The Place of Imagery in the Transmission of Culture: The Banners of the Durham Coalfield

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Abstract

The Durham Miners Gala is an annual event at which the associated branches of the Durham Miners Association carry their banners to a rally held in the city of Durham. The imagery displayed on those banners is representative of the class struggle to create a trade union that would represent and protect individuals and communities against the vagaries of the unbridled capitalism of the nineteenth century. In this way a tradition (and culture) was created not by social or political elites, but developed from ground level to counteract attempts to subsume them into a dominant ideology that saw them as little more than serfs.

> First comes the great Banner, carried by picked men, who must know how to carry themselves or their strength will avail them little. Positioning the poles in the brass cup resting on the chest, and held by leather straps on the shoulders, it is a great art. The Colliery Banner is almost a person. A Colliery without a Banner is almost unthinkable.[1]

Introduction

The Durham Miners Gala, or the "Big Meeting" as it is more affectionately known in the area, is an annual event held on the second Saturday in July, once described as "the greatest unorganised ceremony in the world."[2] The first Gala, held in Wharton Park near the city of Durham in 1871, was organized by the Durham Miners Association (DMA), an organization formed in 1869 to represent the miners of Durham County. While the Gala has altered in form and place over the years, the core elements of the event remain unchanged. Each lodge banner[3] is paraded, following a brass band, through the community it represents, with the lodge officials marching at the front, and mining families following behind. Carried by men chosen by the lodge, the banner is then transported to Durham City where, along with Banners from other communities, it follows a traditional route through the city to the Racecourse, the site of the Gala since 1872. While many other coalfields held similar events, the Durham Miners Gala was the first and has historically been the largest. It is important to understand that the Durham Miners Association is part of the federation of regional organizations that make up the National Union of Mineworkers, which represents miners across the UK coalfield. Although affiliated to the national organization, each Area Association retained high levels of autonomy, and maintained their own governance, structures, and traditions.

It has been argued that this annual event has been, and remains, nothing less than the visible representation of a complex process of socialization into occupational and class politics, and symbolic of the long-established and deep-rooted symbiotic relationship that exists between DMA and the mining communities of Durham that it was created to represent.[4] Each Gala day the city of Durham is invaded by thousands of miners and their families, proudly carrying their Lodge Banners. These banners, more than any other aspect of the Gala, are central to the social process outlined above. Each banner proudly carries the name of the colliery/community it represents, and through the imagery they carry (front and back) can be seen the historical needs and future aspirations of past and present generations of the communities they represent.

Along with all other such events around the national coalfield, the Durham Miners Gala was representative of a living industry. As that industry contracted, particularly following the 1984–1985 Miners Strike, many coalfields have gone out of existence taking with them their own annual celebratory events. When the last colliery in the Durham Coalfield closed in 1993, and with the DMA almost bankrupt following the 1984–1985 Strike, grave concerns were held over the future of the Gala. However, despite those concerns, the Gala has continued to be an annual event, and in more recent years has grown, both in terms of the number of banners carried into the Gala, and in the number of people attending. According to the DMA, the Gala of 2007 was the largest since 1960, with over eighty thousand people in attendance.

The question for many has been why does this particular Gala continue to exist when others have followed their coalfields into redundancy, and why does it continue to grow in popularity in an area where the last mine closed in 1993? Stephenson and Wray[5] have argued that this resurgence has been due to a complex process of emotional regeneration within the now post-industrial mining communities themselves, with the Gala as the focal point in that regeneration. They also look at the influence of concepts such as "culture" and "heritage" to explain this resurgence of interest in the Gala.

Through an examination of both the Gala and particularly the Lodge Banners carried at the Gala, this paper will take this argument forward by demonstrating that the symbolic meanings of both "ceremony" and "imagery" have been crucial in the establishment of a culture and a collectivism that has allowed these communities to overcome social and economic hardship and what can only be described as a process of industrial vandalism imposed by the State. Talking about the reasons for the continued existence of the Gala, one annual participant stated that . . .

We want a proper history written, a people's history, the truth. We have to keep it alive ourselves because no one else will tell the kids what our lives were about and how those lives have changed. The Banners and the Gala are just representations of what our lives, our heritage if you like, is all about. We are talking about educating the kids, so that they will know what it was like to live in a mining community.[6]

The crowd at a recent Durham Gala. Courtesy of David Wray.

The motto on one of the banners puts this view more succinctly: WE BUILD OUR FUTURE ON THE PAST.

The Gala, the Communities, and the DMA

The early years of the Gala have been considered a symbolic replacement for the annual "hiring meetings" that were at the heart of the "Durham system," a system based on bonded labor. As the Gala developed however, it became an annual event through which "miners and their families came together to publicly celebrate themselves, and began a process of consolidation for the social solidarity of the mining communities."[7]

The Gala can be described as part union rally, part political rally, part community get together, and part family picnic. If the Banners are iconic manifestations of the industrial identity of a community, then the Gala acts as an opportunity to celebrate that identity. While the communities of the Durham

Coalfield have experienced and endured many changes, the Gala survives—
remaining firmly located within the occupational and class politics of the
DMA and the communities that organization continues to represent. In short,
the Gala is a ceremony celebrating both occupation and community.

From an historical perspective, those communities have variously been
described as an amalgam of family, community, Chapel and Cooperative
Store[8] with the DMA at the heart of all, with their inhabitants described by
Anderson as archetypal communitarians.[9] While criticizing Anderson for the
limitations of that term, Gilbert[10] does concede that miners and the commu-
nities within which they worked and lived can be described as a "self-consciously
working class local society, radical in political outlook, and disciplined and deter-
mined in strikes or when threatened."[11] Strangleman et al.[12] offer a more
contemporary view that sees mining communities as being narrow and paro-
chial, almost representing a different race.

While they describe this as a negative view of mining communities, this
"otherness" of miners is well recognized in the literature.[13] This "otherness" was
maintained, if not reinforced, in mining communities as the harsh realities of indus-
trial life in the coalfields throughout the twentieth century offered inhabitants few
alternative sources of employment. Located where the coal measures required,
these communities were little more than work camps, as the industrial policy of suc-
cessive governments sought to retain a narrow industrial base in the region, in
order to maintain a willing and available workforce for the industry.[14]

Given these circumstances, Strangleman[15] argues that the cultural net-
works and practices, firmly embedded in these mining communities, prepared
succeeding generations for employment in the mine. Roberts[16] describes this
process as one of anticipatory socialization through which an understanding
of the conditions and requirements of work are gained, before the first entry
to the workplace. Stephenson & Wray[17] argue that the Gala is the visible rep-
resentation of that complex process of socialization into occupational identity
and class politics and symbolic of the long-established and deep-rooted relation-
ship between community and trade union.

Participation in the "ceremony" of the Gala continues to represent a restate-
ment of allegiance to the community, to the trade union, and to a unique culture.
Simply put, "This is how it is and this is who we are." Beynon and Austrin[18] point
out that the Gala was an event to which children were taken as a form of social
baptism, almost a rite of passage into the broader mining family. In this way
the meaning and importance of the Gala as the visible representation of all
that mining communities stood for was passed down from generation to gener-
ation. Simultaneously, it acted as a political defense by providing both the commu-
nities and the trade union with the opportunity to be in the political limelight, to
focus on the importance of the industry for the country as a whole, and to raise the
profile of collectivism and working-class politics. Overall, it was, and remains,

A stage upon which aspirations were voiced, where comradeship was consummated,
solidarity expressed and the sheer joy of survival demonstrated in music and dance.[19]

The DMA was at its most influential in the communities prior to the creation of the welfare state in 1948. At a time when all communities in the UK were bereft of the many services now taken for granted, the DMA became, for the mining communities of Co. Durham, a mini-welfare state in, and of, itself. Each lodge provided a "Colliery Welfare and Institute" funded through membership subscription and providing recreational, welfare, and educational resources to all. Homes for retired miners were provided in each mining village, financed in part through lodge subscription, and convalescent homes were provided, financed collectively by all lodges through the DMA. While Ackers[20] argues that the DMA was rarely the majority force in the coalfields, in times of need, either industrial or social, it was always there, providing a constant and pervasive presence. While each individual mining community was as "varied and individually complex as human beings,"[21] the social and industrial relations within those communities, developed over succeeding generations, created traditions, attitudes, and beliefs that together created an institution that both serviced, and in many ways controlled, those communities.[22]

For those with welfare needs, or those experiencing personal or social problems, the lodge was often the only source of assistance. This social development within the Durham Coalfield is best described by Ackers,[23] who states:

> The Durham miners advanced from a dispirited and degraded set of individuals to a proud and respectable body of individuals by building a massive and stable union association welded to a wider community network.

The Lodge Banners

The Lodge Banners of the collieries of the Durham Coalfield can only be classified as functional works of art. They are, at one and the same time, both representational and iconic. Usually measuring between eight feet high and six feet wide, the banners are made of silk, and carry images painted on both sides. The size and weight of the banners are such that it requires a team of six men to carry each one. The two main carriers each carry a pole that holds the crosspiece from which the banner itself is suspended; each pole is located in a brass cup connected to a leather shoulder harness, worn by these carriers. The remaining four men hold "strings" (braided ropes made of wool) that are connected to the top of the carrying poles. These are carried fore and aft, at each side of the banner, to provide extra stability, particularly in strong winds.

The front of the Banner carries the main image, usually in a circular frame with a motto embossed below, and above this image the Lodge will be identified in sophisticated scroll work across the top. Banners can be dated by this identifying scrollwork: Banners with only the lodge identified will have been made prior to 1869, when the DMA was formed; those dating between 1869 and 1947 will also include a scroll identifying the lodge affiliation to the Durham Miners Association. Banners made after the creation of the National Union of Mineworkers in 1945 will include a scroll identifying affiliation to the National Union of Mineworkers, and in the place of "Durham Miners Association" will

be "Durham Area: NUM." On the reverse side, these identification scrolls are usually repeated, and in the center is another image, accompanied by another motto. Following mine closures, lodge banners were often sold on to Lodges looking to replace an existing banner. The purchased banner would then be sent off to have the original imagery and identifications painted over to meet the needs of the new owners. In this way, many lodge banners have been lost. The older banners that have survived are now very fragile and are no longer carried at the Gala, having been replaced by replica Banners.

The choice of imagery and motto was the result of long and often bitter debate within each lodge, as these images were the public representation of both the lodge and the community that served the mine. Great care was taken over the choice, and if no agreement could be reached, the final images were chosen by ballot.[24] The importance of the banner to the community it represented can be seen in the following statement:

> When we took the Banner out to go to the Gala (in 1986) it was a very windy day, and as soon as we unfurled it, it was torn to shreds. We knew then that the Banner would never go back into Durham, and we realized that the village had died.[25]

The colliery represented by that Banner had closed the previous year, and we can see through this statement that the banner was the last remaining link to the complex matrix of influences that had defined the lives of those living in this community.

Writing about iconography, Eric Hobsbawm[26] talks of visual imagery being used to create invented traditions. For Hobsbawm, this imagery had three functions: to establish social cohesion; to establish or legitimize institutions, status, and relations of authority; and finally to inculcate beliefs, values systems, and conventions of behavior. This represents a hierarchically constructed and top-down attempt to either create tradition where none had previously existed, or to adapt old traditions to meet new needs. All of the traditions that are associated with the Gala were achieved through working-class struggle to create, in the form of a trade union, an organization and movement that would represent and protect individuals and communities against the vagaries of the unbridled capitalism of the nineteenth century. In this way a tradition (and culture) was not invented by social or political elites, but rather developed from ground level to counteract attempts to subsume them into a dominant ideology that saw them as little more than serfs. The imagery used in this instance can be seen on the lodge banners, images that are representative of those early struggles, and the struggles that came afterward. To paraphrase Hobsbawm, just as a national flag identifies and represents a nation, the lodge banners of the Durham Coalfield identify and represent a way of life and culture that was created through a matrix of occupation, community, and trade union, and all tempered by struggle.

Iconic Representations of Culture, Class, and Community

The absence of images of miners' leaders on the earliest banners is indicative of the rank-and-file nature of the movement that would create the Durham Miners

Association. Images of the trade union leadership, or national Labour Party politicians, did not begin to appear on banners with any regularity until the twentieth century. One of the very few exceptions to this was the Edmondsley Lodge banner,[27] a huge banner, much bigger than the norm, which carries the image of Thomas Ramsey (1812–1863) who, for his activities in trying to organize a trade union in the coalfield, had been blacklisted. Ramsey was also an itinerant Primitive Methodist lay preacher, who travelled Durham County bringing both Christian and trade union messages to the mining communities. Portrayed in full figure he can be seen holding the wooden rattle (crake) he used to call people together to hear his message. His image has mottos above and below, and the motto above him reads: OUR MOTTO IS THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF HAPPINESS FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS, WITH THE LEAST INJURY TO ANY, which adds a socially constructive addendum to the more severe utilitarian philosophy of the day. The motto below is a call to arms for the miners of Durham: AWAKE, ARISE OR BE FOREVER FALLEN.

The fact that Ramsey was both a Primitive Methodist and a union activist is not coincidental. The relationship between Primitive Methodism and the creation of the DMA has long been acknowledged.[28] Indeed, Thomas Hepburn, the man recognized as the father of the DMA, and the leader of the Durham miners from the 1830s onward was also a Primitive Methodist. Engaged in conflict with the Church of England, the Church of the Durham coal owners, Beynon and Austrin argue that

> Primitive Methodists appeared as a democratic, progressive form of religion, and one through which the ubiquitous power of the masters could be opposed.[29]

It was because of this alternative example that the Primitive Methodists became central to the movement that evolved into the DMA. As itinerant preachers, they were mobile within the communities; they were literate, used to public speaking, and above all, were trusted within the communities. As we shall see below, their influence can be seen in the images chosen for the early banners, and in the early industrial and political philosophy of the DMA.

The early banner makers in the UK worked mainly from pattern books, with many designs based on allegorical and mythological images.[30] These pattern books would be sent out to prospective customers to choose the images they required, and the Primitive Methodist influence can be seen through many of the images chosen. For example, Chilton Lodge and Butterknowle Lodge banners carry religious imagery depicting the parable of the sticks, with an image of a child breaking a stick, alongside a grown man failing to break a bundle of sticks, with the motto UNITY IS STRENGTH below. Through this image we are brought to see the power of collectivism. Deaf Hill Lodge uses an image of the Good Samaritan helping the injured traveller, with the Samaritan symbolic of the trade union refusing to pass someone in need, again with a collectivist motto: AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL.

The Monkwearmouth Lodge banner, with its image of a courtroom, is celebratory of the DMA's victory in ending the hated system of bonded labor. This court case took place in 1869, the year the DMA was formed. In the court scene, the figure of W.P. Roberts, the solicitor representing the miners, is seen arguing the case against the bond. Under this image is the motto COME LET US REASON TOGETHER, which clearly encapsulates the early industrial philosophy of the DMA. From its inception, the DMA was a trade union dedicated to negotiation and arbitration. The Butterknowle Lodge banner shows an image of mine owners negotiating with DMA officials, over the motto CONCILIATION, and the Esh Winning Lodge has an image of a mine owner and a miner clasping hands below a female image carrying the motto LET US REASON TOGETHER. The imagery of this particular banner cannot be understood without an understanding of the place of Methodism in the lives of those living and working in this community.[31] The influence of the Primitive Methodists on the development of the DMA as an organization was such that for the remainder of the nineteenth century, class consciousness was inhibited within the mining communities of Durham.[32] Other banners from this period would support this theory—for example, an early Boldon Lodge banner. The front image is of an arbitration scene with a female figure of Justice holding scales between groups of owners and miners. The reverse image is of two locked hands with the motto: MASTERS, KNOW YE TO HAVE A MASTER IN HEAVEN. This may well have been the case in some communities, but the banners representing other communities demonstrate a clear understanding of the class relations in the coalfield during this period.

For example, the reverse side of the Page Bank Lodge banner depicts a meeting between a coal owner and a miner, and below each figure, is a section holding a statement from each. The owner's statement tells us that "One colliery on my estate returns me £10,000 per year without risk of life or capital." The miner's statement tells us that "The same colliery returns me £60 per year for labour and risk of life and limb every day." There is an arched scroll above the figures stating: PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE LAND JOIN IN ONE SOCIAL BAND AND SAVE YOURSELVES. At the top of the banner is the motto LET THE WATCHWORD BE JUSTICE AND LIBERTY. The reverse side of the Merrington Lodge banner has a different image demonstrating the same class differentials. In a split image, one young boy enters a doorway marked "Secondary School"; the other image is of a similar-aged boy in work clothes, walking down the road to the colliery. Under these images is the statement: WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE RICH MAN'S CHILD SHOULD ALSO BE WITHIN REACH OF THE WORKER'S CHILD. Other banners used allegorical images to portray the anti-capitalist sentiments' of the lodge membership, usually images of David slaying Goliath. A more explicit anti-capitalist sentiment can be seen on the Crook Drift Lodge banner with its image of the slain beast of "Capitalism" lying at the feet of a female figure with a sword, and a shield with the motto JUSTICE AND EQUALITY, and a miner with chains falling from his arms. Below the image is the motto THE TRIUMPH OF LABOUR.

As the DMA advanced as an organization, so the imagery on the banners began to change with a move away from allegorical religious images toward more pragmatic and representational images that identify both the development of the DMA as an organization and also the aspirations of its members. New banners were continuously being purchased, either to represent the lodges at newly opened collieries or to replace older banners that were becoming too fragile to carry outdoors.[33] The history that can be traced through these images is a history of conflict and change, both within the industry and society. They provide nothing less than a pictorial insight into the changing values, aims, and ambitions of the mining communities all located within the social, economic, and political context of a single industry trade union and the workers and communities it was created to represent. Through an examination of that imagery we can contextualize, and categorize, the issues and accomplishments of the communities and the DMA. Several categories can be identified, from the "conciliation and arbitration" and "anti-capitalist" banners outlined above, to others that were concerned with politics; social welfare; pride in the industry, occupation, and mine; and conflict and struggle. Each of these will be explored below.

Politics

As stated above, the political context of the early banners tended to reflect the religious affiliations of Primitive Methodism; however, with the emergence of the Labour Party, we can see a shift toward more socialist/collectivist imagery. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, socialist groups began to emerge in the area, including the Independent Labour Party and the Fabian Society, and by the beginning of the new century the DMA was closely linked to the emergent Labour Party.[34] Indeed, if we examine the relationship between the DMA and local politics we can see the huge influence that the trade union had over local politics. From its earliest beginnings the DMA had the ability to control the selection of individuals sitting on parish and local councils as well as the MP's representing constituencies in the coalfield.[35] From the beginning of the twentieth century that influence was used to make Co. Durham a Labour Party stronghold that has lasted until the present day.

Some banners reflect the relationship between trade union and party by carrying images of leading Labour Party politicians, and through these images can be seen the history of the Labour Party leadership. On some early banners we can see the image of Keir Hardy, the first Independent Labour MP to sit in the House of Commons. Other leading Labour Party politicians whose images adorn banners are Ramsey MacDonald, Clement Attlee, Aneurin Bevan, Hugh Gaitskell, and Harold Wilson. The latest Labour Party dignitary to have his image carried on a banner is Tony Benn, who declared this the greatest honor of his life.

Some banners carry images that indicate the influence of more radical political ideologies. Following its creation in 1919 the Communist Party of Great Britain began to organize in Co. Durham. While resisted vigorously by both

the Labour Party and the Miners Federation of Great Britain (MFGB), to which
the DMA was affiliated, this radical message was well received in some mining
areas, particularly in the north of the county.[36] Three of the lodges in the north
of Durham—Chopwell, Follonsby, and Bewick Main—adopted banners with
imagery that portrayed this more militant political ideology. The Chopwell
Lodge had a well-earned reputation for militancy going back to the 1890s,
and the imagery on this banner has made it the most well known of all the
banners of the Durham Coalfield.[37] The front of the banner carries a triptych
of images, with Karl Marx and Lenin on either side of Kier Hardy. Within the
triptych are the emblems of both the Labour Party and the Communist Party.
These images are above the motto WE TAKE UP THE TASKS ETERNAL,
THE BURDEN AND THE LESSON. PIONEERS! OH! PIONEERS! On
the reverse side is a male figure, dressed in a toga, and wrapped in a streamer
with the motto HE WHO WOULD BE FREE, HIMSELF MUST STRIKE
THE BLOW. This figure is pointing the way to a group of miners toward an
idyllic community scene of decent housing, with children playing on a grassy
lawn. Above the community scene is the motto GAIN THE
CO-OPERATIVE COMMNWEALTH. Below is the motto THE WORLD
FOR THE WORKERS. The Follonsby Lodge banner has a front image similar
to the Chopwell Lodge banner, with Lenin surrounded by the images of James
Connolly, the Irish Nationalist and Marxist; AJ Cook, general secretary of the
MFGB; Keir Hardy MP; and George Harvey, checkweighman from the colliery
and syndicalist. This central image also carries the Communist Party symbols
the hammer and sickle and the Red Star. The motto reads, COME JOIN IN
THE ONLY BATTLE WHERE NO MAN CAN FAIL; WHERE WHOSO
FALLETH AND DIETH YET HIS DEEDS SHALL STILL PREVAIL. The
Bewick Main Lodge banner, the third of the so called "red banners" also
carries an image of Lenin, but more importantly it carried the motto THE
MINES FOR THE PEOPLE, an important political ambition of the MFGB.

From the early years of the twentieth century, the nationalization of the
mining industry was the great political crusade of the MFGB. The public own-
ership of the industry was seen as the solution to the industrial conflict that
was endemic in the industry. When the MFGB was reorganized in 1945 and
became the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), privatization remained
the main political issue for the new organization. Following the election of a
Labour Government in 1945, nationalization was finally achieved in 1947 and
from the images of some of the lodge banners commissioned after 1947, the sig-
nificance of nationalization for both the industry and the mining communities,
can be seen in the imagery.

The Eppleton Lodge banner has an image of Eppleton Colliery itself,
below which is a scroll stating NATIONALISATION 1947; and above the
image is a scroll with the single word SECURITY, which very simply outlines
the miners need for nationalization. The Harton and Westoe Lodge banner
carries a romanticized image of a miner and his family walking toward a
setting sun embossed with the word SECURITY, having passed through a
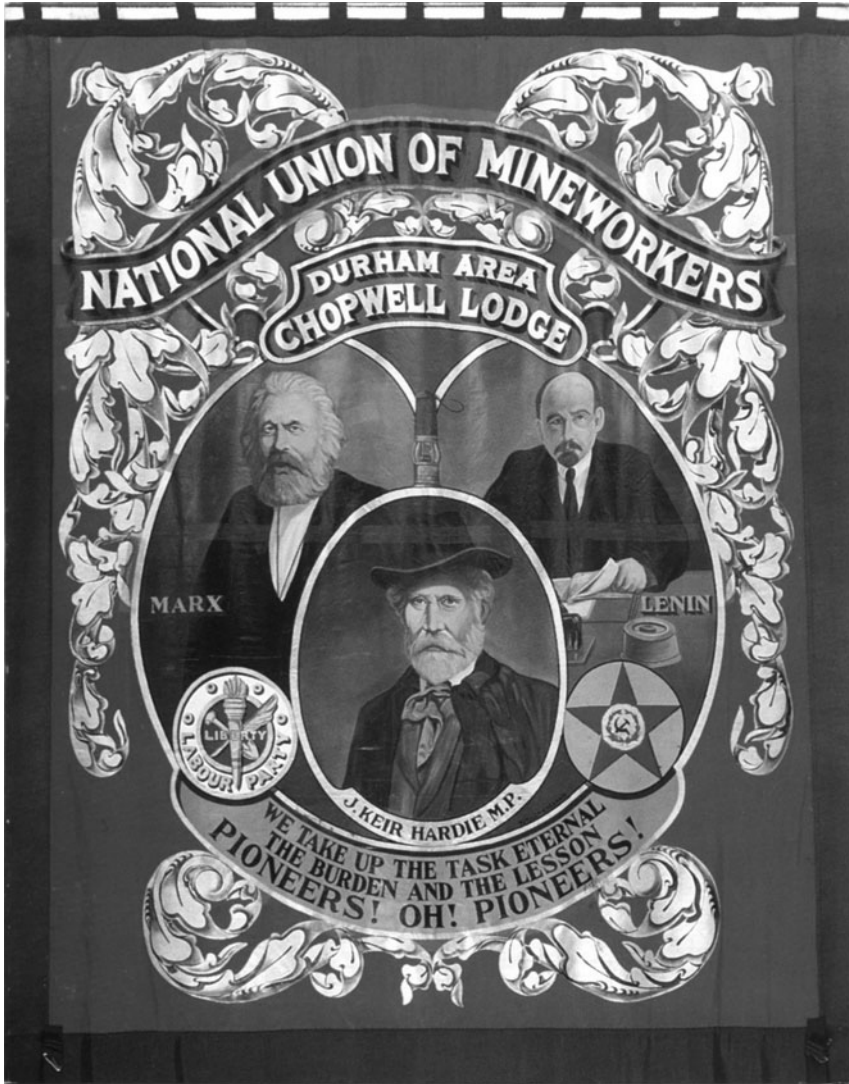
Banner of the Chopwell Lodge, featuring Marx, Lenin, and Keir Hardy, the first Independent Labour MP to sit in the House of Commons. Courtesy of David Wray.

gate marked NATIONALISATION. Below is the motto OUR HERITAGE. An image of the handing over of the industry to the newly formed National Coal Board (NCB) is portrayed on the Heworth Lodge Banner. We can see in the image the figures of Emmanual Shinwell, the Minister of Fuel and Power, handing a copy of the Coal Industry Nationalisation Act to Lord Hindley, Chairman of the Northern Division of the NCB. The motto above the figures reads JUSTICE. SERVICE. SECURITY. Below, a panel reads

COAL INDUSTRY NATIONALISATION ACT 1947. One would assume from these images that, for an industry with a long history of conflict, the future was to be one of harmony and prosperity. While things did improve for miners and their communities, these improvements were driven as much by the creation of the Welfare State and a general increase in prosperity across the nation, than by nationalization. As we shall see in the section on conflict and struggle, this harmony and prosperity was not to last.

Social welfare

In the years leading up to the end of the nineteenth century, welfare was of great concern to mining communities. This was a time of tied housing and very little welfare provision, with the hated Poor Law Commissioners the only refuge for the unemployed. As stated above the DMA, through the network of lodges became a mini-welfare state in itself, and some of these achievements are portrayed on banners. The Adventure Lodge banner is among a number that carry an image of what became known as Aged Miners Homes.[38] These were houses built for retired miners who were required to give up the tied accommodation when they left work. The problem was addressed by the creation in 1894 of the Durham Aged Miners Association, an organization that brought together the owners and the miners. Described as "one of the great philanthropic movements of this country," the Association provided a free house and free coal to retired miners.[39] The Association relied on voluntary contributions from miners, coal owners, and private individuals and charities for funding, and homes were provided at more than seventy locations across Durham. In times of severe hardship, and even during strikes, the miners continued to make their contributions to the Association, as did the owners.[40] The Aged Miners Homes Association is still active in Durham today and has its own banner that is carried in the Gala each year. Banners that carry images of Aged Miners Homes do so on the reverse side, with an image of the homes associated with the individual lodge. On the Adventure Lodge banner, under an image of a row of these homes is the motto HAVEN OF REST, and on the Elmore Lodge banner a similar image has the motto EVENTIDE.

Other forms of welfare are portrayed on the banners. Death and serious injury were constant concerns throughout the mining communities, and the DMA was active in alleviating, as best it could, the consequences of industrial accidents and occupational diseases. A Black Prince Lodge banner shows a DMA official offering comfort to a widow and children at a grave side, under the motto WE SUCCOUR THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS. The Thornley Lodge banner depicts a similar graveside image with the motto COMPENSATION WE DEMAND WHEN LIFE IS SACRIFICED. An earlier Black Prince Lodge banner depicts a DMA official standing by the bed of an injured miner and holding his hand. The miner's wife and children are also in view, and next to the bed is a small table with a purse left on it, representing the financial help that was available from the Lodge for those in need. The motto below the image reads HELP IN TIMES OF NEED.

The realization and acknowledgement of the dangers of this industry can also be seen in banner imagery. An early version of the Monkwearmouth banner has a split image on the reverse side. One half of the image shows a mother and children saying farewell to the father as he leaves for the mine. This image is under the words "The last good morning." The other image is of the mother and children seeking compensation for the death of the father, under the words "We claim compensation." Both images are over the motto IN GOD IS ALL OUR TRUST.

Banners attending the Gala representing lodges that had suffered a fatality in the mine since the previous Gala were carried with a black drape across the top of the banner. In the early years of the Gala it was not uncommon for banners to be so draped for consecutive Galas. In 1946, a Miners Memorial was dedicated in remembrance of all the miners killed in the Durham Coalfield. It bears the inscription "Remember before God the Durham Miners who have given their lives in the pits of this County, and those who work in the darkness and dangers of those pits today." At the base of the memorial are these words from Job 29.4: "He breaketh open a shaft away from where men sojourn. They are forgotten of the foot that passeth by." The Whitworth Park Lodge banner carries an image of the Miners Memorial on the reverse side.

Pride in the Industry, Occupation, and Mine

For an industry whose workers face risks to health and for whom death is a common occurrence, it is perhaps surprising that the imagery of the banners demonstrates a pride in both the industry and the occupation. In trying to understand this, it is difficult to overlook the enclosed nature of the occupation, in terms of physically taking place underground, the dangerous nature of the work, membership in a single industry trade union, and also (in Durham at least) in terms of the isolated single occupational communities that served the mines. Given these circumstances, and being seen as "others" by the wider world, it is not difficult to see why this should be. The banners, as physical representations of trade union and community, are also visual representations of traditions and culture and exist to represent *all* that the community is. In these circumstances it would be surprising if "occupation" and "industry" were not seen on the banners.

The front of the Medomsley Lodge banner depicts the industry and all that benefit from it. The central image is a large piece of coal (a "roundy" in local parlance), against a background of images depicting some of the industries directly dependent upon coal as a source of energy: We see a steel mill, a steam locomotive, and a power station. Circling this image are images of secondary users. Here we see, among others, a cooker, a clothes iron, a car, a ship, a radio, and a telephone. All of this is above the statement BRITAIN'S BASIC INDUSTRY. The Crookhall banner has exactly the same design, but here the central image is a miner set against background images depicting an explosion and women carrying coal in wicker baskets. Circling this are images of other aspects of mining life: the pithead baths, the canteen, the Miners Memorial,

the DMA headquarters building, and a street of Aged Miners Homes—all above the statement DIGNITY IN LABOUR. The fact that the design of these two banners is exactly the same is not a coincidence. Medomsley Lodge purchased the Crookhall Lodge banner when that colliery closed. Once purchased, the design was retained, but the imagery was over-painted to suit the needs of the Medomsley Lodge. Interestingly, the Medomsley Lodge banner was thought to be lost until it was discovered three years ago, hidden under a pigeon loft. It now resides in the Red Hill, the headquarters of the DMA.

Many of the lodge banners carry images of the collieries they represent. While a strong collectivism connects the miners to the trade union, identification with the workplace was also strong. In this we can see the mine as a central part of the community, and through the images on the banners we can identify the symbiotic relationship between community, mine, and trade union. As we shall see in the following section, that relationship would be tested by industrial and political conflict.

Conflict and Struggle

The most radical, even challenging, imagery can be seen in the banners that carry images of industrial and political struggle. The culture and traditions we have been talking about here have been formed, even forged, from struggle. From the earliest struggles to form a trade union, through strikes, and now through closures, that history is vividly told through the banners. Given the remarkable radicalization of the banner imagery since the 1984–1985 strike against mine closures, for this section of the paper I will concentrate on the banners commissioned during that period.

Following nationalization, the inevitable closures in an extractive industry were managed with little conflict as miners began to enter into an almost nomadic existence, moving from mine to mine. However, and against the backdrop of massive industrial closures resulting from the neo-liberal economic policies of the Thatcher government, the miners decided to resist a more rapid run-down of their industry. When in 1984, the NUM called for a national strike to defend jobs and communities the whole weight of the State was turned against the miners who were now described as "the enemy within," with the welfare system in particular used as a weapon against striking miners.[41] The inclusion of communities in the rationale for the strike was not an example of prescience, as miners were well aware of the destruction wrought in communities by the closure of the collieries that had brought them to life. The fact that the strike lasted a year, almost to the day, is in itself indicative of the symbiotic relationships that existed between the union, the mine, and the community.

The fact that the strike was political, rather than economic, resulted in the whole weight of the State being brought down on the miners and their communities. If the Gala was the "social baptism" for them that Beynon and Austrin[42] describe, then this strike represented a "political baptism." The politicization of individuals involved in strikes is not a new phenomenon. Mann[43] talks about

"explosions of consciousness" in relation to the level of political demands made during industrial disputes … While Mann himself describes this explosion of consciousness as "a rather mysterious, even metaphysical process," there is no doubt that the defeat of the NUM had a significant impact on those who had taken part, particularly as the strike was lost.

The first impact on the NUM, following the resultant closure program, was a massive loss in membership that required a reorganization of the affiliated areas. The Durham Miners Association was amalgamated with the Northumberland Miners Association to form the North East Area NUM. One of the first acts of this new organization was the commissioning of a new banner to represent the new organization. The impact of the radicalization of the miners can be seen in the images carried on this banner. The images on the reverse side of the banner are representative of the merger: Above a scene of banners led by a brass band leaving the Red Hill, the headquarters of the new North East Area, are images of clasped hands against a background of the Tyne Bridge that crosses the river that was the boundary between the old Associations. Silhouettes of the Cathedrals of Durham and Newcastle can also be seen. It is the front image of the banner that demonstrates the new radicalism. This image is split, above and below. In the upper image we see a miner holding up a scroll proclaiming THE NORTH EAST AREA surrounded by police in riot gear confronting striking miners. This image is separated from the one below by the statement OUR FIGHT IS FOR THE RIGHT TO WORK. Below this statement we see two miners working underground, above the motto WE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM.

The post-strike Westoe Lodge banner is equally radical. The front holds the images of Thomas Hepburn, the "Father of the DMA," Aneurin Bevan, MP, and AJ Cook, leader of the MFGB. These images are above the motto WE ARE THE FAR OFF FUTURE OF THE DISTANT PAST. WE ARE THOSE NOBLE MEN FOR WHOM THEY DREAMED AND DIED. The reverse side holds a triptych of images: The central image is of a miner holding a very young child and a book. On the left is an image of riot police confronting miners, and identified as ORGREVE JUNE 18 1984.[44] To the right is a figure snapping the chains that bind his hands, identified as THE ENEMY WITHIN, the phrase used by Thatcher to describe the miners during the strike. These images are underpinned by a scroll with the words AGITATE, EDUCATE, LIBERATE. The motto at the bottom of the banner reads ETERNAL VIGILANCE IS THE PRICE OF FREEDOM.

At the end of the strike, the miners marched back to their respective collieries led by their Lodge banner, with the whole community turned out to watch. During the strike, but on this day particularly, the banners had become battle standards in the fullest sense. On the return to work at Monkwearmouth Colliery, the police would not let the miners march back into the colliery with their banner. In the ensuing struggle (battle) to get the Banner in, police tried to confiscate it. As a result, the banner was severely torn and has never been carried again. An exact replica has been carried into the Gala since that date.

Conclusion

Given the number of banners and the varied imagery they carry not all could be discussed. Within these images we can see both continuity and contrast. Some banners carry anti-war sentiments of the First World War, while others carry images of the War Memorials located in their community. Gender issues would also have been an interesting topic for discussion as women are only portrayed on the banners in social and welfare settings. Internationalism is also an issue raised on many banners, as is the Gala itself. More than one lodge banner carries the image of that banner being carried into the Gala, and others carry general images of the Gala as a festival.

While the collieries are now closed, the Gala survives, with newly commissioned banners carried every year, representing the now post-industrial mining communities experiencing what Gilbert[45] describes as "a lost moral order" based upon the fixed relations between locality and work, and finding it difficult to accommodate the social and economic consequences of post-industrialism. What remains, though, for many of the inhabitants of these communities, are the culture and traditions of a more prosperous and certain past and, as Stephenson and Wray[46] argue, these have provided alternative fixed relations between community and trade union that have helped at least some inhabitants to cope.

It is this attachment to past certainties that maintains the interest in the banners and the Gala. Groups in ex-mining communities across Durham have emerged to keep the traditions going. So determined are they to maintain those traditions that some groups have created educational programs that are taken into local schools in order to provide young people an understanding of where, and who, they come from. In all of these activities, the lodge banner is at the center of all, perhaps even more important to the community than when the mine was open. To some extent, it is as if the banners have gone through some anthropomorphic process and become individuals who possess the collective memory of the community they were created to represent.

NOTES

1. Huw Beynon and Terry Austrin, *Masters and Servants: Class and Patronage in the Making of a Labour Organisation* (London, 1994), 210.

2. Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*, 206.

3. "Lodge" is the term used within the DMA to describe the union organization at each individual colliery.

4. Carol Stephenson and David Wray, "Emotional Regeneration Through Community Action in Post-Industrial Mining Communities: The New Herington Banner partnership," *Capital and Class* no. 87 (2005): 175–199.

5. Ibid., 181.

6. Ibid., 191.

7. Ibid., 211.

8. Peter Ackers, "Life After Death: Mining History without a Coal Industry," *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* (March 1996): 159–170.

9. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991).

10. David Gilbert, "Conference Report: Community, Gender and Culture in Mining History," University of Leeds, 1994: 47–55.

11. Gilbert, "Conference Report," 49.

12. Tim Strangleman, Emma Hollywood, Huw Beynon, Katy Bennett, and Ray Hudson, "Heritage Work: Re-representing the Work Ethic in the Coalfields," *Sociological Journal Online* (www.socresonline.org.uk) 4 (1999).

13. For example, see Gilbert, "Conference Report;" and Ackers, "Life After Death."

14. Ray Hudson, *Wrecking a Region: State Policies, Party Politics and Regional Change in the North East of England* (London, 1989).

15. Tim Strangleman, "Network, Place and Identities in Post-industrial Mining Communities," *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research* 25 (2001): 254–268.

16. Ian Roberts, *Craft, Capital and Control* (Edinburgh, 1993).

17. Stephenson and Wray, "Emotional Regeneration," 184.

18. Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*, 206.

19. Ibid.

20. Ackers, "Life After Death," 163.

21. Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*, 167.

22. For example, see David Allsop and David Wray, "The Rise and Fall of Autonomous Group Working in the British Coal Mining Industry," Employment Studies Paper 41, University of Hertfordshire Business School, 2002; David Douglas "Pit Life in Co. Durham," *History Workshop Pamphlet* (Oxford, 1974).

23. Ackers, "Life After Death," 164–165.

24. Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*.

25. Stephenson and Wray, "Emotional Regeneration," 191.

26. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction" in Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: 1983), 1–14.

27. This banner can be seen today in the headquarters of the Durham Miners Association in the City of Durham.

28. For example, see Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*; Robert Colls, *The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield: Work, Culture and Protest 1790–1850* (Manchester 1987); Robert Moore, *Pitmen, Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community* (Cambridge: 1974).

29. Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*, 36.

30. Norman Emory, *The Banners of the Durham Coalfield* (Phoenix Mill, 1998).

31. Moore, *Pitmen, Preachers and Politics*.

32. Ibid.

33. Fragile banners were usually hung in the Colliery Welfare building in a place of honor.

34. For example, see Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants;* and Emory, *The Banners of the Durham Coalfield*.

35. For example, see: Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants;* and Strangleman, "Network, Place and Identities."

36. For example, see Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*; and Emory, *The Banners of the Durham Coalfield*.

37. Emory, *The Banners of the Durham Coalfield*.

38. Many of these Aged Miners Homes can be seen today in the mining communities throughout Co. Durham.

39. Norman Emory, *The Coalminers of Durham* (Pheonix Mill 1992), 155.

40. For example, see Emory, *The Banners of the Durham Coalfield*; and William Redvers Garside *The Durham Miners 1919–1960* (London 1971).

41. Chris Jones and Tony Novak, "Welfare Against the Workers: Benefits as a Political Weapon," in Huw Beynon, *Digging Deeper* (London: 1985), 87–101.

42. Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*.

43. Michael Mann, *Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class* (London 1973).

44. It was at the Orgreave Coking Plant, on this date, that the police diverted pickets into a field and charged them on horseback. In the history of the strike, this day is known as the Battle of Orgreave.

45. Gilbert, "Conference Report," 49.

46. Stephenson and Wray, "Emotional Regeneration."