected the relative success or failure of education, religion, rational recreation and the other means of social control.

One early task was to redefine crime and to create an habitually deviant class of criminals, drunkards, vagabonds and prostitutes from the lowest layers of the urban lumpenproletariat.¹ Another was to divide 'rough' from 'respectable' culture,² and to create 'conventicles of respectability', self-sustaining 'moralised' groups of workers, particularly from the ranks of skilled 'mechanics', who would adhere to 'correct' social values.³ The successful socialization of the working class was the prize, the process whereby the workers would learn the 'rules and practices', not of their own peer group,⁴ but of the middle-class world.

These concepts of social control and socialization do assume some degree of class conflict within the early Victorian suburbs. The evidence for that has been marshalled above.⁵ They do not necessarily imply a conspiracy on behalf of the middle-class. Nor do they assume that the imposition of values and beliefs on the working class did not meet with resistance, or was ever accepted.⁶ Here there are perhaps three general points to be made. Firstly, despite the enormous material resources at the disposal of the urban bourgeoisie, the cards were stacked against them. Above all their view of the working class as a passive, malleable object, and popular culture as formless and devoid of content, robbed most middle-class reformers and social observers of any chance to understand the real character and dimensions of their task.⁷

Secondly, although certain influential public figures, such as Dr. Hook, did conceive of schools and churches as part of a broad campaign to civilise the suburban working class, generally systems of

1 J.J. Tobias, Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century (1967), pp.52-5; Jennifer Davis, 'The London Garotting Panic of 1862: A Moral Panic and the Creation of a Criminal Class in mid-Victorian England', in V.A.C. Gatrell et.al. eds. Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500 (1980), pp.190-213.

2 John Field, 'Police, Power and Community in a Provincial English Town: Portsmouth 1815-1875', in Victor Bailey ed., Policing and Punishment in Nineteenth Century Britain(1981), pp. 42-64.

3 A.P. Donajgrodzki, 'Introduction', in Donajgrodzki, op.cit. p.18.

4 Here again I differ from Thompson op.cit.

5 See above esp. ch.3, pt.1.

6 V.A.C. Gatrell, 'The Decline of Theft and Violence in Victorian and Edwardian England', in Gatrell et.al. op.cit. pp.238-370.

7 R.J.Morris, 'Organisation and Aims of the Principal Secular Voluntary Organisations of the Leeds Middle Class 1830-51', (unpubd. D.Phil., Oxford, 1970), pp.55-9.

social control were more often the produce of makeshift policies rather than any uniform planning.¹

Thirdly, a 'rampant localism' permeated middle-class systems of social control.² As argued above, the defence of community institutions against the centralising authority of municipal or national government was one means by which the suburban middle-class, and increasingly the petty bourgeoisie, reconciled their internally divisive sectarianism and their unifying local patriotism by the middle of the nineteenth century. For the purposes of policing, provincial communities all over England continued to be 'defined locally and regulated locally' until well after 1856.³ Community policing is found to have been frail where no community accountability was secured.⁴ In the 1850's that accountability remained firmly where it always had been, in the pockets of local ratepayers and property owners.⁵

(i)

Crime and Policing in Town and Suburb

Communal control of poverty, juvenile delinquency and criminality remained the key to law and order in the clothing villages in the first half of the nineteenth century. Before the 1830's in Leeds township, and before the 1850's in the out-townships, there was no central uniformed police force. The resources were not available to identify and control socially deviant behaviour on a massive scale. The interpretation of what constituted deviancy depended therefore not only on middle-class perceptions of working class conduct, but on the resources available to control that conduct.

The middle-class were further constrained, as in other areas of activity, by their need to defend local interests against what they saw as the encroachment of central authority. Thus a priority of the large out-township employers was to retain control over the forces of law and order. As ratepayers it was above all important to be able to monitor the level of the watch rate, and to get value for money. Constables and pounders, though appointed by the Justices, were nominated and paid for by the township meetings. Most were local men, artisans, shopkeepers and small employers, the very groups who were

1 Victor Bailey, 'Introduction', in Bailey, op.cit. p.18.

2 Ibid. p.15.

3 Carolyn Steedman, Policing the Victorian Community: the formation of the English Provincial Police Forces 1856-80 (1984), p.8.

4 Field, op.cit.

5 Steedman, op.cit. pp.59-63.

governing the out-townships in the 1840's, and from whose ranks emerged the petty-bourgeois leaders of the mid and late Victorian suburbs.

From the 1780's there was increasing concern among suburban property owners about drunkenness, vagrancy and felonies. Bramley town meeting in 1783 proclaimed that sobriety was the key to an orderly society. It announced a campaign against drunkenness and delinquency, a close monitoring of beerhouses, and rewards for information leading to convictions for 'tipling, drunkenness, swearing or irregularity'.¹ In the mid-1820's Beeston vestry applied for a lock-up and appointed a special constable to bring 'deprecators to justice'.² Although community control of vagrants, delinquents, criminals and the poor became in effect the social control of one class by another, there was no sudden departure from the traditional communal context of policing in the out-townships. While middle-class property owners did sometimes resort to extra measures, such as appointing a special constabulary to aid village pounders, control usually remained in local hands.

At times of major strikes or political unrest however, the enforcement of law and order might pass from local to central authority, from the township meeting to borough magistrates or the military authorities. At the start of the Luddite disturbances of 1812 for instance, property owners of 'several districts' within Leeds formed associations and swore in special constables for their 'mutual security'. This was followed by a general call-up of all adult males in townships across the West Riding, for duties under the Watch and Ward Act.³ When the threat of armed violence increased however, regular troops were brought out as a show of force.⁴

Leeds was a garrison town. During the Croppers' protests and reform campaigns of 1817-19 the Mayor made full use of the military to intimidate workers and suppress demonstrations. 500 hussars were drilled weekly during the unemployed protests of June 1819, and in the

- 1 Bramley Town Book, 6 July, 7 July, 12 July, 13 Nov. 1783.
- 2 Beeston Township Minutes, 17 Sept. 1823, 9 June 1824, 26 Oct. 1825.
- 3 LI, 3 Feb. 20 Apr. 1812. Drafting workers as special constables on threat of dismissal was of course frequently used by employers as a means of controlling a volatile labour force in times of crisis. See for example NS, 22 Apr. 1848.
- 4 LI, 13 July, 20 July, 27 July 1812. For magistrates' proclamations under the Watch and Ward Act, and for details of troop movements in the Leeds area see PRO, HO 42/121-122, Letters and Papers, March-April 1812, especially the numerous letters of Col. Campbell, garrison commander at Leeds.

weeks following Peterloo, dragoons were 'marched and countermarched' in the streets of Leeds.¹ During the Plug riots in 1842 troops were poured into Leeds by railway from all over the north of England. Infantry, fusiliers, hussars, as well as the artillery and lancers already garrisoned at Leeds probably numbered 1500 in addition to over 2000 special constables sworn in. The sheer size of the military presence, possibly even outnumbering the plug drawing crowds, seems to have helped contain the strike movement.²

Generally however the authorities in Leeds were reluctant to call on Military support, particularly from the local garrison. Soldiers might be vulnerable to sedition from radical agitators, and their loyalties were commonly suspect where they fraternised with the locals.³ In 1819 for instance, the army district commander warned his officers of attempts to circulate 'mischievous papers' among the soldiers.⁴ In the summer of 1844 Irish infantrymen brawling with police triggered off a 'mass uprising' in Leeds. Local inhabitants joined the side of the soldiers for three days of street fighting, in one of the largest anti-police riots of the century.⁵

In most industrial disputes therefore it was the police who were called out, supplemented in extreme circumstances by special constabulary. Even before the new municipal 'Peelers' of 1836, local constables, paid for out of the watch rates and based in Leeds court-house, were used by millowners to protect their strikebreakers and to arrest trade unionists, pickets and agitators.⁶ The first chief inspector of the new Leeds police force was himself assaulted by a labourer on a picket line, while still an ordinary constable of the old watch.⁷ Their role of defending blacklegs inevitably drew the

1 LM, 5 June, 21 Aug. 1819; Papers Relative to the Internal State of the Country PP (1819-20) IV, 215, Letters from Mayor Banks to Earl Fitzwilliam, 25 Aug, 27 Aug. 1819.

2 See above ch.3, p.114. Such a mixture of troops and specials was used again in the Fenian scare of 1866. LM, 17 Mar.1866.

3 Cf. NS, 8 Apr. 1848.

4 LM, 14 Aug. 1819.

5 LM, 15 June 1844; John Mayhall, The Annals of Yorkshire, Vol.I. (1859), pp 505-6; Robert D. Storch, 'The Plague of Blue Locusts; Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England 1840-57, International Review of Social History 20 (1975), 61-90. Three months earlier there had been an 'orange versus green' riot within Leeds barracks involving the same Irish soldiers and some artillerymen. LM, 9 Mar. 1844.

6 The Lighting and Watching Act of 1833 allowed parish ratepayers to organise their own police forces, independent of magistrates. Clive Emsley, Policing and its Context 1750-1870 (1983), pp.67-9.

7 This was James Child. LM, 10 Aug. 1833.

police into physical conflict with strikers and their supporters, and moulded police attitudes to the labour movement. This role was only reinforced by the reforms of 1836 and 1856. A constable guarding Kitson's during the Hunslet boilermakers' strike of 1851 was assaulted.¹ Uniformed police were to be found escorting blacklegs during the iron-workers' lock-out of 1864 and confronting pickets at Leeds collieries during the miners' strike of 1868.² In their economic role as defenders of the interests of local employers the police revealed most clearly which side in class conflict they were on. However their strength must not be exaggerated. During the boilermakers' strike for instance, a single constable at times faced up to 500 pickets. There were several cases of blacklegs not relying on the police for protection and arming themselves for self-defence.³ Nevertheless the persistent police presence during strikes and lock-outs helped fuel the resentment of the Leeds working class.

The impact of the police in industrial disputes went beyond the straightforward defence of capital and strikebreaking labour. Firstly, the mobility of the Leeds constabulary and their widespread deployment throughout the borough during the worst strike waves helped to enhance the middle-class fear of industrial violence. The Leeds Trades Union claimed in 1834 that the employers' tactic of filling factory yards with constables during lock-outs was a 'manoeuvre' to make it appear there was a threat to property from trade unionists.⁴ On the contrary, the workers' conduct had shown,

"that neither military power nor special constables were required, that they were not so mad as to burn down factories and have their hard earnings to pay in poor rates..." (5)

Secondly, the conduct of police on picket lines was geared to generating a self-discipline among protesting workers, and to removing the threat of physical violence. When the Leeds police arrived to defend Haley's mill in Bramley in 1834, the huge crowd in front of the mill ceased to break windows and 'contented themselves with hissing, hooting, baaing etc.'⁶ Striking weavers at Morley were arrested 'for encouraging children to throw stones and otherwise annoying the workmen.'⁷ The short term effect of such police actions was to increase local solidarity during disputes. In both clothing and mining villages

1 LM, 15 Nov. 1851.

2 LM, 7 June 1864, 16 May 1868.

3 LM, 29 Nov. 1851.

4 LM, 17 May 1834.

5 LM, 7 June 1834.

6 LM, 5 Apr. 1834.

7 LM, 20 July 1833.

strikers released from custody or from gaol were greeted as heroes by processions and bands of music. Resentment against the police built up quickly in such communities. The police were not only engaged in nullifying strike tactics, they were also challenging the communal nature of protest, the right of a whole community to express its abhorrence at strikebreakers. Thus bleating and 'baaing' at 'black sheep' and 'knobsticks' was frequently regarded as intimidation and sufficient grounds for arrest.¹

The appearance of the new police in 1836 crystallized working class resentment. The Leeds police force was a creation of the reformed corporation and its watch committee. Its area of operation was confined to the townships of Leeds and Hunslet, which in 1843 were divided into three night-beats for more efficient policing.² Other districts within the borough retained the old parish constabulary financed by township rates. Not until the Police Act of 1856 was the borough police force finally extended to the out-townships. At least 16 suburban police stations, mostly converted cottages, were opened between 1857 and 1862.³ The police force, which had numbered 145 in 1852, rose to 220 by 1858 and 256 by 1864. Approximately two-thirds of these were assigned to night-duty.⁴ Leeds however remained relatively underpoliced compared with other major cities. The ratio of police to population was twice as great in Manchester and three times higher in Liverpool in 1852.⁵ By 1861 the gap had narrowed only slightly, and of the six largest cities outside London, Leeds had the lowest number of police per head of population.⁶

The expansion of the new police force did however have a considerable impact on class relations in Leeds and its out-townships. It provoked violent opposition from the working class who regarded the police as intruders. Assaults on policemen, outside of those occurring during strikes, were not infrequent in any period after 1836. In Hunslet there was 'great animosity' towards them, which turned into a riot in 1843 when constables attempted to interfere in Hunslet Feast.⁷

1 LM, 29 June 1833.

2 Ewart W. Clay ed. The Leeds Police 1836-1974 (Leeds, 1974) p.24.

3 Ibid. App.2.

4 Figures from SC on Police, 1st Report, PP (1852-3) XXXVI, evidence of Capt. W.C. Harris, Q.123; T. Fenteman, An Historical Guide to Leeds and its Environs (Leeds, 1858), p.17; Bramley Almanac for 1864.

5 Calculated from SC on Police, op.cit., Summary of the number of constables, pp.11-12.

6 V.A.C. Gatrell, and T.B. Hadden, 'Criminal Statistics and their Interpretation', in E.A. Wrigley ed., Nineteenth Century Society (Cambridge, 1972), pp.336-96.

7 LT, 19 Aug. 1843, cited by Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', 86.

In 1852 a constable was beaten unconscious as he attempted to break up a fight involving six men on Hunslet Moor.¹ In Leeds as well as nationally, the crime statistics reached a peak in the 1860's, and the number of assaults on policemen also seem to have been at their highest level in the 1860's and 1870's.² This has been related to an increase in drunkenness in this period - between 1858 and 1876 cases of drunkenness doubled.³ The police remained deeply unpopular in townships such as Beeston in the 1870's,⁴ but by the end of the century the level of violence against them had probably subsided. Despite the prominence of constables in the industrial struggles of the new unions, and the use of troops in the gasworkers' strike of 1890, there is surprisingly little mention of the Leeds police in the Labour press of the time.

Working class resistance to police incursions was probably greater in the intownship slums than in the suburban villages, as well as being territorially more closely defined. In April and May 1841 Jelinger Symons, on behalf of the Children's Employment Commission, made two tours of the rookeries, alleys, brothels and lodging houses off Kirkgate, accompanied on both occasions by policemen.⁵ Symons' report provides a rare glimpse of the twilight world of the working class in central Leeds, as well as indirectly illustrating their relations with the police.

There were four types of reaction from those in the beerhouses and lodging houses. Firstly, there was a total silence as the visitors walked in. This occurred in the dancing rooms above beerhouses. The effect must have been startling, because the major feature of this entertainment was to dance in clogs to music and to make the maximum possible noise. Drinking, though the primary focus of police interest, was only a secondary activity. The main purpose of these dancing rooms was for girls and boys to meet in the evening.

The second reaction was to clear out as quickly as possible on sight of the police. This happened in a few of the beerhouses visited by Symons when accompanied by Inspector Childs. Symons claimed that

- 1 LI, 22 May 1852.
- 2 Gatrell, op.cit. pp.279-84; Storch, 'Policeman as Domestic Missionary', appendix.
- 3 Gatrell and Hadden, op.cit. pp.369-70; S.C. on Habitual Drunkards, PP(1872), X, evidence of James Weatherell, Q.2459; John Holmes, 'Summary of the State of the Classes in 1878', in McCorquodale and Co., Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds(Leeds, 1878), p.54.
- 4 Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', p.90.
- 5 R.C. on the Employment of Children in Trades and Manufactures, Appendix to the Second Report, pt.I, PP(1843) XIV, Report by Jelinger C. Symons on the Iron Works and other Trades in Leeds and the West Riding, E.33-42 (hereafter Symons' Report). The tours are described in paragraphs 62-80.

the beerhouses with most thieves were 'most comfortable and of higher pretension than those which merely working classes frequented.' This however may have been partly a police-imposed distinction, a product of police attitudes. Generally, recognised criminals and ordinary workers mixed company. In the police mind however there was already by 1841 a 'criminal class' in Leeds and beerhouses were marked as dangerous places after several assaults there on police.

The third reaction, in several lodging houses and beerhouses, was to abuse the police. Noticeably the obscenities were always recorded from women not men. A final reaction was a submissive apathy or dejection, the response in the poorest, disease-stricken houses of the township. An 'emaciated and miserable' widow of a hawker who had been beaten to death by robbers a few days earlier, opened her door in rags to let in the watchman accompanying Symons. 'On walking in the watchman cast his light into a little hole where he said stolen goods were sometimes hidden.'¹ For this policeman the widow's personal circumstances were less relevant than her place on the fringe of the criminal class. Such an incident helps explain why women were the first to abuse the police. As housewives they were in the frontline of the police encroachment on working class areas, in the rookeries of Leeds township, or the terraces of Hunslet.

In the 1830's and 1840's working class opposition to the new police was articulated by local Chartists and Radicals. As early as 1837 Fergus O'Connor had championed the case of a Leeds Irishwoman who alleged police brutality.² In the aftermath of the anti-police riots of June 1844, Chartist councillors, backed by a public meeting, moved to disband the police force.³ Chartists consistently argued in council for making both the watch committee and the police more accountable to the press and the public.

"The public regard the police simply as instruments of force... They know that men of superior character will not enter the police force unless compelled by want." (4)

Chartists were also able to appeal to a latent lower middle class opposition to the expense of the police force. In his address of 1849 to Holbeck burgesses, Joseph Barker claimed that out-townships such as Bramley and Wortley did not want police on the rates. Those property-owners who did, should follow the example of their counterparts in Headingley where they paid for a watchman out of private subscriptions.⁵

1 Ibid.

2 Derek Fraser, 'Politics in Leeds 1830-52', (unpublished PhD thesis, Leeds, 1969), pp.200-1.

3 NS, 22 June 1844.

4 The People II, 55, 18.

5 The People, II, 53, 2-3.

Barker did not deny that there was a crime problem in the suburbs, but he argued that the answer lay in curing unemployment and poverty, not in increasing the police force.

In the out-townships influential sections of the petty-bourgeoisie regarded the Leeds police as another encroachment on local independence. As with other costs of central authority, suburban politicians often found easy popularity in claiming their townships were disproportionately loaded with rate demands. In 1837 several out-townships joined in petitioning the corporation about the burden of nightly watch and police expenses.¹ On the eve of the police bill of 1856 Beeston vestry was checking the cost of a local constabulary.² In 1864 Bramley Almanac, a mouthpiece of petty-bourgeois opinion in that township, calculated that Bramley was paying £200 a year more for the upkeep of Leeds police than the township constabulary alone cost.³ It was only with the triumph of the economy party in Leeds between 1878 and 1893 and the subsequent freezing of police numbers, that complaints about their cost declined.⁴

Any desire by property-owners to keep the rates low was however tempered by the realities of suburban crime. As well as arousing both working class and petty bourgeois opposition, the new police force also seems to have increased suburban awareness of criminality. Police activity and the increase in recorded crime appears to have reinforced the middle-class belief in the habitually criminal element within the working class, a belief which had developed rapidly in the 1820's. In this context the new police can perhaps best be regarded as a self-fulfilling justification of the fears of the middle-class for social order in the out-townships. 'Delinquents' fleeing the town centre for the suburbs in the wake of police action provoked a petition from Headingley residents in 1836 to have the force extended to their township.⁵ In 1841 property-owners in Bramley established a Society for the Prosecution of Felons, with, appropriately a local solicitor as their secretary.⁶ The construction of Armley gaol in 1847, at a cost of £47,000, provided a permanent reminder to the suburban working class of the ultimate sanction of the law - incarceration and the hangman's

1 Wortley Township Minutes, 18 Jan. 1837.

2 Beeston Township Minutes, 12 July 1855.

3 Bramley Almanac for 1864.

4 E.P. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons (1973), p.223.

5 Clay, op.cit. p.14, On the problems of a mobile criminal population, see Tobias, op.cit. pp.67-70.

6 William White, Directory of the Borough of Leeds (Sheffield, 1857).

rope. With its castellated walls and its 'noble appearance', it occupied a prominent position overlooking the terraces, cottages and fields of Wortley, Beeston and Holbeck.¹

Expenditure on policing was sanctioned when the circumstances dictated it. In 1836 Wortley vestry agreed to supply all eight of its constables with staves and handcuffs, a sign of a new efficiency.² In the early 1820's, in the midst of a wave of delinquency, Beeston vestry pressed for a lock-up to be built in the township.³ A committee of 18 burgesses was appointed to fight crime, and each invested with the powers of a constable. Rewards were offered for information on crimes, and handbills posted warning inhabitants of

"idle and disorderly persons loitering on footpaths so as to obstruct and insult passengers - throwing stones and other missiles, braking (sic) windows, committing trespasses upon lands, braking fences, destroying trees, firing pistols, guns, squibs, crackers and other fireworks with other species of wanton and malicious mischiefs - Dogfighting, not only by partys residing in the township, but others from a distance..." (4)

This amounted to more than a perennial attempt to enforce the township bye-laws. The leading farmers, woolstaplers, coal masters and mill-owners were intent to criminalise and control local delinquency and certain traditional popular leisure activities. How much crime however was there in the out-townships?

Unfortunately there is a dearth of criminal statistics for the industrial suburbs, not least because the Leeds magistrates' records do not distinguish between areas within Leeds.⁵ The only detailed table which includes a breakdown of suburban offenders is that compiled by the Town Council in 1839.⁶ This gives a very optimistic picture of suburban crime. The out-townships together accounted for only 15 per cent of offenders brought before Leeds magistrates between 1830 and 1838, while in 1831 they comprised more than 42 per cent of the borough population. Most obviously this was the effect of the in-township orientated watch and the territorial jurisdiction of the new police. It would seem likely that the bulk of the 2300 out-township residents

1 William Slade and D.I. Roebuck, Directory of the Borough of Leeds (1851).

2 Wortley Township Minutes, 22 Sept. 1836.

3 Beeston Township Minutes, 9 Oct. 1823.

4 Ibid. 26 Oct. 1825.

5 See for instance Leeds Justices Minutes Book, 1848-56, LC/J2A; Leeds Justices Court Register 1849-54, LC/J11; Leeds Quarter Sessions Order and Indictment Books 1844-99, LC/QS.

6 Statistical Committee of Leeds Town Council, 'Report Upon the Condition of the Town of Leeds and its Inhabitants', JSSL II (1839-40), 397-424..

brought before the Leeds magistrates were caught committing an offence in the town, particularly being drunk. The enormous increase in offences in 1836-7 were largely accounted for by prosecutions of persons drunk and disorderly.¹ This is testimony to the eagerness of the new police to tackle the drinking habits of the working population first. In Leeds township there were more than 450 inns and beerhouses in 1838, or about one to every 180 inhabitants. The committee of the council admitted that

"with regard to the quality of the offences, it does not appear that the increase in those of a serious nature has been at all great." (2)

The police themselves therefore seemed to be extending the boundaries of criminality.³ This great campaign against intemperance however was probably another factor in the relatively small proportion of out-township offenders. The new police scarcely had the resources to tackle cases of disorderly conduct by drunks at fairly isolated inns on the suburban highways. In its analysis of criminal statistics the committee related the nature of the offence directly to social class and neighbourhood. It claimed that 'certain classes are more addicted to intemperance and dissipation than others', and that the immorality and bad habits of persons within these classes 'operate most unfavourably upon the general character of their respective neighbourhoods. In its tabulation of the major occupations of Leeds offenders, the committee was concerned to pick out those numerous artisan groups from which a greater degree of respectability might be expected. Neither cloth dressers nor croppers, labourers, colliers, soldiers and vagrants could be expected to behave better, but this was not true of clothiers, weavers, blacksmiths, tailors, joiners, butchers and bricklayers. Implicitly the committee had, like the police, dissected the urban working class into the 'roughs' and the potentially 'respectables'.

Partly this entailed an assumption of the negative effects of urban living. In the dense courtyards and alleyways of Leeds, surrounded by the menace of drink and immorality, factory girls tended, by a cumulative process, to moral degeneration and eventual prostitution. They were contrasted starkly with the 'seemly' behaviour and 'decorous' deportment of the 'mill-girls from the country, within three or four miles from Leeds'. The suburban working class were thus portrayed as

1 Prosecutions for drunk and disorderly conduct in 1836 were 100 per cent greater than the average of 1830-5. Calculated from Table D, *ibid.*

2 *Ibid.*

3 Wilbur R. Miller, Cops and Bobbies, (Chicago, 1977), p.45. My thanks to Dr. Victor Bailey for this reference.

poor but industrious for the purposes of comparison with the lumpenproletariat of the inner city slums.

The committee of the Town council, the new police force and Commissioner Symons were all preoccupied with the problems of the inner city. The contradictions in this fictitious portrayal of the suburban workforce were of course clear to anyone who examined the out-townships more closely. When Dr Hook considered the plight of Anglican religion and education in the borough, he could only see the 'barbarism' of the industrial suburbs.¹ Suburban delinquency and crime were increasingly regarded as a problem by the Leeds middle-class after 1815. The Leeds press wrote of 'winter campaigns of robbery and depredation in the immediate post-war years.'² There was an enormous 380 per cent increase in the number of prosecutions at county sessions between 1821 and 1832.³ The rise in recorded crime most likely reflected improvements in detection than anything else.⁴ However, for most of the period 1815-50 the out-townships and large manufacturing villages around Leeds, such as, Pudsey and Morley, were regarded as places with peculiarly semi-rural patterns of criminal behaviour.

The post-war crime wave was fostered by widespread poverty and high unemployment aggravated by discharged soldiers and the failure of the woollen trade. In Leeds intownship this manifested itself particularly in an increase in vagrancy. There was talk of 'cleansing the Augean stable'. The council's 'anti-vagrancy' campaign combined closing lodging houses and establishing an 'institution for the suppression of vagrancy', with a public works scheme involving the construction of public baths, a gas works and the extension of the public markets.⁵ Vagrancy was less obvious in the out-townships where there were few lodging houses to attract the traveller and few public buildings to shelter the loiterer. Instead poaching was a notable problem, particularly in Farnley Wood until it was cut down for arable land after mid-century.⁶ Two clothiers from Armley were caught poach-

1 W.R.W. Stephens, The Life and Letters of Walter Farquhar Hook (6th edn, 1881), p.465.

2 LM, 30 Sept. 1815.

3 Accounts of the Several Sums received for County Rates by the Treasurers of Counties in England and Wales 1821-32, PP (1833) XXXII, 1, no.40, York / West Riding.

4 David Philips, Crime and Authority in Victorian England (1977).

5 LM, 9 Jan. 1819.

6 John Stones, Wortley; Past and Present (Leeds, 1887), p.17. The survival of 400 acres of native wood in Farnley was attributed by Allen to 'the aristocratical genius of the place.' Thomas Allen, A History of the County of York, vol.IV (1831), p.447.

ing small game at Chapel Allerton manor in 1817 and poachers were still a source of concern on Gott's Armley estate in the late 1830's.¹ On both sides of the municipal boundary in the 1840's the inhabitants of Farnley and Horsforth were still violating the Game Laws, while in Armley 'a fresh class' of suburban offenders had 'sprung up', disbanded railway labourers who stole from local allotments and vegetable gardens.²

Certain crimes such as petty theft and burglary were of course universal. However here too a distinction might be drawn between urban and suburban types of crime. Much evidence of housebreaking by gangs and petty thieving by children points to some form of criminal underworld based in the Leeds rookeries. A 'nest of thieves' of about 20 housebreakers, was rounded up by the new Leeds police in July 1840 in one of their earliest successes against organised crime.³ Housebreakers however were quite mobile. In 1857 a woman was caught at Beeston hill with a skeleton key to several houses in the neighbourhood.⁴ Children were particularly useful both as pickpockets and as handlers of stolen goods. In 1852 a 12 year old boy received six weeks gaol with flogging for 'swindling' a Hunslet linen draper of five silk handkerchiefs.⁵ The chaplain of Armley gaol pointed to the 'duckstalls' of Leeds market as a training ground for young thieves. The Fagin-like stall keepers rewarded their children with 'ducks', spiced meatballs in gravy, for pilfering local shops or picking pockets. The small articles collected, hankies, tobacco boxes, watches, were passed through the network of pawn shops in the town centre.⁶ For most juvenile thieves however, it was probably true that crime remained only a bye-employment, or a means of surviving through periods of unemployment.⁷ There was less juvenile crime of this nature in the suburbs. Warehouse burglaries and cloth stealing were more characteristic, though here too there may have been some organised means of disposing of stolen property.⁸

Criminal assaults also occurred throughout the borough but again they might take a form appropriate to their specific locality. In the out-townships assaults frequently took the form of muggings by footpads,

1 LM, 11 Oct. 1817; Gott Ms. 193, Family Papers, 2/11, B. Banester to B. Gott, Jan. 1837.

2 The People II, 53.

3 Symons' Report, op.cit., evidence of John Stubbs, no.5.

4 LM, 17 Mar. 1857.

5 LT, 20 Mar. 1852.

6 S.C. On Criminal and Destitute Children, PP (1852-3) XXIII, evidence of Rev. G.B. de Renzi, Qs. 1998-2006.

7 Tobias, op.cit. pp.140-1.

8 Stones, op.cit. p.17; LM, 25 Aug. 1838, 7 May 1859, for examples of such burglaries.

or 'highway robberies' as the Victorian press called them. Suburban clothiers on their long way home from the cloth market with their earnings were particularly vulnerable, and a local railway service did little to reduce such attacks. In the 1850's as attacks became more vicious and knives were sometimes used on victims, they became commonly known as garotting robberies.¹

Attacks by gangs of youths were common in both urban and suburban areas. About 20 juveniles, for instance, formed the 'Marsh Lane Black Troop' in 1817, and this notorious area of the in-township gave particular trouble to the police in the 1840's.² However in the suburbs and townships surrounding Leeds such gangs took on the form of clans with strong local identities. These incorporated both the traditional sectarianism of their clothier communities and an overriding loyalty to the locality in its defence against outsiders. In Pudsey for instance there were rival clans within the village in the 1820's, who, though fiercely hostile to each other, would join forces under the title of 'Pudsey Blacks' in order to fight gangs from elsewhere.³ At the end of the century in Bramley the streets and yards still formed tight-knit communities with their rival youth gangs, the 'Waterloo Lane Abdabs' and the 'Gowsha Wildcats'.⁴

A number of categories of crime therefore, vagrancy, poaching, housebreaking, burglary and petty theft, robbery with violence and common assault, tended to take particular urban or suburban forms, forms of crime specific to the locality in which they were committed. These distinctions of course cannot be pushed too far. However it is nevertheless true that the attitude of the authorities, township officials, social reformers, employers and the police themselves, were at least partly conditioned by the nature of the criminality they faced in a community. In Leeds therefore there could be little standardization of the bourgeois response to working class criminality as a whole, while large areas of the borough remained devoid of the typical manifestations of urban crime.

Prostitution is perhaps the clearest example of this urban-suburban division. As the Statistical Committee of 1839 pointed out, it

1 LM, 6 Nov. 1819, 20 Dec. 1851, 14 Jan. 1858; Davis, op.cit.

2 LM, 8 Nov. 1817; LT, 9 Sept. 1843.

3 Joseph Lawson, Progress in Pudsey (Stanningley, 1887), ch.XI.

4 Pauline Kirk, 'When the Community Spirit kept Bramley Going', YEP, 31 Jan. 1985. My thanks to Prof. M.W. Beresford for this reference.

was almost solely a phenomenon of the inner city. 98 brothels were counted in Leeds township, 72 of which were in the three poorest and most densely populated wards.¹ A direct connection was seen between physical and moral hygiene, between the 'filthy streets' and the 'laxity of domestic discipline'.² Young factory girls frequenting the beerhouses off Kirkgate were thought to be most at risk, and the police regarded themselves as much as moral guardians, as well as enforcers of the law.³ 35 'prostitutes' were arrested in a police sweep of the Albion Lane-Boar Lane area in 1858.⁴ By contrast, there is no evidence of large-scale prostitution in the clothing out-townships.

In some respects drunkenness was also an urban problem. This is not because there was more drunkenness in the in-township. There is no evidence that there was. Suburban beerhouses were certainly harassed from time to time by magistrates.⁵ The temperance movement also kept a keen vigil on opening hours, though the drink lobby was powerful enough in some township vestries to keep it at bay.⁶ It was the 'moving on' tactic of the new Leeds police of 1836 which provided the major contrast with suburban control of drunkenness. Systematically clearing the streets of drunks, vagrants and loiterers had a greater impact on urban street life in the inner-city, than the repeated attempts by vestries to arrest and fine for disorderly conduct had on suburban communities. In the out-townships drunken youths could avoid the pounder by going to the fields to brawl. In the in-township there were only the streets, yards and ginnels, and the threat of police patrols.

With the singular exception of Storch, most historians of Victorian policing have confined their discussion of 'moving on' to the specific problems of vagrancy and street hawkers.⁷ The order to 'move-on' was clearly much wider than this, and consequently of greater sociological importance. 'Moving on' invoked the deepest opposition to the police, for it endangered the very existence of community life in the streets of Leeds, Holbeck and Hunslet.⁸ It took away from the

1 Statistical Committee of Leeds Council, op.cit. 414. Leeds however had generally less prostitution than other cities.

2 Ibid.

3 Symons' Report, op.cit., evidence of James Child, No.4, John Stubbs, No.5.

4 LM, 27 Mar. 1858.

5 See for example LM, 18 Dec. 1830, 7 Jan. 1859, for prosecutions of suburban beerhouse-keepers. Storch is wrong to suggest these were immune from prosecution before 1857. Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', 85.

6 See above, Ch.3 pp.152-6; Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians (1971), pp.327, 340-2.

7 Storch, 'Policeman as Domestic Missionary', 482-3.

8 Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', 71.

working man the control over his own social habits, of publically congregating and conversing in some numbers. It undermined the functioning of the casual labour market on the streets. By hindering the exchange of information about jobs, it paradoxically drove workers and their informal labour exchanges even more into the beerhouses.¹ The streets of working class neighbourhoods were being forcibly cleared to give the middle class, or more exactly the respectable artisanate and petty bourgeoisie, unimpeded passage through these areas.² The issues at stake were both the right of 'casual assembly', particularly vital in times of high unemployment, and territorial control.³ The police were the means by which the middle-class were attempting to replace the street life of urban working class neighbourhoods with a private household and family orientated lifestyle, recreating an atomistic community of individuals in its own image. This also became true of the out-townships, particularly as tracts of terraced housing emerged around the old village centres, partly reproducing the street life of the inner city in a suburban setting. However, because of the different patterns of community culture in the out-townships, and the absence of a wholly urbanised environment for most of the nineteenth century, the 'moving on' tactic did not have the significance it acquired when used by the police in the slums of the in-township, Hunslet and Holbeck. Instead the suburban forces of law and order turned their attention more directly to the 'problem' of leisure.

1 Ibid. 79-83; S.C. on Drunkenness, PP(1834) VIII, evidence of David Brook, Q.1546.

2 Particularly along the major thoroughfares and in the commercial centres of cities this was to produce the 'concealment of everything which might affront the eye and the nerves of the bourgeoisie...'. Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (1969), p.80.

3 Storch, 'Policeman as Domestic Missionary', 482-3.

(ii)

The Problem of Leisure¹

The 'moving on' order was also used by township authorities in their various efforts to tackle idle, loitering and juvenile delinquency from the 1820's. Particularly in the socially heterogeneous clothing villages puritan sensibilities were offended by public displays of drunkenness, indolence, or rudeness and violence among local youth. However, in the out-townships 'moving on' manifested itself less in clearing the streets of prostitutes, drunks, vagrants and the unemployed, than in the criminalization of many 'traditional' or popular leisure activities.²

By the 1820's the crucial division between 'rough' and 'respectable' cultures had been made in the bourgeois perception of working class leisure. In some ways this division was more easily seen and acted upon in the semi-rural suburban communities than in the dense cosmopolitan world of the inner city. Just as certain types of criminal activity tended to take urban or suburban forms, so patterns of recreation were determined by the economy, environment and culture of the communities in which they were found. Modes of popular leisure were of course products of changing economic and social relationships, and of changing concepts of time and work-discipline, but they cannot entirely be separated from the specificity of place. Communal identities and local cultural traditions underlaid any division between urban and suburban forms of leisure in the borough of Leeds.

In the streets of Kirkgate in 1841 Symons encountered an enormously varied and rich popular culture yet scarcely marked by the commercialised entertainment developing in other major cities.³ Groups of young men from local workshops and factories would, for instance, club together to hire the dancing rooms above beerhouses on Saturday or Monday nights, and pay for a fiddler to provide music. These dancing saloons were initiated and organised privately by and for the proletariat. Beerhouse keepers were undoubtedly glad of the custom of the crowds upstairs, but given the demand, they hardly needed to advertise nor

1 My thanks to Dr. Douglas Reid for his helpful comments on this section.

2 For a warning about the use of 'traditional' as a label for popular modes of leisure see Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Class expression versus social control? A critique of recent trends in the social history of leisure', in idem, Languages of Class (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 76-89.

3 Cf. the rapid growth and commercialisation of singing saloons in Manchester and London, Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England (1978), pp. 29-33.

indeed provide any facilities other than the room itself.¹ Although the police claimed that some very young children would pool their farthings to buy a pint, it was recognised that drinking was a secondary consideration to dancing and meeting girls;² 'not even an empty beer pot was to be seen; the sole amusement was that of dancing and making the utmost possible noise with their feet.'³ Couples performed 'country dances', and men danced 'figures resembling a mixture of reel and quadrille' to the fiddle, or even to organs or bands. In one beerhouse Symons found a group of Italians absorbed in a table game. In a private house a Jewish family was giving a concert of comic songs with piano accompaniment to a 'full assemblage...of young men and a few soldiers'. In a 'penny theatre' about 200 'lads and girls' were watching 'some desperate sticks performing' 'Rory O'More.' It was a crowded night as it had been announced that 'Mr O'Byrne of the Theatre Royal Calcutta and the Royal College of Madras' was to perform. The police however informed Symons that all the performers were 'young men employed in the town', and that the penny fee could not be enforced.⁴

The confluence of cultures, English, Irish, Jewish, Italian, and the variety of entertainment within the claustrophobic environment of narrow streets and small, crowded houses provide a vivid contrast to the more 'rustic' pastimes of the out-townships, dog-fighting, bull-baiting and pugilism. Perhaps the most important point to make about working class leisure in Leeds in-township is the relative absence of commercialization. This made the task of social control and moral reform considerably more difficult. Once urban entertainment fell into the hands of the professional showman and became less fragmented and larger in scale, greater control could be exercised via licensing laws and police surveillance, and greater pressure exerted by reformers.

In 1851, for instance, Joseph Hobson's 'Casino' in Land's Lane came under severe attack from the Baptists and the Leeds Mechanics' Institute, who accused him of harbouring prostitutes and criminals.⁵ Hobson defended his music hall by saying it diverted workers away from

1 Symons' Report, passim. In townships such as Pudsey, beerhouse keepers would however provide prizes for 'single-step' dancing competitions, Lawson, op .cit. pp.74-7.

2 The police also claimed that some beerhouses provided rooms for couples to have connexion', and that this encouraged child prostitution. Symons' Report, evidence of James Child, no.4, John Stubbs, no.5.

3 Symons' Report, E.39.

4 Ibid. E.38.

5 David Russell, 'The Leeds Rational Recreation Society 1852-9', TSP 56 (1981) misc. 17, 137-58.

a variety of sins, badger and rat-worrying, dog and cock fighting, Chartism, heresy and religious schism.¹ In the 1860's music halls became big business, while smaller singing saloons served up nightly 'the most spicy balderdash' along with drink and tobacco, 'all tending to demoralise the young and pull down the aged, poor and wretched.'² Hobson himself survived and prospered. By the 1880's he had crowned his Casino 'Princess Palace Music Hall' and had opened a 'Theatre Royal' next door.³ In this field the commercialization of popular entertainment was almost wholly an urban phenomenon. There is no evidence of music halls, dancing or singing saloons in the out-townships at this time, though Morley could boast a music hall by 1888.

A number of pastimes were however shared by town and suburb. Street betting for instance kept police busy throughout the borough. In 1842 a constable in Wortley was assaulted as he attempted to stop six young men gambling under a lamp-post near his house.⁴ Playing for nuts or gingerbread with 'spinning machines' was very popular among out-township children, though the stall-keepers or local costermongers who supplied them faced gaol if caught.⁵ Illegal games of 'pitch and toss' were carried on in working class areas of many northern towns well into the twentieth century.⁶ Dog and cock-fighting was as common among young workers in Leeds - 'they fight dogs as well as gamble, they nearly all keep dogs' - as among the miners of Beeston and Hunslet, and the weavers of Armley and Pudsey.⁷

1 LM, 20 Dec. 1851.

2 John Holmes, 'Summary of the state of the classes', in Thomas Porter ed., Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds (Leeds, 1872). See also Hugh Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution 1780-1880, (New York, 1980), pp.168-9. Peter Bailey, 'Custom, Capital and Culture in the Victorian Music Hall', in R.D. Storch ed., Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth Century England (1982), pp.180-208.

3 Post Office Directory of Leeds (1882); Kelly's Leeds Directory (1888). The original Theatre Royal in Hunslet Lane had burnt down in 1875, A.C. Price, Leeds and its neighbourhood (Oxford, 1909), p.314.

4 LM, 18 June 1842.

5 LM, 1 Nov. 1851; William Benn, Wortley de Leeds: History of an Ancient Township (Leeds, 1926).

6 Lawson, op.cit. p.77. For private pitch and toss 'schools' in Hunslet in the 1930's see Michael Parkin, 'Memories of the back to-backs', The Guardian, 28 Sept. 1979. Cf. the depiction of illegal coin-tossing in Manchester in the 1950's in Hell is a City, starring Stanley Baker, (Hammer Films, 1959).

7 Symons' Report, evidence of Rev. J Clarke, no.2, Robert Craven, no.55; Lawson, op.cit. p.76; Robert D. Storch, 'The Problems of Working Class Leisure', in Donajgrodzki, op.cit. pp.138-62.

In the eyes of middle-class reformers this was clearly 'rough culture', associated with the wildness, violence and unpredictability of working class behaviour. Much of it seemed incomprehensible to the rational philanthropist. Street fighting broke out apparently at random in town and suburb.¹ In the York road area of Leeds in the summer of 1842 gangs of youths suddenly took up nude foot-racing.² Some occupations such as colliers and brickmakers were thought to be particularly volatile when drunk. 'Rough' areas in and around Leeds were known locally as 'Sodom' or 'Folly'. One 'Sodom', Lower Wortley, where many villagers trained cocks and dogs for fighting, was noted 'for all that is low, debasing and demoralising.'³

It was the violence and irrationality of many aspect of 'rough culture' which was the core of the problem of working class leisure. In the suburbs however, some violent pastimes which were highly organised had their roots in the rural past. Where forms of leisure had long been identified with local communities, they were especially difficult to undermine. In the clothing villages for instance it was customary for both amateur and professional pugilists to form fight-rings at the local feasts.⁴ Hunslet had its own champion prize-fighter 'Winking Tom' in the 1840's.⁵ As well as being a 'moral hazard', pugilism and other publically organised sports such as bull-baiting provided township authorities with the physical problem of crowd control.⁶ One major fight at Soothill in 1842 attracted up to 1000 spectators and gamblers despite repeated police attempts to move it on.⁷ For bull-baiting on feast day at Wortley, 'all the black-legs and scum of the country round about would assemble, setting at defiance all rules... with the exception perhaps of the rules of the Bull-Ring Committee.'⁸ In the last years of the sport bulls were sometimes brought from a distance, a sign of the increasing irregularity of the event. The last bull baited at Wortley feast was brought from Halifax in 1822.⁹ In 1825 an 'idle vagabond' brought a bull from Sheffield and baited it at Beeston feast before 'a large number of spectators.'¹⁰ Bull bait-

1 LM, 17 Sept. 1842.

2 LM, 30 July 1842.

3 Stones, op.cit. p.16.

4 Lawson, op.cit. p.76. Robert W Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850 (Cambridge, 1973), pp.42-3.

5 LM, 18 June 1842.

6 Malcolmson, op.cit. pp.145-6; P.Bailey, Leisure and Class, pp. 24-5.

7 LM, 18 June 1842; Storch, 'The Problems of Leisure', p.153.

8 Stones, op.cit. p.46.

9 Benn, op.cit. p.46.

10 LM, 3 Sept. 1825.

ing appears however to have been stamped out by the out-township vestries by the early 1830's, certainly before the new police were established in Leeds. Primitive Methodists built a chapel on the site of the Wortley bull ring in 1836. Oak mallets were carved from the wooden post to which bulls had been fastened, and these were then used, rather triumphantly, to lay the foundation stone of the chapel school.¹

The annual feast seemed to draw together most of the elements which constituted the 'problem' of leisure in the mind of the middle-class; - the crowds and the undercurrent of violence, with 'rough' sports and animal cruelty so predominant, drunkenness and the challenge to capitalist notions of time and work discipline, the moral hazards of dancing, kissing booths, nude foot-racing and sexual license, and the blasphemy and prophanity of gambling and trading on the Sabbath.²

In the first half of the nineteenth century the 'carnavalesque' of the suburban feasts contrasted markedly with the largely commercial character of the 'official' Leeds fairs and markets.³ By 1830 most of the traditional street markets, for fish, corn, pigs, horses, cattle, meat, fruit and vegetables, had been brought under cover in several new, purpose-built halls.⁴ In addition Leeds had two annual fairs, for horses in the summer and for cattle in the winter, the latter also serving as a hiring fair for farm servants. All these added to the drawing power of Leeds as a central marketing outlet for its region. On Saturday evening the in-township was crowded with people from the surrounding villages, stocking up for the week.⁵

The annual village feasts however were very different. They had only a limited commercial function, but were extremely important culturally. They were one medium through which semi-urban communities in the clothing district could identify with and express the traditions of their rural past.

- 1 LM, 20 May 1837; Benn, op.cit. p.46. On the suppression of bull-baiting, see Malcolmson, op.cit. pp.125-6.
- 2 On wakes and feasts see Malcolmson, op.cit. pp.16-19, 24-5; John K. Walton and Robert Poole, 'The Lancashire Wakes in the 19th century', in Storch, ed., Popular Culture, pp.100-24. On time and work discipline see E.P. Thompson, Time, Work-discipline and Industrial Capitalism, Past and Present 38 (1967), 56-97; D.A. Reid, 'The Decline of Saint Monday', Past and Present 71, (1976), 76-101.
- 3 D.A. Reid, 'Interpreting the Festival Calendar: Wakes and Feasts as Carnivals', in Storch ed., Popular Culture, pp.125-53.
- 4 Kevin Grady, 'Commercial, marketing and retailing amenities 1700-1914', in D. Fraser, ed., A History of Modern Leeds (Manchester, 1980), pp.177-99.
- 5 Edward Baines, General and Commercial Directory of the Town and Borough of Leeds (Leeds, 1817).

Feasts were by custom closely related to the seasonal cycle of work in agriculture.¹ In rural areas this meant a concentration of such festivals in early summer after the spring sowing, and in autumn after the corn harvest. In the semi-industrial out-townships however the harvest was largely of grass, cut early for hay. Hence most suburban feasts occurred after the short but intense few weeks of haymaking in July, and then continued through the weeks of August and September commonly reserved in rural areas for the corn harvest.² Here again the suburbs set a distinctive, if not unique, pattern. The very timing of their feasts gave them an identity of their own.

In the 1830's haymaking and the feasts which followed drew weavers away from their looms. In the 1870's out-township children from even the best working class schools abandoned their lessons for the same reasons. From the 1830's to the 1870's the continuity of the festival season can be traced through the absenteeism recorded in suburban schools. Eventually some schools, in Beeston and Rodley for instance, introduced formal holidays during feast-time.³

It was the strength of this cultural identity which made the local middle-class response to the 'problem' of feasts and leisure so ambiguous. For most of the period down to 1850 this response concentrated on condemnation and suppression. Baines condemned the village feasts as 'pagan relics', 'too often seasons of dissipation and debauchery'.⁴ Animal sports and pugilism at feasts came under closer police scrutiny from 1836. The Church was particularly concerned to improve the behaviour of working class children towards animals, and the new police were ordered to prevent cruelty to animals wherever possible.⁵ Police interference at Hunslet feast caused a near riot

1 None of the out-township feasts appear to have been connected with the chapels. The latter were mostly consecrated in the 17th century. The feasts may predate these, but I have no information on this.

2 On hay harvest celebrations see Malcolmson, op.cit. p.62.

3 Beeston Board School (Mixed Dept) Log Book 1874-99, entry for 27 Aug. 1875; Rodley Wesleyan Day School Log Book 1870-92, entries for 5 Aug. 1870, 21 July, 8 Sept. 1871; Holbeck St. Barnabas National School (Mixed) Log Book 1870-90, entries for 15 Aug. 12 Sept. 1870; MCCE, 1845, vol.2 (1846), Report by Rev.F.Watkins, Table E. p.132, entry on Gomersall National School; MCCE, 1863-4 (1864), Report of Rev. T.W. Sharpe, p.137.

4 Baines, Commercial Directory, op.cit.

5 MCCE, 1858-9 (1859), Report of Rev. F. Watkins, p.45; R.C. on the Establishment of a Constabulary Force in the Counties of England and Wales, First Report, PP (1839) XIX, 154-5. On animal cruelty see Lawson, op.cit. pp.82-3.

in 1843.¹ At Bramley feast in 1858 the police moved in to suppress Sunday trading by nut and gingerbread vendors, and to 'maintain peace'.²

By this date however, attitudes to feasts and to the whole 'problem' of popular leisure were changing rapidly. Despite the strength of local Sabbatarian and temperance lobbies, many small suburban employers, tradesmen and artisans came to regard feasts, once pruned of their more carnivalesque features, as repositories of tolerable customs and traditions which reinforced the cultural identity of their communities.

There were of course considerable efforts made to provide alternative attractions on feast days. During Bramley feast in 1858 the local Baptists held a series of out-door meetings, an agent from the United Kingdom Alliance addressed a further two open-air meetings, several games of cricket were played in different parts of the township, and Bramley Temperance Brass band held its annual gala, which was 'well patronised by the respectable portion of the community.'³

However local feasts not only survived but prospered in the second half of the century, albeit in a mutant form. This was due not only to working class resistance but also partly to the attempt by the suburban petty bourgeoisie to mould the feast to its own interpretation of community culture. In its first number in 1858 Bramley Almanac listed 16 local feasts and fairs, mostly concentrated in August and September. By the 1880's 70 such events were recorded through the calendar and across the region. Its editors were clear that their success was largely due to the continued popularity of such feasts.

"About 10,000 copies of this Almanac have been sold every year for the last 10 years, chiefly we believe because it is a reliable authority for the dates of the feasts, thereby showing the interest taken in these questionable relics of bygone days."⁴

While in 1817 it was clear that feasts were 'pagan relics', by the 1870's they had become merely 'questionable' in the mind of the local middle-class. While the wilder excesses of the carnivalesque had been tamed, feasts certainly retained some of their 'roughness' after mid-century. The inspector at Hunslet National School in 1852 found 'a few broken windows, which are said to be the results of the last Hunslet feast.'⁵ Some dame schools in Wortley held beer drinking

1 Storch, 'Plague of Blue Locusts', 90.

2 LM, 22 July 1858.

3 Ibid.

4 Bramley Almanac, 1880. See also the preface to New Wortley Almanac, 1876, for a similar statement.

5 MCCE, 1852-3, (1853), Tabulated Reports of Rev. G.R.Moncrieff, p.568.

bouts for their pupils, 'potation', during the summer feast.¹

Outweighing the drawbacks however, in the view of lower middle-class opinion, were the possibilities of feasts as celebrations of community identity, and as such they had to be defended from the encroachment of central authority. 'Customs which have existed from our great grandfathers' days are not easily uprooted.'² Given the right tone and moral content, feasts might be another means of enhancing class harmony in the out-townships and raising the level of community consciousness.

"Our Corporation and Chamber of Commerce have combined to abolish our separate Feasts and Fairs, which they consider would 'be more honoured in the breach than in the observance', but they have failed to accomplish their object. We do not desire to see those annual local gatherings conducted as they used to be in years gone by, but ... we think it desirable that each village should have its annual holiday, and by means of rational recreation... promote those healthful recuperative properties of our nature, which ... Providence has placed within our reach." (3)

Feasts in the industrial suburbs of Leeds were partly 'tamed' as elsewhere, but they do not appear to have declined at all before the 1880's. They were not particularly constricted by urban development, as in Birmingham.⁴ There were sufficient open spaces, even in Hunslet and Holbeck, for stalls to be erected and for crowds to be accommodated. They only partially succumbed to evangelicalism, temperance, sabbatarianism and the self-improving movements of the artisan elite.⁵ Instead the out-township middle-class, while continuing to deplore juvenile delinquency and drunkenness, generally tried to work their preferred brand of working class culture into the festival tradition. 'Farnley Philharmonic Society' for instance had a date at Farnley feast in 1858.⁶ The horticultural shows played an increasing role in suburban feasts by the 1870's. The Almanacs actively encouraged this strong movement among artisans and small freeholders by printing gardeners' calendars in some detail.⁷ Vegetable, flower and fruit gardening however represented not just a popular pastime in the out-townships but remained for many, particularly the poorer artisans and a few surviving domestic weavers, a

1 Benn, op.cit. p.67.

2 Bramley Almanac, 1880, Preface.

3 Bramley Almanac, 1881, Preface.

4 Reid, 'Interpreting the Festival Calendar'.

5 Ibid.

6 LM, 30 Sept. 1858.

7 See for instance The Leeds Historical Almanack and Yorkshire Fireside Companion (Leeds, 1835-69); The Frogland Olmenac an Leeds Loiners Annual (Leeds, 1848-69).

question of subsistence.¹ The horticultural shows at feasts were not only cultural products of the farmer-clothier tradition. They had some economic justification as well.

Out-township feasts survived most of the nineteenth century because they could be attached to a community tradition and yet remoulded to some extent by changing forms of popular leisure. Perhaps another reason for their survival is that they provided a more tolerable suburban alternative to urban forms of working-class entertainment. Casinos and music halls particularly received much of the opprobrium in the second half of the century, for 'drinking, promenading and immoral purposes', which had earlier been directed towards the 'pagan relics' of feasts.² There was always suspicion of such entertainments behind closed doors. Suburban feasts on the other hand were open-air, very public, and became increasingly 'right family reunions'.³ As Leeds fairs lost their commercial function and became more like fun parks and less like wholesale markets, and as suburban feasts were pruned of their less respectable sports, there was a certain standardization of this type of entertainment by the end of the century. Feasts and fairs were open to more professional travelling showmen than ever before. Working class concepts of leisure were changing rapidly. Workers were better educated, tastes were more 'sophisticated'. The penny gaffs, the puppet theatres, the 'tingelaries' and the mechanical shows such as 'Emmanuel Thompson's Galloping Horses' (steam-driven), fat ladies, lion tamers and Wombwell's Menagerie, peas and chips, fortune tellers, and 'the cat's meat man from Hunslet Lane who dressed up as a North American Indian', the mixture of the incredible, the gaudy and the baroque was a mélange of working class amusements generally more acceptable to the Leeds middle-class than the animal-baiting, violence and drunkenness of earlier generations.⁴ Yet working-class participation was still the key to the continued popularity of the feasts in the early twentieth century. They remained community celebrations in the oldest sense.

1 This is graphically illustrated in 'The Diary of Ann Scurr for 1871-2,' in Benn, op.cit. See also Hall Lane Community Centre, The Armley Album (Leeds, 1980), pp.11-12.

2 YEP, 14 Nov. 29 Nov. 1904.

3 The Armley Album, p.64.

4 Ibid. pp.64-5; Alfred Mattison, Chronicles of Leeds, vol.1, (Leeds, n.d.), p.25, 'All the fun of the fair: Recollections of Leeds shows in the fifties'. Cf. Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (Harmondsworth, 1958), pp.140-9.

"When it was Armley Feast that was a rather special time, always the first week in September. Everybody was very busy putting their clean curtains up, scouring their window ledges and their steps. I think it was a sort of competition... and then all the street would get together and we'd walk up to Armley Feast." (1)

(iii)

'Respectable' Culture and the Institutions of Social Control

With substantial areas of crime and leisure taking distinctive urban and suburban forms, mechanisms of social control had to vary somewhat according to environment and locality. The means by which the middle-class attempted to impose a framework of values and beliefs on the Leeds working class were, to an important extent, determined by the cultural identity of local communities. The bourgeois division between 'rough' and respectable culture therefore shifted considerably according to the community in which this division was being made. Great flexibility was demanded of the middle-class stereotype of the Leeds worker. There were few 'norms' of working class behaviour which survived for long in the second half of the nineteenth century. The petty bourgeois leaders of the out-townships from the 1850's had to base their efforts to refashion community sentiment and harmonize class relations on a constantly changing kaleidoscope of popular customs and 'traditions'.

I wish to examine four aspects of suburban life which might be regarded as 'functions' of social control, or stages in the elevation of the working class from 'rough' to 'respectable' culture - temperance, rational recreation, educational and economic self-help. Each stemmed in its own way from the problems of crime and leisure as perceived by the Leeds middle-class. What is interesting is, firstly, how did these 'functions' of social control alter class relations in the out-townships, and secondly, what impact, if any, did they have on levels of community consciousness? How did the temperance societies, music concerts, mechanics' institutes and friendly societies actually fit into suburban cultural traditions? Were they external institutions or fringe interest groups created and sustained by their middle-class patrons, or did they

1 The Armley Album, p.64.

emerge from the indigenous leisure patterns of the local working class?

Drink and Temperance

Attempts to tackle drunkenness, 'that fruitful mother of all vices',¹ in two ways reflected the whole character of social control in Victorian Leeds. Firstly the problem of drunkenness, like many of the problems associated with 'rough' culture, only attained modest proportions, especially in the out-townships. Secondly the solution, a heterogeneous temperance 'sub-culture', drew on influences as diverse as industrial paternalism, political radicalism and religious revivalism. The actual mechanisms which temperance provided for controlling social relations, the local societies, tea-meetings, festivals, lectures, therefore remained orderless and unplanned. There was no established blueprint for 'respectable' culture in the Leeds out-townships.

Leeds was comparatively poorly furnished with pubs and beerhouses. With 958 'drink shops' in the borough in 1878, it had the lowest ratio of people to pubs of the ten largest towns outside London.² The number of beerhouses, though not the number of licensed victuallers, appears to have begun falling from the late 1860's. The number of committals for drunkenness however continued to rise. The early 1870's witnessed the peak years of the century for alcohol consumption, drink convictions, and assaults on the police.³ In this context it was not surprising that the Leeds chief constable added his voice to those who wished to see a definition of the habitual drunkard to match that of the habitual criminal.⁴

Drunkenness was a blight on the family life of the working class, but it was also a community problem affecting relations between the classes in many ways. Inebriates fouling footpaths offended the bourgeois sense of propriety and above all restricted access to thoroughfares in a manner that the 'moving on' tactic of the police aimed to prevent. Teachers in the 1870's complained of drunks staggering into schools during the day and refusing to leave.⁵ Above all, drunkenness

1. M.C.C.E. 1855-6 (1856), Report of Rev.F.Watkins, p.366.

2. One 'drink shop' (pubs and beerhouses) per 271 inhabitants in Leeds compared with 216 in Liverpool, 164 in Manchester, 172 in Sheffield. S.C. of the House of Lords on Intemperance, 4th Report, PP(1878-9) X, App. B. p.541.

3. There was particular concern at this time about the 'dementia' caused by the adulteration of drink, fusel oil in brandies etc.. S.C. on Habitual Drunkards, op.cit., evidence of Weatherall, Qs.2370-2; B. Harrison, op.cit. pp.311-15.

4. Defined by three convictions for drunkenness in one year. S.C. on Habitual Drunkards, op.cit. Weatherall, Q.2355.

5. Rodley Wesleyan Day School, Log Book, entry for 8 Nov. 1872.

was regarded by employers as a major obstacle to the establishment of a regular, machine-orientated working week. Leeds forgers in the late 1860's continued to celebrate 'Blue Monday' as out-township mill-workers had done at the beginning of the century.¹ Bramley's historian tells of a clothier's journeyman who left his master's cloth in the fulling stocks while he and the millers drank each other under the table. When they finally came round and recovered the cloth, they found it 'so strangely felted together in one mass that it could not be opened.'² This particular piece was buried in the clothier's dung-heap, the moral of the story being that drunkenness in work-time cost money. Even in the domestic system the rhythms of work set certain strict time constraints on the individual worker.

As the need for time discipline increased with the growth of large scale factory production, it probably increased the problem of inebriation. The number of pubs and 'dram shops' in Leeds rose by 60 per cent between 1822 and 1830 and the number of spirit merchants almost doubled.³ In 1834 a Leeds cloth dresser, who had no strong views on abstinence, claimed that drunkenness had increased in the town over the previous 15 years, out of proportion to the growth of population.⁴ Merely by restricting drinking time, longer hours at factory machines encouraged imbibition in more concentrated bouts and hence aggravated the problem of alcoholism.⁵ Drinking and the working time used in drinking was a problem therefore which changed with different modes of production.

Certainly the time constraints of a regular working week existed for most suburban work groups in the early nineteenth century both inside and outside of mills.⁶ On the other hand the long hours and monotony of factory work, particularly the night-shifts, were said to make men drink to keep going.⁷ Drink was certainly thought by workers in many occupations to be essential for health, strength and that ruddy complexion associated with 'robustness'.⁸ In the 1830's it was also

1 S.C. on Habitual Drunkards, op.cit. Weatherall, Q.2459; Joseph Rogerson, 'The Diary of Joseph Rogerson-Scribbling Miller of Bramley, 1808-1814', in W.B.Crump ed., The Leeds Woollen Industry 1780-1820 (Leeds, 1931).

2 Benjamin Wilson, Our Village (Bramley, 1860), pp.44-5.

3 From 158 to 253 and from 22 to 40 respectively, LM, 11 Sept. 1830.

4 S.C. on Drunkenness, op.cit. Brook, Q.1480.

5 Ibid. Qs. 1540-3.

6 Mark Harrison, 'The Ordering of the Urban Environment', Past and Present 110 (Jan.1986), 134-68.

7 S.C. on Drunkenness, op.cit. Brook, Q.1536.

8 Lawson op.cit. p.79. Most suburban clothiers and weavers, although regarded as a relatively sober group, were beer drinkers. Reports from Assistant Hand-loom Weavers' Commissioners, part III, PP(1840) XXIII, Report on the Hand-loom Weavers of the West Riding, by H.S. Chapman (hereafter Chapman's Report), 547-9.

believed that low wages and unemployment aggravated drinking.¹ By the 1870's the opposite reasons for drunkenness were being invoked by the middle-class, high money wages and full employment.² Significantly in neither period was custom regarded as the root cause of intemperance in Leeds.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the transition, particularly in factory towns like Leeds, to the time and work-discipline, the bell, the clock and the machine rhythms of industrial capitalism.³

"Only our Scribblers and Stocks Running today. Our Slubbers have not given over feasting yet; they have done nothing these three days past; they are a clever set of fellows I doubt I shall see some of them be glad to work when they cannot get any." 4

Even Joseph Rogerson, the Bramley fulling miller whose business stood largely within the domestic system, demanded his slubbers work on Mondays, though he could do little but curse them when they didn't. 'Our Slubbers drinking two days. They are unreasonable Dogs, but very good workmen'.⁵ A 'good workman' was assessed by the quantity and quality of work he completed, not primarily by the hours he kept. The working week in the domestic system therefore was flexible enough to accommodate the irregular drinking bouts of its skilled workmen. Small capitalists like Rogerson had a grudging tolerance of drunkenness and 'Blue Monday', if productivity was high during working hours. As the latter became longer and more rigid in the factory system, sobriety became essential for greater work discipline.

In the mills a fixed measure of productivity was assumed in many processes provided machines were kept running. With increasing mechanization the emphasis therefore shifted to the hours of work and the continuity of production. As time became money, working hours became more tightly controlled, principally by fines and threats of dismissal. However there remained the problem of the lower boredom threshold of factory work. Many recognised that 'what men disliked was not labour but only that labour in which they took no interest or which they were compelled to do against their inclination'.⁶ Furthermore, it was argued, man was a social creature in leisure as well as at work.⁷ If the quality of his leisure could be improved the worker might gain a fresh attitude to work and time discipline. The possibilities of moral and material advancement through recreational activities could result

1 S.C. on Drunkenness, op.cit. Brook, Q.1530.
2 S.C. on Habitual Drunkards, op.cit. Weatherall, Q.2459; Holmes op.cit..
3 E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work Discipline' op.cit.; S.Pollard, 'Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution', ECHR,XVI(1963-4)254-71.
4 Rogerson, op.cit., entry for 30 Aug.1809.
5 Ibid. 27 Dec.1808.
6 From Dr. Hook's address at the opening of Holbeck Mechanics' Institute, 1858, in W.R.W. Stephens op.cit. p.468.
7 Ibid. p.469.

in work no longer being regarded as a drudgery. Self-help out of work might lead to new opportunities in work, and thus to upward social mobility for the individual in his community. Hole identified the means by which this could be achieved.

"Among the direct agencies which will tend to the social elevation of the working classes..... are two principal ones - Temperance and Education." 1

Sobriety and rationalism were regarded as complementary answers to the problems of popular leisure, 'rough' culture and pre-industrial patterns of time and work-discipline. Thus the Leeds Mechanics' Institute hoped to foster 'habits of order, peacefulness and temperance' among its members, the essential foundations of a 'respectable' culture.²

The temperance movement took off in the 1830's. In 1830, ostensibly in response to the rapid growth of drink retailing in Leeds, Leeds Temperance Society was established. At the end of its first year it had four branches and over 800 members in the borough. By 1834 it had nine branches, 2650 members, and claimed to be the second largest provincial society in England.³ Already temperance 'had achieved a life of its own.'⁴ 10,000 turned out for the eleventh anniversary celebrations of the society.⁵

Three aspects of the temperance movement in Leeds shed light on its position in the culture of suburban communities, and on its relevance as a means of social control. Leeds temperance was fundamentally sectarian, generally radical, and it formed a multifarious 'sub-culture' in which many of the suburban working class participated.

Temperance certainly aggravated some existing political and religious divisions. Baptists and Quakers were prominent in attempts on the Town Council to move closer to prohibition.⁶ Leeds had virtually a teetotal council in the 1870's. The divisions teetotalism caused in the Liberal party came to the fore at the 1864 general election when the intervention of a radical temperance candidate cost Baines his seat.⁷ Teetotalism also occasionally threatened Chartist unity in the 1840's. When a temperance Chartist lectured in Morley in 1842, teetotalers set

1 J.F.C. Harrison, 'Social Reform in Victorian Leeds - The Work of James Hole 1820-95', TSP monograph 3, (1954), p.45.
2 Leeds Mechanics' Institute and Literary Society (hereafter LMILS) Annual Report (Leeds, 1849), p.3.
3 The largest was Manchester. LM, 11 Sept. 1830, 17 Dec. 1831, 25 Feb. 1832, 2 Mar. 1833, 3 Mar. 1834.
4 Morris, op.cit. pp.190-204.
5 LM, 21 May, 1842.
6 W.Allott, 'Leeds Quaker Meeting', TSP 50(1965) misc. 14,1-78; Irene E. Goodyear, 'Wilson Armistead and the Leeds Anti-Slavery Movement', TSP 54 (1974), misc.16, 113-29.
7 Hennock, op.cit. pp.215-22.

up a rival meeting, resolving 'to put the Chartists down.'¹

Temperance fostered religious as well as political sectarianism. In the 1840's total abstainers from Lower Wortley chapel forced a split among Primitive Methodists which resulted in repeated lock-outs of the appointed preachers and fighting between pro and anti-temperance factions over access to the pulpit. The temperance people won, and in a fit of iconoclasm limed over the inscription on the pulpit, an action implying a close link between extreme puritanism and teetotal radicalism.²

It might however be argued that the very nature of sectarianism in the 1830's and 1840's fostered a growing sense of local patriotism in the Victorian suburbs.³ Temperance radicals incited local rebellions against central authority, whether political, religious or cultural. This was especially true as the branch life of temperance societies became more established, and as the Leeds middle-class found total abstinence rather too extreme a creed.⁴ Ultimately the divisive impact of temperance was not clear cut. Sectarianism could become a peg on which to hang the tag of local identity.

The second feature of Leeds temperance was a strong and persistent radicalism from Chartism through to the petty-bourgeois liberalism of the 1870's. In out-townships with a liberal or radical tradition, such as Bramley and Holbeck, politics and temperance were complementary aspects of community life. For many radicals, drink and superstition were twin pillars of industrial capitalism. As early as 1829 Carlile had lambasted 'the factory, the gin shop and the gospel shop', as the 'characteristic trinity of Leeds'.⁵ In 1839 Holbeck Operative Reform Association was established 'for the purpose of checking intemperance, and communicating intelligence to the people.'⁶ Moral Chartism in Leeds from 1841 embraced temperance for the most part successfully. Leeds Total Abstinence Charter Association was formed with the support of leading Chartists.⁷ More often than not, teetotalers and Chartists could be found amicably recruiting at each others meetings. In the 1851 municipal elections in Holbeck a beerseller stood with a temperance coffee-house owner on the Chartist ticket.⁸

1 NS, 30 Apr. 1842.

2 Benn, op.cit. p.47; William Beckworth, Records of Leeds Primitive Methodism (Leeds, 1911), pp.100-1.

3 See above ch.5, pp.45-50.

4 Morris, op.cit. p.196.

5 The Lion, 26 Nov. 1829.

6 LM, 26 Aug. 1837.

7 J.F.C.Harrison, 'Chartism in Leeds', in Asa Briggs ed., Chartist Studies, (1959), pp.66-97.

8 LM, 8 Nov. 1851.

In the 1850's and 1860's the radical-temperance movement did not enjoy the relative unity achieved under Chartism. While 'secularists' and many 'progressive liberals' were for the Maine bill and prohibition, or at least greatly restricted opening hours,¹ other working class radicals objected to temperance views on beerhouse licensing and Sunday opening and regarded politicians who espoused such views as being anti-working class and detracting from the real issue of franchise reform. Baines and Forster came under severe attack from this quarter during the election campaign of 1859 in the out-townships.² Generally however it can be said that popular temperance dominated Victorian liberalism in Leeds.³ It was entirely typical that temperance halls housed reform meetings in Bramley in 1859 and the first Liberal Club in Beeston in 1879.⁴

The temperance movement was therefore strongest in those communities which had a long radical-liberal tradition. Temperance itself amounted to a 'sub-culture', a possible solution to the 'problem' of leisure. The ingredients of this 'sub-culture' were manifold, temperance halls, coffee houses and hotels, British workmen's pubs, temperance bands, festivals, teas, lectures and newspapers. The movement accommodated trade unionists, evangelical Baptists and paternalistic employers, and, as usual, the Leeds worker was quite eclectic in choosing what he wanted from it.

The temperance movement was clearly very popular in the 1830's and 1840's, particularly in the Liberal-voting suburbs. 800 tracts were sold to the Holbeck society within a year of its foundation.⁵ Huge temperance festivals and teas were well-attended - 630 at Holbeck in 1842, 2600 at Marshall's mill in 1840 - and large crowds came to see Father Matthew, the temperance revivalist, on his visit to Leeds in 1843.⁶

In Bramley the local reed band, begun by a farmworker in 1828, was retitled Bramley Temperance band in 1837, and proclaimed the first temperance band in England. It played at the giant meetings of Father Matthew in 1843 when each band member publicly took the pledge. Although Bramley band rose to national prominence, winning many competitions in the 1850's and 1860's and playing before the Queen, it remained firmly

1 Cf. for instance the Baptist temperance lobby in the 1857 Liberal election campaign in Bramley, LM, 26 Mar. 1857. For Secularist support for the Maine Law see The Yorkshire Tribune, July 1855.

2 LM, 16 Apr. 23 Apr., 26 Apr. 1859.

3 E.P. Hennock, 'The Social Composition of Borough Councils in Two Large Cities, 1835-1914', in H.J. Dyos, ed. The Study of Urban History (1968), pp.315-36.

4 LM, 7 Apr. 1859, 15 Mar. 1879.

5 LM, 17 Dec. 1831.

6 LM, 24 Sept. 1842; Beckworth, op.cit. p.98.

rooted in its community. It played at all the major township events such as the annual parade of the Loyal Friendly Society, and the annual Bramley 'Clash'.¹ The concerts, the 'Clash' festivities, the temperance meetings were elements of a rapidly changing popular culture in Bramley from the 1830's, which, from a petty bourgeois viewpoint, 'linked young and old, present and past', and above all gave the township its own traditions and identity.²

Leeds temperance changed course in the 1850's as it concentrated more on the upbringing of children rather than the reform of parents. Leeds Temperance Society declined from 14 branches and 29 weekly meeting places in 1837 to only four branches and three weekly meetings in 1851.³ Instead, the Band of Hope grew rapidly. Its first 'aggregate' meeting in Leeds attracted 900 children. 'The little ones in chorus sang the praises of sobriety until the very place was vocal with joy.'⁴ By March 1849 the Leeds Band of Hope had pledged over 4000 children.⁵ At its annual demonstration in 1867 20,000 marched in 42 bands to the cloth hall yard. There were four bands in Armley and Wortley alone numbering nearly 800 members.⁶

With its teas and school-room lectures the Band of Hope brought Leeds temperance closer to the culture of the Sunday school and chapel. With the abatement of extreme teetotalism some middle-class patronage was attracted back to the movement.⁷ Armley Temperance hall and Mechanics' Institute for instance was built by the local society in 1866 at a cost of £1200 under the patronage of the Marsdens, wealthy cardmakers from Wortley.⁸ In Wortley itself two premises, one a former inn, were bought up and reopened as non-alcoholic 'British Workman's Public Houses' in the 1870's by the fire-brick manufacturer Joseph Cliff,⁹ the notice over one declaring 'where men may sit, read, talk and

1 This celebrated the defeat of Horsforth musicians by the original Bramley bandsmen in a music competition in 1829, which developed into a fist-fight. (LT, 8 May 1852). Bramley Almanac, 1860: E.T. Carr, The Lands of Bram (Leeds, 1937), pp.30-1; Bramley History Society, Recollections of Bramla Band (Leeds, 1985). 'Temperance' was finally dropped from the band's title in 1872.

2 J. Dawson, 'Bramley Clash', in Summersgill Collection of Newspaper Cuttings, III, p.61. See the poem 'Bramley Clash' in Bramley Almanac, 1876.

3 E.A. Eiton, 'A Victorian City Mission: The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in Holbeck and New Wortley 1844-78', TSP 54 (1977) misc. 16, 316-32.

4 LM, 1 Apr. 1848.

5 B. Harrison, op.cit. p.192.

6 LM, 20 Apr. 1867.

7 B. Harrison, op.cit. p.191.

8 LM, 8 Oct. 1866. There were also temperance halls in Bramley by 1859 and Beeston by 1879.

9 The first 'British workman's pub' was launched at Leeds in 1867, B. Harrison, op.cit. pp.303-4.

think, and safely home return.'¹ The Farnley ironmasters, the Armitages, sponsored a major recruiting drive for the U.K. Alliance in Farnley and Bramley in 1858, and helped establish Farnley Band of Hope the same year.²

Given this level of patronage, temperance might be regarded as an agency controlling social relations in the suburbs in the interests of the middle class. As a 'sub-culture' however it largely failed to displace other 'rougher' forms of leisure. With drunkenness increasing down to the 1870's, the campaign for greater sobriety can hardly be seen as a success. Employer-sponsored non-alcoholic pubs and temperance teas were fairly futile gestures against the power of custom and working class leisure patterns. As temperance in the form of the Band of Hope moved closer to the Sunday school and chapel, its public, secular life became more remote from the bulk of the non church going adult working class.

Nevertheless there were some aspects of temperance 'sub-culture' which informed the workers' use of leisure time and which might be assimilated to local traditions. Temperance coffee houses, halls and hotels, were not only centres for Chartists and Radicals, but also meeting places for trade unionists and strikers in the 1850's and 1860's.³ A lively temperance press sold well in Leeds, 15,000 periodicals in 1860 compared with 10,000 religious magazines and 27,000 newspapers.⁴ In the industrial suburbs temperance contributed a new dimension to local identity there. Teetotallers, temperance bandsmen, lecturers, reformed drunkards, could be integrated into the cultural traditions of the suburban communities. Many aspects of temperance had a leisure value, the processions, bands, commemorative medals, the ritual pledge taking at mass meetings, the revivalist public speakers with their theatrical gestures. These were not regarded as parts of a solution to the problems of leisure, of time and work discipline imposed from above, but were accepted as belonging to and enhancing popular culture and a sense of community.

Employer Paternalism and Rational Recreation

A greater sense of time and work discipline might be encouraged by employers directly organising their workers' leisure through the work-

1 Benn, op.cit. p.99; W.H. Thwaites, '150 Years of Methodism in Upper Armley' (typescript, Leeds, 1976).

2 LM, 8 Apr. 24 Apr. 13 May 1858. J.W. Armitage was the president of Farnley Band of Hope.

3 See the colliers' strike in LM, 15 Apr. 17 Apr. 1858; the cloth dressers' union in John Hales and S. Brightly, 'Report on Leeds', in Election Reports, 1868, (George Howell Collection, ms.). There were at least three temperance hotels in Leeds in the early 1850's, Morris, op.cit. p.199

4 James Hole, The Working Classes of Leeds (Leeds, 1860).

place. Rational recreation was promoted through company feasts, dinners, holiday excursions, sports clubs and music bands. The culture of the factory was probably not as developed in Leeds as in Lancashire, but there was a very clear resurgence of this type of employer paternalism from the late 1840's.¹ This was especially true in the out-townships where many factory owners had their family roots deep in the local community.

Company feasts were not new in the 1840's. During important national events early industrial workers could usually look forward to a free meal. Gott held a feast for over 700 workers at Bean Ing in 1814 to celebrate the Allies' entry into Paris, while Joseph Rogerson 'made a feast for all my men' at a Bramley inn.² In 1832 John Haley, the largest multiple millowner in Bramley, declared a half-holiday and gave a dinner for his 450 employees to mark the passing of the Reform bill. The procession through the village included

"farmer men, 100 women and girls, wool sorters and engineers, slubbers, children etc., weavers, cloth millers and night-watchmen, each body bearing a handsome banner."

Hymns were sung before the dinner of roast beef for men, and tea and spice-cake for women. The day ended with a concert by Bramley band.³ Haley financed similar celebrations in Bramley at the Liberal election victories of 1832 and 1834.⁴ There was a long tradition of company paternalism in the out-townships.

Yet that tradition was a very fragmentary one. Few factory employees or out-workers showed much evidence before mid-century of close ties or a deferential loyalty to their employer. In relatively closed industrial villages like Stanningley and Beeston, millworkers and weavers were cowed by the truck system, by the domination of a single employer, and even by tied rents. Elsewhere in the suburbs they remained remarkably independent. Despite Haley's free dinners and festivities for instance, his whole labour force embarked on a long and violent strike in 1834.⁵

The widespread resurgence of employer paternalism after mid-century was on a scale hitherto unseen in the out-townships. It involved not just large millowners, but employers of various sizes in other trades as well, representing the whole range of suburban industry. One of the earliest examples was the 'scene of some excitement in Farnley in February 1848. The Leeds Steam Washing Company 'liberally

1 P. Joyce, Work, Society and Politics (1980).

2 Rogerson, *op.cit.* entries for 11 Apr. 22 Apr. 1814.

3 LM, 23 June 1832.

4 LM, 29 Dec. 1832, 8 Mar. 1834.

5 LM, 5 Apr. 1834.

entertained' their 47 laundresses to 'tea-drinking' on their premises at Butterbowl mill. After tea the converted mill, decorated and lit with gas, was opened to husbands and friends, 'and music and dancing began with spirit to a late hour'.¹

The contrast between this 'modern', informal approach to industrial relations, where the employees were left to get on with the entertainment themselves, and the formal, ritualised paternalism of the 1830's could not be clearer. In the 1850's great efforts were made by leading out-township employers to involve their workers more closely with the progress of family businesses, by summer 'treats', autumn 'lighting-up' suppers, or by dinners to celebrate the employer's son attaining his majority or entering into senior partnership in the firm.²

Given the political radicalism in the suburbs in the late 1840's and early 1850's, there could not have been a more propitious time for attempts to improve industrial relations through a new, relaxed paternalism. Apart from tea-drinking and company dinners, often initially aimed at female workers,³ seaside excursions became another means of improving relations not only in the workplace, but in the community as well. In 1853 Joseph Butler treated his 250 Stanningley foundry workers to a day trip by rail to Hull and by steamer to Grimsby, with a music band as accompaniment.⁴ By the 1880's annual seaside excursions to Blackpool, Southport, Morecambe and Scarborough were commonplace, most employers paying the fares and contributing to pocket money. In the space of three weeks in 1889, seven different Bramley firms had their annual excursions. One wealthy millowner, A.W. Hainsworth, was extremely keen in supporting his workers' trips to industrial exhibitions in Glasgow, and even Paris. 'The working people in the surrounding district are loud in their praise of such an employer.'⁵

The preponderance of such workplace paternalism in Bramley is interesting. Trade unionism was notoriously weak in this township throughout the century, and particularly in the 1880's. Such unions as did exist, such as the pressers', were fairly ineffective. There were numerous complaints from Bramley about the frequency of fines for absenteeism and lateness, and about deductions at source from wage packets, especially the so-called 'voluntary' contributions to

1 LM, 5 Feb. 1848.

2 LM, 2 July 1853, 28 Oct. 1854, 14 Aug. 14 Oct. 1858.

3 Hargreave and Son for instance invited just their female mill hands to tea in 1848, LM, 10 June 1848.

4 LM, 3 Sept. 1853.

5 YFT, 2 Aug. 1889.

hospitals and charities, taken, without consultation, at a flat rate for all workers regardless of earnings.¹ It is striking therefore that the township where the system of paternalism appeared to be most complete, was also the township where trade unionism was weakest.

while treats, dinners and excursions were usually annual or festive events, a more regular control of workers' leisure time was possible through company-sponsored rational recreation. This meant sports clubs, music bands and self-help groups organised through the workplace.

The primary 'rational' sport was cricket, but its popularity in the West Riding went far beyond any paternalist influence of middle-class employers. Lawson noted that when cricket arrived in Pudsey it became the fashionable sport of the 'clans', and attracted much gambling. Nevertheless cricket was believed to teach working class youth 'patience, endurance, precision, courage', and above all, 'discipline'.² The attitude of some suburban mechanics' institutes to cricket is revealing. While being extremely cautious in their approach to popular recreation, cricket was accepted before any other sport. Bramley institute had a club from 1852.³ The club established at Holbeck in 1862 was claimed to have had 'a very salutary effect upon the Institute by bringing together and binding more closely many of the members.'⁴ By contrast, 'an attempt was made to establish a gymnastic class for the practice of single-stick, boxing etc., but this the Committee did not think proper to sanction.'⁵ Clearly cricket, unlike other sports, was above any lingering hint of 'rough' culture.

Cricket seems to have taken off in Leeds in the 1830's.⁶ By the 1850's the game was dominated by the labour aristocrats and artisans from the factories, workshops and working men's clubs, and the petty bourgeoisie from the mechanics institutes. Farnley 'shirt-neck' club, Bramley mechanics and Wortley working men's institute were among several suburban cricket clubs playing regularly in the late 1850's and 1860's.⁷ Oldfield Lane club was begun in 1857 by a group of Wortley clothiers and hand-loom weavers, calling themselves the 'Squirts'.⁸ In 1852 the mechanics and yarn makers-up from Holdsworth's flax mill played each other at Hunslet cricket ground.

1 YFT, 23 Aug. 6 Sept. 1889.

2 Lawson, op.cit. p.82.

3 Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes (hereafter, YUMI), Annual Report (Leeds, 1852), p.21.

4 YUMI, Annual Report, (Leeds 1863), p.101.

5 Ibid.

6 See LM, 18 Sept. 1830, 13 July 1833, for references to clubs at Leeds, Armley and Hunslet.

7 LM, 30 Sept. 1858, 25 May 1864.

8 From the practice of damping weft by a squirt. Benn, op.cit. p.107.

"After a very spirited contest the latter were victorious with three wickets to fall. Some very excellent batting was displayed on both sides and the most perfect unanimity prevailed throughout." 1

It is perhaps too much to suggest that cricket itself was an agency which controlled and harmonized class relations in the out-townships. Yet there may be an element of truth in the idea that cricket acted as a kind of 'social therapy'. It was the ideal suburban sport with its pre-industrial associations, the 'perfect vehicle for the myths of Merrie England.'² Of 35 Leeds cricket clubs in 1882, 21 were in the industrial suburbs. There were five clubs in Wortley alone, and four in Armley. At this time it was relatively much more popular than football in the suburbs, where only seven out of 27 Leeds clubs were to be found.³ Despite its aristocratic history and its growing public school image, for a large part of the nineteenth century the sport belonged firmly to Yorkshire working class culture.⁴ Cricket's popularity among the working class had as much to do with fashion and 'modernity' as with tradition. It was a healthy, cheap sport which had some of the 'sophistication' sought by many skilled male workers in their leisure time. Above all the cricket team allowed them to assert their status within the working class, their individualism and yet their allegiance to community and neighbourhood.

Perhaps even more so than sport, music was the all-consuming passion of the 'masses' in Leeds. It was an area of leisure which had some relevance to social control, for it lay at the heart of the concept of rational recreation. The Leeds Rational Recreation Society sponsored 124 concerts between 1852 and 1859 probably reaching several thousand skilled workers altogether. The Leeds Musical Union held 'People's Concerts' regularly during 'the winter season'. The first Leeds music festival was held in 1858, concerts in the town hall began in 1859, and lunchtime organ recitals were free from 1861.⁵

According to its historian, the Leeds Rational Recreation Society attached no specific moral message to the content of its concerts. It appeared to believe that a high standard of vocal music heard in the 'correct environment', with some mingling of the classes at concerts,

1 LT, 10 Apr. 1852.

2 P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, op.cit. p.128.

3 Post Office Directory of Leeds (1882).

4 Malcolmson, op.cit. pp.40-1.; Cunningham op.cit. pp.112-15.

5 Russell, op.cit. 146; Morris, op.cit. p.218; William White, Directory of Leeds and the Clothing District (Sheffield, 1853).

was enough per se to elevate the working class.¹ The 'elevating' tendencies of music appears to have also been behind employers' sponsorship of music in the industrial suburbs, although there the 'correct' milieu was not always obtainable. The range of music and musicianship was wide, from the ubiquitous and excellent Bramley band playing a repertoire of Handel and Haydn on Woodhouse moor or accompanying the 'Yorkshire Queen of Song', Mrs Sunderland, in a recital,² to the local choral societies and numerous workers' bands set up by employers in the 1850's. Bramley band was 'celebrated for great musical skill, though composed chiefly of working men.'³ Its professional bandmaster, John Whiteley, was also hired to instruct or take charge of several works bands in the area.⁴ One of these was the 'Operatic band' of Fairbairn and Company, the machine makers, who in 1851 purchased for it 'a large stock of Saxe-Horns and other instruments'.⁵ These works bands not only provided musical recreation for company employees, but were also expected to give occasional concerts in the community outside. Musical accompaniment to Armley's first art exhibition in 1858 was given by the band of Porritt and Whitham's iron works. Fairbairn's band played at a 'music and literary concert' at Wortley's Zion school earlier in the same year. In 1889 workers from Wellington mill gave a concert at Bramley National school in aid of medical charities.⁶

Employer patronage of rational recreation in sport and the arts was geared to enhancing workers' loyalty to the owner's family and the firm. Through annual dinners, group excursions, sports clubs and music bands a sense of company identity among the workforce and in the community at large was to be created. The consequence, it was hoped, would be better industrial relations, greater work discipline and the 'symbiosis' of work and community found by Joyce in Lancashire mill-towns. Such a symbiosis was never complete in Leeds, though employers in the 1850's and 1860's cannot have been unhappy at the way the new workplace paternalism touched upon areas of leisure which found a response in the wider community. Nevertheless, the continuing fragile state of relations in major industries, mining, building, iron and

1 Russell, op.cit. 148-9.

2 LM, 10 July, 1852.

3 William White, Directory of Leeds and Bradford (Sheffield, 1861), p.403.

4 Whiteley was also organist at Harewood church for 53 years.

5 LM, 27 Dec. 1851.

6 LM, 19 June, 23 June 1858; YFT, 15 Nov. 1889.

engineering, raises doubts about the efficacy of paternalism in establishing a comprehensive system of social control in the out-townships. Workers' self-help was essential to its success.

Employer Paternalism and Self-help

We have been following four stages of social control in the elevation of the working class from 'rough' to 'respectable' culture. The first was the prevention or cure through temperance of all the moral and social evils emanating from drinking and drunkenness. The second was to create alternative leisure patterns. This was achieved by the sub-culture of temperance, and the sports clubs and music bands associated with 'rational recreation'. Middle-class patronage was increasingly in evidence from the late 1840's as it operated through paternalism in the workplace. Nevertheless question marks must remain against the success of temperance, rational recreation and the factory culture in assimilating the suburban working class into more sober and 'respectable' leisure patterns, or in improving the work discipline and company loyalty of the labour force. The sporadic militancy of many groups of both union and non-union workers kept the suburban tradition of labour radicalism alive throughout the upswing of employer paternalism.

Beyond temperance and recreation there were two further stages of social control on the path to creating a 'respectable' working class. Firstly there was education for self-improvement, and secondly there was the attempt to create financial self-reliance, to bring the worker further into the money economy by encouraging personal savings and by attacking older patterns of expenditure and forms of credit. From the 1830's the out-township bourgeoisie was casting a munificent eye over such elevating institutions as cottage gardening clubs, mutual improvement societies, savings banks and building clubs. It was in these areas of economic and educational self-help that middle-class patronage and the ideology of social control was most pervasive.

Cottage Gardening

The first amateur gardeners' societies were established in the clothing villages in the late 1830's, and by the early 1860's horticultural and floral shows were regular events even in the most urbanised townships. Wortley Amateur Gardeners' Society was 'patronised by most of the influential inhabitants and lacks no pecuniary means'. At its show in 1838,

"many of the prizes were taken by labouring men in the village, who have lately, to their great credit, exercised considerable zeal in the province of horticulture." 1

1 LM, 9 June 1838.

This zeal was perhaps understandable in a period of depression in cloth weaving. The cottage gardening movement owed something to middle-class patronage of allotments for the poor, such as those provided by J.G. Marshall at Holbeck in 1842. Marshall enclosed and drained 12 acres of land on which he stipulated that the tenants were to be 'well conducted poor, not paupers, but independent labourers who have endeavoured to keep themselves above that conditions.'¹ Encapsulated therefore in the very concept of allotment husbandry was the notion of the independence and self-respect of the working man, a form of self-help not entirely alien to clothier values.² This undoubtedly added to the popularity of amateur gardening when it became increasingly institutionalized in the early 1850's. Bramley horticultural and floral society was begun in 1852 by

"a few working men, shareholders in the Bramley allotment gardens, who formed themselves into an association for the promotion of cottage gardening."

Subscriptions were successfully solicited 'from principal inhabitants', and at the society's first exhibition, its leading patrons, a Tory tanner, a Tory solicitor, and two Liberal spirit merchants, were elected to its chief offices.³

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of 'cottage gardening' in the industrial suburbs as the nineteenth century progressed. The semi-rural landscape of course facilitated this hobby, but gardening like farming also helped to preserve semi-rural features in the environment. Cottage gardening was in the direct lineage of the farmer-clothier tradition.⁴ Cultivation was often for self sufficiency not only in a wide range of vegetables and herbs, but also in pigs and poultry.⁵ Moreover market gardening itself became an important suburban industry towards the end of the century. It was claimed that more than half the rhubarb production of the country was concentrated within a ten mile radius of Leeds.⁶ Elderly residents of Armley remembered

1 LM, 6 Aug. 1842. Township allotments were also established for the 'labouring poor' at Holbeck in 1842 and Hunslet in 1844, *ibid.* and NS, 19 Oct. 1844. Hook, Beckett, and Marshall formed a society in 1843 to promote poor allotments in Leeds. J.F.C. Harrison, *Social Reform in Victorian Leeds*, fn.90.

2 Allotment schemes were seen by the poor themselves as a great improvement on the 'obnoxious and unproductive drudgery of breaking stones for the highway'. LM, 1 Apr. 1848.

3 LM, 12 Aug. 1853.

4 It makes sense to see this as an extension of the sociability and competitive routines of work. Ross McKibbin, *Work and Hobbies in Britain, 1880-1950*, in Jay Winter ed. *The Working Class in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 1983), pp.127-46.

5 See 'The Diary of Ann Scurr', in Benn, *op.cit.* pp.82-9; *The Armley Album*, *op.cit.* p.11.

6 E.T. Carr et.al., *Industry in Bramley* (Leeds, 1938), p.10.

'acres and acres of rhubarb' at the turn of the century.¹ The rhubarb fields, farms, allotments and cottage gardens ensured that the industrial suburbs retained much of the landscape and character of the clothing villages well into the twentieth century. In the struggle between the classes for the appropriation of the 'milieu' and the constructed environment of the suburbs, this particular working class pastime had an important role to play in preserving and reshaping popular culture. The pigeon lofts, flower-beds and vegetable gardens literally marked out a community of class within space. Despite middle-class patronage of the floral shows and gardeners' societies, the garden and allotment life was almost exclusively the province of the working class.

"A lot of people were more independent, they did more things for themselves in as far as you didn't rush off to t'shop for this and that... Me dad had an allotment that provided us wi' a year's supply of vegetables, we never had to buy potatoes or owt like that. He met other men there and there was a sort of community life going on on the allotment. They used to have competitions for t'best flowers and t'best vegetables." 2

Thus middle-class patronage of cottage gardening touched the nerve of social life in the out-townships in a way that other forms of patronage could only aspire to.

Mutual Improvement

Together with temperance, education was regarded by social reformers such as Hole, as the key to the 'social elevation of the working classes.' Certainly a greater sense of time and work discipline and the creation of a 'respectable' culture were only possible with a better educated and more 'rational' working class.

The West Riding was the fountain of the Victorian self-help movement. Over a quarter of all mechanics' institutes in England and over a fifth of the membership were in Yorkshire.³ At the 1851 Census Yorkshire had almost twice as many 'literary, scientific and mechanics' institutions' as any county in England and Wales. 155 out of the 189 Yorkshire institutions were in the West Riding.⁴

If the West Riding dominated the geography of adult education in

1 The Armley Album, p.11

2 Ibid. p.12. It is a comment on cultural differences within the international working class however that English allotments have seldom taken on the baroque structures and ritualized club life found to this day in their German counterparts, Schrebergärten.

3 M. Tylecote, The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851 (Manchester, 1957), p.259.

4 Horace Mann, Report on Education in England and Wales (1854), p.lxx.

England and Wales, Leeds dominated the early movement in the West Riding. Leeds Mechanics' Institute (LMILS), alone constituted 43 per cent of the membership of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes (YUMI) in 1840, and still nine per cent in 1852, after the period of YUMI's most rapid growth.¹ 16 institutes in Leeds borough accounted for almost one in five of YUMI members in 1860.² Moreover, among its resident reformers and philosophical radicals, Leeds had Samuel Smiles as a teacher at Wortley Zion school and President of Woodhouse Mechanics' Institute, the second largest institute in the borough.³ Leeds and its suburbs were, quite literally, at the heart of self help ideology and praxis.

In the following analysis the trends in the establishment and membership of self-help institutions in town, suburbs and county have been calculated and compared,⁴ before examining what lay behind these trends - the class composition of membership, the structure of patronage, the struggle for survival which revolved around fees, facilities and the use of space, the content of lectures, classwork and recreation, and the social message behind workers' education.

In the industrial suburbs of Leeds there were clearly three major waves in the establishment of further education institutions. The first upswing occurred between 1835 and 1837 when five youth guardian societies were formed in Armley, Bramley, Wortley and Holbeck. The second and major period of growth occurred between 1843 and 1851 when 16 mutual improvement societies, mechanics' institutes, literary and discussion societies were established in the industrial suburbs. By 1851-2 there were at least 18 such institutions where there had been only six in 1845. The third upswing occurred between 1857 and 1862 when another seven suburban institutions were opened or re-established.

Figure 5 shows that fluctuations in the membership of suburban institutes roughly conformed to this cyclical pattern.⁵ In particular the explosion of 'little institutes' in the late 1840's was accompanied by an upswing in levels of membership from 1849 which lasted till about 1852. Similarly the period 1858-64 witnessed a sharp upswing

1 Calculated from figures in J.F.C. Harrison, *Social Reform in Victorian Leeds*, op.cit. fn.68, and Hole, op.cit. app.C.

2 Hole, op.cit. p.81.

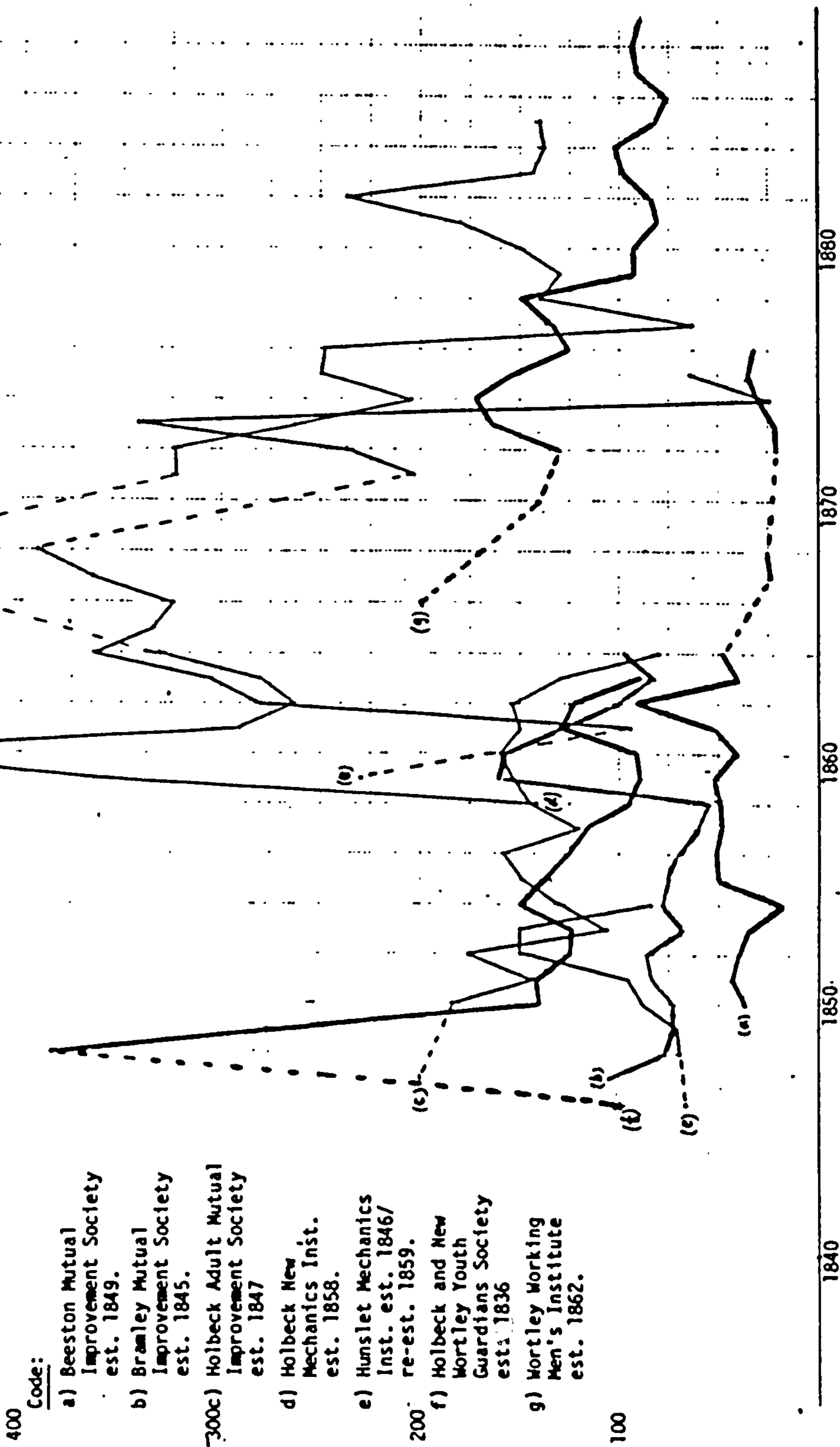
3 Alexander Tyrrell, 'Class Consciousness in Early Victorian Britain: Samuel Smiles, Leeds Politics and the Self-Help Creed', Journal of British Studies IX (1970), 102-25.

4 The first time, I believe, that such an exercise has been attempted.

5 Fig. 5 : Total Membership of Seven Leeds Suburban Mechanics' Institutes and Mutual Improvement Societies, 1846-89.

Fig. 5 : Total Membership of 7 Suburban Mechanics' Institutes, 1846-89.

Sources: YUMI, Annual Reports
Leeds Mercury 1846-89.



- a) Beeston Mutual Improvement Society est. 1849.
- b) Bramley Mutual Improvement Society est. 1845.
- c) Holbeck Adult Mutual Improvement Society est. 1847
- d) Holbeck New Mechanics Inst. est. 1858.
- e) Hunslet Mechanics Inst. est. 1846/ re-est. 1859.
- f) Holbeck and New Wortley Youth Guardians Society est. 1836
- g) Wortley Working Men's Institute est. 1862.

followed by a downswing in numbers at several institutes. While most of the smaller societies did not survive this downswing, the larger institutes in Hunslet and Holbeck experienced a period of renewed growth in the mid 1860's which came to an end around 1868. There followed a steep and long-term secular decline which, despite a brief revival in the early 1870's continued through to the end of the century.

The cyclical fluctuations in the number of suburban institutes and their membership corresponded closely with the experience of their umbrella organisation. The number of institutes affiliated to YUMI doubled between 1840 and 1845, but quadrupled between 1845 and 1850. Total membership of YUMI grew at a staggering 260 per cent between 1845 and 1851 compared with only 60 per cent for LMILS over the same period. Later fluctuations in YUMI also match the suburban picture. The mid-1850's were years of relative stagnation, but between 1857 and 1860 membership grew by 25 per cent. This upswing was in turn followed by some decline in the 1860's.

How did the suburbs compare with the town? In the late 1830's the combined membership of the new youth guardian societies in the suburbs, around 900, more than equalled that of LMILS.¹ By 1845 however, on the eve of the most rapid growth, out-township societies had probably less than half the membership of the central institute. This changed quickly as the proliferation of little institutes narrowed the gap. Particularly in the years 1849-51, as the growth in LMILS membership faltered, the numbers in suburban societies reached nearly 80 per cent of the former. Thereafter a big leap in LMILS membership saw the urban-suburban gap widen again.

It is most interesting that the growth patterns of suburban societies reflected trends in YUMI membership rather than those of Leeds. Suburban self-help followed the county rather than the town in experiencing its most rapid growth between 1848 and 1851, and, as already indicated, suburban fluctuations continued to resemble those of YUMI in the 1850's and 1860's. It is perhaps not un-reasonable to conclude that the little institutes had a dynamic of their own, independent of the immediate fortunes of the central institute.

Before attempting directly to explain these fluctuations it is worth trying to categorise institutes by class structure and level of patronage. Who founded them and who were they for? What was the social composition of membership? These questions themselves relate

1 Calculated from the following sources; LM, 8 Apr. 20 May, 11 Nov. 1837, 21 Apr. 9 June 1838.

to the success of the institutes as agencies of social control in the suburban communities.

There was general agreement among contemporaries that self-help failed to attract the bulk of the working class.¹ Smiles believed that mechanics' institutes were a 'misnomer';

"They are for the most part institutes of the middle and respectable classes and a smaller proportion, in some cases not so much as a half, of working men; a class superior to working men and a small proportion of working men receiving comparatively high wages support those Institutions." 2

J.G. Fitch was of the same opinion;

"...as is well known, the name 'Mechanics' does not fairly represent the social position of the persons who avail themselves of such institutions. It is not men of the labouring class, but the more intelligent shopmen, clerks, warehousemen and travellers of a great town like Leeds, who compose the Mechanics' Institute." 3

A close analysis of nearly 40 self-help organisations in Leeds borough however reveals a more socially complex picture. Several types of institute can be identified. There were those established by and for the middle class and petty-bourgeoisie, and those, perhaps the majority, established with middle class patronage for Smiles' 'superior order' of the working classes'. Some early societies, such as Marshall's book club in Holbeck, were created expressly for the working class by bourgeois patrons, others were begun by workers themselves, only to be taken over by middle class management. A final group comprised those institutes both established and managed by workers, with some support from the radical petty-bourgeoisie. Some examples will elaborate this picture of the class diversity of membership and patronage.

Bramley Philosophical Society was established in 1832 by six 'gentlemen' who came together to begin a library and hold topical discussions on a fortnightly basis. 20 members attended the first annual supper and departed, 'with a renewed determination to exert themselves in the acquirement of knowledge and in diffusing it to others.'⁴ Clearly some of the suburban bourgeoisie, bound by ties of duty to their community, were aware of the power of education and conscious of their own academic shortcomings. Fourteen years later Bramley Dis-

1 Brian Simon, The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870 (1974), p.254; Edward Royle, 'Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860', Historical Journal, XIV (1971)305-21.

2 S.C. on Public Libraries, Report and Minutes, PP (1849)XVII, 1, evidence of Samuel Smiles, Q.1956.

3 Cited in LMILS, Annual Report, (Leeds, 1869), p.10.

4 LM, 23 Feb. 1833.

cussion Society was formed by a number of small clothiers and typified the sociability and 'folksy' character which was to dominate petty-bourgeois culture. A quarterly meeting in 1847 began at five o'clock on a Thursday morning in a field near the Baptist chapel, with the chairman sitting on a wall, and lasted, 'with mirth', for two hours.¹ While being a properly constituted formal society with annual dinners and loyal toasts, there were no grander educational pretensions here.

The majority of self-help institutes were purposefully aimed at skilled workers, artisans, clerks, tradesmen and shopkeepers. There were two important developments affecting the constituency of such institutes. Firstly there was an increasing tendency to educate children and entertain adults. Secondly there was a tendency to justify the social structure of institutes in terms of the elevating effects of social mixing. Both tendencies were to be found in the youth guardian societies of the 1830's and 1840's. Such societies never moved far from the non-conformist Sunday schools in their approach to self-help. They aimed to contribute to the 'moral and social happiness of the working class',² but increasingly were used as youth clubs for the more respectable sections of their communities. Wortley society's tea in 1842 was attended by 'a very orderly class of young persons both of the labouring and middle ranks'.³ The ostensible aim of such societies was to 'check the fearful spread of vice and immorality' among the juvenile population of the suburbs.⁴ A local Liberal councillor boasted in 1842 that not a single member of the Wortley society had been before the magistrates for delinquency in seven years of the society's existence.⁵

Both trends, firstly towards educating the young, and secondly towards the mixing of the classes were most evident in Leeds Mechanics' Institute. As the 1850's progressed there was much emphasis in LMILS on attracting young workers, especially girls, to the elementary classes, regarded as 'nurseries' of members for the institute.⁶ Although adult education was not to be given up, 'the best results in the elevation of the working classes must be sought in providing a thorough system

1 LM, 26 June 1847. See also LM, 15 Jan. 1848.

2 LM, 21 Apr. 1838.

3 LM, 9 Apr. 1842.

4 LM, 29 Jan. 1842.

5 LM, 9 Apr. 1842.

6 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1855), p.16. Female subscribers had been the chief cause of the growth of LMILS membership between 1845 and 1852. A girls' day school and an adult female improvement class were begun in 1855.

of instruction for the young'.¹

Increasingly also a division was made between the hard core of subscribers and the fitful attendance of many workers at lectures and classes.² A fall in the number of 'workmen' subscribers was explained as a decrease, 'chiefly in those classes of adherents who have usually been most influenced by occasional attractions such as soirees and lectures of a very popular character.'³ LMILS however admitted real difficulties in attracting 'mechanics as a body'. The 'severe privations' and 'lengthened self denial' required by the pursuit of self improvement were 'too painful' for all but 'a few of the more energetic and noble of their class'.⁴

By the late 1860's the managers of LMILS were clear that 'there is not a preponderating element of working men who are members.'⁵ The proportion of working class members had fallen since the 1850's, even in the elementary classes. In 1857 elementary pupils had been 'generally young, poor and very defective in their education'.⁶ By 1868 the purpose of these classes was to supply 'a thorough and sound education for the children of the lower middle class.' LMILS had explicitly abandoned the idea of teaching the children of workers.⁷

It was reported that the suburban institutes were catering for the workers which LMILS could not attract.⁸ Yet there were several institutes at Hunslet, Bramley, Holbeck and Wortley which also failed to gain popular support among the working class and which relied heavily on local middle-class patronage for survival. The youth guardian society at Zion school in New Wortley repeatedly showed its disappointment at the lack of adult workers among its members. 'Gentlemen from Leeds' were 'frequently lecturing to empty benches.'⁹ When working men's institutes were built in the early 1860's it was claimed that two of these 'contain as many operatives as all the 15 mechanics' institutes of Leeds put together'.¹⁰ Yet soon Leeds Working Men's Institute also suffered from the competition of 'sensational attractions offered in music saloons and other kindred places of amusement.'¹¹

1 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1856), p.11.

2 From 1856 day schools and evening classes were opened to the public, membership was no longer a precondition. The distinction was thus formalised between a subscriber and a class pupil. LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1857).

3 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1856), p.7.

4 Ibid. p.11.

5 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1867), p.4.

6 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1857).

7 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1868), p.5.

8 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1867), p.4.

9 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1852), p.73.

10 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1864), p.5.

11 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1868), p.39.

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Despite the relative success of Wortley Working Men's Institute in the 1870's with new art and philosophy classes, it still complained that 'mechanics, builders and other artisans don't join us in sufficient numbers.'¹

Placing all institutes in a quantitative perspective, we can express their membership as a proportion of the suburban workforce. In the 1830's the youth guardian societies totalled more than ten per cent of the combined labour force of Armley, Bramley and Wortley. The two Wortley societies could claim up to 15 per cent of the township's workforce. In the more populated suburbs of the 1850's and 1860's mechanics' institutes and mutual improvement societies seldom achieved such levels. Only in Wortley and Beeston for a few years around mid-century could they claim up to one in five of workers as members. Generally self-help institutes accounted for less than five per cent of suburban workers, and less than two per cent in Beeston, Armley and Bramley by the late 1860's. The proportion of mutual improvers in the out-townships was therefore low at most times and clearly failed to keep pace with population growth.

The nature and degree of patronage of course was itself a determinant of the social character and popular success of an institution. There were as many political, religious and social mixtures of patrons as there were categories of institute. The youth guardian societies were established with considerable patronage, mostly from Liberal employers and non-confirmist clergy. Six of the eight speakers at Wortley society's tea in 1837 can be identified as Liberals, four were local manufactures and two were local clergymen.²

The Tories, on the other hand, appear to have dominated the early years of Bramley Mechanics' Institute, established in 1845. Its major patron was a millowner and Tory councillor, and its first president was a Tory solicitor. Among the lecturers in the late 1840's and early 1850's were the incumbent and curate of Bramley, and a future Tory parliamentary candidate for Leeds. Nevertheless, like most institutes, Bramley did try to strike a balance between local political and religious interests. Among its vice-presidents were the local Baptist minister, and the township surgeon, who was a Liberal councillor.

After several years of flitting between church and chapel and Tory and Liberal patronage, Bramley institute, by the mid 1850's, was

1 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1876), p.106. On the impact of working men's institutes see B. Simon, Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920 (1974), pp.72-5.

2 LM, 8 Apr. 1837.

firmly under Liberal control. Liberal merchants, manufacturers, printers and clerks were secretaries each year from 1856 to 1864. A Liberal alderman was president from 1851 to 1862.¹ A rival group, Bramley Mutual Improvement Society, established in 1857 by Sunday school officers and teachers, was consciously designed to be 'a strong, unsectarian and general society'. However it had considerable problems finding a 'neutral building' in the township, and ended up in the Baptist school room with the Baptist minister as president.² Despite, therefore, the most strenuous efforts to keep self-help above the religious and political divisions within the middle class, sectarianism crept into this as into most other aspects of community life.

In the largest suburbs bourgeois patronage of local societies could be generous and certainly sent membership soaring in the 1860's. Few out-townships could match the impressive patronage of Hunslet Mechanics' Institute, relaunched in a splash of publicity in 1859 at a meeting fronted by Baines, Kitson, Marshall and Fairbairn, all grandees of the Leeds elite.³ £1200 was pledged in subscriptions and 1000 volumes obtained for the library. Its building was almost wholly funded by the Leeds middle-class. According to accounts published in 1862, £1364 had been received towards the cost. Of this only £150 was from the 'working classes', and the rest from 'employers'.⁴

Even the working men's institute established in Wortley in 1862 attracted the support of the wealthiest families in that township. 15 of the 23 original trustees and officers can be classified by occupation or franchise. Six were in the top two social classes, clergy, gentlemen, local employers and professional men. Another four were in social class III, a painter, a bookkeeper, a publican and a blacksmith. Six of the fifteen were ratepayers without the parliamentary franchise, i.e. less than £10 householders.⁵ The institute was managed in the 1860's and 1870's by a large group of clerks, artisans and small employers, fairly evenly divided between Tories and Liberals, mainly from old Wortley families. They and their fathers had run the township vestry in the 1830's and 1840's. A new generation appears to have emerged in the 1870's and 1880's, descended from these

1 Details of patrons and officers collected from Leeds directories and annual lists in Bramley Almanac. Other sources are LM, 4 Apr. 1846, 29 Jan. 15 Feb. 22 Apr. 1848, 10 Nov. 1849.

2 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1859).

3 LI, 29 Oct. 1859.

4 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1862) p.115. On Kitson's patronage of the original Hunslet institute see R.J.Morris, 'The Rise of James Kitson: Trades Union and Mechanics' Institution, Leeds 1826-51', TSP 53 misc. 15 (1973), 179-200.

5 Calculated using Leeds directories, burgess rolls, pollbooks and the list of trustees and officers in Benn, op.cit. pp.64-5.

families, men such as William North, the secretary 1877-81, son of a Wortley brickmaker, and G.H. Nussey, patron of the institute's art class and the son of a wealthy local millowner.

The aim of such patronage was the 'fusion of the classes' in harmonious co-operation. Morris saw it as a trade-off, 'an offer of moral equality and equal access to knowledge in return for recognising the social authority of the middle class'.¹ The knowledge to which access was offered was, of course, carefully vetted.² The institutes of self-help were specifically a function of paternalism. They belonged to a system of duty and interest which bound the suburban middle class to their local communities and the Leeds elite to the borough as a whole. LMILS defended itself from the charge that it was instructing the middle-class alongside the working class.

"The fusion of classes and not their isolation is what is to be most desired; for the health of the social system, is to be found in the harmonious union and reciprocal action of the whole and not in the independent existence of separate parts." 3

The philosophical justification for suburban institutes was expressed most clearly in an article in Leeds Mercury, worth quoting at length.⁴ The institutes had a 'salutary influence on communities, families and individuals 'essentially subserving the high cause of virtue and religion.' The institutes sprang 'from a spontaneous zeal for improvement'. They were not imposed,

"by any foreign influence or superior authority. But the several classes of society in each place, feeling their respective duties towards themselves and each other combine to establish and support them."

The rich, the educated, clergy and professionals in a community were all 'to help their poorer neighbours' and 'aid the uneducated'.

Furthermore,

"...the middle class of people...join cordially under a sense of the extraordinary advantages which union gives for obtaining the means of intellectual improvement; and no small number of working men bring their vigorous though untrained minds, like bars of steel, to be filed and hammered into tools that no workmen need be ashamed of. We look with profound respect on societies thus composed. They are cemented by enlightened self-interest as well as by a social spirit of the best kind, and by the sense of duty."

1 Morris, *Organisation and Aims*, op.cit. p.302.

2 Ibid. p.307; Simon, *Two Nations*, op.cit. pp.219-20.

3 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1856), pp.10-11.

4 LM, 1 Nov. 1845.

The ideal motives of patronage were those guided by duty, a social spirit within local communities, and the enlightened self-interest of different classes. Class co-operation was regarded as essential to self-help, whether this took the form of overt patronage of institutions geared to working class needs, or of middle-class management of societies in which the classes might mingle. The ground-rule was that the workers should not be left to organise themselves. Any 'spontaneous zeal' for mutual improvement should be harnessed at an early stage by the owners of property and the employers of labour. This was the belief of patrons such as John Marshall, when he opened his book club and evening school for Holbeck millworkers in the 1820's, and those in charge of LMILS who avoided 'falling into the error of giving too much of the direction of the establishment to the Mechanicks themselves'.¹

Inevitably therefore there was a category of institutes which had been established by workers themselves, but which were taken over by middle class patrons and managers. Armley Literary Society for instance was formed by a group of 'chiefly working men' meeting at the house of a local newsagent. In 1843 the radical middle-class took over the society to render it 'more effective in the diffusion of Literary and Scientific Knowledge'.² As Smiles, who took part in this, argued, education was the means of 'elevating the mass into the full communion of citizenship',³ and this could hardly be effected by the workers alone.

Several suburban institutes however were founded and managed by the working class, with some support from the radical petty bourgeoisie. The most remarkable was Holbeck Adult Mutual Improvement Society, begun in 1847 by a few young men from the Wesleyan Tabernacle Sunday school who met 'to read a little in English history'. The chapel authorities objected and the youths left to join the evening classes and library newly established by John Holmes, the radical draper and Owenite, for employees in his Holbeck shoe workshop. To teach basic literacy was the initial aim and fees were very low at the start, although they rose quickly, from a penny a month in 1847 to a penny a week in 1850. By 1850 the society was already more elaborate, with

1 Marshall jr. to Brougham, 12 Jan. 1825, quoted in Tylecote, *op. cit.* p.62. On Holbeck book club and Marshall's patronage see LM, 7 Feb. 1824, 3 Mar. 1832; Morris, *Organisation and Aims*, *op. cit.* p.294.

2 LM, 21 Oct. 1843.

3 From Smiles' address to Leeds Mutual Improvement Society, 1845, quoted by Tyrrell, *op. cit.* 117.

a geological museum, a music class for men, and elementary classes for women.

The members were 'the very best of their class - sober, industrious and desirous of improvement.'¹ The managers believed there was 'a growing feeling of the importance of culture among the better class of operatives (among whom the Institution solely labours).'² Like James Hole, Holmes believed the 'progress of the people' would ensure the social stability and orderly progress of England.³ His radical vision, however, was of a self improving class managing their own affairs. The jubilant conclusion of the society's first report was that 'there is no danger in letting the members manage their own matters themselves', a far cry from Marshall's opinion 25 years earlier.⁴

This was a conscious, cooperative, 'democratic' venture under the supervision of Leeds radicals, but operated by the workers themselves.

"The members themselves have the sole management and if any need of change occurs, the alteration is at once attended to." 5

Its success in the early 1850's was attributed to its 'very liberal popular constitution' permitting all shades of religious and political opinion in the society and retaining good relations between members and officers.⁶ Like those other contemporary ventures in the district, the cooperative flour mill and Zion school, Holbeck Mutual Improvement Society was firmly rooted in the local community. Although it eventually went the way of other institutes and became reliant on middle-class patronage, for more than a decade the society symbolised the radical approach to working class education.

It is clear therefore that in the relatively small area of Leeds borough there were a multitude of types of self-help institutions, each characterised by different degrees of working class adherence and middle class control. It can also be said that while middle-class patronage lay behind much of the workers' education movement from the 1820's, the cyclical nature of the foundation of institutes, and the wildly fluctuating levels of membership suggest that self help by no means comprised a uniform system of social control carefully engineered from the top.

1 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1850), p.36.

2 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1851), p.47.

3 I am unaware of any biography of Holmes, but see J.F.C. Harrison, Social Reform in Victorian Leeds, op.cit. fn.35.

4 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1850), p.37.

5 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1851), p.47.

6 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1852), p.56.

What lay behind these fluctuations? How did class differences in the composition and patronage of suburban institutes manifest themselves in the struggle for access to facilities and for the content of adult education? What were the implications of the trends in membership and the class variations between institutes for the success of self-help as an agency of social control in the industrial suburbs?

Perhaps the most obvious cause of fluctuations in membership was the trade cycle. Undoubtedly the upswings in the early 1850's, late 1850's and early 1860's coincided with improvements in trade and employment, while some periods in which membership declined coincided with local economic recessions, 1853-4, 1857-8, and after 1874.¹ Buoyant trade for instance lay behind the demand of 400 Leeds carpenters and joiners during the lock-out of 1864 for a shorter working week. They wanted the extra time, they said, to attend mechanics' institutes and working men's clubs.²

The trade cycle however was probably not the main determinant of the numbers involved in mutual improvement. A wide variety of situations were conducive to increasing membership of societies. Strikes themselves, like the building strike of 1864, could increase the importance of cheap access to newspaper reading rooms to workers.³ 'Exciting public events' could have the same effect. The reading rooms of many suburban institutes became crowded during the Crimean War as the volume of newsprint devoured by workers increased.⁴ Other external factors might occasionally benefit institutes. Membership at Beeston institute almost doubled between 1861 and 1862 as its evening classes were filled by local pit boys compelled by the new education code to have six hours schooling a week.⁵

The establishment or re-organisation of individual institutions could also boost numbers for a time. The 'remodelling' of Bramley institute between 1858 and 1859 placed it on 'a more popular basis' and tripled membership.⁶ Those institutes, such as in Holbeck and Hunslet, which were launched in a flare of publicity and with prominent bourgeois patronage, sometimes attracted a larger membership than they were subsequently able to sustain. Specific problems

1 For the association between the trade cycle and membership see, S.C. on Public Libraries, op.cit., evidence of Smiles, Qs. 1990-1; LMILS, Annual Reports (Leeds, 1859), p.8; (Leeds, 1878), p.5, (Leeds, 1879), p.3, (Leeds, 1880), p.3; YUMI, Annual Reports (Leeds, 1856), p.65, (Leeds, 1862), p.114.

2 LM, 25 May 1864.

3 LM, 28 May 1864.

4 YUMI, Annual Reports (Leeds, 1855), p.75, (Leeds, 1856), p.77.

5 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1863), p.113.

6 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1860), p.73.

appeared after initial enthusiasm had waned. 'Apathy' among suburban workers towards lectures and classes seemed to increase with the age of an institution until numbers stabilised with a hard core of dedicated self improvers.¹ Dedicated they had to be. No amount of 'village canvassing', often resorted to in the 1850's, could persuade large numbers of workers to get up at six a.m. on a Sunday morning for classes in elocution or geometry. Zion institute never managed to attract more than 20 to such classes in New Wortley.²

The struggle to determine the content of education and recreation offered by the institutes was fundamentally the same class struggle for 'respectable' culture which was taking place in the communities outside the institutes. The ideal of creating a class of artisan-scientists and inventors permeated many institutes. A series of lectures on electricity and pneumatics with models were given at the youth guardian societies of Bramley, Armley and Kirkstall in 1844.³ There were lectures on natural history, botany, chemistry and astronomy in Armley, Beeston and Wortley in the later 1840's and 1850's.⁴ Lectures directly relevant to a worker's situation were the most popular. Following a number of accidents in Leeds engineering shops, a series of talks on 'Health and Safety in the Factory' were held at LMILS in 1851, which 'attracted large audiences of mechanics who listened to them with the greatest attention'.⁵

Generally however even science education was subject to middle-class indoctrination. Frequent lectures by James Hole and Thomas Plint stressed the contribution of machinery to the progress of civilization and the welfare and comfort of the working class, a controversial subject while technological unemployment was still rampant among suburban domestic woollen workers.⁶ There was less direct propaganda of political economy in the 1850's than there had been in the 1820's, when Marshall had lectured to Leeds Mechanics' Institute on the iron law of wages and explained why trade unions, as monopolies, were an anathema.⁷ However there were plenty of lectures in the vein of

1 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1853).

2 On village canvassing see YUMI, Annual Reports (Leeds, 1853), (Leeds, 1857), pp.68-9. On Zion's classes see B.A. Kilburne, 'Annals of Zion School, New Wortley', (Brotherton Ms.116/2)p.36.

3 LM, 15 June 1844.

4 LM, 24 June, 8 July 1848, 20 Oct. 1849, 6 Mar. 1858.

5 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1852), p.14.

6 LM, 22 Apr. 22 July 1848. Plint was former secretary to the West Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutes, the predecessor to YUMI.

7 LM, 5 Mar. 1825.

'the importance of regularity, method and perseverance', or Smiles' 'self-help in Man'.¹

The institutes however accepted that the 'solid' work was done not in lectures, but in the elementary classes provided to teach basic literacy and numeracy,² and ironically, it was poor teaching and a lack of adult literacy which often kept class numbers down.³ Bramley institute for instance complained of a lack of literacy among potential members. Its solution was to circumvent the problem and to provide other attractions.⁴ By the 1850's the institutes had retreated from the policy of science for artisans and the conception of them as cultural and recreational centres in local communities was firmly established.⁵

Suburban mechanics' institutes sought to raise their public profile with tea parties and concerts, soirees and railway excursions. Chess and draughts were introduced to reading rooms in the 1860's.⁶ Cricket clubs were founded.⁷ Above all the institutes discovered the pulling power of music. Marshall appears again as a forerunner with his employment of Holbeck Choral Society at the opening of his new school rooms in 1842, but by the end of the decade brass bands, choral societies and vocalists were appearing at almost every self help event in the out-townships. Holbeck Mutual Improvement Society experienced the popularity of singing and recitations, and 'drama and song evenings' in winter. By the 1860's, tea parties, 'one lively source of interest', were being followed by 'singing, recitations, dancing and other games.'⁸

Yet all of this could scarcely compete with the diversity of working class leisure activities outside the institutes, the community feasts and customs, sport and the 'vices' of gambling and billiards.⁹ For brief periods in the 1850's particularly, the institutes may have added to the diversity of suburban culture, but they were slow to adapt to changes in fashion and few were ever serious contenders as community recreation centres. As agencies of social control they

1 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1852), p.11.

2 Royle, op.cit. 308.

3 Modern language classes at Holbeck and Leeds were particularly vulnerable to this, see LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1861), p.25; YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1860), p.89.

4 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1853).

5 J.F.C. Harrison, Learning and Living, 1790-1960 (1961), p.74.

6 At Holbeck in 1860, Hunslet in 1862, Leeds in 1863.

7 At Bramley in 1852, Holbeck in 1863.

8 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1861), p.84.

9 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1884), p.64.

were thus weak. As the century progressed they fell back on their original educational function, but teaching only small classes of labour aristocrats, clerks and shopkeepers' assistants. In 1850 they had regarded their elementary classes as extensions of day and Sunday schools, 'offering a means of continuous self culture.'¹ By the 1880's Leeds youth were declared to be 'blind to the interests of their self-culture.'²

Suburban societies such as Wortley Working Men's Institute survived in the 1870's and 1880's largely as a result of the small but regular attendances at art and science classes. Holbeck Mechanics' Institute continued through the 1880's with falling membership but successful science classes. Like the Wortley institute, Holbeck began this switch to science around 1870 with mathematics and geography classes and then added seven other scientific and practical classes to its four elementary ones. This was Holbeck's method of survival in the age of board schools and public libraries, to offer a wide range of elementary and advanced classes, structured to the Yorkshire examination system.³ The surviving institutes had been reduced to representing a purely commercial transaction between instructors and fee-paying pupils. The logic of the marketplace at the centre of self-help ideology, free competition between individuals in pursuit of moral and material improvement, thus worked through to destroy the ideals advanced in the 1840's, of the 'fusion of the classes', enlightened self-interest and the 'social spirit' embodied in a community institution.

At the root of the failure of most suburban institutes to serve both as community centres and agencies of social control, lay the marketplace of adult education itself. In this marketplace the struggle around the working and fixed capital of these institutes, fees and other income, desks, books and buildings, was the primary cause of their fluctuating fortunes.

Prohibitive fees deterred workers from joining some institutes, but the cost of adult education varied enormously across the industrial suburbs. The lowest recorded fee was a penny a month, the original fee charged by Holbeck Mutual Improvement Society in 1847 for

1 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1850), p.47.

2 LMILS, Annual Report (Leeds, 1885), p.3.

3 These examinations were first organised in 1861 by a 'Central Committee of Educational Unions', in connection with the Society of Arts, YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1861), p.57.

the use of their library. The dearest was the quarterly charge of three shillings and threepence at Beeston society in the 1850's. For the working class budget the cheapest institutes were those offering the lowest weekly fees. All the societies in Wortley charged a half-penny or a penny a week, which may help explain why there was a higher proportion of mutual improvers among the workforce there than anywhere else in Leeds. Several societies charged up to twopence a week, but they also offered monthly, quarterly and annual fees, and members at Beeston unusually had the choice of all four methods of payment. In other words most institutes with very cheap weekly rates also maintained a more expensive range of fees.

It might be argued that the most expensive institutes were not necessarily those charging the highest aggregate fees, but those which had no weekly rates. Quarterly or annual payments were likely to cause major disruptions to a working class family budget, whether these averaged out expensive or not.¹ Lump sums of a shilling a quarter, or five shillings a year, charged in the big new institutes in Holbeck and Hunslet in the 1860's, were relatively cheap. However they required upheavals to usual patterns of expenditure based on wages paid weekly, daily or by the hour, and may have been a considerable disincentive to potential working class members.

The level of fees was a hotly debated issue., and one closely related to the social orientation of individual institutes. In the 1850's YUMI believed that village institutes were better geared to working class needs than the large town institutes and were more successful in attracting workers to libraries and reading rooms. It concluded from this that fees could be raised from under twopence to at least fourpence a week. 'It is forgotten that inefficiency drives away the members more effectually than would an extra 1d or 2d per week.'² Those institutes reducing fees or keeping charges down, Bramley, Holbeck Mutual, and Zion institute in New Wortley, were all criticised.

Yet, supported by much evidence, these institutes argued that workers were very sensitive to fee levels. A penny a week could make a great difference to class attendances. Zion charged very low fees for access to its reading room and library, sixpence for six months on joining, and a penny a week thereafter. Class fees were only

1 S.C. on Public Libraries, op.cit. evidence of Smiles, Q.1987.

2 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1853), p.17.

fourpence a month which covered the supply of copybooks and readers. Its classes on Sundays were it argued, 'the chief means of secular instruction' for 850 Zion Sunday scholars meeting in the same building, two-thirds of whom were young factory workers. If, as YUMI suggested, Zion was to double its fees it would lose the few students among these that it had.¹ When Zion did increase its basic fee in 1860, this was followed by a decline in numbers, 1861-3, although income actually doubled in the same period. The proportion of adult males among this declining membership however fell from 84 per cent in 1856 to 67 per cent in 1862.² Zion Mechanics' Institute therefore had to balance the advantages of greater income (although the sums were still paltry) with the disadvantages of a rapid fall in the numbers of adult male workers among the membership.³

Also contradicting YUMI's logic Holbeck Adult Mutual Improvement Society attributed part of its success in the early 1850's to low fees, and pursued a deliberate policy of keeping charges down to maintain working class support. For an entrance fee of sixpence for the first three months and a penny a week thereafter, men and women had access to the reading room, library, and some 15 different classes in 1852, from 'phonotypy' and English history to 'easy reading'. Teaching was given free by other workers, 'under a system of mutual instruction', although the expenses of books and equipment had to be met by the students themselves.⁴

Clearly workers preferred paying weekly fees and joined mechanics' institutes and mutual improvement societies above all for the cheap access they offered to a reading room and a library. According to Smiles, the first thing any group of young men founding a society did was to get a library together as quickly and cheaply as possible, mainly by soliciting donations of books in the neighbourhood.⁵ In the late 1830's there were almost 1500 volumes in the libraries of the two youth guardian societies in Wortley, representing one book for every two workers in the township. By mid-century some 12 institutes with libraries held a total of 6500-7000 volumes, approaching the size of LMILS library with 7700 volumes. Like the fees charged for access,

1 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1854).

2 YUMI, Annual Reports (Leeds 1856), p.77; (Leeds, 1862), p.114.

3 Annual incomes were tiny at most suburban institutes, less than £50 in many, below £20 in the poorest.

4 YUMI, Annual Report, (Leeds, 1852), p.56; S.C. on Public Libraries, op.cit. evidence of Smiles, Q.1984.

5 Ibid.

individual libraries varied considerably in size, from the tiniest mutual improvement societies with less than 200 volumes each, to the biggest and longest established libraries of the Wortley societies with more than 1300 volumes. Many of the smallest were broken up in the 1850's, but some of the rest got bigger. By 1863 only six out-township institutes held nearly 8000 volumes, while LMILS library had grown to over 12000 volumes.¹

Library issues were sometimes used as an indicator of the health of a particular institute. When library issues fell by a half in Beeston, 1851-4, it was taken as a symptom of the 'languid condition' of the society.² The most serious decline in membership occurred when free public libraries attracted workers away from the institutes in the 1870's. Hunslet Mechanics' Institute crashed in 1873 with the transfer of its books to the public library conveniently situated across the road.³ The debate within Leeds Corporation about these municipal libraries indicated the importance of the spacial dimension to class relations in the borough. When John Barran, the clothing manufacturer, proposed a central library he was refuted by Edwin Gaunt himself a native of Wortley.

"Mr Alderman Barran talked about a centre. Where could he get a better centre than Hunslet? That was where the masses lived. It was not in the neighbourhood of Boar Lane or the railway stations, which was the centre round which Mr Barran moved." 4

Facilities such as reading rooms and libraries were crucial to the success of mechanics' institutes because they competed most directly with pubs as social and recreational centres, alternatives to the workplace and the home. Associated with access to such facilities, the most persistent and serious problem attracting levels of membership was the poverty of accommodation. Here the class struggle around workers' education in the suburbs developed quite literally into a struggle for the access to and the use of space. For many societies founded in the 1840's the choice was between meeting in fields and in private houses, or in school rooms rented from a religious denomination. None of the suburban institutes before the mid 1850's owned their halls. Many flitted between rooms and between landlords,

1 The quality of these libraries however was debatable. Ibid., evidence of George Dawson, Q.1212.

2 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1855), p.58.

3 YUMI, Annual Reports (Leeds, 1873), (Leeds, 1875), p.144.

4 LM, 1 Apr. 1870, quoted by Brian Barber, 'Leeds Corporation 1835/1905: A History of its Environmental, Social and Administrative Services', (unpublished PhD Thesis, Leeds, 1975), p.303.

trying to avoid being identified with chapel or church or any particular political or social group. Religious authorities sometimes used their positions as landlords to interfere openly or insidiously in the affairs of societies. Several mutual improvement societies, like Bramley, were beholden to the Baptists and Methodists who accommodated them.¹ Beeston society, which had complained about its 'cold barn-like building' depressing attendances, owed its revival in 1856 to their new Wesleyan landlords. Later however they had great problems with their tenancy and continued only due to 'the sympathy shown and the promises of co-operation made by the working men of our village'.²

Secular halls were scarce in the suburbs before the 1870's,³ which is why the spatial dimension to class relations in the self-help movement was so important. The problem of physical space, lecture halls, reading rooms, class rooms, and the equipment to fill that space, blackboards, desks, books, exhibits, lay at the heart of any institute's struggle both to identify with its local community as a popular educational and recreational centre, and to act as an agency of social control.

Many little institutes dreamed of facilities like those constructed at a cost of £1800 for the new and well-patronised institute at Holbeck in 1858. This first purpose built mechanics' institute in the out-townships was a two storey building with a large reading room and library, a committee room, five class rooms, an 800 seat lecture hall, two 'retiring rooms' and a drawing room.⁴ By contrast Hunslet was among several suburban institutes to decline or break up in the 1850's due to the lack of 'adequate accommodation'. Its building was 'situated at the outskirts of the town, void of any attractive appearance'. The lecture room was 'unworthy of the name, ... low and of limited dimensions.'⁵ The decision to change tenancy, or, more crucially, to attempt to buy a building, was therefore both compelling and momentous for many institutes. The fate of Holbeck Mutual Improvement Society best illustrates the nature of the class issues involved in the struggle for space.

In 1856 the management of the Holbeck society decided to try for a better building. The series of steps they took towards this goal

1 YUMI, Annual Reports (Leeds, 1859), (Leeds, 1877), p.135.

2 YUMI, Annual Reports (Leeds, 1855), p.58, (Leeds, 1866), p.41.

3 When public libraries, political clubs, drill halls, board schools etc. were being built.

4 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1860), p.90.

5 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1851), pp.11, 56.

temporarily altered the class character of the society and compromised its independence from middle-class patronage. Their first decision was to double weekly subscriptions, and this after several years resisting such an increase. The second decision was to start a building fund and appeal for support from 'the wealthy of Leeds.'¹ The third step was to amalgamate with Holbeck Church Institute (formed in 1856), change the Society's name to Mechanics' Institute, accept middle class control (the amalgamation was 'confirmed by a meeting of influential townsmen'), and join funds with the Church Institute to cover the cost of a new building.²

The Churchmen however soon broke the amalgamation agreement and, taking their money with them, built a new institute on a site donated by Marshall. The old institute were still able to buy their former rented building thanks to J.G. Marshall, who continued, apparently impartially, as patron of both institutes.³ The clear shift, 1856-8, to reliance on overt bourgeois patronage, (aided by the reconciliation in the 1850's of the Liberals with radicals such as Hole and Holmes), seems to have temporarily altered the 'democratic' nature of the society. Although still 'supported by the sons of toil', in the 1860's with 'none but artisans' as members,⁴ the old institute eventually appears to have merged with the new, thus ending an important, if not unique, experiment in working class mutual improvement.

The class struggle for space, for access to and use of suitable accommodation and facilities, complemented the similar struggle for the access to and the content of 'respectable' culture. The circumstances and the consequences of such conflicts varied widely between suburbs, with a petty bourgeois management at Bramley, the heavily capitalised patronage at Hunslet and the radical workers controlling the mutual improvement society in Holbeck. Although many institutes were genuine working class foundations, and a few retained worker control, none became effective 'community institutions' for any length of time. After initial flushes of enthusiasm most fell back on a hard core of self-improvers. However several mechanics' institutes survived long enough to leave their mark on suburban community life. The mutuality and co-operative aspects of education at institutes like Holbeck Mutual, Zion, or Beeston Mutual, were attractive to workers in

1 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1856), p.77.

2 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1858), pp.87-8.

3 LM, 9 Jan. 1858.

4 YUMI, Annual Reports, (Leeds, 1859), (Leeds, 1860), p.89.

communities with a still vibrant clothier culture.¹ Reading rooms and libraries partly functioned as alternative social centres to suburban pubs, providing entry fees were not prohibitive, as generally they were not. The outcry at the arrival of public libraries is perhaps the best indicator of the sort of service mechanics' institutes were offering. Once this social centre had gone, institutes lost much of the recreational function acquired since the 1840's. The result was institutes which opened only for minority classes geared to examinations.

These institutes may have helped mute class conflict in the mid-Victorian period, though this is doubtful. They scarcely diminished labour consciousness. Levels of membership show institutes had little impact on the bulk of the working class. They may however have raised the labour consciousness of a few skilled workers in townships like Holbeck and Wortley, through improved education, self-management, and by increasing their awareness of the selectivity of patronage. Above all it was clear to workers involved in any suburban self-help society in the 1840's and 1850's that institutions were dependent on bourgeois control of space. Capital was seen as creating buildings and thereby access to culture. Yet even within those institutes best serving the interests of social control, the working class might shape their own culture; hence the numbers of workers reading 'light works' of fiction, workers' journals and newspapers; hence the greater appreciation of sport, music, elementary education and current affairs, than of lectures on self-help and bourgeois political economy; hence the desire to acquire the tools of literacy rather than the baggage of knowledge carefully vetted by the middle class.

Economic Self-Help

Enlightened self interest was regarded by classical economists as an elemental force in the division of labour and the development of the free market economy. Man, according to Adam Smith, was a social creature in almost constant need of the help of his brethren. This assistance was more likely to be furnished by appealing to the instincts of 'self-love' rather than benevolence. 'Self-love' indeed was 'the governing principle in the intercourse of human society'. Together with an innate desire to better one's condition, 'self-love' resulted in the effort to 'augment one's fortune'. In this effort, Smith argued, the 'principle of frugality' dominated the 'principle of expense.'²

1 I do not, however, believe it is possible, on the Leeds evidence, to draw a firm line between 'mutual improvement' and 'self-help'.

2 Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations (Harmondsworth, revised edn. 1974), pp.118-20, 441.

The motives of thrift and mutual improvement might therefore coalesce. Mutuality was to be founded on enlightened self interest. These ideal concepts were evident in a number of Victorian institutions, savings banks, building clubs, co-operative and friendly societies. Some saw all of these institutions as complementary, part of the movement to educate, rationalise and bring the working class into the cultural and legal framework of bourgeois society. Others, including large sections of the lower middle class, elevated individual thrift alone into a life philosophy.

Early savings banks were often established as 'respectable' alternatives to more mutual and more independent forms of economic self-help. The Leeds Savings Bank, one of 150 established in 1817-18, catered largely for women and children, domestic servants, artisans and their wives.¹ There were, however, virtually no formal banking facilities for small savers in the suburbs until 1850. In that year Charles William Sikes launched his scheme to use mechanics' institutes for a network of 'Preliminary Savings Banks' to act as feeders to the town banks.² Handicapped by their central locations and inconvenient opening hours, the urban banks had become increasingly the province of small masters and tradesmen, and gentlemen's servants.³ 'There is an air of pretension about them which rather repels the lowest class of contributors.'⁴ Sikes' idea was to tap hitherto inaccessible working class savings in suburbs and villages. Preliminary Savings Banks were opened at Wortley, Beeston and New Wortley during 1850, the latter rapidly becoming one of the most 'active' and 'prosperous' features of Zion institutes.⁵ By 1852 £400 had been deposited by over 200 members. From 1854 however deposits declined, and the bank was discontinued due to the difficulty of finding 'fit and proper persons as managers'.⁶

The savings movement revived in 1856 following Edward Akroyd's launch in Leeds of his West Riding Provident Society and Penny Savings Bank.⁷ At least four penny savings banks were opened in Bramley,

1 H. Oliver Horne, A History of Savings Banks (1947), pp.80, 94-8; Morris, Organisation and Aims, p.346.

2 Horne, op.cit. pp.171-2; P.H.J.H. Gosden, Self-Help; Voluntary Associations in the 19th Century (1973), pp.231-4. Sikes was manager of Huddersfield Banking Company and originator in 1861 of the Post Office Savings Bank.

3 S.C. on the Savings of the Middle and Working Classes, PP(1850)XIX, evidence of J. Millbank, Qs.543-4.

4 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1850), p.11.

5 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1853).

6 YUMI, Annual Report (Leeds, 1856), p.77.

7 This became the Yorkshire Penny Savings Bank in 1859. Horne, op.cit. pp.187-90; Gosden, op.cit. pp.233-4.

Hunslet and Holbeck in 1856-7. Ostensibly independent, they were mostly set up by employers and by managers and patrons of Sunday schools and mechanics' institutes.¹ A third impetus came with the Post Office Savings Bank introduced in 1861.² At Bramley the new bank grew rapidly from deposits of £380 in 1861 to over £1300 by 1865, eclipsing the old penny savings bank there.³

How popular was the penny savings movement among the suburban working class? What impact did they have in the out-township communities? The banks were not numerous. Only six have been recorded for the boom period of 1856-64. The numbers using them however were not unimpressive. The total number of current savers in Bramley Penny Savings Bank between 1857 and 1864 ranged from 250 to over 320, that is between two and four times the membership of the mechanics' institute to which the bank was attached.

On the other hand the average volume of savings points to a clientele well above the poorest groups in the wage earning population. The average weekly deposit at Bramley in 1857 was seven pence, more than twice the weekly fee at most mechanics' institutes. Interestingly, as the number of depositors fell at Bramley in the late 1850's the average weekly deposit increased to 17 pence.⁴ Either a few well paid workers were putting a lot more into savings banks than into mutual improvement classes, or the clientele of the banks were wealthier.

The average size of accounts varied. At Zion it rose from seven to nine shillings between 1851 and 1862, while Bramley accounts averaged 15 to 19 shillings between 1858 and 1864. This compares with averages for the West Riding in 1856 of only five shillings and for London savings banks of twelve shillings per account.⁵ Suburban savers therefore appear to have been relatively well-off.⁶

There is some evidence of suburban working class participation in the savings movement. Some of the female depositors were working class housewives, and Bramley Penny Savings Bank was said 'to give great satisfaction to the children of the labouring classes.'⁷ The bank

1 For examples see LM, 3 Apr. 22 July 1858.

2 Horne, op.cit. pp.168-81; Gosden, op.cit. pp.235-41.

3 Bramley Almanac, 1858-66.

4 Ibid.

5 S.C. on Savings Banks, PP (1857-8) XVI, evidence of C.W.Sikes, Q.2718. These averages do not allow for skewing by large accounts.

6 Contrast however several hundred middle class subscribers to the three major joint-stock banks in Leeds owning £20 or £100 shares. S.C. on Joint Stock Banks, PP (1836)IX, Returns, Table 65.

7 YUMI, Annual Report, (Leeds, 1857).

established at Victoria Foundry in 1857 was 'conducted by the men themselves, quite independent of the firm'. Savers however accounted for only 50 out of a workforce of 450.¹ Generally the number of proletarians in formal savings banks remained small. The classification of nearly 13,000 savers in the Leeds bank in 1859 differed little from that of 1818, with women, often widows, children and domestic servants making up 40 per cent of the total. Artisans in non-textile trades, retailers and white collar workers amounted to 67 per cent of adult male depositors.² There was an obvious absence of male labourers and millworkers of both sexes.

Nevertheless this was the era of the institutionalization of saving and credit facilities in both urban and suburban communities. Accompanying the growth of banks came loan societies, pawn shops, savings clubs and building societies, and the new 'down market' life assurance companies, all experiencing rapid growth from the 1840's.³ From only two loan societies in 1850, there were at least 12 south of the Aire by 1872.⁴ The institutions of borrowing and saving nourished each other. For instance, the Hunslet millworkers' savings club, established to enable them to finance a visit to the Great Exhibition, invested its funds in one of the local loan societies. Stock and profits were divided up proportionately when the club was terminated.⁵

What made workers save or not save? There was a deep seated distrust, even among skilled artisans, of investing their capital in savings banks. Some worried about the lack of access to their money.

"Some think that they are putting their combined capital too much beyond their reach, that is it does not redound so immediately to their advantage as they would like it to do." 6

Many, particularly among the poorest workers, distrusted both the stab-

1 Hole, op.cit. p.154.

2 Calculated from *ibid.* p.152.

3 There were 61 licensed pawn shops in Leeds by 1870, see Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet* (Leicester, 1983). See also Paul Johnson, 'Credit and Thrift and the British Working Class, 1870-1939', in Jay Winter ed., *The Working Class in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 1983), pp.147-70; Paul Johnson, *Savings and Spending* (Oxford, 1985). On life assurance see Barry Supple, *The Royal Exchange Assurance* (Cambridge, 1970), pp.130-45; Clive Trebilcock, *Phoenix Assurance and the Development of British Insurance, Vol.1, 1782-1870* (Cambridge, 1985), pp.570-2.

4 Isaac Stater, *Royal National and Commercial Directory* (1848); Thomas Porter, *Topographical and Commercial Directory of Leeds* (Leeds, 1872): On loan societies see Morris, *Organisation and Aims*, pp.347-59.

5 LM, 26 Oct. 1850. The Hunslet workers received five per cent from the loan society compared to only four per cent offered by the Bramley savings bank to its depositors.

6 S.C. on Savings, op.cit. Millbank, Q.507.

ility and the personnel of savings banks, preferring pledge shops which were firmly rooted in their community.¹ They connected all banks and public institutions with government, taxation and the police, and also feared that evidence of savings would encourage employers to reduce wages.²

It was a common middle class belief that a lack of frugality and self-discipline kept the numbers of working class savers down. More realistically however, workers themselves saw the hopelessness of social elevation through savings.³ There was no savings for savings sake among the working class. When money was accumulated it was almost always for a definite object, and usually as part of a group effort. Only by co-operation and the mutual association of producers and consumers, who in working class communities were invariably the same, could their condition be improved.⁴

The most ambitious object of individual savings was to buy cottage property, and here at least some social elevation was tangible.⁵ Building clubs, usually organised on the terminating system before the 1860's, were theoretically mutual in character. Everyone contributed equally to the funds and shared equally in the distribution of the assets. However the gradual separation of borrowers and investors into clearly defined groups which culminated in permanent societies, eventually destroyed the ideal of the small mutual society and the social aspects of membership.⁶

There were at least nine building societies in Leeds by 1851 and a sprinkling of these in the industrial suburbs.⁷ The most notable was the Leeds Union Operative Benefit Building Society, 'begun by some 300 working men' in Holbeck in 1845. This society was successful enough to spawn a chain of five further terminating clubs in Holbeck, lasting till 1883.⁸ Most of the funds of these societies went to build

1 S.C. on Savings Banks, op.cit. Sikes, Qs.2622-7; Tebbutt, op.cit. pp.17-18.

2 S.C. on Savings, op.cit. Millbank, Q.546.

3 Ibid. Q.549. On the aspirations of artisan savers see Gray, op.cit. pp.121-35.

4 S.C. on Savings, op.cit. Millbank, Qs.549-59, Cooper, Qs.642-3; Tebbutt, op.cit. p.16; Johnson, Saving and Spending, p.125.

5 S.C. on Savings Banks, op.cit. Sikes, Q.2703.

6 E.J.Cleary, The Building Society Movement(1965), pp.55-9, 66-8.

7 W. Slade and D.I. Roebuck, Directory of the Borough and Neighbourhood of Leeds (Leeds, 1851).

8 G.H.F. Nelson, 'Holbeck to Holbeck House', (unpublished typescript, Leeds, 1963). These finally resulted in the creation of Leeds and Holbeck Permanent Building Society in 1874, as well as a number of mostly permanent 'co-operative building societies' elsewhere in Yorkshire.

hundreds of houses, 'superior cottage property',¹ in Holbeck, Hunslet and Beeston. Other small clubs financed cottages at Beeston Hill, Burley, New Wortley and Meadow Road. Such houses, with their own gardens, backyards and conveniences, and 'as much architectural appearance as is compatible with due economy', not only gave the building club member enfranchisement, but also a clear status in working class districts.² Areas like Burley and Beeston Hill, and certain roads in New Wortley became enclaves of the superior artisan, tradesman, shop-keeper and clerk. Property ownership confirmed their social elevation within the community.³

Ultimately building societies and savings banks were manifestations of individual effort, but there was a mutual side to economic self-help which had considerably greater significance for community consciousness and class relations in the industrial suburbs.

Leeds largely missed the great upsurge of Owenite co-operation in the early 1830's, although propagandists were active in the town. While Leeds was a trade union stronghold, there was no strong co-operative society to rival those at Huddersfield, Halifax and Bradford.⁴ The town however was at the forefront of the last phase of Owenite community building with the establishment of Leeds Redemption Society in 1845.⁵ The Redemptionists divided Leeds into 15 districts with members paying a penny a week. By January 1847 there were more than 600 subscribers, and another 200 to 300 'from all ranks, creeds and parties' were added that year.⁶

Although the Redemption Society gained instant popularity and national fame, its leadership was divided between Owenites, Communists, Christian Socialists and Radical-Liberals. The former regarded co-operation as an alternative mode of production to that of capitalism. Communists looked further to the 'association of free and equal producers' as one of the forces to transform class society.⁷ For Marx, the emergence of co-operative production was no less than 'a victory for the

1 LM, 27 Aug. 1864.

2 Hole, op.cit. p.171.

3 Cf. Gray op.cit. p.128; Geoffrey Crossick, An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society (1978), pp.145-8.

4 See The Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator and Useful Classes Advocate, 1831-2.

5 For the aims of the society see Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper, 24 Oct. 19 Dec. 1846.

6 LM, 8 Jan. 1848; J.F.C. Harrison, 'The Visions of the Leeds Redemptionists', Manchester Guardian, 22 June 1955; idem, Social Reform in Victorian Leeds, 3-13.

7 Karl Marx, 'Instruktionen für die Delegierten des Provisorischen Zentralrats zu den einzelnen Fragen', in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden, vol.3 (Berlin, 1972), 141-52.

political economy of Labour over the political economy of Capital.¹ Some middle-class reformers like Dr Hook recognised the appeal of these ideas to the working class in Leeds after the failure of 1848.

"They no longer think of brute force; they understand that the middle classes will defend what they have; but they see that there is truth in socialism and communism." 2

Radicals such as James Hole and John Holmes however believed that co-operation could end the antagonism between Capital and Labour. 'Labouring Capitalists - not Labourers and Capitalists' was the motto of Hole's paper The Herald of Co-operation.³ Whether co-operation of producers or consumers, the answer according to the radical middle class was the creation of a strata of small capitalists, workers 'working and making wealth for themselves.'⁴ 'The prize for which you are toiling', Holmes told members of the Leeds co-operative in 1860, 'is social emancipation.'⁵ The progress of the working class was 'dependent on their own self-culture and self-denial.'⁶ Here again the principles of frugality and mutual improvement were to merge. Co-operatives could be added to working mens' institutes, reading rooms, libraries, savings banks and building societies in the culture of self-help. Even trade unions, by maintaining high wages for the labour aristocracy, were useful in keeping 'a limited class in a state of respectability.'⁷

Marx, although regarding all co-operatives as a good thing, advised the International to support co-operatives of producers rather than those of retailers and consumers. The former really undermined capitalist relations of production, the latter merely scratched the surface. However, he warned of the danger of 'degeneration' (entarten) into bourgeois joint-stock companies where shareholders and investors became insulated from the non-shareholding workers.⁸

- 1 Karl Marx, 'Inauguraladresse der Internationalen Arbeiterassoziation', *ibid.* 7-17.
- 2 Hook to Wood, Dec. 1851, in W.R.W. Stephens, *op.cit.* p.494. Original emphasis.
- 3 J.F.C. Harrison, *Social Reform in Victorian Leeds*, 5.
- 4 John Holmes quoted in *LM*, 3 Sept. 1864; Mill envisaged a universal system of co-operatives as the 'probable futurity of the labouring classes'. J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (revised edn. 1923), pp.752-94. Cf. S.C. on Savings, *op.cit.* J.S. Mill, Qs.852, 854.
- 5 Quoted in George Jacob Holyoake, The Jubilee History of the Leeds Industrial Co-operative Society, 1847-97 (Leeds, 1897).
- 6 James Hole quoted in *LM*, 3 Sept. 1864.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Marx, *Instruktionen*, *op.cit.* p.148. From a different viewpoint, Mill also sounded this warning using the same language of 'degeneration'. Samuel Hollander, The Economics of John Stuart Mill; Vol.2 (Oxford, 1985), p.816.

This indeed was the major pitfall. What were initially communities of producers rapidly became shopkeeping companies where shareholders, producers and consumers often formed three separate interests. The border between co-operative and joint-stock ventures became increasingly fogged as the use of limited liability extended, and as local examples of successful 'company mills' multiplied.¹ The early co-operative aims of social egalitarianism by community of property disappeared behind the tenets of 'commercial shrewdness' and material progress for individual members.²

Leeds Industrial Co-operative followed this path most clearly.³ It began in 1847 as an association of Holbeck flaxworkers protesting against the high price and poor quality of flour. From renting their own mill in order to produce and sell 'honest flour', by the 1850's they had accumulated 3000 subscribers and diversified into grocery retailing. The progress of the co-operative out of the hands of its founders and into the management of the radical bourgeoisie was even more rapid. None of the flaxworkers were members of the first Committee of Organisation. The emphasis on 'remunerative prices', dividends and profits took less than a decade to displace the original idea of cheap flour.⁴

From a bourgeois standpoint working class co-operation offered most to social control when it did 'degenerate' into petty-shareholding capitalism and individual profit-taking. Yet the great success of co-operatives in the industrial suburbs had other foundations. Firstly they retained a powerful identification with the radical labour movement throughout the Victorian period, despite the institutionalization of shareholding. They still embodied a working class concept of self-help, a collective strength helping members 'to work their own redemption'.⁵ Conservative elements in the Leeds bourgeoisie continued well into the 1850's to attack co-operatives as 'setting up Labour against Capital', a criticism which would have gladdened Marx, but which dismayed the managers of the Leeds society.⁶

Secondly the emphasis on co-operatives of producers continued,

1 Cf. for instance, Beeston Manor Corn Mill Company, which realised seven and a half per cent profit on business in 1864. LM, 29 Apr. 1864.

2 S. Pollard, 'Nineteenth Century Co-operation: From Community Building to Shopkeeping' in Asa Briggs and J. Saviile eds.; Essays in Labour History (1960), pp.74-112.

3 Following paragraph is based on Holyoake, op.cit.

4 Ibid. p.68.

5 John Green, cited by Crossick, op.cit. p.172.

6 Holyoake, op.cit. p.65.

allowing local societies greater independence as regards prices and costs. Wortley Cloth Manufacturing and Provision Society was begun by a few clothiers in 1854 with all cloth they made to be sold at a fixed price.¹ Another 'industrial manufacturing society' was established at Stanningley in 1864, to produce and sell plain and fancy woollens. Both societies had more than 100 members by 1870, and sales at Stanningley rocketed to more than £3700 from just £270 in 1866.² Leeds Co-operative itself built up an immense manufacturing department to furnish its provisions stores. By the 1890's the Society proclaimed itself 'a city within a city', with a huge network of 13 branches of business and nearly 1400 employees.³

Whether as producers or consumers however, the most substantial foundation of co-operative success was its identification with individual communities. A working class localism was present at the very outset of the co-operative movement in Leeds. Holyoake believed he glimpsed the essence of this in the declaration of the Holbeck flaxworkers from 1847.

"They announced themselves as 'We the workpeople of Messr. Benyon and Co., Meadow Lane, Holbeck, in the County of York.' There was no mistake as to who they were, and where they were...They were to be found in 'Holbeck, in the County of York'. It would appear that they regarded Holbeck as a more important or better known place than Leeds." 4

Whether as flour shops and grocery stores of Leeds Co-operative, or as independent societies like those at Wortley, Stanningley and Farnley, many suburban co-operatives became community institutions. Bramley co-operative claimed not only to be the first branch of the Leeds Society, but also to have held 'a sort of John-the-Baptist forerunner class of co-operators' in 1846. At the opening of their shop in 1847, a procession was held from Leeds and a band played the first flour into Bramley. The reaction of local shopkeepers was to reduce their flour prices in order to ruin the new store, but this only enhanced the reputation of the co-operative as having brought an immediate benefit to the township.⁵

The growth of co-operatives was another episode in the organisation and the class struggle for space in the suburbs. The 'People's Mill'

1 Benn, op.cit. p.95.

2 General Statements of the Funds and Effects of Industrial and Provident Societies for 1866, PP (1867), XXXIX,824; Returns relating to Industrial and Co-operative Societies, 1870, PP(1871)LXII,460.

3 Holyoake, op.cit. p.191.

4 Ibid. p.10.

5 Ibid. pp.250-1.

at Holbeck planned its expansion so that each of its stores belonged firmly to one neighbourhood and their catchment areas should not coincide. From 1858 Leeds Co-operative was organised by local committees elected at ward meetings - 31 in 1870 - connected with each grocery branch.¹ About three out of every ten stores opened in each decade from the 1860's were in the industrial out-townships, with the greatest expansion occurring in the 1870's. By 1897 there were 22 suburban stores from a total of 74 belonging to Leeds Co-operative.²

The independents also expanded rapidly. By 1889 Farnley Co-operative had almost 500 members from less than 200 in 1870. Wortley Co-operative grew to over 520 members and sales nearly quadrupled in the same period.³ Two branches of the latter were opened and new stores built at a cost of £5000 in 1893.⁴ Not until the 20th century did Wortley Society merge with Leeds Co-operative.

In the 1920's some residents could just recall the second building occupied by Wortley Co-operative. "'Old Abe' was the shopkeeper and we think we can remember him making 'havercakes' in this little old shop".⁵ The great success of co-operation lay in the strength of its neighbourhood identity. The 'People's Store' entered the collective memory of suburban communities to a greater extent than did mechanics' institutes, building clubs or savings banks.

The sphere of economic self-help most firmly entrenched in the culture of the industrial suburbs however was the friendly society movement. There were two important reasons for this. Firstly the historical lineage of mutual aid carried with it powerful traditions. Box clubs, sick and burial societies, provident and amicable institutions were rooted in the culture of clothing villages and the early trade unionism of artisans and domestic workers. Secondly the sheer quantitative impact of friendly societies, their size and popularity in the out-townships and in the region as a whole, ensured that they played a major role in the life of the suburban working class.

Around 1800 there were already over 700,000 people in over 9,000 friendly societies in England. By 1815 membership had exceeded one million, and by 1872 it was over four million, which was about four

1 Ibid. pp.204, 259.

2 Calculated from *ibid.* pp.200-1.

3 Calculated from Abstracts of Returns of Industrial and Provident Societies to the Registrar of Friendly Societies, PP (1871-90).

4 Benn, *op.cit.* p.95.

5 Ibid.

times the current membership of trade unions.¹ Friendly societies of all types and sizes permeated national life. They were thickest on the ground in the industrial north. After Lancashire, the West Riding with over 80,000 had the largest county membership according to the returns of 1815.² Not only within the West Riding but nationally, Leeds was a centre of the movement. The town was the birthplace of Forestry in the early eighteenth century and of the Romans in 1833, as well as the centre of districts for a number of other major affiliated orders, the Manchester Oddfellows from 1825, the Loyal Order of Shepherds from 1833, Grand United Oddfellows from 1837 and United Free Gardeners from 1838.³

It is extremely difficult to establish exactly how large the friendly society movement was in Leeds. There is no collected series of membership figures available before 1862. The annual returns to the Registrar from that year grossly understate even the lodges of the largest affiliated orders to say nothing of the smaller orders and many local societies which were more negligent in supplying details of membership and funds.⁴ In addition the printed returns are full of duplications, empty columns and inaccuracies as to dates of foundation, addresses and locations of lodges.⁵ Nevertheless by grouping individual lodges according to their district and township, following these through the returns year by year, and supplementing this with information from newspapers, almanacs, local histories and other sources, it is possible to arrive at rough estimates for the total membership of friendly societies in Leeds, and to provide a more detailed picture of the size and the impact of the movement in the industrial suburbs.

In 1858 21,150 members of 17 affiliated orders and two independent societies took part in the demonstration to mark the Queen's visit to Leeds.⁶ This total probably included a few hundred from outside the

1 P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Friendly Societies in England, 1815-1875 (Manchester, 1961), pp.5-7.

2 Ibid. p.22.

3 T.B. Stead, A Short History of the Chief Affiliated Friendly Societies (Leeds, 1881).

4 For instance in 1874, 11 of the 50 lodges in the Leeds district of Manchester Oddfellows remained unregistered, R.C. on Friendly and Benefit Societies; Reports from Assistant Commissioners, PP(1874) XXIII, 2. Report of E. Lyulph Stanley on Yorkshire, 393-407 (hereafter, Stanley's Report).

5 In 1880 only 41 of the 139 lodges and societies registered in Leeds made returns. Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies for 1880: Returns for Yorkshire PP (1883) LXVIII, 299-419. Even in a good year like 1872, scarcely half the registered societies returned membership, Gosden, Friendly Societies, p.13.

6 LM, 25 Sept. 1858.

town. Nevertheless it represented some 12 per cent of the borough population.

Using the returns for 1866 only 15,600 were counted in 188 Leeds societies and lodges.¹ A similar estimate for 1875 produced only 167 societies², but 19,600 members in the borough. Even allowing for missing returns, some sense can be made of these two sets of figures.³ The decline in the number of societies over the period and the rise in membership is consistent, firstly with the decline of local societies and the fall in the number of lodges of the main orders, and secondly with the compensatory increase in the average size of the remaining lodges.⁴ Taking the longer period from 1858, however, there appears to have been little or no rise in friendly society membership in Leeds. A conflation of the various counts, when allowing for unregistered societies,⁵ suggests over 250 lodges and societies in Leeds during the late 1860's and early 1870's, and more than 20,000 members, some eight per cent of the borough population.⁶

This stagnation or slight decline in friendly society membership during the mid-Victorian years appears to have been more noticeable in the town of Leeds than in the industrial suburbs. The number of lodges in the Leeds district of the Manchester Oddfellows for instance fell from 54 in 1870 to 40 in 1880 and membership declined from over 5,000 to less than 4,500. Membership of the Bramley district of the same order however rose from less than 1,300 in 1866 to over 1,700 by

- 1 These are estimates, composed, where necessary, with figures from returns three years either side of 1866, where it is known the society was in existence for the whole period.
- 2 For brevity in the text below, unless the wording is more explicit, 'society' has been used to denote both independent local societies and lodges of affiliated orders.
- 3 It is assumed there is no bias in the size of those societies which failed to make returns in either of the two years.
- 4 Gosden, *Friendly Societies*, pp.31-3.
- 5 Allowing 20 per cent of societies as unregistered, the same proportion of local Manchester Oddfellows' lodges unregistered in 1874. This itself is undoubtedly a gross underestimate for this was among the best registered of orders. By comparison, only five of the 30 societies existing in Bramley in 1860 have been traced in the returns, a stark reminder both of the inadequacy of the official statistics, and of the breadth and depth of the friendly society movement.
- 6 From the returns and from other references to unregistered societies I have counted a total of 291 lodges and societies existing in the borough at some time between 1850 and 1880. Stanley recorded 242 lodges in the Leeds districts of the eight largest orders in 1874, but some of the 'districts' stretched over a huge geographical area. That of the Leeds Rechabites, for instance, included tents in Harrogate and York.

1880.¹ The same picture is true for the three other largest orders, the Grand United Oddfellows, the Foresters and the Romans, with membership and lodges decreasing in Leeds during the 1870's but increasing in the neighbourhood.

Friendly societies therefore continued to be vibrant in the industrial suburbs in a period when the movement in Leeds had come to a halt. So how big and how dynamic was the movement in the out-townships? The two most populated suburbs had not surprisingly the largest number of societies traced between 1850 and 1880, 41 in both Hunslet and Holbeck, while Armley, Bramley and Wortley had 13, 34 and 18 respectively. Only four societies have been found in Beeston. The annual returns for Hunslet are particularly defective. At best they record over 1,600 members in 22 societies in 1875, only four per cent of the township population.² In Holbeck the returns are fuller and show an increase from over 1,300 members of 13 societies in 1862 to over 3,200 in 34 societies by 1880 - a rise from eight to 17 per cent of the population. In the two textile townships, Armley and Bramley, friendly society membership represented nearly 20 per cent of the population in the early 1860's, declining to 13 and 15 per cent respectively by 1880.³

It seems therefore likely that, although the growth of friendly societies has been associated with industrialization, it was not necessarily a bye-product of urbanization, a function of size or density of population. In Leeds, the two out-townships with the highest proportion of textile workers and the longest persistence of hand-loom seaving, Armley and Bramley, were the townships with the greatest percentage of their population in friendly societies. With rapid population growth, this percentage fell as cloth manufacturing both in the factory and the home declined in importance. On the other hand, where the fastest urbanization was accompanied by the greatest diversification in the structure of employment, as in Holbeck and Wortley, friendly societies might also flourish. General tendencies and causations are difficult to discern here. It seems however that the roots of friendly societies in local culture, and the degree of their

1 There was no transference of lodges between districts and no increase in lodges in Bramley. Stanley's Report, 398; Stead, op. cit. pp.7-14; Annual Report of the Bramley District Branch of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity, (Leeds, 1875).

2 Table 6.1: Friendly Society Membership as a Proportion of the Out-township Population.

3 These figures include only a handful of unregistered local societies whose membership is known.

TABLE 6.1: Friendly Society Membership as a Proportion of the Out-township Population

	<u>1852</u>	<u>1862</u>	<u>1863</u>	<u>1866</u>	<u>1872</u>	<u>1873</u>	<u>1874</u>	<u>1875</u>	<u>1879</u>	<u>1880</u>
<u>Armley</u>										
Mbrs.	1060	1317				1471				1643
%	17.1	19.5				15.9				12.8
<u>Beeston</u>										
Mbrs.				50						225
%				1.9						7.6
<u>Bramley</u>										
Mbrs.			1689				1755		1695	
%			19.4				17.7		15.3	
<u>Wortley</u>										
Mbrs.			780			1089			1666	
%			6.4			5.7			7.0	
<u>Holbeck</u>										
Mbrs.		1331						2666		3244
%		8.4						15.5		16.9
<u>Hunslet</u>										
Mbrs.		346			1042			1652		977
%		1.3			2.7			4.4		2.0

Notes: Membership for only a handful of unregistered societies has been traced.

Percentages calculated as follows:

For 1852, using 1851 Census Population.

For 1862, 1863, 1866, using 1861 Census.

For 1872-5, using 1871 Census.

For 1879, 1881, using 1881 Census.

Sources: Population figures calculated from 10% systematic samples of census enumerators' books. Membership from 'Returns for Yorkshire', in Reports of Registrar of Friendly Societies, PP(1862-1881); Leeds Mercury 1852-80; T.B. Stead, A Short History of the chief affiliated friendly societies (Leeds, 1881).

traditional identification with a particular branch of industry or mode of production played an important part in determining their rate of progress in working class communities.

Friendly societies were remarkably pervasive in the textile townships. Their members accounted for between 35 and 40 per cent of the workforce in Bramley and Armley from the 1850's through to the 1870's.¹ By the early 1860's there was nearly one member per household in both townships.² Allowing for women and children in the employed population,³ it is likely that one in two adult male workers in Armley and Bramley were in a benefit society of some sort.⁴ This was an impressive coverage by any measure.

It can also be said that friendly societies in all industrial suburbs, but particularly those in Bramley and Armley, had a considerably greater survival rate than those in Leeds. Only 22 per cent of societies in Leeds operating in the 1860's and 1870's had been established before mid-century, compared with 54 per cent in Armley and 60 per cent in Bramley.⁵ The great waves of foundations came in the 1790's and the 1830's. Nine of 15 societies recorded in Bramley had been established by 1835. Other clusters occurred in the early 1850's and early 1860's. Of 65 suburban societies established between 1850 and 1880, 33 were formed in the years 1850-4 and 1860-4.

It is tempting to suggest, as with mechanics' institutes, some link between the upswings in foundations, fluctuations in membership, the trade cycle and the state of the local economy. Between 1824 and 1834 for example, a decade of great upheaval in the domestic woollen industry, the funds of Bramley loyal Friendly Society increased by 100 per cent.⁶ For those societies established in the troubled 1830's, mutual thrift was regarded by workers more as self defence than self help, given the insecurity and vagaries of the labour market. Most of these societies appeared to have expanded gradually through the mid-

1 Table 6.2: Out-township Friendly Societies.

2 For Bramley at least this is a gross underestimate. Only six of the 30 societies in Bramley in 1860 left any membership figures for posterity. There were no fewer than 10 different affiliated orders there, Bramley Almanac, 1858.

3 There is little evidence of female friendly societies in the suburbs, though there were several in Leeds.

4 This compares with a figure of 35-40 per cent of occupied adult males in Kentish London, 1864-72, Crossick, op.cit. p.182. Compare also W.R. Greg's claim in 1852 that nearly half the adult male population belonged to friendly societies, cited by Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880(1969),p.382.

5 Table 6.2.

6 Calculated from figures in Bramley Almanac, 1865.

Table 6.2: Out-township Friendly Societies
Membership as a Percentage of Occupied Population

	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Wortley</u>
1851/2	34		
1861/2/3	40	38	16
1871/3/4	35	36	13

Ratio of Members per Household

	<u>Armley</u>	<u>Bramley</u>	<u>Wortley</u>	<u>Beeston</u>
1861/2/3	0.9	0.9	0.2	0.1
1871/3/4	0.7	0.8	0.2	
1879/81	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.4

Proportion of Friendly Societies existing 1862-80, which were established before 1850 (%)

Leeds Borough	32
Leeds Town	22
Wortley	33
Hunslet	38
Holbeck	45
Armley	54
Bramley	60

Sources: as for Table 6.1

Victorian decades to the mid-1870's. The majority of all suburban societies experienced at least some hiccup in growth, or stagnation and decline from the mid 1870's, followed by a short recovery in the early 1880's. This also paralleled neatly the trade fluctuations in local industry.

Societies of course depended on a continual intake of youthful recruits whose contributions would help pay for the sick and funeral benefits of old or deceased members, and most had an upper-age limit of 40 on entry. The primitive state of actuarial science before the 1840's, and the fact that most societies had no idea of collecting their mortality experience or of scaling new premiums according to the age of entrants, only added to the financial difficulties many faced.¹ However, it appears to be extremely dubious to assert, as Gosden has done, that the major reason for the decline of local societies was the lack of 'safe' life tables and their difficulty of applying any 'average' mortality experience to their small number of members. The 'safety' of affiliated orders was supposed to have been an important attraction.² This is doubtful. It is unlikely that workers took the state of actuarial science into account before joining either a local society or an affiliated lodge. Neither members nor managers had much knowledge of, or interest in, life tables. A vague awareness of the size of funds and membership may have existed among potential recruits for some societies, but what was of immediate concern to the worker was the amount required in contributions and the size and nature of the benefits paid. Affiliated orders grew by organisation, by publicity, and by imitation. Workers joined because friends and relatives had joined, unless premiums were prohibitive, and booms in membership could be self-sustaining. After the split among the Free Gardeners in 1842, for instance, the breakaway order progressed 'at railway speed' in the Leeds district with 30 lodges opening and over 700 members recruited in nine months.³

Growth was also achieved through continuity and tradition, where a local society was already well established in a neighbourhood, or where, like the Romans at Leeds, an order particularly identified with

1 Gosden, *Friendly Societies*, pp.94-114. Manchester Oddfellows first adopted graduated entry fees in 1853.

2 *Ibid.* p.112. Gosden also overstates the contribution of friendly societies to the development of actuarial science itself. The big money lay in life assurance not in mutual thrift, and the pioneers, like Charles Ansell, were actuaries employed by the established life offices. Cf. Trebilcock, *op.cit.* pp.606-7.

3 LM, 16 Apr. 21 May 1842.

a town. Friendly societies also multiplied territorially, especially in neighbourhoods witnessing rapid urban and industrial growth. 13 of the 15 societies formed in Wortley between 1850 and 1885 were located in New Wortley. Every lodge and society of spinners, railwaymen, gasworkers, Foresters and Oddfellows established there after 1866 congregated in a handful of pubs on or near Wellington Road, the major thoroughfare into Leeds. Because friendly societies were as much cultural and social institutions as insurance organisations, workers' motives for joining them were necessarily complex.

John Tidd Pratt claimed in 1853 that friendly societies were in fact assurance associations intended for those poorer classes not able to insure in the larger companies.¹ Yet they were much more than this. The irregularity of payments, their lack of reserves, inadequate premiums, their failure to distinguish between superannuation and sickness payments to elderly members, their 'injudicious and speculative' investments, and their basic assurance error of lumping together different risks, sickness, death and superannuation, in a common fund, all attest to the fundamental lack of a professional approach to the financial services they offered. While the practical consequence was a relatively short life span for most societies - in 1857 only 10 per cent of over 3000 societies were more than 40 years old² - their vitality clearly extended far beyond the balance sheets and life tables.

For some the friendly society was ideally 'a medium of kindly sentiments, of generous sympathy, and of mutual respect' between the classes.³ Yet for much of the nineteenth century the attitude of the State was persistently ambivalent. There was considerable concern at the traditional overlap between trade unions and benefit societies and repeated attempts were made to separate their functions in law. Many regarded friendly societies as subversive secret orders because of this connection. Even Tidd Pratt thought affiliated orders to be dangerous combinations.⁴

Box clubs had been formed by different trades in the seventeenth century, and the work 'box' was still used to refer to a branch by the West Riding Fancy Union in 1824.⁵ The illegal Clothworkers'

1 S.C. on Assurance Associations, PP (1852-3) XXI, evidence of John Tidd Pratt, Qs.498-500.

2 Samuel Brown, 'On the Present Position of Friendly Societies in England and Wales,' Assurance Magazine, XI (1863-4), 333-56.

3 *Ibid.* 356.

4 Gosden, *Self Help*, pp.72-3.

5 Dermot Morrah, A History of Industrial Life Assurance(1955), p.14.

Institution in Leeds in the 1800's operated three separate relief funds for sick benefit, widows' relief and unemployment relief.¹ The rules of the Leeds Clothiers' Community of 1803 included provisions for shop collections and payment of sickness benefit once a year.² In the 1820's and 1830's benefit societies were still very popular among suburban weavers, 'but less as certified societies and more as free gifts, secret orders, sick clubs and funeral briefs.'³ 63 of the 66 founding members of Wortley Clothiers Benefit Society in 1824 were hand-loom weavers or clothiers employing weavers.⁴ In the clothing villages lodges and friendly societies were for all practical purposes trade societies of woollen workers. They were evidence both of the 'providence of the industrious population', and of the 'independent spirit' of local weavers.⁵ The 'travelling cards' enabling members to identify themselves at other lodges mirrored the trade organisations of tramping artisans. Equally the organisation, ritual and regalia of the Leeds trade union of 1832-4 seem to have been drawn from the friendly society tradition.⁶

There were persistent efforts made to pull apart the functions of trade unions and friendly societies, above all to separate unemployment relief from other forms of welfare provision. In 1830 for instance a Commons Select Committee recommended legislation permitting workers to set up 'Employment Fund Societies' from voluntary subscriptions, to be distinct from other benefit organisations.⁷

Much of the Victorian legislation on friendly societies aimed to create centralised financial institutions from what were largely local social clubs. For the most part the central management of the largest affiliated orders were allies to this cause, though repeated attempts to limit the financial autonomy of lodges often led to secessions.⁸

1 S.C. on the Woollen Manufacture of England, PP (1806) III, evidence of William Child, 106.

2 Ibid. Joseph Coope, 38.

3 Reports from Assistant Hand-loom Weavers' Commissioners, pt.III, PP (1840) XXIII, Report on the West Riding by H.S. Chapman, 539. (hereafter Chapman's Report).

4 Benn, op.cit. p.97.

5 Chapman's Report, 539.

6 See above Ch.3 pp.121-2. On the covert links between early trade unions and friendly societies see E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Harmondsworth, revised edn. 1968), pp.456-64; John Bohstedt, Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales 1790-1810 (1983), pp.133-4; Robert Glen, Urban Workers in the Early Industrial Revolution (1984), pp.109-14.

7 S.C. on Manufacturers' Employment, PP (1830) X, 221-33.

8 Funeral funds, usually administered by districts rather than by lodges, were frequent causes of disputes.

In 1874 the Royal Commission asserted that the independence of lodges within the large orders and the multiplication of small lodges was a hindrance to good management.¹ With their committees, stewards and local districts, most orders consciously resembled the circuit organisations of the Methodists. And like the Methodist circuits, the orders were racked by breakaway movements, several of which originated in Leeds. Lodges in Leeds, Armley and Holbeck led a temporary secession among the Manchester Oddfellows in the 1820's. In 1834 the great split among the Royal Foresters was precipitated by the attempt of the Leeds court to extend its 'despotic powers'.² The frequency of secessions and the fragmentation of lodges indicate that local independence was a principle of the friendly society movement, and was jealously guarded.

Quite apart from the actuarial and organisational difficulties societies often found themselves in, there was dismay at the lack of their financial acumen in the mid-Victorian period. The Friendly Society Act of 1855 for instance attempted to impose restrictions on the use of funds for social activities.³ Commissioner Stanley complained in 1874 that Bramley Loyal Friendly Society was financing its annual dinner out of general funds, even though reserves stood at more than £1800. Despite local claims that the discontinuance of the dinner would upset many members, Stanley persisted with his criticism.

"I think the annual gathering is useful in bringing together old friends and associates once a year and in promoting good feeling among them. But I do not think it is worth to the Society the money it costs. Undoubtedly members are attracted to the Society by the demonstration, but not in such numbers as to compensate for the expense involved." 4

'Unrespectable' patterns of expenditure and meetings in public houses gave particular concern to those for whom thrift and temperance were the watchwords of mutual aid. Yet even with a petty-bourgeois economy and abstinence party in the ascendancy in the 1850's, suburban friendly societies remained curiously ambivalent in their attitudes towards bourgeois definitions of thrift and respectability. Although Wortley Clothiers' Benefit Society, for instance, witnessed its offices gradually being filled by brick manufacturers, small millowners, farmers,

1 Stanley's Report, 398.

2 Stead, op.cit. pp.15-21; Gosden, Friendly Societies, p.36. Other Leeds based secessions include: Imperial United Oddfellows, 1850; Leeds United Oddfellows, 1834, 1852-62; Free and Independent Oddfellows, 1858; and the Holbeck secession among the Ancient Romans, 1863.

3 Gosden, Self Help, p.56.

4 Stanley's Report, 407.

publicans, surgeons and schoolmasters from the 1840's, it continued to spend funds on annual dinners of beef, mutton and pudding, asking only for three pence 'tin money' towards the costs.¹

Another illustration of this 'cultural ambivalence' was the annual gathering of Bramley Loyal Friendly Society in 1852. After their meeting in the Barley Mow Inn, the 500 members marched behind Bramley Temperance Band to the Wesleyan chapel. Back in their lodge room after the sermon a motion was passed that those wishing beer, gin and porter would in future have to pay for it themselves and not out of the society's funds.² The worlds of the bottle and the bible crossed in the lives of the average friendly society member. The loss of the 'good of the house expenditure' after 90 years was itself a considerable break with clothier tradition, and a small triumph for temperance. However, most probably felt no great incongruity in the frequent oscillation between pub and chapel. On the same evening, Armley Clothiers' Friendly Society held glee singing in the Malt Shovel Inn, after their own procession and church sermon, 'and brotherhood and kindly feeling reigned supreme.'³

Such brotherhood was cemented by the ritual, regalia, annual dinners and processions which became community feasts for the largest local societies. The centenary of Bramley Loyal Friendly Society was celebrated on May Day 1865 with that mixture of alehouse conviviality and chapel formality, public display and private ceremonial, which had always marked the Society's proceedings.⁴ After a 'roll-call' in the Unicorn Inn and a service in the Wesleyan chapel, over 1000 members, wives and friends sat down to a 'knife and fork tea'. Following a second roll call in a field near the Barley Mow Inn, members marched down Town Street through a triumphant arch. The order of the military style procession was defined as carefully as any coronation. Led by policemen, the Chief Marshall and 30 horsemen were followed by the oldest member (aged 85) in a carriage bearing 'the Golden Fleece',

"the General Committee in three carriages with pairs of greys, the Centenary Committee in new scarves bearing mace and sceptre, pensioners and the oldest members in horse drawn vans and postillions,

1 Benn, op.cit. p.97. Costs must however not be exaggerated. In 1857 food and cooking cost the society just under eight pounds, about the amount of one member's funeral money. This was for a dinner of 101. Beer was extra.

2 LT, 8 May 1852.

3 Ibid.

4 The following description is from Bramley Almanac, 1866; Mayhall, op.cit. vol.2, pp.508-11.

decorated with arches of living green boughs, the horses also bearing handsome saddlecloths and other picturesque trappings".

The main body included the uniformed bands of the West Riding Artillery, Leeds Rifle Corps, and the Engineers, as well as nine sections of members and more conveyances, all with flags, banners and mottoes, 'forming one of the most imposing sights ever witnessed in Bramley.' It amounted to a suburban festival on the grandest scale, with flags and streamers decorating the streets and the route 'thickly lined with villagers from the neighbourhood'. The day finished with a gala at which over 5000 people saw a balloon ascent, a fireworks display and joined in sports and dancing.¹

Bramley was on show for the whole district to see. As well as being excellent business for local publicans and shopkeepers, the ritualised celebrations had a greater significance. They served to reaffirm both the internal order and unity of the friendly society, and its legitimate role in the cultural traditions of the community.² They were also an expression of localism, for societies and lodges generally looked only to the interests of their own communities. Their public conscience was exhibited in their charitable activities, supporting local Sunday schools and hospitals, or backing the sanitation campaigns of the 1840's.³

Despite the increasingly respectability of friendly societies, and the tendency for the petty bourgeoisie to take over their management in the mid-Victorian years, they remained, more than any other self-help organisation with the possible exception of co-operatives, community institutions of and for the working class. The numbers alone support this view. Some shopkeepers and small employers, and certainly most of the wealthier resident middle class remained, at most, on the fringes of friendly society culture. They were unable to accommodate the beer drinking, communal dinners and the baroque celebrations of mutuality within their own value systems that emphasised temperance, individual thrift and a family orientated social life.⁴ Petty bourgeois leaders in the mid-Victorian period were only successful because they largely abandoned hope of propagating an individualist ethic and themselves stepped within the framework of

1 For similar festivities of societies in Armley, see LM, 8 May 1841, 17 Apr. 1852.

2 On the social meanings of ritual see Joyce, *op.cit.* p.277; E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester, 1959), pp.150-74.

3 For examples see LM, 17 Apr. 1830, 31 Aug. 21 Sept. 1833, 27 Oct. 1838, 1 May 1847.

4 Morris, *Organisation and Aims*, p.342.

suburban working class culture. Drink, conviviality and social cohesion obscured the middle class values of industry and thrift.¹

Friendly societies were less vehicles of respectability for upwardly mobile labour aristocrats than community institutions, strategies for survival, expressions of solidarity within the working class.² Membership offered the worker security, companionship, and a structure through which he could identify with and be identified in the wider community. For those expelled for not paying their dues, there was a feeling of isolation and a certain ignominy.³

'Exclusiveness' however, was only found 'within a context of social involvement.'⁴ Social mobility and a bourgeois stamp of 'respectability' was not achieved through friendly society membership. On the contrary, more often the reverse was true. To step outside the society was to abandon one's communal and class loyalties and to 'get on in life'. Joseph Hayward complained of this to Bramley Oddfellows in 1875.

"...many I am sorry to say leave, because they rise in what is called Society, and consider it a disgrace to belong to a combination composed of working men, whose object is one of the best that can be conceived, viz. to provide as far as their means will allow, pecuniary and medical relief at a time when men need it most. Such ought not to be the case in this enlightened age, 'for man knoweth not what a day may bring forth'."⁵

Behind this complaint of Hayward's lay much that remained unspoken - the awareness of progress but the need for continued working class solidarity in the face of adversity, the puritan sense of humility and of 'keeping within one's station', and the clothier's feeling of mutuality. A mutuality culminating in localism was not necessarily a negation of class consciousness.⁶ Rather it was the adherence to traditional values which was seen to point the way forward for the working class. As with so many other aspects of suburban life, workers, like the petty bourgeoisie, defined community in terms of their own class experience of space and time,⁷ in terms of their own sense

1 Crossick, op.cit. pp.178-9.

2 Cf. Gray, op.cit. pp.136-43, on the meanings of 'respectability'; Crossick, op.cit. pp.196-7, on the artisan concept of progress. Foster is disappointingly inconclusive on the position of friendly societies in Oldham, though he hints at an idea of solidarity. John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution (1974), pp.216-18.

3 Cf. the weavers Samuel Deane of Bramley and Benjamin Kirk of Holbeck in Chapman's Report, pp.539-40.

4 Crossick, op.cit. p.197.

5 Annual Report of the Bramley District Branch of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity (Leeds, 1875).

6 P.Johnson, Saving and Spending, p.10.

7 Cf. David Harvey, Consciousness and the Urban Experience (Oxford 1985), pp.154-68.

of place and their own sense of the past. The spirit of community in the Victorian suburb did not negate class consciousness, but embodied it.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The primary conclusion to be drawn here is the confirmation of the thesis itself; that the concept of community was real; that community mattered to the inhabitants of the industrial suburbs of Leeds; that it affected their behaviour, attitudes and relations with each other. Community consciousness was important both as a force moulding class relations in Victorian society, and as a cognizance itself shaped by class relations and class consciousness.

Community and class were therefore not opposites, but were complementary social expressions of the 'relationship of exploitation' between labour and capital in nineteenth century society.¹ As class divisions permeated the industrial suburbs, the awareness of belonging to a community, of identifying with the language, customs, economic, political and religious life of a well-defined locality, was a powerful force in social relations, sometimes transcending those class divisions, often reinforcing them in the local context. Community persisted as something real to the generations inhabiting the Leeds out-townships, but their perceptions of community changed as class relations evolved.

(i)

By its all-embracing nature, any study of community and class requires some very large questions to be tackled. The starting point in chapter two above was an analysis of the impact of industrialization and urbanization on social change. However this was at once accompanied by the evident need to interpret almost every aspect of out-township life in terms of changing attitudes towards class and community.

The most important consequence of suburban industrialization in the first half of the nineteenth century was the decline of the domestic system of cloth manufacture, the growth of factory production, and the demise of the independent clothier. This had major cultural, social and political ramifications.

1 I am here using de Sainte Croix's definition of class as the 'collective social expression' of a 'relationship of exploitation'. Geoffrey de Sainte Croix, 'Karl Marx and the interpretation of Greek and Roman History', Isaac Deutscher Memorial Lecture, 28 Nov. 1983.

It was argued that around 1800 the community life of the out-townships was still dominated by the relatively monolithic culture of the master clothier, the 'small kulak of the Industrial Revolution'.¹ Several elements constituting this culture were identified. These included the organisation of work and the close knit relations between the families of small masters and their journeymen, the general acceptance of the need for a clothier to be 'brought up to the trade', and the family inheritance of businesses. There was almost a tribal sense of belonging among suburban clothiers, of being 'a hebrew of the hebrews'.² At the same time, clothiers were very conscious of their independence as small businessmen, so that their culture contained a fusion of individualism and collective experience. Other elements such as family and communal controls on the markets for cloth and land, the political and religious autonomy of the out-townships, and their distinctive semi-rural pattern of leisure activities reinforced the individual's feeling of community.

Master clothiers found themselves in an increasingly ambiguous position after 1800. They were firstly in an economically ambiguous position, drifting in the widening gap between the wage-earning and capitalist classes. Secondly they were caught in a social and cultural contradiction, torn between the collectivist values of their communities and the individualistic values deriving from industrial capitalism and the factory mode of production. What was cut down in the 'commercial slaughterhouse' (to borrow Oastler's phrase) was not just prices and labour costs, but the ties to community life, and the relations between clothiers and journeymen. By the 1830's attitudes towards community in the industrial suburbs were being redefined and expressed in the language of class. The community institutions of the clothing villages, the vestry offices, the local charities, free schools and friendly societies, were coming under regulation or attack as the state enhanced central and municipal authority at the expense of the chapelry and township. Collective local autonomy was undermined. The ritualised celebrations of the Reform party's victories in the early 1830's indicated that many of the largest suburban capitalists were seeking to

1 E.P.Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (revised edn. Harmondsworth, 1968), p.303.

2 S.C. on Woollen Manufacture, PP(1806) III, evidence of Joseph Coope, 53.

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legitimise a right won by their economic power, the right to represent and articulate the consciousness of the whole community in their own terms and language.

(ii)

However it was also argued that there was considerable continuity as well as change in the first half of the century. The factory system scarcely dominated the woollen industry before the 1840's. Out-township mills did not determine the structure of out-township employment, which was divided amongst many non-factory branches of production. Even for whole groups of millworkers, especially for men, little changed from the domestic system before the 1820's. Despite the cruel exploitation of the first factory proletariat composed of women and children, and the constant pressure to introduce new machinery, it took decades for millowners to win control over several skilled labour processes, and to subordinate customary work relations to capitalist notions of time and work discipline. Domestic manufacture persisted in the out-townships till well after 1850, because of the skill element in fine broadcloth weaving, because of the haven of the cloth halls, the clothier's relationship to the land, the continuity of family production and small workshops, and the traditional values of respectability, collectivity and independence. In other words, several characteristics of clothier culture long survived the introduction and growth of the factory system.

(iii)

Industrialization, therefore, was not just a question of the breakdown of a 'traditional' social order and its replacement by a 'modern' class structure. Many features of the older order survived. The hegemony of large manufacturers and merchants was certainly based on their economic weight in the out-townships, and their local political power was reinforced by the franchise reforms of 1832 and 1835. However much of the legitimacy of their leadership derived from the historical identification of their families with the institutions, customs and privileges of the clothing villages, from the social and political prominence of their forefathers, from residential stability and the long-term inheritance

of family businesses and property.

The importance of patronage and localism at all levels of suburban political life was demonstrated in chapter three above. The party divisions and 'politics of opinions' of the 1830's and 1840's frequently broke down in the face of strong community based loyalties. Well beyond mid-century bourgeois hegemony operated in familiar channels, through philanthropy, patronage and, among the wealthiest families, through an almost feudal paternalism. Factory capitalism and the decline of the domestic system undermined customary social relations in the clothing villages. However the logical development of naked class conflict, dictated by the cash nexus, was constrained and reshaped at all corners by the traditional configurations of community relations.

(iv)

In the second half of the century the wealthier middle class mostly withdrew from public affairs and retreated behind their villa walls or moved away to more respectable areas of the borough. A petty bourgeoisie of shopkeepers, tradesmen and small artisan employers filled the surviving posts of township government and took on the patronage and management of chapel schools, mechanics' institutes and building clubs. Petty bourgeois hegemony was of crucial importance to the development of class relations, if only because the shopkeepers and artisans occupied a large intermediate strata between capital and labour. The petty bourgeoisie evolved their own awareness of community and expressed it through a variety of media, the political platform, the township vestry, the chapel meeting, through the press, local almanacs and histories from the 1850's. It was also a product of the social reverberations caused by the rise of industrial capitalism and the demands of political centralization, yet it owed much to the traditional social order. Petty bourgeois community consciousness was a fusion of the 'schismatic intellect' and an intense local patriotism, both characteristics of clothier culture. The former derived directly from a political and religious sectarianism stretching back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Local patriotism stemmed from the historical independence of out-township institutions, a rate-payers' solidarity which transcended political and religious differences. It was more often than not through sectarianism that

the sense of local independence was asserted. At the heart of the Victorian suburb, therefore, lay a contradiction between internal schism and external unity which itself became the mark of petty bourgeois community consciousness. A number of issues examined in chapters three and five above illustrated this. Rates, educational provision, environmental control, for instance, functioned both as foci for localist sentiments, uniting ratepayers against external authority, and as sources of internal conflict between different socio-economic, political and religious groups in the suburbs.

The petty bourgeois attitude to community underwent some change in the second half of the century. In the 1850's and 1860's there was much emphasis on the material and spiritual progress of the suburban communities. This was highlighted by a deliberate revival of local customs, cultivating a sense of the clothier past. Tapping the traditional ideals of respectability and independence, a widening range of self-help institutions offered the skilled artisan and white collar worker a promise of social ascendancy within his community. At the same time, homilies on the nobility of hard work and the humility of 'knowing one's place' were designed to maintain petty bourgeois hegemony over the suburban working class.

The limited scope of this hegemony was reflected above all in the growing insecurity felt from the 1870's. The middle class consciousness of community became impregnated by a deep sense of transience and fatalism felt by large capitalists and small shopkeepers alike. This manifested itself in a nostalgia for the past, for the traditions of the clothing villages, the disappearing features of the rural environment, and for the sense of locality itself. Regardless of class or social mobility, an individual was believed to carry with him his community roots for all of his life.

(v)

This bourgeois concept of a harmonious community where all classes were bound together by historical ties of local identity, by the sense of place and the sense of past, influenced but did not recast class relations in the industrial suburbs. The effectiveness of bourgeois hegemony and its institutions of social control were closely examined in chapters five and six above. Chapels, schools, mechanics' institutes, loan societies and savings banks failed to eliminate class conflict in the workplace or on the political

platform. Instead, chapel congregations and mutual improvement classes became communities of interest among a minority of the suburban population, with little impact on the labour consciousness of the working class. Education, rational recreation and self-help institutions, the sub-culture of temperance and factory paternalism did not transform working class behaviour into patterns more acceptable to the middle-class. Neither was the elevation of the suburban working class from 'rough' to 'respectable' culture achieved by tougher policing and more stringent use of the law.

If most chapels, schools and mechanics' institutes failed as agencies of social control, other institutions, cooperatives, friendly societies, the Zion school in New Wortley for instance, could become community centres with solid working class support. Such 'community institutions' did partially help transform working class leisure patterns during the third quarter of the century. However 'rough' culture was not replaced from above by rational recreation. Instead it was altered by its own internal dynamic as the tastes and leisure needs of the workers themselves changed.

(vi)

While petty bourgeois community consciousness was a central feature of suburban class relations after 1850, equally important was the continued strength of trade unionism, political radicalism and the working class awareness of a labour community. Certainly any search for Foster's 'liberalization' process in Leeds would reveal an 'accommodationist' labour aristocracy in some industries, for instance textile overlookers collaborating with employers, or tanners who were largely anti-unionist.¹ Certainly paternalism led to deferential behaviour in some out-townships. However unlike Joyce's Lancashire, in suburban Leeds neither factory culture nor factory paternalism were all consuming.² From the 1850's to the end of the century there were plenty examples of labour aristocrats in expanding industries fighting to improve conditions, extend trade

1 John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution(1974), ch.7. On tanners see Richard Nicholls' Letter in R.C. on Trade Unions, Third Report, PP(1867) XXXII, evidence of James Wilson, Q.4694; Statistical Tables and Third Report on Trade Unions, PP(1889) LXXXIV, 147, United Tanners' Society. On overlookers see ch.4 above, p.234.

2 Patrick Joyce, Work, Society and Politics (1980).

unionism, defend wages and entry restrictions.

The important point is that many of these struggles were carried out in work groups or on the basis of workplace identity, with labourers and skilled workers combined in militancy. Events such as the miners' strike of 1858 or the ironworkers' lock-out of 1864 were more than just illustrations of a labour aristocratic trade union consciousness. These struggles involved the whole labour community. The bonds of neighbourhood residence and birthplace, which tied together occupational groups of workers regardless of status divisions within their trade, proved their strength in industrial conflict and in political campaigns such as the reform movement of the 1860's. It was argued in chapter four that the labour aristocracy remained largely independent of middle-class hegemony and firmly rooted to the working class community. The suburban labour aristocracy was not caught in a 'social matrix' dominated by middle-class values, nor in a 'framework of consensus.'¹ There was no 'cohesive urban culture' of 'shared values', with an 'improvement ethic' embracing all classes.² The drive for status and respectability, while of great significance for divisions within the working class, did not displace class conflict in the mid-Victorian suburb.

(vii)

The prevalence of community consciousness meant that nothing was clear cut about class relations in the nineteenth century suburb. The strength of political radicalism and trade unionism throughout most of the century ensured there was no process of 'embourgeoisment' despite the hegemony of the petty bourgeoisie in out-township affairs after 1850. There was no 'suburbia' created in west and south Leeds. The former clothing villages remained predominantly working class communities, the 'labour side' of Leeds. Nevertheless the industrial suburbs were still socially heterogeneous communities at the end of the century. Paternalism, patronage and deference

1 Trygve R. Tholfsen, Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England (1976), p.17; idem, 'The intellectual origins of mid-Victorian stability', Political Science Quarterly 86 (1976), 57-91.

2 Tholfsen, Intellectual Origins, 63. For an earlier, cruder version of this thesis, see Trygve R. Tholfsen, 'The Transition to Democracy in Victorian England', International Review of Social History VI (1961), 226-48.

continued to have a significant influence on class awareness in townships such as Bramley. The vital elements in petty bourgeois community consciousness, the sense of place and the sense of past, were shared to some extent by all classes in the suburbs.

The question therefore has to be asked. Did the awareness of community undermine class consciousness? The answer from the evidence presented above is - probably not. Community in the Leeds out-townships was not simply a product of working class endeavour or occupational solidarity as Thompson and Foster argued. Neither did it represent some sort of antipode to class solidarity as Calhoun claimed,¹ nor a medium of deference and social control as in Joyce's interpretation. It was certainly not the repository of 'common values' uniting the classes in a 'cohesive urban culture' as Tholfsen imagined. Instead community was itself a dynamic relationship of conflict, a consciousness which existed only in the mutual opposition of the classes.

(viii)

The relationship of conflict which was community occurred in two dimensions, in the struggle between the classes in space and in time.

The sense of place and attachment to the locality was one of the pillars of community consciousness in the out-townships. The landmarks of the community, the beerhouses, public halls, schools, chapels, common land and tenter grounds comprised a semi-rural 'milieu' peculiar to the suburbs. The conflict between capital and labour for the appropriation of this 'milieu', for the man-made and natural environment, manifested itself in the struggle for ownership and access to buildings, meeting halls, commons, access to and use of suitable accommodation and facilities by Radicals, trade unionists, Chartists, religious dissenters, workers' friendly societies and cooperatives. Before the crop of political clubs and public buildings in the 1870's, secular halls and meeting places were scarce in most out-townships. This is why the spatial dimension to class relations in a wide variety of suburban affairs was so important. There can be no underestimating the significance of the class struggle for the control of space and the sense of place. It is

1 Craig J. Calhoun, The Question of Class Struggle (Oxford, 1982).

vividly illustrated for example by Wortley Ranters triumphantly hammering in the foundation stone to Bull Ring chapel using a mallet made from the former bull baiting post, or by the cavalry patrols organised by local employers to guard the suburban approach roads to Leeds in the aftermath of the Plug riots.

For those few historians like Joyce who have paid any attention to it, the sense of place has remained a static notion.¹ The identification with 'milieu' however was passed down through generations of suburban inhabitants. The sense of place was accompanied by a sense of the past, the 'corporate memory', to use David Vincent's phrase,² which was itself central to class struggle. The historical consciousness of the community became involved in the capital - labour conflict. Chapter six above therefore examined labour's resistance to capitalist appropriation of community traditions and culture and labour's struggle to retain its own sense of belonging in the face of attempts, above all by the petty bourgeoisie in the third quarter of the century, to reinterpret this 'collective memory'. From the legacy of clothier culture each class extracted its own value system and defined community in terms of its own experience of space and time. This was illustrated in several areas of social activity. Out-township feasts, for example, were tolerated by the middle-class after mid-century, despite the continued associations of 'rough' culture and carnivalesque, because they were also seen as celebrations of community identity. As such they had to be defended from the encroachment of central authority. Similarly, friendly societies, though becoming increasingly 'respectable', continued to express the solidarity and independence of working class culture. They were accepted by suburban bourgeoisie, though shopkeepers and small employers, still less the wealthier middle class, were unable to accommodate the beer drinking, communal

1 In his excellent introduction to Frank Peel, The Risings of the Luddites, Chartists and Plug Drawers (revised edn. 1968), E.P. Thompson has discussed exactly these spatial and temporal elements in community consciousness, without, however, relating them systematically to class relations. Unfortunately this phenomenon has never been examined in a major historical work, although David Harvey and a number of radical geographers have recently pointed the way. David Harvey, Consciousness and the Urban Experience (Oxford, 1985); Derek Gregory and John Urry, Social Relations and Spatial Structures (1985). For a survey of recent work see Edward W. Soja and Costis Hadjimichalis, 'Between Geographical Materialism and Spatial Fetishism: Some observations on the development of Marxist Spatial Analysis', Antipode 17 (1985), 59-67.

2 David Vincent, Bread, Knowledge and Freedom (1981).

feasts and baroque celebrations of mutuality within their own value systems which emphasised sobriety, thrift and a family orientated social life.

(ix)

To conclude the conclusion, therefore, the sense of place and of past were fundamental to community consciousness in the industrial suburb. The awareness of 'milieu' and community traditions must be taken into account in any attempt to analyse the impact of industrialization on social change and the emergence of class relations in the nineteenth century.

In the suburbs the rural past survived physically in the woods and fields surrounding the cottages and back to backs, and in place names like Cabbage hill, Bull ring hill, Windmill hill and Silver royd. Until well into the twentieth century different localities in the townships were known by their names, Pinfold, Folly, Town end, Wasp's Nest, rather than by streets. In the oldest village centres such as Lower Wortley, cottages remained as if 'fallen from the clouds in a cluster.'¹ Even the new back to back terracing in the out-townships took on irregular, angulated patterns to conform to the pre-urban cadaster.²

As late as the 1930's suburban residents were intimately related to their semi-rural environment. Even in the closely packed streets of Hunslet, Hoggart's grandmother preserved her country background 'in every line of her body and in many of her attitudes.'³ The rural past also survived in the customs, rites and superstitions of the suburban working class. The local superstitions of Guytrash, Padfoot, the white rabbit and white woman were common to several townships in the Leeds district long after they had ceased to be clothing villages.^{4v} At home, in the weavers' cottages or the isolated terraces of back to backs looking out over fields and woodland, working class wives in the 1870's and 1880's were as concerned with the weather and as knowledgable about the state of the

1 John Stones, Wortley: Past and Present (Leeds, 1887), p.19.

2 David Ward, 'The pre-urban cadaster and the urban pattern of Leeds', Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 52 (1962), 150-66.

3 Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (Harmondsworth, 1958), p.25.

4 Stones, op.cit. pp.13-15; Joseph Lawson, Progress in Pudsey (Stanningley, 1887), ch.X; William Benn, Wortley de Leeds (Leeds, 1926). By the 1930s Bramley children were faced not with Padfoot, but with the more non-descript but equally frightening 'terror of the ginnel'. E.T.Carr, The Land of Bram (Leeds, 1937), p.14.

crops as the farmer-clothiers of 50 years before.¹ Well into this century many suburban families' diets were supplemented, at least in summer, by mushrooms and berries from the woods, by home-made herb beer made from nettles and dandelions, and by rhubarb, cabbage, potatoes and beans grown in gardens or allotments. In the allotments the community life of the township was reproduced in miniature.² Locals also remained partly dependent on street traders for items of food and household goods. Trams did not come to the suburbs until the 1890's and the clothier habit of walking virtually everywhere persisted. At the end of the century haymaking on local farms provided a supplement to the income of casual labourers and a diversion for school children as it had done at the time of the Hand-loom Weavers' commission.

The survival of the intimate relationship with the rural environment and the memory of the customs and pastimes of the past were features of clothier culture which were cemented in the consciousness of the suburban community. Local observers, from Benjamin Wilson in the 1860's to Richard Hoggart in the 1950's, were aware not only of 'progress', but also of the continuity between generations. Continuity could be witnessed in the daily routine of the working class, in their codes of behaviour, of good or bad neighbourliness, in their leisure habits and the survival of intimate contacts with the semi-rural environment. Work itself remained a bedrock of local identity in the twentieth century as it had been in Thoresby's day, when he remarked for instance that Wortley was 'by the Vulgar frequently called WORKLEY from the Industry of the inhabitants, as they would fancy'.²

The elderly residents of the out-townships today who can recall life there in the 1920's and before, are conscious of having been part of close-knit working class communities. Community remains a real force, moulding and being moulded by class relations. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, in urban areas like Toxteth, Brixton and Hackney, city administrators and politicians are re-discovering the value of a community awareness in trying to tackle overwhelming problems of social alienation and deprivation. In the Liberal stronghold of West Leeds, in the mining villages and steel

1 'The Diary of Ann Scurr', in Benn, op.cit. pp.82-9.

2 Hall Lane Community Trust, The Armley Album (Leeds, 1980).

3 Ralph Thoresby, Ducatus Leodiensis (2nd edn. 1816)p.196.

towns of Wales, the Midlands and the North, people have never lost the sense of the importance of community.¹ It is the thread which holds together the social fabric of a locality. The miners' strike of 1984 illustrated what a potent force this could still become, given the industrial and political mobilization of entire communities. The class nature of community consciousness has been recognised when the government has poured funds into Brixton or West Belfast, and when police chiefs have earnestly discussed the need for community policing, or attacked the 'hard core urban areas which have existed since the time of the Industrial Revolution - where a positive hatred is maintained towards the police by a sizeable minority of the people.'²

The great revival of interest in local history in the 1970's and 1980's in the Leeds suburbs, and in the country as a whole, indicates that the popular search for a community identity rooted in the past is dear to many people.³ Certainly the search is nostalgic, romantic, even sentimental. Yet the need to establish a sense of place and a sense of the past is part of an unconscious 'strategy for survival' in the modern world.⁴ In the face of the long predicted atomisation of western society into groups of individual capitalist shareholders and property owners⁵, the regenerative powers of community and class identity are proving stronger than ever imagined.

- 1 'The New (Liberal) Left: Interview with Michael Meadowcroft', Marxism Today (Feb. 1984), 14-18; 'Liberal loyalty strong amid the back to backs', The Guardian, 1 May 1984.
- 2 Basil Griffiths, Deputy Chairman of the Police Federation, quoted in The Guardian, 19 Apr. 1982.
- 3 Cf. the successful local history groups in Bramley and Armley, and articles such as 'The Changing Face of Bramley', Pudsey and Stanningley News, 11 May 1967; 'Those were the days at good old Armley', YEP, 8 Nov. 1980; 'Beautiful Bramley', YEP 3 Jan. 1981; 'When the Community Spirit Kept Bramley Going', YEP, 30 Jan. 1985.
- 4 Cf. the annual reunion of back to back dwellers in Hunslet, 'Memories of the back to backs', The Guardian, 28 Sept. 1979.
- 5 For a recent restatement of the idea that class society no longer exists, see the discussion between Alain Touraine and Ralf Dahrendorf in 'Voices', Channel Four Television, 10 Apr. 1986.

A Note on the Census Samples

Many of the tables given above, as well as some biographical information in the text, were based on systematic ten per cent samples of the census enumerators' books for Armley, Beeston, Bramley and Wortley for 1841-71, and for Holbeck and Hunslet for 1851. The census information was coded and analysed using simple frequency distribution and crosstabulation procedures available in the SPSS package. This codification raised a number of problems, the most important of which I wish to highlight here.

i) The Household - Anderson's advice to use the 'co-residing group' (CRG) rather than 'household' as the basic residential unit was of little use in Leeds. Only in 1841 was the CRG at all important in the family structure of the out-townships, occurring in nearly ten per cent of Bramley households. The same figure for all townships in other census years was one per cent or less. Thus in suburban Leeds, a family, with its lodgers and relatives, was almost always contiguous with a house. Moreover, despite specific instructions, Leeds enumerators did not consistently use double lines to demarcate households. In 1841 single lines were often used and double lines appeared only to demarcate a household which either contained lodgers, or which occupied more than one enumerators' schedule.

ii) Lodgers and Relatives - In 1841 it was scarcely possible to distinguish between lodgers, relatives and visitors. All children under 12 with surnames different from the household head were treated as relatives unless (a) they were clearly members of a CRG (b) they were apprentices. The problem also reappears in later censuses. Lodgers might be relatives in disguise, particularly if they were in-laws. Although they occurred in every third household in 1841, the frequency of lodgers and relatives in the Leeds suburbs was relatively limited. Relatives could be found in about 20 per cent, and lodgers in about 10 per cent of households in Armley, Beeston, Bramley and Wortley, 1851-71.

iii) Servants - 'Housekeepers' were designated by Armstrong as domestic servants, but in Leeds many were co-resident female relatives and not clearly in paid employment to the household head. A similar, though less common problem, occurred with the title 'nurse'. Generally, unless domestic service or the abbreviations FS and MS were specified, 'servants' were treated as lodgers, and classified according to their area of work, viz. publican's servants in retail-

ing, farm servants in agriculture. Unless domestic service was clearly involved, young children's occupations such as 'housekeeper' and 'nurse-maid' were ignored and they were classed as dependents (at some risk of underestimating child employment outside the family). Similarly, female household heads described as 'housekeepers', unless widowed, were classed as dependents. Domestic service was relatively limited in the industrial suburbs. At most it occurred in eight per cent of households in Bramley in 1851, but otherwise usually in only three or four per cent of sample households.

iv) Children's Occupations - Certain titles created difficulties. 'Scholar' was treated sceptically, particularly when applied to children under three. School age was defined as three to 14 years to encompass dame schools. Pupil teachers, like scholars, were treated as dependents. For most of the period their grants were sent directly to school managers and they received no remuneration. Within textile households it was particularly difficult to tell whether children (and wives) were helping their fathers, or working elsewhere.

v) Industrial Classification of Occupations - Rimmer used an occupational rather than an industrial classification in his analysis of the printed census returns for Leeds. My classification of occupations by industry is based on Armstrong's reworking of Booth's groupings and uses the same headings with 26 sub-categories appropriate to the industrial structure of Leeds. These are given below. To some extent, certain categories become 'catch-alls', viz. group N, 'unspecified manufacture', included several machine and engine fitters, mechanics, fenders and warehousemen whose industries could not be identified. The same occurred in Group U with 'commercial clerks', 'general labourers', and 'bookkeepers'.

An Industrial Classification of Census Occupations

The letters and figures in brackets refer to Booth's groups as listed in Appendix D of Armstrong's article, 'The Use of Information about Occupation', (full reference below).

A.	Agriculture, Animals, Fishing, (AG 1-4)	<u>AGRICULTURE</u>
B.	Mining, Quarrying, Brickmaking (M 1-4)	<u>MINING</u>
C.	Building (BI-3)	<u>BUILDING</u>
D.	Engineering - Machinery, Tools, Ships, Brass, Iron, Steel, Copper, Tin, Lead (MF 1-5)	<u>MANUFACTURE</u>
E.	Precious Metals, Instruments (MF6, MF 29).	
F.	Glass, Pottery (MF 7)	

G.	Fuel, Gas, Chemicals (MF 8-9).	
H.	Skins, Furs, Leather, Glue (MF 10-12)	
I.	Woodworking, Furniture, Carriages, Harnesses (MF 13-15)	
J.	Paper, Books, Printing (MF 16-17, MF 30)	
K.	Textiles, Dyeing (MF 18-22)	
L.	Dress (MF 23-4)	
M.	Food, Drink, Tobacco (MF 25-8)	
N.	Unspecified (MF 31)	
O.	Navigation, Docks, Roads (T1-3, T5)	<u>TRANSPORT</u>
P.	Railways (T4)	
Q.	Raw Materials, Coals (D1-2)	<u>DEALING</u>
R.	Clothing Materials, Dress (D3-4)	
S.	Food, Tobacco, Drink, Lodging (D5-8)	
T.	Furniture, Stationery, General Unspecified (D.9-13)	
U.	Banking, Insurance, Labourers (IS 1-2)	<u>INDUSTRIAL SERVICE</u>
V.	Administration, Local Government, Defence, Law, Medicine, Art, Science, Education (P1-14)	<u>PUBLIC SERVICE /</u> <u>PROFESSIONAL</u>
W.	Domestic Service, Laundry, Cleaning (DS 1-3)	<u>DOMESTIC SERVICE</u>
X.	Property Owning, Independent	<u>RESIDUAL</u>
Y.	Indefinite, Paupers, Retired	
Z.	Dependents, including all unoccupied males under 20, scholars, all unoccupied females unless household heads.	

vi) Social Classification of Occupations - As always the most difficult task of all was to translate occupational titles into social classes. My social groupings were based on the five classes used by Armstrong and adapted by him from the Registrar General's classification. Social classes I and II included property owners, employers, professionals and middle and upper middle class occupations. Class III generally included the lower middle and upper working classes, shopkeepers, artisans and skilled factory workers. Classes IV and V comprise the semi-skilled and unskilled working class occupations. One major assumption of Armstrong's was not adhered to. Employment of a domestic servant was not used as a criterion of class. Though domestic servants were not particularly numerous in Leeds, they were found in households of all social classes.

Clearly for a social classification of occupations to be realistic, an intimate knowledge of the organization and relations of production, and of status divisions in major local industries is essential. For instance, the designation of coal, clay and ironstone miners to classes III, IV and III respectively creates a dubious distinction between jobs as far as west Leeds is concerned. Most miners there, including those in clay, worked underground and many mined all three substances. The local status divisions between these occupations were minimal.

A card index was created in order to help ascertain social classifications for 230 occupations, mostly unclassified by Armstrong. This index collected information about status divisions, about different production processes and products and different titles for the same job, and most importantly, about wages and hours. It was especially useful in classifying the numerous occupations in textiles, and in identifying the more obscure female and child occupations such as liggers, carpers, preemers, servers, gear knitters and parters. The index is available for consultation on request.

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