

The formation of the Schools of Design, 1830-1850,
with special reference to Manchester, Birmingham
and Leeds

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ABSTRACT

Although much of the discussion which preceded the formation of the Schools of Design turned on their potential benefit to industry, they were not simply a prototype of technical education, established for commercial reasons. The formation of the schools occurred against a background of increasing public encouragement of art, which laid emphasis on the national prestige, and social benefits, as much as on the commercial advantages to be derived from art. Above all, the campaign of B.R. Haydon, an influential factor in securing government support for Schools of Design, was idealistic in its approach; moreover, the politicians who assisted his cause were mostly individuals with cultural and educational rather than commercial interests.

As regards the industrial arguments for art education, an examination of parliamentary enquiries into the silk trade, calico printing and copyright of designs, reveals that the manufacturers were not wholeheartedly interested in art education. National pride was as prevalent as any sense of real commercial deprivation, and the most persuasive arguments in favour of design schools were put by a few unrepresentative individuals.

Since local initiative was so important in establishing provincial Schools of Design, the particular circumstances surrounding their formation in Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds, is closely studied. An industrial need for designers existed in varying degrees in each town, but also characteristic of each town was an expanding range of cultural activity with a marked growth of interest in the visual arts. The three schools were founded under the auspices of institutions already existing, and in two cases, at Manchester and Birmingham, these were societies with an interest in the fine arts. Aspects of the early history of each provincial school reveal their function to have been conceived locally as much in terms of fine as of applied art, and a detailed study of the schools' promoters shows that they were mostly drawn from what may be termed a 'cultural elite', men with interests in fine art or in the patronage of other educational, cultural and philanthropic institutions of their towns.

PREFACE

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|---|
| B.S.A. | Birmingham Society of Arts |
| B.R.L. | Birmingham Reference Library |
| Bull. | Bulletin |
| Coll. | Collection |
| E.H.R. | English Historical Review |
| Ec.H.R. | Economic History Review |
| H.C. | House of Commons |
| H.L. | House of Lords |
| J. | Journal |
| J.D.M. | Journal of Design and Manufactures |
| J.W.C.I. | Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes |
| L.C.L. | Leeds City Library |
| M.C.L. | Manchester Central Library |
| M.I. | Mechanics' Institution |
| Mins. | Minutes |
| P.P. | Parliamentary Paper |
| P.R.O. | Public Record Office |
| Proc. | Proceedings |
| R. | Review |
| R.M.I. | Royal Manchester Institution |
| R.S.A. | Royal Society of Arts |
| S.C. | Select Committee |
| S.D. | School of Design |
| Supp. | Supplement |
| v. | volume |

A note on terms

A number of terms used in the discussion of art and design in the early nineteenth century require some explanation, as their usage has subsequently changed or decayed: art could be ambiguous in many contexts as it still retained in general usage the sense of technique or skill applied as much to technology as to creativity in the accepted cultural modes. Thus, for example, in the title of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures lay a confusion of which the significance was more than purely semantic. Although terms such as 'visual arts' or 'figurative arts' are sometimes used in this thesis to be more specific, the term 'art' is used according to modern practice to mean creative activity, unless the context specifically dictates otherwise. fine art was used then, as now, to distinguish painting and sculpture for its own sake, from applied ornament or decoration.

high art was a term which overlapped in meaning with 'fine art', but used more specifically, distinguished the more elevated types of fine art described, for example, by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his Fourth Discourse; in particular, it distinguished historical painting (i.e. the painting of subjects from historical, literary, biblical or mythological sources) as the highest type, from landscape, portrait and flower painting, and genre (i.e. scenes of everyday, domestic life) as lower types. N.B. These terms were frequently given capital letters in early nineteenth century writing, a practice which is abandoned in this thesis, except in quotations, as inconsistent with modern usage.

design, like 'art', had an ambiguity of meaning which lent a degree of confusion to discussions of principle. Design could mean both the drawing, and the planning of proportion, colour etc.. Thus Schools of Design could be interpreted simply as drawing schools (the Royal Academy had a 'School of Design' within its walls) or as schools to impart the skills of planning ornament, pattern-making etc.

art-manufacture is a term which has disappeared from use, but was widely used in the second quarter of the nineteenth century to indicate the manufacture of decorative or highly ornamented objects.

culture, a complex word because of its many senses is here used to mean "refinement of the mind and tastes", and "the intellectual side of civilization", to quote two definitions given by O.E.D. of a usage which became current in the early nineteenth century. (It is definitely not used here in the broader sense adopted by anthropologists and sociologists later in the century).

INTRODUCTION

On 3 August 1836, the House of Commons passed an Estimate of £1500 to be spent by the Board of Trade on setting up a School of Design.¹ The Government Schools of Design have often been cited as the earliest example of state provision of technical education in England, apparently established in response to industrial demand. As such, they appear to have failed to provide the training desired by the manufacturers, and their lack of industrial support was blamed on the unrealistic curriculum which they followed.² The contention of this thesis is that the actual motivation for the schools may have differed from their expressed aims, that the economic arguments were an expedient for justifying a vote of government money when utilitarian principles guided much of public expenditure, and that the true motivation for establishing Schools of Design is to be seen in a growing interest in the visual arts.

This contention is introduced in the first chapter, where the various reasons proposed for encouraging art in early nineteenth century England are examined, and found to be predominantly educational, moral, and patriotic, rather than commercial, even extending to a view of art, like elementary education, as a means of social control. The sources drawn upon are contemporary writings on art. The second chapter continues the argument by looking more closely at the painter B.R. Haydon's campaign, which did so much to create a mood in favour of Schools of Design, and it is found that the politicians whom he lobbied were largely interested as

1 P.P. 1836 (525) xxxviii

2 J. Hodgson, On the failure in results of the Government Art Schools, in Trans. of the National Assoc. for the Advancement of Art and its application to industry, Edinburgh meeting 1889, 1890

much in education and culture, as in commerce. Here, the sources used are Haydon's Diary (now published in five volumes, but never thoroughly analysed in this respect), Hansard, and parliamentary papers. A sample of Haydon's political contacts reveals a number of individual M.P.s and public figures who had markedly cultural interests and were frequently to be found on the various parliamentary committees concerned with art, and on the boards of trustees of the British Museum and the newly established National Gallery.

Bearing in mind the theory that the Schools of Design were established for primarily commercial reasons,¹ the economic arguments are examined in chapter 3, in relation to silk manufacture and calico printing, industries which received a great deal of parliamentary attention at the time. In fact, it will be seen that the arguments were not strong, especially where the manufacturers themselves were concerned, and the case for Schools of Design was put most emphatically by a few influential characters, such as John Bowring, an intellectual and economic theorist. The information for this chapter is drawn principally from parliamentary reports on trade.

In 1841 an additional sum of £10,000 was included in the Estimates for establishing Schools of Design in provincial towns.² The industrial need for design training had been a persuasive argument in securing state funds for a central school, and the logical extension of this argument was to set up schools in the seats of industry which were most apparently in need of designers. However, the provincial Schools of Design were not simply extensions of national activity. To secure the grant, local

1 P.P. 1849 (576) xviii q. 3296 (Henry Cole)
S. Macdonald, History and philosophy of art education, 1970 p. 60

2 P.P. 1841 (357-I) xiv

initiative had to be taken, and the significance of local initiative is underlined by the fact that at Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds the schools were established under the auspices of three quite different institutions, the Royal Manchester Institution, the Birmingham Society of Arts, and the Leeds Mechanics' Institution.

Each local study begins with a consideration of aspects of 'art-manufacture' in that locality, although the support from local manufacturers for the Schools of Design was hardly overwhelming in any of the three areas. The encouragement of art and art education in these industrial towns must be seen in the context of the great expansion of urban cultural activity, and in the second section of each local study this expansion is illustrated by an account of libraries, institutions for adult education, societies and the performing arts. As regards the visual arts in particular, aspects examined include professional artists and their societies, exhibitions of contemporary art and of old masters; public sculpture is considered, as is architecture, since both were regarded as important by contemporaries in contributing not only to civic pride, but also to the aesthetic education of citizens. Many of the institutions of adult education included the visual arts within their 'curriculum', for instance as a subject for public lectures and in the provision of library books. The organisation of drawing classes by such institutions is also noticed.

In the third section of each local study, the circumstances surrounding the receipt of a government grant and the early years of the School of Design are discussed. As suggested above, the character of the parent institution in each case was sufficiently different to make these local conditions significant. By the same token, the individuals who undertook to participate in the opening and running of these schools are especially

worthy of close attention. The fourth section of each local study therefore examines the characters and interests of those men, by which means a more accurate understanding may be reached of the motives underlying the formation of local Schools of Design than would be achieved by taking at face value the purposes of the schools as expressed by the Board of Trade, under which they were administered. The inspiration for this approach has been the use of prosopography as proposed by Lawrence Stone, Arnold Thackray and others.¹ Although the small numbers involved in promoting and patronising the Schools of Design in each town would make a statistical analysis misleading, yet, as with the discussion of Haydon's political contacts, the biographical profiles of these promoters are very revealing in terms of their social status, interests, affiliations and other activities. It is a method of study that might fruitfully be applied to a variety of educational institutions.

As regards the local Schools of Design themselves, the study of their patrons in the early years reinforces the conclusion that they must be seen more as cultural institutions than as technical training schools. But the implications go further, for the body of men represent very strongly that provincial elite of the nineteenth century town identified long ago in a general way by G.M. Young, and more recently and more specifically by Kitson Clark.² This theme is taken up at the end of chapter 6.

Source material for the three local studies is of a miscellaneous kind. A wealth of printed pamphlets, annual reports of societies,

1 L. Stone, Prosopography, in Daedalus (American Academy of Arts and Science) v.100 no.1 (1971)

S. Shapin and A. Thackray, Prosopography as a tool in the history of science, in History of Science v.12 (1974)

2 G.M. Young, Portrait of an age, annotated ed, by G.K. Clark, 1977 p. 42
G.K. Clark, The Leeds elite, in Univ. of Leeds R. v.7 no.2 (1974-5)

published lectures and kindred material has been examined in the local history and archive collections at the public libraries of all three towns, and contemporary national journals such as the Art Union, and the Journal of Design and Manufactures have been searched. In each case MS minutes and other MS materials relating to the early history of the local schools have been examined, as have records surviving at the Public Record Office, Department of Education and Science, and the Royal Society of Arts. For descriptions of local industrial art, contemporary and near-contemporary printed sources have been found useful, and in identifying the patrons of the local Schools of Design, and for other purposes, contemporary directories, poll books and guide books have been used, as well as school registers, local newscuttings, institutional (chapel, church etc.) histories, and published autobiographies and memoirs. Local newspapers have not been methodically searched on the grounds that the additional detail to be uncovered in this way would have been of minimal relevance to the argument.

Placing the formation of one type of institution - the Schools of Design - in a fuller context than has been the case in previous studies, the thesis aims to fulfil two broad purposes: first by illustrating an important cultural and educational development in the years 1830-1850, the public promotion of art, with its emphasis on the moral benefits of educating taste, and secondly in contributing to the identification of a 'cultural elite' in the early Victorian town.

CHAPTER 1

ARGUMENTS FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF ART 1768-1830

The argument for national art education was voiced by no means in purely commercial terms; considerable weight had been given by a belief shared by many cultivated and influential people in the moral value and national importance of nurturing the fine arts in Britain. The rise of this belief can be traced in writings and events during the latter half of the eighteenth, and early decades of the nineteenth centuries. The development may be seen as an aspect of 'curriculum history', interpreting 'curriculum' not in the narrow sense of a programme pursued by schools and formal institutions, but in the broader sense of what was considered to be appropriate for the education of the people at large.

The main reasons advanced by contemporary writers who advocated more patronage of, and education in art, are selected for consideration below under the following heads: the rising status of art, the relationship of art to the state, patriotism and nationalism as motives for progress in British art, and finally the commercial utility of art. The chapter continues by discussing various proposed means of encouraging the arts, through patronage and education, and concludes by referring briefly to the realization of these means in public institutions.

The writings discussed are representative of a burgeoning field of literature in the early nineteenth century which publicised contemporary thought and activity in the arts. Reynolds' Discourses were published as they were delivered, in the years 1769-1790, followed

by numerous collected editions and translations in response to popular demand. The lectures of James Barry and Henry Fuseli, successive Professors of Painting at the Royal Academy, were published in 1809 and 1805 respectively. Martin Archer Shee, later to be President of the Royal Academy, published his Rhymes on Art which went into two editions in 1805. Prince Hoare, Honorary Secretary for Foreign Correspondence at the Royal Academy, published a series of Academic Annals and correspondence with foreign academies (1802-1809) in addition to an important, because well informed work of his own in 1813. These publications anticipated in many details those of the most notable protagonist of art education, Benjamin Robert Haydon, who borrowed from them frequently, and often without acknowledgement.

That the interest was increasingly popular is shown by the appearance of a new species of periodical on art. The first of these was perhaps The Artist (1807-1809) edited by Prince Hoare, and another early example was Annals of the Fine Arts (1816-1820) edited by James Elmes, an architect active in the literature of art. Though often short-lived, these journals, like the books on art, proliferated especially in the 1820's and 1830's, aided of course by general developments of that time in printing and publishing. In particular, improvements in steel engraving enabled the production of illustrated magazines such as the Art Union (later Art Journal) from 1839 and the Journal of Design and Manufactures from 1849 to 1852. The satirical magazine Punch from 1841 often made effective use of illustrations in commenting upon art. The Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures of 1835-6 commented favourably on the value of the new steam printing machine in permitting the circulation of cheap publications on art and noted the existence "among the enterprising and laborious classes of an earnest desire for

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information on the arts".¹ Wordsworth on the other hand, disapproved in his sonnet Illustrated Books and Newspapers of 1846:

"Now prose and verse sunk into disrepute
Must lacquey a dumb Art that best can suit
The taste of this once-intellectual Land.
A backward movement surely have we here ...
Avaunt this vile abuse of pictured page!"²

Like the railways which he also attacked, this was clearly a phenomenon to be reckoned with.

Dorothy George has observed that graphic satire aimed at the world of art declined after 1810 "partly no doubt because the spirit of the age had changed". If by this she implies that interest in art had fallen off, the flourishing of these publications proves her wrong; if, however, the implication is that art had become a matter for serious treatment rather than for social satire, there is a wealth of evidence in the writings of the time. Watkin is more precise in identifying "the artistic self-consciousness of the whole period".³

Stowe had described painting, in Elizabeth's reign, as

"base and mechanical, and a mere mestier of an
Artificer and handy craftsman",⁴

in extreme contrast with contemporary Italy where Leonardo, Raphael and the "divine" Michelangelo had raised the practice of art to the level of literary, philosophical and scientific activity. Notwithstanding the knighthoods conferred on a few court painters in the seventeenth century, for English painters generally it was not until 1768, a point in time clearly marked by the foundation of the Royal

1 S.C. on Arts and Manufactures 1836 (568) ix, pp. iii, vi

2 Wordsworth, Poetical works ed. T. Hutchinson, 1936 repr. 1969 p. 383

3 M.D. George, Hogarth to Cruikshank : Social change in graphic satire, 1967 p. 207

D. Watkin, Thomas Hope and the Neo-Classical Idea, 1968 p. xix

4 D. Piper, Painting in England 1500-1880, 2nd ed. 1965 p. 36

Academy of Arts, that the situation improved.¹ Much was due to the personality of Sir Joshua Reynolds, close friend of Johnson, Goldsmith and Burke, and first President of the Royal Academy, who delivered periodic discourses to an audience of intellect and fashion; he was the intimate of aristocracy during life and received pompous obsequies on his death. Prince Hoare, writing in 1813, recognized that Reynolds' Discourses had "awakened a sentiment" causing knowledge of the art to increase amongst the higher classes, owing to its new philosophical respectability.²

This cause, the status of art, was taken up by a number of writers, both artists and amateurs of art. Much of their reasoning was founded on a conception of the role that the arts were supposed to have played in Greek society, especially at the peak of cultural achievement in Periclean Athens. The campaign for national art education was partly then, a consequence of the 'Greek Revival', the polite and fashionable study of antiquity which gained momentum with the excavation of Herculanaeum and Pompeii in the 1750s. In this activity certain Englishmen such as Stuart and Revett and Sir William Hamilton had particularly distinguished themselves; dilettanti returned from their Grand Tours with rich collections of antique sculpture, casts and objects of vertu, which were then studied and often published. R.L. Archer has described the change in attitudes to classical studies in the secondary school which began at this time, from the exclusive study of language and grammar to a philosophical, moral and aesthetic appreciation of Greek civilization.³

1 L. Lipking, The ordering of the arts in Eighteenth Century England, Princeton 1970 p.6

2 Prince Hoare, Epochs of the arts, 1813 p. 66

3 R.L. Archer, Secondary education in the nineteenth century, Cambridge 1928, p. 25

Shee noted that for the ancients, the painter and sculptor "were characters of the highest importance".¹ Barry summarized this ideal view of the arts in Greece in his lecture On the History and Progress of the Art:

"The manly philosophy of Socrates, which infused so much public spirit, and such a love of virtue and liberty; which produced so many heroes, patriots, brave and worthy men; afforded also the noblest and best adapted foundation for authors and artists of a sublime and daring genius. Laborious and self-denying, it looked with a becoming contempt on mere riches, dignities, and all those showy pompous exteriors which are calculated to encumber, to divert the attention from matters of real value, and only to dazzle those vulgar eyes which have not strength and penetration enough to discover their comparative wretchedness and little worth. To arrive at the utmost extent of human capacity was the generous, the prime object of Grecian attention; and accordingly, the illustrious works which this people have produced, are universally acknowledged to be not only a standard and ultimatum in their several kinds, but also to be in great measure the prime cause of all approximation to perfection ever since."²

An important claim to status for the visual arts was their supposed moral influence. By the time of Fuseli's twelfth lecture, (c. 1804) the

"influence of the plastic Arts on society, on manners, sentiments ..."

was a commonplace.³ As a philosophical concept this had been best expressed by Schiller, a true Platonist who considered beauty to have a morally uplifting effect. Schiller was not directly quoted in English literature on the subject, German philosophy acquiring wide influence in England only from about 1830. Similar ideas were manifest however in the preface to Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, which first appeared in 1816:

"The painter's art, in the exercise of its more elevated faculties, inspires the mind with a taste for whatever is good, as well as what is beautiful:

1 M.A. Shee, Rhymes on art, 2nd ed. 1805 p.xxxv

2 J. Barry, Lecture I, in R.N. Wornum ed., Lectures of the Royal Academicians, 1848, p. 76

3 H. Fuseli, Lecture XII, in J. Knowles ed., Life and writings of Henry Fuseli, 1831, v.3 p. 41

fills the heart with the most salutary sensations, and promotes the love of virtue and the abhorrence of vice ... Its productions instil into mankind a love of order, of symmetry, of harmony of parts, and of general beauty ..."¹

Barry had practical hopes of the moral effects of art in 1793, when he hoped that some great man with the eloquence of Burke or Rousseau would come forward in the crisis of political revolution as the advocate of a constitution productive of intellectual, virtuous culture nourished by the arts.²

Roscoe and Sass both considered art to be an activity prescribed in the divine plan; for Sass it was man's duty as the image of his Creator, to cultivate his intellect in all its aspects. Hoare wrote that the arts distinguish civilized, rational creatures, acting under Providence.³ Another aspect of the moral purpose of art rested on a particular theory which gained renewed vigour from Reynolds' Discourses : Ekphrasis was the classical theory that painting, like poetry, should tell a story to draw a moral. Reynolds thought that the painter, instead of trying to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, should endeavour to improve men by the grandeur of his ideas. For authority, Reynolds referred to the poets, orators and rhetoricians of antiquity. Virtually all writers made much of this particular moral power of art, even though, like Reynolds himself, they mostly failed to practise their theory. James Barry was an exception, practising high art in the face of considerable discouragement.⁴

1 M. Bryan, Biographical and critical dictionary of painters and engravers, 1816, v.1 p. 5

2 J. Barry, Letter to the Dilettanti Society, 1793, in Works of James Barry, 1809, v.2 p. 525

3 W. Roscoe, On the origin and vicissitudes of literature, science and art, 1817 p.8
H. Sass, A journey to Rome and Naples, 1818 p.xxviii
P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813, p. 3

4 Sir J. Reynolds, Discourse III, 1770, in Works of Sir J. Reynolds, 4th ed. 1809, v.1, p. 51ff.

The artist's moral power in high art indirectly enhanced his status also, through the scholarly learning necessary for its practice.

In Reynolds' words:

"The moderns are not less convinced than the Ancients of this superior power existing in the art; nor less sensible of its effects. Every language has adopted terms expressive of this excellence. The gusto grande of the Italians, the beau ideal of the French, and the great style, genius and taste among the English, are but different appellations of the same thing. It is this intellectual dignity, they say, that ennobles the painter's art; that lays the line between him and the mere mechanick."¹

It was necessary for the great artist therefore to be familiar with history, literature, classical and christian iconography, to be able to perform his task. He had therefore to be broadly educated in addition to being inspired, for only by studying the whole body and mind of man could he carry "a meaning, a dignity and a propriety" into his work, as Barry suggested. Fuseli, Barry's successor in the Chair of Painting at the Royal Academy, helped to realize this ideal of the learned artist in his talent for classical and modern languages and philosophy.

It was the universal knowledge required of the artist that made him a fit companion for kings, claimed Sass, referring to Leonardo's death in the arms of Francis I. Similar anecdotes from the history of art, such as the Emperor Charles V stooping to pick up Titian's brush, were frequently recalled (in paintings as well as in literature), inspired by the keen interest and patronage of George III and the Prince Regent to whom many contemporary writings on art were dedicated.²

There were some limitations to the status of art, however, in the mind of William Roscoe who, whilst a strong advocate of institutions for the encouragement of Literature, Science and Art, spoke of "the bearings they have upon the more important avocations of life", and who

1 Sir J. Reynolds, op.cit., pp. 54-5

2 H. Sass, op.cit., 1818, p. xl

described art and literature in the rather subordinate role of "inevitable features of human nature", stimulated by religion, by hero-worship, and by emotions.¹

A particularly strong belief was current, in the special relationship existing between art and the state; like the theory of its moral influence, this concept of art was being methodically expressed by German philosophers such as Hegel and Herder, whose works were not yet well known in England (Hegel's Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik was not in fact published until 1835). But D'Alembert in the Encyclopédie (1751) had separated the arts from other human knowledge as a unique repository of the "spirit and life" of man, and Winckelmann had postulated that Greek sculpture reflected the "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" of the Greek spirit. Barry, in 1774, quoted extensively the preface of Vasari's Lives of the Artists to demonstrate the observation that the rise of art in Italy was due to the civilized atmosphere of the Italian republics.² Richard Payne Knight, the noted connoisseur, took an anthropological view of ancient art, and under the influence of his criticism and later that of Pugin and Ruskin, it became axiomatic that art and architecture of the past reflected the character of its age and country, and that contemporary art should consciously seek to express national character.³

1 W. Roscoe, op.cit., 1817, pp. 9, 11 (my italics)

2 S. Lang, R.P. Knight and the idea of modernity, in J. Summerson ed., Concerning architecture, 1968, p. 91
W. Leppmann, Winckelmann, 1971, p. ix
J. Barry, An inquiry into the ... arts in England, 1774, ch. 3, in Works of James Barry, 1809, v.2, p. 167 ff.

3 R.P. Knight, Principles of taste 1805 p. 223 ff.
A.W.N. Pugin, Contrasts 1836
J. Ruskin, The poetry of architecture, 1837, 1838, in Works of John Ruskin, ed. E.T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, 1903, v.1. p. 1

This concept of a "unity of culture" related the practice of art to its national government in four points of significance. First, artistic achievement was a means of immortality and fame for the state as for the individual, a way of conquering posterity as Shee described it; Roscoe in 1817 stressed this power of the arts to confer on the nation where they have once flourished

"A rank and distinction in the annals of mankind, the most honourable and the most durable that can be attained."

After Waterloo, with military greatness unquestionably established, Lord Castlereagh hoped that

"as there was nothing of glory left to achieve, his Majesty would snatch the only remaining laurel, by cultivating the arts of peace",

by which some contemporaries at least understood the fine arts.¹

Secondly, the moral power of art had a specific interpretation in respect of national virtue; the arts were capable of promoting the "vital principle of the state" as Hoare put it, by means of the portrayal of the English character and achievements. Such monuments and commemorations would be to the political advantage of the state by impressing the minds of "a very numerous class of men". Shee thought it in the enlightened interest of a great nation to be liberal and splendid in its public works, because

"they produce large returns of respect and consideration from our neighbours and competitors - of patriotic exultation amongst ourselves : they make men proud of their country, and from priding in it - prompt in its defence ..."²

William Paulet Carey, a staunch and energetic protagonist of modern British Art, quoted the good authority of Montesquieu and Burke for the

1 M.A. Shee, op.cit., 1805 preface
W. Roscoe, op.cit., 1817 p. 41
Lord Castlereagh's speech on the Address of Condolence 17 Feb. 1820, quoted in Annals of the Fine Arts, v. 5 (1820), title page

2 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813 p. 271
M.A. Shee, op.cit., 1805 p. xxv

importance of artistic achievement as the mainspring of prosperity in every state, and "the cheap defence of nations". Craig distinguished between two different media in the use of art as propaganda; painting amongst the upper classes, and engraving amongst the lower, provided a happy means of exciting patriotic enthusiasm. These visual means, he claimed, had a greater force than verbal description.¹

Thirdly, extrapolating from history, a connection suggested by some commentators between artistic achievement and certain types of political structure gave rise to the advocacy of art institutions for party political reasons. A personification of the relationship between art and liberal politics was found in the poet James Thomson, frequently quoted in literature on art, especially by Hoare and Haydon; his poem Liberty, dedicated to Frederick Prince of Wales, cynosure of the whig circles in which Thomson moved, revealed an admiration for Greek art which he associated with its democratic origins, and his poetry had been much criticised by Johnson for its whig sentiments. Both Barry and Fuseli argued that liberty was essential to flourishing art, Barry associating the elucidation of natural rights and the legal equality of mankind with the Christian dispensation which had fostered the Italian Renaissance. (For Barry, with his Irish Roman Catholic background, the papacy epitomised enlightened patronage of art and education; this cannot have been a persuasive argument in eighteenth century England). Fuseli thought religion and liberty had been the most powerful reasons for the success of Greek culture; art must feel itself free and dictate its own course.²

Shee recognized the weakness of the historical argument. He criticized Lorenzo de' Medici (referring to Roscoe's biography of the

1 W.P. Carey, Cursory thoughts on the present state of the fine arts, Liverpool, 1810 p.12

W.M. Craig, A course of lectures on drawing, painting and engraving, 1821

2 H. Fuseli, Lecture XII, in J. Knowles ed. op.cit., 1831, v.3 pp. 43, 45
 J. Barry, Lecture I, in R.N. Wornum ed. op.cit., 1848, pp. 84-5

prince) for having undermined the liberty of his country, and found that the arts traditionally thrived under despotic governments. He hoped however that Britain would furnish a contrary example and establish a fifth great era in world history, never cultivating refinement at the expense of freedom. Roscoe attempted to reconcile the historical facts; having quoted Hume's observation that arts and sciences can only arise under a free government and that slaves can never aspire to the refinements of taste or reason, he demurred, believing that the nominal form of government was not as significant as the relation of government to public opinion, that is, the extent of a government's popular support. For art had enjoyed a great era under the despotism of Louis XIV because of the government's stability; this stability had enabled a degree of liberty to be allowed to the expression of public sentiment, which in turn facilitated literary achievement. But he agreed that literary freedom was more certain under a popular or mixed form of government, where it was not dependent on the monarch's will. Regarding the artistic achievements of the Florentine republic, Roscoe attributed this chiefly to the nature of government which called for talent from every rank of citizen and admitted them without distinction to the chief offices of the state.¹

Finally, both Roscoe and Hoare offered a glimpse, but only a glimpse, of the more visionary international ideals that were to inspire the Great Exhibition of 1851. Roscoe recognized the necessity of peace for the progress of science and letters, for free communication between men of talent and genius, which tends to the improvement of mankind, and Hoare commended the encouragement of art so that

1 M.A. Shee, op.cit., 1805 Poem, part I
 W. Roscoe, op.cit., 1817 pp. 29-35
 W. Roscoe, Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, 1796 (1846 ed. p. 333)

"the records of cultivated genius would descend to posterity, manifesting the blessings of friendly and peaceful union among the distant Nations of the globe..."¹

Conscious of its national importance, some writers demanded encouragement of art as a patriotic duty. A sense of patriotism and of nationalism motivated advocates of progress in British art. An identifiable British School of painting had begun to emerge, but at the same time British ability in art was impugned both at home and abroad, and various diagnoses were made of this alleged incapacity. As in the sphere of foreign trade, (to be considered in chapter 3) a sharp sense of rivalry with France was an important factor.

During the eighteenth century, a truly British school of art had begun to emerge. Hogarth was recognized as the father of English painting, not because his style found followers in England, but because he was a native painter of eminence in contrast to the foreigners who had dominated English art for two centuries. In 1780 Horace Walpole published the first history of English art. Sir Joshua Reynolds attained eminence as a world authority on painting, and Mason in a prefatory epistle to his Art of Painting (1783), addressed Sir Joshua:

"Give her in Albion as in Greece to rule,
And guide (what thou hast form'd) a British school"²

Spurring many writers on to defend and encourage art was the "anti-British prejudice" attributed to various foreign authors, such as Du Bos, Voltaire and Winckelmann; Winckelmann was the chief target because of his theory that art depended on climate and that the foggy North could never rival in excellence the art of Mediterranean lands. William Carey devoted his entire literary career to refuting these

1 W. Roscoe, op.cit., 1817 p. 39
P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813 pp. 346-7

2 L. Lipking, op.cit., 1970 p. 60

prejudices, in pamphlets and articles, many of them pseudonymous, between 1801 and 1833; he acknowledged that the prejudice was older than these European authors, and that it was shared by many Englishmen too.¹ Shee remonstrated with the

"unpatriotic feeling towards the productions of our own time, which characterizes the criticism of the day",

and the Somerset House Gazette, in which a recurrent exhortation was "the patriotic disposition to favour the arts of one's country", compared in 1824 the Scottish pride in their art with the indifference and contempt of English literati for theirs.²

Fuseli was a severe critic of contemporary British art; though not without hope for the future, given enlightened education and patronage, he considered most current work to be meretricious, affected and insipid, dictated by fashion and vanity. Fuseli was only one of many foreign artists in England. It was a source of consternation to some that the original Royal Academy included such a proportion of foreigners (nine out of 33 members). Farington interpreted this as a necessity due to the disinclination of Englishmen:

"Nothing could exceed the ignorance of a People, who were, themselves, learned ingenious and highly cultivated in all things but the Arts of design".

Hazlitt argued that English insensibility to art proved that England was indeed a shopkeeping nation.³

For the evident lack of great art in England the Reformation and liturgical iconoclasm of the protestant church was quite generally blamed by native commentators, as it had stopped the most important

1 W.P. Carey, The national obstacle to the national style considered 1825 p.6

2 M.A. Shee, op.cit., 1805 p. xxviii
The Somerset House Gazette 1824 v.1 p. 99

3 H. Fuseli, Lecture XII in J. Knowles ed. op.cit., 1831, v.3 pp. 56-7.
W. Hazlitt, On the catalogue raisonné of the British Institution, in P.P. Howe ed. Complete Works of William Hazlitt 1930 v.4 p. 150
J. Farington, Memoirs of the life of Reynolds, in Literary Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, ed. E. Malone 5th ed. 1819 v.1 p. clxviii

source of commissions for noble works; some held that British art might be encouraged by supplying the lack in churches.

The Napoleonic Wars, too, were blamed to some extent for the mediocrity of English art, although there was disagreement on this. Shee considered that the Revolution had interrupted commercial speculations particularly by the printsellers who had begun to provide a useful source of employment for artists; in addition the French upheaval had caused such an inundation of old masters on the English market from French aristocratic collections, notably the rich Orléans collection, that living artists were effectively robbed of potential patronage:

"The trading tribes of Taste [are] set in motion in every corner of Europe".¹

This question of the preference amongst collectors for old masters was to be a contentious point; contact with earlier art could be said to stimulate the skills of living artists, and to educate the taste of potential patrons. For a period during 1802-3, the Treaty of Amiens was in operation and thousands of Englishmen were able to travel abroad once more. Eight years later Hoare was lamenting that the enforced seclusion from the schools of the continent and their examples of excellence, was adversely affecting English art.² Haydon, on the other hand, thought that English art had benefitted from the wars since the connoisseurs who traditionally spent their wealth on old masters during their Grand Tour, were forced to remain at home and purchase native works.

An effect of the wars was to sharpen the sense of rivalry with France; Castlereagh has already been cited as expecting glory in the

1 M.A. Shee, op.cit., 1805 p. xviii

2 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1817 p. xxvi

arts of peace to follow victory in those of war. In 1793 Barry contemplated the impression that a Frenchman must receive of London:

"These strangers here have no galleries like the Luxemburgh, filled with intellectual entertainment, to receive them gratis twice a week; no library of prints like that in the Rue de Richelieu, where they might contemplate whatever the industry and genius, the youth, progress, and perfection, of modern Europe, have been able to add, to every vestige of perfection remaining of all the preceding ages and countries".¹

Prince Hoare was especially aware of foreign superiority in respect of encouragement for art, having been secretary for foreign correspondence at the Royal Academy, in which role he published the series of Academic Annals and correspondence; the regulations for the Academy of St. Petersburg had institutionalized the employment of painting and sculpture to record national greatness,² and in France:

"when one of the late annual reports of the state of the public circumstances was made, ... distinct mention was found in it of the works of painting and sculpture which had been carrying on during the preceding year, and of the general advancement of the Arts, as one of the points of national progress in which the public were interested."³

For Hoare, France demonstrated the importance of publicly honouring artists:

"It has been the skilful policy of our great Antagonist, to make several of the most eminent Professors in Science and the Arts, members of the Legion of Honour; and I have the testimony of a

1 J. Barry, op.cit., 1793, in Works of James Barry, 1809, v.2 p. 516

2 P. Hoare ed., Extracts from a correspondence with the academies of Vienna and St. Petersburg, 1802

3 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813, p. 93 (my italics). This passage is probably a reference to:
Dechazelle, Discours qui a obtenu la mention honorable sur cette question par l'Institut national : Quelle est l'influence de la peinture sur les arts d'industrie commerciale?, Paris 1804

Parisian well acquainted with the actual state of Literature and the Arts in France, 'that the little bit of riband had produced a greater effect on the exertions of the Professors than all the pecuniary rewards which had been bestowed'."1

The Annals of the Fine Arts edited by James Elmes from 1816-1820, took a generally comparative view of systems for the encouragement of art, reporting the transactions of foreign as well as of British academies, reviewing especially French exhibitions and French schools of art; the French system of encouragement was held up for admiration.

Patriotism in art occasionally took an abusive turn, as when the Examiner, a radical journal, launched its notorious attack on "Prinny" accusing this "Protector of the Arts" of appointing a foreigner as his Historical Painter, and ignoring the merits of his own countrymen.² The "wretched foreigner" was a painter named Stoehling, but he was an exception, and the Regent was more justly remembered for his assistance to English art. An embodiment of the union of patriotic sentiment and artistic achievement was David Wilkie's Chelsea Pensioners reading the gazette of the Battle of Waterloo, a masterpiece of British genre painting which aroused such enthusiasm when exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1822 that it became the first painting ever to be protected from damage by a special rail, and was purchased by the Duke of Wellington for the record sum of 1200 guineas.

The idea of promoting national pride through art was not universally held, however, and one dissenting voice was Hazlitt:

"Patriotism and the Fine Arts have nothing to do with one another - because patriotism relates to exclusive advantages, and the advantages of the Fine Arts are not exclusive but communicable ... We do not consume the works of Art as articles of food, or clothing, or fuel; but we brood over their idea,

1 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813 p. 131

2 "The Prince on St. Patrick's Day" in Examiner 22 March 1812

which is accessible to all, and may be multiplied without end ..."¹

But this intelligent and sensitive view was quite contrary to general published opinion at the time.

Proof that native genius did exist was frequently based on English literary achievement, and when patrons were to be blamed, a favourite anecdote was the neglect of Milton, whose posthumous reputation was now at a peak. Comments on the current state of the arts often sought to prove that a native poetic genius underlay the works of contemporary painters who required only encouragement and opportunity to flourish. Eulogies of English art became more frequent about 1815 when they carried the hint of an attempt at self-persuasion that measures taken to foster native art, such as the British Institution founded in 1806, must be having some visible effect. Thus Carey in 1810 supported the view that the greatness of Benjamin West P.R.A. was positive proof of a flourishing English school. In 1829 he claimed that British artists had made unprecedented advances in the previous twenty-five years and were now the first in Europe, although this appraisal referred to domestic genre painting and to landscape, which were considered lesser 'departments' of art than history painting.² Henry Sass, teacher of art, claimed in 1818 that the Elgin marbles had produced a "revolution in art" since their introduction into England, and in a notice of the New York Academy exhibition of 1818, the Annals of the Fine Arts observed:

"We are quite convinced that the great proportion of the American people look with respect and admiration towards England, and are happy to take her advice and imitate her example in art, in preference to the erroneous ... schools of the Continent. We do not hold ourselves up as being proper examples for any

1 W. Hazlitt, on the catalogue raisonné of the British Institution, in P.P. Howe ed. op.cit., 1930, v.4 p. 144

2 W.P. Carey, op.cit., 1810 p. 17
W.P. Carey, Observations on the primary object of the British Institution, Newcastle, 1829, p. 2

nation to imitate yet, because we have almost as much to do as the Americans in sound taste, and have besides bad habits ... Had it not been for the introduction of the Elgin marbles, and the opening of the British Institution, we should have been in a worse state, perhaps than any other nation on the Continent ..."¹

Finally, the commercial benefit of art was proposed as a persuasive argument for its national encouragement, and was perhaps the decisive claim in securing a grant of public money for the Government Schools of Design. But this argument was more than merely opportunistic, even on the part of those artists whose main preoccupation was high art, for many believed that improvement in the fine arts would raise the standard of ornamental art in manufacture.

Barry was precise in his discussion of ornamental art, arguing that it was neither trifling nor mean in itself, only becoming so when it was produced by men of limited powers. If historical painting were properly revived, then the qualities of dignity and propriety would be carried into all ornamental applications of art. He admired the encouragement to artists provided by Wedgwood, to equal or surpass the excellence of Greek works of ornamental art; Shee, however, considered the imitation of Greek art in manufactures to be indicative of the failure to produce a modern style.²

The improving influence which high art could exert on the quality of manufactures was quite generally agreed. Shee found that pure taste adorned everything it touched:

"While it mounts on wings of fire with the poet
and the painter to the highest heaven of invention,
it descends with humble diligence to the aid of the

1 H. Sass, op.cit., 1818 intro. p. 1
Annals of the Fine Arts v. 3 (1818) p. 489 f.

2 J. Barry, op.cit., 1774, 1798, in Works of James Barry, 1809,
v.2 pp. 246, 536
M.A. Shee, op.cit., 1805, p. xxxvi

mechanic at the anvil and the loom."¹

Roscoe, whilst recognizing that the practice of manufactures tended to the detriment of intellectual character by "reducing the powers of the mind and body to a machine", thought that proficiency in the "lower departments of art" could only flow from the one genuine stream.²

Hoare concurred with Barry inasmuch as moral and commercial excellence could be attained only by the powers of genius being "directed and confined to the highest pursuits of Art". He quoted from Dechazelle on the history of French art, who had argued that the lustre of manufactures and the prosperity which had stemmed from them corresponded to the degree of influence which painting had possessed over them. In an appendix, Hoare referred also to letters from the Berlin Academy announcing a remarkable improvement on artisans and trade wrought by encouraging the art of painting.³

In describing the original source of the nation's "technic sense" as a "sense of genuine Beauty", Fuseli anticipated in an almost metaphysical way a line of argument developed more pragmatically in evidence before the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures by the engineer James Nasmyth, who proposed that in the design of machinery, the most beautiful form was always the most economic and efficient.⁴ This notion has only received widespread acknowledgement in the twentieth century association of aesthetic and functional form.

The theme selected by Hoare for his Epochs of the Arts was that splendour in the fine arts, and "National utility" were necessarily

1 M.A. Shee, op.cit., 1805, p. xxxv

2 W. Roscoe, op.cit., 1817, pp. 43, 55-6

3 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813, pp. 43, 105, & appendix

4 S.C. on Arts and Manufactures 1835-6, 1836 (568) ix, v.2 qq. 290-

united and entirely interdependent. Hoare believed that utility must serve as the main pretext for national encouragement since popular indifference to art was created by the view of art as solely a vehicle of fancy and moral sentiment. To separate delight from utility was, according to Hoare, to give an imperfect view of a question of national importance. In fact, he claimed, the fine arts formed only one branch of the "Science of Design", and he drew an analogy with chemical science, arguing that painting resembled chemistry in its union of exalted and humble purposes, the contemplation of nature and the service of daily economy.¹

The utility here contemplated was, of course, economic utility, the measure of which was achievement in trade. Hoare was sanguine about the achievements already made by the influence of art on trade, where rivalry with France was a point of economic reality, as well as of pride:

"In our own days, the rival competitions of England and France, formed under the eye of the returning Arts, have raised the manufacture of either country to a celebrity which renders them the objects of universal desire. From the designs of David, the classical Painter of France, every article of household furniture has received the stamp of grace, and attained a value beyond all former example. In England, the industry of Wedgwood transferred to his earthen wares the forms of all that Grecian and Etruscan taste has recommended to use or luxury; regular artists of merit were employed in making his designs; and the enormous preponderancy of his manufactures sufficiently declares the wealth which it has added to his country."²

Roscoe, a merchant, considered that the arts ought to remunerate their patrons if they were to succeed, making the observation that literary activity brought employment and profit by stimulation of the printing

¹ P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813, pp. 28, 34

² H. Fuseli, Lecture XII, in J. Knowles ed. op.cit. 1831, v.3 p. 42

² P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813, pp. 105-6

industry in sixteenth century Venice, seventeenth century Holland, and modern Britain.¹

Craig shared the pride and hopes of Prince Hoare. His theory was that art had naturally come into demand in England when economic surplus arose from manufacturing success about 1790, since when, commerce had improved enormously through the assistance of our progress in the fine arts. Thereafter, the wealth of the country had increased and the laurels of victory had been won in warfare which gained Britain a commercial monopoly of the world. Now, said Craig, Britain had to contend with the revived commercial talent of foreign nations, and everyone, for love of his country, must assist the arts.² Carey quoted Dr Johnson on the benefits of commercial speculators in literature, especially compared with with insecurity of private patronage. But he gave only reluctant approval to the commercial application of art:

"The union of Capital and Industry has produced the flourishing state of our cotton, woollen and hardware manufactures. The union of Capital and Genius has raised Literature from slavery and indulgence to dignity and independence. The union of Capital and Genius produced the Boydell, Macklin and Bowyer Galleries; and the Writer of these remarks, after the best consideration which he has been able to give the subject, cannot help fearing that the continuance, or revival of that union, is, at present, the only hope of certain support for historical Painting in this country."³

However, against the hopes and fears which attached to the application of art for commercial profit, there remained the belief common to most amateurs of art, that the connection between art and commerce applied in one direction only; though good art might stimulate wealth, art itself required more than commercial incentive for encouragement.

1 W. Roscoe, op.cit., 1817, pp. 62-4

2 W.M. Craig, op.cit., 1821, pp. 4-5

3 W.P. Carey, op.cit., 1810, pp. 21, 27

Given the many and excellent reasons for encouraging and improving art, these authors then turned to proposing various means. Patronage was, of course, crucial, but it also presupposed the education of laymen in art. Shee considered that the spirit of the age impeded patronage of the arts to some extent:

"Speculations of modern philosophy ... general disregard of the arts in pursuit of physical phenomena ... convulsions of Europe occupying the public mind so as to leave no leisure for taste ... pretentious connoisseurship diverted resources of patronage to antiquity..."¹

Only a few individuals had shown interest in advancing the arts; in particular Shee admired Egerton, Duke of Bridgewater, who had pioneered a mechanical invention, the canal, then in old age had formed a collection of old masters and some modern works, even purchasing a Turner at a very high price. This collection was later bequeathed to his nephew, Lord Francis Egerton, who made it freely accessible to the public at his London house, and who later became an active patron of the Manchester School of Design.²

The lack of patronage and need to improve it through the influence of public institutions was a theme developed by Carey in a course of lectures given at Leeds in 1827:

"Hot houses for certain plants and fruits may be likened to Public Institutions for the encouragement of the Fine Arts, which prove the coldness of the Public to those Arts and the necessity of general exertions to abate that evil ..." ³

Hazlitt once again dissented from the general view, claiming that the idea of art following a straight line of progress towards perfection was erroneous, being based on a false analogy with science. Further-

1 M.A. Shee, op.cit., 1805, preface to Part II

2 see chapter 4 below

3 W.P. Carey, op.cit., 1829 p. 1

more, he argued that the expedients proposed to remedy the poor quality of art, were calculated rather to confirm the evil; art could only flourish through immediate intercourse with nature. That view implied the virtual inefficacy of education in art.¹

The role of art patron was shifting gradually from the monarchy and aristocracy to merchants and manufacturers and public institutions, and with this shift, the style of patronage and collecting began to change. Collections were more often seen as having some didactic purpose; private and public galleries were increasingly open for artists to copy, and for the education of popular taste. It is evident from the diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon that the purchase or commission of contemporary works was often regarded by those patrons with a serious interest in art, as not simply the acquisition of a traditional object of luxury, but also as a deliberate act of encouragement.²

Royal patronage of art under George III and the Prince Regent has already been cited as a feature of the waxing status of art. George III was seen by Carey as the first truly British monarch, never having lived abroad; his encouragement of art was described as a genuinely national concern, and parliamentary measures such as the purchase of the Elgin marbles were attributed to his good example. The Somerset House Gazette praised George IV for acts of patronage.³ The aristocracy were traditional patrons of art, and their increasing inability or unwillingness to provide the stimulus necessary to art in the early years of the nineteenth century was a factor in the movement towards

1 W. Hazlitt, Fragments on art, in P.P. Howe ed. op.cit., 1930, v.18 p. 5

2 Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon, ed. W.B. Pope, 1960-63, v.4 p. 369

3 W.P. Carey, Some memoirs of the patronage and progress of the fine arts, 1826, pp. 11-12
 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813, p. 189
Somerset House Gazette v.1 (1824) p. 241

state encouragement of art. The generality of the landed classes had been active purchasers in the market for portraiture and funerary monuments, but the new exertions of painters towards large-scale history painting, required a different style of patronage.

Thomas Hope, collector and connoisseur, whose wealth was commercial and friends aristocratic, provides an interesting example of a patron in the age of transition from private collections to public museums. The son of an enormously rich and well-established banking family in Amsterdam, he came to England in the 1790's and moved with sufficient ease in the whig literary world; his unhappy negotiation for a peerage has been interpreted by Watkin as part of his attempt to influence taste:

"I who, though of merchant blood, am not a merchant ... should I succeed in kindling for the arts a more intense and universal love, when comes the hour of death I shall think I have not lived in vain."¹

He was a keen advocate of public institutions for the encouragement of art, and even participated in publishing enterprises for the dissemination of taste, but was at the same time very much a traditionally self-conscious and possessive patron. His eldest son, Henry Thomas Hope, was a great architectural patron, a benefactor of Haydon, and as a member of parliament served on several parliamentary committees connected with art. A younger son, Alexander Beresford-Hope was an art collector and an Anglican benefactor notable for his patronage of progressive ecclesiastical art at All Saints, Margaret Street.²

1 D. Watkin, op.cit., 1968, p. 29

2 Somerset House Gazette v.1 (1824) p. 195f
 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
 W.B. Pope ed., op.cit., 1960-63 v.4 pp. 362, 369
 P.J. Cunningham, William Dyce and the High Church movement, unpub.
 M.A. thesis, U.E.A., Norwich 1972, p. 38

Barry identified the necessary prerequisite of "economic overplus" for the nurture of art, in his letter to the Society of Dilettanti, and since surplus wealth was increasingly coming into the hands of commercial and manufacturing men, so were these men looked to for patronage of the fine arts. Carey, in 1810, laid great emphasis on the necessity of commercial patronage for high art, admiring the action of a "mercantile gentleman" in purchasing a work by Benjamin West which had been painted purely for love of art and the preservation of taste, and had been ignored by the nobility.

It was the merchant William Roscoe who made the most emphatic assertions regarding the association of commerce and fine art. The son of a publican, he read for the bar and made a literary reputation in 1796 by publishing the first English life of Lorenzo de' Medici, following this in 1805 with a study of Pope Leo X, son of Lorenzo. The importance of the Medici banking family as patrons of art evidently coloured his ideas of patronage; he had himself meantime engaged in banking, and his native Liverpool was a thriving centre of trade. He campaigned against the slave trade, admired the French Revolution in its early years, and represented Liverpool in parliament as a whig in 1806-7. Roscoe bequeathed an important art collection to Liverpool. His aim in building up the collection had been somewhat didactic, in attempting to illustrate fully the historical development of art.¹

But for all his love of art, he appeared to place it second to the practical affairs of life; he thought the arts to be indispensably useful to commerce, but at the same time the practice of arts and letters required wealth, to enable withdrawal from the more laborious

¹ W. Roscoe, op.cit., 1796 (1846 ed., p. 279)

occupations of life. He distinguished between manufacture, which although economically essential for the support of art, was not conducive to the development of intellectual character, and commerce, the urbanity of which encouraged intellectual improvement. His "economy of art" was distinctly laissez-faire:

"Till an artist can produce a work of such merit, as to induce some individual to prefer it to its value in money, he ought not to expect a reward."

It was entirely consistent with his life and outlook that Roscoe believed the best literature to have been produced by laymen, owing to their experience of the world; it was to a union of intellectual pursuits with the affairs of the world that he looked forward.¹

That such views were shared by many promoters of provincial institutions, subsequent chapters of this thesis will show, but these promoters represented a small cultural elite in their respective towns. Although many local institutions were founded in manufacturing districts for the leisure-time pursuit of scientific, literary and artistic knowledge, and monuments or commemorative paintings commissioned, it was unlikely that a costly system of professional art education would find subscriptions from this quarter; hence the relative failure, as far as practising artists were concerned, of the Birmingham Society of Arts (founded 1821) and the Royal Manchester Institution (founded 1824) within which the lay patrons dominated, and in which the secondary aim of establishing Academies of Art foundered in the early years.

Where the state was concerned, however, the less tangible benefits of national glory and moral elevation were likely to justify exertion and expenditure on art institutions. Thus the Royal Academy,

¹ W. Roscoe, op.cit., 1817 pp. 36-7, 39-40, 43-5, 56-7, 74-5

financially independent in theory, was accommodated in public buildings, (first Somerset House, and later, the newly built National Gallery), and despite repeated attacks from the radicals in the 1830's, a majority in parliament supported the retention of its privileges.

Hoare stressed the desirability of national patronage, since the arts, to achieve "epochal fame", must distinguish their epoch, that is, they must be

"radically connected with the essential principle
of the State".

In this sense, Charles I, although a great patron of the arts, had failed to lead them to epochal fame. He also argued, from his opinion that excellence in art was not an automatic consequence of commercial prosperity, that state patronage was preferable to commercial patronage.¹ Thomas Hope agreed with this view, where history painting was concerned; it could only thrive through encouragement by the nation.²

The Annals of the Fine Arts ceased publication in 1820, claiming to have achieved its object of awakening public interest in high art; it expressed its "most sanguine expectation" that sooner or later the House of Commons would be fully awakened to the importance of its task in patronage.³

One general aspect of the proposals for encouragement of art that had a significant bearing on expectations of the Schools of Design, was the close relationship that was deemed to exist between patronage, professional art training, and education of the layman in art. During the first three decades of the century, patronage and public galleries

1 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1817, pp. 125, 289, 319

2 T. Hope, Costume of the ancients, 2nd ed. 1812, preface

3 Annals of the Fine Arts v.5 (1820) preface

were the predominantly favoured means, inspired by envious comparisons with the ostentatious achievements of Napoleonic France. By the mid 'thirties, with a deeper knowledge of Prussian and French achievements in educational theory and practice, and with the influential participation of Prince Albert after 1840, the possibility of raising public taste through education became apparent, whilst state patronage, following the euphoric interlude of the competitions at the Palace of Westminster (1843-48) became slowly discredited in the long debacle of that and other administrative fiascos, such as the Wellington Monument for St Paul's Cathedral.

William Paulet Carey was quite definite throughout his writings, about the relationship of education to patronage. In 1810 he claimed that academies were not enough, since they produced only artists, but did not increase their opportunity for employment by encouraging public patronage. By 1829 he had formulated this as a theory of supply and demand; the primary object of all institutions for promotion of the fine arts must therefore be the increase of patronage by annual exhibitions and sales of British works. These exhibitions had an educational as well as a patronizing function. In Barry's time, said Carey, it was erroneous patronage that led artists to practise only the lower branches of art, but the only effective way of educating public taste, where the "uncultivated million" were patrons, was by means of exhibitions:

"The most refined education in every department of learning and science will not communicate a discriminative taste for painting. The perusal of the best rules and precepts only renders men obstinate in mistaking their way, when their eyes have not been educated in their youth by the view of grand examples of painting and sculpture."¹

¹ W.P. Carey, op.cit., 1810, passim; op.cit., 1825, p. 55; op.cit., 1829, p. 3 ff

Carey was also quite pragmatic. He suggested that provincial academies were essential to the creation of a national regard for British art, sketching in some detail the difficulties for most Englishmen of passing more than a short stay in London, where the most important artistic activity traditionally took place (and only during "the season", too); he calculated that for this reason 95% of the people were denied any means of direct acquaintance with the British school.¹ Carey himself travelled widely and lectured in the provinces, settling in Birmingham in 1834. He may well have been inspired by Benjamin West's letter to the Northern Society for Promoting the Fine Arts in 1809, which commended that society's work in Leeds and Yorkshire, for only by the widespread patronage of native, contemporary art could the people in the country come to understand its excellence. West recommended re-creating the vital situation of ancient Greece and Italy, where the people were surrounded by the indigenous style in the decoration of temples and churches.²

As for general education in art, Turnbull had voiced in 1740 the Platonic idea that:

"good Taste of Nature, of Art, and of Life, is the same; takes its Rise from the same Dispositions and Principles in our moral Frame and Make: and consequently that the most successful way of forming and improving good Taste, must be by uniting all the Arts in Education."³

Sass, who ran a very reputable private school of art believed that the fine arts embraced every other art and science and their cultivation would then be advantageous to everyone, leading to universal knowledge.

1 W.P. Carey, op.cit., 1810 pp. 39-40

2 B. West P.R.A., Letter ... to the Northern Society, in The Artist v.2 (1809) p. 48 ff

3 L.Lipking, op.cit., 1970 p. 34

He was disapproving, moreover, of the neglect of education in general which would not improve whilst teachers were treated as servants, for that way, only the least competent were attracted to the task.¹

Thomas Hope strongly advocated drawing of the human form as part of the education of all classes:

"The execution [of the artists] and the discernment [of patrons] will remain inferior ... until all the different classes of the community be made, in early life, to acquire some expertness in tracing the forms and proportions of the most finished of nature's productions, the human frame ...

"until a certain proficiency in drawing the figure ... become general, can neither those that are engaged in manufactures obtain any certain rules, by which to give their works that elegance which must embrace their value, nor those that are in trade possess any unfailing criteria, by which to display, in the choice of their various articles, that taste which must ensure and increase their vent."²

Hope concluded by observing that the Greeks created a law enjoining instruction in the basic rudiments of Design for all youths of ingenuous birth, a law recommended by Aristotle in the Politics.

Prince Hoare also advocated drawing as a school exercise for all classes, and in 1828 a sub-committee of the British and Foreign School Society advised that "linear drawing" should be added to their course of training.³ Craig, as a professional drawing master, shared this belief in the importance of drawing as a skill for all classes; for those "of sedentary habits", he was flattered to have "contributed materially to the stock of individual happiness" by encouraging painting as a pastime. The most remarkable feature of Craig's work, however, was his prescription for a normal school of design; Haydon had advocated one in 1812 and again in 1815, but Craig's plan,

1 H. Sass, op.cit., 1818, pp. xxxix, liii

2 T. Hope, On instruction in design, in The Artist v.1 no. 7 (2 May 1807), p. 2

3 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813, pp. 71, 87-90
G. Sutton, Artisan or artist, 1967, p. 45

published in 1821 was more complete than Haydon's, anticipating in a number of details the central Government School of Design. He suggested that a school or academy should be established immediately for the instruction of 200 young people in the practice of every branch of drawing and painting, this instruction to be received without fee (the instruction to be voluntarily supported, with professional artists giving their services free, in rotation). The students should be taught these arts

"not only as they are complete professions of themselves, but should likewise be taught the manner in which they connect themselves with the mechanic arts and with manufactures."

Students, once trained, would carry their taste and design into productions, and those who achieved higher distinction in drawing and painting would be chosen as provincial drawing masters, to assist in forming public taste. He trusted that patriotic lovers of art would take up his proposals seriously.¹

Hoare was an advocate of the inclusion of art in the syllabus of the Universities, in the hope of producing statesmen capable of encouraging art, - a recommendation later taken up by Haydon. It would be appropriate to the liberal study of the university, as the Greeks had found, by embracing in public education all that could strengthen and adorn the mind; Socrates had been educated in sculpture. The artists, too, would benefit from a liberal education alongside laymen, recalling Reynolds' claim that it was the exertion of the mind which ennobled the painter's art.²

Many of the ideas proposed by these authors became common currency on the platforms of provincial institutions in the 1830's and

1 W.M. Craig, op.cit., 1821, pp. 48-9, 136, 445-50

2 P. Hoare, op.cit., 1813, pp. 190-204

1840's. A good example was the lecture given by George Jackson, a committee member of the local School of Design, at a conversazione held in the Royal Manchester Institution in 1844.¹

Jackson's theme was the means of improving public taste, and the main points of his argument were as follows: Rightly directed taste was important in both national and commercial terms; taste was not an inherent faculty of the mind, but the result of tuition, and only as facilities were provided for the elevation of the public mind could we expect an improvement in taste. Two factors in particular, it was argued, had restricted the growth of taste. One was that the industrial revolution had led to neglect of art at the expense of science, and that art was excluded from the education of youth. The second factor was that an artificial distinction had been made in England between fine and applied art: Michelangelo and Raphael had recognised no distinction between fine and applied art. Industrial art could be used as a means of elevating public taste:

"Extensive patronage must not be anticipated for the ideal of Art, until the useful is more generally appreciated. The industrial Arts must be the means not only of educating the public taste, but of teaching the elements of Art to those who would soar to its highest end."²

For this reason he had advocated, along with Benjamin Heywood, the exhibitions of fine arts alongside objects of utility, that had already taken place in Manchester.³

Jackson argued forcibly the need for exhibitions and museums, referring to an account by Sir Joshua Reynolds that it had taken him some considerable time to arrive at an appreciation of Raphael. The

1 G. Jackson, On the means of improving public taste, Manchester, 1844

2 Ibid. p. 7

3 see below, chapter 4

people should therefore have constant access to fine examples of art, they should be educated "insensibly" through their eyes. He pointed to the relative lack of fine examples of art in Manchester by comparison with the artistic wealth that existed in London, and begged that the government should therefore encourage provincial museums and provide them with facsimiles of great works.

Most striking of all, however, was the argument that since art appealed to a sense of propriety and a love of perfection, museums would have a powerful moral effect on the people, and he quoted remarks recently made at a soirée of the Manchester Athenaeum:

"... appeal to the sense of the beautiful in nature, ... awaken that preference for what is good instead of bad, and you extend the sway of intellectual morality over a wide domain. It is subjecting the 'lower orders' - the 'common people' - to the rule of good taste. You could scarcely have a more vigilant and efficient police. Once establish such an authority, and far more than half the vices of large towns - the abuses against sanitary laws, the very dangers of popular turbulence - would cease".¹

Many of the writers who advocated a resurgence of British art made no rigid distinction between encouragement by individuals and by public institutions. In particular, in proclaiming the commercial utility of art, some of them cited as models for emulation, figures who had encouraged artists in the pursuit of industry or commerce. Since entrepreneurs anticipated state action to some extent, a few examples are given here.

Three frequently cited were Macklin, Bowyer and Boydell all of whom commissioned series of pictures which were engraved and sold while the original paintings were exhibited at their premises. John Boydell was

¹ G. Jackson, op.cit., 1844 pp. 17-18

an engraver and print publisher who from the mid eighteenth century began publishing and marketing cheap prints which became the basis of a considerable personal fortune. Most notably he published engravings of the works of British painters, and with a strong foreign trade, spread their reputation abroad thus earning much praise for encouraging British art. The lottery by which he disposed of a large stock of engravings in 1804 provided a model for Art Unions of the 1830's.¹

Thomas Macklin similarly published a Poet's Gallery in 1787-8, and an illustrated Bible in 1800, and Robert Bowyer an illustrated edition of David Hume's History of England in 1792-1806, for all of which illustrations by leading British artists were commissioned.²

In manufacturing industry, Matthew Boulton and Josiah Wedgwood were the paragons most frequently cited. Boulton worked as a young man for Boydell and seems to have taken his example of encouraging art through commerce. He employed a local painter, Francis Eginton, to experiment in techniques of enamelling, and in the design of silverware and ormolu he employed the talents of leading sculptors such as Bacon, Nollekens, Flaxman, and architects Robert Adam and James Wyatt.³ Wedgwood, well acquainted with Boulton through the Lunar Society, also employed Flaxman, as well as William Blake and George Stubbs.⁴ This type of patronage seems to have had some effect, as the catalogue of the British Institution in 1814 commented that:

1 D.N.B.

T.S.R. Boase, Alderman Boydell and the Shakespeare Gallery, in J.W.C.1. v.10 (1948) p. 83

2 T.S.R. Boase, Macklin and Bowyer, in J.W.C.1. v.26 (1963) p. 148

3 E. Robinson, Matthew Boulton, patron of the arts, in Annals of Science v.9 (1953)

E. Robinson, Eighteenth century commerce and fashion; Matthew Boulton's marketing techniques, in Ec.H.R. 2nd ser. v.16 (1963-4)
(and see chapter 5 below)

4 S. Smiles, Josiah Wedgwood, 1894

N. McKendrick, Josiah Wedgwood and George Stubbs, in History Today v.7 (1957)

N. McKendrick, Josiah Wedgwood: an eighteenth century entrepreneur, in Ec.H.R. 2nd ser. v.12 (1960)

"although the professors [of art] are not neglected as heretofore - nay, that happily the most ingenious are not without commissions, yet that their employment is obtained by means much more dependent upon the spirit of certain liberal publishers, the diffusion of taste to society generally, and the commercial prosperity of the country, than to that enlarged patronage which should proceed from the government, and that superior class of society, which can alone uphold the dignity of the national school."¹

But the response to writings discussed above is much more evident in the growth of public institutions. Apart from bestowing royal patronage and accommodating it in a public building, the 'government' had done little to encourage the Royal Academy which had been founded in 1767. The Academy, through its annual exhibitions and Reynolds' Discourses, however, had been the major public institution for encouraging art. From 1805 it was assisted in this role by the British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts under the patronage of His Majesty. Founded by a group of nobility, gentry and connoisseurs, with Thomas Hope a leading member, the British Institution held an annual exhibition of contemporary works for sale, another of old masters, and from 1813, regular exhibitions of the works of deceased masters of the British school. Both the Royal Academy and the British Institution made some reference in their aims to the beneficial effects anticipated in the arts of design and manufactures in general, but their activity was confined to the encouragement of fine art (by contrast with the Trustees Academy of Edinburgh and the Foulis Academy in Glasgow).²

The British Museum was established by Act of Parliament in 1753 and began to acquire antique sculpture from Sir William Hamilton's collection in 1772, from the Dilettanti Society in 1784 and from the

1 quoted in Somerset House Gazette v.2 (1824) p. 205

2 W.B.S. Taylor, Origin, progress and present condition of the fine arts, 1841, v.2 ch. 18
 N. Pevsner, Academies of art, 1940, pp. 152-7, 183
 S. Hutchison, History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968, 1968, passim

Towneley collection in 1805. In the latter year, admission tickets to the museum, formerly given only by personal application, were abolished. The Elgin Marbles were finally acquired for the British Museum in 1816 when a select committee investigating the matter, remarked:

"Your committee cannot dismiss this interesting subject without submitting to the attentive reflection of the House, how highly the cultivation of the Fine Arts has contributed to the reputation, character, and dignity of every government by whom they have been encouraged, and how intimately they are connected with the advance of every thing valuable in science literature and philosophy."¹

One incentive to the expansion of the museum was the French example. The Louvre Museum opened in 1793 and, renamed the Musée Napoléon in 1803, had been considerably enriched with acquisitions from conquered nations.²

More galleries of art were becoming open to the public in these years, recorded in Carey's Some memoirs of the patronage and progress of the Fine Arts, and accounts by foreign visitors such as Gustav Friedrich Waagen and J.D. Passavant.³ Sir John Soane's and Dulwich Art Gallery were two such in the vicinity of London. Barry had advocated a national gallery of art in 1793, as others had before him, but only in 1823 did parliament finally agree to the purchase of the Angerstein collection as the foundation of the National Gallery. In 1824 a Keeper was appointed and the pictures went on public view in Pall Mall, and in 1837 the new building in Trafalgar Square was completed.⁴

The latter year saw a public meeting on 29 May to campaign for

1 S.C. on the Earl of Elgin's collection 1816 (161) iii, p. 15
L. Cust and S. Colvin, History of the Society of Dilettanti, 1898, pp. 105, 118

2 C. Gould, Trophy of conquest, 1965 passim

3 W.P. Carey, op.cit., 1826
J.D. Passavant, Tour of a German artist in England, 1836
G. Waagen, Works of art and artists in England, 1838

4 W.T. Whitley, Art in England 1821-1837, 1930, p. 72

public access to national monuments and collections of art, in which the radical members of parliament, Joseph Hume and William Ewart, took a prominent part.¹ 1837 also saw the launching of the Art Union, a scheme to commission works of art by means of a lottery and the sale of engravings, with the explicit aim of educating public taste. Several members of the founding committee were M.P.s acquainted with B.R. Haydon and/or members of the Government Schools of Design Council, such as Ridley Colborne, Ewart, Benjamin Hawes, Henry T. Hope and Thomas Wyse, and the Art Union proved a successful blend of public institution and commercial enterprise.²

In 1845 was passed the Museums Act pioneered by William Ewart of Liverpool, which enabled local authorities to raise a $\frac{1}{2}$ d rate for museums, and to charge an entrance fee of not more than 1d. The provision of public museums and galleries of art had been recommended in 1836 by the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures.³ This committee had been appointed to

"enquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population) of the country; also to enquire into the constitution of the Royal Academy and the effects of institutions connected with the Arts",

and it was the interest aroused by this committee which had given the impetus to a vote of £1500 in the Miscellaneous Estimates of 3 August 1836, for the foundation of a Normal School of Design.⁴

It must be concluded that by 1836 a climate favourable to the encouragement of art had been created by artists and amateurs, and the opinions voiced in the selection of writings quoted above were repeated

1 Diary of B.R. Haydon, ed. W.B. Pope, 1960-3, v.4 p. 416
W. Sandby, History of the Royal Academy, 1862, v.2 p. 106

2 A. King, George Godwin and the Art Union of London, in Victorian Studies, v.8 no. 2 (1964)
(for the significance of Haydon's acquaintances, see chapter 2 below).

3 S.C. on Arts and Manufactures 1835-6, 1836 (568) ix p.v

4 P.P. 1836 (525)xxxviii p. 5

and developed in the growing number of publications on art,¹ and on the platforms of provincial institutions. The predisposition to establishing national art education was therefore more idealistic and less commercially weighted than might have been assumed from a superficial reading of the early history of the Schools of Design, and the argument concerning the commercial utility of such schools,² though it undoubtedly held sway in the House of Commons, was but an adjunct to the cultural arguments for encouraging art.

1 eg. E. Edwards, The fine arts in England, 1840
J. Pye, Patronage of British art, 1845

2 Discussed in chapter 3, below

CHAPTER 2

BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON AND THE POLITICIANS

The singular importance of Benjamin Robert Haydon, historical painter, in the events surrounding the formation of schools of design, was that he took up many of the views outlined in the previous chapter and waged a tenacious and at times ferocious public and political campaign for state intervention in art throughout the 1820's and 1830's. By seeking publicity and by importuning politicians he did more than any of the writers mentioned so far towards realising government support for art. In addition, his lecturing and agitation up and down the country was instrumental in precipitating the establishment of provincial schools of design, as will be seen in later chapters on Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds.

Two very significant aspects of Haydon's campaign will become apparent in this account. First, he created a close association between national encouragement of high art and the establishment of schools of design. Secondly, he associated his call for new design schools with an assault on the vested interests of the Royal Academy, implying that the former would serve to replace the latter (and thereby further implying a role in fine art for the schools of design). The early history of the schools in fact reflected a dichotomy of purpose in confusion about their role and methods.

These two aspects of his campaign determined very closely the kind of politician from whom he sought and received support. The Tories that he wooed were generally Canningite conservatives and men

of culture. Many of the politicians with whom he pressed his case were whigs who, in the best traditions of that party, were men actively engaged in literary and artistic patronage, but such men generally disapproved of Haydon's attacks on the Royal Academy. Those politicians who most actively adopted his cause were radical M.P.s bent on attacking established institutions and wasteful public expenditure; in particular, Joseph Hume was of this ilk, but Wyse and Ewart who also supported Haydon in the 1830s were men deeply interested in education and in extending the culture of the people.

The great majority of Haydon's political contacts were men with artistic and educational interests rather than commercial aims. Haydon's campaign did much to place the emphasis of the schools of design issue on cultural development rather than on technical training. Ironically for Haydon, the outcome was the staffing of a council for the Schools of Design with Royal Academicians, thus reinforcing the role of the very institution that he wished to see replaced.

Most comment on Haydon has focused on his complex personality, especially his frustration in painting, and on his relations with literary friends.¹ Only Frank Wordsworth Haydon, his son, has ever taken as the central theme of the artist's life, his campaign for the reform of art institutions. Haydon's diary, recently published in full, reinforces this interpretation by revealing the true breadth of his lifelong mission for state patronage of art, the ultimate aim of which was the establishment of a great national school of history painting to rival the work of Raphael and Michaelangelo.² The very existence of

1 Autobiography and memoirs of B.R. Haydon, ed. Tom Taylor, intro. by A. Huxley, 1926
 A. Hayter, A sultry month, 1965
 E. George, Life and death of Benjamin Robert Haydon, 2nd ed. 1967
 G. Paston (pseud.) [E.M. Symonds], B.R. Haydon and his friends, 1905

2 Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon, ed. W.B. Pope, 5v., Cambridge, Mass. 1960-3 (hereafter cited as Diary)
B.R. Haydon : Correspondence and table-talk. With a memoir by his son, F.W. Haydon 2v., 1876 (hereafter cited as Correspondence)

of the diary, and its prodigious length was the result of Haydon's early conception of his role as a pioneer of change. He boasted that an account of his struggles would inspire future generations of artists, and teach them to avoid some of the pitfalls of his own career. When the manuscript was left with Elizabeth Barrett Browning towards the close of his life, it was with instructions for unedited publication after his death.

The traditional view of Haydon's political influence is modified by a reading of the complete diary. Accounts of his campaign for schools of design have concentrated on three features only : his relationship with Lord Melbourne, his friendship with the radicals, and his evidence to the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures.¹ In the present account, a closer examination of his persistent lobbying at Westminster reveals a more complex process, and shows incidentally how an individual outside politics could influence events in the years before and immediately after the first Reform Act. This period, being one of relatively loose parliamentary groupings, gave considerable scope for independent action by members, and therefore to those outside parliament who could influence them, especially by such means as select committees which were beginning to take on great importance as an instrument for promoting legislation.

This chapter describes first, Haydon's ideas and attitudes, and secondly his political influence. However, it must be emphasised that art, before politics, was Haydon's true passion. Much as he enjoyed an audience of rank and fashion for his opinions, the improvement of art was his constant aim and justification; although he was often aware of

1 Q. Bell, Haydon versus Shee, in J.W.C.l. v.22 (1959) p. 347
 Q. Bell, The Schools of Design, 1963
 S. Macdonald, History and Philosophy of Art Education, 1970

neglecting his own practice of art for the demands of propaganda, that propaganda was a means towards realising his dreams of a great national art. In 1831, after writing a pseudonymous letter to The Times in favour of reform, he reflected: "What would my Tory friends say if they knew this letter was mine? They could hardly say nothing - but I am not a party man. I admire Wellington & want great Pictures", and in 1837 he confessed: "My enthusiasm for Art has given me the air of a Trimmer, which I despise, but Trimmer or not, whatever party passes state encouragement, to that party I anchor for Life". In October 1831, when the popular temper in London was high, Haydon had written to Lord Londonderry begging him above all to protect his Correggios from the mob.¹

Haydon's suggestions for innovation and reform in art comprised a far more complete programme than has sometimes been suggested. The scope of his campaign was only partly reflected in his seven petitions to parliament between 1823 and 1839 (Table 1). In these submissions he pleaded for public encouragement of English historical painters, inadequately supported by the Royal Academy and British Institution, by employing them for the adornment of public buildings such as churches and the Admiralty, and he argued the commercial benefit to be derived from encouraging high art and design. A further suggestion was the purchase of contemporary English paintings for the National Gallery, and in the petitions of 1835 and 1836 he made direct reference to the possibility of decorating the new Houses of Parliament. Schools of Design were not specifically suggested in any of these petitions. They were, however, projected at a remarkably early date in a letter to Lord Castlereagh of 1815 in which he urged "the establishment of a

¹ Diary v.3 pp. 561, 582, v.4 p. 444

TABLE 1
HAYDON'S PETITIONS

25 June 1823

(from King's Bench prison)

That H.C. provide commissions for decoration of new churches, to rescue historical painting and its professors from their state of discouragement.

Presented by Brougham

J.H.C. v.78 p.427
Diary v.2 pp.418-9

14 June 1824

That H.C. provide commissions to adorn public buildings, churches and cathedrals, and thus encourage historical painting, the most essential and least patronised branch of art, and realize the objects for which the British Gallery and Royal Academy were founded.

Discussed with Brougham and Charles Long
Presented by Lambton

J.H.C. v.79 p.491
Diary v.2 pp.479, 486

23 February 1826

That native artists should be the objects of national patronage, and in view of proposed National Gallery, that H.C. should set aside £4,000 p.a. for encouragement of historical painting.

Discussed with Brougham and Charles Long
Presented by Ridley Colborne

J.H.C. v.81 p.95
Diary v 3 pp.78-9, 83-5

4 June 1830

(from King's Bench prison)

That H.C. devise means of stimulating and rewarding genius in historical painting for which the British Gallery and Royal Academy have proved inadequate), to remove suspicions of foreign nations of the capacity of this great country.

Presenter not recorded
(possibly Peel who wrote to him 19 June 1830)

J.H.C. v.85 p.511
Diary v.3 p.465

6 April 1835

That H.C. encourage historical painting by commissioning paintings of national triumphs for new Houses of Parliament.

Offered to Peel
Presented by Morpeth

J.H.C. v.90 p.201
Diary v.4 pp.274, 279

31 May 1836

That H.C. encourage historical painting by granting premiums for designs for new Houses of Parliament.

J.H.C. v.91 p.409
No reference in Diary

17 July 1839

That H.C. enforce order against Royal Academy requiring a return of receipts and expenditure.

Presented by Hume
Wrote to Peel and Melbourne to support it

J.H.C. v.94 p.453
Diary v.4 pp.571-3

J.H.C. = Journals of the House of Commons

system of Public Schools of Design for the benefit of the art and the manufactures of the country".¹ Even earlier, in a memorandum to the Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval dated November 1811, and in his third open letter to Payne Knight in the Examiner, February 1812, he had referred to the lack of schools of design in England. So this part of Haydon's plan germinated long before 1823, the earliest date given by Quentin Bell.² The memorandum of 1815 suggesting a parliamentary enquiry into the means of extending a knowledge of art and design anticipated developments by twenty years.

Haydon also demanded that art should be taught in the universities. To Lord Melbourne in 1834, he addressed the question: "What is the reason ... that no English Minister is aware of the importance of Art to the Manufactures & Wealth of the Country? I will tell you my lord; your tutors at the Universities", and in 1835 he argued that the failure of the British Institution was due to a lack of aesthetic education of the subscribers, suggesting as a remedy the appointment of Professors of Painting at the universities.³

Haydon's motives have been questioned by literary critics sensitive to the flaws in his character. Aldous Huxley called Haydon "his own favourite hero of fiction" and Alethea Hayter has doubted whether his cause had any real meaning for Haydon beyond his own achievement of it.⁴ The truth of these observations would not diminish the impact which he

1 Correspondence, v.2 p. 217
(The letter is not dated, but its subject is the Waterloo Monument Commission.)

2 Correspondence, v.2 pp. 216-7
Examiner 9 Feb. 1812 pp. 92-6
Q. Bell op.cit., 1963 p. 44

3 Diary v.4 pp. 234, 290

4 Autobiography and memoirs, op.cit., intro. by A. Huxley, 1926, p. xi
A. Hayter, op.cit., 1965 p. 199

demonstrably had on contemporaries, but Hayter's opinion is also undermined by the fact that so many other writers and artists joined the cause of reform in art. His plea for history painting consciously echoed the precepts of Reynolds and the sacrifice of James Barry, and approached fulfilment in a scheme for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament before Haydon's death. In 1835, lamenting that despite his life's devotion to the cause, art was still considered a mere embellishment, "a sort of gilding", he was expressing a philosophy similar to that being formulated at the very same time, with regard to architecture, by Pugin.¹ Nor were his feelings of nationalism and moral fervour by any means exclusive to Haydon; the decoration of public buildings with historical pictures would be of national benefit in arousing patriotic and Christian sentiments amongst the people. In 1814 he suggested that the British Institution should present pictures to churches, and in 1818 he took advantage of the vote of money for churches, to publish a pamphlet arguing for a proportion of the budget to be expended on altarpieces. In a letter to Canning he cited painting as "a department of intellect yet to be filled, and which must be filled greatly and gloriously before the country will completely take its stand with Italy and Greece".²

The gravity of this cause for Haydon was expressed the first time that he prayed God for assistance (a frequently recurring motif in the diary): "One request more, spare my life till I have reformed the taste of my country, till great works are felt, ordered & erected, till the Arts of England are on a level with her Philosophy, her heroism, & her Poetry, and her greatness is compleat".³ In 1818, when William Hamilton offered

1 Diary v.4 p. 274
A.W.N. Pugin, Contrasts, 1836

2 B.R. Haydon, New churches considered with respect to the opportunities they afford for the encouragement of painting [March 1818].
Diary v.2 p. 190
Correspondence v.2 p. 218

3 Diary v.1 p. 351

him a passage to Italy at the expense of the Foreign Office, Haydon, who never saw at first hand the Raphael frescoes which were the cynosure of his art, searched his soul before deciding that his responsibility to the cause of high art in England forbade his absence.¹

Haydon despised the argument that the turbulence of the country must postpone reforms in art until quieter days, and feared that in England art would be suffocated in the struggle between the people to gain political rights and the nobility to retain them.² He was generally disparaging about the English attitude to art; with characteristic boisterousness he wrote in 1826: "In Art the English are at present Pigmyes! In War Heroes! in Commerce Giants! in Poetry Gods!"³ In 1823 and again in 1829 he criticised the English for ranking politics and commerce above art. The fashionable classes who were the source of patronage, were fickle; in November 1835, he lamented: "As Lord M says 'nobody talks of Art now', & this is true - it is no longer the Fashion. There is a species of intermitting heat in May & June when the Academy opens, but that is all, & it soon ends".⁴ However, he rejected the theory given currency, according to Haydon, by foreigners such as Dubos, and Winckelmann ("a useless, pedantic, ambiguous rhapsodist"), that the English climate prevented her ever producing any great art.⁵

1 Autobiography and journals of B.R. Haydon, ed. M. Elwin, 1950 pp. 327-8 (hereafter cited as Autobiography)
(This story, recorded in the autobiography written late in life is not corroborated in the diary, and must therefore be treated with a degree of scepticism, although his very narration of such an anecdote carries some significance.)

2 Diary v.3 p. 349

3 Ibid v.3 p. 175

4 Ibid v.2 p. 430, v.3 p. 395, v.4 p. 322

5 Ibid v.1 pp. 50, 103, 346

(In fact the theory was propounded by English writers, too, in the eighteenth century.

V. Lang, B.R. Haydon, Philological Quarterly v.26 (1947) p. 243.)

What was lacking in England was patronage, which depended, as Haydon argued, on the education of laymen in art. Patronage, as distinct from collecting, meant the encouragement of contemporary artists, and Haydon stressed its necessity. Preparing a petition in 1826, he wrote: "The Love of Art in Britain is directed to the illustrious Dead ... The Question is, how were the works now so enthusiastically purchased, produced? After the Artists were screwed in their coffin or while they were alive?"¹ He also argued that painting required more protection and encouragement than poetry, philosophy, history, law or music, since those other arts could be kept alive by amateurs, whereas painting and sculpture were full-time professional occupations "I should like to ... see Public Patronage a settled principle of the State", he wrote in 1828.² The scale and nature of the historical painting which he advocated necessitated a public rather than a private system of patronage, although it also accorded with his development of the idea that art education should be a matter for state intervention.

Haydon had great faith in the development of popular taste, a democratic instinct that cohered with his antipathy towards connoisseurs. In his autobiography he projected this feeling back to the year 1810, following his disillusionment with the patronage of Sir George Beaumont " ... if I wished to advance High Art, I must look beyond fashion and its coteries to the people of Britain. I must qualify myself to instruct them and make them react on the upper class".³ He argued that the people understood instinctively the quality of the Elgin marbles when they flocked to the British Museum, and reposed great trust in their judgment of his own work. After the cool reception given to his Judgment of Solomon

1 Ibid. v.3 p. 84

2 Ibid. v.1 pp. 49-50, v.3 p. 328

3 Autobiography p. 127

by the nobility and connoisseurs at a private view in 1814, he wrote: "My dear friends, wait for John Bull ... At last on the Monday the Exhibition opened to Honest John, who swore it was the finest work England had produced".¹ Similarly, after his showing of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem in 1820: "The Jerusalem was considered, like the Solomon, a national triumph. I had proved that the people cared about High Art and that an Englishman could execute it".² When he felt the people indifferent to his art, as in 1826, he found others to blame; he had tried them and been nobly supported, but they were impotent without the active encouragement of nobility and ministers.³

In October 1837 he found that public feeling had advanced and that he could rely on public estimation despite having fallen from favour with both political parties. It was his sense of educating the public that so enthused him in the lectures which he gave frequently in London and in provincial towns in the years after 1837. His faithful supporter William Hamilton considered that his lectures had done immense good, amusing the people and making art a matter of conversation.⁴

Haydon's opinion was that the public taste could be raised. In 1815 the British Institution launched an annual exhibition of old masters from private collections. Though he had certain reservations about their motives, he thought the sacrifice of exhibition space for living artists was justified by the good effect which the old masters would have on taste. In 1816 his enthusiasm was further aroused by the inclusion of two of the Raphael cartoons from Hampton Court, loaned by the Prince Regent; these were supreme examples of "the Art" and had a prodigious

1 Ibid. pp. 196-7

2 Ibid. p. 333

3 Diary v.3 p. 176

4 Diary v.4 pp. 441, 467

effect on the minds of the people, according to Haydon.¹

In his view, government action could also help to raise the public taste, and in the 1810s and 1820s such action was beginning to occur, with the purchase of the Elgin marbles and the vote for a National Gallery. Of the first event, he recorded in December 1816: "This year the Elgin Marbles were bought, & produced an Aera in public feeling", and after the vote of 1823, he reflected:

"As the first step Angerstein's pictures have been bought as the first foundation of a Gallery. English pictures being amongst them, of course will take their station with the Great Masters, for no Gallery can be national if Modern pictures do not fill it, as well as Foreign Masters. I consider this is the greatest step since the Elgin Marbles".²

However, the people did not all live in the metropolis. In 1821 Londoners constituted only 1.6 million in a population of 14.21 million for the whole of Great Britain. Haydon was aware remarkably early of the need to disseminate taste in the provinces, for in 1811 he suggested in his diary that the government should purchase the Elgin Marbles, and make casts from them to be kept at Bath, Liverpool, Leeds, Dublin and Edinburgh, as the only way to circulate them in the country and to impregnate the minds of the rising students. This idea anticipated by thirty years one of the essential features of the provincial schools of design, and Haydon himself, when lecturing in towns like Leeds and Hull in the later 1830s, was often asked for assistance in procuring casts.³

Haydon also subscribed to the argument that improvement in public taste would be in the commercial interest of the nation. This was undoubtedly the argument which finally persuaded the government to vote a sum of money for schools of design since it was the leitmotif of many

1. Autobiography p. 301

2. Diary v.2 pp. 76, 446-7

3. Ibid. v.1 p. 219, v.4 p. 597

witnesses to the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures in 1835; it was also an argument repeated frequently on platforms up and down the country as manufacturers were exhorted to support the new schools. It is suggested elsewhere in this thesis that the motives of those who founded the schools of design were more idealistic than commercial, and that the commercial argument was something of an expedient. For Haydon, however, it was more than just an expedient, since his intense nationalistic pride regarded commercial superiority as a meritorious end in itself, like military might.

Though high art remained his own supreme goal, he used the commercial argument in his letter to Lord Castlereagh of 1815, urging the establishment of a system of public schools of design. Not a common argument in England at that early date, it derived from mercantilist theory embodied in Colbert's patronage of the arts in seventeenth century France, and was widely expressed in Europe in the eighteenth century; Hagedorn, in a memorandum of 1763 concerning the Dresden Academy had even referred to the Lyons silk industry, which became a source of anxiety for English manufacturers.¹ Later, taking his cue no doubt from reports such as that on the silk trade of 1831-2, and that on trade with France 1834-5, he put the commercial argument in conversations with Lord Melbourne.

"High Art does not end with itself. It presupposes in excellence great knowledge, which influences manufactures and commerce, such as in France. Why is she superior in manufacture at Lyons? Because by State support she educates youth to design."²

One last aspect of Haydon's attitudes that must be assessed is his opposition to the Establishment in art. His 'radical' reputation, as

¹ Correspondence p. 217
N. Pevsner, Academies of art, 1940, p. 152 ff

² Diary v.4 pp. 227, 290

he himself was aware, was not wholly justified and was inadvertently courted by his behaviour. Partly it was a myth created by his inclination to hyperbole, and partly it was due to the coincidence of his campaign with the years of Reform. In all his writing on art there was an implicit political analogy, since the language which he used to describe what he saw as an embattled situation in art, was borrowed from the political currency of the time. On several occasions he described himself variously as the Wycliffe, the Luther, and the John Knox of art; on one occasion he even compared himself with Christ:

"Ought any man to complain of ill treatment who merely wants to reform a Nation's taste in Art if he be opposed & thwarted, when there was one who was persecuted, nailed to a cross & murdered, for telling men there was an eternal happiness for their souls!"¹

It has often been observed that Haydon's antipathy to the Royal Academy stemmed from the personal slight which he had suffered at the treatment of one of his early paintings in the annual exhibition. His lifelong offensive was launched in articles published in the Examiner in 1812. In petitions to the House of Commons in 1824 and 1830, however, he accused the Academy of failing to encourage poetical or historical painting, for the promotion of which it had been founded. Anxious for reform of the Academy by government, he feared a complicity between the institution and the Establishment at large:

"A decided step by Government would check its decay, but every member of the Government, with the King at their head, are so much at the mercy of Portrait Painters, that if his Majesty was to resolve today, a hint from his Portrait Painter would shake his resolution ..."²

1 Autobiography, p. 147
Diary, v.2 p. 324, v.4 p. 146

2 Diary, v.3 p. 16 (In 1825, Sir Thomas Lawrence P.R.A. was portrait painter to the King)

In 1831, with the prospect of a Reform Act, he made a direct connection between political and artistic reform: "God ... grant I may live to see the Reform in Art ... The Prospects of Art at this time are precarious, but if the Bill passes I think Corporate Bodies (the great nuisance) will be shaken and native Art will have a better chance".¹ The Academicians, he told Lord Althorp in 1832 were "the Borough Mongers of the Art", and in 1833 he informed Lord Westminster that "There is the same want of liberal policy in Art as there was in Politics before Reform".² He failed, however, to persuade Lord Melbourne to submit the Academy to examination by the commission on corporate bodies, as it did not operate under a charter. When he allied with the radical members of parliament in 1835, it was in common cause against the Royal Academy as a corrupt and anachronistic institution surviving from the days before Reform. This parliamentary attack was made possible by the Academy's intention of occupying a public building, thus receiving public funds (in kind at least) for the first time. Pevsner has suggested that the relative strength of the English Royal Academy, as compared with many European counterparts, was its large degree of financial independence.³

The British Institution also came under attack in some of Haydon's petitions, but it was independent of the state and financially self-sufficient. Established in 1805 by subscriptions from noblemen and businessmen to the sum of £8,000 it had encouraged historical painting, but from about 1815 developed as a gallery for exhibiting old masters from the collections of the directors and their friends, a practice which Haydon at first welcomed as promising to raise public taste, but which

1 Diary v.3 pp. 566, 569

2 Ibid. v.4 pp. 16, 42

3 N. Pevsner, op.cit., 1940, p. 183 ff

he came to despise as the ostentation of wealthy connoisseurs.¹

To understand the use made by Haydon of politicians in his campaign to secure government support for art, it is necessary to take full account of his passionate interest in politics and the deep conflicts of allegiance which he felt.

In the first two decades of his career in London, his principal friendships were with literary radicals like John and Leigh Hunt in whose journal, the Examiner, Haydon published his earliest attacks on the Royal Academy; Blackwood's Magazine included him in its counterblasts against "the Cockney school". This company coloured his view of the artist's role: "There is something radical in heroism & Genius. They can't be taught, but are independent of birth & hereditary succession".² But at the same time Haydon maintained literary friendships with more conservative figures such as Wordsworth and Southey, and his deeply rooted Christianity led him to reject Shelley for his atheism and Hazlitt for his immorality. He had always felt some disdain for Hazlitt, whom he regarded as a failed painter and a mere dilettante in art. Haydon felt that no sect or philosophy had contributed so much to the public good as Christianity, and was taken aback at a meeting in Leeds when asked if he meant to attack the Church by blaming the ruin of art on the Reformation.³

Haydon had met Lord Brougham as early as 1823, and his radical reputation and attacks on the Establishment in art earned him the acquaintance of other political radicals about the time of the Reform Act. He was encouraged by the commission, granted at his suggestion,

1 W.B.S. Taylor, Origin, progress and present condition of the fine arts,
1841, v.2 p. 221

2 Blackwood's Magazine v.5 (April 1819) pp. 97-8
Diary v.2 p. 435

3 Diary v.2 pp. 84-6, 372, v.4 p. 457
Autobiography pp. 187, 246

to paint the mass meeting of the Birmingham Political Union where prayers were offered in thanksgiving for Reform, but here it was really the "fine moral nature" of the subject that attracted him, "the value of the Religious feeling operating in men accustomed to give vent to their feelings". But the commission was ultimately thwarted by apathy, and by 1833 Haydon was of the opinion that the whigs should stand in fear of the radical leaders.¹

A similar ambiguity underlay Haydon's support for Reform, which was motivated by patriotism. With his faith in popular taste, he differed with his friend Wilkie who thought that Reform would be the end of art. Haydon wrote two letters under a pseudonym to The Times, advocating Reform, in 1831, and described himself as "a Reformer, yet a John Bull to the marrow ... If this reform bill passes, whose breast will not broaden, & heart swell, who will not go down on his knees and thank God he was born in England?"² England's greatness was still waxing for Haydon and he believed in education of all classes for their improvement, but premature transference of political power would be dangerous.

A curb to any hint of republicanism in Haydon's beliefs lay in his admiration for rank and power. Alethea Hayter has compared his adulation of heroes (Wellington above all but also Nelson and even Napoleon) to that of Carlyle. The company of nobility gave him "a grand sensation"; engaged on his famous picture of the Reform Banquet, he reflected: "I should be happy to enlighten the lower classes, but not to dine with them ... I prefer Tasso or Virgil, Propinque maribus, champagne & the Order of the Bath. I know it is wrong, & in reality

1 Diary v.4 p. 82

2 Ibid. v.3 pp. 557, 570, 575, 582

perhaps I don't, but the ribbon paints well"¹ Frequently in the diary he displayed a similar affection for traditional institutions, constitutional monarchy and the state church. But the practice of jobbery within such institutions, as at the Royal Academy, aroused his wrath, and jobbing, he swore, must be guarded against in any new public institutions for the arts.²

In 1839 Haydon confided to his diary an attempted summary of his conflicting political views:

"My position has always been a complicated one. My attacking the Academy was put to the score of Republicanism. I was suspected by my own party because I liked the Hunts. Believing in the Duke & hating the French, I was exasperated at being left to ruin, & joined the Whigs to punish my old associates. Seeing through the hollowness of their long Reform, I regretted my impetuosity, & am now ashamed to do my duty to my own honest Convictions, lest I get a repute like Southey.

... as Burke said 'There is hardly a point of pride which is not injurious to a Man's interest'. The real truth, I court all Parties to get one other to do something, for the Art, but I am more a Duke's man than any other, and under every other pretence have ever been so, and that IS from my heart!"³

Haydon's political character, in all its complexity, illuminates the way in which he pressed his views, for he did not attach himself to any one party, and his activity appears fairly opportunistic. Surveying the campaign waged throughout his entire career, the means which he employed might be separated into four categories: journalism and pamphleteering, parliamentary activity through petitions and evidence to a Select Committee, informal contact with politicians, and lecturing in the provinces. His influence via the first two of these means had

1 A. Hayter, op.cit., 1965 pp. 120, 128
Diary v.4 pp. 32-3

2 Diary v.4 pp. 369-70

3 Diary v.4 p. 556

declined by the early 1830's and will be described only briefly here, before proceeding to a more thorough account of his discussions with public figures, based on accounts in his diary.

His influence in publicising the cause of art must have been considerable in the years 1812 to 1830. The Examiner, The Champion and of course The Times, in all of which Haydon propagated his views, were widely read. Barnes, editor of The Times, and, according to Lord Lyndhurst, "The most powerful man in the country", was friendly with Haydon from their early acquaintance in Leigh Hunt's circle.¹ Journalistic support came from more than one political group. The Examiner, Champion, and Elmes' Annals of the Fine Arts, which were all of a liberal persuasion, published his articles, but Southey in the Quarterly Review supported his campaign for paintings in churches, Blackwood's Magazine, after its initial attack, recanted in 1820 and Lockhart defended him in the Quarterly. But by 1830, Haydon had begun to lose the excellent platform which he had in the Press, due to the death and failure of some of his early journalist colleagues, as well as to a quarrel with Barnes.² Thereafter, his public voice was generally confined to the correspondence columns.

The presentation of petitions to parliament was increasingly common before the Reform Act as this was a means available to interested parties outside the House of introducing subjects which would otherwise have been ignored, when membership of the House was less representative of the population as a whole. Therefore Haydon's action in this respect was not extraordinary when, between 1828 and 1832, more than 22,000 petitions were presented. By the period 1838-42, the number had more than trebled, so it is hardly surprising that Serjeant Talfourd, the literary lawyer and liberal minded M.P., should have dissuaded Haydon

1 Diary v.2 p. 419

D. Hudson, Thomas Barnes of The Times, 1943 p. 80

2 E. George, op.cit., 1967 p. 123

from presenting a parliamentary petition on the grounds that it would be a farce, preferring a petition to the Queen.¹

Haydon's part in the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures of 1835-6 has been examined in detail by Quentin Bell, revealing discrepancies between Haydon's and other accounts of the event. Although he was a witness on two occasions, it must be concluded that his evidence was not as devastating to the Royal Academy's case as he claimed, since the provisional Council of the School of Design appointed in 1837 included many Academicians. It may be justly claimed, however, that his campaign over the previous decades had played no small part in creating the climate in which this committee was appointed, and Haydon was very active in the wings prompting Ewart, radical M.P. and chairman of the committee.² His exclusion as a witness in two other enquiries may also paradoxically be seen as a reflection of Haydon's influence. In 1816, though vociferous on the subject, and nominated by Lord Elgin as a witness to the Elgin Marbles Committee, he was not in fact called to testify. Similarly, having advocated throughout his life the principle of state patronage and history painting, he was passed over by the Fine Arts Committee established in 1841 to arrange the decoration of the new Palace of Westminster. In both instances he must have been deliberately ignored, for his voice had been raised loud enough; his voice had not only been heard, it had aroused strong antagonism in some quarters. But by the same token his opinion doubtless had a considerable indirect influence.³

The third means by which Haydon urged his cause was personal and informal contact with politicians. The commission to paint a commemorative picture of the Reform Banquet is usually cited as the chief occasion for

1 T. Erskine May, Treatise on the ... Proceedings and Usage of Parliament, 19th ed. 1976 p. 819
Diary v.4 pp. 474-5

2 S.C. on Arts and Manufactures 1835-36, 1836 (568) ix
Q. Bell, Haydon versus Shee, in J.W.C.1. v.22 (1959) p. 347

3 S.C. on the Earl of Elgin's Collection 1816 (161) iii
S.C. on the promotion of the fine arts 1841 session 1 (423) vi

such contact, but some reservations have to be made concerning this interpretation. His great interest in politics, and a young artist's natural search for patrons, brought him into contact with parliamentary figures at a much earlier date. In 1812 he attended the first opening of Parliament by the Prince Regent, and was admitted to the Coronation Banquet in 1821.¹ Those whose company he most relished were whig aristocrats rather than the parliamentarians like Ewart and Hume who were ultimately the men most active in promoting schools of design. Moreover Haydon's own account of proselytizing his sitters for the Reform Banquet picture, was included in a lecture delivered late in his life and was most probably tendentious and exaggerated, although writers such as Bell and Morgan have quoted it;² the diaries for these years provide a more immediate and therefore probably a more truthful account of frequently superficial exchanges with Haydon listening as much as he talked, to glean the political intelligence which he so much enjoyed. He even complained at the time: "I have had opportunities of impressing the Highest Classes in the value of High design. But I found them, from Lord Grey downwards, Ministers & all, perfectly unimpressible".³ In the select list of eleven of Haydon's most important political contacts discussed below, only five were sitters for the Reform Banquet picture, and his diary records conversations on art with only two of these.

The significance of Haydon's pattern of political contacts is difficult to assess. It has already been demonstrated that his own political views were equivocal, and that his overriding interest in art led to political opportunism in campaigning for its protection by the state. As regards the

1 Diary v.1 p. 255, v.2 p. 348

2 Q. Bell, op.cit., 1963 p. 45
H.C. Morgan, The educational and social significance of B.R. Haydon, in J. of Educational Administration and History v.4 no.1 (Dec.1971) p.1

3 Diary v.4 pp. 155-6

political parties themselves, the question is raised as to whether Tories, Whigs or radicals had any clear policy towards art. This was a period in which more organized political parties were beginning to emerge, and the views of Gash and of Beales that party was weak before the mid 'thirties, particularly as regards voting on policy matters, can be countered by Mitchell's view of the identity and spirit of the Whigs in opposition, and the opinion of Large that a party spirit was hardening in the Lords during the years before Reform.¹ Whatever their political strength, the organization of parties was casual and informal before the Reform Act, and centred on the great drawing rooms of the capital; even the larger and more formal meetings which resulted from the necessity of greater party discipline in the years after 1832, were held at the town houses of party leaders, or at the party Club. Haydon had observed of his petition in 1826, that it had "had great effect and been much discussed at the usual courts of decision and appeal, the dinner parties of the Season".² As for the question of art, it is a striking fact that the three centres around which the Whig party turned for twenty years after the death of Fox, namely Devonshire House, Lansdowne House and Holland House, were also important centres of literary and cultural activity, more so than Apsley House which was the centre of Tory organization. Of Haydon's aristocratic patrons in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, more were Whigs than were Tories. The combined circumstances of the Reform Banquet picture, and a Whig government during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ensured that Haydon's contacts were predominantly with Whig

1. N. Gash, Reaction and reconstruction (The Ford lectures), 1965, passim
 D.E.D. Beales, Parliamentary politics and the 'independent' member 1810-60, in R. Robson ed., Ideas and institutions of Victorian Britain, 1967, passim

A. Mitchell, The Whigs in opposition, 1967, passim

D. Large The decline of 'the Party of the Crown', in E.H.R. v.78 (1963) p. 669

2. Diary v.3 p. 93

politicians in the years preceding the foundation of the Schools of Design, and it was of course a whig government heavily prompted by certain radicals which brought about these schools.

However, Haydon's view of the parties before and after 1832 was formed by the gradual realization that art was a low political priority. Having campaigned steadily in the mid 'twenties, he complained that there was no hope from the tory government, and yet the leaders of the opposition, the Duke of Bedford, Lords Grey, Lansdowne and Holland, would not persevere for high art as they had for the Catholics. Even Brougham, the advocate of all intellectual advance, and once apparently so enthusiastic for art, had let the subject drop. In March and April 1835 whilst Peel's ministry was still in office, he submitted a petition advocating historical paintings for the new parliament buildings, and wrote copies for Wellington and Peel, sent another to Lord Morpeth, and urged Hume and Ewart to support it. Thus he was simultaneously pressing conservatives, whigs and radicals in the service of his cause. As he had commented earlier: "I would wish to keep well with all in the hope of getting some of the Rascals to do something for Art".¹

The fact that Haydon's campaign was principally concerned with culture rather than commerce is reinforced by a study of the individual politicians and public figures through whom he pressed his cause. As in the chapters below on the formation of local schools, it is here argued that motives for the formation of new institutions such as the Schools of Design are properly understood by considering not only the arguments used, but also the background of those who voiced the arguments. Haydon had varying degrees of contact with a number of politicians, and whilst a full statistical analysis would misrepresent the qualitative nature of the material, at the same time a biographical study of each one

1. Ibid. v.3 pp. 377, 571, v.4 pp. 275-8

would be too unwieldly in the present context. It is therefore proposed to deal briefly with a select number of his most important political contacts, to illustrate the fact that they were men of markedly cultural and educational interests. Almost all had some personal interest in art and were connected with public institutions such as the British Museum, the National Gallery or the School of Design itself; in the years 1830-50 a number of select committees were held on artistic matters, and several M.P.s who were consistently active in these committees are found amongst Haydon's political contacts.

From 1812, when Haydon began his campaign for art, until 1830, the tory party held office continuously, if the Canningite coalition is included. Consequently, Haydon made frequent contact with tory politicians, in submitting memoranda and petitions to the government; those whose acquaintance he gained tended to be Canningite conservatives.

Lord Francis Egerton, 1st Earl of Ellesmere (1800-1857) was a Canningite liberal-conservative, a member of parliament from 1826, and a Privy Councillor. During the 1820s Haydon recorded in his diary a number of visits to Egerton, (Leveson-Gower as he then was) who spent considerable sums in supporting men of genius, and in 1827 Egerton chaired a subscription meeting to release the painter from debt, as well as bestowing financial help and patronage on other occasions.¹ Following the Commons debate on the Royal Academy in 1839, he wrote to Haydon requesting information.² Like others of Haydon's political contacts, Egerton was a man of intellectual leanings, a poet and prose-writer, president of various learned societies, a promoter of London University and a trustee of the National Gallery. From 1835 to 1846 he represented

1 Diary v.3 pp. 209, 217, 271-2
Correspondence v.1 p. 408

2 Correspondence v.1 p. 413

South Lancashire and in that period was an active patron of the Manchester School of Design. In London, the house which accommodated his magnificent collection of paintings was freely open to the public; this collection was inherited from his uncle, the eighth Earl of Bridgewater, through whom he was related to Charles Long, another leading tory, intellectual, collector, and frequent contact of Haydon.¹

Much publicity was given following Haydon's death at the height of the Anti-Corn Law crisis, to the charity bestowed by Sir Robert Peel on the tragic artist. Peel formed a famous collection of paintings, many of which are now in the National Gallery, on which he spent considerable sums. In addition to this interest in fine art, Peel, of all the politicians with whom Haydon dealt, was in a position to appreciate the commercial value of art education, since his family fortunes were derived from calico printing. Moreover, while most of the liberal members of Liverpool's cabinet were apathetic or even hostile towards popular education, Peel (alongside Huskisson) proved an exception, for instance in his subscription to the Edinburgh School of Arts in 1825.² Peel was a trustee of the National Gallery from 1827, and Seguier, Keeper of the gallery, told Haydon that there were great hopes for the arts if Peel should form a government. In 1830, as Home Secretary, Peel showed Haydon kindness in offering him time to pay arrears of tax after his third imprisonment for debt, and the artist called on him to thank him personally. When Peel came briefly to office in the early months of 1835, Haydon wrote anxiously begging him to prevent the proposed occupation of the National Gallery building by the Royal Academy, and later

1 D.N.B.

G.F. Waagen, Works of art and artists in England, 1838, v.2

2 N. Gash, Mr. Secretary Peel, 1961, pp. 20, 237 ff

A. Hayter, op.cit., 1965, pp. 106-7

A. Briggs, The Age of Improvement, 1959, p. 223

sent him a personal copy of his petition for decorating the House of Lords. The following year he saw Peel in person to propose the endowment of a Chair of Art at Oxford.¹

Despite his personal kindness, Haydon had no success in bringing Peel around to share his specific views on the details of government intervention in art. Despite Haydon's begging letter to the contrary Peel spoke and voted against the imposition of parliamentary control over the Royal Academy in 1839, and Haydon was apprehensive on his return as Prime Minister in 1841 that he would seek to placate the Academy by tempering the development of the Schools of Design. Earlier in 1841, in a debate on the copyright of designs, Peel had annoyed Haydon by referring candidly to the inferiority of British printed fabrics, and in May, Haydon resolved to write to him on the subject of schools of design.² The following November, Peel rebuffed a representation from Haydon on the subject of decorating the Palace of Westminster. Haydon thought it cruel of him to sanction the decision against his employment on the mural paintings at Westminster, and regarded Peel as a tool of the Academicians in this. It is hardly surprising to find Haydon being informed by his old friend Hamilton in 1843 that Sir Robert felt annoyed at his restless interference.³

William Richard Hamilton (1771-1859), antiquary and diplomat, regularly advised Haydon on tactics. In his career as secretary to Lord Elgin and as an under-secretary for foreign affairs, he had taken a very active interest in art and archaeology, instrumental in recovering the Rosetta stone from the French, restoring to Italy works of art plundered by

1 Diary v.3 pp. 187, 465, 474, v.4 pp. 260, 274, 364

2 Hansard (3rd ser.) 30 July 1839 xlix col. 1038
Diary v.4 pp. 572, 576, 616, v.5 pp. 36, 53, 86

3 Diary v.5 pp. 96, 293-4, 298-9

Napoleon, and, ironically perhaps, superintending the removal and transport of the Elgin marbles. A Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Society of Antiquaries, he was also very active in the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Society of Literature; recognized for his taste in art, he was a trustee of the British Museum from 1838 to 1858, and a council member of the Schools of Design.¹

Haydon's contact with whig politicians tended to be concentrated within their period of office. The nation sometimes expressed that his practice of lobbying originated with his painting of the Reform Banquet picture must be dismissed on the evidence of earlier petitions and contact with tory politicians already described. But the social ease and intimacy with whig leaders, reflected in Haydon's diary, must be attributable to the more relaxed relationship between portraitist and sitter which he was able to enjoy, as well as to his increasing confidence and to the different characters of the men with whom he talked. Casual conversation replaced the more formal means of communication by letters and memoranda. The general policy of institutional reform and innovation pursued by this government, exemplified by municipal reform and the first grant for elementary education, doubtless made these politicians more immediately sympathetic to the campaign urged by Haydon. As with the tories, those who were most sympathetic were men of broad cultural interests.

The whigs have been described by Mitchell, in contrast with the opinions of some earlier historians, as a distinct parliamentary party in the years 1815-1830, offering an alternative philosophy on the main issues of the day, to that of the tories.² But like the tories, they

¹ Diary v.3 pp. 70, 180-1 v.4 pp. 245, 257, 268, 273, 274
F. Boase, Modern English Biography
D.N.B.

² A. Mitchell, op.cit., 1967 passim

comprised a spectrum of interest groups; at one extreme were the old aristocratic whig families who accepted reform only with reluctance, and at the other were radical whigs who embraced the new utilitarian philosophy. Haydon's diaries reveal an awareness of these groupings. In 1832, Lord Grey's invitation to Haydon to paint the Reform Banquet arose from his refusal for political reasons to lead subscriptions to Haydon's picture of the Birmingham Political Union at Newhall Hill, and in 1834 when Melbourne cited opinions of Royal Academicians against a vote of public money for art, Haydon accused him of being influenced by the company at Holland House.¹

Holland House has already been mentioned as a centre of whig party organization, where Lady Holland's taste and hospitality attracted a continuous stream of literary and intellectual figures to her table. The young painter G.F. Watts benefited from the Hollands' patronage, but as Haydon implied, their connexions with the Royal Academy doubtless worked to exclude him. In 1817 Haydon had met Lord Holland, a man with "rather more than the dilettante's appreciation of art", at a dinner for the actor Kemble, and both Lord and Lady Holland visited him during the painting of the Reform Banquet picture.² At Devonshire House, the magnificent collection of art, much of which was moved to Chatsworth in 1835, gave Haydon occasions to visit, but although the sixth Duke was a Privy Councillor and voted for the party in the Lords, Devonshire House had declined in importance as a whig centre since the death of the fifth Duke in 1811. The third great whig magnate was Lord Lansdowne a very moderate whig of advanced opinions having studied at Edinburgh rather than Oxford (on the advice of Bentham). An advocate of state assistance

1 Diary v.3 p. 622, v.4 p. 246

2 Ibid. v.3 p. 660, v.4 p.10; M. Lichtenstein, Holland House, 1874, passim

and inspection for elementary schools, he was Lord President of the Council when the Committee of Council on Education was formed in 1839. He was also a man of literary tastes, an art collector and a patron of contemporary artists as the collection remaining at Bowood testifies. Haydon had become familiar with Lansdowne in the decade preceding reform; in 1819 the peer had visited an exhibition of drawings by Haydon's pupils, and in 1827 he had called on Haydon to admire his painting of Alexander and Bucephalus, and subscribed to the painter's release from the King's Bench prison later in the same year.¹

Nicholas Ridley-Colborne, later first Baron Colborne (1779-1854) presented Haydon's petition in 1826 after Charles Long had proved reluctant. A whig M.P. from 1805-37, he was a collector and patron of art, subscribing a share in the lottery for Haydon's Heroine of Saragossa in 1836. A very active trustee of the National Gallery from 1831 to 1854, he bequeathed a number of pictures to the gallery, and became a Fine Arts commissioner and a council member for the Schools of Design. But as regards Haydon's particular causes, he was sometimes non-committal, a characteristic which the painter ascribed to all whigs. Of the petition, Colborne "thought as I did that as a hint it must do good. He did not expect it would lead to anything yet, but still he thought right to keep up the feeling".² In 1835, when Haydon called on him, he would make no promises to vote for a Select Committee on arts and manufactures; the previous day, Ewart had had to reassure Haydon that The Times had mis-reported Colborne in quoting his alleged approval of occupation of the National Gallery by the Royal Academy.³

1 D.N.B.
Correspondence v.2 pp. 242-3
Diary v.2 pp. 218, 337, v.3 pp. 186, 323

2 Diary v.3 p. 85

3 Diary v.4 pp. 292-3, 350
 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
 C. Holmes and Collins Baker The making of the National Gallery, 1924 p. 28

The anti-Establishment aspects of Haydon's programme ought in theory to have appealed to the radical whigs, but in practice the assistance of these men was no greater than that of their moderate colleagues. Henry Brougham was such a powerful figure that the whigs were too afraid to appoint him leader in the Commons. He had proven his forensic skill and acquired a reputation for attacking established privilege in his defence of the brothers Leigh and John Hunt, and of Queen Caroline. His zeal in extending education should have made him an appropriate ally for Haydon, but on the other hand his love of retrenchment would hardly dispose him towards public expenditure on art; indeed the New Whig Guide of 1819 had caricatured Brougham as speaking for two hours in opposition to the purchase of the Elgin Marbles.¹ Haydon enlisted his help to present a petition in 1823, and thought him enthusiastic for historical painting and "determined to get a committee on art"; but in the following year Brougham evaded the responsibility of a second petition, passing it on to Lambton to present. In 1826 he advised Haydon against a further petition owing to the financial crisis and industrial unrest, but in this Brougham was no doubt sincere as the depression postponed his own plans for the S.D.U.K.² Although approaches in 1827 and 1828 came to nothing, Haydon's optimism was revived when Brougham was elevated to the woolsack in 1830, but whilst in office he left Haydon's letters unanswered, excusing himself later by explaining that there had been no opportunity for action.³

Although he conceded that the Schools of Design were founded under their ministry, Haydon ultimately remained disillusioned with the whigs

1 [Lord Palmerston ed.], The New Whig Guide, 1819 pp. 209-211

2 Diary v.2 pp. 410, 418, v.3 pp. 446, 451-2, 462, 471
 A. Aspinall, Lord Brougham and the Whig Party, Manchester, 1927 *passim*
 C.W. New, The life of Henry Brougham to 1830, Oxford, 1961 pp. 347-8

3 Diary v.3 pp. 152, 209, 498, v.4 pp. 38, 240-1

and frustrated at their refusal to allow him any personal influence:

"I threw myself into the hands of men who had not the moral courage to stand by me as I had stood by them in their hour of peril & doubt."¹

Despite rejecting the radicalism of his early literary friends, Haydon was attracted to those members of parliament who might effect practical reforms in art, and such men were to be found amongst the radicals. Because his campaign included an attack on the privileges of the Royal Academy, it seemed to suit the radicals' anti-Establishment demeanour, and consequently their energy and tactical skill in parliament were put at his service. The radicals were even less of an organized party than the whigs or the tories; they comprised a few individualistic and even eccentric members who shared the general aim of parliamentary reform but remained leaderless. Even after the achievement of 1832, which had been a disappointment to them, they were not strong as a group; they were obliged to act with the whigs in order to have any political effect, but at the same time they had considerable influence in preventing the whigs from resting on their laurels.

Dr John Bowring was a key member of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, and although he had sat to Haydon for the Reform Banquet picture, his own motive in securing such a committee was a special interest in economic theory, in particular foreign manufactures and especially silk. Bowring was a keen intellectual, an intimate friend of Bentham, and a founder editor of the Westminster Review, and sat also on the Select Committee on the British Museum in 1835. Haydon painted him again in 1840 for a picture of the anti-slavery convention, but there seems to have been no communication between them on art.²

1 Ibid. v.4 p. 406

2 J. Bowring, Autobiographical recollections, 1877, passim Diary v.4 pp. 108, 664

By contrast, when Warburton sat to him they conversed on two occasions about the Royal Academy and National Gallery and it was evident that Warburton had been questioning Spring-Rice, Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the subject. Haydon's first recommendation to Henry Warburton (1784?-1858) came from Melbourne in 1833, when Haydon was pressing for investigation of the Royal Academy by the commission on corporations. Warburton was a philosophical radical from a mercantile background, a leading supporter of the new London University, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and was noted for sound judgment and personal integrity. "The Academy are so rooted in Society ... my dependence is on Warburton and parliament", wrote Haydon.¹ In the Committee of Supply in April 1834, Warburton raised the question of entitlement of the Academy to occupy a public building. Haydon sought him out again in 1835, and Warburton spoke against the Royal Academy in 1839.²

Richard Lalor Sheil (1791-1851) was an Irish M.P. from 1830, a barrister and a dramatist, who sat to Haydon for the Reform Banquet picture. His radicalism and criticism of the whig government was later curbed by the prospect of office, and as vice-president of the Board of Trade he became a council member of the Schools of Design. In 1841 he spoke in the House on extending copyright of designs.³ A fellow member of the Schools of Design council, was Thomas Wyse (1791-1862) who must have been well acquainted with Sheil as they had both been educated at Stonyhurst and had both represented Tipperary. Like many of Haydon's whig contacts, Wyse had a particular love of art, nurtured by two years spent in Rome and Florence and by a Grand Tour of the near east. He was subsequently active

1 Diary v.4 pp. 144-5

2 Diary v.4 pp. 139, 314

D.N.B.

Hansard (3rd ser.) 14 April 1834 xxii col. 739, 30 July 1839 xlix col. 1038

3 D.N.B.

Diary v.4 p. 162, v.5 p. 36

on the art question in parliament, seconding Ewart's motion in 1835 for a select committee on arts and manufactures, and sitting on the Select Committee and subsequent Royal Commission for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. Wyse was also extremely active in the cause of public education, a founder of the Central Society of Education and a campaigner in the north of England where Cobden spoke of his "moral intoxication" of the people regarding education.¹

Haydon recorded meeting Wyse only in 1838 when the trio of radical MPs who were most active in promoting his cause, came together to establish the Society for Promoting Practical Design, an alternative school of design in protest against the government model.² These three were Thomas Wyse, Joseph Hume and William Ewart.

William Ewart had a commercial background. His father was a leading merchant of Liverpool and a close friend of the Gladstones. William was educated at Eton and Christ Church, made a Grand Tour of two years' duration, and subsequently read for the bar. This educational background no doubt stimulated the interest which he took both in art and in public education, notably the Acts of 1845 and 1850 for municipal museums and public libraries, which he pioneered, and the part which he played in parliamentary committees on art. Haydon recorded no sitting by Ewart for the Reform Banquet picture; their first meeting seems to have been in May 1834 after Ewart had first challenged the Royal Academy on the floor of the House.³ On this occasion Ewart intended to move for a Committee of Enquiry into the Academy, and Matthew Davenport Hill, M.P. for Hull, whom Haydon had importuned in the studio, brought the painter into the House

1 J.J. Auchmuty, Sir Thomas Wyse, 1939 passim
Hansard (3rd ser.) 15 July 1835 xxix col. 553. Haydon wrote that he spoke well in the 1839 debate on the Royal Academy, (Diary v.2 p. 575), but Hansard records only his vote (30 July 1839 xlix col. 1038)

2 Diary v.4 p. 469

3 W.A. Munford, William Ewart M.P., 1960 gives 23 March 1835 as their first encounter, but Haydon's diary records a meeting on 15 May 1834 which was by implication the first (Diary v.4 p. 189)

for this event.

It appears that they had not become intimate on this first meeting, for in March 1835 Melbourne recommended Haydon to meet Ewart and judge of his character. Haydon found him "a sensible man" who "regulated his enthusiasm" and advised him to await a good opportunity, and in July of that year, Ewart moved successfully for a select committee on arts and manufactures. Radicals were well represented on the committee which included in its scope an investigation of the Royal Academy. A year passed before Haydon was called to the committee; it was now in its second session, with the radicals even more dominant, and Haydon was prompting Ewart behind the scenes, discounting the Academicians' evidence and priming him, as chairman, with awkward questions for them. Ewart in his turn kept Haydon informed, warning him in advance that the report would be more moderate than Haydon would have liked, and blaming on Poulett Thomson the staffing of the council of the new Schools of Design with Academicians.¹

When on his provincial lecture tours, Haydon kept in touch with Ewart, and on 22 March 1838 they were together at the inauguration of their Society for Promoting Practical Design. Two months later, Ewart proposed a petition to be presented by Wyse, to bring the Raphael cartoons up from Hampton Court to the National Gallery, a course which Haydon had advocated at intervals for some years. (Indeed Haydon later claimed the credit for procuring a temporary exhibition of the cartoons in London in 1816, but W.B. Pope has questioned the veracity of this claim).² Ewart had

1 Diary v.4 pp. 272, 275, 355-6, 366, 369

Correspondence v.2 p. 232

S.C. on Arts and Manufactures 1835-6, 1836 (568) ix passim

A full account of the committee's proceedings is given in Q. Bell, op.cit., 1959 and W.A. Munford, op.cit., chap. 9

2 Diary v.2 p. 70, v.4 p. 469

Autobiography p. 301

always exercised a restraining influence on Haydon, and eventually upset him by changing sides on the Academy issue between 1839 and 1842.¹

Eventually Haydon became disillusioned with the radicals too. In 1835, when they had secured the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, he had rejoiced: "... a feeling is dawning among the mechanics & the middle Classes. Day has broke! however slow will be the meridian", but in 1840 he feared: "The Radicals have taken the Academy question out of my hands ... they care nothing for Art, and only want to make it a stepping stone to pull down other institutions."²

Some reference must be made to Haydon's provincial lecture tours which constituted an important aspect of his activity at a specific period in his life, and to which reference is made in chapters on Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds below. As well as lecturing in London, between the years 1837 and 1841 he travelled to places as far afield as Bath, Glasgow and Edinburgh, Liverpool and Warrington, Newcastle and Hull. Two significant features of the new industrial towns made this possible: institutions such as Mechanics' Institutes, Athenaeums and the more prestigious societies such as the Royal Institutions of Liverpool and Manchester were willing to pay fees for visiting lecturers, and railways drastically shortened the travelling times and generally eased access between the towns. Many others derived a part of their livelihood from such itinerant lecturing; for example William Paulet Carey³ lectured widely on art.

Haydon frequently made a high estimate of his own impact on audiences at these lectures, but certainly the lectures were popular, especially when he introduced the naked model. At the close of the year 1840, he reflected that he had lectured on the naked model in London,

1 Diary v.5 p. 187
Correspondence passim

2 Diary v.4 pp. 331, 600

3 see above, chapter 1

Edinburgh and Manchester, and had lately had wrestlers struggle before an audience of 1500 at Liverpool; "50 years ago such things were not credible".¹ The industrialists whom he met on these tours frequently commanded his respect; his admiration for perfection in various 'arts', extended to the art of 'mechanism'. William Fairbairn, the Manchester engineer had "a good, iron, Steam Engine head" and earned Haydon's admiration for his sound common sense in disliking novels. The energy and spirit of manufacturing towns caught his imagination: "The Liverpool men are speculative and spirited, the Leeds men steady and persevering and the Manchester men industrious and wealthy".²

In Birmingham Haydon visited the factories and concluded that if ever a town needed a school of design, it was this one. In Leeds he felt that his visit had improved the taste and love of art. But in neither of these towns did he play an active part in organising the School of Design. In Manchester however he played a significant role, criticising, encouraging and exhorting at private meetings with leaders of the town's cultural elite, and maintaining a correspondence with some of them.³

Doubtless the chief significance of Haydon's tours lay in their contribution to the generally expanding programmes of lectures, soirées and exhibitions which constituted a popular form of art education in the industrial towns of the 1830's and 1840's. Excluded from the official cadre of Government School of Design officials, he probably nevertheless did more through the publicity which his lectures aroused, to stimulate the local demand for art education which was vital to the setting up of provincial schools of design.

1 Diary v.5 p. 23

2 Ibid. v.4 pp. 455, 527

3 Ibid. v.4 p. 601, v.5 p. 19 (and see below chapters 4, 5, 6)

CHAPTER 3

THE INDUSTRIAL ARGUMENT FOR ART EDUCATION

The Government Schools of Design were established under the Board of Trade. If they were founded for primarily commercial reasons, as this implies, then why did the manufacturers fail to support them? The answer generally proposed is that industrialists, while at first enthusiastic, were soon disappointed by the teaching of the schools in practice. The argument of this thesis however is that the true motivation for the schools was as much the encouragement of fine art as of manufactures. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to study in more detail the nature of the apparent industrial demand for schools of design.

Silk manufacture and calico printing were both industries, dependent on design, which commanded much parliamentary attention in the decade that saw the foundation of the Schools of Design. The apparently uncompetitive state of the silk industry by comparison with that of France, the major European rival in export markets, must have provided a particularly plausible incentive for a parliamentary vote of money to establish design schools. The silk and wine trades were treated to a separate report by a select committee of the House of Lords on foreign trade in 1821; in 1831-2 a select committee of the House of Commons investigated the silk trade; and in the reports on Anglo-French commercial relations made by John Bowring and George Villiers in 1834-5, special attention was again given to silk.¹ By the time of the 1835-6 Select

¹ P.P.1821 (703) vii, 1831-2 (678) xix, 1834 [64] xix and 1835 [65] xxxvi

Committee on Arts and Manufactures, therefore, the British silk industry was well established in the parliamentary mind as a cause for concern, and facts and figures were to hand. Some members of the 1831-2 committee were appointed in 1835 to the committee on arts and manufactures, and John Bowring, an influential witness, gave well-researched evidence to both committees.

Calico printing had received parliamentary attention earlier in the century as a relatively new and fast growing part of the textile industry; a trade recession had inspired a petition by calico printers in 1803-4, and in 1818 a select committee was set up to discuss anachronistic duties levied on printed cotton goods (duties which were eventually abolished under the whig ministry in 1831). Shortly after the launching of the Schools of Design, the question of copyright, which had already been much discussed with reference to mechanical inventions, was extended to designs, and a select committee reported in 1840 in favour of applying copyright to such articles as printed textiles and papers. Evidence given to the committee included many opinions on the value of design in these products.¹

There can be no doubt that the coincidence in one decade of major enquiries into the silk industry, art education, and copyright of designs, reflected a common concern in all three questions. Fear of French industrial competition was a common theme, and a natural one at a time when France was recovering from the long disruption of revolution and war, and Britain by comparison was beginning to lose the initial advantage gained from early industrial development in the eighteenth century. British naval superiority had been a spur to French self-sufficiency in trade and industry, and a firm wall of protection had been erected in France at a time when opinion in England

¹ P.P. 1803-4 (150) v, 1818 (279) iii, 1840 (442) vi

was turning to free trade as the soundest commercial policy.

This chapter is based upon the evidence of two major committees of enquiry into the silk and the calico printing industries, and examines in each case their trading performance and the role of design.

However much the enquiries on silk might have created a mood of concern in parliament, it must be concluded that the condition of the silk industry did not in reality provide a sufficient reason for the establishment of national schools of design. Examining the evidence supplied to committees it becomes clear that protection for the silk industry and design education were not unaminously demanded by the manufacturers. In particular, the need for schools of design was not appreciated by those manufacturers who relied chiefly on their production of plain goods, and who were happy to continue in that manner. Furthermore, a discrepancy is found between such trade statistics as are available, and the gloomy statements of those who complained of the deterioration of English trade since the opening of the ports to French goods in 1826, showing that French competition had not depressed English trade as much as some of the manufacturers thought or asserted.

What was the extent of the discrepancy between feeling and fact in respect of the fortunes of the silk trade? The complaint came largely from those who dealt in the luxury end of the fancy silk trade. William Sedgwick, a dealer, claimed that before 1826 he sold only English goods whereas by 1831-2 almost all his ribbons and one third of his broad silks were French, and George Stephens, a buyer, compared his purchases of ribbons in 1826, 35-40% more English than French, with those of 1832 when he bought 300% more French than English.¹

A number of manufacturers concurred in blaming a decline in

1 S.C. on the silk trade 1831-2 (678) xix qq. 7979-85, 2729-30

activity at Spitalfields on the change in trade policy of 1826 which lifted prohibition and allowed French imports. John Ballance and Richard Bennett agreed that before 1826 about 25% of the 16,000 looms at Spitalfields were employed on figured and fancy goods, where now there were only about 300 (less than 10%) producing such work. William Wallis, a silk weaver of Bethnal Green, believed that not more than 250 looms at Spitalfields were employed on figured and fancy silk work - a proportion of about one eighth whereas formerly one third or more were so used.¹ R.S. Cox who had 60-100 looms for the manufacture of broad fancy silks at Spitalfields between 1814 and 1827 had been forced to cease manufacture in the latter year. It was suggested by one witness that the decline at Spitalfields had been the result of a shift to Manchester, but this was not a recent phenomenon, having been noticed in the report of 1821.

Coventry had also suffered. Merry and Brown, once a fashionable ribbon maker in that town, had seen their annual turnover decline from £6,700 in 1826 to £614 in 1831. William Bridges of Bridges, Campbell & Co, by reputation one of the leading houses for fashion and design and supplier of aristocracy and royalty, considered that the whole of the gauze trade had left this country; he had owned fifty looms and now had none.²

Another opinion, however, was that a recent recovery had been made in the English fancy trade. William Sedgwick, quoted above, maintained that taste was lately reverting to English goods, as shown by a recent increased demand for English fancy goods, and he later claimed to have sold more English than French products of this category.³

1 Ibid. qq. 8436-44, 10752, 10886-9

2 Ibid. qq. 2446, 8120, 10383, 10394

3 Ibid. qq. 7989, 8109, 8115

This view inevitably found support from those who wished the ports to remain open to French goods. Richard Baggallay was one of these, a dealer in ribbons and broad silks who found his customers more disposed recently to buy English goods, as all his fancy satins now came from Coventry and he had imported none since the previous autumn (1831). But Edward Goode, a Coventry manufacturer who was in favour of more protection for the British industry, also detected an increase of activity in the ribbon trade at Coventry, comparing the six hundred fancy looms installed there with the two or three hundred existing in 1826.¹

It was generally agreed that English plain goods were superior to French plain, and were more successful commercially than English fancy work. François Bouillon noted that foreign plain goods could not be sold in England in competition with native production.² Export statistics available for the silk trade did not distinguish between plain and fancy; over the years 1825-31 they showed an increase of 300%, and if the decline of the fancy trade was as radical as suggested by some of the witnesses quoted above, it must have been more than compensated by the increased trade in plain silk. This increase compared with a growth of 77.7% in total domestic exports over the same period, suggesting that silk was an area of particular growth. Expansion on this scale was new to the silk manufacturers; Schumpeter referred to an increase in exports of wrought silk from £62,964 in 1750 to £111,512 in 1800, less than 100% increase over fifty years, and exports between 1814 and 1823 had fluctuated fairly evenly about an average of 240,000 lbs.³ (Table 2)

1 Ibid. qq. 7391-4, 1248

2 Ibid. q. 10168

3 E. Schumpeter, English overseas trade statistics, Oxford 1960, (The first figure is for England and Wales, the second for Great Britain). B. Mitchell and P. Deane, Abstract of British historical statistics, Cambridge 1962, pp. 209, 328. (Exports of silk manufactures were entered by weight before 1826 and after 1840).

Table 2 STATISTICS OF THE SILK TRADE 1825-1831

official values in £

| | <u>UK exports of silk manufactures</u> | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | <u>1825</u> | <u>1826</u> | <u>1827</u> | <u>1828</u> | <u>1829</u> | <u>1830</u> | <u>1831</u> |
| Total | 150,887 | 106,931 | 173,593 | 179,076 | 221,998 | 427,849 | 471,119 |
| to France | 246 | 1,354 | 5,308 | 11,206 | 38,294 | 35,716 | 48,365 |
| (Total domestic exports for comparison.) | 47.2m | 41.0m | 52.2m | 52.8m | 56.2m | 61.2m | 60.7m) ¹ |
| <u>UK imports of silk manufactures</u> | | | | | | | |
| from India | 147,883 | 275,525 | 176,210 | 131,293 | 170,416 | 124,699 | 159,495 |
| from Europe (inc. France) | 29,444 | 172,176 | 380,202 | 545,925 | 425,231 | 409,631 | 447,670 |
| from France | 40,303 | 150,898 | 328,354 | 463,730 | 354,378 | 370,247 | 416,937 |
| from France (French official return, converted 25 fr = £1) | 244,164 | 303,857 | 458,405 | 692,472 | 419,351 | 608,176 | |

Source: P.P. 1834[64]xix Appendix II, XX, LVII

¹ B.R.Mitchell and P.Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics, Cambridge, 1962 p.282

It appears, then, that British manufacturers should have had sufficient scope for their activity in the production of plain silks, the best of which were of very high quality according to several witnesses before the select committee of 1831-2. Perhaps it was just the sense of rivalry with France, the chief competitor in fancy and figured silks, rather than any serious decline in trade, that lent weight to the argument for schools of design; a sustained feeling of hostility no doubt continued to influence commercial attitudes in addition to the real fear of French economic recovery since the war.

Although imports of French silk were running at a higher level than exports of British silk to France after 1826, British exports were nevertheless increasing by leaps and bounds. French figures showed that English manufactured silks in 1830 constituted more than 50% of the silk imported by France, and that the quantity of English exports to France increased by 500% in the years 1831-4.¹ In judging from the monetary values of exports and imports in this trade, it has to be remembered that French values were comparatively higher since the French goods constituted more expensive luxury items, and quantities represented were therefore comparatively less.

The statistical evidence seems to indicate that imports of French goods about the turn of the decade were nearly equal to total British exports, but that British growth was more rapid than French. Whether or not certain manufacturers were accurate or wise in complaining of French superiority in the more decorative aspects of the trade, they drew a number of conclusions as follows.

The most general opinion was of an inherent French superiority in questions of taste (a prejudice which has been shown in Chapter 1 as existing also in the fine arts). Richard Bottrell, a silk merchant, thought that French goods had better style than English:

¹ Second report on the commercial relations between France and Great Britain 1835 [65] xxxvi. (The French official figure, when converted, is lower than the English figure, perhaps due to smuggling).

"The pattern drawers are artists ... In French figured gauzes, and gauze ribbons, there is generally a minute beauty, and general good effect, which the English have not yet attained."¹

François Bouillon (one of several French names amongst witnesses from the British silk industry) was partner in a fashionable business in Hanover Square; he stressed that English goods were considerably cheaper in this country, but that the design and beautiful quality alone of French fancy goods enabled him to make a profit.²

Mr. George Stephens maintained that France definitely had better taste than Manchester, but he also referred to the question of fashion. He was not alone in perceiving that fashion was sheer prejudice, and that in the present instance the preference for French goods was inspired as much by blind social dictates as by a discriminating eye. This marks the recognition of a relatively new but important factor in machine production, a phenomenon which underlay much of the concern with design in the years leading to the Great Exhibition. For where decoration was applied to mass-produced articles for the first time, shifting vogues became as material a consideration as the more serious discussions of good and bad taste conducted by 'authorities'. Fashion was an aspect of marketing which Wedgwood had recognized and exploited from 1765, but he, as a singularly prestigious manufacturer, was producing relatively small quantities, often made to order, for a very limited clientele.

Stephens pointed out to the committee that he was obliged to pay for fashionable French goods any price that the manufacturer asked; in many instances he paid for fashion three times the cost of materials and labour. In fact, in the luxury market, price might be

1. P.P. 1831-2 (678) xix q. 7880

2. Ibid. q. 10168

almost inversely correlated with demand, as in the case of French gauzes being preferred to Scottish by ladies who regarded the latter as too cheap.¹

Richard Bottrell, the silk merchant, was rather cryptic about the relationship of fashion and quality.

"Q. Do not various goods coming into general use, depend more upon fashion and demand than upon the ability of the manufacturer ...?"

- The English manufacturer can produce any article the public might fancy.

Q. Is it not the skill of the manufacturer that occasions what we call fashion?

- If the master has invention, and the workman skill, approved articles will doubtless be produced; the caprices of fashion cannot be well defined."²

Various opinions existed concerning the comparative quality of French and English manufactured silks. The report of 1821 maintained that several American gentlemen, as well as those engaged in the English trade regarded English quality in many respects equal to French - equal in piece goods, greatly superior in gloves and hosiery, although inferior in ribbons.³ Thomas Stone, a manufacturer, could not distinguish between French and English silks of similar pattern and knew of a native Frenchman who could not, whilst Robert Clay considered that French 'finish' was superior. But there was broad agreement as to the superiority of French patterns.⁴

Anthony Cheeper, a ribbon manufacturer of Coventry, was personally unaware that one hundred years previously the French had enjoyed acknowledged superiority in taste, though he admitted that English

1 Ibid. qq. 10604, 10597-8

2 Ibid. qq. 7962-3

3 S.C. of H.L. on the foreign trade of the Country 2nd report 1821 (703) vii p. 5

4 P.P. 1831-2 (678) xix qq. 5853-8, 6782

ribbons of that period may have been copied, and that the French had almost invariably set fashion over the world.¹ In the fashionable world, in art, literature and manners, the French influence which had been so strong in the eighteenth century was not diminished by revolution and war. Rather the periods of the Treaty of Amiens, and the aftermath of Waterloo with Wellington established in Paris, made that capital a most fashionable resort.

Manufacturers such as William Brunskill who had factories at Spitalfields and at Coventry, emphasised not only French superiority in patterns, but the very attention to fashion of their French counterparts, in the frequent introduction of new styles in fairly small quantities which were sold in a very short space of time.² At St Etienne, for example, novelties were introduced annually and the taste of customers was studied. This modern sounding practice of market research and continual novelty seems to have escaped the English manufacturers who lacked the expertise and material resources of the French.

The skill of the French in design was referred to by some witnesses with an air of inevitability, considering this to be an innate national trait. Not so Barrett Wadden, a Spitalfields silk manufacturer, who understood that the French ability was founded upon a broad educational base:

"I need scarcely say that it is impossible for any gentleman to have visited a tapestry manufactory in the suburbs of Paris, without seeing the enormous benefit that is conferred on the manufactures of the country, by the Government of that country upholding an art that would be destructive to an individual, but which, when supported by a Government, opens a school of knowledge to every silk weaver in the country ...

"When I see persons in that manufactory at work upon

1 Ibid. q. 867

2 Ibid. qq. 301, 375

productions that were lent them for the occasion; the most splendid pictures taken from the Louvre and brought down to be imitated in tapestry;

" ... here I live in such a state of things that I see nothing without paying for it; no I cannot even see the royal lions in the Tower without giving my 5s or 6s; nothing is to be seen in this country without payment; whereas in Paris every school of knowledge that Paris possesses is thrown open to every man that is in pursuit of that knowledge ..."¹

In the space of one answer, French superiority in design was attributed to their free access to all forms of knowledge, including museums.

The contrast between Paris and London in this respect was reminiscent of James Barry's observations in 1797, and the question of free entrance to national monuments anticipated a campaign to be fought by certain radical members of parliament in 1837.² Wadden's statement also contains the view that such educational resources would be too costly for any individual manufacturer to provide, but were of commercial benefit when supported by the government.

John Bowring's evidence to the committee referred to Lyons rather than to Paris:

" ... the fact that struck me most in France was the way in which taste was formed, and I was exceedingly surprised at finding among the weavers themselves and among their children, and amongst every body connected with the production of patterns, an attention devoted to every thing which was in any way connected with beauty, either in arrangement or in colour. I have again and again seen the weavers walking about gathering flowers, arranging them in their most attractive shapes. I found them constantly suggesting to their masters improvements in their designs; and I learnt that in almost every case, where the manufacturers had great success, there was some individual in the fabric who was the creator of beautiful things; there is at this moment scarcely any house of any considerable reputation in Lyons which has not a partner who owes

1 Ibid. q. 10033

2 See above chaps. 1 and 2

his position to his great success in the study of the arts."

Such was the importance accorded to art, the city of Lyons gave 20,000 francs (a contemporary equivalent of about £800) per annum towards the upkeep of a school of arts, in which every youth showing an aptitude for drawing or for other subjects of study connected with manufactures, was taught. Bowring also noted that painters, sculptors and botanists all tended to work for manufacturers in Lyons. He found that the French manufacturers themselves attributed their superiority to this attention which they paid to design.¹

In the context of the present argument, it is important to notice that education was not the sole factor to which any superiority in French designs was attributed. In fact, the advantage of design education in France, asserted so influentially by Dr. Bowring and supported by Barrett Wadden, was not the uppermost factor in the minds of many of the witnesses. Another key to success in the fancy goods industry was the Jacquard loom, developed in France for the mechanical reproduction of patterns. In the 1821 report the Jacquard loom was stated to have been in use at Lyons for some years and was considered to have enabled the French to produce a finer and greater variety of patterned silks at a cheaper price. It had recently been adopted by one Englishman and brought to perfection; Bridges and Campbell, a firm noted for their superior designs, were the first manufacturers to put it to use.²

The Jacquard loom profoundly affected the role of designers. One argument was that by demanding much less skill the Jacquard loom had evened out the wages of plain and fancy workers at St. Etienne, cheapening

1 Ibid.qq. 8806, 8812

2 Ibid.q. 10384

the price of the latter goods, but William Brunskill disagreed, claiming that more skill was still required for figured work.¹ Insofar as it was a powered loom, more work could be produced by one man and the Jacquard machine did not therefore contribute to an increase in employment, but engine looms of a cruder kind for figured work had operated in Coventry in larger numbers than the 650-700 Jacquard looms which existed there in 1831. There was uncertain and irregular employment for the operators, particularly as a great deal of their work, altering the patterns by means of rearrangement of the machine, was unpaid; this purely mechanical task took between two and five weeks (four to six weeks to set a new pattern) and the men who performed it were frequently classified as 'designers'. The new looms produced a longer and more beautiful pattern though inferior in quality compared with the hand loom.² However, by 1831 the Jacquard loom was an asset shared by England and France.

Amongst the natural advantages enjoyed by France were proximity to sources of good quality raw material in France itself and in Italy, and cheapness of labour due to a lower standard of living, although these factors were disputed by some witnesses. It was more generally agreed that the large foreign markets open to France in England, Germany, America and Poland, enabled versatility in the production of new patterns; ephemeral fashions could be economically produced in large quantities and could be transferred from one market to another as demand dictated, whereas English manufacturers found that they could not sustain the rapid depreciation in price to which articles of fashion were subject.³

1 Ibid. qq. 321-8

2 Ibid. : evidence of David Smith, a Jacquard loom weaver at Coventry

3 Ibid. q. 8410

It was pertinent to the question of a prospective school of design that several witnesses expressed their faith in British ability to design; this view was consistent with the feeling discussed above that the fashion for French goods was mere prejudice. Cleophas Ratcliff and William Jacombs, both ribbon manufacturers from the midlands, expressed such views. Bridges, Campbell & Co. had designs made by English artists expressly to the firm's instructions and found no want of taste and skill; William Bridges regarded English fancy silks as of equal excellence to the French, although the fashion for French goods had stifled his trade since 1826, when all the principal buyers had gone to Lyons.¹ Robert Clay found no failure in English design as he frequently had patterns composed in England and took them to be made up in France, where it was the superiority of finish that was important.²

Anthony Cheeper and William Merry, ribbon manufacturers of Coventry, founded their case for prohibition of French goods on the grounds that England had sufficient national taste, and need not have her fashions regulated by France. That there were now more fancy ribbons than prior to 1820, Cheeper attributed to improved taste and a change of fashion for the more ornate (such as can be seen in clothing and ornament as the neo-Grec simplicity began to be replaced by more flamboyant mid-Victorian styles.). The more ornate style was not entirely dependent on importations from France, he argued, since he had seen English ribbon patterns of between fifty and a hundred years old that were of a wider and richer figure. William Merry took an equally patriotic stand; there was no want of exertion on his part to employ designers, and he was now producing very good patterns at home.³ John

1 Ibid. qq. 1716, 1894-5, 10383-10469

2 Ibid. q. 6782

3 Ibid. qq. 862-7, 2547

Dubois, a broad silk manufacturer who had entirely given up the fancy trade for lack of custom claimed that quite sophisticated arrangements for design had existed at Spitalfields where there had once been regular designers, and each house had kept a pattern drawer who was paid £300-500 p.a.; Spitalfields had then been equal to France in its fancy products which were mostly original designs rather than copies of foreign patterns, but designers were no longer employed on a regular basis, as there was insufficient work.¹ Finally, Richard Cox, a ribbon-maker at Coventry who considered French designs superior to English, nevertheless retained faith in the possible development of a distinctively national style. Although the French employed a superior class of artist, there were good artists in England, and there was a great increase in designers who did not imitate the French but made the best of their own ideas.²

The general attitude expressed by silk manufacturers before the committee was therefore one of faith in the indigenous ability to design. This ability had revealed itself without the assistance of schools of design, and its subsequent disappearance was attributed more to trading disadvantages and to the whim of fashion, than to the lack of formal institutions for training designers.

The protective trade barriers which France had erected were also considered to work in her favour. By many witnesses the solution to problems of the silk industry was seen to lie in trade policy rather than in design schools. The 1821 committee had recommended a general alleviation of prohibitions, duties and drawbacks which were seen as having hampered the home industry, but in 1831-2 the majority of the manufacturers of fancy silks were in favour of fiscal protection. In many cases the argument for prohibiting French imports was that of

1 Ibid. qq. 10261-10267

2 Ibid. q. 2429

immediate economic advantage; so, for example, Brunskill argued that competition since the opening of the ports had eroded English profits, and that given greater profit margins the manufacturer would risk new patterns. Alternatively, he argued that if French fashions could be excluded altogether, the lower retail price of English goods would have its effect in the market. Thomas Stone wanted prohibition simply to alleviate the weavers' distress.¹

However, John Brocklehurst junior, a Macclesfield manufacturer, based his argument for protection on giving manufacturers the incentive to improve design in woven silks:

" ... if our trade were protected, our taste would soon be found to equal that of other countries.

" ... I feel fully confirmed in this opinion, by reference to the beautiful styles the English silk and cotton printers have attained, both in designs and engraving, we are not behind the rest of the world in many other arts of taste I could enumerate."

Brocklehurst went on to emphasise the need for Government encouragement to realize this.²

There were also those, however, who advocated a free trade policy on precisely the same grounds, that it would improve the quality of English designs. Richard Baggallay and William Sedgwick were merchants rather than manufacturers, and were engaged in the very fashionable end of the market. Their opinions carried weight in supporting those of the influential Dr. Bowring. Baggallay argued that Coventry manufacturers had improved with regard to colour since the importation of French ribbons and cited the recent trend in demand towards English items, as proof of the beneficial influence on English design of French imports. Sedgwick maintained, in more general terms, that

"Communication of all classes of society with the

1 Ibid. qq. 428, 754, 5858

2 Ibid. qq. 11491, 11500

Continent in late years has tended greatly to increase and improve English taste",¹

an argument analagous to that concerning the benefit of foreign travel in encouraging patronage of the fine arts. Dr. Bowring put the same argument for free trade in the very strongest terms:

"I do not believe that England can at all compete with France in ribbons and fine fancy goods. I stated, as a general principle, that where taste and beauty form a considerable part of the cost of production, there is no present and immediate chance of competition; and that it is precisely on account of their superiority that they are wanted here as a source of instruction and improvement."²

Others however were prepared to contradict this emphatic opinion; Richard Cox, for example, believed that English products had declined in style since 1825 and had not been improved by French imports.³

General conclusions to be drawn concerning the silk industry, may therefore be summarised as follows: Overall, the silk trade was not in a bad state. French superiority in patterns and in fashion was conceded (and fashion was becoming more important in a mass market), but the English trade was still upheld by the quality of its plain goods. The superiority of French patterns was only partly attributed to schools of design, and it was recognized that English ability in design had shown itself in the past without the encouragement of special schools. Moreover the solution to any deficiency in the fancy trade was generally thought to lie as much in fiscal policy as in institutions for design training; manufacturers of fancy goods were in favour of protecting their own interests but displayed no general spontaneous enthusiasm for schools of design. Merchants (and free traders) were on the whole more

1 Ibid. qq. 7390, 7394, 8191

2 Ibid. q. 8783

3 Ibid. qq. 2205-2208

concerned than manufacturers with the question of design.

Of the two witnesses who made explicit and emphatic links between success in design and educational provision one was a Spitalfields manufacturer, Barrett Wadden, and the other was Dr. John Bowring. Before any committee of enquiry it is clear that the evidence of some witnesses weighs more heavily than that of others. Bowring would undoubtedly have been influential and it seems appropriate therefore to point out that he was not actively engaged in manufacture or trade but an economic adviser to governments; a radical reformer, an intimate friend of Bentham, he had been editor of the Westminster Review, and as a master of languages held various government posts abroad. A committed free trader he was a co-founder of the Anti Corn Law League, and amongst Bowring's publications was The influence of knowledge on domestic and social happiness (1842).¹ Thus, as with Henry Cole later in planning the Department of Science and Art, it was the independent expert, the intellectual rather than the manufacturer or merchant, whose initiative was most influential.

Calico printing was another substantial industry which ought to have benefitted from the training of designers. Yet evidence submitted to the Select Committee on Copyright of Designs in 1840, revealed that, like the witnesses from the silk trade, the calico printers were very far from unanimous. It is proposed to examine here the size of the trade, and from the evidence submitted in 1840 to determine the numbers, quality and function of designers in calico printing, as a guide to the demand for art education within the industry.

Although its recent growth was less spectacular than that of silk manufacture, printed fabric had enjoyed a steady increase over the previous fifty years. The printing of cottons and linens at home had

1. J. Bowring, Autobiographical recollections, 1877. (and see above chap. 2)

begun after 1720 as a response to the import duties on Indian printed calico and chintz which was regarded as undermining the domestic wool and silk industries. The Peel family had played a pioneering role from the 1760s, developing technique and finally establishing the industry in the area around Blackburn and Preston. Technical improvements in the design printing process included the roller printer, the improvement of block printing, mechanical reproduction of engraved patterns and the union of block and roller printing, so that, according to Sir Edward Baines:

" ... for ingenuity and beauty, as well as for productive power, they well deserve to rank with the more celebrated inventions in cotton spinning."¹

By these inventions and improvements, the printing business prospered in spite of its subjection to many duties and excise regulations, which were finally repealed only in 1831. The excise imposed on printed goods increased the cost of prints by an average of 30-40%, and as a standard duty on all qualities, it pressed most heavily on the cheaper prints, constituting 70-80% of the price. Baines considered that the repeal of print duty gave an important stimulus to the trade, halving the retail price of a common printed dress, for example and leaving the manufacturer a profit margin sufficient to encourage enterprise and innovation.²

Table 3 shows the rate of increase in printing activity. Figures available for the eighteenth century, which included the printing of all fabrics, reveal a steady progress; those for 1814-30 were confined to cottons, muslins and linen but reveal a similar rate of growth, despite cyclical fluctuations of trade. The precise achievement of the print trade in the 1830s is less easy to determine,

1 E. Baines, History of the cotton manufacture. 1835 pp. 271-2.

2 Ibid. p. 282

Table 3 STATISTICS OF CALICO PRINTING 1770-1830 and EXPORTS OF PRINTED FABRICS 1831-40

| <u>Printed goods charged with duty</u> (Inc. silks, linens, calicoes, stuffs, but exc. paper) | '000 yds. | | | | <u>Calicoes, muslins etc. printed in Great Britain</u> | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | pieces | | | |
| 1775.. 8,160 | 1800.. 34,134 | 1815.. 69,790 | 1814.. 5,192,228 | 1820.. 5,456,196 | 1826.. 6,098,656 | | | |
| 1785.. 14,113 | 1805.. 48,342 | 1820.. 75,516 | 1816.. 4,511,244 | 1822.. 6,730,808 | 1828.. 8,395,848 | | | |
| 1795.. 24,054 | 1810.. 67,539 | 1825.. 114,636 | 1818.. 6,282,544 | 1824.. 8,162,872 | 1830.. 8,596,952 | | | |

Source: B.R.Mitchell and P.Deane, op. cit., p.184

Source: E.Baines, History of the cotton manufacture, 1835 p.283

| | <u>Exports from UK of printed woven fabrics in cotton, silk or wool, or mixed fabrics 1831-40</u> | | | | | | | | | | £'000 official value |
|---|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| | 1831 | 1832 | 1833 | 1834 | 1835 | 1836 | 1837 | 1838 | 1839 | 1840 | |
| Cotton | 7,475 | 6,027 | 5,564 | 6,489 | 7,500 | 8,154 | 9,066 | 6,574 | 8,192 | 8,771 | |
| Linen | 12 | 14 | 6 | 10 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 16 | 26 | 24 | |
| Cotton + linen mixed | 83 | 71 | 82 | 114 | 113 | 117 | 132 | 68 | 68 | 71 | |
| Silk mixed | 165 | 190 | 146 | 170 | 163 | 304 | 282 | 109 | 160 | 188 | |
| Woollen mixed | 97 | 92 | 115 | 126 | 122 | 134 | 123 | 98 | 138 | 196 | |
| Total | 7,832 | 6,394 | 5,913 | 6,909 | 7,911 | 8,723 | 9,617 | 6,865 | 8,584 | 9,250 | |
| (Total domestic exports for comparison) | 60,700 | 65,000 | 70,000 | 73,800 | 78,400 | 85,200 | 72,500 | 95,500 | 97,400 | 102,700) ¹ | |

Source: P.P. 1840(442)VI Appendix 1 A note stated the impossibility of obtaining statistics for printed goods exclusively, so that all figures include checked, stained and dyed goods also.

¹ B.R.Mitchell and P.Deane, op.cit., p.282

since the export and import figures available did not distinguish between plain and fancy goods.¹ These figures represented on average a proportion of nearly 10% of the figure for all domestic exports, suggesting that the print trade was of considerable importance to the national economy. Exports of printed goods of cotton and mixed materials in 1831 were seventeen times greater in value than total exports of silk manufactures in the same year.² Several manufacturers at the select committee in 1840 considered that the printing trade was growing in importance and productivity, and that it had materially increased over the whole country during the previous decades (despite a contraction of activity in London), and one member of the committee even suggested that the print trade was "one of our leading staple manufactures".³

The conditions affecting prosperity in calico printing were not dissimilar to those influencing the silk industry. Before the select committee of 1818, a number of calico printers offered their explanations of the depressed state of the trade.⁴ As with the silk manufacture, there appears to be something of a gap between opinions of the manufacturers and the statistical evidence. Table 3 shows a small decline in 1819 and 1820, but there is no statistic to support the view of one witness that trade had declined by three quarters in the last seven years, or that of another who spoke of a decline of one sixth over six years.⁵ One manufacturer of plain and figured cambrics blamed the

1 Figures for printed goods only were requested by the Select Committee of 1840, but were not available.

2 See Table 2 above

3 S.C. on Copyright of Designs 1840 (442) vi qq. 4609, 2065, 2971, 7357

4 S.C. on Duties payable on printed cotton goods 1818 (279) iii

5 P.P.1818 (279) iii, evidence of Robert Price and James Thomson

depression on an international decline in the demand for these manufactures.¹

Taxes also were blamed, but the particular threat to trade in printed cotton goods, as in fancy silk, was seen to lie in the vagaries of fashion. Several witnesses contended that the decline had been in the "higher description" of printed cottons rather than the lower, and that the opulent classes had abandoned these goods which were now worn exclusively by servants and by the "lowest class of society". It was said that fashion in the town trade had turned to white cambrics, white muslins and plain coloured goods (a reflection no doubt of chaste neo-classical styles in art and architecture). Even as late as 1840, Edmund Potter was lamenting that the print trade had fared worse than the plain trade over the previous ten years.²

At the enquiry of 1840 many manufacturers were highly conscious of the market and of the importance of design. Augustus Applegarth, calico printer, recognized that a higher class of art in the home market would sell more dresses, since the dress was not simply a functional object, but decorative, like painting and sculpture, and so purchased on impulse. James Kershaw and Daniel Lee both claimed to rely on a constant succession of new prints.³ An interesting sidelight on the matter of fashion was the importance of London as the largest market for fashionable goods and consequently a centre of taste. Chippendale and Thompson had designs drawn in London and John Brooks of Butterworth and Brooks in Manchester complained that when he had started in a small way he had been obliged to buy patterns, having no

1 Ibid. evidence of George Jones

2 P.P.1840 (442) vi qq. 500-506

3 Ibid. qq. 2885, 3650, 4014, 4457

opportunity of seeing patterns to copy in London.¹ It is noticeable that many of the promoters of the provincial schools of design, not necessarily manufacturers but members of a "cultural elite" in their towns, paid regular visits to London.

As in the silk trade, there was fairly widespread envy of the skill with which French manufacturers acted in matters of fashion. The number of patterns produced in France was similar to that of England, even though their overall production was only one third of the English, by which estimate Potter concluded that the production of patterns in France was proportionately three times greater. John Brooks regarded the French as superior not only in taste, but in novelty and variety of design, and Applegarth, as well as Holdway the designer, attributed their superiority of design to the imposition of copyright. Leo Schuster, a Manchester merchant, held that the French excelled in taste and choice of patterns.²

Anglo-French rivalry was as evident in cotton goods as it was in silk, but in England the greater efficiency and cheaper production of less sophisticated patterns enabled her to surpass the French in this particular branch of the trade. Witnesses before the 1840 select committee were generally agreed about this, and Baines referred to the great reputation of Manchester engravers for skill and perfection which resulted in orders sent from Europe and America for engraved cylinders, despite the great cost of transport involved. He regarded it as a great advantage to English calico printers, over their foreign rivals, that engraving was so cheap and patterns were so various in this country.³

1 Ibid. qq. 802, 928

2 Ibid. qq. 1493-6, 783, 1211 ff. and evidence of T.B. Holdway

3 E. Baines, op.cit., 1835 p.270

Opinions of the skill, even perhaps of taste displayed by English designers and engravers, received a variety of supporting evidence. William Ross, of Potter and Ross, vice-president of the Salford Mechanics' Institute, observed that agents from foreign markets were employed to get patterns copied and engraved in England. Joseph and Thomas Lockett, members of a family renowned for practical innovation in calico printing, noted that although the French spoke with contempt of English taste, Naples and Germany took English patterns in order to copy their style. Thomas Lockett recounted anecdotes from his experience as a commission agent in Germany where he saw new English patterns from Manchester being copied with great speed.¹ Schenk, a London merchant, confirmed that English prints were much copied by the Germans.²

Several witnesses in 1840 argued that the native capacity for design would emerge clearly in practice given protection by copyright. Salis Schwabe thought so, Edward Brooke maintained that talent was already shown in the invention of designs at Manchester, and Daniel Iee considered that the art of design was

"higher than seven years ago and improving."³

Edmund Potter, who was a patron of the Manchester School of Design, pointed out that Thomas Stothard R.A. and John Oldham, miniature painter turned engineer who designed notes for the Bank of England, had both worked as designers for printed calico; but had left for want of encouragement. He argued that almost every other department of applied art, such as metals, snuff boxes, wallpapers and printed oil-cloths, as well as fine art, enjoyed more protection for taste and genius in the

1 Ibid. qq. 6811, 8716, 8737, 8773

2 Ibid. q. 7485

3 Ibid. qq. 145, 1948, 4566

form of copyright. But Potter was realistic about British achievement so far; the accelerated speed of improvements in mechanical and chemical means for reproducing patterns had not been matched in original design, as the latter was the result of a mental rather than a practical process, and he advocated copyright to encourage native genius and cultivated taste.¹

The discussion of copyright revealed considerable disagreement as to the extent of copying in practice within the industry. Much of this copying for cotton prints, as in the silk industry, was from French designs; about twenty Lancashire printers, according to Ross, were receiving French patterns immediately on publication, from agents in Paris. Lockett and Kershaw both testified to the majority of patterns engraved, especially among the first class houses, being based on French designs.² But the larger English manufacturers were accused by the smaller firms of mere self interest in promoting copyright in order to protect the original patterns which only they could afford to commission. This discussion also raised the difficult question of what exactly constituted originality in a pattern; Thomas Holdway, designer and teacher, believed that there was not a great number of original designers in England and Scotland, but that invention of designs was on the increase rather than the decrease, and that the possible varieties were infinite.³ John Brooks, proprietor of a large concern, thought that very few designs were original, being usually pieced together from other patterns; he had seen only two genuinely original patterns in thirty years!⁴

John Dillon was a merchant who thought that the legal protection

1 Ibid. qq. 1478, 1481-90, 344 (For Potter see below Chap.4)

2 Ibid. qq. 3679, 5481, 6800

E. Potter, A Letter to Mark Philips Esq. M.P., Manchester 1841, p. 11

3 P.P.1840 (442) vi qq. 2705, 2770

4 Ibid. qq. 684, 795

of design would be highly desirable alongside its encouragement by means of education. (It is of some significance for this thesis that he was a partner of James Morrison, a self educated man from a humble background, who died a multi-millionaire; Morrison's career had striking similarities with some of Haydon's political contacts described in Chapter 2 above, since from his drapery business he went into politics as a liberal M.P., sat on the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, and on the Council of the Government Schools of Design, and at the same time formed a large personal library and an art collection of a very high class.). The firm of Morrison and Co. had been active in founding a school of design.¹ Supporting Dillon were the weighty opinions of Salis Schwabe and Edmund Potter who both gave priority to copyright over art education, on the grounds that the former would encourage manufacturers to improve design of their own accord.²

It is instructive to notice that one fairly common objection which was made to any proposal of government intervention was the importance of secrecy, which might be undermined by official inspection. Thomas Hargreaves of Accrington made this point before the 1818 committee, anxious to protect the discovery of dyes and mechanical inventions which he had made.³ Similarly schools of design were also feared as posing a threat to secrecy in the trade with artisans pooling the knowledge gained from their various employers.

The deliberations of the Select Committee on Copyright of Design provide useful, if conflicting evidence about the numbers of designers employed by the trade. Edmund Potter had compiled his own statistics of calico printers in Lancashire, which he believed to be almost the only list in the trade, but his figures were tendentious in setting out to

1 P.P.1840 (442) vi qq. 2635, 2637
D.N.B.

2 G. Waagen, Treasures of Art, 1854 supp. pp. 105-13, 300-12

3 P.P.1840 (442) vi qq. 145, 1506

3 P.P.1818 (279) iii evidence of T. Hargreaves

prove that the supporters of a copyright extension bill were the producers of the richest and most original designs. Amongst 88 large firms he found 410 roller printing machines and 8,610 tables for block printing (the latter for producing finer and more expensive goods). Amongst these he counted 26 supporters of the bill who employed original designers in their own establishments, and 32 opponents of copyright, most of whom did not employ salaried designers, and many of whom were engaged in pirating designs.¹

Other witnesses however challenged Potter's observations. James Russell Wood, a statistical expert, found that 35 calico printers opposing extension of copyright gave constant employment to 86 pattern designers. Kershaw held that opponents of the bill were superior in number and in the value of their productions over the whole country, and that one or two first-class printers were petitioning against the bill.² Daniel Lee was opposed to any extension of copyright although himself a producer of exclusively original patterns. He employed six, and sometimes eight designers who were paid by the pattern rather than by the hour. He also bought patterns from freelance designers. His estimation was that about 500 pattern designers lived in and around Manchester, and that if all were working as hard as his own employees, producing 20 patterns per week, then 520,000 patterns per annum were being produced in the Manchester area alone. Lengthening of copyright would restrict this number and throw designers out of employment.³

The employment of 500 pattern designers in the vicinity of Manchester would seem to indicate clearly a potential demand for a school of design, but a further qualification has to be made regarding

1 P.P.1840 (442) vi qq. 353, 367-71, 1542-3

2 Ibid. qq. 8362, 3679-86

3 Ibid. qq. 4379-4400, 4566-4572, 4597-4606

the functions of the designer, not all of which would have required a full art education. Daniel Lee described designing as a two-part process: the original invention, and the 'making-out' (i.e. reducing to scale, arranging the repetition etc.)¹ William Ross, a producer of "middle and lower class goods", argued on this basis against the lavish outlay made by some printers to achieve good design:

"We employ our own designer; we have but one designer; the patterns are produced entirely by myself; he only executes the ideas which I give to him. There has been, in my opinion, a great waste of money in the production of patterns by many houses; some houses think the business cannot be conducted unless they have three or four designers, houses whose productions are not greater than my own; they give them ideas, and they say you must draw us something in this or that style; but unless properly conducted, it proves a failure. If the designing department be properly conducted, it may be brought within a very small cost."²

The work executed by designers so-called, extended even further to mechanical work in engraving copper rollers etc., creating a similar overlap between the cerebral and mechanical aspects of the job as existed with regard to the Jacquard loom in silk-weaving. Butterworth and Brooks, printers of high quality goods, had a drawer in London (who had produced 646 patterns in the previous year) and two other designers (drawing 2-3,000 patterns per annum), but in addition employed 'putters-on' to transfer designs to blocks and plates. Applegarth paid large sums to original designers and pattern makers (£10-15 per week for original designs) and employed one designer of his own, who worked away from the factory, and six designers at the works employed chiefly in 'putting-on' and occasionally in designing (for which they earned considerably less - about £2 per week). Holdway said that it

1 Ibid. q. 4584

2 Ibid. q. 5489

was possible for men to execute work both as designers and engravers, but had never himself in his career as a pattern designer since 1822, put anything on roller or block.¹

At the drawing board, the copying of other patterns was often regarded as part of the job of an "original designer". Kershaw argued that this activity gave them some employment but did not think that any individual was employed exclusively in copying. Butterworth and Brooks' drawer in London copied selectively from patterns in shop windows.² A most graphic description of the mere drudgery which a designer's work might entail was contained in James Stirling's complaint that Irish boys were absconding to England in their third or fourth year of apprenticeship:

"A lad that is simply able to put a sheet of tracing paper on a pattern and trace the pattern with a pencil, is the person that is wanted in our days in Lancashire, in consequence of the system of copying".³

It must be concluded that calico printing, like the silk industry, was generally prospering, although its prosperity was based more on the middle and low quality range of goods. Fashion was very important, and the French were considered superior in this, but the British trade compensated for this in skill and efficiency of engraving. Copying was widespread and there were doubts as to the possibility of true originality in design; moreover the designer's job included many mechanical tasks as well as invention. A full art education was therefore hardly necessary for all designers, and there was no unanimous demand amongst cotton printers for schools of design. As the next chapter will reveal, a number of calico printers in Manchester

1 Ibid. qq. 752-5, 2944-62, 2700

2 Ibid. qq. 4014, 792

3 Ibid. qq. 3559-3565

assisted in promoting the local school of design, but these were frequently men who supported other educational and cultural enterprises so that their motives cannot be regarded as purely commercial.

Amongst the makers and merchants of fancy silk and cotton there was a general interest in any measure aimed at improving their trade. Both were important sectors of trade in the national economy, and both were flourishing as a whole, despite the pessimism expressed by some representatives. A sense of rivalry with France in both cases centred on the higher quality trade whilst the majority of the trade remained competitive, so a feeling of national pride was a salient factor alongside any element of commercial deprivation. In general the manufacturers had faith in British taste and ability to design given the right encouragement, but this encouragement was often seen in fiscal as much as in educational terms.

A superficial reading of the select committees studied above has previously led to the statement that industrialists advocated schools of design, but when it observed that only a few of the witnesses did so with any positive conviction, and that the witnesses as a whole were probably representative only of the more forward-looking practitioners of the trade (or, in the case of Bowring, a theorist not engaged in trade) the attitude of manufacturers in general can only be described as a passive acceptance of any move which the government would make to improve trade on their behalf.

CHAPTER 4

MANCHESTER

I

The industrial demand for design in Manchester arose primarily from the calico printing industry, and the considerable extent of this demand can be gauged from statistics and other factors cited in chapter 3. The nature of Manchester's economy, and the activities and opinions of local calico printers regarding design, will now be considered for the influences brought to bear on the formation of a local school of design.

The awesome growth of Manchester in the Industrial Revolution hardly needs re-stating in detail. Whatever the modifications recently made by economic historians regarding the actual pattern of industrial growth,¹ the often quoted reactions of individuals such as Carlyle and Disraeli remain valid as a testimony to the impact of Manchester's spectacular growth on contemporary observers. The parish of Manchester itself had increased in population between 1774 and 1831 from 41,032 to 270,961, but these figures alone are not the most significant, for Manchester's importance grew as the trading centre of a constellation of 15 or 16 rapidly expanding industrial towns with populations ranging from 20,000 to 60,000 each. Thus it was boasted that within an hour's ride of Manchester lived a greater population than in an equivalent radius around London.² The population of Lancashire

1 V. Gatrell, Labour, power and the size of firms in Lancashire cotton in Ec.H.R. 2nd ser. v.30 (1977) p. 95

2 L. Faucher, Manchester in 1844, Manchester, 1844 p. x

as a whole had more than doubled between 1750 and 1801 from 297,400 to 672,565, and doubled again to 1,336,854 by 1831.¹

Industrial power in Manchester underwent a particularly rapid increase in the 1820s. Between 1820 and 1832 the number of cotton mills in the townships of Manchester and Salford rose from 66 to 96, silk mills increased from three to fourteen, and two new flax-spinning mills were erected (although mills varied enormously in size from 1500 down to 50 employees). In the same decade the combined population of these two boroughs rose by 50%.² Mechanization was a vital aspect of this industrial growth; it was estimated in 1827 that 50% of the 55,000 power looms at works in Great Britain were located in Manchester and Stockport,³ and by 1832 this had grown in one estimate to 80,000 power looms in Lancashire alone, and the number was constantly growing.

The growth of commercial activity in Manchester was reflected in the rise of an energetic Chamber of Commerce. During the Napoleonic wars and subsequent disruptions, a number of ad hoc organizations were formed to protect the interests of merchants, but whereas the Commercial Society of the 1790s never had more than 60 members, the Chamber of Commerce by the 1830s had between 230 and 320 annual subscribers, and wielded great influence in the town. These commercial associations also aimed to encourage industrial development; the Manchester Committee for Protection of Trade gave rewards for new inventions. In reply to a Board of Trade enquiry in 1833 as to the principal branches of commerce and industry, a summary by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce underlined the great

1 E. Baines, History of the cotton manufacture, 1835, p. 360
(population figures given by Baines correspond with other authorities)

2 E. Baines, op.cit., 1835, p. 395
A. Redford, Manchester merchants and foreign trade 1794-1858, Manchester, 1934 p. 72

3 E. Baines, op.cit., 1835, pp. 237, 383
R. Smith, Manchester as a centre for the manufacture and merchanting of cotton goods, in Birmingham Univ. Hist. J. v.4 no. 1 (1953) p. 59

importance of selling and exportation of cotton and silk goods.¹ In the late 1820s, the Bank of England established a branch in Manchester, and in the 1830s, four new joint-stock banks were opened there. William Roscoe has been quoted in chapter 1 as observing that commerce was more conducive than industry to literary pursuits, and the importance of mercantile activity may well have stimulated the cultural life of Manchester in ways that will be suggested below.

Immediately antecedent to selling were the finishing trades, especially dyeing and printing, which the Chamber of Commerce reported as employing "a very large population".² Roland Smith has described the increasing process of vertical integration in the 1820s of calico printing with merchanting functions, as well as a growth in the number of merchants and agents specialising in the selling of goods. By 1845 one hundred factories in Manchester and Salford combined spinning, weaving and finishing under one roof, and an increase in the number of warehouses from 126 in 1820 to almost 1000 in 1829 reflected the habit of firms with factories around Manchester erecting storage and marketing premises in the town.³

Calico printing was a general term used to describe the printing of all fabrics - muslins, linens, silks and woollens. In ornamented goods of this kind, markets were very elastic; technical discoveries and innovations in design had an acute influence on consumption, and were therefore of great interest to merchants and manufacturers alike. The other two British centres of calico printing tended to specialise (Glasgow in shawls and handkerchiefs, London in the limited production of high quality goods) but the trade gradually became more and more centred

1 A. Redford, op.cit., 1934 p. 237

2 loc.cit.

3 R. Smith, op.cit., (1953) p. 47

around Manchester, with Scottish printers and even a French print house of high reputation, setting up there.¹

The most notable of the early names in Lancashire calico printing was that of Peel, who set up at Bury in the 1760s. A modern historian has described Peel as being to calico printing what Arkwright was to spinning.² A useful comparison for present purposes might also be with Wedgwood and Boulton; for whilst supplying a more popular market with a fairly limited range of designs, his mercantile instincts were astute. He kept four travellers constantly exploring the home market and traded in America through agents; very sensitive to consumer demand, he studied new patterns from London and France and concentrated on imitating the most popular of them as cheaply as possible. In 1795 it was reported of Peel's works at Bury:

"The articles here made and printed are chiefly the finest kind of the cotton manufactory and they are in high request both in Manchester and London ... Ingenious artists are employed in drawing patterns and cutting and engraving them on wood and copper ..."³

Other leading calico printers in Lancashire in the later eighteenth century were Livesey, Hargreaves & Co. who introduced roller or cylinder printing in 1785, which reduced the labour requirement by a factor of 100:1, and Joseph Lockett who, about 1808, perfected a mechanical means of transferring patterns from a master cylinder to the printing cylinder, and who later developed tracing machinery for engraving novel patterns on printing cylinders.⁴ Robert Peel of Bury first printed extensively using 'resist' techniques (a dye-repellent substance applied to the cloth)

1 E. Potter, Calico printing as an art manufacture, 1852 p. 25

2 S.D. Chapman, The Peels in the early English Cotton industry, in Business History v.11 no. 2 (1969)

3 J. Aitkin, Description of the country from thirty to forty miles around Manchester, 1795 p. 268

4 E. Baines, op.cit., 1835 pp. 265-269

about 1802, and James Thomson of Clitheroe, whose name will be encountered frequently in connection with the Manchester School of Design, took out a number of patents for various chemical processes in dyeing and printing.¹ A technical innovation which did much to increase output of printed fabrics was the use of steam to fix dyes; this process radically reduced the drying time necessary, and in combination with cylinder printing increased the possible output to 500 pieces per day from one machine (as compared with 6 pieces per day by the old block-printing method).²

Whilst these technical innovations operated to encourage the growth of calico printing in the early nineteenth century, a further stimulus to production was given in 1831 with the repeal of heavy excise duties imposed on printed calicoes since 1785. The politician immediately responsible for this repeal was the vice-president of the Board of Trade, C. Poulett Thomson, who was subsequently elected M.P. for Manchester and became closely involved with the establishment of the Schools of Design; Baines' History of the Cotton Manufacture was dedicated to Thomson in gratitude.

The combined effect of technical and fiscal developments may be traced in the rise of national production in calico printing over the century 1750-1850, drawing together figures given by Baines and by the local calico printer, Edmund Potter³:

| | | | |
|-------|---------------|------|---------------------|
| 1750. | 50,000 pieces | 1830 | 8.6 m. |
| 1796 | 1.0 m. | 1840 | 16.0 m. * |
| 1815 | 5.3 m. | 1852 | 20.0 m. * |
| 1820 | 5.5 m. | | |
| 1825 | 8.1 m. | | * Potter's estimate |

1. Ibid. pp. 276-279

2 G. Turnbull, A history of calico printing in Great Britain, 1951, pp. 62-9

3 E. Baines, op.cit., 1835 p. 283
E. Potter, op.cit., 1852 pp. 15-21

A high proportion of this output was exported. Export figures rose rapidly between 1830 and 1850:

Exports of printed and dyed cottons¹

| | | | |
|------|---------------|------|---------------|
| 1830 | 199.8 m. yds. | 1845 | 413.3 m. yds. |
| 1835 | 279.8 | 1850 | 586.0 |
| 1840 | 357.5 | | |

For excise purposes printed and dyed cloths were classed together, so that the exact quantity of prints is difficult to determine, but Potter estimated the quantity of printed goods exported in 1851 at 15.5 m. pieces (three quarters of the total production). The importance of this export trade to the national economy is indicated by its estimated value of £5.775 m., or one quarter of the entire exports of manufactured goods,² and increasingly this trade was centred around Manchester. In Lancashire over the decade 1840 to 1851 the number of printworks increased from 93 to 120³, and the number of printing machines in England (most of which were in Lancashire) from 435 to 604. Such was the output of machines that the number of blocking tables declined over the same period from over 8,000 to just under 4,000.⁴

Calico printing provided a locus classicus for debates concerning the application of art to industry. As compared with the art manufactures of Birmingham, the scale of production was vast and increasing in this period, the consumption of such goods was widespread in the home market, and they constituted a significant proportion of national exports. In the sensitive area of marketing both at home and abroad, the quality of design was crucial; printed cloths represent one of the earliest industrial manufactures where consumption was based not simply on utility. 'Art'

1 G. Turnbull, op.cit., 1951 p. 431

2 E. Potter, op.cit., 1852 pp. 27-8

3 Ibid., pp. 29-30

4 G. Turnbull, op.cit., 1951 p. 82

and 'design' in this context had a clear economic value. On an optimistic note in 1842, one commentator observed that Manchester's patterns "guide taste equally under the burning sun of Africa, and amid the snows of Siberia".¹

However, from the late eighteenth century, doubts had been raised regarding the quality of designs. In one case decline in quality was attributed to the introduction of machinery by Livesey and Hargreaves:

"... 600 or 700 cylinders have been cut or pinned; common prints etc. innumerable; and it is well known, one man, at the beginning made a decent fortune by the cutting of them; but as observed above, the price of labour was reduced as much as possible; by converting (as done at other places) herds of Lancashire boors into drawers, cutters, printers, machine workers etc., and the work was latterly proportionably execrable."²

To some extent also, the ephemerality of fashion might be blamed, as it was in the buckle trade at Birmingham:³

"... patterns are for the most part like soap bubbles blown in the sunshine; glittering and iridescent, they burst almost at the moment of their birth and leave not a trace behind. Novelty, the handmaid of 'Fashion' and sometimes the enemy of 'Taste' enjoys but a short and fleeting existence ..."⁴

Throughout the period under discussion, the feeling remained strong that the French were superior in the highest class of designs. Edmund Potter, a leading manufacturer of printed calico and a prolific writer on the subject, as well as an active supporter of the School of Design, observed that the French printed fabrics displayed at the Great Exhibition exemplified their excellence over English productions in drawing, colouring and execution. "They had all the scope required for

1 W.C. Taylor, Notes of the manufacturing districts, 1842 p. 10

2 C. O'Brien, A treatise on calico-printing, 2 v. 1792, quoted in G. Turnbull, op.cit., 1951 p. 72

3 see chapter 4 below

4 J. Thomson F.R.S., A letter to the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Peel on copyright, 1840, quoted in G. Turnbull, op.cit., 1951 p. 80

art; and they were works of art".¹ It was argued by some experts that the imitation of French designs had brought about an improvement in the quality of English manufacture. Thomas James, a silk merchant, recounted to the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures how the silk manufacturers of Manchester had improved the beauty of their own products, having obtained patterns of French goods from him.² On the other hand, the argument that imitation and even the purchase of French patterns by English manufacturers had inhibited the development of native design and was economically unsound, was reiterated in evidence to various select committees in this period, as noticed in chapter 3 above. Potter advanced this view in 1841, claiming that one Print House alone had paid more than £1500 in 1839 for French designs,³ although in 1852 he modified this opinion to some extent, asserting that the quantities of designs alleged to have been obtained from Paris, and the sums paid for them, had been exaggerated.⁴ Thomas Bull, a designer of calico prints, wrote in 1853:

"The Designers are all very anxious to be considered Men of Taste, and frequently launch out with a few extravagant Drawings; but the cold indifference shown to Designs ... not possessing the prestige of a French Name, damps the ardour of the English Designer, and obliges him to return in the trodden path."⁵

Vociferous in the campaign of 1841 for extending copyright in designs, Potter put the commercial argument to Mark Philips:

"... the closer the competition, the greater the necessity for taste in design, and copyright as a means of procuring it.

You ... refer to French designs and admit that they are better. They are so, most undoubtedly.

1 E. Potter, op.cit., 1852 p. 57

2 P.P. 1836 (568) ix I qq. 336, 342

3 E. Potter A letter to Mark Philips, Manchester, 1841 p. 11

4 E. Potter, op.cit., 1852 p. 63

5 Thomas Bull, A voice from the bench, Manchester, 1853 p. 7

This was the one fact admitted by all the witnesses examined before the Committee. Those for the Bill ascribe it to ... taste, respected and promoted by the legislature and public opinion."¹

Both Potter and Bull in the years following the Great Exhibition, sought to relieve the English designer of blame for lack of commercial success by pointing to the responsibility of public taste. Many of the arguments advanced for the promotion of art were concerned with the education of public taste, as indicated in chapter 1 above, and it is particularly significant in the context of this thesis that some of the leading writers on calico printing should have implied that the extension of good design in fabrics would be morally beneficial to the population at large. Thus arguments for the application of art to industry were not exclusively commercial.

Amongst the pattern books of the Lightfoot family, printers at Broad Oak Mill, Accrington, is a manuscript note by John Lightfoot on a French design of 1863:

"This work really puts 'John Bull' in shade... Because the French have got the benefit of 'order' and few English men know it. It is nature's great Law! The first law given to man by the Allmighty! Without it this world would be a kaos! I owe all my success (what little I have had) to this great law."²

The analogy of beauty and virtue was proposed by Potter in his letter of 1841: "Till virtue is properly estimated, it will never be respected or encouraged; so it will be in Art and Taste. Ignorance is the bane of both".³ This analogy was implied again elsewhere in his writings, for example in his argument that improvement of taste and diffusion of art

1 E. Potter, op.cit., 1841 p. 10

2 Calico Printers Association records, M.C.L. Archives M75 (un-numbered item with pattern books nos. 46-48)

3 E. Potter, op.cit., 1841 p. 6

in a lower class of production would not prejudice improvement in the higher class "either in the moral, intellectual or artistic world." He distinguished the taste of different social strata and argued of the working and middle classes of society

"They require it quiet, modest, and useful, and any deviation for the sake of novelty, which calls in the aid of the brighter and less permanent colour, quickly checks itself. The sober careful classes of society cling to an inoffensive taste."¹

In comparing the different export markets, he associated the demand for good taste with those countries and classes which possessed "a degree of education and refinement, sufficient to appreciate art in connection with manufactures."²

Pugin and Ruskin had sufficiently popularised such concepts as the morality of decorative art to have made them readily accessible by the 1850's. But even as early as 1835 similar inferences might have been drawn from Baines' writings on cotton manufacture:

"Women of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, are clothed in British manufactures of cotton... The ingenuity of the calico printers has ... produced patterns of printed goods, which for elegance of drawing exceed everything that was ever imported ... and give an air of neatness and cleanliness to the wearer, beyond the elegance of silk in the first freshness of its transitory lustre."

"Thus the humblest classes have now the means of as great neatness, and even gaiety of dress, as the middle and upper classes of the last age. A country-wake in the nineteenth century may display as much finery as a drawing-room of the eighteenth; and the peasant's cottage may, at this day, with good management, have as handsome furniture for beds, windows and tables, as the house of a substantial tradesman sixty years since."³

These claims implied an association between cheap decorative cloths and the inculcation of habits of order and cleanliness amongst the working

1 E. Potter, op.cit., 1852 pp. 50-51

2 Ibid. p. 36

3 E. Baines, op.cit., 1835 pp. 336, 358

classes. It is noteworthy that Baines, in selecting the peasantry for his illustration, betrayed a hint of the nostalgia for a pre-industrial order which was not uncommon in the art and literature of his time.

The industrial case for a school of design in Manchester rested principally on calico printing, but in a flourishing commercial town there were also numerous minor trades which might also benefit from trained designers. Although it is impossible to estimate precisely the demand for designers, a marked growth in such trades over this period can be identified from local directories:¹

| | 1838 | 1850 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|
| Architects and surveyors | 36 | 59 |
| Cabinet makers | 71 | 157 |
| Engravers and copper plate printers * | 39 | 104 |
| Glass painters and stainers | 4 | 6 |
| Japanners | 4 | 8 |
| Jewellers | 6 | 17 |
| Painters (fine art) | 23 | 42 |
| Print block cutters | 3 | 5 |
| Printers - lithographic | 9 | 69 |

(* many of these employed in calico printing)

A need for draughtsmen would also have been created to some extent by the engineering industry. Consequent upon the rapid mechanization of cotton manufacture, Manchester had also become an important centre of engineering, represented most notably by the great firms of Fairbairn and Whitworth. In 1838 there were listed in the directory 27 'engineers and machinists' (excluding civil engineers and machine makers), and by 1850 their number had risen to 66. The Schools of Design were principally concerned with art and ornamentation, and classes in mechanical drawing were already provided in the Mechanics' Institutions; but the evidence given by one manufacturing engineer from Manchester, James Nasmyth, to the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures anticipated many more

¹ Manchester Directories, 1838, 1850

recent ideas in advocating aesthetic education for engineers and mechanics. He argued that in the framework of machinery an improvement in the art of design "would be applicable not only in giving elegance of form, but in attaining a very decided economy in the use of the materials", and that the mechanic would improve both in professional skill and in mind and morals, from public exhibitions and from study at Mechanics' Institutions. In addition, Nasmyth suggested the aesthetic education of all working men through exhibitions of art in the factories.¹

Whilst there was, therefore, a marked industrial need for art education in Manchester, as expressed by certain prominent local manufacturers, this need was concerned with more than simple commercial benefit. In the event, the practical support forthcoming from local industrialists, and particularly from the calico printers as a whole, was very limited, and this was a constant cause for complaint in the annual reports of the Manchester School of Design in the later 1840s. It will be demonstrated later in this chapter that the few manufacturers who were active in promotion of the school were those who supported other educational and cultural institutions in the town and who seem to have been motivated as much by a belief in the moral value of art as by commercial self-interest.

II

The growth of cultural and educational institutions in Manchester during the first half of the nineteenth century provides a significant background to the formation of the local School of Design. In particular the visual arts received great encouragement locally in the years 1830 to 1850.

¹ P.P. 1836 (568) ix II qq. 294-5

Well before its rise to fame as a centre of industrial revolution, some important cultural institutions had been established in Manchester. Chetham's Hospital and Library founded in 1656 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1665 was the oldest Blue Coat School and Public Free Library in England, and a grammar school had been founded by Bishop Oldham in the early sixteenth century. Warrington Academy from 1757, and subsequently Manchester New College from 1786, provided a local education of high quality for many of those dissenters who were to make important scientific and technological contributions to industrial change, and the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Institution, established in 1781, the first of its kind in England, brought together some of the finest minds of that generation in applying science to industry. Other institutions attest to a considerable intellectual dynamism and diversity in Manchester at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries (Table 4).

The select list in Table 4 suggests a marked rise in the quantity of intellectual activity in the 1820s, an increasing diversity, and towards the end of the period a growing involvement of the working classes. Amongst contemporaries, however, there appears to have been some disagreement about the intellectual status of the town. Charles Hulbert, who had spent his late teens and early twenties improving himself there, wrote in 1825 that few towns would be found to contain an equal number of enlightened individuals: "the whole population seems to be imbued with a general thirst for knowledge and improvement",¹ whilst 'Geoffrey Gimcrack' argued at about the same time that everything in Manchester was subordinated to an insatiable passion for wealth, which

1 C. Hulbert, Musaeum Europaeum, Shrewsbury, 1825 p. 143

Table 4

A select list of cultural institutions and events in
Manchester 1750-1830

| | |
|------|---|
| 1757 | Manchester Circulating Library |
| 65 | subscription library at the Exchange |
| 75 | first theatre licence for Manchester |
| 77 | three-day musical festival |
| 81 | Lit. and Phil. Soc. |
| 82 | Manchester Printing Soc. (Swedenborgian) |
| 91 | first printed catalogue of Chetham's Library |
| 1803 | Philological Soc. for diffusion of lit. and useful knowledge |
| 04 | Lit. and Phil. Soc. rooms opened |
| 06 | Portico Library (cost £7,000) |
| 07 | Theatre Royal |
| 09 | Exchange newsroom |
| 1814 | School of Anatomy |
| 17 | Manchester Chess Club |
| 19 | Hulme Phil. Institution |
| 1821 | first perf. of <u>Hamlet</u> in Manchester |
| | Manchester Soc. for Promotion of Nat. Hist. |
| | <u>Manchester Guardian</u> |
| 23 | R.M.L. inaugurated (£32,000 subscribed) |
| 24 | Floral and Horticultural Soc. |
| 25 | Manchester M.L. (£7,000 subscribed in shares) |
| 26 | Soc. for Preservation of Ancient Footpaths |
| 27 | Botanical and Horticultural Soc. |
| 28 | Manchester Music Festival (£5,000 raised) |
| | <u>Poor Man's Advocate</u> (first working class newspaper fd. in Manchester by John Doherty) |
| 29 | Banksian Soc. for study of Botany, Geology, Entomology (fd. by working men) |
| | Manchester Phrenological Soc. |
| | New Mechanics' Institution (fd. by working men led by Rowland Detrosier-breakaway from M.L.) |

Sources

- J. Butterworth, Antiquities of the town ... Manchester, Manchester, 1822
W.E.A. Axon, Annals of Manchester, 1886
Manchester Historical Recorder, Manchester, 1874

precluded a taste for the refined pleasures of the mind.¹ It is an inescapable fact that what cultural activity there was, was made possible by the industrial and commercial success of the town; economic expansion produced the surplus wealth to be spent on subscriptions and buildings, and concentrated a large population in one geographical centre.

Conflicting opinions concerning the cultural life of the town arose from different views of the economic policy of laissez-faire with which Manchester was so closely associated. De Tocqueville in 1835 identified the peculiar character of Manchester in its combination of civilization and barbarism; intellectual qualities being more important than geographical advantages to its industrial success, but the necessary cheap labour force depending on "near-savages" from Ireland.² J.G. Kohl referred to a conflict between writers on Manchester, some blackening it and others defending it as no more criminal or immoral than other large towns, but he himself was deeply impressed by its outward appearance and commercial prosperity, as well as by "its remarkable moral and political phenomena". The local Museum of Natural History he considered one of the best museums in Great Britain, although the total of 3000 shareholders for its two Mechanics' Institutions suggested to him scanty support from a town the size of Manchester, and at the time of his visit many cultural institutions fell victims to economic depression.³

Leon Faucher visited Manchester in the same year as Kohl, 1842, a year of intense industrial depression, and the picture of cultural poverty

1 Geoffrey Gimcrack pseud. [J.S. Gregson], Gimcrackiana, Manchester, 1833 pp. 159-60

2 A. de Tocqueville, Journeys to England and Ireland, ed. J.P. Mayer, 1958 pp. 104, 113

3 J.G. Kohl, Ireland, Scotland and England, 1844 pp. 106-7, 129-30 (The conflict to which Kohl referred may have been that conducted in two anonymous pamphlets: Manchester and Manchester people, by a Citizen of the World, 1843 and a reply: Vindication of Manchester, by a foreigner, 1843)

which he sketched (especially the blame which he laid on economic policies of individualism) was a direct antecedant of the criticisms made by Ruskin and Arnold amongst others who described the town as lacking in culture because dominated by the commercial spirit.¹ However, even 'Geoffrey Gimcrack' had claimed to be criticising the 'Manchester man', and not the facilities for literary occupations, for "few towns can boast institutions which offer nobler advantages to the reading part of the community".² Examining more closely the institutions of the 1830s and 1840s, one is forced to question Faucher's view that "literature and the arts are a dead letter".³

The flourishing of cultural institutions in the mid 1830's was indicated in a manuscript list of literary and scientific institutions drawn up by Benjamin Heywood in 1834 in reply to a query from the London Statistical Society. Seven large circulating libraries, two professional libraries and Chetham's Library (reference only) were augmented by various private circulating libraries of lighter reading, parish and chapel libraries, and reading rooms for the working classes in various districts of the town. Ten major societies were listed (eight of which are included in Table 4, in addition to the Agricultural Society, established as far back as 1767, and the recently founded Manchester Statistical Society).⁴ A further select list of institutions and events in the years 1830-50 illustrates not only the continuing growth of cultural activity, but also its continued extension to the working classes (Table 5).

Manchester was notable for cultural institutions established by

1 L. Faucher, Manchester in 1844, 1844 p.x

2 Geoffrey Gimcrack pseud. [J.S. Gregson], op.cit., 1833 p. 159

3 L. Faucher, op.cit., 1844 p. 21

4 B. Heywood, Report on the associations for the promotion of literature and science in Manchester, 1834, MS. in M.C.L. Archives MS.f.310.6 15/37

Table 5

A select list of cultural institutions and events in
Manchester 1830-1850

| | |
|------|---|
| 1830 | R.M.I. building completed Manchester Gentlemen's Glee Club |
| 1831 | Manchester School of Medicine and Surgery opened Manchester Choral Soc., first concert Botanical and Horticultural Gdns. opened |
| 1832 | John Doherty's coffee shop, bookshop and newsroom ('People's Library of Cheap and Entertaining Knowledge') |
| 1833 | Manchester Statistical Soc. |
| 1834 | Manchester Medical Soc. Geological Soc. Miles Platting Institution |
| 1835 | Athenaeum Natural Hist. Mus. opened (Old Trafford) |
| 1836 | Music Festival |
| 1837 | Manchester Architectural Soc. Manchester Soc. for Promoting National Education |
| 1838 | Salford M.I. Ancoats Lyceum Chorlton-on-Medlock Lyceum Cheetham Hill Operative Institution School of Design Zoological Gardens (Higher Broughton) |
| 1839 | Salford Lyceum new Athenaeum building opened |
| 1840 | Owenite Hall of Science |
| 1841 | Hargreaves Choral Soc. |
| 1843 | Chetham Soc. Lancs. and Cheshire Workmen's Singing Classes (first meeting at Free Trade Hall - 1500 performers) Athenaeum soiree with Charles Dickens |
| 1844 | Manchester Church Education Soc. Athenaeum soirée with Disraeli |
| 1845 | new Theatre Royal opened Lancs. and Cheshire Philharmonic Institution (first of series of concerts for working classes) Athenaeum soirée with Douglas Jerrold, Sergeant Talfourd |
| 1846 | Owens bequest £97,000 for a college Athenaeum soirée with Lord Morpeth |
| 1849 | Salford Borough Mus. and Lib. opened |
| 1850 | scheme for Free Library launched in Manchester |

Sources

Manchester Historical Recorder, Manchester 1874

W.E.A. Axon, Annals of Manchester, 1886

W.A. Shaw, Manchester old and new, 3.v. 1894-5

F.S. Stancliffe, John Shaw's 1738-1938, Timperley, Cheshire, 1938

the working class, such as Rowland Detrosier's New Mechanics' Institution in 1829 and John Doherty's 'People's Library' of 1832 (Tables 4, 5).¹ Martha Vicinus has shown how literary activity, especially the writing of poetry, transcended class boundaries between middle class and working men in Manchester.² The broadening class basis of cultural activity at this period had a striking parallel in racing; at Heaton Park, the local race course, 1835 was "a year of changes" when professional jockeys were allowed to join in the riding, which had previously been confined to gentlemen, and for the spectators tickets of admission were dispensed with, and "all decent people were permitted to enter the grounds without scruple".³ Most of the cultural activity was, however, organised by the middle classes. In the case of the visual arts the initiative came from them, but some distinction will be made in the discussion below between provision by the middle classes for their own benefit (notably in the Royal Manchester Institution) and that for the benefit of working people (through the Mechanics' Institution).

Before examining in detail the varieties of provision in the visual arts, some general points must be made, first regarding the motives behind provision of cultural activity for the working classes, and secondly concerning the existence in Manchester of an 'intellectual elite'.

Many Lyceums and similar institutions were opened locally in the mid 1830s, by employers for the recreation and instruction of their workers in the evenings. J.G. Kohl quoted the engineer William Fairbairn as

1 R. Kirby and A. Musson, The voice of the people, 1976 pp. 334-9
R. Kirby, 'The 'New Mechanics' Institution', in D.S.L. Cardwell ed. Artisan to Graduate, Manchester, 1975

2 M. Vicinus, Literary voices of an industrial town, in H. Dyos and M. Wolff eds. The Victorian City, 1973 v.2 chap. 31

3 R.W. Procter, Our Turf, our Stage and our Ring, 1862 p. 59

maintaining that the educated workmen were far more moderate in their demands, and quiet and manageable in their behaviour, and Edmund Potter who, like Fairbairn, was a patron of the School of Design in Manchester, argued that education led both to morality and to taste.¹ Engels was suspicious of reading-rooms provided by the mill-owners to "inculcate strict obedience" and "to support the middle-class point of view".² Reports of both the Manchester Mechanics' Institution and the Athenæum in 1836 referred to their common objects in mental and moral improvement of the people and the youth of the lower middle classes, and in drawing them from "scenes of dissipation and vice ... that abound in large communities".³

Reacting against the alleged motives of employers in establishing such institutions, John Doherty, the working-class radical, encouraged independent action by the working classes, yet he himself, like many of the masters, saw cultural activity as an antidote to intemperance.⁴ The relationship between temperance and cultural activity was raised with regard to music by Faucher who had been shocked to hear sacred music performed in the saloons of gin palaces, but his translator noted that the manufacturing districts of Lancashire were distinguished for their successful cultivation of music and that sacred oratorios of Handel and Haydn were familiar as household words amongst the working classes. Musical concerts in public houses, he argued, represented a decline in drinking for its own sake.⁵ The growth of choral societies for working men in Manchester is recorded in Table 5, and "the town's craving for music"⁶ was

1 J.G. Kohl, op.cit., 1844 p. 138

E. Potter, A picture of a manufacturing district, 1856 p. 12

2 F. Engels, The condition of the working class in England, trans. W.O. Henderson and W.H. Chaloner, Oxford, 1971 p.211

3 The Analyst v.4 (1836) pp. 131-5

4 R. Kirby and A. Musson, op.cit., 1975 pp. 334-9

5 L. Faucher, op.cit., 1844 pp. 49-50

6 F.S. Stancliffe, op.cit., 1938 p. 164

reflected amongst the middle classes in the gentlemen's concerts already well established, the Gentlemen's Glee Club founded in 1830, and the great musical festivals of 1828 and 1836.

The existence of a middle class 'intellectual elite' to which many of the promoters of the Manchester School of Design will be seen to have belonged is well attested by the journal of Absalom Watkin.¹ A liberal and an intimate friend of Cobden and Bright, Watkin was a man of intellectual cultivation and was involved in societies for the "rational amusement" of both middle and working classes in Manchester. In the years 1835-9 he was engaged in the establishment of the Athenaeum of which he subsequently became a director, he attended dinners of the Literary Society and another for 'friends of education', took an active part in the Essay and Discussion Society, and gave an address at the opening of the zoological gardens which he hoped would "long be distinguished as a source of rational recreation and instruction to all classes of the inhabitants of this populous district."² Watkin had inherited his uncle's cotton business, and had at the same time built up an extensive library and developed an interest in history, travel and botany. He was perhaps egregious amongst fellow industrialists for the depth of his intellectual pursuits, for which he gave up his business, but from his journal can be identified a group of local men with cultural interests, many of them manufacturers.³ A distinguishing characteristic which he shared with his friends, was experience of travel: Watkin took a particular interest in architecture and objets d'art, visiting stately homes on his journeys; he travelled frequently to London, where he attended theatres and concert

1 A. Watkin, Extracts from his journal 1814-1856 ed. A.E. Watkin, 1920

2 Ibid. pp. 183-199

3 Ibid. pp. 111, 115

halls, and the awareness of metropolitan culture must have been an important stimulus to activity in Manchester.

Engagement in cultural societies was not exclusive to one political or occupational group; another vice-president of the Athenaeum was James Crossley, a staunch tory solicitor with extensive literary tastes, and his fellow solicitor William Harrison Ainsworth, also a tory and a member of various local societies, took up literature as a full-time occupation.¹ V. Gatrell, in his recent thesis, has noticed a distinct political division within the social elite of Manchester, between tory and whig-radical newly-risen men tended to attach themselves to one or other group to attain a vicarious status.² But party politics were generally excluded from cultural societies; a proposal for establishing the Royal Manchester Institution in 1823 asserted that:

"shrinking from all participation in the storms of religious or political animosity, literature and the arts flourish only in a still and quiet atmosphere of their own; they are the guardian deities of peace and harmony",³

and similarly with regard to the Athenaeum, Dr. Henry warned James Heywood that it should never be perverted to the causes of party politics, but only pursue "in a spirit of cordial union ... those objects that would still the warring elements of interest and passion".⁴

Religious and political convictions frequently went hand-in-hand, tory with high church on the one hand and whig-radical with Unitarianism and Quakerism on the other,⁵ and Unitarians were particularly prominent amongst the cultural elite. The calico printer Salis Schwabe for

1 F.S. Stancliffe, op.cit., 1938 passim.

2 V. Gatrell, The commercial middle classes in Manchester c.1820-1857, Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 1971, pp. 148-153.

3 R.M.I. Council Mins. 1823-35, M.C.L. Archives M6/1

4 The Analyst v.4 (1836) pp. 131-2

(Dr William Henry 1774-1836, son of the more famous Dr. Thomas Henry 1734-1816, chemist and co-founder of Manchester Lit. and Phil. Soc. - D.N.B.)

5 V. Gatrell, op.cit., pp. 151-2

instance, who entertained at his country house at Crumpsall and patronised contemporary music and literature, was a Unitarian. As early as 1816, the Mosley Street Chapel had boasted "as much respectability in the characters which compose it" as any in Manchester and Salford,¹ and under the distinguished ministry of William Gaskell from 1828-1884 Cross Street Unitarian Chapel became an influential centre of intellectual life in Manchester. As evidence of their educational endeavour, the Unitarian boys' school in Lower Mosley Street was one of the earliest local schools to appoint certificated teachers and pupil-teachers under the Minutes of 1846, and was consistently praised by the inspectors.²

The Gaskell family itself became a cynosure of well-educated Mancunians, such as scientists, schoolmasters and journalists, and especially of the émigré German and Italian communities. Their hospitality extended to notable individuals from outside Manchester, such as Macready who stayed with them when acting in the town, and to foreigners.³ Many of the German merchants in Manchester attended the Unitarian Chapel, and the presence of large numbers of Europeans was an important feature of Mancunian society, revealing a direct link between the local economy, dominated by commerce, and the cultural life of the town. Ogden observed as early as 1783 that the openness of Manchester to strangers was the basis of a strong economy and a large wage-earning middle-class;⁴ a manuscript list of foreign merchants in Manchester gave the following figures:⁵

1 J. Aston, A picture of Manchester, 1816, p. 96

2 J.T. Slugg, Reminiscences of Manchester fifty years ago, Manchester, 1881 pp. 172-3
S.D. Simon, A century of city government, 1938 pp. 230-1

3 R. Ryan, A biography of Manchester, 1937 p. 23
H. McLachlan, Cross Street chapel in the life of Manchester, in Manchester Lit. and Phil. Soc. Memoirs and Proc. for 1939-41 v.84 (1942)

4 [J. Ogden], Description of Manchester, by a native, 1783, repr. 1866 ed. W.E. Axon, p. 93

5 J. Scholes, List of foreign merchants residing in Manchester, MS (M.C.L. Archives)

| | German | French | Italian | Others | Total |
|------|--------|--------|---------|--------|-------|
| 1820 | 28 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 35 |
| 1826 | 45 | 6 | 3 | - | 54 |
| 1830 | 61 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 74 |

The presence of these Europeans attracted others, residents and visitors; the Lancasterian School at Manchester was, for example, visited by "many of the most distinguished men of learning in Europe".¹ A cosmopolitan outlook might thus have been expected amongst the local intelligentsia, and examples abound: Henry Winkworth's daughters received part of their education in Germany, William Langton, co-founder of the Manchester Statistical Society, received his early education in Europe, and his friend Dr. James Kay made considerable innovations in English elementary education on the basis of European experience. One effect of its cosmopolitanism on the cultural life of Manchester may be identified precisely in the arrival in 1849 of Charles Augustus Hallé as a German refugee from Paris, where he had mixed with Berlioz and Wagner.²

In the activities of the various cultural societies of Manchester, there can be traced a growing interest in the visual arts, indicative of a general trend which, it is here argued, led towards the establishment of a School of Design. This interest was foreshadowed in a local proposal of 1783 for a College of Arts and Sciences which was to combine a considerable portion of liberal instruction with a 'commercial' curriculum. The lectures to be given were: 1) on practical mathematics, natural and experimental philosophy, and geography, 2) on chemistry with reference to arts and manufactures, 3) on the theory and history of the fine arts, and 4) on the origin, history and progress of arts, manufactures

1 J. Butterworth, Antiquities of the town ... of Manchester, Manchester, 1822, p. 182

2 D.N.B.

and commerce, including commercial laws and contracts.¹ Such a curriculum eschewed the classics, but lightened commercial and scientific studies with a consideration of literature, music and art.

Manchester Mechanics' Institution, founded in 1824, was the earliest of the large provincial institutions, and the first to enjoy purpose-built accommodation, from 1827. This was an example of an institution provided by the middle for the working classes. Mabel Tylecote has fully described the early vocational bias which gradually gave way to a broadening of the curriculum in the 1830s, due to pressure from the artisans and their increasing role in the government of the M.I., to the competition from other institutions, and not least to the changing views of Benjamin Heywood himself, president and most active patron of the Mechanics' Institution.² One conclusion drawn by Tylecote (which will be applied below in considering the Manchester School of Design) is the influence which individual personalities had in determining the direction taken by different institutions.³

The general pattern of change in the Mechanics' Institution from a practical to a more liberal bias is well reflected in the development of the drawing classes. Early in the life of the institution, a mechanical and an architectural drawing class were established, justified by the need for drawing skills in civil and mechanical engineering. In 1831, however, "to gratify the subscribers and to increase the interest of the establishment", a class for landscape, figure, flower and general ornamental drawing was set up. This was taught by Charles Calvert, a well established landscape

1 College of Arts and Sciences, instituted at Manchester June vi, MDCCCLXXXIII, Prospectus M.C.L. Archives S+A 94/44

2 M. Tylecote, Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire, Manchester, 1957 chap. 5

3 Ibid. p. 68

painter, and a small fee was charged. This drawing class rapidly became more popular than the others, and although the annual report of 1831 had anticipated that it might serve as an introduction to the architectural and mechanical drawing classes, the likelihood is that many students regarded it as a preferable option altogether. Such a conclusion is reinforced by a decline in attendance at the landscape and figure class after the opening of the local School of Design, which was generally regarded as superior by comparison with the elementary nature of the Mechanics' Institution classes.¹ (Table 6)

Further indications of a growing interest in the visual arts within the Mechanics' Institution are found in the library catalogues. In the 1834 edition, the Fine Arts were classed as one of the 'Mixed Sciences' along with Natural Philosophy, Useful Arts, Natural History etc. (by contrast with 'Pure Sciences' which included Mathematics, Metaphysics, Morals and Theology). About half the works listed under Fine Arts were on architecture, and under the sub-heading Drawing, Painting and Sculpture was a very small range of titles with a distinctly practical bias:

Fuseli's Lectures on Painting, 1820
 Gwilt on Shadows, 1824
 Hamilton's Elements of Drawing, 1812
 Hullmandel's Art of Drawing on Stone, 1824
 Metz's Studies of the Human Figure, 1819
 Memes's History of Sculpture, Painting and Architecture, 1829
 Ornaments for Carvers, Painters etc., 1825
 Reynolds' Discourses at the Royal Academy, 1825
 Smith's Cabinet Maker's and Upholsterer's Drawing Book, 1826
 Taylor's Familiar Treatise on Drawing, 1830
 Theory and Practice of Drawing and Painting, 1819
 Whittock's Oxford Drawing Book, 1830²

The seventh edition of 1849, however, showed a clear development. Within a system of classification altogether changed, Fine Arts now received

1 Manchester M.I. Annual Repts., 1831 p. 5, 1838 p. 12

2 Manchester M.I., Catalogue of the Library, Manchester, 1834 pp. 35-6

Table 6

Attendance figures for drawing classes at
Manchester Mechanics' Institution 1828-41

| | | | |
|------|------------------------------|-----|---|
| 1828 | Mechanical drawing | 44 | |
| | Architectural drawing | 83 | |
| 1836 | Mechanical | 38 | |
| | Architectural | 33 | |
| | Landscape, flower and figure | 60 | |
| 1837 | Mechanical | 60 | |
| | Landscape etc. | 87 | |
| 1838 | Mechanical | 80 | * |
| | Architectural | 80 | * |
| | Landscape etc. | 130 | * |

(School of Design opened at Royal Manchester Institution, Oct. 1838)

| | | | |
|------|----------------|-----|--|
| 1839 | Mechanical | 64 | |
| | Architectural | nil | |
| | Landscape etc. | 46 | |
| 1841 | Mechanical | 34 | |
| | Architectural | 35 | |
| | Landscape etc. | 19 | |

* Approximate figures

Sources

Manchester M.I. Annual Repts.
The Analyst v.4 (1836) p. 135

Note

After 1841 Calvert's drawing class was discontinued, since its purposes were apparently being served by the School of Design. Two technical drawing classes continued: one 'Mechanical and Architectural', the other 'General Drawing and Pattern Designing', the latter having a generally much lower attendance.

a section to itself and was much expanded in size and scope. Books dealing with appreciation and history of art were now much more in evidence.

Examples of new titles were:

Bell's Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression, 1844
 British School of Art, 1831
 Cameos from the Antique; or Cabinet of Mythology, 1831
 Dodd's Connoisseur's Repertorium; a Record of Painters,
 Sculptors and Architects, 1825
 Flaxman's Lectures on Sculpture, 1829
 Haydon's Lectures on Painting and Design, 1844
 Hervey's Illustrations of Modern Sculpture, 1834
 Historic Gallery of Portraits and Paintings, 1829
 Hoare's Epochs of the Arts, 1813
 Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting in England, 1786
 James's Flemish, Dutch and German Schools of Painting, 1822¹

That these books were frequently consulted is suggested by the numbers of library loans, which rose from 24 to 54 books per member per annum over the period covered by these two catalogues.²

Fine arts and architecture entered the lecture lists in the year 1837-8, with two series of lectures from Haydon on Painting, as well as two lectures by George Jackson on Schools of Design.

The major contribution by the Mechanics' Institution to artistic activity in the town was probably its series of exhibitions. First proposed by Benjamin Heywood, president of the Mechanics' Institution, in 1837, five exhibitions were subsequently held between 1837 and 1845. The first exhibition set the pattern: specimens of natural history, models of machinery and philosophical (i.e. scientific) apparatus were borrowed by the directors and exhibited in six rooms during the Christmas vacation.

Such was the response that the proposed period of opening was extended to 35 days (subsequent exhibitions lasted 10-17 weeks) during which 50,000 visitors were recorded. New Year's Day, described as "the

1 Manchester M.I., Library Catalogue, 7th ed. 1849, pp. 53-5

2 M. Tylecote, op.cit., 1957 p. 152

great festival of the working classes", drew great crowds which escalated in the ensuing week until 3,000 passed through the rooms on one day alone. 'Free admission was granted to children from local schools such as Chetham's Hospital, the Deaf and Dumb School, and the Manchester and Salford Workhouses. The Directors claimed to be imitating similar exhibitions, "the effects of which have been felt in France, and other parts of the continent, by generating a taste for works of art in giving a polish to the manners, and rightly directing the pursuits of the people", and expressed their gratification that no wilful damage was done.¹ Heywood referred to "the new and nobler taste which it has awakened", and also commented on the lack of damage, arguing that this disproved the fear of those who would not open their collections to working men at large and appealing to the Royal Institution, Natural History Society, and Botanical and Zoological Gardens in Manchester to take note of their example.² Mr. Cumber, a schoolmaster and a director of the Mechanics' Institution recounted at the annual general meeting in 1839 how effective such exhibitions were in the cause of temperance and told of one intoxicated man who had been admitted to the second exhibition and had been utterly reformed by the experience.³

These exhibitions included a great variety of objects, but in the third annual exhibition (April to June 1840) a picture gallery formed the principal feature, and the directors' report boasted that the valuable paintings by Landseer, Turner, West, Callcott, Leslie, Morland etc., and the sculpture, loaned by noblemen and gentlemen of the district, constituted the most extensive and valuable collection ever opened to the

1 Manchester M.I. Annual Rep., 1838, pp. 22-4

2 Ibid. p. 28

3 Manchester M.I. Annual Rep., 1839, pp. 56-57

public of Manchester on such reasonable terms.¹ To reinforce the didactic purposes of this exhibition, lectures, soirées and promenades were organised, and the Exhibition Gazette was published weekly, giving news and commentaries on the exhibits. In general the comments on works of art were brief and rather superficial but were obviously calculated to extend the visitors' educational experience. These Gazettes were continued for the fourth and fifth exhibitions.

The catalogue of the fifth exhibition held at Christmas 1844-5 listed many antiquities and objets d'art in the general galleries, but the main Painting Gallery with 139 items, included works attributed to Rubens, Rembrandt and the Carracci, many Dutch landscapes, several works attributed to Murillo and one to Raphael. Local painters such as Liverseege exhibited, as did painters from London, most notably Haydon, whose Curtius was on show. There were 50 watercolours, 36 engravings and 53 pieces of sculpture exhibited.² From 1839 the Mechanics' Institution began to form a permanent museum which consisted mainly of natural history specimens, but the donations recorded in 1839 and 1840 included works of art such as prints after Raphael given by William Langton, and a cast of a Gladiator and three terracotta figures donated by Sir Benjamin Heywood and Mr. Joseph Zanetti respectively.³

A secondary purpose of the exhibitions was to raise money for the institution, and in this connection a brief reference should be made to bazaars. The bazaar was a sale of useful and ornamental arts the primary purpose of which was to raise funds. The Mechanics' Institution launched one in 1840 for the benefit of the building fund, which was very

1 Manchester M.I. Annual Rep., 1841 p. 23

2 Manchester M.I., Catalogue of the Fifth Exhibition, Manchester, 1845

3 Manchester M.I. Annual Repts. 1839, 1840

successful, and the idea was taken up by the Athenaeum, and by the Anti-Corn Law League whose national bazaar in Covent Garden has been interpreted as a precursor to the Great Exhibition of 1851.¹ Clearly, in both exhibitions and bazaars the boundary between entertainment and instruction cannot be easily defined. Analogies may be drawn with other fields of social activity in Manchester, where the race week in 1835 was marked by a performance of the Merchant of Venice by Charles Kean under the patronage of the Steward of the Races, Lord Robert Grosvenor.² But the art exhibition had a definite educational purpose, and one of the great glories of mid-nineteenth century Manchester was the Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857, an event of national importance. In 1866 Lord Houghton (Richard Monckton Milnes) was greeted with cries of "hear! hear!" and cheers, when he addressed the Art Workmen's Exhibition in Manchester in the following terms:

"In such a town as this, where material interests are so powerful, and where competition for life is so hard, it is a great thing to preserve an interest in works of art ... a good work of art gives to mankind, to all who look upon it, a real sense of something which is permanent, lasting, and unchangeable."³

The Athenaeum was a society founded in response to certain tensions felt within the Mechanics' Institution between the demands of technical instruction and a demand for "rational amusement". In his address to the first general meeting, the president, James Heywood quoted Roscoe of Liverpool in favour of the study of science and literature, and referred to James Watt as a man not only skilled in mechanical arts, but a cultivated all-rounder familiar with architecture, music and law;

1 R.J. Morris, Leeds and the Crystal Palace, in Victorian Studies v.13 (1970) p. 286

2 R.W. Procter, op.cit., 1862 pp. 60-61

3 Art Workmen's Exhibition, R.M.I., Rep. of Inaugural Proc., Manchester, 1866 p. 10

science, commerce and literature were compared to the three graces of antiquity, sisters in mutual support.¹ Many of the founding committee were leading industrialists and professional men whose names were found amongst the patrons of other cultural societies, and in the memoirs of the intellectual Watkin.²

In the curriculum of this institution, the visual arts were present. In 1837 for example, John Britton F.S.A. gave eight lectures on architectural antiquities, and in the following year Haydon lectured on Fuseli, and George Jackson spoke on the need for a knowledge of ornamental design.³ The library contained a large section of novels, tales and romances (1100 books in 1842), compared with which the section on Fine Arts, Literary History etc. (140 books in 1842) was rather small. Indeed, 'Voyages, travels and topography' accounted for 519 books.⁴ However, the library catalogue published in 1847 revealed significant works on art such as:

Art Union (journal)
H.W. Beechey Memoir of Sir Joshua Reynolds
John W. Brown Life of Leonardo da Vinci with a
critical account of his works
Sir J. Reynolds Collected writings
Cellini Memoirs, translated by Thomas Roscoe
Cellini Treatise on painting
Allan Cunningham Lives of the most eminent British
painters
Thomas Hope Historical essay on architecture
William Hazlitt Criticisms on art and sketches of the
picture galleries of England
G.F. Waagen Works of art and artists in England,

works by Mrs. Jameson, and the writings of B.R. Haydon (presented by himself).⁵

1 The Analyst v.4 (1836) p. 133

2 Manchester Athenaeum, Rep. of public meeting for the purpose of
establishing the Athenaeum, Manchester, 1835

3 Manchester Athenaeum, Repts. of the directors, 1837, 1838

4 Manchester Athenaeum, Rep. of the directors, 1842, p. 7

5 Manchester Athenaeum, Catalogue of the Athenaeum Library, 1847

The pursuit of artistic activity by such institutions in Manchester was to some extent pre-empted by the most prestigious of all provincial institutions for the encouragement of the fine arts, the Royal Manchester Institution for the Promotion of Literature, Science and the Arts, which was to become the parent body of the School of Design. Its purpose was to bring together local artists and amateurs, and patrons of art, providing within one building a permanent collection and annual exhibitions of modern art, series of lectures, studio and study facilities for artists and patrons, and prizes awarded at the annual exhibitions to encourage local artists. This institution was essentially for the benefit of the middle classes, since members (who were called Governors) had to subscribe at least two guineas per annum, which gave themselves and their families free entrance to all exhibitions and lectures. These exhibitions and lectures were, however, open to the public, and the aim of the institution in raising the level of culture in the town as a whole was explicit in some of its early statements.

The first paragraph of a printed address circulated in 1823 to promote the formation of "an Establishment in Manchester for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts" revealed a conscious attempt to reconcile commercial pursuits and cultural achievement (a particular problem of Manchester as identified by some outside observers discussed above):

"An alliance between Commerce and the Liberal Arts is at once natural and salutary. The wishes of mankind increase with the means of gratifying them; and the superfluous wealth, which is the fruit of an extensive and flourishing trade, finds an object in those elegant productions of human genius and skill which minister to the luxury of the imagination. Nor do the Arts fail to reward the patronage which is extended to them; they bestow an intellectual grace upon society; they refine the taste and soften the manners; they not only furnish employment for the rich which must otherwise accumulate in useless abundance, but provide a counteracting

influence to the gross and sordid spirit which is too often the result of an undivided attention to mercenary pursuits."¹

At the first public meeting in October 1823, chaired by Dr. J.D. Hulme, it was resolved that

"the diffusion of a taste for the Fine Arts, in this populous and opulent district, by establishing a collection of the best models that can be obtained, in Painting and Sculpture, and by opening a channel through which the works of meritorious Artists may be brought before the Public, and the encouragement of Literary and Scientific pursuits by the delivery of popular courses of public Lectures ..."²

An account of the meeting printed in the Manchester Exchange-Herald observed that the progress of Taste and a love of the Arts proceeded in a town much as in an individual, that in Manchester it had lain dormant until spinning by machinery and calico printing had led to education and a gradual reawakening of Taste, in the form of "Buildings for the purpose of elegant Amusements, and Literary Institutions". Addressing the meeting, G.W. Wood a whig manufacturer and a very cultivated man, rejected Napoleon's slur on "the Nation of Shopkeepers" by pointing to the rise of intellectual societies in London, Liverpool and Manchester.³ Indeed, the immediate precedent for the Manchester plan was the Liverpool Royal Institution inaugurated in 1817 by local artists and patrons such as B.A. Heywood and William Roscoe.

Whereas in Liverpool an existing mansion was converted to the uses of the Royal Institution, in Manchester a new building was erected "to reflect honour on the public spirit and good taste of the founders,

1. R.M.I. Council Mins., M.C.L. Archives M6/1 (5 Nov. 1823)

2. Ibid. (Oct. 1823)

3. Manchester ... origin and outline of the plan of an institution (Manchester Exchange-Herald) [1823], M.C.L. Archives S.& A. 94/46

and to be considered more accordant with the wealth and consequence of the town of Manchester."¹ A measure of this "wealth and consequence" was the sum of £32,000 raised in subscriptions by 1825, and the expenditure of well over £20,000 on the building alone; for comparison, the Town Hall completed in 1825 cost less than £40,000.

It is argued throughout this thesis that provincial developments in artistic activity were to some extent in emulation of metropolitan institutions, and that a significant feature of the intellectual elite, responsible for the Schools of Design as well as for other local institutions, was their metropolitan contacts. Robert Peel, for example, intervened with the King to secure royal patronage for the institution in 1824 and later persuaded him to present a set of casts from the Elgin marbles. Sir John Fleming Leicester, an eminent collector, gave encouragement by inviting a delegation to visit his gallery of British art in London, and by offering to solicit patronage from other nobility and "Gentlemen of Taste". Amongst collectors Sir George Beaumont and Walter Fawkes expressed an interest, whilst Sir Thomas Lawrence P.R.A. became a Life Governor and wrote advice on the policy of the institution.² Correspondence with William Carey, the writer on art, revealed his interest in the institution as a means of encouraging the patronage of modern British art.³

The importance of the metropolitan connection is also suggested by a letter of March 1832 from G.W. Wood in London, where he had consulted William Ewart M.P. over a proposed list of presidents for the institution. Ewart, Heywood and Bright had advised and assisted in

1 J. Wheeler, Manchester : its political, social and commercial history, Manchester, 1842 pp. 409-12

2 R.M.I. Council Mins. M.C.L. Archives M6/1 passim
R.M.I. Letter Book M.C.L. Archives M6/A1/pp. 7, 13

3 R.M.I. Letter Book M.C.L. Archives M6/A1/pp. 81, 87
(for W.P. Carey, see chapter 1 above)

various ways, such as consulting William Wyon at the Royal Mint; Ewart and Wood warned of the danger of political bias in the list.¹

A long delay in completing the building, which was first partially opened in 1831 and fully in use only from the winter of 1834-5, inhibited the proposed activities during the early years. A group of casts and busts presented to the institution were originally kept in a room beneath the Portico Library where students and artists had access to them, but a memorandum from the artists in 1828 complained of overcrowding due to an influx of 'non-professional' students.² Haydon was certainly critical of the conduct of the drawing academy when he visited Manchester in 1837; the school was in a deranged condition with no head and no system, and distracted by idling and talking, and the studio was cluttered by lumber.³

Of greater impact on the cultural life of the town were the public lectures. Some cooperation with other provincial societies was mooted, as a letter of January 1825 from John Corrie F.R.S., president of the Birmingham Philosophical Society, referred to a conversation with B.A. Heywood of Liverpool and suggested collaboration in booking "the very best lecturers that London or Edinburgh afford." In 1827, the Mechanics' Institution allowed the use of their theatre for four courses of Royal Institution lectures including one on painting by the local artist, Arthur Perigal.⁴ Lectures on art were quite frequent from the late 1830s onwards, some of them arranged in cooperation with the Athenaeum and

1 R.M.I. Letter Book, M.C.L. Archives M6/A1/p. 169
Wood, Ewart and Heywood were all Lancashire M.P.s. Bright (presumably John Bright of Rochdale) had begun his career in public life but was not yet at Westminster (D.N.B., Dod's Parliamentary Companion)

2 R.M.I. Council Mins., M.C.L. Archives M6/1 pp. 242-3

3 R.M.I. Letter Book, M.C.L. Archives M6/A2/165
Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.4 p. 416

4 R.M.I. Letter Book, M.C.L. Archives M6/A1/pp. 39, 77

Mechanics' Institution. In 1837 lectures by John Britton on architecture were sponsored jointly with the Athenaeum, and one series by Haydon in the same year paid for by the Mechanics' Institution, the Athenaeum and the Royal Institution together. In October 1837 William Rider of Leamington gave a course of six lectures on Painting, Perspective and Engraving, repeated again in 1839. Haydon returned to deliver his series on painting in the winter of 1840-41.¹ George Wallis, master of the School of Design, gave lectures at the Royal Institution in 1846 and 1847 "on the reproductive principles of ornamental art" and "on the early education of the hand and eye", R.T. Hunt Esq. lectured in the same years on physiology of vision in the arts, and A.G. Henderson on the philosophy of the fine arts. In 1849 again both Wallis and Hunt lectured.² The Royal Institution was not restricted in scope to the fine arts alone, and lectures were given on a wide range of scientific and literary topics.

The most striking contribution to Manchester's artistic life must have been the exhibitions mounted at the Royal Institution. Impatience with the continued unreadiness of its permanent home led to the hiring of Jackson's gallery in Market Street in 1827 for an exhibition of oil paintings by living British artists, which was followed by a second devoted to watercolours in the same year, and a third exhibition in the same gallery in 1828. In 1829 an exhibition of oil paintings was held in the unfinished building of the R.M.I. in Mosley Street, and in 1830 the gallery of the building was put in a state of temporary preparation for the fifth exhibition. In May 1831, with the three exhibition rooms and the lecture theatre in a state of near completion, an important step

1 Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.5 p. 25

2 R.M.I. Proc. of General Meetings, M.C.L. Archives M6/6 passim
 R.M.I. Lecture Committee Mins. M.C.L. Archives M6/8 passim
 R.M.I. Annual Repts. 1837-51, M.C.L. Archives M6/B2/1/173, 180, 192

was taken with the first exhibition of British and foreign old masters.

The annual exhibition of contemporary British art had a dual role, in the aesthetic education of the town, and in providing publicity for local artists. It is significant that the council members of the institution were keeping in touch with developments outside Manchester; J.W. Fraser wrote to Winstanley from London in June 1832 on the hanging of the Royal Academy exhibition with reference to the best way of hanging exhibitions in the new building at Manchester, and reported generally on the Academy show:

"Wilkie is very great this year - also Leslie - Pickersgill - Turner has not been so happy as last year in my opinion, though exhibiting some very fine pictures full of feeling ...

"I called on Barber at Birmingham he does not intend to exhibit this year. - I had a minute inspection of their Society of Arts their whole Institution did not cost £4,000 - Had we had less money to spend in Architecture we should have been better lighted - Ground glass & plenty of it."¹

In the later 1830s and 1840s there was a tendency on the part of the institution to make the exhibitions accessible to a greater number of the townspeople. In March 1837 it was reported that Lord Francis Egerton had lent 100 Carracci drawings from the former collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence, and these had been exhibited for eight weeks. A recommendation was also made that at the next exhibition, evening opening should be arranged for the sake of those prevented from daytime attendance by their work, so that "a taste for the fine arts be encouraged among those who, under the existing arrangements, have not the means of acquiring it." From May to July 1838 a third exhibition of paintings by old masters was held, stimulated by the success of the previous two. The aim was to give Governors and their families,

¹ R.M.I. Letter Book, M.C.L. Archives M6/A2/132

(both Fraser and Winstanley were later active promoters of Manchester S.D., see below)

artists and the public an opportunity of seeing "the noble conceptions and skilful execution of the Painters of former times, and thus contribute to elevate and purify the taste in this locality ...".¹ The exhibits were lent by gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and the annual report claimed that in the quality of the works this exhibition had not been surpassed by any outside London; local artists and members of the Mechanics' Institute drawing class were admitted free, and 3,212 visitors, apart from governors and their families, attended. The autumn exhibition of modern art that year was lit by gas to allow evening opening and 4,129 visitors were recorded.

The following spring a Mr. Trull was given use of the gallery to exhibit the nine Raphael tapestries, and these were visited by a large number. The didactic purpose of this show was emphasised by the appearance of two catalogues - a full description published by Trull himself which dwelt on the quality and technique of the works as well as on their narrative content, and a shorter descriptive catalogue apparently published by the institution itself.² The autumn exhibition of modern art was visited by more than 4,000 "strangers" that year. In the following year, 1840, the lecture theatre was lent free of charge to a well-known London dealer, Buchanan, to exhibit three scriptural paintings by the Carracci; at the autumn exhibition a reduced admission price for evening viewing was introduced "with a view to the gratification and improvement of the humbler classes" which brought in great numbers, and children of the Deaf and Dumb Institute were given a free viewing. Characteristic of the apprehensions at that time, it was noted by the Council that "in none of these cases was the slightest injury done to any one of the pictures."³

1 R.M.I. Proc. of General Meetings, M.C.L. Archives M6/6 (23 March 1837, 30 March 1838)

2 Beauties of Raphael : nine original works on public inspection, [1839] M.C.L. 706 M10/11

3 R.M.I. Proc. of General Meetings, M.C.L. Archives M6/6 (27 Mar. 1839, 15 Apr. 1840, 24 Mar. 1841)

Kohl visited the Royal Institution's annual exhibition in 1842 and commented on the dominance of genre as opposed to the biblical subjects which predominated on the continent.¹

Occasional exhibitions continued, such as one of sketches and drawings by Linton² in 1842, and access to the autumn exhibition was made increasingly easier, as in 1849 when the admission charge in the evening was reduced to 2d, securing an average attendance of 1000 between 7.00 and 9.00 p.m. In 1842 the council also lent some works of art from the permanent collection for exhibition at the Mechanics' Institution.³

The permanent collection was an important feature of the Royal Institution, not least because it subsequently formed the nucleus of the City Art Gallery. It began with the donation of casts and marbles by Mr. Jonathan Hatfield, a prominent collector, and a collection of casts given by George IV. Subsequent donations included a Salvator Rosa from Henry McConnel, the local manufacturer, who hoped that it would contribute to a collection of paintings to do justice to the taste and wealth of the town. By 1839 the collection included 25 paintings together with bronzes, medals and coins, architectural sketches and models, many given by artists and local collectors, and some purchased by the institution. From 1846 the collection was displayed in one of the galleries, and from the following year the public were admitted three days per week at a charge of 6d. In 1847 a catalogue was printed "considering that a love for Art might, in some degree, be excited or fostered by an account of the Paintings, casts etc., and their respective artists".⁴

1 J.G. Kohl, op.cit., 1844 p.129

2 probably William Linton (1791-1876) Lancashire-born landscape painter, in that year exhibiting sketches from his foreign travels (D.N.B.)

3 R.M.I. Council Mins., M.C.L. Archives M6/2/p. 280

4 R.M.I. Letter Book, M.C.L. Archives M6/A1/pp. 39, 43, M6/A2/p. 216

R.M.I. Annual Repts. M.C.L. Archives M6/B2/1/180

R.M.I. List of governors and donations, 1839, M.C.L. Archives M6/B23

Several of the churches in Manchester contained works of art which may be said to have contributed to the artistic environment of the town. As early as 1822, James Butterworth noted a number of examples in his guide, such as a monument by Bacon in the Collegiate Church, a good copy of Raphael's Ascension in St. Mary's, French stained glass in St. John's and in St. Peter's "an undoubted original by Annibal Carracci", the Descent from the Cross.¹ Butterworth also noted many of the practising artists resident in the town and observed that calico printing gave employment to a particularly high number of artists in Manchester.² A comparison of two Manchester directories reveals a considerable increase in the number of painters from 23 in 1838 to 42 in 1850.³ Doubtless the number of exhibitions and the increase in aesthetic education, as well as a rise in prosperity, boosted the demand for fine arts.

A deliberate attempt to improve the patronage of fine art in Manchester is particularly relevant as it grew, like the School of Design, from within the Royal Institution, and because its chief promoters were also active patrons of the School of Design. In 1834 a Manchester Artists' and Amateurs' Conversazione was formed "to aminate the love of Art" and "to promote mutual improvement". A fairly exclusive body of 49 men, collectors, patrons, and practising artists, were to meet monthly during the winter to discuss particular works of art in their possession. Amongst the leading members were Dr. J.D. Hulme, T.W. Winstanley and J.W. Fraser, all later active in the School of Design, and other members included Richard Lane the architect, and Benjamin Heywood, who were both to take an interest in the school. At the same time, a circular proposed a

1 J. Butterworth, The antiquities of the town, Manchester, 1822 pp. 197, 237, 259

2 Ibid. p. 163

3 Manchester directories 1838, 1850

subscription for the purpose of purchasing works of art, to be drawn for by lottery. Such an arrangement anticipated the Art Unions which were to become popular nationally and locally in the 1840s, and the chief signatories of the circular were once again Hulme, Fraser and Winstanley.¹

An Art Union on quite a large scale was being organised in Manchester by the early 1840s, and in addition to the three names mentioned above, six other patrons of the School of Design were to be found on the committee, which expressed its hope of extending "those elevating influences and beneficial effects which a taste for the fine arts is calculated to produce. In cultivating such a taste there is much to dignify and adorn the character and give relief and vigour to the mind".²

It may be argued, and was indeed argued at the time, that fine architecture constituted a part of the aesthetic education afforded by a city. James Nasmyth maintained before the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures that "correctness and beauty" in the exterior of public buildings would have an improving effect on the mind of a mechanic, and that by making elegance of form familiar to the eyes of the inhabitants, in buildings that were seen every day, a "very decided improvement in the taste of those cities would be the consequence". In fact, as regards Manchester, he claimed that the town was wanting in any great open institution for exhibiting specimens of beautiful art, and that the outsides of buildings were the only objects presenting familiar examples of good taste and design.³

The first point of this claim would have to be modified in the light

1 Manchester Artists' and Amateurs' Conversazione, (printed circular)
M.C.L. Archives M6/A2/10

R.M.I. circular letter, M.C.L. Archives M6/B2/1/120

2 Manchester Assoc. for Patronage of the Fine Arts, Annual Rep., 1843 p. 6

3 P.P. 1836 (568) ix II qq. 320-3

of institutional artistic activity already described. As for the architecture, some contemporary responses are revealing. Views on the subject were contradictory: W. Cooke Taylor observed that in a manufacturing town space was too valuable for architectural display, but Kohl admired the large manufacturing establishments and colossal warehouses "on which no trifling degree of architectural ornament has been expended", which he found in Manchester.¹ De Tocqueville most accurately placed the architectural ornament in context: "Amid this noisome labyrinth, this great, sombre stretch of brickwork, from time to time one is astonished at the sight of fine stone buildings with Corinthian columns".² Engels' response to the architecture of Manchester was perhaps the most subtle and complex, seeing the commercial buildings, public houses, warehouses and factories in their symbolic function, at once revealing and concealing the reality of the town's social and economic life.³

A guide to the architectural ornaments of the town was provided by the steel engravings in Benjamin Love's guidebook of 1839, Manchester as it is.⁴ The most splendid example of late Gothic was provided by the Collegiate Church of 1422. Most impressive of modern buildings were the Royal Manchester Institution and the Athenaeum by Charles Barry, architect of the Houses of Parliament. These were prestigious buildings for the town. An Ionic façade with wings, the Royal Manchester Institution (now the City Art Gallery) might be seen as a scaled-down version of the British Museum, whilst the Athenaeum was a Renaissance palazzo type, like the clubs which Barry designed in Pall Mall. The former of

1 W.C. Taylor, Moral economy of large towns, in Bentley's Miscellany v.7 (1840) p. 596

J.G. Kohl, op.cit., 1844 p. 8

2 A. de Tocqueville, Journeys to England and Ireland, ed. J.P. Mayer, 1958 p. 106

3 S. Marcus, Reading the illegible, in H. Dyos and M. Wolff eds., The Victorian City, 1973 v.1 chap. 11

4 Manchester as it is, (Love and Barton) Manchester, 1839

these two buildings housed the School of Design in its early years.

Richard Lane, a local architect and an active patron of the School of Design, furnished the town with several impressive Greek facades, Ionic for the infirmary and lunatic asylum, and for the graceful Corn Exchange, modelled on a Greek Temple of Ceres, and severer Doric for the town halls of Chorlton upon Medlock and Salford. A pair of ornamental gates designed by Lane to improve the surroundings of the Collegiate Church were illustrated in Butterworth's guide of 1822.¹ Earlier public buildings of note were the Portico Library of 1806, and the Exchange by Thomas Harrison of Chester, completed in 1809. G.W. Wood commented at the inauguration of the R.M.L.:

"To the public spirit of the Inhabitants of Manchester, we are indebted for the Exchange and the Portico, two buildings which, for chaste and correct architecture ... might vie with any other modern buildings in the Kingdom."²

Thus in public architecture, as in other aspects of artistic activity, including the formation of the School of Design, aesthetic education and an element of civic pride were harmoniously combined.

In 1837 an Architectural Society was formed "for the purpose of diffusing a general taste for architecture and the fine arts", as well as for professional intercourse. The society provided a library and facilities for drawing from casts, as well as exhibiting works of excellence in every branch of art at their quarterly conversazione.³ The Builder, a national architectural magazine, observed that "Art in Manchester has sprung into vigorous existence, and the town is now a striking example of prevailing good taste".⁴

1 J. Butterworth, op.cit., 1822 p. 116

2 Manchester ... origin and outline of the plan of an institution
(Manchester Exchange-Herald) [1823] M.C.L. Archives S & A 94/46

3 Manchester as it is, (Love and Barton) 1839 pp. 119-20

4 C. Stewart, The stones of Manchester, 1956 p. 36

III

Its cultural context having been described in detail, the formation and early years of the Manchester School of Design must now be considered for the light which they shed on the actual role of the school, - whether it served an industrial need as the government hoped, or whether its real function was more broadly educational. Much has been written about the early years of the Manchester School of Design, as its stormy progress illustrated so well the fundamental disagreements between various parties. The first provincial school to be established (it opened in October 1838), although not the first to receive a government grant which only came in 1842, it was by its geographical position potentially one of the most important schools for British industry. Yet by 1849 the inspector regarded it as the worst of the bad, and the history of its internal dissensions was raked over at length by the Select Committee of 1849.¹ The conflicts of policy between individual masters, the school's council, and the several directors and inspectors of the Government Schools of Design have been discussed by a number of authors.² Re-treading as little as possible the ground covered by them, the facts are however open to reinterpretation.

Insufficient emphasis has been given, in the first place, to the fact that Manchester's School of Design originated within the Royal

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- 1 S.C. on the Schools of Design 1849 (576) xviii
ev. of W. Dyce, J. Lockett, G. Jackson, J. Hammersley, G. Wallis
 - 2 C. Stewart, A short history of the college, in City of Manchester Ed. Ctee., Regional College of Art Centenary Diploma Day, Manchester, 1953
Q. Bell, Schools of Design, 1964 p. 110 ff.
S. Macdonald, History and philosophy of art education, 1970, pp. 84-95
K. Dixon, George Wallis, master of the Manchester S.D. 1844-46, in J. of Educational Admin. and Hist. v.2 no.2 (June 1970)
T.A. Smith, Some aspects of the development of technical education in Lancashire 1825-1889, Ph.D. thesis, Leeds, 1975 chap. 3

Manchester Institution, a society shown in the previous section of this chapter to have been very much concerned with the fine arts and their civilizing effects. The Institution had always had as one of its intentions the establishment of a drawing academy principally for fine art, and with the completion of its own building this at last became a possibility. Charles Pye wrote from London offering his services in teaching art on the principles adopted in London and Paris, which would "afford everyone an opportunity of improving his taste, and do honour to the town".¹ An academy was eventually established, although its conduct was somewhat haphazard, and Haydon's censure of its condition in 1837 has been described above.²

An alternative starting point for the School of Design might have been the drawing classes provided by the Mechanics' Institution where a proper school of design had been proposed sporadically from 1828 onwards, particularly by Benjamin Heywood in his address of 1832 when he had recently visited and been impressed by the School of Design at Lyons. According to Haydon, Heywood was to some extent manoeuvred out of the eventual negotiations (perhaps because his views might have inclined more than those of other promoters, towards an industrially orientated school).³

Haydon's visits to Manchester and his lectures in 1837 have generally been recognized as instrumental in promoting a school of design, but his own objective was primarily an academy of fine art based on the study of the living model, from which improvements in industrial design would inevitably

1 R.M.I. Letter book, M.C.L. Archives M6/A1/p. 157 (24 Oct. 1831)
 (Charles Pye, engraver (1777-1864) was the elder brother of John Pye whose Patronage of British Art was referred to in chap. 1 above)

2 Edmund Lyon papers, M.C.L. Archives M134/4/1/23, 37, 126
 R.M.I. Council Mins. M.C.L. Archives M6/1/p. 475
 R.M.I. Letter Book M.C.L. Archives M6/A5/2/p. 140

3 Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.4 p. 456

follow; a purely technical course in pattern designing was not his intention. In his diary, Haydon recorded how he linked the cause of high art and that of schools of design in his campaign at Manchester, and how at one meeting he opposed the idea of an elementary course preceding figure drawing.¹ He chose to lobby council members of the Royal Institution more than directors of the Mechanics' Institution, and surviving letters reveal him as having been on very familiar terms with the Royal Institution's secretary, Winstanley.² A small committee appointed by the R.M.I. council to investigate the practicality of Haydon's proposal consisted of a doctor, Hulme, Heywood the banker, Fraser the merchant and R.C. Sharp, an engineer; this committee could not be said to have represented predominantly industrial interests, particularly with the omission of any calico printer. In presenting their report to the council of the Royal Institution, the committee, whilst proposing that pattern drawing in its application to calico printing be included in the syllabus, argued also that such a school of design would be consistent with the founding aims of the institution in awakening and cherishing "a taste for what is liberal, instructive and elegant". The proposal was nevertheless rejected at this stage for want of finance.³

Haydon's lectures and a letter to the local press, gave rise to some correspondence on the proposed school of design. It was Winstanley of the R.M.I. who arranged publication of Haydon's letter in the Manchester Guardian of 13 September 1837, and in reply I.W. Hance anticipated the principal debate about the curriculum of schools of design. He opposed Haydon's plan for study based on the human figure above all (which he

1 Ibid. v.4 pp. 416, 454

2 R.M.I. Letter Book M.C.L. Archives M6/A2/162-165 M6/A5/2/pp. 135, 140

3 R.M.I. Council Mins. M.C.L. Archives M6/2/pp. 84-93

identified as the French system), with the Prussian Gewerb-institut model, based on a close connection between school and manufacture. The subsequent exchanges of newspaper correspondence between the two were amicable enough, with agreement on broad intentions, but differences on the role of life drawing. Significantly, Hance stressed the importance of refining general taste through libraries, museums and publications on art, and proposed an independent institution, unconfined by the regulations of any other institution "be it royal or be it mechanic", and based on "no narrow views, no paltry envies ... but open to all whom God has gifted - high or low, rich or poor, the refined artist, and the modest mechanic".¹ Thus the plea for cultural improvement was given religious and slightly democratic overtones.

Another public response to Haydon's clarion call came from George Jackson, who delivered two addresses on the subject of a school of design to the Mechanics' Institution in October 1837, and subsequently published a series of letters in the local press in January 1838.² Jackson was to be a key figure in the Manchester school, since he joined its first council and subsequently led a faction opposed to the academic syllabus, resigning in 1840 but returning as secretary in 1844. Although his letter was indeed largely concerned with the useful application of art and practical details of the syllabus, even he prefaced this with some telling comments on the moral value of the exhibition then at the Mechanics' Institution:

"... that it has a powerful effect on the minds of the working classes is evident, and I trust you will not stop in your labours till the moral force of society has been changed, and a source of rational

1. I.W. Hance, An address to the 'leading men of Manchester', Manchester, 1837, p.15. (Hance was Hon. Sec. to the Architectural Soc. and taught architectural drawing at the M.I.)

2. G. Jackson, Two essays on a school of design, Manchester, 1838

amusement and enjoyment permanently provided for all classes, but particularly for those who are now excluded from every source of moral and intellectual improvement."¹

A school of design was firmly planned at a meeting in February 1838 at the Royal Institution, at which Haydon was present. It was to be independent of the R.M.I. although several council members of that body were amongst its most active promoters, and rooms for the school were made available free of rent in the R.M.I. building. The Royal Institution also accommodated diverse societies like the Choral, Architectural, Geological and Pathological Societies, and this aspect of cooperation between cultural societies is important since, in the eyes of their promoters, the different organizations must have been seen as having common aims in the extension of 'rational amusement'; the School of Design was no doubt seen less as a discrete technical training than as a further extension of such activities. In 1846, for example, the annual report of the School of Design offered thanks to the Natural History Society, the Athenaeum, the Mechanics' Institution and the Royal Institution for various favours bestowed on students.²

The first appointment as master of the school was a 'high artist'. J.Z. Bell had been a pupil of Baron Gros in Paris, and was an assistant at this time to David Wilkie. Since Wilkie was a close friend of Haydon, it is not unlikely that Haydon secured him the job.³ Bell was an aspiring history painter, and followed Haydon in laying great emphasis on life drawing. George Jackson resigned from the council in 1840 because he thought senior students were being trained by Bell as artists rather than

1 Ibid. p. 4

2 Manchester S.D., Rep. of annual meeting, 24 Feb. 1846, Manchester, 1846 pp. 11-12

3 C.L. Nursey, the first master appointed to the Leeds S.D. in 1846, had also been through Wilkie's studio, although in that case the appointment was made by Somerset House, and not by the local committee (see chapter 6, below)

designers, and Bell himself resigned his mastership when, following a government grant to the school in 1842, the inspector, Dyce, insisted on a more limited and more practical course. Before the intervention of Somerset House it seems that the Manchester School of Design was being run as a general art school with classes in figure drawing, flower drawing, modelling, light and shade, and colour, although its broad curriculum (which embraced lectures on painting, sculpture, anatomy, zoology and botany) included also courses in ornamental drawing, pattern drawing for calico printing, and drawing for civil engineering and architecture.¹

After receipt of the grant, the official documents reflected the emphasis laid by Somerset House on applicability of studies to manufacture and decorative art.² However, in the Objects, Laws and Regulations of 1844, although industrial benefit was given as the primary object, a secondary object was added:

"Secondly, and of scarcely less importance, instruction to young persons of both sexes, will be given in private and distinct day classes, in those branches of the art of Design which are the foundation of a correct and refined taste, and essential to a good education ...

"The course of study ... will be accommodated, as far as possible, to the wants and taste of the pupils."³

A museum of casts had been accumulated for the use of students, but the council of 1844 proposed to increase this collection for the "no less important" object of cultivating the eye and taste of the public. The library was made accessible not only to students, but to

1 Manchester S.D., Laws and regulations, Manchester 1839

2 Manchester S.D., Rep. ... for the quarter ending 24 June 1844, Manchester, 1844 p. 4, and Rule 6

3 Manchester S.D., Objects, Laws and Regulations, Manchester, 1844 p. 4

subscribers and their families, and the council expressed its wish to extend the collection of books and to form a collection of facsimiles of antique medals, gems and vases. Explicitly, this collection was to be for the advantage of those cultivating art as a branch of polite education, without reference to its professional application, and it was argued that such specimens would be valuable not only for their beauty, but for the light which they shed on the history, chronology, religion and poetry of past ages.¹

In 1845, with the return of George Jackson as honorary secretary, and the appointment of his protégé Wallis as master, and perhaps also because the three-year government grant was coming up for renewal, there was a distinct reassertion of the commercial relevance of the school. An exhibition of students' drawings had been augmented by a display of "specimens of Manufacture and Industrial Art" in order to demonstrate the practical utility of the school. In the same report, a list of students by trade was given, indicating that the majority were intending to practise their talents commercially.² A similar list was reproduced later in the year by George Wallis, the master himself, and showed not only the same vocational bias amongst students, but an increase in total numbers between January and October 1845 from 141 to 220.³ These figures were part of a polemic to show how the school flourished under Wallis and his vocational approach to teaching, and in weighing their significance, some account must be taken of Wallis' evident skill as a self-publicist, and of the number of students whom he included as "intended for", but not

1 Ibid. p. 5

2 Manchester S.D., Rep. of annual meeting, 13 Jan. 1845 Manchester, 1845 pp. 5-7, 19

3 G. Wallis, A letter to the council of the Manchester S.D., Manchester, 1845 pp. 25-7

yet practising, particular trades, many of whom would undoubtedly have been uncommitted schoolchildren. There was even a suggestion in the inspector's report that the attendance had been artificially forced up by Wallis.¹ Wallis' resignation was forced by the Manchester School's council in 1846, over his refusal to comply with the demands of Charles Heath Wilson, the new director at Somerset House, that life drawing should be included in the elementary stages.

The practical utility of the school continued to be given prominence by an annual exhibition of manufactures. The first, of 1844-5, had claimed an attendance of 5,000; the following year this increased to almost 26,000 and in the annual report it was reckoned that between forty and fifty thousand of the working population had seen the show.² This report, however, complained of lack of support from local manufacturers; attendance at the school was not increasing - it stood at 168 when Manchester ought to supply 1,000 pupils - and the exhibition, despite its huge attendance, had lost £110. By 1849, attendance had declined, the school was in debt, and the inspectors from Somerset House were most critical of the pupils' work.³

A conclusion sometimes drawn from this state of affairs is that, following the resignation in February 1846 of George Wallis, whose commitment had been to the industrial utility of the school, the manufacturers had lost interest. However, this does not accord with the views expressed by some of the interested parties at the time. At the annual meeting of 1847, Salis Schwabe, a leading silk manufacturer,

1 Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 p. 100 (3 Nov. 1846)

2 Manchester S.D., 'Reps. of annual meetings, 1845 p. 7, 1846 p. 10, 1847 p. 6

3 Manchester S.D., Reps. of annual meetings, 1847 pp. 6, 16, 1851 pp. 9-10

attributed public apathy towards the School of Design to a mistaken notion amongst the middle and lower classes that the school was useful only to those who were pattern-makers by trade; he compared this situation to that of his native Germany where nobody, whatever his rank, considered himself educated if he had not studied the art of drawing.¹ Another speaker at the meeting was Paul Moon James, a banker, who also saw the purpose of the institution as being to unite good taste with good feeling, and ultimately to spread refinement throughout the world.² Earlier the council of the school had given practical expression to this aim in actively supporting Joseph Brotherton's parliamentary Bill of 1845 to enable town councils to establish museums of art.³ In April 1847 a deputation of James Heywood and Joshua Satterfield from the committee of the Manchester School, attended a Council meeting in London to request the appointment of a master competent to lecture on "the principles of Art".⁴

A retrospective opinion by one of its most active council members, the manufacturer Edmund Potter, put a similar view of the school in a slightly different way, by stressing its limitations as a practical training for designers. Both he and Thomas Bull, the artisan calico printer whose views followed very closely those of Potter, argued that for the market, more was needed than simple drawing skills. These skills were of course necessary to designers and engravers, and the Schools of Design taught them well, but sensitivity to the market, which was needed to create

1 Manchester S.D., Rep. of annual meeting, 23 Feb. 1847, Manchester, 1847 pp. 23-4

2 Ibid. p. 17 (P.M. James was not a committee member of Manchester S.D., but had been well known as a patron of education and a man of culture in Birmingham, before moving to Manchester. E. Edwards, Personal recollections of Birmingham, Birmingham, 1877 p. 58)

3 Manchester S.D., Rep. of annual meeting, 24 Feb. 1846, Manchester, 1846 p. 9

4 Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 pp. 176-7 (13 April 1847)

commercially successful designs, could not be taught in schools. The English market was such that a highly developed taste was not required for commercial success, and Potter himself confessed to having encouraged those students in the school who had exhibited exceptional taste, to pursue their careers in high art rather than in industrial design.

Moreover, Potter attributed what improvements had been made in the taste of working men, to a process of general education - the diffusion of works of art.¹

Given these views by men who knew intimately the working of the Manchester School of Design, it is not surprising that a regeneration was brought about from 1849 by the appointment of J.A. Hammersley as master. This appointment was greeted with sarcasm by the Journal of Design and Manufactures, since Hammersley was a fine artist specializing in landscape watercolours, "not the speciality that a master of a school of design should devote himself to"; and the new master advocated individuality and imagination in pattern designing, and the precedence of a fine art training over practical design.² In fact, Hammersley had once worked as a designer for Wedgwood, and in the event his tuition at Manchester won the approval of 'practical' men. The annual exhibitions of manufactures were revived, and George Jackson wrote to the Journal of Design and Manufactures in 1850 that his early misgivings about Hammersley had been allayed, although in the same journal an anonymous correspondent complained at the predominance of amateurs' landscape paintings exhibited by the Manchester School of Design.³

The council report to the annual meeting in May 1850 revealed that

1 E. Potter, Calico printing as an art manufacture, 1852 pp. 55-6, 60-1
T. Bull, A voice from the bench, Manchester, 1853 p. 11

2 J.D.M. v.1 (1849) pp. 163-4, v.2 (1849-50) p. 210

3 J.D.M. v.3 (1850) p. 28

student numbers had risen from 90 to 352. In an analysis of students' occupations some of the largest groups included schoolboys, schoolgirls and governesses, and, simply "artists", and the report specifically defended the fact that only 62 of 352 students were intending to work in calico or silk designing. It was argued that the teaching of artistic principles without reference to industrial application, would help to improve the public taste.¹ All in all, it seems that Hammersley had brought the 'practical' men round to his way of thinking.

The pupils' work under Hammersley was highly praised when exhibited at Marlborough House in London, in 1851, and it seems entirely fitting with the interpretation of the Manchester School of Design given in this chapter, that an important feature of Hammersley's mastership was the pictorial decoration of the new Free Trade Hall, one of the largest public rooms in Britain, in 1851. This commission, the decoration of what was in effect an architectural monument to 'Manchester's great principle', combined the dissemination of taste with civic pride, ideals which clearly underlay the encouragement of art in the new industrial towns.²

IV

Possibly one of the most accurate means of judging the motives behind the formation of Manchester School of Design, is to consider in some detail the men who promoted it. Most of these can be reasonably well identified from directories, poll books and local biographical sources; in the following pages, biographical details of the individual council members holding office between 1838 and 1848 are considered, insofar as the

¹ reported in J.D.M. v.3 (1850) p. 122

² Manchester S.D., Rep. of annual meeting, 6 June 1851, Manchester, 1851
pp. 11, 13

sources will allow, having particular regard to their interests in art and to their patronage of other educational enterprise. Roughly classified below according to profession, a broad spread of occupations is found; although the largest occupational group were calico printers, it will be shown that those calico printers involved were far from having a purely commercial interest in promoting the School of Design. Other biographical details of the committee (or 'council') members of the Manchester School of Design indicate that many belonged to what may be identified as a social and cultural elite in the town, marked by various features such as experience of foreign travel, collection of art, even the purchase of country seats, and in general a pattern of prosperity and upward social mobility.

The one aristocrat actively involved in the Manchester School of Design was Lord Francis Egerton, created 1st Earl of Ellesmere in 1846. A member of the Cabinet at the age of 27, and M.P. for South Lancashire from 1835-46, he was remarkable for his collection, particularly for his interest in the visual arts, and for his encouragement of cultural activity in Manchester. He translated works of Goethe and Schiller, and inherited from his scholar-uncle, the eighth Earl of Bridgewater, a magnificent collection of paintings to which, in the gallery in his London home, the public were freely admitted. In 1835 he was made a trustee of the National Gallery, and one of his wife's many books was illustrated by his drawings. In Manchester he was a liberal donor to the Athenaeum, and at various times a director and president of the Mechanics' Institution; he attended many public meetings, and subscribed £50 to the Manchester Free Public Library in 1851. He lent works of art to various local exhibitions, notably 100 Carracci drawings to the Royal Institution in 1836. As president of the School of Design his active involvement is attested

by correspondence with the Council at Somerset House.¹

Three attorneys were at various times committee members of the School of Design. James Barratt junior, a committee member in 1839, came from a Manchester family that had been corn factors for several generations. Educated at the grammar school, he later practised law at Manchester and Warrington, voted tory, and was reputedly a man of considerable taste, as shown by his restoration of the country house which he purchased, Lymm Hall near Warrington. The Barratt family seems to have cultivated an interest in the fine arts, for several members were governors of the R.M.I., James himself was a shareholder in the local Association for the Patronage of Fine Art, and a relative, John Barratt of Fallowfield, owned a highly reputable art collection from which he lent to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857.²

Samuel Dukinfield Darbshire, also a scholar, was descended from two families which had long connections with Cross Street Chapel, and was himself a trustee of the chapel. He was a liberal-whig voter, and with other prominent Unitarians such as J.E. Taylor he lent money to the new Corporation of Manchester during legal battles over the town's new Charter. He was very active in the intellectual life of the town, particularly in the establishment of the Athenaeum and of Manchester New College. He read a paper to the Manchester Statistical Society and delivered lectures at the Mechanics' Institution on historical topics, and on the Dublin meeting of the British Association in 1836. A founding committee member of the school of design, he had dined with Haydon, who described him as "a very fine fellow". Other Darbshires continued to be

1 D.N.B.

The Analyst v.4 (1836) p. 132

A. Watkin, Extracts from his journal 1814-56, ed. A.E. Watkin, 1920 pp. 174, 194, 234

Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 p. 370 (7 April 1846)

2 Manchester Grammar School Register v.3 (1874) p. 177

J.T. Slugg, Reminiscences of Manchester, 1881 p. 95

Manchester Guardian 28 Feb. 1887

Poll Book, Manchester, 1839

active in Manchester education after Samuel had retired to an estate which he purchased in Wales.¹

Thomas Woodcock Winstanley, also a solicitor by profession, and a whig in politics, was Honorary Secretary of the School of Design in its early years. He was particularly dedicated to the promotion of fine art, publishing a book of advice for collectors in Liverpool in 1828, and on moving to Manchester he became very actively involved in the Royal Manchester Institution, as secretary in 1832 and later a council member. His activity as an amateur included the post of honorary secretary in the Manchester Artists' and Amateurs' Conversazione from 1834, and in the later Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts, and surviving correspondence with Haydon suggests that they were on familiar terms. Other cultural societies also claimed his attention, for he was honorary secretary of the New Concert Hall in 1839 and an honorary life member of the Mechanics' Institution. Winstanley's interest in art earned him an obituary in the Art Union, which praised his judgment and good taste.²

As a third generation member of the prosperous Liverpool banking family, the barrister James Heywood had the resources to study at Cambridge and at the Inner Temple, and the leisure to devote much of his time to promoting cultural societies in Manchester. A member of Cross Street Unitarian Chapel, he was most active as a founder and leading promoter of the Athenaeum, a council member of the R.M.I., a pioneer of the Free Public Library movement and Sunday opening of museums and public gardens. He was in the Manchester Statistical Society, and the British

1 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
T. Baker, Memorials of a dissenting chapel, 1884 passim
The Analyst v.4 (1836) pp. 135-6
Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.4 p. 455

2 T.W. Winstanley, Observations on the arts, Liverpool, 1828
Manchester as it is (Love and Barton) 1839 p. 139
Art Union v.7 (1845) p. 101
R.M.I. Letter Books, M.C.L. Archives M6/A2/162-5

Association, was elected F.R.S. and F.S.A. in 1839 and M.P. for North Lancashire 1847-1857. This list by no means exhausts his activities and achievements, and it is against such a background that his close involvement with the School of Design, as president, vice-president and committee member, must be assessed.¹

Another profession well represented on the committee was architecture. Their professional interest in the school must have been limited, since the scope for employment of architectural assistants would not have justified an entire school of design; however, architects were at this time consolidating their professional status (the R.I.B.A. was inaugurated in 1834) and were recognised as men of taste in the provincial town; a Manchester Architectural Society was formed in 1837. Richard Lane (fl. 1815-58) was one of the senior architects of the town, and was founder president of this society. He had worked with Francis Goodwin, architect of the first Manchester Town Hall, and later taught Alfred Waterhouse (architect of the great neo-Gothic town hall completed in 1877), and he himself designed a number of public buildings in Manchester. Lane was a tory voter. He was deeply involved in promoting art locally, not only through the School of Design but also as a member of the Artists' and Amateurs' Conversazione and a subscriber to the Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts, and was also a director of the Mechanics' Institution.²

John Edgar Gregan, another architect, sat on the committee of the

1 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
 A. Watkin, Extracts from his journal, op.cit. pp. 156, 193
 T. Baker, op.cit., 1884. pp. 54-5
Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 pp. 176-7 (13 Apr. 1847)

2 C. Stewart, Architecture of Manchester; an index of buildings and their architects, Manchester, 1956
 J. Butterworth, op.cit., 1822 p. 116
 J.T. Slugg, op.cit., 1881 p. 182
 Poll Books, Manchester 1832, 1839

School of Design from 1844. He came to Manchester to study architecture and practised there from 1840 until his death in 1855, designing particularly for Benjamin Heywood a bank in St. Ann Street and a church at Miles Platting. He shared with his patron a "zeal for art and education", as secretary of the Royal Institution and as a local committee member for the Great Exhibition (1849) and for the Free Public Library (1851). In 1854 he designed the new Mechanics' Institution building in Princess St.¹

Edward Walters, the leading Manchester architect before Waterhouse, corresponds to the biographical pattern of other members of the local cultural elite, in having had extensive metropolitan contacts and experience of foreign travel. His father had practised architecture in London, and Edward had worked for Thomas Cubitt, Lewis Vulliamy (under whom Owen Jones had been a co-pupil) and Sir John Rennie - all major figures in architecture and engineering. Rennie had sent him to Constantinople, where he had met Richard Cobden who pointed out the opportunities existing for an architect in Manchester. Heeding Cobden's advice, Walters established a practice there in 1839 and became an innovating designer of warehouses in the Renaissance palazzo style, his clients including some of the wealthiest merchants and manufacturers such as Edmund Potter, Salis Schwabe and Cobden himself. He also built a residence for Joseph Whitworth, engineer and fellow member of the School of Design committee. One obituary observed that Walters was "very much respected for his social qualities" as well as for his business capacity.²

1 Builder, May 1855, p. 222

D.N.B.

F. Boase, Modern English Biography

2 D.N.B.

Manchester Guardian 26 Jan. 1872

Manchester Critic 24 Feb. 1872

C. Stewart, Architecture of Manchester, op.cit.

Francis Chester, a committee member in 1842-3, had himself been a student and a prizewinner at the school in its first years. Born in London in 1811, he was already aged 26 when the school opened, and one contemporary recalled his suave French manners, his passion for colour and his painting in the manner of Etty. For thirty years from 1845 he practised as an architect and artistic adviser to the Manchester Theatre Royal.¹

The medical profession, although well represented in the cultural life of Manchester generally, provided only two committee members. John Jesse F.L.S. was a surgeon with a large practice in Downing Street, Ardwick; he must have been a man of some learning as he was elected F.R.S. in 1842 and later F.R.A.S., and also a man of some wealth since, like Darbishire the attorney, he removed to a Welsh country seat, and became sheriff for the County of Denbigh in 1856. A hereditary governor of the R.M.I. and a member of its council in 1838, he took an active part in the early years of the School of Design.² Dr. James Davenport Hulme, honorary physician to the Manchester Infirmary from 1826 to 1848 and medical officer to the School for the Deaf and Dumb, took a frequent part in discussions on forming a school of design within the R.M.I. Since 1824 he had been a governor of the R.M.I., in which his colleagues, Doctors Edmund Lyon and S.A. Bardsley, also played an energetic part. Hulme was a keen amateur of art, being chairman of the Artists' and Amateurs' Conversazione and a committee member of the Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts. The early letter books reveal his correspondence with figures such as William Carey, the writer on art, and

1 Recollections by Robert Crozier 2 Sept. 1879, MS., M.C.L. 707.0942
M2/3

T. Letherbrow, In memoriam, Warwick Brookes, Manchester, 1882 passim

2 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
J.T. Slugg, op.cit., 1881, p. 54

Buchanan, the London art dealer. Retiring temporarily for reasons of health in 1836, he praised the "liberal and enlightened" gentlemen of the council for promoting so successfully "utility and ornament and the most rational amusements of refined society".¹ Hulme lived at a succession of fashionable addresses such as Mosley Street, and later Plymouth Grove where he would have been a near neighbour of the Gaskells.²

The only accountant connected with the school was Richard Aspden, who was connected with many public institutions in Manchester. A liberal whig supporter, he was secretary for various periods to the R.M.I., the Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts, Manchester New College, Lower Mosley Street Schools and Ladies' Jubilee Charity Schools, the Clinical Hospital and the Humane Society. Some of these were nonconformist institutions, which could reflect his religious opinions, although he married in the Anglican church. Secretary of the School of Design from 1844 (which became a salaried position from 1846), he continued as secretary to the School of Art for a period of twenty years in all. Despite an apparent interest in art, his involvement was clearly part of a general pattern of philanthropic activity.³

Three professional artists were amongst the Manchester school's patrons. Charles Swain was an engraver and lithographer, poet and essayist. Originally employed in a dye works, he began writing poetry in the 1820s, and turned to bookselling at the age of 29, then began engraving two years later. An intimate friend of the Manchester artist Henry Liverseege, of whom he wrote a memoir in 1836, he also met Southey and moved in

1 R.M.I. Letter Books, M.C.L. Archives M6/A1/pp. 43, 87, 153
R.M.I. Proc. of General Meetings, M.C.L. Archives M6/6 (28 Mar. 1835)

2 E.M. Brockbank, Sketches of the lives and work of the hon. medical staff of the Manchester Infirmary 1752-1830, 1904

3 Biography and obituary coll., M.C.L. Local History Coll.
Manchester S.D., Rep. of annual meeting 24 Feb. 1846, p. 12
St. Mary's Parish Church Register, 19 May 1826

professional and literary circles in Manchester. As well as a committee member of the School of Design in the mid 1840s, he was 'Professor of Poetry' at the R.M.I. where he lectured on modern poets. In 1856 he was awarded a Civil List pension.¹ Some of Swain's books were illustrated by another local engraver, James Stephenson. Born in Manchester, the son of a boot-maker, Stephenson became friendly with Henry Liverseege, who advised him to enter apprenticeship with William Finden in London, where he won a Society of Arts medal. Returning to his native town in 1838, he undertook commissions from the Anti-Corn Law League, and in 1845 established with other local artists the Manchester Academy of Arts, an antique school and life school for the higher branches of art, of which he became secretary. Stephenson was a council member of the School of Design from 1844 until 1848 when he moved to London and became a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy.²

The third professional artist who participated in the management of the school was Warwick Brookes, who, like Chester the architect, had first attended in 1837 as a student. Previous to that he had been a pattern-designer at the calico printing works of John Barge and Co.. A prize-winner in life drawing, he joined the independent life class set up by students after Bell's resignation, rejoining the school when Hammersley was appointed master. Despite his previous work in pattern designing, therefore, Brookes, already aged 30 when he began studying at the school, saw himself as a fine artist. Haydon reputedly admired his

1 D.N.B.

W. Axon, Annals of Manchester, 1886 pp. 193-4
Manchester Literary Club Papers v.1 (1875) pp. 96-101
J.T. Slugg, op.cit., 1881 p. 72

2 D.N.B.

Palatine Note Book v.3 (1883) pp. 163, 219
Art Union v.7 (1845) p. 329, v.9 (1847) p. 182

work; in later years Queen Victoria purchased his drawings, and Gladstone admired his work and secured him a Civil List pension in 1871.¹

One banker and five merchants were amongst the promoters of the Manchester School of Design. Sir Benjamin Heywood F.R.S., brother of James Heywood, is well known to historians as a banker and for his local philanthropic and educational endeavours.² He was a founding committee member, and with no particular interest in design must have seen the school as an extension of the general educational activity which he patronised; however, there was a firm utilitarian aspect to his leadership of the Mechanics' Institution. Educated at Glasgow University, a trustee of the Unitarian Cross Street chapel, whig M.P. for the county 1831-2, created baronet. 1838, and elected F.R.S. in 1843, he enjoyed a distinguished public career. His chief local interest was the Mechanics' Institution, of which he was founder and president from 1825-40, and he has been credited with the original idea of exhibitions of art and industry, which led eventually to the Great Exhibition of 1851. But almost all the cultural institutions of the town received his patronage, including those which encouraged the fine arts.

Haydon was uncomplimentary, referring to Heywood as vain and brainless, and in need of guidance. This seems unfair, although it is most likely that Heywood's aims for the School of Design would have been more pragmatic than those of the artist (he proposed, for example, a system of financing the school by interest-bearing shares). Heywood's views on the purpose of Mechanics' Institutions shifted over the years, but in his Address of 1840, he observed:

1 Recollections by Robert Crozier 2 Sept. 1879 MS., M.C.L. 707.0942
M2/3

T. Ietherbrow, In memoriam, Warwick Brookes, Manchester, 1882

W. Axon, op.cit., 1886 pp. 406-7

Manchester Courier, 1 April 1871

2 L. Grindon, Manchester banks and bankers, Manchester, 1877 pp. 188-9

T. Heywood, A memoir of Sir Benjamin Heywood, Manchester, 1888

M. Tylecote, op.cit., Manchester 1957 pp. 79, 133, 149

"If the working classes desire to raise their condition they must do it by exerting themselves for their own moral and intellectual improvement. Instead of seeking, in the first instance, an extension of their political privileges from the legislature let them seek a rational and liberal education for themselves and their children."¹

Haydon had a much higher opinion of the merchant James W. Fraser, one of the most active committee members of the school and vice-president on three occasions. "Frazer the Connoisseur" (sic) was described by Haydon as "a very fine fellow and the best Amateur Sketcher except Sir George I ever knew".² It is indeed Fraser's keen interest in the fine arts which is most striking in one who was a leading promoter of the Manchester School of Design. A Governor of the R.M.I., and a trustee of its permanent fund, he was particularly active on the committees of the Artists' and Amateurs' Conversazione and later the Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts. A letter to Winstanley in 1832, is revealing, as it recounted Fraser's activities on a visit to London, the cultural round of a provincial visitor calling on artists such as Wilkie, visiting art galleries, and attending concerts and the opera with another Manchester businessman; such visits to London must have been important to the provincial intellectual elite, and Absalom Watkin in his journal recorded similar activities, as did Dr. Heaton of Leeds.³

Fraser became a director of the Union Bank founded in 1836, and a fellow director was James Atherton, another council member of the School of Design. Atherton was variously described in the sources as a manufacturer

1 Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.4 pp. 455-6
T. Baker, Memorials of a dissenting chapel, 1884, pp. 111, 115

2 Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.4 p. 456
 (The reference was to Sir George Beaumont)

3 R.M.I. Letter Book, M.C.L. Archives M6/A2/p. 132
A. Watkin, Extracts from his journal, op.cit., passim (For Dr. Heaton see chap. 6, below)

and a merchant, and was a director of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. He purchased three shares in the Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts 1841-2, and 1842-3, and was a subscriber to the Great Exhibition. Both Fraser and Atherton were tories.¹

Joshua Satterfield was also a merchant, but details concerning himself and his business are scarce. His father was a linen draper of St. Anne's Square and an Anglican, his brother a pupil at the Grammar School. Joshua cast his votes for the tory and whig candidates in the general election of 1832. Of his interest in fine art there is little doubt, as he was a committee member of the Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts, and in 1844 he loaned a landscape painting by Müller to the Mechanics' Institution exhibition. He was at various times a vice-president of the Athenaeum, a council member of the R.M.I., and acted as treasurer of the School of Design for a number of years from 1842. Close involvement with the affairs of the school is indicated by a personal deputation to Somerset House, in the company of James Heywood in 1847.²

Thomas Townend, a partner in the firm of Townend and Hickson, merchants, was a trustee of the School of Design, whose business and social life brought him into contact with other committee members of the school. Henry Tootal, for example, was a co-director in the Manchester and Salford Banking Company, and William Burd the calico printer worshipped at the same Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Grosvenor Street. Despite his religious nonconformity, Townend was a staunch tory, plumping for the tory candidate in 1832 and attending a dinner in his honour. Townend's support

1 L. Grindon, op.cit., 1877 p. 306
Poll Books, Manchester, 1832, 1839

2 Poll Book, Manchester, 1832
Manchester Grammar School Register v.3 pp. 53, 291
T. Swindells, Manchester streets and Manchester men ser.1, 1906, p. 107
Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 pp. 176-7 (13 Apr. 1847)

for the School of Design has to be seen in the context of engagement in other cultural and philanthropic movements in Manchester; a founder governor and council member of the R.M.I., a vice-president and trustee of the Athenaeum, he also led a local campaign against slavery and was treasurer to the lunatic asylum.¹

Like other merchants already described, James Collier Harter was well fitted by his wealth and position to serve as trustee and treasurer to a number of public and charitable institutions in Manchester; he was appointed a trustee of the Grammar School in 1849 and was for fourteen years treasurer of the infirmary. An Anglican, he was educated at the Grammar School, the published register of which lauded his industry, ability, honourable character and munificence; these qualities were such that "few among the merchants and manufacturers of the town have at any period been more respected both on public and private grounds." The register added the tribute that, unlike so many successful tradesmen, he did not desert the neighbourhood where his wealth was accumulated for some less smoky and more attractive part of England.² Indeed he purchased a mansion in Broughton, an area which Watkin noted for "abundance of the means of elegant enjoyment." Here he was a member of the exclusive and traditionally tory club, the Broughton Archers, with others such as James Crossley, in whose company he met the young Dickens and John Forster; such clubs were a characteristic means of social intercourse amongst the social and intellectual elite from which the patrons of the School of Design were drawn. Unlike John Shaw's, a similar club, the Broughton Archers was not exclusively tory; Harter

1 Poll Books, Manchester, 1832, 1839
Seating plan of a dinner to J.T. Hope, 4 Dec. 1832, M.C.L. Archives Misc. 122
J.T. Slugg, op.cit., 1881 p. 165
L. Grindon, op.cit., 1877 p. 282
A. Watkin, Extracts from his journal, op.cit., pp. 197, 208

2 Manchester Grammar School Register v.2 pp. 213-4

had supported the whig banker, Loyd, in 1832. His particular interest in art was reflected by Harter's large shareholding in the lottery of the Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts in 1841-2, and his active support for the Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857; at the School of Design he was vice-president in 1842-3.¹

Mark Philips, a president of the Manchester School of Design from 1844 to 1846, and a committee member thereafter, is best known as a politician, although his family wealth was mercantile in origin. Like James and Benjamin Heywood, he belonged to the third generation of a family which enjoyed a record of commercial success and local philanthropy. His father was a president of Manchester New College, and his uncle, like himself and later his brother, was a member of parliament. A Unitarian, he was educated at Manchester College, York and Glasgow University, and sat as liberal whig M.P. for Manchester from 1832 to 1847, steadfastly opposing the Corn Laws and factory legislation. The Philips family were all active supporters of education, in the Sunday School movement for example, and Mark Philips, together with Sir Thomas Potter applied to Chancery at their sole personal expense for modernisation of the Manchester Grammar School curriculum, to include maths, modern languages and drawing. Most members of the family were governors of the Royal Manchester Institution, and the existence of a family art collection is suggested by the loan of two marble mosaics from Herculanaeum to the school of design exhibition in 1845. Mark Philips joined Lord Francis Egerton and Benjamin Heywood in each subscribing £1,000 in 1844, towards the provision of public parks in Manchester. Like several fellow members of the committee Philips purchased an estate in Warwickshire to which he retired, becoming Sheriff

1 Poll Book, Manchester, 1832

L. Grindon, op.cit., 1877 pp. 95, 155

J. Mortimer, Dickens and Manchester, Manchester Literary Club Papers, v.38 (1912) pp. 103-4

of the County in 1851.¹

Two cotton spinners amongst the promoters of the School of Design were Richard Birley and Richard Hole. The Birleys were a leading family in conservative politics, spent £100,000 in church building, and much in addition on founding and maintaining schools. Richard was a churchwarden of the Collegiate Church and played an important part in securing its cathedral status. At various times a president of the Athenaeum, council member of the R.M.I., honorary life member of the Mechanics' Institution and a vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce, he also lectured on steam power to the Statistical Society and was prominent at the public meeting of 1851 for a Free Library, to which Birley and Co. donated £100. He also subscribed to the Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts and sat on the local committee for the Great Exhibition.² Richard Hole, who joined the committee in 1846, was a partner in the firm of Hole, Lingard and Cruttenden, Mosley Street. He was a governor and council member of the R.M.I., and a subscriber to the Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts. Like a number of the merchants and manufacturers connected with the school, he lived at Ardwick, and like Birley he voted tory in 1839.³

Silk manufacturers had a closer commercial interest in the School of Design, but only three actively supported the school. Henry Winkworth, who lived close to Thomas Townend in the Polygon, Ardwick, was a partner in the firm of Winkworth and Procter. He came to Manchester from London in 1829, and the family became friendly with the Gaskells, which had a profound influence on the career of his daughters. Taught by the Unitarian ministers William Gaskell and James Martineau, Susanna and

1 R.V. Holt, The Unitarian contribution to social progress, 1938 passim
W. Axon, op.cit., 1886 p. 339
H.R. Fox Bourne, English merchants, 1866 v.2 p. 281

2 W. Shaw, Manchester old and new, 1894-5 v.1 p. 42 v.2 p. 17

3 Manchester directory, 1838
Poll Book, Manchester, 1839

Catherine completed their schooling in Germany and entered the progressive literary circles of Baron Bunsen, Rev. Charles Kingsley, and F.D. Maurice. Although Winkworth does not seem to have been otherwise active in the cultural institutions of Manchester, he was clearly well connected with the local intellectual elite.¹ Henry Tootal was a committee member for one year only, 1844-5, and participated sporadically in the cultural institutions of the town, as a council member of the R.M.I. in 1835 and a speaker at the meeting to found the Athenaeum in the same year. Other public roles included a directorship of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and as a leading municipal reformer he was involved in talks with the tories to solve the deadlock in local government in 1841.²

Louis Schwabe came to Manchester from Dessau in 1817 to become 'the father' of high class silks in that town. Best remembered for the first experiments in spinning artificial silks, which he demonstrated to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, he was renowned at the time for high quality figured silks which were bought by the royal courts of England and even France (the major rival in this product), and obtained a patent for design-weaving apparatus. An obituary in the Art Union referred to Schwabe's high taste and practical ability in art; to his love and knowledge of drawing he attributed his commercial success, and observed that the practice of drawing in his youth had provided leisurely enjoyment and had kept him from "the temptations which too often beguile the young in large and populous towns". For these reasons no doubt, he took an interest in the Mechanics' Institution and negotiated for its students the use of facilities at the Royal Institution. He was a donor

1 T. Swindells, op.cit., ser.1, 1906, p. 207
D.N.B., articles on Catherine and Susanna Winkworth

2 Manchester directory 1838
Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Annual Reports, 1835-8, 1843

to the Athenaeum library and his cultural pursuits included committee membership of the Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts. With his commercial success, Louis moved to the fashionable area of Plymouth Grove, and his relation Salis Schwabe was the host of Chopin in Manchester.¹

Engineers might also be said to have had a direct commercial interest in the training of draughtsmen, and four engineering firms were represented on the committee. J.F. La Trobe Bateman received an education in Moravian schools and was apprenticed surveyor and civil engineer, setting up a practice in Manchester in 1834, and becoming associated with William Fairbairn who recognized his abilities as a hydraulic specialist. Bateman's social rise then began, with marriage to Fairbairn's daughter, travel abroad as a consultant, election to Fellowships of the Royal Society, Royal Geological Society and Royal Society of Arts, purchase of a Surrey estate and acquisition of a coat of arms. His brief period as a committee member of the School of Design in 1839 was not conspicuously matched by other educational or cultural activity in Manchester, although Bateman did purchase a share in the Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts.²

Bateman's father-in-law, Sir William Fairbairn Bart., LL.D. F.R.S., was more closely involved in local affairs, and acted as a trustee and a vice-president of the Manchester School of Design. Haydon liked him: "... a good, iron, Steam Engine head ... 'I can't get through novels' said he. It showed his good sense. He has risen from a foundery-laborer to Master of as great a Manufactory as any in the World."³ Fairbairn's

1 Art Union v.7 (1845) p. 101

A.H. Hard, The romance of rayon, Manchester, 1933

W. Axon, op.cit., 1886 pp. 181, 230

2 D.N.B.

Manchester Guardian 12 June 1889 p. 8

3 Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.4 p. 455

career is well known from the writings of Samuel Smiles and William Pole. In the context of Manchester's intellectual life it is significant that he was a member of the Cross Street chapel, and that, like other members of the cultural elite, he had travelled abroad, for example to Constantinople where he was decorated by the Sultan. He was closely associated with Benjamin Heywood in promoting the Mechanics' Institution, especially as one of eleven citizens who raised £6,600 for the building, was a donor to the Athenaeum library and to the Free Public Library, a council member of the Royal Institution, and a president of the Literary and Philosophical Society. J.G. Kohl recorded the benevolent regime of his factory, for instance the provision of good drinking water to combat intemperance, and reported his views on education

"This experienced and enlightened man affirmed that in his establishment he always selected, for every kind of employment requiring any skill or forethought, those men whose general education had been liberal and thorough, in preference to those whose acquirements were limited to what was conferred upon them by the 'special training' (by which they are fitted for their particular mechanical avocations)."

Fairbairn went on to tell Kohl that well educated workmen were more moderate and manageable, especially in times of industrial disturbance.¹

Sharp, Roberts and Co., later Sharp Bros. and Co., was a third generation iron business which built up an international reputation in engineering by 1841 and turned to the production of locomotives. The Sharp family were Anglicans and predominantly tory voters, and patronised both the Mechanics' and the Royal Institutions, playing some part in their management. Both John and Robert C. Sharp were briefly committee members of the School of Design. Absalom Watkin recorded a meeting with Lord

¹ S. Smiles, Industrial biography, 1863

W. Pole ed., Life of Sir William Fairbairn, 1877

J.G. Kohl, Ireland, Scotland and England, 1844 p. 138

D.N.B.

R.V. Holt, The Unitarian contribution to social progress 1938 pp. 221,

Francis Egerton in connection with the Commercial Clerks' Friendly Society, at R.C. Sharp's house and observed that the profusion of pictures and "knick-knacks" gave it the air of a curiosity shop. But neither brother appears to have participated in the fine art lotteries at Manchester. John Sharp was active in local preparations for the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the firm subscribed £100 for the Free Public Library.¹

Sir Joseph Whitworth the engineer, was a committee member of the Manchester School of Design for eight years. As with Fairbairn, his engineering achievements and his rise from humble origins have been well documented. His support for the School of Design was matched by activity in the Mechanics' Institution and in the Literary and Philosophical Society, but Whitworth does not appear to have taken any particular personal interest in the fine arts. He did however give and bequeath large sums of money for a park, museums and technical education, and as a member of the Mosley Street Congregational Church he would have been well acquainted with two other great educational benefactors, John Owens and John Rylands. A liberal whig in politics, and the pioneer of a profit-sharing scheme for his workmen, he also, like other successful businessmen, purchased a country seat.²

The largest occupational category amongst the promoters of the School of Design, was calico printing; there were twelve printers, and one engraver to calico printers. This fact is explicable in terms of the industrial structure of Manchester and of the advantages likely to accrue from a school of design, but with a number of the calico printers,

1 T. Swindells, op.cit., 1906 ser.1 pp. 215-6
 A. Watkin, Extracts from his journal, op.cit., p. 194
Manchester Grammar School Register, v.3 p. 211

2 S. Smiles, op.cit., 1863
 D.N.B.
Manchester Lit. and Phil. Soc. Proc. v.26 (1886-7) pp. 160-9

their encouragement of design training must be seen also in the context of their patronage of education in general

Edmund Potter was very much a 'Manchester man' in his firm opposition to state education and general advocacy of self-reliance, on which he wrote a number of pamphlets in the 1840s and '50s. This position may well have been encouraged by his own experience of honourable recovery from a business failure in 1831, building up one of the most extensive printworks in the world. Perhaps because these printworks were located at Glossop in Derbyshire, he did not play as active a part in Manchester societies as some other manufacturers, but with a warehouse in the town he was a worshipper and trustee at both the Mosley Street and Cross Street Unitarian chapels (both of which had wealthy and influential congregations), and played a very prominent role in the School of Design. Together with James Thomson he has been described as representing the "Haydon faction" in the school's management, but his position was more complicated, probably deriving from his general opposition to state intervention (and thus to direction of policy from Somerset House) combined with a belief in the general value of art and taste. He was himself a subscriber to the Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts, and a promoter of the Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857, and his son acquired a high reputation as a collector and connoisseur, lending freely to public exhibitions from a collection which sold in 1884 for more than £37,000.

In one of his earliest writings, Potter implied an analogy between virtue and taste: "Till virtue is properly estimated, so it will never be respected or encouraged; so it will be in Art and Taste. Ignorance is the bane of both."¹ Later, he appealed for general art education through the provision of more provincial galleries and temporary exhibitions of fine art, to raise the public taste, rather than state subsidies to specific and technical science and art education: "I am willing to join in almost

1 E. Potter, Letter to Mark Philips, 1841 p. 6

any experiment in Art Education unconnected with trade, but of a higher, purer and sounder kind ... but I will be no party to taxing the State to supply a fancied demand [for practical training]."¹ Potter was later elected F.R.S. for his contributions to calico printing, was M.P. for Carlisle from 1861 to 1874, and died at his country house in Hertfordshire in 1883.²

James Thomson, probably the most important single patron of the Manchester school, was described by Potter as "the head of the Print trade for a period of forty years", and like Potter, Thomson was greatly concerned with the elevation of taste:

"No sums, however large, were spared, to draw into ... service the talent even of Royal Academicians, and of many other eminent men, high in art. His love of art, and taste, and progress, carried him in many cases beyond the taste of his consumers, and he often reaped the reward of genius in advance of the age - disappointment."³

The Art Union concurred in this assessment: "He has sought out artistic merit, and often raised it from obscurity to reward its possessor and benefit the community."⁴ Thomson, later a Fellow of the Royal Society, also experimented scientifically in his manufacture, patenting an acid discharge process and employing the young Lyon Playfair who was to be a key figure in English science education. But his patronage of art was extensive; he travelled abroad and commissioned casts of Roman ornament for the School of Design, commissioned a medal, designed by Gibson and executed by Wyon, for the school, donated a portrait of Humphrey Davy

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- 1 E. Potter, Trade schools, 1854, p.27
E. Potter, Lecture on the position of schools of art, 1855 pp. 22, 26-7
 - 2 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
J.G. Hurst, Edmund Potter and Dinting Vale, Manchester, 1948
W. Axon, op.cit., 1886 p. 397
 - 3 E. Potter, Calico printing as an art manufacture, 1852 p. 16
 - 4 Art Union v.8 (1846) p. 49

to the Literary and Philosophical Society, and was a large shareholder in the local art lottery. Most important for the Manchester school, Thomson was a council member of the central Schools of Design, where he would have met a number of Royal Academicians, and evidently earned the friendship of Charles Heath Wilson, Director of the schools at Somerset House.¹

Thomson's partner was his brother, Edmund Peel Thomson (the family was related to the Peels - pioneers of calico printing). Edmund was also a committee member and vice-president of the School of Design and a council member of the R.M.I. Their calico printing firm, founded in 1810 at Primrose near Clitheroe, had grown to be the second largest in England by 1840, with seven machines, 204 tables and 80 long tables. John Graham's manuscript notes of 1846 commented on the richness and novelty of their block-printed designs, and their extensive employment of designers.²

Thomas Barge junior, a committee member of the school from 1845, was a partner in the calico printing firm of Barge Bros., Lower Broughton. The firm had a reputation for artistic taste and skill (Warwick Brookes was employed at their paintworks) and the Barge family was reputedly the first to introduce a piano into Manchester in about 1820. Thomas Barge junior took an active part in the foundation of the Athenaeum and in the Jubilee School for Girls, and cast his votes for the liberal and whig candidates in 1832.³

Two committee members of the Manchester school were partners in

1 Letters from C.H. Wilson, P.R.O. Ed. 84/1/pp. 40, 84

2 Grundy's list of English calico printers, 1840, in G. Turnbull, op.cit., 1951, p. 423

J. Graham, Chemistry of calico printing, [c.1846] MS., M.C.L. BR.FF. 667.3 Q.1

F. Nicholson, The Lit. and Phil. Soc. 1781-1851, in Manchester Lit. and Phil. Soc. Proc. for 1923-4 v.68 (1924) p. 125

3 Poll Book, Manchester, 1832

Manchester Guardian 10 and 14 Nov. 1871

F.S. Stancliffe, John Shaw's 1738-1938, Timperley, 1938, p. 129

T. Swindells, op.cit., 1906-7 ser.4 p. 182

the firm of Thomas Hoyle and Son, about the fifth largest English calico printer in 1840, with nine machines and 186 tables. John Butterworth was a strict churchman, and a moderate liberal active in the Anti-Corn Law League. He was also involved in the management of the Royal Infirmary, the Lunatic Asylum, Henshaw's Blind Asylum and the Botanical Gardens, and was a shareholder in the Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts.¹ Another partner, Alfred Binyon, entered the firm through marriage to Thomas Hoyle's daughter; the Binyon family were well established in Manchester as tea dealers, with other retail shops besides, and both the Hoyles and the Binyons were prominent worshippers at the Friends' Meeting House. Alfred Binyon had other educational interests as an honorary life member of the Mechanics' Institution, and a committee member for the Free Public Library to which Hoyle and Sons contributed £100 in 1851.²

Samuel Fletcher, who sat on the school's council from 1844, was a partner in Fletcher, Son and Co., calico printers of Parker Street. He was at the same time a member of the R.M.I. Council and a subscriber to the local art lottery, but is not otherwise well documented. It may be assumed however that his views followed to some extent those of his father, a successful merchant, a Congregationalist and a leading Christian philanthropist and educational benefactor; Samuel Fletcher senior addressed the annual meeting of the School of Design in 1847 by urging the students:

"not only to aim at high things as respects art,
but to aim at high things as respects morals;
to bear in mind that it was to patient continuance
in well-doing, that glory, and honor, and im-

1 G. Turnbull, op.cit., 1951, p. 423
Biography and obituary coll., M.C.L. Local History Coll.

2 J. Swindells, op.cit., 1906 ser.1 p. 107; ser.2 p. 293
J.T. Slugg, op.cit., 1881 p. 184

mortality were allotted, not only in this world, but in the world to come; and they might depend upon it, that unless they were actuated by principles of virtue in going out to view the beauties of the Creation, they would never succeed in thoroughly appreciating them."¹

Before the family firm became independent, Fletcher had been in partnership with two fellow Congregationalists, as Fletcher, Burd and Wood.

William Burd of that partnership became, like Fletcher, a leading figure in the community, as alderman and a director of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and William Burd junior became a committee member of the Manchester School of Design from 1845 to '47.²

John Chippindall was a respected citizen, having built up a successful calico printing business and served the community as a commissioner for the improvement of Market Street in 1821, along with prominent liberal whigs such as Greg, Heywood and Lloyd (He himself inclined more to conservatism, however, and voted against Greg in the 1837 election). In 1824 he was a trustee of the R.M.I. permanent fund, and from 1835 to '37 a director of the Chamber of Commerce. With seven machines and 151 tables, his industrial success had been such as to provide an education for his son at Rugby School, to buy a large house at Cheethan Hill, and to contribute £1000 to the building of St. Luke's Church in that area, the church of which his son eventually became rector in 1869.

Chippindall sat on the committee of the school from 1844 to '47, and was a subscriber to the Association for Patronage of the Fine Arts.³

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- 1 Manchester S.D., Rep. of annual meeting 23 Feb. 1847, p. 19
Good Words Aug. 1864 pp. 570-9
E. Fiddes, Chapters in the history of Owen's College, 1937 pp. 7-8, 149
W. Shaw, op.cit., 1894-5 v.2 p. 42
 - 2 J.T. Slugg, op.cit., 1881 pp. 133, 165
Manchester directories, 1838, 1843
 - 3 Poll Books, Manchester 1832, '39
Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Annual Reps. 1835, '36, '37
T. Swindells, op.cit., 1906-7 ser.5 pp. 37, 63
G. Turnbull, op.cit., 1951, p. 423

Of the remaining three calico printers who were members of the committee, less can be said regarding their social background. James Hertz of Mosley Street was reported as being one of the very few committee members who sent pupils to the school; he was a member of the Chamber of Commerce in 1839 and a committee member for the Great Exhibition ten years later.¹ Edward Brooke, a council member of the school throughout the period 1838 to '48, was a senior partner in the firm of Philips, Nash and Lowe when he gave evidence to the Select Committee on Copyright in 1840. As an employer of original designers, he advocated extension of copyright.² Thomas Warner is identifiable as a calico printer from the 1838 directory, and as a tory voter from the Poll Books; relative prosperity and an interest in art may be surmised, as he took three shares in the art lottery of 1841-2, when his address was Mosley Street, and in the following year he joined the committee of the Manchester Association for Patronage of the Fine arts.³

Joseph Lockett, who served on the committee from 1844 was the son of "one of the most eminent and ingenious engravers in the united towns", to whose abilities, it was claimed, the unrivalled quality of calico printing in Manchester was due. Baines recorded that Joseph Lockett junior and Co. had developed a method of etching cylinders with beautiful and novel patterns in endless variety. In evidence to the Select Committee on Schools of Design in 1849, Lockett put a strong case for relating work at the schools to local manufacture, argued the necessity of artistic knowledge for successful trade and commented on the deficiency of that

1 S.C. on the Schools of Design 1849 (576) xviii pp. 365-6
 Manchester directory 1838
 Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Annual Rep. 1839
Further report on provincial support, 14 Nov. 1849, in Scott Russell
papers, R.S.A.

2 S.C. on Copyright of Designs 1840 (442) vi qq. 1777-1821

3 Poll Books, Manchester, 1832, '39
 Manchester directory 1838

knowledge amongst workmen, and the failure of the Manchester school as regards manufacture. He himself employed about eight designers and 150 engravers. A member of the local committee for the Great Exhibition, but not otherwise active in the educational and cultural institutions of Manchester, his interest in the School of Design seems to have been mainly commercial.¹

The same was certainly true of George Jackson, general decorator and manufacturer of ornament for internal decoration, whose activity in the Manchester school has already been described. He seems to have emerged from relative obscurity in 1837, since Winstanley in a letter to Haydon claimed not to know who he was, although Jackson's father, a London-based stuccatore, by appointment to H.M. King George IV, had worked for Barry on the R.M.I. building.² Jackson, too, was a witness before the Select Committee of 1849, but whereas Lockett had dismissed all teaching at the Manchester school as irrelevant, Jackson supported the work done by Wallis in his tenure of the mastership. He claimed that the odium previously attached to ornamental art had disappeared, and that no distinction should be drawn between high art and ornamentation. Prominent in the founding of the school, and honorary secretary 1844-6, Jackson, who lived in Salford, played no active part in the organisation of other educational institutions in Manchester. He did, however, read a paper On the improvement of public taste, at a conversazione of the Royal Institution in 1844, and this paper, repeated by request at a public meeting of the Athenaeum, was published by the School of Design. In it, he argued strenuously for facilities for the elevation of the

1 Manchester Grammar School Register v.3 p. 105
E. Baines, History of the cotton manufacture, 1835 p. 269
S.C. on Schools of Design 1849 (576) xviii qq. 2319-2386
J. Butterworth, Antiquities of the town, Manchester, 1822 p. 290

2 R.M.I. Letter Books, M.C.L. Archives M6/A1/p. 141, M6/A5/2/p. 140

public mind and improvement of taste, through free exhibitions in Manchester of both high art and industrial art, and contrasted the abundance of galleries and museums in London; the advantages which he claimed for such institutions included moral and disciplinary effects as well as national prosperity. Jackson applied his principles in arranging the Exposition of Art and Manufactures at the school in 1845.¹

Such a survey of the backgrounds and attitudes of the school's promoters reveals a rather more commercially orientated group than will be found at Birmingham and Leeds. Political and religious convictions were mixed; political alignments were in any case complicated at this period, based on a variety of national and local issues; certain denominations, such as Unitarians, Anglicans and to some extent Congregationalists, were notably represented. It is evident that there were a variety of motives for promoting the Manchester School of Design, but a striking feature of the majority of its patrons was their membership of a social and intellectual elite, and the pattern of other philanthropic or educational and cultural activity, and where specific attitudes were expressed, these were often characterised by a broad interest in moral and aesthetic education of the people.

1 S.C. on Schools of Design 1849 (576) xviii q. 2484
Art Union v.8 (1846) p. 53

G. Jackson, On the means of improving public taste, Manchester, 1844

CHAPTER 5

BIRMINGHAM

The situation in which a School of Design was formed in Birmingham was different from that in Manchester. The quantity and variety of 'art-manufactures' created a considerable demand for trained designers and had established many precedents for the employment of artists in industry, and the industrial aspect will therefore be considered at length. But whereas Manchester's industry had been consolidated into large units, the industrial structure of Birmingham was one of much smaller enterprises. Workshops rather than factories prevailed, and this fact may explain the absence of manufacturers amongst promoters of the local School of Design.

A similar pattern of cultural activity to that of Manchester is found, but differences in the patronage and exhibition of the fine arts created particular problems. The tension between practising artists and lay patrons which existed within the Royal Manchester Institution led to an open rift which split the Birmingham Society of Arts, and a situation arose in which contemporary art was shown by a large body of practising artists with the purpose of selling, much more than old masters, the exhibition of which, as at Manchester, was more for the educational purpose of elevating taste.

Whereas Manchester had been one of the first towns to receive a grant, Birmingham did not receive its grant until 1842, and this delay was partly attributable to the internal problems of the Society of Arts.

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Birmingham in the early nineteenth century was a city where the need for educated designers was pronounced; it also enjoyed the tradition of several pioneering attempts to apply ornamental design to industrial production. Edmund Burke had christened it "the toy-shop of Europe."¹

Most prominent in this respect was the firm of Boulton, especially in the period of Matthew Boulton's early partnership with John Fothergill in the production of silver and gilt ornaments. In his youth, Boulton was in London selling prints for John Boydell, in which job, perhaps, he first learned of the market for mechanically produced objets d'art. By setting up the Soho manufactory in 1762, he aimed to remove "the prejudice which Birmingham hath so justly established against itself" (i.e. the tradition of cheap 'Brummagem' wares), and he sought to "merit Orders by superior work."² Like his friend and fellow-member of the Lunar Society, Josiah Wedgwood, Boulton diversified his wares for customers of high and moderate income; the buttons, buckles and chains which he produced in quantity helped to subsidise the more expensive silverware, but to both were applied rigorous criteria of taste, which was widely recognised.

Boulton's designs were prepared by the best men he could procure, and Swinney's Directory noted as early as 1774 that

"Their excellent ornamental Pieces or Or-Moulu, have been admired by the Nobility and Gentry, not only of this Kingdom, but of all Europe; and are

1 S. Timmins ed., Resources, products and industrial history of Birmingham, Birmingham, 1866 p. 216

2 E. Robinson, Eighteenth century commerce and fashion, in Ec.H.R. 2nd ser. v.16 (1963-4) p. 44

allowed to surpass anything of the kind made abroad: and some Articles lately executed in Silver-plate shew that Taste and Elegance of Design prevail here in a superior Degree, and are, with Mechanism and Chymistry, happily united."¹

His personal taste has been widely discussed in the context of his close relationship with leading neo-classical artists and architects, such as Flaxman, Wyon, Chantrey, Sir William Chambers and the Adam brothers. He was a subscriber to the magnificent 1758 edition of Virgil by the Birmingham printer John Baskerville (another industrial craftsman who lent his taste to the city's growing reputation in the eighteenth century).

Boulton was an important precursor in industrial design, with his interests in mechanical reproduction, fashionable markets, and in the training of designers. So it was that Boulton and Fothergill were first attracted to Watt's steam engine as a means of operating presses and die stampers. His interest in means of reproduction extended also to the patronage of Francis and John Eginton. Francis worked at Soho until 1780, where Boulton encouraged his experiments in the reproduction of oil paintings, and several large sums were contributed by Boulton to the unprofitable partnership in commercial engraving of Edward Jee and John Eginton.²

In the matter of fashion, Boulton, again like Wedgwood, learned to study his market:

"Fashion hath much to do in these things and that of the present age distinguishes itself by adopting the most Elegant ornaments of the most refined Grecian artists, I am satisfy'd in conforming thereto, and humbly copying their style, and makeing new combinations of old

¹ S. Timmins ed., op.cit., 1866 p. 218.

² H.R. Hitchcock, An 'altarpiece' by Benjamin West PRA, in Smith College of Art Bull. nos. 29-32 (June 1951) p. 12

ornaments, without presuming to invent new ones."¹

Sadly ill-documented is the 'School of Industrial Design' which Boulton founded at Soho. Here, any apprentices showing an inclination for design were taught to draw. Edward Piercy, a printseller, wrote to Boulton in 1787 recommending the works of one artist "whose Genius first began to dawn at Soho, under your liberal Patronage", and referring to "the Genius and Taste of Artists who may have received their Education and cultivated their Talents at the Soho manufactory."² A former apprentice of Soho, afterwards employed by a noted London Goldsmith, gave evidence before a parliamentary committee in 1773, stating that Boulton's patterns were the handsomest he had ever seen, and that many were made to order for London but were designed in Boulton's factory.³ Boulton even persuaded the great historical painter Benjamin West to guide one of his engravers in the preparation of a medal, and his protégé John Phillip was sent for advice to Thomas Hope, one of the foremost arbiters of neo-classical taste.⁴ John Flaxman the sculptor and William Wyon, engraver to the Royal Mint were both trained at Boulton's school.⁵

Similar encouragement to the industrial application of art was being given by contemporaries in Birmingham. John Baskerville was engaged in japanning from 1740, and William Hutton, contemporary historian of Birmingham, remarked of him: "He could well design, but procured others to execute; wherever he found merit, he caressed it." Baskerville's

1 E. Robinson, op.cit., (1963-4) p. 46

2 E. Robinson, Matthew Boulton, Patron of the Arts, in Annals of Science v.9 (1953) p. 372

3 A. Westwood, The manufacture of wrought plate in Birmingham, in Birmingham Archaeol. Soc. Trans. v.29 (1904) p. 48

4 D. Watkin, Thomas Hope, 1769-1831, and the neo-classical idea, 1968, pp. 54, 198 (on Thomas Hope see chapter 1 above)

5 S.C. on Arts and Manufactures 1835-6 1836 (568) ix II qq. 122-3

printing activities included the publication of an illustrated bible, and his appointment as printer to Cambridge University contributed to the growing reputation of Birmingham as a centre of good and original design.¹ Francis Eginton was responsible for reviving the manufacture of painted glass, beginning with experiments at Soho when he was superintendent of japanned ware, and his contribution to the elevation of taste in Birmingham industry was the commission of designs from noted artists. Gavin Hamilton provided designs for fifty enamelled-glass panels for Beckford's Fonthill Abbey, whilst in 1776 Eginton's major work, the east window of St Paul's in Birmingham, was made from an original painting by Benjamin West.²

Edward Thomason, a luminary of the jewellery, plate and bronze-casting trades, had been apprenticed to Boulton before establishing his own factory in 1806, which he built up to rival Soho in the quality of its productions. The first manufacturer outside London to cast bronze on a large scale, he made a copy of the famous Venetian horses, which surmounted his factory, and his copy of a classical urn, the Warwick Vase, equalled in renown Wedgwood's Portland Vase. Andrew Ure, a learned and influential commentator, paid compliment to him in 1839: "I am well aware that both the useful and the fine arts of this country are under deep obligations to your brilliant career as a great manufacturer at Birmingham."³ Thomason, who was knighted for his statue of George IV, employed the Hollins family, local sculptors who achieved a national reputation, and Samuel Lines, a local artist who was also a teacher of drawing and an active promoter of the Society of Arts.

1 D.N.B.
T.S.R. Boase, Macklin and Bowyer, in J.W.C.I. v.26 (1963) p. 163

2 H.R. Hitchcock, op.cit., (1951)

3 E. Thomason, Sir Edward Thomason's memoirs, 1845 v.2 pp. 326-7
A. Westwood, op.cit., (1904) pp. 54-5

The local tradition of industrial art thus established by pioneers in ornamental production was often referred to in connection with the Society of Arts (founded 1821), which was partly intended to improve still further the aesthetic quality of Birmingham manufactures.¹ A direct link between this period of Birmingham's industry, and the formation of the School of Design in 1843 is to be traced in the father and son partnership of Thomas and Theophilus Richards, goldsmiths and jewellers. Their Birmingham shop was "scarcely rivalled for the elegance of its appearance and the multiplicity of its valuable arts", and was one of the show-places of the town over which Lord Nelson, with Sir William and Lady Hamilton, were conducted in 1802.² Theophilus became a patron of the School of Design.

A survey of industry in Birmingham in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, indicates a potential demand for design training. The local economy was based on the finishing trades which impressed foreign visitors such as Bodmer, the German engineer, in 1816-17.³ Lord Shelburne noted in his diary as early as 1766

"Birmingham originally had no manufacture except a small one of linen thread ... Its great rise was owing to ... first, the discovery of mixed metal so mollient or ductile as easily to suffer stamping, the consequence of which is they do buttons, buckles, toys and everything in the hardware way by stamping machines which were before obliged to be performed by human labour."⁴

The 'toys' to which Shelburne referred included all manner of clasps, watch-chains, sword-hilts etc., to most of which some surface ornament was applied. The methods employed in designing these small objects is

1 Preface to catalogue of B.S.A. Exhibition, 1827. Draft copy in B.S.A. Mins., 7 Sept. 1827

2 A. Westwood, loc.cit.

3 C.R. Fay, Round about industrial Britain 1830-1860, Toronto, 1952 chap.4

4 W.H.B. Court, The rise of the midland industries 1600-1838, 1938 pp. 239-

not clear; most of the manufacturers of cheap gilt toys were craftsmen working on their own account, or with one or two apprentices, who, without the resources of specialist designers, continued traditional shapes and patterns with minor modifications, and imitated the best fashions of foreign manufacturers or copied from Boulton's works. Soho was an exception to these small workshops in employing designers, as well as agents in London and Europe who kept an eye on fashion.

As Boulton himself had observed, fashion was becoming an important factor in industrial art. Improved communications, especially between London and the provinces in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were partly responsible for the increasing rapidity with which styles changed. So, too, was communication with the continent of Europe and the steady popularity of the Grand Tour, despite its interruption during the Napoleonic Wars. In consumer goods, the growing scale of production and highly competitive markets caused the manufacturers to become very sensitive to fashion.

The vicissitudes of the buckle and button trades provide good illustrations of the effects of fashion on Birmingham's economy. Buckles as shoe-fastenings were outmoded by laces about 1790, and a petition to the Prince of Wales pleaded with him to influence court fashion by wearing buckles. In 1840, metal buttons were usurped by horn, silk and porcelain, and once more an appeal to royal influence was made, this time to the Prince Consort, but as a contemporary observed:

"These sanguine gentlemen all had gradually to learn that a Prince, however gracious, does not carry the fiats of the fickle goddess in his button-hole, and that the revolutions of fashion are to be met by measures more in accordance with sound judgment, good taste and manly industry."¹

His criticism of the industry implied the importance of education:

1 S. Timmins ed., op.cit., 1866 pp. 433, 439.

"I fear there are among [the artisans] as many instances of a low state of education and morals as can be found in any other trade when women and children are engaged ...

"The nature of the work involves, in many cases, considerable artistic skill, or educated art..."¹

Jewellery proper, as distinct from the gilt toy trades, was to become a staple craft in Birmingham throughout the nineteenth century. It suffered heavily from the trade recession in 1825, but began to flourish again from 1836 and made great progress during the mid-century. Supply was boosted by the discoveries of gold in Australia and California, whilst demand increased with the growing wealth of England and the colonies, together with an increased desire for personal ornament. By the 1860s London had become almost entirely dependent on Birmingham for articles of jewellery for the middle classes.²

The papier mâché industry was a large and expanding concern in both Birmingham and Wolverhampton in the early nineteenth century. Developing from the patent for a new method of manufacture registered in 1773 by Henry Clay, an apprentice with Baskerville, this material had become adapted for use in tables, cabinets, coach and even ship furniture, as well as smaller domestic items such as tea-trays, caddies and snuff-boxes. As a poor material, it needed decoration, but it was malleable and very receptive to japanning or enamelling treatments. Jennens and Bettridge, the successors to Clay's firm, raised their trade in popular estimation by the tastefulness of their decoration; a number of their apprentices went on to achieve some renown as artists, and others went on to employment with Hardman in the manufacture of stained glass, so that the firm became recognised as an ideal training-school for designers.³ The

1 Ibid. p. 444

2 Ibid. p. 452 ff.

3 S.C. on Arts and Manufactures, 1835-6, 1836 (568) ix I q. 751
 W.C. Aitken, Papier mâché manufacture, in S. Timmins ed., op.cit.,
 1866 p. 572 ff.
 G. Dickinson, English papier mâché, 1925

techniques were closely allied with those of the japanning trade, which was already well established in the midlands. In Birmingham, by mid-century, there were 45 manufacturers of japanned iron goods, fifteen of whom also manufactured papier mâché, and between them they employed about one thousand decorative artists and apprentices. Henry Clay had established the respectability of his product by presenting to Queen Caroline a sedan chair with papier mâché panels, and a set of console tables of the same material, decorated with paintings after Guido Reni. The peak of its success was represented by the Great Exhibition with a display of elaborate papier mâché furniture which achieved extensive sales.

The cast iron manufacturer was another whose need for designers grew with the taste for ornament. The two leading firms in the production of hollow-ware were Kenrick at West Bromwich and Clark at Wolverhampton. Archibald Kenrick established a small but sound business with rather less than 100 employees by 1815, producing 'odd-work' such as bell-pulls, door-knobs, handles and knockers. The business expanded, especially with the development of a new process of enamelling, and samples of his work were displayed at the Crystal Palace in 1851. His early catalogues showed simple products offered in a variety of shapes and patterns which multiplied especially in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹

The brass manufacturers found a similarly increasing demand for ornamented objects, especially in cabinet brassfoundry such as table fastenings, latches and handles, and in the increasing domestic use of brass for hatstands, window fittings, ornamental railings, and particularly gas fittings. Other soft alloys suitable for decorative embellishment, such as pewter and Britannia metal, were also manufactured in Birmingham.

¹ R.A. Church, Kenricks in hardware, Newton Abbot, 1969 passim

The leading brassfounder in Birmingham, R.W. Winfield, employed W.C. Aitken, a prominent designer and writer on industrial design. Winfield reputedly paid the highest wages in Birmingham to attract the best talent. His products attained a world-wide reputation, winning a Gold Medal at the 1851 Exhibition. Much of this success was due to Aitken

"whose name will always be remembered in Birmingham in connection with Art ... His correct knowledge and wonderful skill in the application of correct principles of form and colour to articles of manufacture for daily use, raised the fame of the Winfield's house as high, artistically, as it was for excellence of material and workmanship."¹

Chance Brothers manufactured glass on such a scale that by 1851 they were able to supply the 300,000 panes for the Crystal Palace in a matter of weeks, with no disruption of their normal working. In the 1830s they became interested in decorative glass, developing glass lamp shades, and employing a Frenchman, Georges Bontemps, who rediscovered an ancient method of producing brilliant ruby glass.² A stained glass department was added to the firm in 1846. The firm of A.F. and T.C. Osler became eminent as manufacturers of chandeliers and cut glass.³ The decorative glass works of Bacchus and Sons "long enjoyed a reputation for the clearness, purity and brilliancy of its productions, ... elegant in shape and chaste in design", and was honoured by a tour of inspection by Prince Albert in 1843.⁴ John Hardman was a manufacturer whose interest in ornamental work was inspired by his friendship with Pugin from 1837. He became the foremost manufacturer of Pugin's designs in metal and glass, sending his pupils to study under Pugin's personal supervision:

1 E. Edwards, Personal recollections of Birmingham, Birmingham, 1877 p. 119

2 Chance Bros. and Co., A hundred years of British glass making, [Birmingham] [1925] (Georges Bontemps was a respondent quoted in the Society of Arts' Report ... [on] Industrial Instruction, 1853 (pp. 91-2) where he advocated the education of taste)

3 F. Buckley, The Birmingham glass trade 1740-1833, in J. of the Soc. of Glass Technology v.11 no. 44 (Dec. 1927) p. 374

4 Cornish's Stranger's guide through Birmingham, 1849 pp. 74, 79

"For the last few years as many as from 80-100 hands have been employed, and in nearly every instance, Birmingham youths have been taken as apprentices. One ... made his first outline with chalk - caricatures of his friends, of course, on the soles of the shoes he had to brush - a circumstance which first drew Mr. Hardman's attention to his talent. On the whole there is ample proof that in towns so intimate with coal and iron as Birmingham, so apparently given up to a worship of material, plenty of artistic talent is to be found, which only requires, as all arts do - the highest most of all - fostering and cultivating in order to produce good fruit."¹

Decorative glass therefore played an important part in Birmingham industry. A Birmingham directory of 1841 listed 15 glass cutters, 2 glass engravers, 6 glass manufacturers, 8 glass stainers, and 20 glass toy and chandelier makers.²

Gun and sword makers required skilled engravers for ornamental work, for which Birmingham had a high reputation:

"A gentleman may contrive to spend a great deal of money on firearms, if he will order ornament enough; and we could understand the temptation, the engraving is so beautiful. Every bit of metal left visible, except the barrel, bears engravings, in the most expensive pistols and fowling-pieces. Not only graceful arabesques, but figures of game, wild beasts, hunters etc. are beautifully executed by men who make from four to five hundred pounds a year by their art."³

Thus, engravers were nurtured at Birmingham who won national reputations, for example the Wyon family, and John Pye, the writer on art.⁴

1 J. Hardman Powell, *The art of stained glass in Birmingham*, in S. Timmins ed., *op.cit.*, 1866 p. 530

(This anecdote of the discovery of "untutored genius" is exactly parallel to Vasari's account of Cimabue's discovery of Giotto, a shepherd boy sketching on stone. Artistic biography was a popular literary form of the period.)

2 D.N. Bandilands, *the birth of Birmingham's glass industry*, in *J. of the Soc. of Glass Technology* v.15 no. 59 (Sept. 1931) p. 227

3 Harriet Martineau, in *Household Words* v.4 (1852) p. 583

4 John Pye (1782-1874) engraver to Turner and author of *Patronage of British Art*, 1845 referred to in chapter 1, above

Finally, a technical development of about the same period as the Government Schools of Design, created another area of demand for designers in Birmingham. At the same time, it contributed significantly to the dissemination of good design. The Elkington brothers' patent of electro-plating revolutionized the well-established manufacture of plate in Birmingham. As well as being a cleaner and more efficient process for manufacturing plated ware, electro-plating lent itself in particular to the exact reproduction of classic works of statuary and relief modelling, which made accessible in a cheap form the exemplars and epitomes of good taste.¹ An assessment of the effects of this innovation, from the pen of William Ryland (who, as a registered maker of silver and plated ware, might justifiably have mistrusted the competition created by the new process), offered a particularly mid-Victorian view of the unity of art, industry and morality:

"The rapid advance made in Birmingham in fine art productions since the introduction of this valuable scientific discovery, has been marvellous, and has given scope to the talent of a class of artisans in designing, modelling and chasing, which before had no existence. The effect of the training for this kind of work has been of great advantage to the moral standing of the workman. The occupation is pleasant, the labour light, cleanly and remunerative, and the impression produced on the mind and heart, by the study of fine forms of decoration carried out in the highest character of workmanship lead the artist captive, and prevent him from falling into low pursuits, which would not only degrade him as a man, but destroy his ability to produce the requisite effects in his work. We are now able to produce works by electro-plating, equal in appearance to the most elaborate silver; nor does there appear to be any limit to the designs which are constantly in demand."²

In 1852, Harriet Martineau visited Elkington's factory and found

1 S. Bury, Victorian Electro-Plate, Feltham, 1971

2 W. Ryland, The plated wares and electro-plating trades, in S. Timmins ed., op.cit., 1866 pp. 493-4

"... work of so high an order, that the wonder is how, in the imperfect state of our popular education, so many can be found to manage such processes."

In the modellers' room, she noted approvingly the books on Art, engravings and patterns of beautiful forms, used as inspiration and sources. Francis Elkington's personal interest in art was revealed as early as 1824 in a letter to the Birmingham Gazette, appraising a sculpture by Peter Hollins.¹

The ease with which galvanic and chemical processes could now effect accurate reproduction echoed Lord Shelburne's acute observation three quarters of a century earlier, that mechanical means of reproduction were the key to Boulton's prosperity. Bisset, a local rhymester, noted this aspect in his epic The Ramble of the Gods through Birmingham:

"The Gods with rapture fraught, the whole survey'd:
Their NAMES they wrote, and saw, with great surprise,
FACSIMILES that moment, strike their eyes"²

It was this very transition from craft to industry that made more acute the problem of training in design. In a craft system the artisan could learn by imitation and by trial and error a limited repertoire of ornament, in which individual eccentricities provided part of the charm of the hand-made object. With machinery it became possible to produce thousands of accurate copies from a sophisticated original; the original had therefore to conform to a much higher standard of taste and precision in execution, whilst the chasing and finishing of machine-made objects by hundreds of craftsmen required a sympathetic understanding by them of the original design.

Despite the increasing use of dies and patterns, in some industries

1 Household Words v.4 (1852) pp. 114-5
J.A. Langford, A century of Birmingham life, 1868, pp. 499-500

2 R.K. Dent, Old and new Birmingham, Birmingham 1880, pp. 266-7

ornamentation was still applied by hand. Harriet Martineau described her visit to the Jennens and Bettridge factory in 1851:

"In the colouring room, one of the prettiest processes seen is the gilding of borders and other designs. The artist paints his border with a steady hand and graceful strokes. ... Not far off sits another artist, with a convulvulus in water before him. He is painting flowers on a work-box."¹

Moreover, as mechanisation multiplied the production of ornamented and decorative goods, so an appreciation of design had to be inculcated amongst the consuming public as a whole. Correct aesthetic choices had to be made by purchasers in order to raise the quality of production, and good design was thought to be morally uplifting and socially valuable:

"There is no valid reason why the factory girl should not display her gilt buckle and brooch of the same design as the golden one worn by the lady of the villa. Art may thus serve the community by cheapening the cost of the beautiful and affording gratification to the humblest members of society, by superior designs reproduced in the cheapest possible form, and attainable by all."²

Given the importance to Birmingham's economy of art-manufactures, and the local reputations which had been established, the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures took surprisingly little evidence regarding the town.

Of four witnesses who referred to Birmingham, only one was employed in manufacture there. This was Samuel Wiley,³ a japper with Jennens and Bettridge to whose energies he attributed a great improvement in japanning: "being men of taste, and stimulating their apprentices and teaching them the art of drawing, they have taken great pains."⁴ Every workman designed his own patterns, but some excelled

1 H. Martineau, Flower shows in a Birmingham Hot-house, in Household Words v.4 (1852) pp. 82-5

2 J.S. Wright, Jewellery and gilt toy trades, in S. Timmins ed., op.cit., 1866 p. 461

3 S.C. on Arts and Manufactures 1835-6, 1836 (568) ix I qq. 748-807

4 Ibid. I q. 751

more than others; there was a want, not a talent, but of facilities, in the form of public instruction and public exhibitions to improve taste and arouse a spirit of enquiry. There had been of late a considerable extension of the trade both in home consumption and in export to America, and especially in export of the best objects to France, owing to the superior quality of British japanning "in characters, the beauty and everything."¹

The one other witness who could claim some first-hand knowledge of the situation at Birmingham was Thomas Jones Howell, a factory inspector for the midlands,² and he, too, referred to the efforts of Jennens and Bettridge in instructing their operatives: "that is the chief instruction they get, aided by such private tuition from the professional masters in the town as they are able to spare money for. It is in fact a school of itself. They bring them up to it from the youngest age."³ Jennens and Co. were "extremely anxious for any institution that the state might furnish that would encourage art in Birmingham, with reference to their own particular manufacture",⁴ but Howell made the telling point that demand for instruction came more from the artisans than from the masters, on the whole.⁵

Two other witnesses who referred to Birmingham were C.R. Cockerell A.R.A., architect to the Bank of England, who had visited the town infrequently, and William Wyon A.R.A., chief engraver to the mint. Wyon had originally trained at Soho, and had left Birmingham twenty years before, although he had occasional communication with the place.

1 Ibid. I q. 801

2 Ibid. II qq. 66-143

3 Ibid. II q. 120

4 Ibid. II q. 119

5 Ibid. II qq. 71, 72, 85, 103, 112

Cockerell's interest in art-manufacture related to architectural decoration in brass and metal, such as door furniture, grates and stoves, many of which were produced in Birmingham. Having resided a good deal abroad, he felt pique as an Englishman, at the superiority shown by foreigners in these goods. He had visited the manufactories and lamented the want of instruction, where

"cultivation of taste only is wanting to give us superiority over the world ... from ignorance of the true principles of design, there is a constant waste of capital in the capricious and random endeavour to catch the public taste; I have freely commented upon this deficiency, and have found it generally confessed. The manufacturers are not sufficiently impressed with the necessity of a higher culture of design."¹

Cockerell saw apathy on the part of the manufacturers; he spoke of a very able artist, Mr. Briggens, who had been forced to leave Birmingham ten years earlier through want of taste amongst public and manufacturers.²

Also he saw a divergence between encouragement of fine art, and the commercial need for design training; speaking of institutions like the Society of Arts at Birmingham, he noted:

"these have been raised by the subscriptions of individuals, often manufacturers themselves, very enthusiastic for the honour and for the real improvement of their native towns; but the means being very small, they have been obliged to support them by the attractions of fine art and annual exhibitions; they have not been able to bring them to bear more directly on manufactures to such an extent as they might otherwise have done."³

Wyon's interest lay in the silversmiths, and plated and brass work. The fault which he identified was lack of originality and dependence on French designs, which he attributed to a deficient knowledge of art amongst

1 Ibid. I qq. 1439, 1440

2 Ibid. I q. 1459

3 Ibid. I q. 1478

ornamental designers, and this in turn to the want of encouragement and protection for the arts in Birmingham.¹ Like Wiley, Wyon considered that the talent was already available in Birmingham manufactories,

"There are a great number of artists employed as designers ...

(Do they receive encouragement if they are ingenious and clever men?) - Not sufficient to keep them to that particular department. ... there wants emulation and protection to be offered to them to continue that particular class of art, instead of wandering to other pursuits."²

Wyon claimed to have proposed to the Society of Arts a plan for the better encouragement of design, with prizes for designs, a good library containing works of an ornamental character, and a museum of examples, but nothing had come of this.³

The importance of Birmingham art-manufactures was acknowledged by the visit of Prince Albert in 1843, to inspect the factories. Amongst those inspected were the glass works of Messrs. Bacchus, the papier-mâché production of Jennens and Bettridge, Elkington's electro-plating establishment, and Armfield's button manufactory, after which he was ceremoniously received at the Town Hall and the Grammar School.⁴ Albert returned in 1849 for the Birmingham Exposition of Manufactures, arranged to coincide with the second visit to Birmingham of the British Association, the triennial music festival, and an exhibition of modern works of art at the Society of Artists. The Exposition included the works of all the major manufacturers of Birmingham, and will be discussed below in the context of cultural activities. At its close, the Journal of Design and Manufactures noted its success, with 100,000 visitors in all and 8,000

1 Ibid. I qq. 1674-1678

2 Ibid. I qq. 1701-1703

3 Ibid. I qq. 1672, 1699

4 Stranger's Guide through Birmingham, (Cornish) 1849 pp. 74-5 (This guide listed the most important factories which could be visited by the public. pp. 76-93)

catalogues sold. "The exhibition has certainly raised the credit of Birmingham manufacturers. Royalty has honoured the productions by importing them to the Palace. The Duchess of Sutherland and others ... have expressed their approbation by large purchases."¹

In September of that year, whilst the British Association meeting was in progress, Cole and Fuller visited Birmingham on behalf of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, to drum up support for the project of a Great Exhibition in 1851. Their report shows that 25 local firms and individuals put their names forward on this occasion as promoters and subscribers (only one of whom was an active committee member of the School of Design).² Thirty-two Birmingham exhibitors at the Great Exhibition were paid the compliment of inclusion in the Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue representing the following manufactures:³

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| decorative metalwork | 20 |
| glass | 7 |
| papier mâché | 3 |
| carriages | 1 |
| altar cloths | 1 |

but only four of these were involved in the management of the Birmingham School of Design.

Birmingham was therefore well represented by art-manufactures at the Great Exhibition. The traditional prejudice against "Brummagem" which Boulton had sought to remove, still persisted to some extent, as Harriet Martineau observed, but "Whatever may have been Brummagem gold-beating in ancient times, and in days of imperfect art, when long wars impeded the education of English taste, it is mere ignorance to keep

1 J.D.M. v.2 (1849-50) p. 180

2 Rep. to H.R.H. Prince Albert, 5 Oct. 1849 by H. Cole and F. Fuller, in Scott Russell Papers, R.S.A.

3 Art Journal Catalogue of the Great Exhibition, 1851 passim

up the censure in these times."¹ Assessing the industrial demand for art and design in Birmingham, it must be concluded that this was considerable, and on the increase in the years 1830 to 1850. There was a long tradition of the application of art to industry, and design was apparently improving in response to popular demand for ornamentation. Some manufacturers, such as Jennens and Bettridge did train their designers, but it was thought that insufficient encouragement for good artists existed in Birmingham industry. It will be seen below that very few of the major manufacturers were active in the management of the School of Design. Local institutions tended to encourage the fine arts rather than industrial art, and it is worthy of note that the need for good design, and for design training, was often expressed with moral overtones.

II

The objective of raising popular taste, with all that that implied, was shared by a number of institutions, of which the School of Design has to be counted as one, and the work of those institutions encouraging art and art education must be understood in the context of a general increase of cultural activity in Birmingham in the first half of the nineteenth century. Before dealing specifically with the visual arts, therefore, it is proposed to discuss some of the principal features of cultural life in Birmingham, such as libraries, adult education and societies, the performing arts and the press.

Some aspects of industrial development in Birmingham, outlined above, will already have suggested that the town enjoyed an active cultural life by 1800. The Lunar Society which embraced the artistic and

¹ Household Words v.4 (1852) p. 451

scientific pursuits of Boulton, Wedgwood, Joseph Wright of Derby and Erasmus Darwin was perhaps exceptional and was confined in its membership to a few friends; but other activities and societies embraced a wider social range including craftsmen and small tradesmen.

In a striking analogy with the gas-lighting by Murdoch of the Soho works in 1798, William Matthews noted:

"The art of producing and managing that beautiful and brilliant light, which is now rendered so extensively subservient to the dispelling of physical darkness, either originated, or was greatly improved, in the vicinity of Birmingham; but the endeavours to diffuse a considerable portion of mental and moral light over that remarkable and populous district were more early, and certainly not less earnest and effective."¹

The subscription library established in 1779 arose from a Birmingham Book Club in which Unitarian families such as the Pembertons and the Phipsons (both to figure in the patronage of the School of Design) were active. Joseph Priestley was very influential in the library, and by 1786 it comprised 1600 volumes. In 1794 the Birmingham New Library began as an off-shoot after disagreements over policy, and lasted until 1860. In 1797 the Artizans Library "for the peculiar use of the working classes" was founded by Thomas and Samuel Carpenter in connection with their Sunday School, and included works on the arts and sciences, drama, poetry and novels. By 1836, then, there were three independent libraries, in addition to those attached to institutions such as the

M.I.:²

| | <u>volumes</u> | <u>subscribers</u> |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Birmingham Old Library | 16,700 | 500 |
| Birmingham New Library | 4,000 | 360 |
| Artizans' Library | 1,500 | 182 |

1 W. Matthews, A sketch of the principal means which have been employed to ameliorate ... the working classes at Birmingham, 1830, p. 3

2 W. Hawkes Smith, Birmingham and its vicinity, 1836, p. 34
W. Matthews, op.cit., 1830 pp. 15-18

Catering for the literary tastes of the town were a number of booksellers, including William Hutton, the local historian, who had organised a circulating library for subscribers as early as 1751.¹

Men with common cultural interests formed themselves into social clubs. One such was the Book Club which met at Freeth's coffee house in 1790. Freeth and Bisset, both amateur poets, were members, as was Richard Webster, a brass founder, and Joseph Fearon, a tin worker.² Another was the Anacreontic Society, founded in 1793 as a society of leading tradesmen meeting at Joseph Warden's Eagle and Ball Tavern, and embracing men like Bisset, Theophilus Richards and Peter Wyon, die-sinker and father of the line of famous sculptors and engravers.³

More formal institutions existed, such as Sunday Schools, which Birmingham was one of the first towns to adopt. Indeed Frederic Hill ascribed the "intimate connexion" between middle and working classes there (as compared with the greater hostility in Manchester, for example) to the influence of the Sunday Schools; many ex-Sunday School students had accumulated property through trade and risen to respectable positions in society, and habits of cleanliness were induced: "few parents ... will not make an effort to prevent their children appearing in a ragged and dirty state before those who will be disgusted by such neglect."⁴ He also credited the Sunday Schools with the decline in social unrest in Birmingham since 1791. A society for mutual improvement with lectures on natural philosophy had preceded the Sunday Society, established in 1789 to "communicate such ... information as would not only contribute

1 Memoir of James Bisset, ed. T. Dudley, Leamington Spa, 1904 p. 32

2 Ibid. p. 76

C. Gill, History of Birmingham, 1952 v.1 p. 139

3 B. Walker, The Anacreontic Society, in Birmingham Archaeol. Soc. Trans. and Proc. for 1939-40 v.63 (1944) p. 76

4 F. Hill, National education, 1836 v.1 p. 113 ff.

to form the moral character of the boys but be useful to them in their future occupations"; here geography, book-keeping and drawing were therefore added to the usual curriculum of writing and arithmetic.¹

Out of the Sunday Society grew the Philosophical Society which included M.D. Hill (principal of Hazelwood School), Josiah Pemberton, Thomas Phipson and James Luckcock amongst its members. They took a particular interest in theories of the mind as related to education, and James Luckcock went on to assist in the Brotherly Society from 1798, formed for reciprocal instruction amongst predominantly Unitarian Sunday School teachers.²

The Birmingham Philosophical Institution was formed in 1800, modelling itself on the Royal Institution in London, with a lecture theatre, scientific apparatus and laboratories, a museum and a newsroom. It conducted a series of lectures on various topics. For example, James Elmes, a prominent architect and antiquary, lectured in its early years, and Matthew Bloxam spoke on the architectural antiquities of Warwickshire in 1836,³ although in the 1830s phrenology appears to have been a more popular topic. By 1837 the Institution was still being promoted for its usefulness in diffusing scientific knowledge, although, like many societies in Birmingham by this period, it was feeling the want of support.⁴

The Mechanics' Institution pioneered at Birmingham in 1826 by the whig-radical lawyer and son-in-law of Priestley, Joseph Parkes, was well patronised, to begin with, reaching a membership of 1,000 at its peak,

1 Central Soc. of Education, First publication, of 1837, pp. 216-7
W. Matthews, op.cit., 1830 pp. 6-7

2 W. Matthews, op.cit., 1830 p. 14

3 for Elmes, see chapter 1, above
M.H. Bloxam (1805-88), antiquary and writer on architecture, was a leader of the Ecclesiological movement

4 P. Blakiston, Lecture on the diffusion of scientific knowledge, Birmingham Philosophical Institution 18 Dec. 1837, p. 23

but by 1830 the number of quarterly members had sunk to 100. A serious decline of the Institution in the 1830s has been attributed to political distractions created by the Birmingham Political Union, but the decline had clearly begun in the 'twenties, and Frederic Hill's correspondent explained this by the divergence of intentions between the honorary members, "'respectable inhabitants' of the town, technically so called", and the quarterly subscribers, which led to the former abandoning the institution.¹ It is worthy of note that the usual struggle for the introduction of literary as opposed to purely utilitarian subjects on the curriculum, was won as early as 1828 when the half-yearly report announced the purchase of fiction for the library, "aware of the influence which the literature of a nation has upon the formation of the character of its people, and the controul those principles have upon future action, which are early imbibed."² Hill's respondent was apparently of this opinion, pointing out that although lectures on natural philosophy and on history had been well received, those on poetry and the drama had been most of all attractive. In the classes, writing, arithmetic and drawing had 90-100 students each, maths, French and Latin 20-25 students each:

"Drawing may be said perhaps to be studied in reference to the manufacturing operations of the town, but I question whether profession or occupation be often considered by the youths who attend the classes ... I advocate them as the means of elevating the human race, not of making them more skilful at the lathe or the file. I do not know that our members are distinguished for their skill; in Truth, the smaller part only are actually 'workmen'."³

In the intellectual life of Birmingham, the period 1831-47 was

1 F. Hill, op.cit., 1836 v.2 p. 191 ff.

2 Birmingham M.I., Half-yearly report, 1828 p. 7

3 F. Hill, loc.cit.

notable for the excellence of teaching at the Grammar School. A parliamentary Bill for the school's improvement was eventually passed in 1831, which coincided with the arrival of Dr. Francis Jeune, a very able headmaster who raised the standards of discipline and scholarship before succeeding to the mastership of Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1837 (and ultimately to the Bishopric of Peterborough). A further private Act expanding the curriculum to include science and drawing was secured in his last year there. He was succeeded by James Prince Lee, who in a decade as headmaster taught three future bishops and sent six Senior Classics to Cambridge (an almost unparalleled achievement for one school), before taking the newly created See of Manchester in 1847. Particularly relevant here is the interest taken by both men in the visual arts. Jeune was a supporter of the Society for the Purchase of Works by Living Artists; Lee greatly encouraged the teaching of drawing in the school and was very active in the Society of Arts and School of Design. It can be no mere coincidence that one of the eminent alumni to emerge from King Edward's School at this period was the painter Edward Burne-Jones.¹

Other forms of general cultural activity in Birmingham up to 1840 included the Botanical and Horticultural Society begun in 1829, the Law Library opened in 1831 and the Birmingham Statistical Society for the Improvement of Education, 1838. The last society made a survey of education in Birmingham and concluded that 48.5% of the 5-15 age group were attending some form of instruction, which put Birmingham on a par with Liverpool, but well behind Bury, and Manchester and Salford. Of the 563 scholars in attendance at 36 evening schools in Birmingham, 262

¹ D.N.B.

C. Gill, op.cit., v.1 pp. 388-391

were aged over 15.¹

A general picture of cultural provision can be gleaned from the guide books and directories of the 1830s and 1840s. William Hawkes Smith, in his guide book of 1836, noted with approval that many mechanics were now organising themselves for mutual improvement and rational recreation, at their own cost; he considered that few towns excelled Birmingham in public means of education and general intellectual improvement.² Apart from the various elementary schools, he listed the Philosophical Institution, Horticultural Society Gardens, Society of Arts annual exhibition and drawing school, the Public News Rooms, School of Medicine, three libraries, the Mechanics' Institution, Temperance Societies, and a Social Union for improvement and recreation, recently established for both sexes of the artizan class. In 1849, Whites directory could list in addition to these, a Young Men's Instruction Society established in 1844, the Polytechnic Institution (successor to the M.I., which had failed, but on a grander scale, with public classes, experimental science classes, lectures, library, news and reading rooms) and an Athenic Institute for rational amusement, set up in 1848.³ In 1851 the Philosophical Institution was described as obsolete, but its valuable and extensive Museum was still open.⁴ Meanwhile there had come and gone an Athenaeum (failed in 1843), a People's Hall of Science (1846-49) and a People's Instruction Society (1846-50). The 1840s were a time of high mortality for such institutions, and even the Polytechnic Institution had to be reborn once more as the Birmingham and Midland Institute (which also absorbed the defunct Philosophical Institution) in 1854, before acquiring

1 J. of the Statistical Soc. of London v.3 (1840) p. 25 ff.

2 W. Hawkes Smith, op.cit., 1836 pp. 28, 34

3 F. White, History and general directory of the Borough of Birmingham, 1849 pp. 18-20

4 Birmingham in miniature, (J. Allen and Son) Birmingham, 1851 pp. 49-50

the strength which has kept it in existence until today. There was apparently no want of initiative and dynamism where cultural societies were concerned; the failures were generally due to financial problems.¹

This range of institutions appears to have had some effect, if the German visitor Kohl was correct:

"Even during my short stay I saw quite enough to be really astonished at the varied and extensive information possessed by the superior workmen, who, when I spoke to them of the early history of their several branches of art showed themselves quite familiar with the fabrics of ancient Egypt and modern China."²

In addition to these formal educational institutions, the performing arts were also an important feature of the cultural life of the town. The triennial music festival continued to thrive under the direction of Joseph Moore who, incidentally, received great encouragement from Boulton, and reached their apogee with the visits of Mendelssohn in 1837, 1840 and 1846. Other concerts were given, particularly by the several new choral societies founded between 1820 and 1850, and in 1820 the Musical Quarterly spoke highly of music in Birmingham.³ In Bisset's time (1776-1813) there were two rival theatres, employing many of the best English actors during the summer season (when London theatres were closed), and an amateur theatrical society was in existence. Following a fire in 1820 the Theatre Royal, New Street, was rebuilt with 2000 seats, marking "the beginning of a new period in Birmingham social history",

1 During this period, too, were established at Birmingham the following institutions of national as much as local significance, but which doubtless had their influence on the cultural life of the town:

| | |
|------|---|
| 1835 | Roman Catholic College at Oscott |
| 1838 | Spring Hill College for Congregational Ministers (later Mansfield College, Oxford) |
| 1843 | Queen's college medical school and school of theology |
| 1852 | Church of England Training College, Saltley |

2 J.G. Kohl, Ireland, Scotland and England, 1844 p. 6

3 J. Sutcliffe Smith, The story of music in Birmingham, Birmingham, 1945
passim

according to Asa Briggs who cites contemporary reviews.¹

Briggs refers to the press as a sign of the vibrant cultural life of Birmingham in this period; he lists 45 titles of newspapers and periodicals published in Birmingham between 1800 and 1835, and suggests that probably one in every four citizens read the Birmingham Journal. Moreover, the picture drawn from a reading of the press reveals an active social life in which church and chapel, theatre and ring, platform and home played a very important part.²

Within this context of increasing cultural activity, the visual arts featured in various ways, and an atmosphere favourable to the creation of new art institutions was generated. It is the argument of this thesis that the local school of design was as much a product of this cultural climate, as a response to industrial demand for technical education in art. The aspects of artistic activity to be described here are as follows: professional artists and their societies; exhibitions of contemporary art and of old masters, (including local private collections and public sculpture in the town); architecture; interest in the visual arts shown by educational institutions and public lectures; and finally the provision of drawing classes. All of these factors contributed to the aesthetic education of the townspeople.

Trevor Fawcett has dealt with many such institutions and events occurring in Birmingham in the years 1800 to 1830, and as far as possible I shall avoid repeating these except where they are necessary to understanding events in the years between 1830 and 1850.³

1 Memoirs of James Bisset, ed. T.B. Dudley, Leamington Spa, 1904, pp. 27-30
A. Briggs, Press and public in early nineteenth century Birmingham,
Oxford, 1949 pp. 21-3

2 A. Briggs, op.cit., 1949 pp. 16-17, 20-21

3 T. Fawcett, The rise of English provincial art, Oxford, 1974, passim

When Bisset first visited the town in 1776, he made a close study of the many fine inn-signs, the work of local painters.¹ Some professional artists were called in to the assistance of local industry in the latter part of the previous century, as discussed above, and in response to the demand for both fine and applied art, the number of local professional artists rose from four in 1800 to sixty-one in 1827. The Society of Arts established in 1821 included both patrons and artists in its membership, and the first schism occurred in 1828 in disagreement over policy between these two groups. To oversimplify a complex situation, it may be said that the laymen were keen to exhibit old masters, thus fulfilling the educational purpose of the society, whilst the artists naturally enough saw the society's exhibitions as primarily a market for their own works. The second schism in 1842, immediately preceding the establishment of the School of Design, will be discussed in detail, but again might be seen as a fundamental conflict between the functions of patronage and of education.

The artists in Birmingham had been active in various ways in the promotion of their work. The Academy of Arts formed in 1814 had held an exhibition with the proposal of raising money for a permanent building. This exhibition had been confined to works of fine art (specifically excluding items of manufacture) and was essentially local in character, with a few contributions from Royal Academicians to lend prestige. The experiment was not repeated however.² One individual example of artistic enterprise was the work of the local engraver William Hawkes Smith who published a number of illustrated works, most notably:

1 Memoir of James Bisset, op.cit., p. 25

2 R.K. Dent, op.cit., 1880 pp. 388-391

J.A. Langford, A century of Birmingham life, v.2 1868 pp. 365-7

Essays in design, drawn and etched by William
Hawkes Smith; illustrative of the poem of Thalaba
the Destroyer by Robert Southey, Poet Laureate

Birmingham (W. Hawkes Smith) 1818

This work was, significantly, dedicated to "the patron of British art" for possessing profound judgment and having the firmness to stand alone, and Hawkes Smith invited the world to an examination of the merits of his countrymen.¹ Thus Hawkes Smith aligned himself with the campaign described above in chapter 1, to promote a national school of art. He was later quite active in Birmingham cultural life, teaching gratuitously at the Mechanics' Institution, for example.

The classical casts presented by Sir Francis Lawley were shown at the Society of Arts in 1822, but there followed a few years without exhibitions. A manuscript copy of a resolution of the Society's general meeting on 5 October 1825, reveals the plan of arranging an exhibition, to coincide with the triennial music festival.² The advantage of such a plan in selling works is obvious, but the proposal also implied the appropriateness of a general arts festival in the town (such as is more familiar today). This particular plan came to nothing, however, and the first exhibition was organized in 1827. The laymen of the Society of Arts then arranged a loan exhibition of old masters in 1828, which, according to Samuel Lines was "one of the best exhibitions of old masters seen in the provinces at this period"; its educational purpose, "the extensive diffusion of knowledge and taste", was underlined by the detailed biographies of artists included in the catalogue, and the occasional lectures which accompanied the exhibition. A circular of 3

¹ The Bodleian copy has a letter of appreciation and admiration from Robert Southey, subscribing for four copies. Bodleian Lib. Arch. AA.d.34

² S. Lines, Collection of documents 1814-42, B.R.L. Local History Coll.

April 1828 from J.W. Unett, announced the intention of planning an exhibition for the autumn of 1829, again expressly to coincide with the music festival;¹ this was a particularly splendid exhibition to mark the opening of the Society of Arts' new rooms in New Street, by Rickman and Hutchinson with a handsome Corinthian façade.

Despite, or perhaps because of the tension between lay patrons and artists within the Society of Arts, the late 1820s were rich in art exhibitions at Birmingham.² These were important social events, especially the associated conversazioni; James Bisset recorded in doggerel his impression of the splendid exhibition buildings and their gas-lit interiors, as well as of the company;

"The company there, were select (keep in mind),
The Cards of Admission are only consign'd
For those Evenings alone, when the grand Promenade
To visiting Friends is so freely display'd -
Where Stewards politely receive at the door,
The Strangers invited, three hundred and more."

"A species of amusement rare,
Did pleasures yield in store -
That such, in no provincial Town,
Were ever known before.
The social intercourse there found,
The rational high treat ..."³

The Gazette noted that the conversazione had been very well attended:

"The ladies for the most appeared [sic] in full evening dress, occasionally, however, relieved by others in fancy and promenade costume."⁴ The phenomenon thus described is important to this thesis in that a social elite in a provincial town were evidently manifesting their status in cultural activity. Prestige was lent to the exhibition by the many national figures exhibiting: Northcote, Mulready, Phillips, Smirke,

1 Ibid., B.R.L. Local History Coll.

2 T. Fawcett, op.cit., 1974, pp. 177-181

3 J. Bisset's quaint remarks and comic strictures on Birmingham's Fine Arts, 1829 pp. 6, 31-2

4 Aris's Birmingham Gazette 9 Nov. 1829

Soane, Stothard, Ward, Turner, Etty, Reinagle, Calcott, Chalon, Collins, Cooper, Beechey, Lawrence and Chantrey.

The annual exhibitions continued, together with exhibitions of old masters in 1828, 1831, 1833, 1836 and 1842 (a lapse in the later 1830's may have been partly due to the political activity, Chartist upheaval and economic distress which seems to have adversely affected other cultural institutions in Birmingham). The exhibitions remained something of a spectacle, as an anonymous rhymester in 1835 recounted:

"Now fairly launched with Catalogue in hand,
We'll glance at some of this gilt-bordered band,
Who are all gaily trimmed, - were King Sarnapalus
Among them, he might be out-framed by an alehouse;
But 'tis as should be, - for to right if we come,¹
Who so much right to gilding as buttons in Brum?"¹

Art exhibitions at Birmingham in the 1840s were well chronicled by the Art Union journal. At their secession from the Society of Arts, the Birmingham painters and sculptors formed a Birmingham Society of Artists and returned to the gallery in Temple Row, conducting an annual exhibition there from 1842.² In 1844, the Art Union reported:

"The collection at Birmingham consists of 412 works, among which there are many of deep interest and high value; several of the best have however, been contributed by residents in the neighbourhood, whose galleries they adorn. On the whole, it is certainly the best of the Provincial Exhibitions, although inferior to that of last year ..."³

The journal went on to express pleasure that the best paintings were by "native artists", - those resident and pursuing their profession in the town, whilst the exhibition was augmented by some from those painters

1 Anon. [?Watts], The poet among the painters or, random shots in the round-rooms [of the Birmingham Soc. of Arts], Birmingham, 1835, p. 6 (The implication is that genre paintings have a special right to gilded frames in Birmingham, where humble objects like buttons are ornamented).

2 The gallery, first built in 1828 by the then seceding artists, as the Birmingham Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts, it had been occupied since by the Athenaeum, which had now failed.

3 Art Union v.6 (1844) pp. 330-1

dwelling in the metropolis who owed their early education to "the great mart of iron manufacture".

In the preface to their 1845 catalogue, the artists expressed their philosophy through the words of Sir Joshua Reynolds:

"An institution like this has often been recommended upon considerations purely mercantile; but an Academy founded upon such principles can never effect even its own narrow purposes. If it has an origin no higher, no taste can ever be formed in Manufactures; but if the higher Arts of Design flourish, these inferior ends will be answered of course."¹

This was a clear statement of their own view of the contribution of fine art to manufactures contrasting with the more pragmatic approach officially supported by the central Schools of Design.

No doubt inspired to some extent by the example of Manchester in 1837, Birmingham had a number of polytechnic exhibitions. In 1839, to mark the first visit of the British Association to Birmingham, an exhibition of industrial art was organized in King Edward's School, the success of which encouraged the Mechanics' Institution to arrange a similar event at their rooms in Newhall Street in 1840 and 1841. The catalogue of the Grand Exhibition of Wonders of Nature and Art speaks for itself. Items displayed included:

- I ancient and modern paintings
- II sculpture and carvings
- III interesting philosophical apparatus [demonstrated by an attendant]
- IV collections in natural history (including 300 cases of rare and beautiful birds)
- V antiquities and curiosities

and so on, to

- XI splendidly embroidered coat presented to Buonaparte by the citizens of Lyons
- XII models of the Guillotine, the Tuileries etc.
- XIII specimens of the hippopotamus and other animals
- XIV illustrations of British manufactures
- XV models of engines and machinery

¹ Art Union v.7 (1845) p. 317

XVI weaving of figured silk, by the Jacquard loom. Impressions of medals by voltaic electricity; and the process of modelling china ornaments; letter-press and lithographic printing etc. all in full operation.

The old masters exhibited were largely seventeenth century works, reflecting the established taste of the time, with a distinct bias towards the Dutch and Flemish Schools. Contemporary painters represented were largely genre and landscape masters, such as Stothard, Morland and Calvert, and the portraitist Hayter. Local men lending to the exhibition included Gillott, the pen manufacturer, Rev. Hugh Hutton, and Baker and Lines who were both practising artists and drawing masters.¹ At a subsequent exhibition in 1841, the committee of the Mechanics' Institution hoped to confer a great boon on the town;

"By concentrating into one focus, the wonders of nature, art, science and mechanics, they have placed within the reach of all persons a fund of high intellectual improvement and rational gratification which would be sought elsewhere in vain. And they conceive that the price of admission will fully demonstrate their anxiety, that the very poorest of their neighbours and townsmen shall participate and benefit of this interesting spectacle."²

The Birmingham Exposition of Manufactures in 1849 has already been referred to in the context of industrial art, but it was also important as a cultural event and exemplifies so clearly the overlap which could exist between the promotion of art-manufactures and the pursuit of culture. Welcoming the idea of marking the British Association meeting with an industrial exhibition, the Journal of Design and Manufactures considered that such events possessed "a great national and popularly educational value", quite independent of their benefit to trade. The

1 Birmingham M.I., A catalogue of the Grand Exhibition of Wonders of Nature and Art [1840]

2 Birmingham M.I., Rep. of 15th anniversary meeting, 1841

journal therefore noted with approval that there were to be cheap days for the working classes

"to examine and study again and again the beautiful objects ... The advantage to the artizan is incalculable ... to elevate his sympathies and to connect them with art. Feeling, as we do, more deeply, perhaps, than even the body of manufacturers may be inclined to just at present, the absolute commercial importance of this alliance, we look upon the increasing taste for the public display of works of beauty and perfection in manufacture as one of the most progressive movements of the day."¹

Later in the course of the exhibition, the journal also congratulated the committee on lighting the rooms and arranging evening admission, when the visitors, chiefly the more educated artisans, were even more numerous than those in the daytime.²

Birmingham was perhaps less well off than Manchester and Leeds for private art collections; local guide books give no hint as to the accessibility of any such collections. Of the 218 old masters exhibited in 1833 at the Society of Arts, only 27 were loaned by Birmingham men, but on the other hand, in 1836, the response from "the gentry of the Midlands" was so good that more works were offered than could be accommodated.³ Two notable collections in the town were those of Gillott and of Birch. Joseph Gillott was a highly successful manufacturer of pen nibs and an employer concerned with his workers' welfare; by 1849 his was "the largest steel pen manufactory in the Kingdom."⁴ He was a man of taste, an enthusiastic collector and a close friend of Turner, and although he was remembered as a man who disliked

1 J.D.M. v.2 (1849-50) pp. 2, 16

2 Ibid, p. 86

3 B.S.A. Mins. 16 Aug. 1836

4 Stranger's guide through Birmingham, (Cornish) 1849 p. 87

public company, he lent freely to local exhibitions. In 1846, for example, he lent a Landseer, a Collins and an Etty to the annual exhibition of the Society of Artists.¹ Charles Birch, discussed below as a promoter of the School of Design, lent a Wilkie and a Turner amongst other pictures, to the same exhibition.² Birch was a vice-president, and Gillott a committee member of the local Art Union, and it was doubtless their activity above all which led the Art Union journal to comment on the "high degree of patronage at Birmingham".³

However, if public sculpture were to be taken as an index of local art patronage, Birmingham was certainly deficient, which is ironical as the town was particularly well provided with sculptors.⁴ The German, Kohl, was quite emphatic after his visit of 1842; having criticised Westmacott's statue of Nelson in the Bull Ring, he continued:

"This statue, small as it is, is the only one, literally the only statue that Birmingham can boast of! ... Birmingham and Leeds appear to me, among all the large towns of England, to be the two most destitute of taste, ornament and enjoyment. As far as the useful arts are concerned, Birmingham may be a paradise, but with respect to the fine arts it is a very desert."⁵

He was not being altogether fair; there were for example the monuments to Boulton and Watt by Flaxman and Chantrey respectively, at St. Mary's, Handsworth, which Haydon thought worth visiting.⁶ But the author of the 1849 Pictorial Guide accepted Kohl's criticism:

1 E. Edwards, Personal recollections of Birmingham, Birmingham, 1877 p. 98
 Birmingham Soc. of Artists, Rough minute book, 8 June 1846, 7 Aug. 1847,
 B.R.L. Local History Coll.

2 Birmingham Soc. of Artists, op.cit., 23 June 1846
Art Union v.9 (1847) p. 389, v.10 (1848) p. 30
 In 1839, he had lent a Constable and a David Cox (J. Hill and W. Midgley,
History of the Royal Birmingham Soc. of Artists [1928] p. 22)

3 Art Union v.8 (1846) p. 234

4 T. Fawcett, op.cit., 1974 pp. 61-2

5 J.G. Kohl, Ireland, Scotland and England, 1844 p. 11

6 Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.5 pp. 104-5.

"The merest observer cannot fail to remark how little sculpture is to be seen in Birmingham, and will thence infer that her citizens are ... insensible to the influences of the fine arts ...

"The unusually flippant and superficial Kohl ... gives us wholesome castigation in relation to this matter. The German tourist laughs at the idea of one single piece of sculpture to 200,000 men, when in Rome or Athens there would have been one to every 50 or 100, and in Berlin, St. Petersburg etc. one may be reckoned to every 4000 or 5000 inhabitants. Still, though the censure is merited, it must in fairness be remembered that these are capital cities, and, consequently, the resort of the wealthy and the educated."¹

Lukewarm patronage was a problem that Haydon encountered in Birmingham. Significantly, perhaps, his putative patrons were the liberals and radicals of the Birmingham Political Union, who were not well represented on the Society of Arts and School of Design committees. His offer to record in a great painting the mass meeting of the Political Union at Newhall Hill in 1832, was accepted, and a subscription was launched (with Joseph Parkes as trustee) but eventually failed.² Haydon was bitter against the radicals for this, but one figure to be exonerated must be the Unitarian minister Rev. Hugh Hutton, who had led the prayers at Newhall Hill and whom Haydon thought "a highly powerful and intellectual young man."³ Hutton's personal initiative and energy brought into being in 1837, the Society for the Purchase of Works by Living Artists, a forerunner of the Birmingham Art Union, through which works of art were purchased from subscriptions and distributed by lottery. The purchases were made at the annual exhibition of the works of modern art, and did much to boost sales.⁴ In this work, Hutton was closely

1 Pictorial guide to Birmingham (J. Allen and Son) Birmingham, 1849 pp. 94-5
2 Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.5 pp. 104-5
3 loc.cit.
4 J. Hill and W. Midgley, History of the Royal Birmingham Soc. of Artists [1928] p. 21

supported by, amongst others, Rev. F. Jeune, headmaster of the Grammar School, and Walker and Shaw, who were both to be associated with the School of Design.

In 1843, the Royal Birmingham and Midland Counties Art Union was launched under the patronage of the Queen and Prince Albert. To the activity of its predecessor, it added the distribution of an engraving to all subscribers. This was to fulfil the ulterior object benefitting manufactures and commerce, through the raising of public taste, which was the condition of royal sanction. The statement of aims embraced both the patronage of artists and the improvement of manufactures.¹

The Art Union journal welcomed this Birmingham enterprise, with more than a hint of metropolitan condescension:

"These provincial Institutions ... give publicity to the work of provincial artists ... and display throughout the provinces the highest efforts of metropolitan Art; they give a residence to Art in the remotest regions, and throw the seeds of taste on the barren places ... they prompt the genius of the manufacturer by the proposal of premiums appropriate to local employments, and complete the great work so happily begun by the Art-Union of London, namely the improvement of the taste of the people of England."²

Reports over the next two years in the Art Union indicated the fluctuation of fortune which affected most such institutions in these years, owing to challenges made to their legality, but a comment in 1846 showed how the various artistic institutions of a town could interact in their effects, observing that the success of the new School of Design and the constantly increasing number of visitors to the Society of Artists' exhibition, promised more subscriptions for the Art Union lottery.³

1 Royal Birmingham and Midland Counties Art Union [Prospectus, with report for 1843] 1844

2 Art Union v.6 (1844) p. 331

3 Ibid. v.8 (1846) p. 69

The physical environment, especially the architecture of public buildings which was supposed by contemporaries to have a potentially great moral effect, may be considered as an aspect of the aesthetic education offered by the town, and was a reflection of civic pride.

"Birmingham, during the last fifty years, by the spirited expenditure of individuals, and the judicious management of the street commissioners, has changed its character of blackness, closeness, and defective taste, for that of a town of spacious, wide and well-paved streets, abounding in public buildings, in the offices of large trading companies, and in private undertakings, exhibiting generally a highly advanced state of architectural decorations, and a general air of substantial wealth and independence."¹

The Street Commissioners had indeed made considerable efforts in public building. In 1830 the site was purchased for a Town Hall and five of the commissioners, including three who were to be active in the Society of Arts (Phipson, Walker and Shaw), joined together to buy land around the hall in order to create a 'civic centre'. Great care was taken over the design of the hall, with an architectural competition, and the design finally chosen was based on a model from the Roman forum. When Prince Albert, the royal arbiter of taste, visited the hall in 1844, he expressed himself highly gratified by its noble proportions,² and it was later claimed that the hall had "played a great part in forming the public spirit and character of Birmingham."³

Kohl made an invidious comparison with Manchester, finding Birmingham relatively deficient in large buildings and public institutions.⁴ Although the comparison may have been valid, Birmingham could boast a quantity of good public architecture by 1844, including the Theatre Royal, rebuilt in

1 History and general directory of the Borough of Birmingham, (Francis White and Co.) 1849 p. 36

2 Stranger's guide through Birmingham, (Cornish) 1849 p. 75

3 C. Gill, op.cit., p. 327

4 J.G. Kohl, op.cit., 1844 p. 8

1820, the News Room, a Greek building by Rickman and Hutchinson opened in 1825, the Society of Arts by the same architects, of 1829, the Market Halls in severe Doric, opened in 1834 and refurbished and decorated in 1849 as "a depot of the more beautiful productions of floral and horticultural art", and Charles Barry's new Grammar School building in a late Gothic style, built in 1834. In 1836, William Hawkes Smith found many of the public buildings "highly creditable to the taste and judgment of the controlling bodies."¹

The importance of architecture in creating and reflecting a sense of civic pride was understood both at this period and later in the century with the construction of an Art Gallery and Museum and other buildings which had a symbolic as well as a utilitarian function. Civic pride was being cultivated as early as 1824, when the Birmingham Review wished to

"congratulate our townsmen on the spirit of improvement, which has manifested itself for the last year or two and still seems to be on the increase in this town ...

... to place it in the rank and situation it ought to hold among the largest and most opulent towns in the Empire."²

Another measure of the level of artistic culture lies in the activities of the various institutions of adult education in the town. To what extent did the visual arts feature in their curricula? The polytechnic exhibitions arranged by the Mechanics' Institution have already been discussed, and their drawing classes will be considered below. But on the whole there is rather less evidence of artistic interests in the Birmingham Mechanics' and Philosophical Institutions than will be found at Leeds. The Birmingham Philosophical Institution, as its

1 W. Hawkes Smith, op.cit., 1836 p. 33

2 Birmingham Review no.1 7 Aug. 1824

eighteenth century origins and its very title would suggest, was less concerned with artistic culture than was the Leeds 'Phil. and Lit.'

The catalogue of the Birmingham Library in 1838 reveals relatively few titles on art, although it did include Reynolds' Discourses, Northcote's Memoirs of Reynolds, Alison on the Nature and Principles of Taste, Burke on The Sublime and the Beautiful and Hope's Historical essay on architecture, amongst others.¹ In the library of the Mechanics' Institution, despite the inclusion of much general literature, books on art were far outnumbered by titles on natural philosophy and practical arts. There were six treatises on perspective, Camper on the connection between anatomy, painting and statuary, and Galt's Life of Benjamin West, but many standard works on the fine arts were absent.²

The exhibition of 1841 at the Mechanics' Institution was a financial disaster and in January 1842 the premises were in the hands of creditors. Its successor was the Birmingham Polytechnic Institution which, as its name suggests, continued the broad curriculum of its predecessor. Classes were to be re-established, and it was proposed to form a collection of British and foreign manufactures for public inspection. But the basic philosophy of the institution was that "the surest way to benefit man, is to educate him; that the best mode of improving his condition, is to enlarge his mind and refine his tastes."³ The new institution was splendidly launched at a conversazione presided over by Charles Dickens, which was "supported by a large number of the gentry of the town and neighbourhood." Painted transparencies decorated the Town Hall, and Dickens, deeply interested in the visual arts, made reference to them in

1 Birmingham Library, A catalogue of the books ... with a list of subscribers, Birmingham, 1838

2 Birmingham M.I., Rules of the library and catalogue of books, 1839

3 Birmingham Polytechnic Inst. Rep. of Conversazione 23 Feb. 1844, p. 6

his speech.¹ However, the fine arts, once again, did not feature largely in the life of this institution, although by 1847 the library, taken over from the Mechanics' Institution, had been augmented by such standard works as Bell's Anatomy of expression and Leonardo's Treatise on Painting, and the Art Union journal had been subscribed to from vol.8 (1846).²

Amongst the lectures given were two in 1847 by Peter Hollins, the local sculptor, on 'Genius of British Artists' and on 'Application of Fine Arts to Manufactures' (the latter title carried a hint of polemic against the idea that teaching in the Schools of Design should be a practical training rather than an education in fine art). In addition, of six lectures on historical characters, given by George Dawson, one was on Michelangelo.³

Lectures on art in Birmingham included those given by the indefatigable Haydon, although less impact appears to have been made by his visits there, than in Manchester. Haydon was already acquainted with some of the leading radicals of the town, having taken their portraits at the time of the Reform agitation, and in coming to lecture in 1840 and 1841 he appears to have been a guest of Joseph Sturge, the middle-class radical, and Joshua Scholefield, the liberal M.P., amongst others. His first lecture, on 23 November 1840 was "genteelly but not numerously attended, & coldly welcomed, in fact, no welcome at all. I was perfectly cool & at last warmed up, & made my bow amidst hearty applause", and his tone was similarly subdued (for Haydon), on his lecture one year later:

1 Ibid. p. 11.

2 Birmingham Polytechnic Inst., Catalogue and rules of the library, 1847

3 Birmingham Polytechnic Inst., Rep. of fourth annual meeting, 1847 (Hollins' lectures were also noticed in Art Union v.9 (1847) p. 52)

"Delivered my lecture on the Elgin Marbles, with great Effect."¹

Most specifically, in the background of educational and cultural activity, it remains to consider what provision was made for the teaching of drawing before the formation of a Government School of Design in Birmingham. As early as 1754 a "well-wisher" writing to the Birmingham Gazette had advocated an academy to teach the art of drawing and designing to local craftsmen, and forty years later a similar appeal was made in the same newspaper.² In 1760 there were perhaps two or three drawing schools, and Boulton set up his own school of design at Soho. Bisset, who settled in Birmingham in 1776, later lent prints and portfolios and gave free instruction in drawing to "scores of young mechanics and artisans."³ The Sunday Society, and the Brotherly Society from 1796, included drawing amongst their subjects of instruction.⁴

Samuel Lines was the best known private drawing teacher in Birmingham in the early nineteenth century. He had been apprenticed to a clock dial enameller and decorator, and later made designs for ornamenting swords, then in 1807 he set up a school which included drawing from casts (i.e. from the round) as well as from 'copies'; the school was in Temple Row, and he continued to teach there until his death in 1863. With other local artists a life class was begun in 1809, the short-lived Academy of Arts was set up in 1814, then in 1821 Lines was actively engaged in launching the Society of Arts. The Art Union reported at length a testimonial to him in recognition of his services, as a drawing master

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- 1 Diary of B.R. Haydon, op.cit., v.5 pp. 19, 104-5
Haydon first had contact with Birmingham when in 1821 his Christ's Entry into Jerusalem was exhibited there (Diary v.2 pp. 266, 310), and he had donated drawings to the newly established Society of Arts in 1822 (B.S.A. Mins. 1 Jan., 1 May, 1822)
- 2 R.C. Smith, Birmingham Municipal School of Art, in J.H. Muirhead ed., Birmingham Institutions, 1911 p. 278
- 3 Memoir of James Bisset, op.cit., pp. 32-3
- 4 W. Matthews, op.cit., 1830 pp. 6-7, 14

for 39 years; the chairman of the presentation committee, Thomas Lane, a manufacturer of papier mâché, admitted his own debt to instruction received from Lines.¹ His chief competitor in the teaching of drawing was Joseph Barber, succeeded by his son J.V. Barber in 1811, who conducted a drawing class at the grammar school from 1818.

The Society of Arts organized a class from 1822 onwards to draw and model from the casts provided by Sir Robert Lawley, but rejected his offer to assist in the provision of a full-time professor, on the grounds that the society could not afford the salary. The class was apparently an attraction of general interest, since the students complained of being disturbed by visitors.² A report at the annual general meeting of 1826 announced: "That a considerable and increasing number of students regularly avail themselves of the facilities which we have afforded for making drawings and modelling from the casts in the museum."³ The society extended its assistance to students in other ways, as for example, the resolution regarding the first exhibition in 1827 "That all students be admitted after the first week, four times Gratis (as is the case at the exhibition in London)", and free use of a room was given to Mr. Ripplingille for his courses of lectures on the Art of Design.⁴ In 1831 prizes were offered to students for modelling the figure, a candelabrum, and a vase of original design.⁵ The teaching was, however, conducted on the traditional lines of an academy of fine art, with artists taking the twice weekly class in rotation. The surgeon Gutteridge, as Professor of Anatomy from 1832 lectured on Anatomy for the Fine Arts, and in 1835 the

1 Newspaper obituaries coll., B.R.L. Local History Coll.
Art Union v.9 (1847) p. 100

2 B.S.A. Mins. 1 Jul. 1822, 3 Sept. 1822, 4 Dec. 1822

3 B.S.A. Mins. 1 Nov. 1826

4 B.S.A. Mins. 7 Sept. 1827, 2 Sept. 1829
(The artist E.V. Ripplingille of Bristol gave a similar course of lectures at the Leeds Phil. and Lit. in 1824-5, see below chap.6, table 8)

5 B.S.A. Mins. 27 June 1831

artists' committee proposed the appointment of professors for the antique academy and for linear perspective. There was no direct connection between the teaching and industrial needs.

The society also extended its assistance to other drawing schools, by sending season tickets to be presented to the best pupils of the drawing class at the Mechanics' Institution in 1831, and later offering annually 25 free tickets to draw and model at the society, to young men of the Mechanics' Institution.¹

Strictures on the tuition available at the Society of Arts were voiced before the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, by the factory inspector T.J. Howell.² It was his impression that any art learnt in Birmingham was learnt in the manufactories rather than schools of art. Artisans did attend the latter, but there were certain reservations and criticisms:

"At one of the large lamp and chandelier manufactories [probably Osler's], I had a long conversation with a modeller. ... This man ... had been and was attending the drawing lessons of the Society of Arts (which exists in that town), and at leisure times was frequently in the habit of modelling for his own improvement. He considered that he had derived benefit from his attendance at the Society of Arts; but said that more might be done if prizes were given for the best models and drawings; and he spoke of the great benefit which would result from a public institution of this kind, more enlarged in its views, and fostered by Government..."³

One barrier to the artisan was the annual subscription of one guinea at the Society of Arts; another was the type of instruction available there. Howell had spoken to one of the private drawing-masters (probably Samuel Lines) on this:

1 B.S.A. Mins. 27 June 1831, 13 Oct. 1838

2 S.C. on Arts and Manufactures 1835-6, 1836 (568) ix II q. 71 ff.

3 Ibid. II q. 103

"He said he had turned his attention particularly to that branch of art which would tend to the improvement of the manufactures of the town, and had for a length of time had classes of young men who were brought up with a view to these manufactures, ... He objected to the system carried on at the Society of Arts as too exclusive, and too much of a monopoly. He had even drawn up a paper containing amendments which he wished to press on the committee of the Society of Arts. He had been desirous to use the collection of casts at the Society for his pupils to draw from; but the restrictions and regulations were such as to prevent him ... He stated the admission to the society was not thrown sufficiently open, and even to the pupils admitted, the committee did not give sufficient encouragement by prizes etc."¹

A further criticism was that the emphasis placed on modern paintings at the Society of Arts (as a society, chiefly, of practising artists) had not succeeded either in diffusing a love for higher art, or in influencing the manufacturers of the town. Most of the antique casts were locked away in cupboards for the season of the annual exhibition.

"An intelligent workman engaged in chasing, strongly insisted on the advantage to be derived from the study of casts from sculpture, as being far more important than any drawings from modern pictures. He was very desirous that a School of Art should be established on a liberal scale, where opportunity should be afforded to the young artists for drawing from the antique ... Workmen more generally take lessons from drawing masters in the town, than avail themselves of the Society of Arts."²

In addition to the academy at the Society of Arts was a class for architectural and mechanical drawing at the Mechanics' Institution, conducted by "a gentleman who has taught this branch of drawing professionally in the town for a number of years."³ In 1835 it was reported that 80-90 students were attending each of the classes in

1 Ibid. II q. 114

2 Ibid. II q. 112 (see also Cockerell's criticisms of the Society of Arts before the same committee, quoted above, section I)

3 Birmingham M.I., Half yearly rep., 1828 p. 5

writing, in arithmetic and in drawing, all of which were taught by Mr. Daniel Wright; in 1836 the figures were given as 90-100.¹ By 1840 the drawing class had grown to an average of 154 members (by comparison with 140 each for writing and arithmetic) and medals and book prizes were awarded.² Lectures were given on linear perspective (by William Hawkes Smith), and on architecture.³

Tuition in drawing was therefore readily available in Birmingham before the formation of a Government School of Design, and it continued to be provided by the Polytechnic Institution throughout the 1840s, where the average nightly attendance ranged from 74 to 94 between 1845 and 1850; in 1852 the Polytechnic Institution was given assistance by the Department of Practical Art, in the form of books and examples.⁴ Doubtless the tuition here was more elementary than, and therefore complementary to the activities of the School of Design.

III

The Society of Arts, under whose auspices a Government School of Design was established in Birmingham has already been shown to have been divided in its composition and functions: Initiated with the ultimate purpose of improving manufactures, but very much through the encouragement of fine art, its course was steered between the conflicting interests of the artists themselves, who primarily wanted exhibition space, and the lay patrons, whose interests were chiefly in the

1 Birmingham M.I., Rep. of the committee, 1835 p. 7
F. Hill, op.cit., 1836 v.2 p. 191 ff.

2 Birmingham M.I., Rep. of 14th anniversary meeting, 1840 p. 6

3 The Analyst v.2 (1834) p. 280
Birmingham M.I., Reps. of anniversary meetings, 1835, 1841

4 Birmingham Polytechnic Inst., Reps. of annual meetings, 1845-1850 passim
Birmingham Polytechnic Inst., Syllabus of classes, January 1852

extension of education, and who eventually came to dominate the Society, especially in negotiating a government grant for the School of Design.

Bell has attributed the initiative in founding the Society in 1821 to Sir Robert Lawley (later Lord Wenlock) gathering about him a group of manufacturers.¹ However Lawley was not alone in the initiative, for three others in particular made overtures towards extending the existing Academy, the advancement of art being frequently discussed at the time.²

Only one of these four wealthy men was an active manufacturer. Sir Robert Lawley lived a great deal of the time in his villa near Florence, having pursued a traditional aristocratic career as an ensign in the Guards, whig M.P. for Newcastle under Lyme 1802-1806, and High Sheriff of Staffordshire.³ John Wilkes Unett was a practising attorney, a generally retiring figure whose only public activities were as the long-standing secretary to the Society of Arts, an elected governor of King Edward's School from 1839, and a donor of sites for churches in Harborne and Smethwick.⁴ Samuel Galton F.R.S. had been a gunmaker, but his main business interest had transferred to the bank which he founded after marriage into the Barclay family, an interest which was in turn subordinated to his passion for scientific knowledge, pursued within the ambit of the Lunar Society (his son, Samuel Tertius Galton, who was very active in the Society of Arts, was also an enthusiast for science and for literature).⁵ The fourth figure was Archibald Kenrick, who was a manufacturer of cast iron hollow ware; he had a limited commercial

1 Q. Bell, The Schools of Design, 1963 p. 104

2 J. Hill and W. Midgley, op.cit., [1928] p. 6
J.A. Langford, A century of Birmingham life, 1868 v.2 p. 411

3 D.N.B.

4 Gentlemen's Magazine Jan. 1857 p. 118
F. Boase Modern English Biography

5 J. Hill and R.K. Dent, Memorials of Old Square, Birmingham, 1897 pp. 97-9
R.E. Schofield, The Lunar Society of Birmingham, Oxford, 1963 pp. 219, 387, 425
F. Galton, Memories of my life, 1908 p. 8

interest in design, as some of his products were ornamented, but the picture drawn of him by Nora Kenrick points to the conclusion that his participation in the Society of Arts was more an aspect of his varied philanthropic activity, than a pursuit of commercial advantage.¹

Rather than "a group of manufacturers", then, the originators of the Society of Arts in 1821 are better described as varied group of individuals motivated by a desire to improve the physical and moral conditions of industrial city life. The men who, twenty years later, were directly responsible for the establishment of the School of Design, were also apparently working from philanthropic rather than industrial motives.

In the meantime, the Society continued a programme of art exhibitions and a limited range of teaching already described, both of which were aimed much more directly at the encouragement of the fine arts than at the improvement of manufactures. Several incidents can be chosen at random to illustrate the role of such an institution within the field of cultural and educational activity in provincial life. In 1837 the society cooperated with the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool to press for the exemption of such institutions from parochial and other rates and taxes, a campaign being led at Westminster by Thomas Wyse.² Lobbying on this question continued for a number of years.³ In 1839 the annual exhibition was opened free of charge to delegates of the British Association who were in congress at Birmingham. Of interest also is the extension of the Society's geographical horizons;

1 N. Kenrick, Chronicles of a nonconformist family, Birmingham, 1932 pp. 228-31

2 for T. Wyse, see chapter 2 above

3 B.S.A. Mins. 14 Oct. 1837, 22 Dec. 1837, 27 May 1843

recognizing that the railway had made Birmingham exhibitions more easily accessible from Manchester and Liverpool, George Unett was sent to these towns in 1837 to solicit subscriptions and donations from patrons of the fine arts.¹ When Unett made this trip, three active members of the society, J.F. Iedsam, George Barker and Joseph Walker were to write to "influential friends" in those two cities, to ease his path.

The use of personal contacts in this way seems to have been a characteristic feature of the establishment of provincial schools of design. The first approach for government aid came as a result of a letter to the committee from John Corrie, a founder subscriber, who was in London in November 1836. He had learned in conversation at a dinner party of the government's vote of £1500 for the promotion of fine arts and manufactures, which had been made in the previous session; it was rumoured that the London artists were intent on keeping this sum to themselves, but a Manchester gentleman at the dinner had apparently applied for a part and had secured an audience with Poulett Thomson, President of the Board of Trade. Corrie advised the committee to act quickly in applying for a share for Birmingham, and offered to make representations to the Home Office and to the Exchequer. In the event, of course, the whole sum was applied to the establishment of a central School of Design in London.²

In the eventual adoption of the government plan, an important part appears to have been played by Rev. James Prince Lee, who was then headmaster of King Edward's Grammar School in Birmingham. The account by Hill and Midgley records that formal application for a grant by the

1 Ibid. 31 Oct. 1837 (George was the son of J.W. Unett)

2 B.S.A. Mins. 1 Dec. 1836

Free Grammar School having been refused, Mr. Lee suggested to the Society of Arts that they

"should obtain the grant and become a School for teaching Design, for, it was alleged, the advantage of the advanced pupils of the Grammar School, and this was practically but privately agreed to by the Patrons' Committee [i.e. 'unprofessional' committee] of the Society."¹

No such incident is recorded in the minutes, where Lee first appears on the committee elected by the Society in April 1840. It was almost a year later that plans were first set afoot to "render the Academy and School of Design more efficient", and the professional committee drew up for this purpose a project which, with its proposals for acquiring casts and models of architectural ornament, of classes in ornamental art and architecture, and of memorializing the government to present the society with casts from the Elgin marbles, is suggestive of at least some sympathy towards the concept of a School of Design for applied art.²

In June a meeting of the unprofessional committee appointed a sub-committee to effect such a plan, predicated significantly as: "carrying out the views of the Founders of the Society as a School of Art."³ (The artists' committee still referred to the institution as an 'academy', a vital distinction). Moreover the membership of this sub-committee was entirely lay, comprising Rev. Lee, and Messrs. Phipson, Ledsam, Unett and Clark; when their number was expanded one year later, in order to negotiate directly with the Government Schools of Design, the latent rift between artists and laymen was blown wide open. For the artists were well aware that official policy, particularly at this time, was

1 J. Hill and W. Midgley, op.cit., [1928] p. 24 (It should be noted that Hill and Midgley's account is partial throughout towards the artists, and generally biased against the actions of the lay patrons.)

2 B.S.A. Mins. 16 March 1841

3 B.S.A. Mins. 8 June 1841

firmly set against any tendency for the schools to patronise the fine arts.

Lee had probably made a personal approach in London, as he intimated that the government would look favourably on an application and urged an immediate application since a distribution of grants to provincial schools was imminent.¹ In these circumstances the 'unprofessional committee' took command, and the artists dissociated themselves, regretfully, they protested, as they were mostly very much in favour of the School of Design, but felt that the government's terms of reference contravened the original laws "which formed the basis of a permanent union of the artists with this Institution."² The defence by the 'patrons' of their own action is interesting: at a meeting on 31 March 1842 it was argued that since the government grant was dependent on an equal sum being raised by local subscription, "the Regulation of the Society must thenceforward necessarily rest with the subscribing members alone."³

This dissension between the 'professional' and 'unprofessional' committees of the Society of Arts was recounted in the Report of the Council of the School of Design in 1843. In February 1842, their outline arrangements for the establishment of provincial schools (the document which had excited Lee's attention) had proposed that Birmingham, together with Manchester, had the first claim on their attention as the chief seat of a branch of industry comprising works of fancy and taste; moreover at Birmingham there appeared at first to be unusual facilities already in existence in the form of the Society of Arts established for the promotion of art in general, as well as in connection with manufactures. The

1 B.S.A. Mins. 12 March 1842

2 B.S.A. Mins. 16 May 1842

3 B.S.A. Mins. 31 March 1842

dispute, and secession of the artists' committee, had raised doubts as to the wisdom of conferring a government grant on an apparently unstable institution, but further enquiries had satisfied the Council that in the event of the Society of Arts being prepared to make a School of Design its sole object (the condition which caused delay in Leeds), and to 'subscribe to other general conditions which the 'unprofessional' committee now in exclusive control of the Society were prepared to accept, a grant could be made.¹ The difficulties had been overcome, as the Third Report of the Council made clear, through the personal intercession of Rev. James Prince Lee.²

In more general terms, the 'difficulties' related to concern at Somerset House regarding the Birmingham Society's preoccupation with fine art, and it is to be noted that the interest in fine art was maintained by the laymen even after the secession of the artists, and compromises were reached with the Council in London. Thus a request to continue annual exhibitions was acceded to by Somerset House on condition that the paintings and other items exhibited could be shown as serviceable in promoting ornamental arts and manufactures;³ the Birmingham committee's wish to omit Rule 4, which excluded prospective fine artists from studying in the school, was firmly rejected by the Council but led to the setting up of a separate morning school for fine art in the same premises.⁴

The early years of the School of Design, as recorded in the annual

1 P.P. 1843 [454] xxix pp. 9, 13
Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.1 pp. 115, 120, 148, 158

2 P.P. 1844 [566] xxxi p. 32
Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.1 pp. 264-5

3 Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.1 p. 233

4 B.S.A. Mins. 15 Nov. 1843
Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.1 pp. 310, 328
Government S.D., Letters from C.H. Wilson, P.R.O. Ed. 84/1/pp. 55-7

reports, were a great success, but the deep-rooted conflict of underlying aims showed through the congratulation and optimism.

Consistent with the evidence of Howell to the Select Committee of 1836,¹ the response of the artisans was warmer than that of the manufacturers on the whole. Figures for 1844 show that Birmingham had the highest recruitment and lowest wastage rate of the seven provincial schools then established, and with just over 300 pupils in 1845 it still enjoyed the highest enrolment in England (marginally surpassed by the new school at Glasgow).² Appointing Heaviside as master to the school in June 1844, C.H. Wilson wrote advising him of the progress it had made and the already advanced state of the pupils.³ By far the greatest number of students in the first year were attending the class for drawing of ornament in outline, and emphasis was carefully placed in the Council's Reports, on industrial relevance, for example that students had executed ornamental work for the papier mâché manufacture, and that one manufacturer in the japanning trade had sixteen of his workpeople at one time in the school.⁴ The Committee of Management was reported to be composed of "very intelligent gentlemen ... actuated by an earnest desire to promote the welfare of the School, as being an important means of benefitting the manufacturing community ..."⁵ An occupational analysis of male students in 1845 purported to show the "very considerable number of the industrial classes for whose benefit these Institutions are especially intended", yet 88 out of 231 were recorded as of undetermined occupation, and the majority of the 79 female students were not engaged in ornamental manufacture. This

1 P.P. 1836 (568) ix II qq. 72, 85

2 Third and Fourth Reps. of the Council of the S.D. 1844 [566] xxxi p. 29, 1845 [654] xxvii p. 24

3 Government S.D., letters from C.H. Wilson, P.R.O. Ed. 84/1/p. 44

4 P.P. 1845 [654] xxvii p. 26
Fifth Rep. of the Council of the S.D. 1846 [730] xxiv p. 19

5 P.P. 1844 [566] xxxi p. 33

was justified on the ground that

"the diffusion of a knowledge of drawing must serve to effect a general improvement and elevation of the standard of taste by which the productions of our manufactures are estimated. It is also due to the highly intelligent and active Committee of the Birmingham School to add that, in sanctioning the admission of Pupils whose pursuits are not immediately connected with manufactures, they have been actuated by this impression."¹

The Birmingham Committee in its own reports, revealed a marked consciousness of the broader purposes of such an institution; in 1845,

"in art alone, connected with manufactures, satisfactory progress has been made, while the invariable attention, industry, and good conduct of the Students are fully bearing out the anticipations of those who augured that moral results might be reasonably looked for from the operations of this Institution",

and in 1846 they recorded with "unmixed satisfaction ... the increased usefulness of the School, as bearing on the manufactures and general taste, as well as the mental and moral improvement of a considerable number of the inhabitants of the town."² The threefold purpose of raising taste by diffusing a knowledge of art, improving trade by cultivating talent for design, and raising the tone of morals, was reiterated in the report for 1848, when the last of these had been achieved by "affording an opportunity of passing the evenings in the pursuit of a useful and elegant branch of study in the school, and by supplying the means of intellectual improvement in the lending library."³ If this aspect of the school was given as much importance as appears, then perhaps it is hardly surprising that in a petition for more financial help the committee should have complained of the indifference of the manufacturers whom the school was supposed to benefit.⁴

1 P.P. 1845 [654] xxxvii pp. 26-27

2 Ibid. p. 27
P.P. 1846 [730] xxiv p. 19

3 quoted in Art Union v.10 (1848) p. 66

4 Petition from Soc. of Arts and Government S.D., Birmingham, 4 Dec. 1848 to Rt. Hon. Henry Labouchere, President of the Board of Trade, P.R.O., B.T.1/470/3894

The Art Union complained on more than one occasion that the majority of works exhibited were not related to the needs of local manufacturers and expressed the opinion that education in fine art was insufficient for manufacturing design. But the blame was generally laid on the local manufacturers for failing to make their influence felt in the Birmingham school:

"That a taste for the Fine Arts is spreading all must admit; that the productions of our manufactories are gradually imbibing and incorporating Art into their external configuration, every observing person must be cognisant of; but that this is more attributable to the zeal of the artisan than to that of his employer, is most true."¹

The Journal of Design and Manufactures, always more acerbic in its criticism, clearly recognised that the fault lay in the personnel controlling the School of Design, and its attacks are worth quoting at length. In 1849 it complained that the annual meeting of the Birmingham school should have been presided over by the Bishop of Manchester, James Prince Lee

"It pains us to say that we should greatly have preferred to see some prominent Birmingham manufacturer rather than this excellent prelate, as chairman of such a meeting. It would have been a little more germane to the purpose, and we should have been able to discuss with such a chairman the question, whether the making of designs ought or ought not to be the proof of a designer's knowledge ... but we cannot be expected to do this with one who is actually prohibited from having any practical connexion with commerce. That a bishop should take the chair and dogmatise at such a meeting seems to us as much out of place as it would be to find Mr. Elkington or Mr. Winfield taking the place of the bishop in his pulpit, and debating divinity."²

The following year's meeting was equally 'inappropriately' chaired by

1 Art Union v.6 (1846) p. 214, v.10 (1848) p. 227

2 J.D.M. v.1 (1849) p. 198

the very Rev. Chancellor Law,¹ but the attendance was also deficient in an important respect:

"There was a goodly show of the fair sex present, a sprinkling of the professionals of the town, but, as for manufacturers, with the exception of Mr. Bacchus and one or two others, there were none to support or countenance the doings of an educational establishment instituted expressly for their benefit. Where, we ask in vain, are the Elkingtons, the Winfields, the Messengers, etc., with many others of whom Birmingham might be proud and whose manufactures would be so much benefited by an infusion of that which the School of Design ought to teach."²

At this meeting the treasurer recorded a balance in hand of £90, which, the Journal commented, was not at all attributable to the liberality of the manufacturers; who raised about £50; "in truth, but for the Government grant of £600 and the generosity of those who are interested in the progress of art for its own sake, the school could not exist."³

IV

The general observation just quoted may be reinforced by a detailed study of the individuals most intimately connected with the formation and early years of the Birmingham School of Design. The lay patrons within the Society of Arts often voiced the manufacturing interest in promoting their cause, but were not themselves particularly representative of art-manufactures. A list of thirty-three members of the Society of Arts 'unprofessional' committee, subsequently the School of Design committee, from 1840 to 1845,⁴ is most revealing: one was an aristocrat, six may be classed as gentlemen, thirteen were professional, and there were

1 founder of Queen's College, Birmingham

2 J.D.M. v.3 (1850) pp. 152-3

3 loc.cit., (The Art Union in 1848 had made an unfavourable comparison between the generosity of manufacturers in Birmingham, and those at Manchester, and especially Glasgow, where £1500 was raised locally)

4 With one exception, Rev. John Corrie who died in 1839. See below

two bankers, six merchants and five manufacturers. The sources available give more or less detail on the public activities of these individuals and their families, their political and religious affiliations, and their patronage of education in general; but what detail is available reveals a variety of business, political and religious connections, and of cultural interests which suggests that they may be identified as members of a social and intellectual elite in the town.

The one aristocrat was Sir Francis Lawley, following in the footsteps of his elder brother Sir Robert whose early connection with the Society of Arts has been described above, and who died at his villa in Florence in 1834. Francis was, as early as 1822, a trustee of the Society, and maintained an active interest in the welfare of the town as M.P. for Warwickshire from 1820 to 1832. He was chairman of the School of Design committee in 1844, and was active in attempting to reconcile the Society with the artists following the split, and in defraying the expenses of three students visiting London to view the exhibition at the Palace of Westminster in 1844.¹

Those committee members here identified as 'gentlemen' are those described as such in the directories and generally accorded the title 'esquire' in Poll Books and other lists. They were not necessarily landed gentry by inheritance, some having retired on wealth gained in business or manufacture. Charles Birch was most notable for the fine collection of art which he formed at his home, Metchley Abbey, in Harborne; in particular he was a patron of contemporary English painters and owned works by Constable, Etty, Maclise, Danby, Stothard, David Cox, Turner and Copley Fielding amongst others, from which he lent to local exhibitions. He was

1 B.S.A. Mins. 27 May 1843, 7 March, 6 June 1844.

F. Boase, Modern English Biography

a vice-president of the Birmingham and Midland Counties Art Union.¹

John Edwards Piercy was also a vice-president of the local Art Union and a member of the 'unprofessional' committee in 1842. In 1837 he lived in Bristol Road and cast his votes for the liberal candidates, but otherwise remains obscure, although the family name is found amongst wardens of the Unitarian Old Meeting House, and one Ebenezer Piercy was a drawing master in Newhall Street during the 1840s.²

Joseph Walker, who became chairman of the committee in 1845, was a gentleman resident at no.10, Crescent. A liberal in politics, Walker was one of the Street Commissioners anxious to create a 'civic centre' after 1830, buying land for this purpose with his own money. The Walker family appeared frequently in the annals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Chamber of Commerce, and Joseph's own public service included heading the police at the Chartist riots and sitting on the Bench which committed Lovett in 1839. He was a subscriber to the Birmingham Library.³ Joseph Webster was a fellow magistrate in the late 1830s, and a member of the Board of Guardians at Erdington, but may have lived outside the town as he is not recorded as a voter, or as a resident in the directories; the name is one which had long-standing connections with the Unitarian chapel.⁴

Joseph may well have been the "Mr. Webster" who lectured to the Philosophical Institution on Geology, and a fellow lecturer, on music,

1 B.S.A. Mins. 21 Apr. 1840, 31 March 1842
Birmingham Soc. of Artists, Rough Minute Book, 23 June 1846
Catalogue of the effects of Metchley Abbey, 1857, B.R.L. Local History Coll.
Catalogue of English pictures in the coll. of Charles Birch, 1855, B.R.L. Local History Coll.

2 Poll Book, Birmingham, 1837
Birmingham directories, 1842, 1846
C. Beale, Memorials of the Old Meeting House, 1882 p. 56

3 Poll Books, Birmingham, 1837, 1841
Birmingham Directory, 1846
E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877, p. 26
C. Gill, op.cit., 1952 p. 323

4 C. Beale, op.cit., 1882, p. 58 and memorials

was probably James Taylor¹ who sat on the School of Design committee in 1845. Generally described simply as James Taylor Esq., of Mosley Hall, he was also listed as a banker in 1849, but his chief importance was his prominent role in local charities, as a Governor of King Edward's School from 1825, Treasurer of the General Hospital and a supporter of the Anglican church. One correspondent wrote of his "station as an opulent and influential gentleman ... and high character for personal worth", and another stated that "the Institutions of this town ... have been sustained by you with a liberality which seems to be ever watchful for good."² Politically a whig, hostile to incorporation of the town, Taylor must also have had an interest in art, as he had been one of the earliest trustees of the Society of Arts.³

Another leading opponent of the municipal charter, but from a tory point of view, was Joseph Frederick Ledsam Esq., who played an extremely active part in local affairs. His family had been active in the Chamber of Commerce, and he had joined a deputation from the Chamber to the Bank of England for a loan in 1825, as one of the more prosperous members not personally in need of assistance; in 1829, with Shaw and Chance (both to be members of the School of Design committee), he had founded the Birmingham Banking Co.⁴ Ledsam's interest in education was shown by his membership of the steering committee for Infant Schools in 1825, and his involvement with the Society of Arts was continuous and close; for example,

1 P. Blakiston, Lecture on the diffusion of scientific knowledge, 1837 p. 20

2 Rev. J. Garbett, An appeal for the erection of new churches in Birmingham, in a letter addressed to James Taylor Esq., 1838 p. 3

T. Gutteridge, A letter to James Taylor Esq. ... on the corrupt system of election of the medical officers, 1843 p. 3

3 E.P. Hennock, Fit and proper persons, 1973 p. 18
B.S.A. Mins. 21 May 1822

4 E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877 p. 57
G.H. Wright, Chronicles of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham, 1913 p. 95

in 1842, when in London with Rev. J.P. Lee, the 'unprofessional' committee asked them to try to secure Prince Albert's patronage for the Society.¹

The largest occupational group amongst the promoters of the Birmingham School of Design were lawyers. George Barker (1776-1845) was a leading tory, who, with Ledsam, organised the counter-petition to the municipal charter. A committee member of the Society from 1842 to 1844, he had been an original signatory to the advertisement calling for a Society of Arts in 1821, and previous to that, had been largely responsible for the establishment of the Philosophical Institution. He devoted much time to scientific pursuits (elected a member of the Royal Society in 1839), and to benevolent enterprises such as the triennial music festival for the General Hospital. He was described in 1837 as a man of "enlightened and vigorous mind, and great energy of character."²

Harry Hunt (1777-1856) inherited a family tradition of local activity, as his father had been a member of the Commercial Committee (forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce) formed in Birmingham in 1784. He was a liberal, a warden of the Unitarian Old Meeting House, a subscriber to the Birmingham Library and a committee member of the Art Union.³ Clement Ingleby (d.1859), son of a country gentleman of Cheadle, was a partner in Ingleby and Wragge, attorneys and agents to the Argus Life Assurance Office. A tory voter, he was also a subscriber to the Birmingham Library in 1838. He remains otherwise an obscure figure, but his son, Clement Mansfield Ingleby, abandoned the law in favour of his interests as a Shakespeare scholar

1 J.A. Langford, A century of Birmingham life, 1868 v.2 p. 501
B.S.A. Mins. 18 July 1842

2 P. Blakiston, op.cit., 1837 pp. 19-20
D.N.B.

3 Poll Book, Birmingham, 1841
C. Beale, op.cit., 1882 p. 56 and memorials

and metaphysician, having briefly occupied the chair of logic at the newly established Birmingham and Midland Institute;¹ this is not the only case where developing literary interests and upward social mobility seem to characterise the families of patrons of the School of Design (see, for example, William Chance, below).

Howard Luckcock (1801/2-1877), a member of the School of Design Committee in 1844, had been articled as a solicitor to Joseph Parkes, but probably never practiced. The name Luckcock was well established in Birmingham Unitarianism, and particularly in education, since James Luckcock (d. 1835) was known as "the Father of Sunday School instruction". Howard was a commissioner of land tax and income tax, and chairman of the Birmingham Fire Insurance Co.. As a magistrate, town councillor and alderman he was active in local affairs. He took a particular interest in the Birmingham Dispensary, and was a shareholder of the Philosophical Institution and subsequently of the Birmingham and Midland Institute.² John Wilkes Unett has been mentioned above for his early involvement in the Society of Arts; he continued to be very active as Honorary Secretary of the School of Design until his death in 1856. Described as otherwise "scarcely a public man", he had, however, been a member, with his fellow solicitor Joseph Parkes, of a committee to watch the town's parliamentary interests in the years preceding Reform. A tory, and an Anglican benefactor, his literary and educational interests are suggested by his membership of the Birmingham Library, and a donation to the Mechanics' Institution in 1840.³

1 Poll Books, Birmingham, 1837, 1841
 D.N.B. (on C.M. Ingleby)
 F. Boase, Modern English Biography (on C.M. Ingleby)

2 Birmingham Daily Post 30 Oct. 1877
 C. Beale, op.cit., 1882 pp. 59-60
 R. Waterhouse, The Birmingham and Midland Institute, Birmingham, 1954, p.15

3 Poll Books, Birmingham, 1837, 1841
 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
 R.K. Dent, Old and new Birmingham, Birmingham, 1880 p. 389

The two remaining lawyers connected with the School of Design were John Welchman Whateley and William Wills. The former was closely involved in local politics through his work; J.W. and G. Whateley were solicitors to the Grammar School, which necessarily embroiled them in the periodic squabbles over that institution, and as Coroner to the unreformed administration, John Welchman was ousted by the liberals after incorporation in 1838. He declared his political allegiance as secretary to the Loyal and Constitutional Association, and his cultural interests are illustrated by his subscription to the Birmingham Library and his participation in the establishment of the Birmingham and Midland Institute.¹ Williams Wills, by contrast, was a prominent liberal, addressing the town meeting for a municipal charter in October 1837. His family was well established in Birmingham, his parents being buried at the Unitarian Old Meeting House, and William himself was Low Bailiff of Birmingham in 1831. He was learned too, author of a work on circumstantial evidence which ran to four editions, and a subscriber with two shares in the Birmingham Library.² Wills was an honorary member of the Mechanics' Institution and a donor of £10 in 1840; in 1827 he had written to the Society of Arts offering the cast of an original sculpture by Bailey, defending the study of fine contemporary works alongside antique models, and offered further to present a cast of the Dying Gladiator, "students having expressed a want of the same".³ He seems therefore to have been an educational benefactor with a close interest in art.

1 Poll Books, Birmingham, 1837, 1841
E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877 pp. 8, 29
C. Gill, op.cit., 1952, p. 235

2 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
C. Beale, op.cit., 1882, p. 58 and memorials
Birmingham directory, 1849

3 B.S.A. Mins. 20 Nov. 1827

Three ministers of religion interested themselves in the School of Design. Rev. John Corrie F.R.S. (1786-1839) did not live to see it implemented, but played an interesting part in the earliest stages as a contact with London in 1836;¹ the importance of these personal contacts with the metropolis may be seen especially in the roles of J.P. Lee (below), and of Edward Baines for Leeds (chapter 6, below). Corrie had been minister of the Old Meeting House from 1817-19, but having retired through ill health, continued to interest himself in both the cultural and the commercial life of Birmingham. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce personally unconnected with business, he was jointly responsible for distributing a Bank of England loan in the depression of 1825; as president of the Philosophical Institution and a delegate to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, he persuaded the latter to hold their 1839 meeting in Birmingham, shortly before which, he died. Peyton Blakiston commented, "His death has made a void in the literary society of this place."²

The Anglican priest James Prince Lee was generally prominent in Birmingham life during the decade 1838 to '48, but took a particular interest in the School of Design, as described above. Son of a secretary to the Royal Society, he enjoyed a distinguished career at Cambridge and as a master under Arnold at Rugby, and came to Birmingham as headmaster of King Edward's School in 1838. He became first chairman of the School of Design committee, and the records of the central Council at Somerset House bear abundant witness to his personal influence on behalf of

1 B.S.A. Mins. 1 Dec. 1836 (see section III, above)

2 P. Blakiston, op.cit., 1837 pp. 20-21

G.H. Wright, op.cit., 1913 p. 97

E. Lee, An episode in the history of the Old Meeting House, in Unitarian Hist. Soc. Trans. v.11 no.4 (1958)

Birmingham.¹ The extent of his personal influence is perhaps indicated by his subsequent elevation to the newly created Bishopric of Manchester in 1847, nominated by Lord John Russell, and a personal interest in art is suggested by the contents of the fine library which he bequeathed to Owens College, Manchester.²

Rev. Dr. Peyton Blakiston F.R.S. (1801-78) embraced two professions. Son of a baronet, educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge (where J.P. Lee was a Fellow), he was curate and vicar before going on to study medicine, and practised at the General Hospital in Birmingham from 1840, becoming F.R.C.P. in 1843. Accusations against him by Thomas Gutteridge suggest that he was friendly with the Whateley family, who procured his appointment at the hospital. His part in local intellectual life included the vice-presidency of the Philosophical Institution, and membership of the committee of the School of Design; like Lee, he was a tory voter.³

The surgeon Thomas Gutteridge, who was Professor of Anatomy at the Society of Arts, and Honorary Secretary to the 'unprofessional' committee until 1842 was a prolific and vitriolic pamphleteer against real or imagined abuses in local public charities. Amongst his main targets were four fellow members of the Society of Arts Committee: Lee and Blakiston perhaps incurred his wrath as they were outsiders with a privileged education, whereas he, the son of a Birmingham publican, had trained as an apothecary and surgeon, becoming M.R.C.S. in 1827; the Whateley family, and James Taylor, were accused by him of abusing their positions in the

1 Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.1 pp. 264-5, 347, v.2 pp. 257-9, 298, v.3 pp. 13, 97

Government S.D., Letters from C.H. Wilson P.R.O. Ed. 84/1/pp. 55-7
B.S.A. Mins. 18 July 1842

2 D.N.B.

F. Boase, Modern English Biography

3 F. Boase, Modern English Biography

Poll Book, Birmingham, 1841

T. Gutteridge, Letter to ... Lord Bishop of Worcester ... on corruptions and abuses, 1846 p. 15

P. Blakiston, Lecture on the diffusion of scientific knowledge, 1837

Grammar School and Hospital to appoint their friends and gain personal advantage.¹ He was eventually found guilty of libel against Ise.

Gutteridge played a leading role in the Loyal and Conservative Association, and his animated defence of Church Rates against the liberals in 1837 provoked a physical assault on him by G.F. Muntz, the future M.P. for Birmingham.²

As in Manchester, the architectural profession was represented on the committee, but so little is known regarding the two architects in question that it would be false to surmise as to their motives for supporting the school. John Lewis Hornblower, who joined the committee in 1844, practised as an architect and surveyor in Waterloo Street, where one Frederick Hornblower had joined him as an auctioneer and land agent by 1849; in that year Joseph Hornblower was also registered as an architect and surveyor in Ann St.. J.L. Hornblower was a liberal voter, and the family name was to be found frequently amongst the memorials at the Unitarian Chapel.³ Even less is found concerning Richard Charles Hussey, an architect at 45 Ann St. in 1842 with a house in Russell Row; he was a member of the committee in 1844.⁴

The commercial men who involved themselves in the school included two bankers who played a relatively minor role in the period under consideration, but are interesting for their background and contacts. William Beaumont was manager of the Birmingham Banking Co., an enterprise established by a number of figures active on the School of Design committee (Ledsam, Chance and Shaw). Beaumont was also precentor at

1 Bound volume of pamphlets by T. Gutteridge 1843-72, B.R.L. Local History Coll.

2 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877 pp. 85-6

3 Birmingham directories, 1842, 1849
Poll Book, Birmingham, 1837
C. Beale, op.cit., 1882 passim

4 Birmingham directories, 1842, 1849

Carrs Lane Congregational Church under the eminent preacher John Angell James (who was, however, sternly opposed to the arts).¹ Capt. Charles Tindal R.N., manager of the local Bank of England branch, was a highly cultivated man who patronised the arts, especially drama; the soirées at his home attracted all the literary and artistic personalities of the neighbourhood. He presided over the Special General Meeting in July 1842, when the laymen of the Society of Arts succeeded in imposing their plan for a School of Design. A member of the first Borough Council, he was also a shareholder of the Philosophical Institution, and in the early 1850s was very active in the formation of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, before his removal to London in 1856.²

Merchants and wholesalers accounted for six members of the committee, although, as in Manchester, merchanting and manufacturing interests were not always completely separate. W.M. Grundy was partner in a firm dealing in lace, gloves and hosiery in Bull Street, about whom little else is recorded, although the family name had figured in the chronicles of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce since 1784. He was a committee member of the school from 1842-4.³ John Gibson Reeves was a merchant and factor, who, as a director of the Town and District Bank established in 1836, was closely allied with George Bacchus, the enterprising art-manufacturer. Reeves, Greaves and Reeves, with which he doubtless had some family connection, were sword manufacturers to the Board of Ordnance and the East India Company. A tory, John Reeves was appointed Rector's warden at the hotly contested election for St. Martin's in 1837.⁴ Elected to

1 Birmingham directory, 1849
E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877 pp. 57-8

2 B.S.A. Mins. 12 July, 9 Aug. 1842
E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877 p. 53
R. Waterhouse, op.cit., 1954 pp. 11, 14, 15

3 G.H. Wright, op.cit., 1913 passim

4 Birmingham directories, 1842, 1849
E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877 pp. 60, 85
(for George Bacchus, see section I above)

the Society of Arts committee in 1835, Reeves assisted Unett and Richards in organizing the conversazione for the 1836 exhibition, and sat on the School of Design committee from 1842-5.¹

William Middlemore (1802-87) was a leather merchant and wholesale saddler; descended from an ancient Catholic family of Warwickshire, he joined the Baptist Church. Deeply engaged in local affairs, and a liberal voter, he was Low Bailiff, a member of the first Town Council, a magistrate, and a council member of the reconstituted Chamber of Commerce from 1855. Broad in his religious sympathies, he and his Anglican brothers rebuilt Edgbaston Parish Church, and he was munificent also in secular fields, presenting £100 to the School of Design in 1843, and donating money for the civic art gallery and for the purchase by the borough, of Aston Hall in 1863. On his death he left £14,000 for a recreation ground in Birmingham. Thus his own participation as a committee member of the school in 1844, appears to fit a larger pattern of general philanthropy and munificence.²

Thomas and Theophilus Richards have been mentioned above (section I), as eminent goldsmiths and jewellers about the turn of the century. Theophilus was also a gunsmith, and a member of the Anacreontic Society with other lively-minded tradesmen of the 1790s, such as James Bisset and Peter Wyon. Theophilus junior (grandson of Thomas) was a signatory to the original statement calling for a Society of Arts in 1821, and in 1832 he sold to the Society for £12 a valuable collection of casts of ornament procured from Italy. He was very closely involved in the

1 B.S.A. Mins. 3 Feb. 1835, 17 Sept. 1836

2 Poll Book, Birmingham, 1837
B.S.A. Mins. 21 October 1843

A.S. Langley, Birmingham Baptists, past and present, 1939 passim
F. Boase, Modern English Biography

negotiations for a School of Design in the 1840s, when he was recorded as a merchant, and a tory, resident at Edgbaston Cottage. He also subscribed to the Birmingham Library, and put himself forward as a local promoter of the Great Exhibition.¹

Charles Shaw (1791-1865) was a member of the 'unprofessional' committee in 1842. He had amassed a large fortune in both commerce and manufacture, and as some of his products consisted of domestic hardware such as candlesticks and fenders, he must have had some vested interest in design. Brought up in his father's factory, he had never acquired refinement, according to one contemporary, although he must have had some literary and artistic interests as a subscriber to the Birmingham Library and a committee member of the Art Union. Shaw was supposedly most unpopular; however, he was a considerable force in the town - a leader in averting financial disaster in 1837, a member of the Bench (with Chance and Walker, both promoters of the School of Design) which committed Collins and Lovett following the Chartist disturbances, and an outspoken tory. Thus his contacts with other members of the Society of Arts committee were many: as a Street Commissioner with Phipson and Walker, he personally bought land to create decent surroundings for the new Town Hall (the present Chamberlain Place), and it may well have been his meeting with Thomas Pemberton and Francis Clark amongst others, for the reconstitution of the Chamber of Commerce in 1842, that induced him to join the Society of Arts committee in the same year.²

William Chance was described in the directories of the 1840s as a merchant, but the industrial origins of his wealth were in the great firm

1 B.S.A. Mins. 18 Sept. 1832
 Poll Book, Birmingham, 1841
 Birmingham directories, 1842, 1849
Rep. made to Prince Albert ... 5 Oct. 1849, Scott Russell papers, R.S.A.

2 Poll Books, Birmingham, 1837, 1841
 E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877, pp. 109-112
 G.H. Wright, op.cit., 1913 p. 118
 C. Gill, op.cit., 1952 p. 323
 F. Boase, Modern English Biography

of glass manufacturers, Chance Bros. The elder William Chance (1749-1828) had been active in Birmingham trade as a member of the first Commercial Committee in 1784. His sons, William and Robert Lucas, joined the family firm of factors, but in 1824 they purchased the Spon Lane glass works, which they soon turned into "one of the greatest Crown Glass works in the Kingdom (paying, in 1832-3, half as much duty again, as all the other Birmingham manufacturers together).¹ Their excursions into ornamental glass have been described above (section I). The breadth of local activity of the younger William Chance (d. 1856), was striking. He was a committee member of the first Chamber of Commerce in 1813, High Bailiff in 1820, and in 1839 a magistrate on the Bench with Charles Shaw and Joseph Walker; his interest in education and culture prompted a £10 donation to the Society of Arts conversazione in 1829, membership of the Birmingham Library Committee, a year as president of the Mechanics' Institution, and the setting up by Chance Bros. of a school for their employees' children, to accompany the Provident Society which they already operated.² A taste for philanthropy and education seems to have run in the family, since the third William Chance sat on the Council of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, in which the younger R.L. Chance, a member of the firm from 1846, and an active philanthropist, was also engaged. Moreover, the family as a whole seems to have been rising in occupational status at this period; Henry, a third brother of William and Robert Lucas, practised at the bar at Lincolns Inn from 1824, and published works on law; Frank, son of Robert Lucas, became a biblical scholar and author on physiology, whilst

1 D.N. Sandilands, The birth of Birmingham's glass industry, in J. of the Soc. of Glass Technology, v.15 no.59 (Sept. 1931) p. 246

2 G. Strauss et al., England's workshops, 1864 pp. 133-41, 185-202
Birmingham M.I., Rep. of 14th anniversary meeting, 1840

Sir James Timmins Chance, son of William, followed a brilliant career at Cambridge in maths and classics before developing the firm's expertise in optical glass.¹

The five manufacturers involved in the early years of the School of Design were few in relation to the professional and commercial men. They were but a small sample of the industrialists who might have been expected to have an interest in design, and many of the names such as Bacchus, Messenger, Elkington, Winfield, Hardman, which were known for the quality of their ornamental productions, were nowhere to be found in the minutes of the school. The chief manufactures of Birmingham were only barely represented, - one jeweller, one decorative brass manufacturer, one glass manufacturer, and no representative of papier mâché or electroplate, the new departures in decorative art. Moreover, when the particular manufacturers who supported the school are studied, it is found that several of them were either men of culture, who took an interest in education generally, or were active in other local philanthropic exercises; it might be said of the manufacturers, then, that their motive was not exclusively the improvement of their own wares.

Francis Clark was listed in the directory as a jeweller and iron and steel wire manufacturer. He was appointed to the patrons' sub-committee in 1842 to make plans for a School of Design, and acted as treasurer of the school's committee in 1844. A liberal in politics, Clark had taken a general interest in education, as joint honorary secretary, with Joseph Parkes, of the Mechanics' Institution when it was founded in 1826, and as an honorary member of the M.I., he donated £5 in 1840. From 1847 he served on the Polytechnic Institution's committee (the only School of Design committee member to do so), and was treasurer of that

1 Birmingham directories, 1842, 1849

E. Edwards, op.cit., 1877, p. 26

R. Waterhouse, op.cit., 1954 pp. 13, 21

F. Boase, Modern English Biography

institution in 1849. Clark had also given public service in other spheres, for example as a magistrate, and in the attempt to revive the Chamber of Commerce in 1842.¹

The Pembertons were a large Unitarian family in Birmingham in the late eighteenth century, as indicated by their memorials and other records of the Old Meeting House. This leads to possible ambiguity in identifying the Thomas Pemberton who was a member of the School of Design committee in 1842, as several branches of the family were then living in Birmingham. The probability is that this was the senior partner (b. 1816/17 d. 1873) of an old firm of brassfounders, Pemberton and Sons. Pemberton and Simcox were praised for their decorative brass fittings exhibited at the Great Exhibition.² Thomas was a trustee of the Unitarian Old Meeting House,³ but otherwise never took part in public affairs. He was, however, "deeply interested in the cultivation of the fine arts",⁴ and his brother, Oliver, became F.R.C.S., Professor of Surgery at Queen's College, Birmingham, and local coroner.⁵

A.F. and T.C. Osler made a spectacular contribution to the Crystal Palace in the form of a crystal fountain, a centrepiece of the exhibition, and a cut glass candelabrum which they had produced for Ibrahim Pasha in 1846, had been exhibited at the Society of Arts for the benefit of students.⁶

1 Birmingham M.I., Rep. of 14th anniversary meeting, 1840
Birmingham directory, 1849
Poll Book, Birmingham, 1841
G.H. Wright, op.cit., 1913 p. 118

2 Art Union illustrated catalogue of the Great Exhibition, 1851, p. 154
J.D.M. v.2 (1849-50) p. 12

3 C. Beale, op.cit., 1882 p. 55

4 Birmingham Daily Post 10 April 1873

5 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
 (The Pembertons were maternal ancestors of Miss Ryland who was later a generous donor to the School of Art and the Art Gallery)

6 Art Union illustrated catalogue of the Great Exhibition, 1851 p. 255
B.S.A. Mins. 7 Jan. 1847

Abraham Follett Osler F.R.S., who was a committee member in 1845, had succeeded with his brother to their father's glass works in 1831. He was a liberal and a Unitarian, and described himself as "a sincere advocate of education"; he invented a self-registering anemometer and rain gauge which excited attention at the 1839 congress of the British Association. Osler was no doubt another of those promoters of the school who had frequent contact with London, as a Fellow of the Royal Society, and also since the firm maintained a showroom in Oxford Street. He assisted local institutions in other ways, for example as honorary secretary of the newly formed junior department of the Philosophical Institution in 1841, and as a council member of the Birmingham and Midland Institute.¹

T. Wells Ingram appeared as a committee member in 1844, having made some reputation as a manufacturer of horn buttons. In the 1830s he had developed the decorative processes employed in this particular manufacture, and was known for the excellence, beauty and variety of his productions. Ingram was a medallist and die-sinker too, but does not appear to have been very active in the public life of the town; he voted tory, and may have had Unitarian connections.²

The last manufacturer to be considered is William Phipson, who was a committee member throughout the period under discussion. The Phipsons were

¹ Poll Books, Birmingham, 1837, 1841
 P. Blakiston, op.cit., 1837 p. 22
 Soc. for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, Rep. on industrial instruction, 1853 p. 8

R. Waterhouse, op.cit., 1954 p. 21
 (In 1871, Birmingham municipal art gallery was established with a donation of £3,000 by T.C. Osler, towards the purchase of pictures)

² Birmingham directory 1842
 Poll Book, Birmingham, 1841
 J.P. Turner, The Birmingham button trade, in S. Timmins ed. op.cit., 1866 p. 437

an old Unitarian family, like the Pembertons (and like them, closely connected by marriage with the Rylands, who were prominent in local government at this period, and great benefactors of the town in the later nineteenth century).¹ Phipson was described as "a roller of metals" and was probably a member of Thomas Phipson and Son, pin and needle makers, and therefore had no personal commercial interest in joining the sub-committee appointed in 1842 to negotiate for a School of Design. He had experience of various local activities, however, having been a committee member and chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and a Street Commissioner in the early 1830s, when he was personally involved with Walker and Shaw in the purchase of land for a civic centre. William had also held office as Low Bailiff of Birmingham in 1813. A member of the Birmingham Book Club and of the Birmingham Library, and a donor to the Mechanics' Institution, it may be argued that his assistance with the School of Design was but one aspect of a general participation in local affairs;² his politics were liberal, and the firm had a reputation for philanthropy.³

In addition to the conclusion that the motivation behind the formation of a School of Design in Birmingham was more cultural than economic, some particular points of interest may be drawn from the foregoing study of the school's promoters. Political affiliations show rather more conservatives than liberals, and the absence of leading liberal names such as Attwood, Sturge, Scholefield and Muntz, is marked. From so small a sample of patrons, conclusions must be tentative, but it is noteworthy

1 R.V. Holt, The Unitarian contribution to social progress, 1938 pp. 225-236

2 Birmingham directory, 1843
 R.V. Holt, op cit., 1938 pp. 270-1
 C. Beale, op.cit., 1882 p. 58
 Birmingham M.I., Rep. of 14th anniversary meeting, 1840

3 Poll Book, Birmingham, 1841
Stranger's Guide through Birmingham (Cornish) 1849 pp. 78-9

that the Birmingham liberals were preoccupied at this time with taking over, and consolidating their hold on local government; moreover the patronage of the School of Design was quite distinct in Birmingham from that of the Mechanics' Institution, in which the liberals took a greater interest. In Birmingham, as in Manchester (but unlike Leeds), the local School of Design grew within an established institution for patronage of the fine arts, which would undoubtedly have attracted more politically conservative patrons.

As regards religion, Unitarianism was the sect most strongly represented, corresponding perhaps with the intellectual and cultural traditions of the Unitarian chapels. Amongst the Anglicans, several were active in the vestries or prominent benefactors. Finally, the connections which existed, whether between families, through chapels, within banking companies, or on the magistrates' bench or other local bodies, offer a glimpse of the pattern of association amongst the middle classes of the large industrial towns, which underlay the patronage of institutions such as the provincial Schools of Design.

CHAPTER 6

LEEDS

I

The industrial profile of Leeds in the 1840s presented a less obvious case than that of Manchester or Birmingham for the establishment of a Government School of Design, insofar as the predominant industries would not appear to have demanded the same degree of ornamentation as calico-printing or metal-work. Leeds was not regarded as a priority by the Board of Trade, and nine provincial towns received grants before Leeds.¹ Not that the skills to be acquired at the Schools of Design were exclusively directed towards ornamentation pure and simple, despite some of the contemporary propaganda which gave this the greatest emphasis. The skills of drawing and designing might have been applicable for example in engineering, which became an increasingly important industry in Leeds during the 1830s and 1840s.

The industrial situation in Leeds will be examined for any evidence of growth in demand for training in design. But it is the contention of this thesis that the demand for schools of design arose also from a growing interest in education and intellectual culture for its own sake, and in this respect too, industrial expansion was of at least indirect significance in producing the degree of prosperity and the type of social structure which facilitated cultural activity.

W.G. Rimmer has argued that the growth of Leeds should not be

¹ Manchester, York, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle upon Tyne, Glasgow, Nottingham, Coventry, Norwich
(Fourth Report of Council of S.D. 1845 [654] xxvii)

attributed simply to the industrial revolution.¹ Its township population of 30,669 in 1801 made Leeds four times the size of any other town in the clothing district. Already its markets and wealth, due to its position at the hub of the region's transport network, made it an important social centre. Between 1823 and 1828 nearly £90,000 was spent on five new market halls in Leeds, and transport to the west was greatly improved by the completion of the Leeds and Liverpool canal in 1816. John Marshall boasted in 1826 that "Leeds ... may justly be considered the capital of the North-Eastern part of England".² The population of Leeds parish more than doubled in the years 1801-1831, from 53,162 to 123,393.

The industrial structure was less monolithic than at first appears. Rimmer has observed that not only the woollen industry grew in this period, but many craft industries untransformed by the factory system, also expanded; dressmaking, shoemaking, building, retailing, printing, brick and pottery manufacture, woodworking and even engineering have all been unduly neglected in descriptions of industrial Leeds. Rimmer went on to suggest that further investigation of these craft industries would provide a more convincing background than at present exists for understanding social action in Leeds during the first half of the nineteenth century.³

The occupational distribution of those firms which might, in one way or another, have profitted from a school of design is indicated by the figures for 1817 and 1834 in Table 7. Of course the size of firms varied enormously, and Rimmer has reiterated Clapham's argument that the large-scale machinery so much remarked by novelty-seeking travellers and by parliamentary committees, was restricted to textiles and engineering. In

1 W.G. Rimmer, The industrial profile of Leeds 1740-1840, in Thoresby Soc. Publications v.50 pt. 2 (1967)

2 Leeds Mercury 14 January 1826

3 W.G. Rimmer, op.cit., p. 157

Table 7 Distribution of industry in Leeds
(industries requiring designers) 1817-51

| | 1817 | | 1834 | | 1841 | | 1851 | |
|---------------------|--------------|------|--------------|------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|------|
| Metals, engineering | 167 | 6.7 | 394 | 8.9 | 3741 * | 6.3 | 7415 * | 8.8 |
| Precious metals | 17 | 0.7 | 68 | 1.5 | 111 | 0.2 | 111 | 0.2 |
| Textiles | 452 | 18.0 | 642 | 14.4 | 1084 + | 1.6 | 644 + | 0.8 |
| Dress | 135 @ | 5.4 | 471 @ | 10.6 | 4995 | 8.3 | 9184 | 11.0 |
| Woodworking | 113 | 4.5 | 233 | 5.2 | 968 | 1.6 | 1546 | 1.9 |
| Building | 164 | 6.6 | 261 | 5.9 | 3148 | 5.3 | 4179 | 5.0 |
| | total | % | total | % | total | % | total | % |
| | <u>firms</u> | | <u>firms</u> | | <u>occupied</u> | | <u>occupied</u> | |
| | | | | | <u>persons</u> | | <u>persons</u> | |

@ = Dress and shoes

* = Engineering only

+ = Finishing trades only
i.e. bleaching, printing,
dyeing

Table drawn from:

W.G. Rimmer, The industrial profile of Leeds 1740-1840, in
Thoresby Soc. Publications v.50 pt.2 (1967) pp. 145, 162

1841 only one fifth to one quarter of the workforce was employed in a factory, and much of the employment was found in household and small-scale production units.¹ This fact of itself suggests a less extensive division of labour and consequently less demand for the specialized skills that might have been provided by the Schools of Design. On the other hand, increasing specialization within existing trades led to a great increase in the number of crafts in the town; Baines' Directory for 1834 listed 307 local trades.

The first occupational census, of 1841, enables a more accurate picture to be drawn of the relative scale of various industries in the town (see Table 7). The overall percentage workforce in industries where design would be applicable was 23.3% in 1841 and 27.7% in 1851; of course only a minute proportion of this workforce would require the actual skills of design, but in the absence of more precise statistics concerning design (as are available for Manchester) these figures reveal the relative importance of those industries in the local industrial structure.

Innovations such as the mechanization of textiles, the rapid growth of engineering and the introduction of new methods of clothing manufacture in the mid-century indicated an awareness and alertness on the part of the manufacturing community of Leeds. Benjamin Gott had pioneered the factory production of woollen cloth on the pattern of the new methods of cotton manufacture developed in Lancashire; he was intimate with Boulton and Watt, John Rennie and other prominent engineers.² Such connections between pioneering manufacturers and engineers in different provincial

1 Ibid. p. 131 Another estimate is that rather more than 10,000 operatives were engaged in power-driven mills in 1839, a year when the total occupied population must have been nearly 59,000 (J.F.C. Harrison, Chartism in Leeds, in Asa Briggs ed. Chartist Studies, 1959).

2 W.B. Crump ed., The Leeds Woollen Industry, in Thoresby Soc. Publications v.32 (1931).
H. Heaton, Benjamin Gott and the Industrial Revolution in Yorkshire in Ec.H.R. v.3 (1931)

towns were, incidentally, not without significance for the general process of cultural and educational advance with which this thesis is primarily concerned, and connections between the Gotts and the Rennies are of particular interest. Apprenticed to Rennie as an engineer was Peter Ewart, and his friendship with the Gotts led to the marriage into that family of his niece Margaret Ewart, sister of the M.P. who promoted art galleries and public libraries, whilst another apprentice of John Rennie was the Manchester architect and promoter of the Manchester School of Design, Edward Walters; the Gotts were active patrons of art, and John Rennie's nephew George was a sculptor and a member of parliament who gave evidence against the Royal Academy before Ewart's Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures of 1835-6. Regarding Gott's industrial enterprise, he was also friendly with George Augustus Lee, the cotton spinner of Manchester, with whom he experimented in the gas lighting of factories, and his own huge mill, Bean Ing, was a tourist attraction for many, including the Duke of Clarence (later William IV) when he visited Leeds in 1806.

Matthew Murray, the inventive engineer who had assisted John Marshall in the erection of a flax-spinning mill at Adel in 1788, experimented with the steam heating of a house in Leeds in 1804 and developed a regular steam locomotive service on the Hunslet to Middleton Railway in 1812.¹ These pioneers also contributed to the early development of public services in Leeds. Street lighting with oil lamps was inaugurated in 1791, and in 1819 Murray lit some streets with gas. Gott as mayor of Leeds in 1799 was an early industrialist to participate in public life and was perhaps instrumental in procuring George Rennie (engineer and son of John Rennie) to construct the Wellington Bridge in 1818.

¹ E.K. Scott, Matthew Murray, pioneer engineer, Leeds 1928 passim

The application of taste and design to certain manufactured goods had already been practised in Leeds in the late eighteenth century. Perhaps the best known industry in this respect was the Leeds Pottery, established in 1760 by Hartley Greens and Co. and famous for its cream ware, whose drawing books for the years 1792-1819 survive, but in 1820 the original firm became bankrupt and the pottery declined.¹

It has already been observed in passing that the Gott family were men of taste. Textile industrialists generally were aware of the importance of design at an early date; a delegation from Leeds to the Privy Council in November 1785 concerning a commercial treaty to be drawn up with France, commented hopefully that

"In the Fine Cloths the French can furnish a Cloth which may take the Eye ... but as we now have the raw materials on at least equal terms, particularly as the machines for shortening manual labour are still improving, it must end in our finding the means to give at least similar qualities ..."²

Samuel Gray Sons & Co. were a firm of woollen manufacturers established in 1833 who produced "woollen coatings and trouserings in great variety and design".³ The majority of Leeds exhibitors at the Great Exhibition were woollen manufacturers. Five Leeds men were on the jury for wool, and the jury's report made the following point:

"The merchants and manufacturers engaged in the woollen trade of this important district supply very extensively the home, foreign and colonial markets, and adapt the fabrics manufactured to the peculiar taste of each".⁴

The ornamentation of woollen fabrics, however, had far less scope for invention and created less of a demand for drawing, than did calico

1 D. Towner, The Leeds Pottery, 1961 passim

2 M.W. Beresford, The Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Leeds, 1951 pp. 18-20

3 The Century's Progress. Yorkshire Industry and Commerce, 1893 p.152

4 M.W. Beresford, op.cit., p. 54

printing in Manchester. The decline towards 1851 in the finishing trades such as dyeing and printing, which is apparent from the occupational census (Table 7), might suggest that adaptation of taste was directed more to woven patterns and to quality of cloth than to printed ornamental designs. Moreover R.J. Morris has found correspondence of Leeds manufacturers concerning the Great Exhibition which suggests that they had conceded the high-quality end of the market to continental competitors.¹

Engineering grew rapidly in the second quarter of the nineteenth century to play a leading role in the economy of Leeds. The mechanization of flax spinning and cloth manufacture encouraged this, and the employment of engineers by local industrialists such as Marshall and Gott has been mentioned above. In 1828 Peter Fairbairn established the Wellington Foundry, in 1833 Greenwood and Batley commenced machine making in Armley, and in 1837 the firm of Todd, Kitson and Laird began to construct locomotives in Hunslet.² The 1843 Directory listed thirty-one machine makers, of whom three, Maclea, Kitson and Bingley, became supporters of the School of Design.³ The draughtsmanship required in engineering no doubt contributed to some extent to the demand for a School of Design, although the actual motives of Maclea and Kitson are given a different interpretation later in this chapter.

Apart from its chief industries, a town of Leeds' size and prosperity would have been served by its own complement of decorative trades. From the Leeds Directories, a list can be compiled of trades which would to some extent have required decorative skills. In 1843, White's Directory listed:

1 R.J. Morris, Leeds and the Crystal Palace, in Victorian Studies v.13 (1970) p. 294

2 E.K. Scott, op.cit., 1928 passim

3 Leeds Directory 1843

| | |
|--|----|
| Architects | 11 |
| Cabinet Makers | 47 |
| Carpet and rug manufacturers | 5 |
| Carvers and gilders | 11 |
| Chair makers | 6 |
| Clock makers | 9 |
| Coach builders | 8 |
| Engravers and printers in copper and wood | 16 |
| Gun makers | 7 |
| Hat manufacturers | 12 |
| Watch and clockmakers (and jewellers) | 29 |
| Lithographers | 2 |
| Painters (House etc.) | 32 |
| Stone and marble masons | 46 |
| Stuff and woollen printers | 3 |

Although the absence of information about the size of these firms and the quality of their work makes a strict assessment of the demand for design impossible to achieve, the large numbers of cabinet makers and of stone and marble masons, as also architects and carvers and gilders, reflects a demand for design which corresponds with increasing prosperity and the building of new "middle class" suburbs in Leeds from this period onwards.

Amongst those craftsmen listed in the directories were Brownbill and Co., the old-established watch manufacturer and goldsmith of Briggate who mounted gems "in a highly artistic style". Benjamin Verity, monumental sculptor and architectural carver, had established his business in 1841, appropriately at Cemetery Place, Woodhouse.¹ A well-known firm of high-quality decorators and furnishers had been established in 1760 by Mr. A. Kendle, and early in the nineteenth century became Marsh and Jones (later, Marsh, Jones and Cribb).² One such tradesman, whose work was illustrated in the Art Journal Catalogue of the Great Exhibition was G.W. England "upholsterer, cabinet maker, decorator,

1 The Century's Progress. Yorkshire Industry and Commerce, 1893 pp.152, 174

2 Anon. article in Paint Journal v.11 no. 81 (Jan. 1960)

carver and gilder, paper hangings etc.". His advertisements in the Leeds directories suggest the demand which existed locally for style and fashion:

"Architectural Designs for Internal Decorations furnished by eminent Artists"
 "Embroidery and ladies' needlework made up and displayed in the first style, from Original Designs"
 "Manufacturer of cabinet furniture of highest quality, massive elegant and light, in Grecian, Italian, Elizabethan, French and Gothic Styles of Decoration"
 "Decorative carvings of the utmost richness and beauty, executed in a style not to be equalled out of London".¹

Of the 4,000 provincial exhibitors at the Crystal Palace, only 142 were from Leeds, a disproportionately low share by comparison with the town's importance to the export economy. Only one other Leeds exhibitor was accorded an illustration in the Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue, - Christopher Wesley Dove & Co. carpet manufacturers, who were apparently not established in Leeds before 1849.²

These names did not appear, however, amongst the supporters of the Leeds School of Design. Nor were Leeds names prominent amongst the furnishers and decorators of the Town Hall, an important monument to civic pride built in the 1850's; the stained glass was from Manchester, the chandeliers were from Birmingham, John Grace of London provided the interior decoration and John Thomas the sculpture.³ Although the prestige of this monument demanded the employment of foremost contractors in the applied arts, the absence of local candidates may reflect the fact that industrial demand for schools of design was less at Leeds than at Manchester and Birmingham.

The possibility of an accurate assessment of the local demand overall

1 Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition, 1851, p. 268
 Leeds Directories 1845 p. 38, 1851 p. 18

2 Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue, op.cit., p. 246

3 A. Briggs, The building of Leeds Town Hall, in Thoresby Soc. Publications v. 46 pt. 3 (1961) p. 275

for trained designers is limited by the lack of specific evidence. The general conclusions are that although it was not crucial to any one industry, as it was to the metal-plate trade and the calico printing at Birmingham and Manchester respectively, design skills were applicable to some extent in cloth-finishing and in engineering which were important elements in the local economy. However, it is significant that no evidence concerning Leeds was given before the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures in 1835-6, and C.H. Wilson, Director of the Government Schools of Design, found in his visit of 1846 that improvements in enterprise were as necessary as the study of art.¹ Some of the leading local industrialists were keen innovators, and moreover, patrons of art; increasing industrial prosperity had created the surplus wealth necessary for patronage of the decorative and the fine arts, as in the building of a lavish new Town Hall, but Leeds did not have the large-scale ornamental art industries found in Birmingham and Manchester.

II

If the industrial situation in Leeds presented no outstanding demand, beyond that of a generally flourishing industrial town, for a school of design, the reasons for establishing such a school might be sought in the context of urban cultural activity. The cultural aspect of urban life has been less frequently studied than the political and economic aspects, yet it represents an important feature of urban activity during a period which saw the reorganization of local government and growth of civic identity in the large industrial towns; alongside the expansion of municipal institutions went the institutionalization of

¹ Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 p. 27

activities such as music, art and even conversation which might previously have been conducted in a more private and spontaneous manner amongst groups of friends.

Local guides and directories provide a useful source of information on these activities and societies. In 1806, under the heading 'Arts and Sciences', the Leeds Guide lamented:

"Under this head we have nothing that is particularly interesting to communicate; for excepting those arts which have an immediate reference to Commerce and Manufactures, the town of Leeds has not been eminently disposed to foster the production of art and genius, or to aid and encourage the researches of the philosopher. No societies of a literary or philosophical nature exist, to afford the means of concentrating and bringing before the public eye, the discoveries or improvements made by individuals, and for the rational employment of the leisure of young men, who might be inspired by such an institution with a taste for literary refinement, instead of cultivating vicious habits".¹

The guide referred to the attempted establishment in 1793 of a society for the discussion of literary and moral subjects, and to the concert room and theatre, but there was, inexplicably, no reference to the Leeds Library. This had been established in 1768 on the initiative of Joseph Priestley, and by 1817 there were in addition a New Subscription Library, a Methodist Library and several other circulating libraries which operated in Leeds.² A Coffee Room and a Commercial News Room supplied newspaper and periodical reading in 1817, the first for merchants, the second for tradesmen "and other respectable inhabitants". New libraries were opened and some, like the Eclectic Subscription Library, seem to have had a relatively ephemeral existence, but in 1845 there were six libraries including the Church of England Parochial, the Holbeck

1 [J. Ryley], *The Leeds Guide*, 1806 p. 131

2 *Leeds Directory* 1817, p. 30

Circulating, and the Mechanics' Institution libraries, the last two having reading rooms. Three newsrooms were in existence by 1845, including the Conservative News Room in Albion Street.

From the various directories published between 1817 and 1845 can be traced, alongside the growth and development of the infirmary and charitable and benevolent societies, the expansion of cultural societies and provision for adult education. The Philosophical and Literary Society was instituted in 1820, and modified the title adopted by similar societies already existing at Liverpool and Manchester, putting 'philosophy' before 'literature' in deference to the eminent surgeon William Hey who wanted a purely scientific society; in practice general intellectual interests were pursued alongside experimental science. The aim of the Society was quite consciously to 'civilize' local life and to assuage to some degree political and religious antagonism. In 1823, the annual report commented:

"The studies of literature and science must ever exert a purifying influence on the taste and character of their votaries; and the elevated views which they unfold must convince the most incredulous that there are more ennobling subjects for the exertion of the rational faculties than the conflicts of political warfare, the animosities of religious discord, or the restless controversies respecting civil or parochial affairs"¹

Membership was drawn predominantly from the middle classes, but later efforts to popularise its activities led to an attempted merger with the Literary Institution, the admission of subscribers at a lower rate in 1836, and the opening of its museum free to the public in 1837 for the benefit of the working classes.² A Yorkshire Horticultural Society was

1 Leeds Phil. and Lit. Soc. Annual Rep. for 1822-3 p. 11

2 Leeds Phil. and Lit. Soc. Annual Reps. for 1836-7 and 1837-8

also founded in 1820.

In 1825 the Leeds Mechanics' Institution was launched, with prominent industrialists such as Benjamin Gott, John Marshall and John Luccock taking the offices of president and vice-presidents, and Edward Baines junior, a very active director; this followed a path of development similar to that of many provincial 'M.I.s', with some tension arising over questions of management and of curriculum.¹ In the latter case the conflict was between a policy of concentration on technical classes and that of more general literary pursuits; the more utilitarian approach represented by Gott and Marshall prevailed, in consequence of which a new society was formed in 1834, the Leeds Literary Institution, "to increase the means of intellectual improvement among persons engaged in professional, commercial, and other pursuits".² Eventually in 1842, these two bodies merged to form the Mechanics' Institution and Literary Society.

Museums had an important role in the cultural life of the town, and by 1845 there were two well-established examples in Leeds. The museum of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, founded at the Society's birth in 1820, was by 1831 housed in the Philosophical Hall, purpose-built by R.D. Chantrell, a leading architect in the town. This museum contained mostly zoological and geological specimens, but by 1854 had also acquired a few works of art commemorating local worthies. A marble bust of John Marshall by Macdonald of Rome graced its rooms, as did busts by Behnes of the second William Hey, Sir John Beckett Bart., and M.T. Sadler. The fine arts were also represented in a curious way by casts of the skulls of Wordsworth, Haydon and Godwin amongst other

1 M. Tylecote, The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire, Manchester, 1957 pp. 70-71

2 Leeds Directory 1834 p. 412
F. Hill, National education, 1836, v.2 p. 195

"remarkable characters", included no doubt for their phrenological interest.¹ Calvert's Museum of Natural History which opened in 1826 also contained predominantly zoological and geological exhibits, apart from some foreign arms and dress, and a few Roman antiquities such as a head in marble, and one in terracotta, from Pompeii.²

Music also played an important part in the cultural life of Leeds, where concerts became a popular form of entertainment from the middle of the eighteenth century. A tradition of music festivals was inaugurated by charity concerts for the benefit of Leeds infirmary, and in 1791 a music hall was built to hold 800. Development in the middle of the nineteenth century, however, was hindered by the absence of any larger auditorium suitable for concerts until the completion of the Town Hall in 1858.³ In 1848 a society was founded to arrange musical soirées, and several of the leading families of Leeds, who also supported the School of Design, were found among its members.⁴

Against this background of general cultural activity, a particular interest in the visual arts was growing. Many details of the patronage and encouragement of art in Leeds up to 1830 have been supplied by Trevor Fawcett in his recent study of art in the English provinces.⁵ Fawcett has argued that

"It was only to be expected that [the] utilitarian connection between arts and manufactures should have been particularly appreciated in areas where the local industries could most benefit"

1 A guide to the museum of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, Leeds, 1854

2 Catalogue of John Calvert's collection of natural curiosities, antiquities, works of art etc. etc., Leeds (Edward Baines), 1826

3 E. Hargreave, Musical Leeds in the eighteenth century, in Thoresby Soc. Publications v.28 (1928) p. 320
J. Sprittles, Leeds Musical Festivals, in Ibid. v.46 pt. 2 (1960) p. 200

4 B.P. Scattergood, A short history of the Leeds Musical Soirées, Leeds, 1931, p. 5

5 T. Fawcett, The rise of English provincial art, 1974

but has quoted William Carey to show that Leeds was something of a special case in this respect:

"... although the woollen manufactures of Yorkshire are wholly carried on independent of embellishment from the Fine Arts, that great commercial district was the first which followed the example of the British Institution."¹

Carey was here referring to the Northern Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts established in Leeds in 1809, which after a period of desuetude, revived and flourished in the 1820s. This society is well described by Fawcett,² but a few points may be emphasised here as indicative of the social and cultural context in which art was encouraged. The Northern Society received its initial impetus (like the later Birmingham Society of Arts and Royal Manchester Institution, discussed above) from "gentry and amateurs" rather than artists; Thomas and George Walker were flax-spinners, Thomas being a collector of paintings, and George a naturalist, sportsman, amateur artist and author.³ Francis T. Billam, another promoter, was the son of a surgeon, and himself a soldier who wrote a short guide book to Leeds, joined the council of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, and even produced a farce at the Leeds theatre.⁴

As Carey suggested, the Northern Society was formed in emulation of a metropolitan example, the British Institution.⁵ A parallel in this emulation of metropolitan societies is found in the Leeds Philosophical Society (immediate antecedant to the 'Phil. and Lit. '), an 'address'

¹ Ibid, pp. 2-3

² Ibid. pp. 123-137, 168-9

³ F. Klingender, Art and the Industrial Revolution, rev. ed., ed. A. Elton, 1968 pp. 110-113

⁴ C.H. Cope, Reminiscences of C.W. Cope, 1891, pp. 18, 22
Leeds Notes and Queries (scrapbook in L.C.L. Local History Coll.) 1890-91 p. 150

⁵ for the British Institution see above, chapter 1

concerning which proclaimed: "and Institutions of the loftiest name,/Which lift to heav'n itself their haughty tow'rs,/Have risen from beginnings low as ours"; a footnote to the address' revealed this to be a direct reference to the Royal Society in London.¹ In imitation of the Royal Academy with its social éclat, the North Society held a preview dinner before each exhibition for directors and members, and in 1822 the annual exhibition was described as "a favourite lounge for the fashionable part of the town".²

The size of the annual exhibition in the 1820s (twice the average number of pictures that were shown at Norwich, a recognised provincial art centre), its popularity with the town (6,000 admissions and 500 season tickets sold in 1825), and the custom which it developed of exhibiting old masters, all reflected a significant interest in the visual arts in Leeds, and served as a precedent for the exhibitions mounted a decade later by the Mechanics' Institution.

One purpose of the Northern Society had been to sell the works of contemporary painters, and although to judge by the number of picture dealers there was more interest in collecting in Manchester than in Leeds, yet by the late 1840s there were some prominent patrons of contemporary art, such as Ellen Heaton and Thomas Plint, living in Leeds.³ An advertisement in the Art Union journal in December 1845 announced the opening of a picture gallery in East Parade by George Henwood, and claimed that a growing taste for modern art was evident in Leeds, where "of thirty-four pictures sold at the late Polytechnic Exhibition in this town, only two were by old masters".⁴

1 Leeds Philosophical Society, Original address, spoken at the second anniversary meeting, 1817, p. 12.

2 T. Fawcett, op.cit., 1974 p. 133

3 V. Surtees ed. Sublime and Instructive, 1972 pp. 141-151
J. Maas, Gambart, Prince of the Victorian Art World, 1975 pp. 139-150

4 Art Union v.7 (1845) p. 374

The Polytechnic Exhibitions will be discussed below, but another opportunity for viewing works of art existed in some of the notable collections owned by local nobility and gentry. The Stranger's Guide of 1831 listed eleven country seats within ten miles of Leeds, but not all were easy of access. Walter Fawkes' collection at Farnley Hall, which included a number of Turners, was only accessible for acquaintances, although he did lend to exhibitions in the town, and it was difficult to gain entry to Temple Newsam, but at Harewood the rooms and gardens were shown to visitors every Saturday.¹

No doubt such access to private collections was possible for the middle classes in general, but through the medium of the middle classes, who controlled such societies as the Mechanics' Institution and Literary Society, the visual arts became an important aspect of the cultural life of Leeds, and the appreciation of art an accomplishment to which the self-improving artisan might aspire. In July 1849, a notice in the Leeds Mercury announced that permission had been received from the Duke of Devonshire for the Mechanics' Institution to visit Chatsworth (such visits must have approached the scenes evoked in Tennyson's Princess),² and following a successful visit of Leeds artisans to the Great Exhibition, Baines' editorial comment in the Mercury linked together the pursuit of culture and improved social behaviour, with special reference to country house visits:

"The orderly and excellent conduct of the humblest class who have visited the Exhibition affords delightful evidence of intelligence and good feeling. It is one of the fruits of the Mechanics' Institutes and our extended education - we may add the wise liberality of the noblemen and gentlemen who of

1 The stranger's guide through Leeds, (H. Cullingworth) Leeds, 1831 p. 50

2 Leeds Mercury 14 July 1849.
Works of Tennyson ed. Hallam Tennyson, 1908, v.4 pp. 1, 3-4

late years have so frequently admitted the members of those institutions and of Temperance Societies to see their houses and parks".¹

A particular interest in the visual arts can be traced in the activities of the societies already mentioned. The 'address' to the Philosophical Society, quoted above, compared the birth of culture in Leeds in the late eighteenth century with that of Greece in the fifth century B.C., and included painting as represented by the local artist Joseph Rhodes (father of John Rhodes).² In the 1820s and 1830s the programme of lectures presented by the Philosophical and Literary Society reflected a growing interest in art (Table 8).

Reporting a series of lectures by Ripplingille on the Art of Design 1824-5, the Society's attitude to the visual arts was expounded:

"Though a subject not strictly included in the objects of your institution, it was conceived that a series of lectures on Painting, an art, which forms at once the surest test of the progress of civilization in past ages, and the best illustration of modern refinement, was on every account suitable to a Society, which should account nothing foreign from its design connected with the amelioration of taste, or the progress of intellect. They rejoice, however, that the brilliant success of another institution, formed especially for the promotion of the Fine Arts [i.e. the Northern Society], leaves them nothing to hope for in these respects, but to express their ardent wishes that the Northern Society, whose establishment forms one of the brightest eras in the intellectual history of Leeds, may long pursue its useful and honourable career..."³

The Society's reports for the years 1837 to 1840 indicated that public lectures on music and on painting, and especially those given by B.R. Haydon, were full to overflowing, and were the source of many new subscribers. Haydon's own view of his lectures concurs in their having had some effect; in February 1838, on his first arrival, he found that

1 Leeds Mercury 7 June 1851

2 Leeds Philosophical Soc., op.cit., 1817 p. 9

3 Leeds Phil. and Lit. Soc. Annual Rep. for 1824-5, p. 11

Table 8

Lectures on art, architecture and related topics
Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society 1820-1851

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1821-2 | Ed. Baines jnr. | The Rise of Art, Science and Literature amongst the Athenians |
| 1822-3 | Ed. Baines jnr. | The Elgin Marbles and the Causes of Excellence in Greek Sculpture |
| 1824-5 | F.T. Billam | Painting and Painters, from the time of the accession of Henry VIII to the death of Charles I |
| 1824-5 | E.V. Ripplingille (Bristol) | Seven Lectures on the Art of Design (<u>Public Lectures</u>) |
| 1825-6 | F.T. Billam | Stained Glass and Glass Stainers, from the invention of the Art to the Present Time |
| 1826-7 | W. Carey (London) | The Necessity, the Wisdom and Glory of cherishing a National Spirit in the Patronage of the Fine Arts, and a National Pride in the excellence of British artists |
| 1826-7 | John Hey | The Anatomy of Expression in Painting and Sculpture |
| 1827-8 | F.T. Billam | The Progress of Painting from the death of Charles I, to the close of the reign of George II |
| 1827-8 | W. Carey (London) | Course of Lectures on the Fine Arts (<u>Public Lectures</u>) |
| 1828-9 | J. Sangster | The Origin of Gothic Architecture |
| 1831-2 | C. Kemplay | The Comparative Beauties of Grecian and Gothic Architecture |
| 1832-3 | Hartley Coleridge | The Union of Literature with the Pursuits of Commerce, as exemplified in the Life and Character of the late Mr. Roscoe |
| 1833-4 | Rev. T. Kilby (Wakefield) | The Music, Painting and Sculpture |
| 1833-4 | J.G. Marshall | The Philosophy of Amusement, or Importance of a Cultivation of Imagination and Taste, duly proportioned to that of Understanding and Moral Sense |

| | | |
|---------|------------------------|---|
| 1837-8 | R.A. Stothard (London) | Art in its Usefulness, or Art as the means of affording Employment to an increased Population |
| 1837-8 | B.R. Haydon | Course of Lectures on Painting <u>(Public Lectures)</u> |
| 1838-9 | B.R. Haydon | Course of Lectures on Painting <u>(Public Lectures)</u> |
| 1839-40 | B.R. Haydon | Course of Lectures on the History of Painting <u>(Public Lectures)</u> |
| 1839-40 | R.D. Chantrell | Italian Architecture |
| 1841-2 | R.D. Chantrell | Gothic Architecture |
| 1843-4 | Nevins Compton | Architecture as a Fine Art |
| 1850-1 | Dr. R. Hay | Geometrical Principles of Beauty |
| | C.L. Dresser | Comparison of Gothic and Grecian Architecture |

Note

A significant feature of some of the earlier lecture titles in this series was their concern with the causes and conditions of cultural achievement. Such titles as the causes of excellence in Greek sculpture, and the necessity of national pride in English painting, expressed a concern discussed above in chapter 1. The birth of culture had also been the theme of the 'original address' to the Philosophical Society in 1817 (quoted above). William Roscoe of Liverpool was the topic of one lecture, as an exemplar of commercial activity combined with intellectual pursuits. The decline in numbers of lectures on the visual arts in the 1840s may have been due to other bodies and events such as the Art Union, the Polytechnic Exhibitions and public lectures at the School of Design by then serving the local interest in art.

"After the spirit of London & Manchester, Leeds is stupid - nous verrons ... Dull - Leeds - like their workers, not the energy of Manchester - Bah", but in November 1839, he felt that "a feeling of the Truth is spreading in the Country ... at Leeds a strong feeling is aroused", and a month later, "the taste and love of Art is certainly improved since my visit. The hospitality and kindness of the Inhabitants have been great, and on the whole the Visit has been prosperous."¹ The Society's museum contained miniature casts of the Elgin and Phygalian marbles donated in 1822 by Edward Baines amongst others, and a bust of James Watt and casts of antique gems given by William West.²

At the Mechanics' Institution, classes in maths, chemistry and 'architectural and mechanical drawing', together with lectures in physical science, constituted the principal activities in the early years. The drawing classes will be considered separately below, but as regards the cultivation of the visual arts, above and beyond their practical application, an important development was the staging of three poly-technic exhibitions at the M.I., in 1839, 1843 and 1845. A modification of the exclusively practical emphasis in its work could be found as early as 1827, when a report had summarized the Institution's objects: "... to cultivate the minds of the ignorant, to improve the skill of the artisan, and, through these means, to purify the morals and raise the character of society."³

In 1839 a joint committee of the Mechanics' Institution and the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society launched the 'Leeds Public Exhibition of Works of Art, Science, Natural History and Manufacturing

1 Diary of B.R. Haydon ed. W.B. Pope, 1960-63, v.4 pp. 457-8, 597-9, 601

2 Leeds Phil. and Lit. Soc. Annual Rep. for 1822-3
Baines and West both served on the School of Design committee (see below, section IV)

3 Leeds M.I. Annual Rep., 1827, p. 9

Skill' in the Music Hall, which raised about £1800 towards the purchase of premises for the Mechanics' Institution. This exhibition was modelled on successful precedents at Manchester and Birmingham. Doubtless the contents of the exhibition were dictated partly by the range of items available for free loan from various local collectors, and partly by a desire to attract a large audience, but the promoters of the exhibition proclaimed that contemplation of the beautiful would tend "to elevate the moral and social feelings".¹

The didactic purpose of such an exhibition was underlined by an unofficial descriptive pamphlet published by William West and Edward Baines, which was to be considered as "a spontaneous attempt to add to the interest of the Exhibition [and] to aid its funds." A hint of rivalry with other provincial towns crept in:

"Nothing of the sort, it is believed, has been attempted at any similar temporary Exhibition in other towns, and it is hoped that ... the descriptions will be a help to those who are desirous of deriving profit as well as intelligent pleasure from the objects displayed".²

The fine arts were strongly represented in the exhibition; the catalogue listed as many paintings as machines, models and objects of natural history all together,³ and in the descriptive pamphlet, Baines boasted that

"This department of the Exhibition forms decidedly the largest and best collection of Paintings ever exhibited in this town, and it is believed that a superior collection has rarely been seen out of the metropolis."⁴

His succeeding comments included much art-historical information of the

1 Leeds Mercury 11 May 1839

2 W. West and E. Baines jun. eds., A description of some of the principal paintings, apparatus ... at the Leeds Public Exhibition, Leeds, 1839 p. 1

3 Catalogue of the exhibition of paintings, curiosities... at the Music-Hall, Leeds ... , [Leeds], [1839]

4 W. West and E. Baines jun. eds., op.cit., 1839 p. 5

biographical kind then common.

The variety of works on display was characteristic of such polytechnic exhibitions. For the second exhibition in 1843, R.D. Chantrell, a local architect who had recently completed the new Parish Church, lent fragments of ancient glass from the old church, and a seventh century sword and Francis Billam, a co-founder of the Northern Society, lent a Charles I silver casket, an illuminated manuscript and autograph letters of Sir Walter Scott and John Wesley amongst others. Items of art-manufacture were also on display: the will of Louis XIV woven on a Jacquard loom, lent by Tootal of Manchester, and specimens of iron manufacture lent by the Colebrook Dale Co. (sic) and Mrs. A. Lupton.¹ The truly polytechnic nature of the exhibition is suggested by a description of the saloon:

"This room contains a Fountain throwing up Jets many feet high, a Circular Canal, with Ships and Steamers afloat; on the Table are numerous Models at work... which are worked by condensed air; an extensive Railway, with a large Tunnel, upon which Locomotives are frequently running. The Invisible Girl; a Weighing and Measuring Machine, where any Person may have his Weight and Measure properly certified, - for which a charge of One Penny is made; a Likeness Cutter; Lithographic and Printing Presses in Operation; a Fancy Turner, who sells the productions of his ingenuity at very moderate prices. In this Room is shown the process of Silvering Looking Glass; and Lectures on Chemistry, Galvanism, Pneumatics, Hydrostatics etc., are delivered, illustrated by many interesting Experiments. It contains likewise a Confectioner's Stall for the Accommodation of Visitors."²

This gallimaufry anticipated the character of the Great Exhibition particularly in its emphasis on the machine, but also in the elements of art and design (e.g. fancy turners and likeness cutters) which enter

1 Catalogue of the second public exhibition, Leeds, 1843 passim

2 Ibid. p. 37

the world of engineering. The characteristic blend of serious and trivial was also found in many popular journals, but such was nevertheless the context of an important endeavour in aesthetic education.

Improving taste amongst the population at large was a declared aim of these exhibitions, just as it was an explicit purpose of the Schools of Design. To this end many paintings were also exhibited: works by contemporary British artists such as Wright of Derby, Benjamin West, Turner, Wilkie and Watts, and the local painters Rhodes and Cope, as well as old masters representing the conventional good taste of the time, mostly seventeenth century Dutch, Flemish and Italian. Lenders of paintings included local landed gentry such as Fawkes, and members of the cultivated urban elite such as J.G. Marshall, William Hey and Thomas Eagland (the last, a supporter of the Leeds School of Design).

The advent of the third Leeds exhibition was noticed in the Art Union in the following terms:

"We direct attention to an advertisement which announces an approaching Exhibition in this wealthy town - the commercial capital of Yorkshire. The object in view is an excellent one; and the artists who contribute works will, while increasing their fame and advancing their own interests, have the satisfaction to know that they are aiding a good cause and extending a knowledge and love of Art".¹

The last of these aims was reflected in the selection of exhibits which, despite an extensive range similar to that of the previous exhibition, and including photography for the first time, showed a greater proportional concentration on the fine arts, both painting and sculpture.² The third exhibition attracted less attention, although at its close the Art Union commented:

"We rejoice to learn that there is a great probability

1 Art Union v.7 (1845) p. 102

2 Catalogue of the Leeds third Polytechnic Exhibition, Leeds, 1845

of an annual exhibition being established in this wealthy manufacturing town. It is, indeed, a reproach to Leeds to have been so far, and so long, behind Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham".¹

The reproach, though hardly justified, is interesting for its comparison of the provincial industrial towns in this respect; the probability of an annual exhibition was not realised.

The occasion of a third exhibition in Leeds was taken to launch a local Art Union, on a pattern already established in Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. A prospectus, printed in the exhibition catalogue listed a number of eminent patrons from Prince Albert, the Archbishop of York and Viscount Morpeth, to local personalities such as H.C. Meynell Ingram, William Beckett M.P., J.G. Marshall and Edward Baines, and their expressed intentions corresponded with the aims of the exhibitions already discussed:

"the Committee earnestly solicit the support of the Friends of the Fine Arts, and of the Working Population in Leeds, in favour of a project which has the advantage of these important classes for its sole object ..."²

Amongst the works of art accessible to the people of Leeds must be included the architecture of a number of public buildings. St. John's Church, Briggate was richly decorated with elaborate wood-carving of the seventeenth century, and of the eighteenth-century Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane, a guidebook commented:

"its beautiful lofty spire is a prominent object in every prospect of the town. The urns upon the parapets of this church are highly ornamental, and the altar-piece is very elegant".³

In the old parish church were many elegant monuments, including a life-size figure of Victory by Flaxman.

1 Art Union v. 7 (1845) p. 317

2 Catalogue of the Leeds third Polytechnic Exhibition, Leeds, 1845 p. 4

3 The stranger's guide through Leeds (H. Cullingworth), Leeds, 1831 p. 37

In the decades immediately preceding the establishment of the Schools of Design, the number of impressive buildings increased markedly. R.D. Chantrell was perhaps the most prolific architect locally, designing the Public Baths and the Philosophical Hall in 1819 and an elaborate South Market in 1824; his Christ Church, Meadow Lane (1823-5) was one of the best of the 'Commissioners' churches', and the new parish church, commissioned by Dean Hook in 1839, he built in a romantic late Gothic style. In 1841 he replaced the damaged spire of Holy Trinity with a tower in the style of Wren. The Greek style was well represented by John Clark's Exchange Buildings in Boar Lane (1826), and a gatehouse and mortuary chapel for Woodhouse Cemetery in 1835. Another fine Greek building of this period was East Parade chapel built by Moffat and Hurst in 1841.¹

An indication of the integral part which public architecture might play in the cultural life of the mid-Victorian town is provided by Leeds Town Hall, begun in 1853. Symbolic of the cultural achievements afforded by trade, a comparison was sought between Leeds and other historic mercantile communities in describing the new building:

"a stirring and thriving seat of English industry embellished by an edifice not inferior to those stately piles which still attest the ancient opulence of the great commercial cities of Italy and Flanders ... We were also desirous to provide a place where large assemblies might meet in comfort to exercise their constitutional right of discussing public questions, listen to instruction on literary or philosophical subjects, or to enjoy innocent amusements".²

The tympanum sculpture by John Thomas illustrated the theme: "Leeds in its commercial and industrial character fostering and encouraging the

1 D. Linstrum, Historic architecture of Leeds, Newcastle on Tyne, 1969, pp. 33, 35-38, 41, 48

2 Leeds Mercury 11 Sept. 1858

arts and sciences".

Tuition in drawing was available in Leeds prior to the School of Design, principally at the Mechanics' Institution where the title of the class, 'Architectural and Mechanical Drawing', reflected the utilitarian purpose expressed in the first annual report:

"Notwithstanding the general superiority of our manufactures to those of other nations, we are still inferior in many departments. The French surpass us in the important art of dyeing, in gilding, in the manufacture of porcelain, in the patterns of figured goods, and in various articles of taste and fancy. One reason of this may be, the zeal and attention with which the arts of design are cultivated in France; and here, therefore, the drawing school of our Institution may prove of great utility".¹

In the master's report on the class, however, the implication was that mechanical drawing might lead to 'higher' forms of art: "In some instances, genius has had an impulse given, and has developed its powers in the execution of landscape drawing, and also of the human figure".² The reply to a questionnaire in 1836 reported drawing to be the most popular of the classes offered.³

The Leeds Church of England Commercial School included in its curriculum linear drawing "to such an extent as will enable the Pupil to sketch out any Design that he may have occasion to delineate in the Occupations of after Life", Lockwood's Academy in Brunswick Terrace offered instruction in mechanical and landscape drawing on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and Allerton Mount Academy offered drawing as an extra subject at one guinea per annum.⁴

1 Leeds M.I Annual Rep., 1926, pp. 4-5

2 Ibid. p. 9

3 F. Hill, op.cit., 1836, v.2 p. 195

4 Leeds Mercury 18 Sept. 1841
Leeds Directory 1845 pp. 36, 65

III

The distinctive feature of the Leeds School of Design as compared with those at Manchester and Birmingham, was its establishment within a Mechanics' Institution. This fact partly accounts for the delay in setting up such a school at Leeds, as an application from the Mechanics' Institution in 1843 was rejected by the Council of the Government Schools of Design who thought it more advisable to establish a school at Leeds under an independent body rather than to place it in the care of an association formed for more extensive purposes and having no immediate relation to the "Art of Design with reference to manufactures".¹ This was general government policy, perhaps based upon a residual suspicion of the political implications of Mechanics' Institutions, as well as on organisational grounds. Repeated applications from Huddersfield M.I. were rejected in similar terms.²

Following a letter from Edward Baines to the Council of the Schools of Design at Somerset House in April 1846, and some informal communication from Thomas Wyse M.P., who indicated to Baines the favourable disposition of the Council, formal negotiations were begun and the applicants from Leeds prevailed.³ Their petition was, significantly, signed by the mayor of Leeds, the president of the M.I., and the "principal commercial and professional inhabitants" of the town. Manufacturers, as such, were not mentioned, as they were in a petition of the same year from the Staffordshire Potteries. Advantages of establishing the school within the Mechanics' Institution were listed in the petition as: an immediate source of pupils, rent-free accommodation, security of the Institution's

1. [2nd] Rep. of Council of Government S.D. 1843 [454] xxix p. 16

2. 3rd Rep. of Council of Government S.D. 1844 [566] xxi p. 27
Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 p. 199

3. Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.2 p. 372 (7 Apr. 1846)

funds, and a "public-spirited and active committee" who had already proved their success in conducting the affairs of the M.I. for kindred objects. The request for a grant of £80 per annum together with the requisite stock of examples and school furniture (set by the Council at £100), was fairly modest by comparison with the Schools of Design total estimate of £5,381 for the year 1846-7.¹

A sub-committee for the management of the School of Design was set up at Leeds on 29 August 1846, but it was resolved in November that the nominal Committee for the School would be the whole committee of the Mechanics' Institution.² This committee included relatively few manufacturers.

Besides the lack of support from industrialists, other aspects of the early history of Leeds School of Design suggest that the school's role was as much cultural as utilitarian. Announcing their first (unsuccessful) approach to Somerset House in the Annual Report published in January 1843, the M.I. Committee explained their action as follows:

"To every person, the cultivation of a correct taste must be of great importance, for even intellectual activity, without refinement of taste, as has been well observed, may frequently prove an evil instead of a good. But, to a manufacturing community, the advantages of it are most palpable ..."³

Two incidents recorded early in the minutes of the sub-committee suggest the broad purpose which they had in mind. On 23 November 1846, the secretary reported that the Rules of the School of Design had been passed by the General Committee with the exception of Rule 4 which

1 Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 pp. 2, 22, 52, 68
5th Rep. of Council of Government S.D. 1846 [730] xxiv p. 32

2 Leeds S.D. Mins 29 Aug. 1846, 16 Nov. 1846

3 Leeds M.I. and Literary Soc. Annual Rep., 1843, p. 8

would have prohibited the attendance of students studying fine art "solely for the purpose of the profession of an artist".¹ This rule had been proposed by the Council at Somerset House to prevent the Schools of Design becoming training grounds for fine artists. At the same time the committee found themselves in dispute with Somerset House over the arrangement by which a reduced fee was payable by those students already in membership of the Mechanics' Institution. The justification of this discount was that it would induce pupils in the School of Design to subscribe to the M.I., "a thing much to be desired inasmuch as they will enjoy all the intellectual and moral advantages which that Institution is calculated to produce".² In a letter to the Council of the Schools of Design the arguments put were that the Leeds School was peculiar in its relationship to the Mechanics' Institution, that to have one combined institution rather than two separate institutions, "will be very greatly for the advantage of those [industrial] classes by enlarging, confirming and perpetuating the means of instruction and improvement provided for them", and that the library of the M.I. provided already for the students of the School of Design many valuable works on art, which the committee was intending to increase in number.³

The appointment of a master was made by Somerset House, not by the local committee, but C.L. Nursey whom they appointed had a background in fine rather than applied art, having been a pupil of Sir David Wilkie; within two months of his appointment the committee granted him £4 to

1 Leeds S.D. Mins. 23 Nov. 1846

2 Leeds S.D. Mins. 27 Nov. 1846
Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 p. 115 (17 Nov. 1846)

3 Leeds S.D. Mins., letter dated 9 Dec. 1846, but note the master's opinion in 1847, that the library was deficient in books on art (Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 p. 199)

travel to London in order to complete an oil painting for the school, a purpose not manifestly related to industrial art.¹ By contrast, George Thurnell, the drawing master already established at the Mechanics' Institution, had served an apprenticeship with a London jeweller before his rise as an autodidact and a student at the London Mechanics' Institute.²

Recruitment to the new School was immediately successful; in the first fortnight 103 students were admitted, of whom 53 had not been members of the M.I. Within two months there were problems of overcrowding, with 115 pupils in all and on some evenings an attendance as high as 60.³ An occupational analysis of students, submitted to the committee by Nursey in February 1848, suggests that a substantial proportion of the students were not serving any major local industry:

| <u>Male students</u> | | total : 89 | |
|--|---|--|----|
| Architects | 2 | Mechanic | 1 |
| Bootmaker | 1 | Painters and Decorators | 14 |
| Block cutter | 1 | Plasterer | 1 |
| Carvers and gilders | 4 | Seal engraver | 1 |
| Clerks | 8 | Saddler | 1 |
| China and glass cutters, (youth intended for) | 1 | School boys | 13 |
| Designers for paper | 2 | Upholsterers | 5 |
| Engravers | 8 | Wire worker | 1 |
| Joiner | 1 | Wood carvers | 2 |
| Land Surveyor | | Whitesmith | 1 |
| (youth intended for) | 1 | Engineers | 2 |
| Masons, ornamental | 8 | Studying as designers for local manufacture | 10 |

Amongst these the largest group include schoolboys, youths studying as designers for manufacture (which may well have been a category comprising those undetermined in their intentions), painters and decorators (an important craft, but not a manufacturing industry) and clerks. Of twenty

1 Leeds S.D. Mins. 24 Oct. 1846, 19 Dec. 1846
Leeds M.I. Annual Rep., 1847 p. 12

2 Leeds S.D. Mins. 23 Nov. 1846
F. Hill, National education, 1836 v.2 p. 214 ff.

3 Leeds S.D. Mins. 13 Feb. 1847

female students, six were preparing to be governesses and fourteen were "undetermined";¹ Nursey had already been embarrassed by the size of the Female Class, the intended nature of which had evidently been misunderstood, according to the Inspector, since it had become popularly known as the 'Ladies' Class'.² Only a small proportion of the students, therefore, were training for a specific industrial application of the art of design.

This feature of the Leeds school was revealed again in a discouraging report made by Ambrose Poynter in October 1849, when the number of pupils had dropped to 70, and the school was in debt by £212.³ Poynter's report to the Board of Trade stated that although Leeds was the centre, it was not the seat of manufacture of fancy woollen goods. The actual manufacturing localities were too distant and widely spread for the Leeds school to be of direct benefit to designers and artizans of the district. Thus there was no instance since its establishment, of a designer of fancy woollens entering the school, and only a small proportion of the students since the opening of the school had had any connection with that manufacture.⁴ In his second report of May 1850, Poynter noted that attendance had not improved and blamed this on the management committee, appointed by the Mechanics' Institution for other purposes and hence unskilled in running a school of art. However, he noted the master's skill as a teacher of drawing, proven by the flourishing female class.⁵

In these reports the picture was clearly given of a school whose

1 Leeds S.D. Mins. 10 Feb. 1848

2 Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 p. 200

3 Leeds B.D. Mins. 28 Aug. 1849

4 Mr. Poynter's two reports on the Leeds school. First rep. 8 Oct. 1849, in Reports and documents 1850 (730) xlii

5 Ibid., Second rep., May 1850

activity and management bore little relation to industrial activity. Poynter's justification of the Leeds school was its relationship as a parent body to the other Mechanics' Institutions of the West Riding, in the newly formed Yorkshire Union: "The Leeds Committee continue fully alive to the importance of this function - to introduce a sound system of teaching into drawing classes at Mechanics' Institutes in the Union".¹ Thus Bradford M.I. employed one of the best pupils from Leeds to attend three times per week, and at Woodlesford M.I. a drawing class of masons sent one of their number to the school at Leeds, to enable him to teach their class which met two nights per week. From the autumn of 1848 there had been repeated requests to Somerset House for assistance with drawing classes from M.I.s within the Yorkshire Union.²

This role of the Leeds School of Design was stressed in successive reports accompanying the Estimates for 1849-50 and 1850-1. These reports to parliament were noticeably more sanguine than those of Poynter to the Board of Trade. Explaining a proposed grant of £200 (an increase of £50), it was said that the Leeds school had been a decided success, that its importance lay especially in its ability to help extend a sound artistic education throughout the Mechanics' Institutions of Yorkshire, and that the grant to Leeds had been disproportionately small as the school was subsidised by the M.I.³

Troubles besetting the Leeds School, especially its failure to establish a relationship with local manufacture which would ensure its support, did not go unnoticed in the national journals. The second annual conversazione, held on 31 January 1849, was "numerously and very respectably attended", and Ambrose Poynter, inspector of provincial

1 Ibid. In fact this function had been proposed to the Leeds Committee by Poynter in 1847. (Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.3 pp. 199-200)

2 Committee of Management of S.D., MS Minute Book. P.R.O. Ed. 9/2/ p. 91

3 P.P. 1851 (211-IV) xxxii

schools, came from London to address it. But the Journal of Design and Manufactures, which frequently castigated the management at Somerset House for their inattention to industrial needs, took Poynter to task on his speech:

"Mr Poynter took occasion to say that 'the real objects of those schools, perhaps, by some persons were not quite understood. The object was to educate designers, not to make designs'. In other words, Leeds is not to expect to obtain designs from its own School, the only test that it is teaching properly. This is an old fallacy, the apology for incompetency ... Such idle babble is one cause of a debt of £120 in this School, and of similar debts in other towns ..."¹

The Art Journal reported the committee's implied view that blame for lack of support lay with the commercial depression which had prevailed during almost the entire period of the school's operations, and their hope that the returning prosperity of the country would induce fellow townsmen to supply the modest sum needed to maintain the school.² Later that year, the Art Journal itself went on to suggest that manufacturing support for the school would be achieved only when "fellow-townsmen are fully impressed with the conviction that their interests are allied with its prosperity".³ Nowhere in this discussion was to be found any recognition amongst the propagandists of design schools that the benefits of such schools may not have been applicable to the principal manufactures of Leeds. In 1853, the Society of Arts and Manufactures sponsored a committee of inquiry into industrial instruction, and whereas Manchester and Birmingham featured largely, no substantial evidence was put forward from Leeds.⁴

1 J.D.M. v.1 (1849) p. 29

2 Art Journal v.11 (1849) p. 94

3 Ibid. p. 204

4 Soc. of Arts and Manufactures, Committee ... to inquire into the subject of industrial instruction, 1853

In considering the lack of industrial support for the Leeds School of Design, a useful comparison can be made with the response of local manufacturers to the project of the Great Exhibition. Undoubtedly this project bore much greater commercial promise, and Leeds industrialists were indeed more responsive to this than they had been to the School of Design; on the other hand, the 'cultivated elite' were still in the forefront of activity concerning the exhibition as they were with regard to the school. When Francis Fuller originally visited Leeds to sound out support for the idea, a cholera epidemic hampered his plans, but Wentworth Dilke and Captain Ibbetson visited shortly afterwards, and a public meeting was called. The Leeds Mercury noted that this meeting

"brought not the great names of local manufacturing and commerce, but a selection of the habitual attenders at public meetings - the solicitors and town councillors".¹

A local committee was formed for promoting the exhibition and a considerable correlation may be found between its membership and that of the sub-committee for the School of Design. A list of 33 Leeds subscribers and promoters, including some manufacturing names, was attached to this report, but it was a shorter list than that drawn up at Birmingham.²

The following year, however, the Journal of Design and Manufactures was congratulating the Leeds manufacturers for their activity, and especially the initiative of the executive committee in establishing a sub-committee for facilitating visits of the working classes to the Great Exhibition (reflecting again the sense of educational purpose). The Leeds subscription list raised £2,100 towards the Exhibition fund, a sum exceeded only by Manchester and Glasgow amongst provincial cities.³

1 Leeds Mercury 3 Nov. 1849 ,

2 Great Exhibition : Further report [on provincial support] 14 Nov. 1849,
in Scott Russell Papers, R.S.A.

3 J.D.M. v.3 (1950) pp. 29, 192

Despite official statements and pleas regarding its usefulness to local industry, then, many aspects of its early history suggest that the Leeds School of Design must be understood in terms of the general extension of 'adult education' and not as a separate institution primarily concerned with immediate commercial advantage. At an annual soiree of the Leeds M.I. and Literary Society in 1852, the platform was decidedly 'cultural' in tone with A.H. Layard and George Cruikshank as guests alongside Lord John Russell, Lord Beaumont and Henry Cole. Nevertheless Cole held firm to the principle of combining cultural and commercial progress in his resolution that evening:

"The continued extension of the School of Design and of Class instruction among the People; since to these in great measure, do we look for the culture of taste, and the progress of such mechanical contrivances as are necessary to maintain the national position of 'the Workshop of the World!'"¹

¹ Leeds M.I. and Literary Soc. Annual Soiree Wed. 8 Dec. 1852
 [Programme], Bodleian Lib., John Johnson Coll., Education Box 39

IV

As with the Schools of Design at Manchester and Birmingham, it is proposed that an investigation of the chief promoters at Leeds will give additional insight into the motives for such schools, and once again, the general conclusion to be drawn is that the School was founded more out of a desire to extend educational benefit than for commercial advantage. Owing to the particular circumstances of the School's foundation at Leeds, the committee nominally responsible to Somerset House was the full committee of the Mechanics' Institution, but a smaller sub-committee was appointed to manage the School, and it is the membership of this sub-committee in the first five years of its existence, together with a few additional individuals recorded in the minutes as having attended meetings during the same period 1846-51, who are discussed below. The occupations and political opinions of these twenty-two promoters have been identified from directories and poll books, and details of their other activities from a variety of sources.

Unlike Manchester and Birmingham, the Leeds School of Design enjoyed no aristocratic promoter, and only one committee member, Richard Hamilton Church, was described in the directory as a gentleman, with no identifiable profession.¹ He was however, very active in the promotion of local cultural activity, and at a public meeting for the early closing of shops, Church based his argument on the value to youth of attending Mechanics' and similar institutions.² Speaking of the School of Design at a soirée chaired by Charles Dickens in 1847, he discoursed on the value of elegance and beauty of form as a mark of civilization, and

1 Leeds Directory 1847

2 Leeds Mercury 11 July 1849

argued that such institutions were "no humble instruments in securing the elevated sovereignty of man".¹ A vice-president and occasional lecturer at the Leeds Mechanics' Institution, he took a particular interest in exhibitions, as a curator for the third Polytechnic Exhibition in 1845 and a subscriber to the Great Exhibition of 1851; the local committee for the Great Exhibition appointed him to tour West Yorkshire, lecturing in its favour.²

A sure sign of his place amongst the intellectual elite of the town was his membership of the exclusive Conversation Club, amongst whose other founding members, Edward Baines, J.D. Heaton, Thomas Wilson and Charles Wicksteed had all taken some part in promoting the local School of Design.³ Church seems to have had some radical ideas, since with James Hole he advocated female membership of the Mechanics' Institution as a route to improving the social status of women, but in 1847 he voted for the whig and conservative parliamentary candidates.⁴

Rev. Charles Wicksteed, Unitarian minister of Mill Hill chapel, was a member of the Committee from 1846. Taking a great interest in the educational institutions of the town, he was a committee member of the Leeds Literary Institution from 1837, and later a vice-president of the Mechanics' Institution. In 1847 Wicksteed energetically supported state grants for schools, despite having to cross the 'voluntaryist' members of his congregation on this issue. He was a member of the Leeds Conversation Club, and president of the Philosophical Hall from 1851-4. In 1844 he had established the Domestic Mission at Holbeck and the Leeds Friendly Loan Society. An entry from his diary for 27 January 1852

1 Leeds Mercury 4 Dec. 1847

2 Further report ... 14 November 1849 ... by M. Digby Wyatt Scott
Russell Papers, R.S.A.
Leeds M.I. Annual Rep. 1847 pp. 10-11

3 Correspondence of J.D. Heaton MS, Letter to Fanny Heaton [5] June 1849

4 Poll Book Leeds 1847

illustrates the pressure of his educational and philanthropic activities:

"Yesterday morning spent as usual, ... in visiting my flock, with the addition, however, of four committee-meetings in succession - Chapel, Day-School, Philosophical Hall, Leeds Public Improvement and Charitable Inquiry."¹

Wicksteed taught himself modern languages and edited a theological journal, but his particular interest in art was stimulated by his wife, Jane Lupton (cousin of Francis Lupton, also a committee member of the School of Design), whom he married in 1837.

"Her artistic enthusiasms aided the general expansion and growth of his powers, till the impatience and almost disgust with which he had once regarded the monotony of Catholic art, was converted into a deep and restful appreciation of its deathless message to humanity."²

So he was in close touch with that movement represented by Pugin and the Anglo-Catholic revival, which spanned the field of literature, art, architecture and progressive theology. Hence the Middle Gothic style of his new chapel; two stained glass windows given by the Lupton family were made by Warrington of London, a firm which frequently served the Ecclesiologists. When in London to visit the Great Exhibition, Wicksteed also travelled to Hampton Court to see the Raphael cartoons, and to the Houses of Parliament which were still undergoing decoration as part of the great scheme of revival of English art. His comment was that

"Parliamentary proceedings ... the talk of literary men, a good library, and the sight of good pictures and sculpture, would fill up the measure of all chief secular delights with me."³

1 P.H. Wicksteed ed., Memorials of the Rev. Charles Wicksteed, 1886 p. 131

2 Ibid. p. 52

3 Ibid. p. 129

Two medical men took an interest in the Leeds School, the young physician John Deakin Heaton, and the surgeon R.G. Horton. Heaton provides a good example of the Leeds cultural elite, but his contribution to public life in Leeds was more important in the years after 1850, particularly as a member of the Leeds Improvement Society, and in the part he played in establishing the Yorkshire College, which was regarded as his "magnum opus".¹ He had been educated at Leeds Grammar School and had studied medicine in London. In Leeds he was an active member of the congregation at St. George's, an Anglican church with evangelical leanings. He had an interesting view of his own social status within the town; his father, a bookseller who was indeed sufficiently prosperous to retire from business and buy a house in Park Square in 1827, he referred to as "a gentleman", and in his journals he described how the Art and Industrial Exhibition in the new infirmary was planned at a meeting of the "gentry" of Leeds in 1866.² Heaton relied financially as much on the rents from his inherited property as on his professional income.

Heaton was well travelled, having visited Italy and worked in Paris in his earlier years. His diaries reveal a close interest in art, including a connection with the young John Everett Millais, precocious member of the 'avant-garde' Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: in 1848 a party of amateur writers contributed to a monthly manuscript periodical edited by the housekeeper of Mr (later Sir Peter) Fairbairn; illustrations were furnished by Edward La Trobe Bateman and W.R. Corson, two architects recently established in Leeds, and pupils of Owen Jones (who was a friend of Henry Cole and already collaborating in Cole's campaign for aesthetic

1 P. Gosden, The early years of the Yorkshire College, in Thoresby Soc. Publications v.54 pt. 3 (1976) p. 224

2 B. and D. Payne eds., Journals of John Deakin Heaton in Thoresby Soc. Publications v.53 pt. 2 (1971) p. 99

reform of manufactures); another illustrator was Millais, brought to Leeds by Bateman and Corson to design some decorations for John Atkinson's home in Little Woodhouse.¹ In 1849 he visited the art exhibitions in London with his sister Ellen who made many contacts with leading painters and critics, and through her he gained privileged access to Stafford House to see the Duke of Sutherland's collection. In his frequent trips to London, he regularly viewed the exhibitions; he visited Paris briefly in 1853 and viewed the public buildings and galleries; and in the 1860s he called on many leading figures connected with South Kensington, such as Digby Wyatt, Owen Jones and the artist C.W. Cope, to arrange art lectures for Leeds. He was one of the leading citizens who called a Town's Meeting to demand a tower for the new Town Hall, and consciously spoke for "the cultured classes".²

In the early years of the School of Design, he was playing an active part in the intellectual life of the town, lecturing at the Philosophical and Literary Society and at the Mechanics' Institution on botany. In 1849 he was elected a Fellow of University College, London, and in the same year was one of the founding members of the Conversation Club in Leeds.³

Richard George Horton M.R.C.S. (1805/6-1875) was also educated at Leeds Grammar School, and practised his profession from a number of different addresses in Leeds; his move from Marshall Street, Holbeck, to Park Place by 1845 and later Park Square, suggests that he prospered, and his political opinions appear to have become more conservative in the 1840's. In 1836 he made a public attack on his fellow surgeon,

1 T.W. Reid ed. Memoir of John Deakin Heaton, 1883 pp. 104-5

2 Journals of J.D. Heaton MS., passim

3 Correspondence of J.D. Heaton MS., Letter to Fanny Heaton [5] June 1849

the Poor Law Medical Officer and sanitary reformer Robert Baker, accusing him of pluralism, but did not play as prominent a part in local affairs generally, as other supporters of the School of Design.¹

The one lawyer was John Atkinson who joined the management committee of the School of Design in 1851. His father had been a solicitor and owned land at Little Woodhouse, and Atkinson inherited the practice and the land. Prominent in local affairs, he was a conservative and had supported Sadler and the Leeds movement for factory reform. In 1845 he was a Councillor for Mill Hill ward, Steward of the Manor of Leeds, and a vice-president of the Church of England Visiting Society. Well connected by marriage with other leading families of the town, his wife was the daughter of William Hey and their son married into the Heaton family; he worshipped at St. George's, Little Woodhouse, where J.D. Heaton was also a member of the congregation.²

Atkinson was also an art patron, and it was for the new church of St. George that he commissioned an altarpiece from the Leeds-born painter Charles West Cope, which was subsequently exhibited at the Royal Academy; Cope referred to the Atkinsons as his "dear friends".³ He also had the young Millais execute decorations in his house in 1848, and was a local subscriber to the Great Exhibition.⁴

1 Sykes Coll. v.1 pt. 10 p. 286 L.C.L. Local History Coll.
Leeds Grammar School admission books ed. E. Wilson, Leeds, 1906, no. 933
 F. Beckwith, Robert Baker, in Univ. of Leeds R. v.7 (1960) p. 41

2 Leeds Directory 1845
 Poll Books Leeds 1832, '34, '37, '47
 B.P. Scattergood, op.cit., 1931, p. 47
 J.T. Ward, Leeds and the factory reform movement, in Thoresby Soc. Publications v.46 pt. 2 (1960)

3 C.H. Cope, Reminiscences of Charles West Cope R.A., 1891, pp. 119-20, 126, 141

4 T.W. Reid, op.cit., 1883, p. 104 (The house, on which the architect W.R. Corson was employed, later became the Judge's Lodgings, and the paintings by Millais are now in Leeds City Art Gallery).

The most energetic of all promoters of the Leeds School of Design was undoubtedly the journalist and politician Edward Baines junior. Son of the founder editor of the liberal whig Leeds Mercury, and liberal M.P. for Leeds from 1834, Baines grew up in an environment of public life and political reform. At the age of nine, he heard Joseph Lancaster speak at the Leeds Music Hall, and in 1824 in London he was deeply impressed by one of the first lectures given by Birkbeck and Brougham at the Mechanics' Institute.¹ His espousal of evangelical religion and religious nonconformity, his continuous engagement in Sunday School teaching, his personal interest in the Mechanics' Institution and his work for the local Chamber of Commerce illustrate a typically liberal conflation of social and educational advance with commercial and manufacturing interest. Such views were expressed in his letter To the unemployed workmen of Yorkshire and Lancashire on the present distress and on machinery written from Rouen and published in the Leeds Mercury in 1826 at the time of commercial distress and loom-breaking in England, and commercial benefit was the principal argument which he proposed in a leading article of the same newspaper, for the foundation of a Mechanics' Institution in Leeds.²

Although there was clearly an aspiration to some form of 'social control' in his wish to disseminate general culture, and despite Kitson Clark's accusation of philistinism on the grounds of his later 'voluntaryism', Baines showed evidence of a personal interest in artistic and literary culture. In 1825-6 he made a nine-month tour of Belgium, Switzerland and Italy. At one point he was "alone with Wilkie in the Sistine Chapel, admiring the frescoes of Michael Angelo", and conversed

1 Leeds and Yorkshire Biography, (newscuttings) v.1 p. 108 L.C.L. Local History Coll.

2 E. Baines jun., The life of Edward Baines, 1851, p. 138
Leeds Mercury 31 July 1824

with the Danish sculptor Thorvaldsen who had a considerable influence on many young English artists visiting Rome at that time.¹ Only a few years later, he was in conflict with Gott and Marshall over the contents of the Mechanics' Institution Library, Baines advocating the inclusion of general literature (as he had earlier defended a more comprehensive curriculum for the Philosophical and Literary Society), whereas Gott and Marshall preferred a restriction to strictly scientific works.

On his travels abroad Baines also inspected the Jacquard loom in operation at Milan and Lyons, and visited the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers in Paris. His involvement with the Leeds School was deep; as President of the Mechanics' Institution, he presided over the original School of Design sub-committee, and despite all his other preoccupations in 1846 (in particular the dispute over state elementary education in which he was engaged) he personally undertook the correspondence with Somerset House over the establishment of the school.²

Three further patrons of the School of Design who should be considered along with the professional group were C.L. Dresser, William West and Thomas Wilson. Christopher Leefe Dresser was a land surveyor and agent with offices in Park Row; it was his interest in design, perhaps, which led him later to practise as an architect. For the first Public Exhibition in 1839, he contributed descriptions of telescopes, orreries and surveying instruments to the explanatory pamphlet edited by Baines and West, and was listed as a curator of the second Polytechnic Exhibition in 1843. In the general election of 1852 he supported the

1 Leeds and Yorkshire Biography loc.cit.
 (Sir David Wilkie R.A. (1785-1841) was successor to Lawrence as Painter to the King. Thorvaldsen's students included John Gibson and Alfred Stevens, sculptor of the Wellington monument in St. Paul's, who taught at Sheffield S.D.)

2 Leeds S.D. Mins. 23 Nov. 1846
Council of Government S.D. Mins. v.2 p. 372, v.3 pp. 2-3, 22

liberals.¹

William West had a well documented career. Born in 1793 and educated at Ackworth, he became an analytical chemist and scientific lecturer and kept a druggist's shop in Briggate. An early supporter of Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, he read many papers on scientific and mechanical topics, including one on the chemistry of colours used in wall paintings at Pompeii, and was President of the Society at his death in 1851. A regular supporter of the Leeds Mechanics' Institution, secretary of the local anti-slavery society, and town councillor for Hunslet Ward from 1844 to 1850, he also had a national reputation as a founding supporter of the British Association, winner of the Telford silver medal for engineering in 1842, and was elected F.R.S. in 1846. West was evidently keen to inspire the people of Leeds : he donated a bust of James Watt and casts of antique gems to the Philosophical and Literary Society museum and was a curator for the second Polytechnic Exhibition in 1843. Politically a radical, he joined Baines as a 'voluntaryist' in the education issue of 1846, and maintained firm religious convictions (as suggested by a public recital in 1848 of verses on science as illustrative of the glory of God's creation).²

Thomas Wilson M.A. (Cantab.), a surgeon's son from a South Yorkshire family, was auditor and comptroller of the Aire and Calder Navigation Co. He was eulogized by Edward Baines as "one never-failing, accomplished and most estimable friend; and a friend of all education and natural and economical science".³ His post as chairman of the School of

1 W. West and E. Baines eds., A description ... of the Leeds Public Exhibition, Leeds, 1839
Leeds Directory 1851
Poll Book, Leeds 1852

2 R.V. Taylor ed. Biographia Leodiensis, 1865, pp. 451-3
Leeds and Yorkshire Biography (newscuttings) v.1 L.C.L. Local History Coll.
Poll Books Leeds 1832, 1837, 1847

3 Leeds and Yorkshire Biography (newscuttings) v.1 p. 108 L.C.L. Local History Coll.

Design committee from 1848 was only one of many similar posts, as a committee member of the 'Phil. and Lit.', a promoter of the Mechanics' Institution and the subsequent Yorkshire Union of M.I.s, a founder of the West Riding Geological and Polytechnic Society, and an early member of the British Association. Wilson became an honorary secretary of the local committee for the Great Exhibition, a council member of the Chamber of Commerce and treasurer of the Leeds Improvement Society, so his activities covered a wide range of local affairs. His particular interest in education, however, was underlined by his later career, assisting in the establishment of the Yorkshire College of Science, the university extension scheme, and the organisation of local examinations by Oxford and Cambridge and by the Royal Society of Arts.¹

In terms of his role as a leading member of the Leeds intellectual elite, his most interesting contribution was as the initiator of the Conversation Club in 1849 at his home, Crimble House, in Camp Road. Others amongst the School of Design supporters who attended the inaugural meeting there were Church (a near neighbour in Camp Road), Wicksteed, Heaton and Baines. One topic proposed for discussion by Wilson, reflecting his educational interests, was: "What would be the most feasible plan for forming in Leeds an Establishment ... at which a first rate education might be given to both sexes?"²

As in Manchester, so in Leeds, the role of merchant and manufacturer was often combined within one firm, and representatives of two substantial firms of this kind, who both joined the School of Design committee in 1851, were Joseph Bateson and Francis Lupton.

1 obituary in Leeds Mercury 1 February 1876.
Further report ... 14 Nov. 1849 in Scott Russell Papers R.S.A.

2 Leeds Conversation Club Mins. v.1 passim

Joseph Bateson owned a house and warehouse in Park Square in 1832; a liberal Anglican, he voted for Marshall and Macaulay in that year, and participated in the vestry elections of 1833-4. Active in local affairs as an alderman and magistrate in the 1840's, there is no evidence of any deep interest in education, although he was a lender to the exhibition in 1839. In 1850, however, as mayor he presided over the selection of local commissioners for the Great Exhibition, and was subsequently appointed to a canvassing committee for the Leeds School of Design, then in May 1851 joined the school's committee of management. In that year he also supported the foundation of Leeds Chamber of Commerce. By 1847 he had moved house to Hillary Place, Woodhouse Lane, and the firm was trading as Bateson & Co., cloth merchants in Park Cross St. and Albion St.. Bateson voted for the whig and radical candidates in 1837 and 1841, but withdrew his support from the radicals in 1847.¹

Francis Lupton (1813-84), like Joseph Bateson, was primarily a merchant, although he had worked through the various processes in the finishing mill when, at a time of poor trade, his father had withdrawn him, aged 14, from Leeds Grammar School. He devoted himself to the business of the family firm, only in later life taking any great part in activities outside it, and his eldest brother, Darnton Lupton, was much better known as a liberal, a very active Unitarian philanthropist, magistrate and later mayor of Leeds. Their cousin Jane married Rev. Charles Wicksteed. The firm dealt in high quality goods, and Francis may have become aware quite early of the commercial importance of good design; he would undoubtedly have seen a letter from the firm's agent in Rio de Janeiro, which

1 obituary in Yorkshire Post 24 Oct. 1867

J.D.M. v.3 (1850) p. 29

Leeds Chamber of Commerce Mins. v.1

D. Fraser, Leeds Churchwardens 1820-50, in Thoresby Soc. Publications

v.53 pt. 1 (1970) p. 1

complained of drabness and poor finish in ladies' cloths : "A dashing appearance is the very thing for the sale of goods in this market".¹

However, Francis' interest in the School of Design may be seen in a cultural as well as a commercial context. His father William, when travelling abroad, had shipped home geological specimens for the 'Lit. and Phil.'. Francis' education at the grammar school has already been mentioned, and family contacts with other leading liberal and Unitarian families in the town must have been stimulating; in particular, he travelled to France and Italy as a young man with his cousin John Darnton Luccock whose own father, a traveller and author, was prominent in the Literary and Philosophical Society and Mechanics' Institution. Fond of travel, Francis returned to Italy on a honeymoon with his wife and sister in 1847. When building new premises in Wellington Street in 1850, the firm employed William and George Corson as architects for the high quality of their work; in 1851 all the staff of Lupton & Co. were taken to London for the Great Exhibition. Francis, like Joseph Bateson, became involved with the School of Design through the canvassing committee in 1850; later in life he demonstrated an interest in promoting education as chairman of the finance committee for the Yorkshire College.² The Lupton family were later to become great benefactors of the City Art Gallery at Leeds.

A third member of the committee whose family were extensively engaged in both manufacture and selling of woollen cloth was one Joseph Buckton. The firm, Joseph Buckton and Son, owned land and workshops in Meadow Lane, Holbeck, and later had a warehouse at Cookridge Street, and

1 C.A. Lupton, The Lupton family in Leeds, 1967, p. 64

2 C.A. Lupton, op.cit., 1967 passim
Recollections and traditions of William Lupton & Co. Leeds, 1927, passim
 Leeds and Yorkshire Biography (newscuttings) v.3 p. 199 L.C.L. Local
 History Coll.

most of the family, like the Luptons, took up residence at Potternewton in the later 1840s. Joseph Buckton junior (most likely to be the one that joined the School of Design Committee in 1846) lived at Blenheim Terrace in 1849, but little specific detail can be found about his other activities. The whole family seem to have been liberal in their politics but like many former liberals in Leeds, cast their votes for Beckett (conservative) and Marshall (whig) in 1847. There seems also to have been a long-standing family connection with Unitarianism, since the name Buckton appeared amongst the trustees of Mill Hill chapel in 1810, and Catherine Mary Buckton, wife of Joseph, was a Unitarian, a Liberal and first female member of the Leeds School Board.¹

Edwin Heycock was a fourth committee member whom the directories described as both merchant and manufacturer. In 1843 he was a merchant, resident in York Place, but from 1845 he was recorded as a manufacturer, having some connection with the firm of Gibson, Ord & Co. He joined the School of Design committee in 1851, but no evidence is found of participation in other educational or cultural projects. However, it is clear from the Poll Books that his prosperity increased markedly in the years 1832 to 1847, since he moved from a house and mill in Beeston via a warehouse in Boar Lane, to a house in Park Square, retaining shops and land in Beeston. In 1837 he supported the whig and radical candidates, but in the 1840s his votes were cast for conservatives and whigs.²

Some commercial interest in the dissemination of design skills may well have been felt by manufacturing engineers, of whom three were members of the committee. The most notable of these, however, was James

1 Poll Books, Leeds 1832, 1834, 1837, 1847
W.L. Schroeder, Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds, [Leeds] [1925] p. 54

2 Poll Books, Leeds 1832, 1837, 1841, 1847
Leeds Directories, 1843, 1845, 1847

Kitson, joint secretary with R.G. Horton to the Mechanics' Institution and also to the School of Design sub-committee, whose general interest in education and culture is well documented. A classic instance of self-improvement through involvement with the Mechanics' Institution which he joined in 1825, being noted as a diligent student in the drawing and mathematical classes, he also took an interest in music, singing in the choir of the Leeds Parish Church. An Anglican, and a publican by trade, he might have been expected to vote for the tories, but in fact he became involved in liberal politics, and in the Friendly Societies.¹

In 1837 Kitson made the move from publican to engineer, and at the same time changed from Anglicanism to Unitarianism, joining the Mill Hill congregation where so many intellectuals were to be found. In the late 'thirties also, he took over from Thomas Plint as secretary to the Mechanics' Institution of which he later became vice-president and president in 1849-52. He also served as Honorary Secretary to the local committee for the Great Exhibition. Later, in 1856, Kitson was elected to membership of the exclusive Conversation Club (a sure sign of having 'arrived' amongst the cultural elite of Leeds), and some of the topics proposed by him reflected an interest in art: "the use of the interior of the new Town Hall for pictures and statuary", "a comparison of art of the day with that of twenty years before", and "should greater prominence be given to fine or industrial arts in a Provincial Exhibition?". In 1857 he was chairman of the orchestral committee for the first musical festival in the new Victoria Hall.²

1 R.J. Morris, The rise of James Kitson, in Thoresby Soc. Publications v.53 pt. 3 (1972) p. 179
F. Hill, op.cit., 1836 v.2 pp. 214-229

2 E.K. Clark, Kitsons of Leeds, [1938] passim
B.P. Scattergood, op.cit., 1931 pp. 47-51

In 1852 when Kitson lived at 18 Blenheim Terrace, his next door neighbour was fellow manufacturing engineer and member of the School of Design committee, Charles Gascoigne Maclea. Maclea was one of the leading engineers of Leeds, with a European reputation, and was a partner in the firm of Maclea and March, iron and brass founders and machine makers at the Union Foundry in Dewsbury Road. Although this may have given him a specific industrial interest in design training, he had in fact retired from business in 1843 and did not join the School of Design committee until 1851, having assisted the canvassing committee in the previous year.¹ In the meantime he had turned his energies to local politics and philanthropic activity as an alderman from 1842, mayor in 1846, and a vice president of the Leeds Tradesmen's Benevolent Institution. From 1847 he was chairman of the Leeds and Yorkshire Insurance Co., and in 1851 he acted as a juror for tools and manufacturing machines at the Great Exhibition. Maclea was a liberal in politics, and an Anglican, presenting a font to St Mark's Church, Woodhouse.²

Evidence for Maclea's cultural interests comes from the sale catalogue of his possessions, following his death in 1864. Amongst his extensive library were works such as Rogers' Italy (illustrated by Turner), Hogarth's Works and Nicholson's Architecture, as well as prints after John Martin and B.R. Haydon, and engravings published by the Art Union of London.³

The third manufacturing engineer who supported the School of Design was John Bingley, who joined the committee in 1847. Bingley and Co.

1 Leeds S.D. Mins. 22 November 1850, 30 May 1851

2 F. Boase, Modern English Biography
R.V. Taylor, Biographia Leodiensis, 1865 pp. 516-8

3 Messrs Hardwick and Best, Catalogue of the ... furniture ... and valuable library of modern literature ... at 17 Blenheim Terrace September 1865 (copy in L.C.L. Local History Coll.)

were described as ironfounders and engineers, manufacturers of locomotives and other steam engines, and railway rolling stock etc.. The family were leading radicals in Leeds; in 1851 John shared a residence at 68 Camp Road (near Church and Wilson, two other committee members) with W.S. Bingley, editor of the Leeds Times, and another Bingley, Godfrey Martin, was a reporter for that radical newspaper.¹

The last manufacturer, recorded in the minutes as having attended a meeting to plan the school in August 1846 and a committee member of the Mechanics' Institution, was John Nichols Dickinson. He appears to have been the junior partner in Jonathan Dickinson and Son, brush manufacturers in Hunslet since at least 1834, which was probably a fairly prosperous enterprise : the firm owned several properties in the 1840s, in 1845 John was resident at Headingley Hill and his father at Seacroft Lodge, and by 1847 he had moved to a house in Park Square. Like Bingley, Dickinson voted for the radicals, and seems to have followed his father in this. His role in the Mechanics' Institution went back until at least 1843, when he was a curator of the second Polytechnic Exhibition.²

Thomas Eagland, a member of the School of Design committee from its very beginning was rising socially during the period under discussion. The Leeds Grammar School register recorded him as a truss maker in 1842, but the 1845 Directory described him as a surgical instrument maker; in 1832 he appears to have lived over his business premises in Bond Street, but by 1845 he had a separate residence in Springfield Place (a party there in 1848 is recorded in the MS diary of the son of a leading Briggate

1 Poll Books Leeds 1832, 1841, 1847, 1852
Leeds Directory 1851

2 Poll Books Leeds 1832, 1834, 1837, 1841, 1847, 1852
Leeds Directory 1845
Leeds M.I., Catalogue of the second public exhibition, 1843

bookseller).¹ His craft is perhaps significant in its connection with the medical profession, which Kitson Clark has indicated as central to the Leeds elite; the 1851 Directory carried an advertising supplement of eleven pages for England's medical equipment with testimonials from leading surgeons at the Infirmary, especially T.P. Teale, and he refused to exhibit in the Great Exhibition instruments sold to local surgeons, through distrust of the new Patent Law.² England was a staunch tory, unlike the majority of his colleagues on the committee, and a councillor and a Poor Law Guardian. His sons attended Leeds Grammar School and one entered the medical profession. His interest in art is attested by a collection which he made of works by the local painter John Rhodes, purchasing in 1846 the last picture on which Rhodes worked; he officiated at the second and third exhibitions in 1843 and 1845, and lent paintings to them.³

One George Turner, a member of the management committee in 1846 is difficult to identify precisely, but was most likely to have been a linen draper of 42 Richmond Street, later of Dickinson's Yard. Although registered as an elector, he did not vote in 1847, and may have subsequently left Leeds as he disappeared from the directories after 1849 and from the School of Design minutes.⁴ Similarly elusive is George Howitt, a member of the committee in 1846 and 1847, who was resident at Blundell Terrace between 1842 and 1847, variously described as a Warehouse Man and a manager. He had a son at Leeds Grammar School and voted for the radical candidate in 1847, but beyond this no record of his activities

1 R.B. Harrison, Diary for 1848, MS., 5 Jan., L.C.L. Local History Coll. E. Wilson ed. Leeds Grammar School admission books, 1906 nos. 939, 965 Leeds Directory 1845

2 G.K. Clark, The Leeds elite, in Univ. of Leeds R. v.17 no. 2 (1975) p. 238
R.J. Morris, Leeds and the Crystal Palace, in Victorian Studies v.13 (1970) p. 293
Leeds Directory 1851

3 W.H. Thorp, John N. Rhodes, 1904, pp. 34, 57.

4 Poll Book Leeds 1847
Leeds Directories 1845, 1847, 1849

could be found. A family of the same name, however, occupied a warehouse at the south end of the Bridge, and one William Howitt was friendly with James Hole and a chairman of the Leeds Redemption Society, a cooperative organization, in 1847.¹

James Hole himself was recorded in the minutes as having been present at the meeting of 29 August 1846 to establish a sub-committee for the School of Design, although he was not a committee member of the Mechanics' Institution in that year. Hole is well documented elsewhere, and his informative account of the state of education in Leeds is sufficient proof of his interests.² Before 1851 his energies were mainly channelled into radical cooperative movements, but from 1856-65, Hole took a special interest in what had by then become the School of Art at Leeds, and was successively chairman and vice-chairman of the Committee of Management, in addition to his work for the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, and lectures on social science, housing, and the organization of labour. Despite his interest in Fourierist ideas, Hole voted for Marshall (liberal whig) rather than for the radical Sturge in the election of 1847, and in 1848 he joined the congregation at Mill Hill Unitarian chapel, a distinct sign of 'respectability'.

Another fellow Redemptionist of Hole was the cashier William Eggleston, a pioneer of the Leeds Cooperative Society of which he was president in 1851, and auditor and joint honorary secretary of the Mechanics' Institution. Eggleston joined the School of Design sub-committee on 4 January 1847, and in 1849 he was recorded as living in

1 Poll Books Leeds 1832, 1847
Leeds Directory 1845

J.F.C. Harrison, Social reform in Victorian Leeds, 1954 footnote 29

2 J.F.C. Harrison, op.cit., 1954 passim
J. Hole, "Light more light!", 1860

Alfred Place (having become a borough and municipal elector according to the 1848-9 revision). In the General Election of 1852 he supported the liberals.¹

Eggleston's residence in Alfred Place raises an interesting conjecture about the significance of particular neighbourhoods. As might have been expected, a number of the promoters of the School of Design lived in certain neighbourhoods, since urban and social change was creating new areas to which the social elite tended to move, such as Potternewton, an area of substantial detached villas, where the Lupton and Buckton families lived, or, nearer to the centre of town, locations such as Blenheim Terrace in which three committee members were near neighbours.

Alfred Place seems to have had a markedly liberal and intellectual character. James Hole and Richard Church, who both advocated admission of women to the Mechanics' Institution, lived there, as did Eggleston, and G.M. Bingley, the radical journalist. Alfred Place had been built by a pioneer Building Society which had, however, terminated in 1842;² it was in Little London, off Camp Road where Thomas Wilson lived at no. 46. By 1851 Church had moved to no. 50 Camp Road and John Bingley (with his brother W.S. Bingley, editor of the radical Leeds Times) was resident at no. 68.

Apart from residential proximity as one aspect of the interaction between the members of this group, the most significant conclusion regarding the majority is that they had little commercial interest as individuals, in the schools of design, but were notable for their cultural and educational or philanthropic activity. A specific interest

1 Leeds Directory 1849
Poll Book Leeds 1852

2 W.G. Rimmer, Alfred Place Terminating Building Society, 1825-43, in Thoresby Soc. Publications v.46 pt. 3 (1961) p. 303

in art can be identified in some of the most prominent members of the group, as can the experience of travel abroad, or contact with London. A predominance of liberals and the presence of a few radicals on the committee reflected the general political situation in Leeds where liberal whiggism had become a dominant force through the agency of such families as the Marshalls and the Baines, and radicalism became respectable under such leaders as Samuel Smiles (editor of the Leeds Times) and James Hole. Another conclusion to be drawn is that although some promoters of the School of Design came from families already commercially and industrially prosperous (although not from the most successful established families such as the Becketts and Marshalls who gave financial rather than organisational support), several others were upwardly mobile during this period in social or occupational terms.

A note on the Leeds cultural elite

Identification of a 'cultural elite' to which the promoters of the Leeds School of Design belonged is facilitated by the work of three social historians in particular: Kitson Clark, R.J. Morris and C.M. Elliott.

Morris suggested a threefold division of the Leeds middle class which reflected the different levels of participation in cultural activities.¹ The major share of financial and political power was derived from the independence, security and leisure conferred by ownership of large trading and manufacturing enterprises, and Morris included attendant professional aides, such as solicitors, physicians and upper clergy within this group. Distinguished from them, chiefly by vulnerability to bad trade (and therefore less security and leisure)

1 R.J. Morris, The social, political and institutional structure of the Leeds business and manufacturing community 1830-1851, D.Phil. thesis, Oxford 1971

were the tradesmen, small master manufacturers in craft industries, and the shopkeepers of Briggate, together with their attendant professionals such as solicitors, surgeons and schoolmasters. Within the secular voluntary organizations, it was the former group such as the Becketts, Gotts and Marshalls who tended to patronize and occupy honorary positions, and the latter who provided most of the active committee. In the case of the School of Design, this analysis is generally applicable, although representatives of some very large firms, such as Bateson, Lupton and Maclea, were active on the committee. Morris's third group, the lower middle class, such as clerks, schoolteachers, artisans and other skilled manual workers, formed the clientele of such organizations.

Kitson Clark noted that in Victorian Leeds, the social elite could be defined by their patronage of cultural activity.¹ Identifying a number of medical men amongst this group, he referred to the importance of study away from Leeds; experience of travel amongst the upper middle classes was instrumental in awakening cultural interests. Travel, even within England, which was becoming increasingly easy with the growth of railways, encouraged comparisons with London and with other provincial towns in respect of cultural activity. Emulation of metropolitan institutions and a spirit of rivalry with other industrial centres, which have been noted above, would have been stimulated in this way. A report for 1838-9 of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society commented that

"Leeds has for long both in the number of its inhabitants and its commercial importance ranked as the metropolis of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and the equal of the most important towns in England. Surely then the support of its scientific and literary institutions ought at least to be commensurate with those of other places ...",

1 G. Kitson Clark, *The Leeds elite*, in Univ. of Leeds R. v.17 no. 2 (1974-5) p. 232 ff.

and suggested that there was a need to refute the view that Leeds contained no object of interest save dirty and smoky factories.¹

Ten years later, Edward Baines made the point that although London was "the glorious focus of intellect" and the seat of government, nevertheless the provinces had recently originated and sustained important aspects of national policy such as parliamentary reform, abolition of the slave trade and repeal of the Corn Laws.²

John Deakin Heaton was cited by Kitson Clark as a classic example of the Leeds elite, a physician who had travelled widely both at home and abroad. His biographer, Wemyss Reid, who was a champion of the provincial contribution to English life in the nineteenth century, described Heaton as one of a class of men whose influence on social life had gone unacknowledged; when Heaton returned to Leeds after his travels,

"it was to identify himself with the social life of the place, not with a view to his own aggrandisement or enrichment ... but with a view to the elevation and improvement of the whole tone of life, the creation and extension of public institutions calculated either to relieve the physical wants of the poor and suffering, or to stimulate the intellectual faculties of those more happily situated ... Such a record ... cannot be without its value to all who are interested in the agencies by which the social life of England is being developed".³

A further result of travel by the upper middle classes was acquaintances and contacts which were formed with individuals in London and in other industrial towns, which were sometimes useful in procuring a grant for schools of design. It has been seen that Baines had informal contact with Thomas Wyse M.P. before the grant was conferred on Leeds. In the 1860s, Heaton called on various artists connected with South

1 Leeds Phil. and Lit. Soc. Rep. for 1838-9, p. 10

2 E. Baines jun., The life of Edward Baines, 1851 p. 7

3 T.W. Reid ed., Memoir of John Deakin Heaton, 1883 pp. 83-5

Kensington to persuade them to lecture in Leeds, and in this a useful contact was the artist C.W. Cope R.A.. Cope was born in Leeds and patronised by the Gott family (whose connections were discussed earlier in this chapter), who introduced him to William Ewart M.P. in 1841; living in London, Cope became very friendly with Richard Redgrave and Henry Cole who both held important positions at South Kensington.¹

The intellectual elite were also to some extent identifiable by their religious affiliations, as the work of C.M. Elliott on Leeds has indicated.² A number of the promoters of the School of Design worshipped at the Mill Hill Unitarian chapel in Leeds, and Elliott has suggested that Unitarianism attracted intellectuals for its rationalistic denial of certain Christian dogmas, requiring a level of education not generally shared by groups which relied more on enthusiasm and experimental acquaintance with truth.³ The Mill Hill chapel in particular had a tradition of high intellectual standing amongst its ministers, which stemmed from Priestley's ministry there in the eighteenth century. Wicksteed, the minister, took an interest in the School of Design at Leeds, and both Kitson and Hole joined the congregation almost as a mark of their rising social status, as did Samuel Smiles. Leading families such as the Luptons and Luccocks were members of Mill Hill, and the opening, free of debt, in 1848 of the new middle-Gothic chapel costing £7,300, was a tribute to both the taste and the wealth of the congregation; the Christian Reformer described the congregation at the opening as "the most intelligent and cultivated ever seen ... in any

1 C.H. Cope, Reminiscences of C.W. Cope R.A., 1891 pp. 143-5

2 C.M. Elliott, The social and economic history of the principal Protestant denominations in Leeds 1760-1844, D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1962

3 Ibid. pp. 428-9

Unitarian chapel".¹

Another prominent group of dissenters were the Congregationalists at East Parade chapel; though generally less wealthy and more humble in social status than the Unitarians, they built an impressive new chapel in 1841, but retained the Greek style by contrast with the Unitarians who copied Anglicanism in their use of Gothic. Amongst promoters of the School of Design, Edward Baines was a member of this congregation.

Anglican members of the School of Design committee included Heaton and Bateson who attended St. George's, and Maclea whose connection was with St. Mark's, Woodhouse. Anglicanism had traditionally enjoyed a high social status, and several Anglican clergy in Leeds were connected by marriage with the 'commercial aristocracy' and with local landed gentry. An intellectual stamp was given to the Church of England in Leeds by the influential leadership of Rev. W.F. Hook, who advocated social and educational reform and built 14 schools in his first ten years at Leeds. His direct contribution to adult education was less, and he had clashed with the Mechanics' Institutes on religious grounds, but his comments on his congregation were revealing:

"In the manufacturing districts we have a commercial aristocracy full of enterprise and intellect; whose minds from constant exercise are vigorous and acute; men of literature and science ...".²

Hook, publicly advocated a broad programme of education:

"... I am very desirous to cultivate among the people not merely a scientific but a literary turn of mind, to induce them to relish poetry and works of imagination: for the civilised mind is best prepared to give the heart to religion,"³

1 W.L. Schroeder, op.cit., p. 61

2 W.F. Hook, Our need of a learned and united clergy, 1857, p. 12

3 W.R.W. Stephens, The life and letters of Walter Farquhar Hook, 1878 v.1 p. 182

and considered that this was best achieved by the process of 'association':

"We are social in everything we do; associated to carry on business, associated for the purposes of religion; and indeed without association it is impossible that civilisation can be advanced."¹

The beneficial effects of association in raising the general level of popular intelligence was a theme considered at this time by Robert Vaughan D.D. in his book, The age of great cities. He contrasted city and country, demonstrating that the "unavoidable intercourse of townsmen must always involve a system of education" and referring in particular to news rooms, religious meetings and local associations as the means by which men stimulated their fellows to achieve a greater general intelligence.² An example of formal association amongst the Leeds elite of this time was the Conversation Club, founded in 1849, of which the minutes survive.³ This was an exclusive society, limited to twelve members, meeting in their own homes in rotation, for discussion of various topics; Thomas Wilson was the founder, and other promoters of the School of Design were amongst its members, as was W.E. Forster of Bradford. A relevant point in the present context is that art was not infrequently a topic for discussion; on 29 October 1849 the question: "Does the perception of Beauty generally, arise from association or from the physical character of the object?" was discussed, and on 21 December 1849, "Has Painting or Sculpture the most influence on Society?"⁴ Topics on art proposed by James Kitson have been mentioned above. In the Conversation Club, the Leeds Improvement Society was first planned, and

1 Ibid. v.1 p. 469

2 R. Vaughan, The age of great cities, 1843 pp. 152-5
see also W.C. Taylor, Moral economy of large towns, in Bentley's Miscellany v.7 (1840)

3 Leeds Conversation Club Mins. MS. L.C.L. Local History Coll.

4 Ibid. v.1 p. 9
Correspondence of J.D. Heaton MS., Letter to Fanny Heaton [5] June 1849

issues such as the campaign led by Heaton for a tower for Leeds Town Hall were germinated.

Another example of such an association amongst members of the Leeds elite was the organisation of musical soirées by a group originally limited to thirty-two at its foundation in 1848. Although the earliest records are missing, names such as Heaton, Kitson and Lupton connected with the School of Design, were found amongst its later members, and membership of this society in the latter half of the nineteenth century reveals a significant number of the medical profession, and considerable inter-marriage amongst families of the Leeds elite.¹

A close correspondence between the activities of such a cultural elite and the formation of the local School of Design, supports an interpretation of those schools which has been elaborated throughout the preceding chapters.

¹ B.P. Scattergood, A short history of the Leeds Musical Soirées, Leeds, 1931 p. 5

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