

Work, Culture, and Protest in the North East Mining
Community in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Robert Malcolm Colls

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University of York

Department of History

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The Collier's Rant. Song and Culture in the Industrial Village
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I accept full responsibility.

Although this study is presented for the degree of D. Phil., my
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ABSTRACT

The thesis is divided into three parts, Work, Culture, and Protest. Each theme is studied over approximately the same chronological period to show the making of a mid nineteenth-century mining community which was distinctly different in social character from that which preceded it. The separation of themes was necessary for research purposes, but the study acknowledges their real indivisibility.

Part I concerns changes in productive relations. These relations have been taken to include every facet of the pitman as a worker: skills, conditions of work, rhythms of working, mode of bargaining, contractual standing, sense of status. Changes in labour relations are connected with concurrent changes in the structure of the industry. By the 1850s the North East pitman had to relate to a mode of production which was less dependent upon his craft and experience, and a market which was increasingly careless of it.

Part II considers cultural change through the intervention of the Primitive Methodists. Their peculiar relationship with the pit village is examined within the broader context of 'moral improvement' and class relations.

Part III traces the shift from direct action to an orderly and total withdrawal of labour as a form of social protest. This process is studied as both a response to changes in authority - magistrates, the state, the owners, and to experiences within the community itself - trade union organization, radical politics, industrial conflict.

INTRODUCTION

"The general diffusion of manufactures throughout a country generates a new character in its inhabitants."

(Robert Owen, Observations on the Effect
of the Manufacturing System. 1815)

In 1817 the Newcastle Religious Tract Society was concerned about the 'character' of the miner:

Were there not numbers of persons in the neighbouring collieries yet enwrapt in moral darkness, as profound and opaque, as if they had been reared in a heathen or pagan country?

By 1904 the Rev. J. Christie was concerned only to praise the miners' character:

The pitman, as a rule, is a quiet living, religious, and godly man, who enters with the greatest heartiness into all exercises of the communion, which is generally one of the many Methodist bodies, and par excellence the Primitives.¹

These were not random or eccentric observations. They were instead representative extremes in a chronological spectrum of observation of the miners' social character for the whole of the nineteenth, and part of the twentieth centuries. Blaring images from the brazen days of 1817 when they were a heathen camp without the walls of Heaven and Newcastle, to more stable Edwardian tones when they were a Primitive communion within the mansion halls of liberal capitalism. Within a hundred years the men and women of the mining community had ceased to be heathens

and had started to be citizens.² Within a hundred years it would seem that not only had the population grown and moved, its economy revolutionized and its culture transformed, but also, men and women had changed their social character.³

What does it mean to talk of changing 'social character' and, what kind of change was it? Contemporaries were well aware of massive change: that, as productive relations altered human relations, society underwent crucial qualitative change.⁴ The nineteenth-century mining community suffered forms of social mutation and manipulation. Mutation because coal production was the basis of industrialization, and manipulation because the isolation and solidarity of the mining village had traditionally been able to threaten established authority. By 1850, all the productive and social relationships of the mining community were experiencing this, the extent of which sometimes prompted contemporary observers to call for a halt:

I would say, then to the philanthropist - 'Let well alone', and do not interfere with the physical condition of the miner in our northern coalfields. A more useful and important aim would be to try to improve his moral state, although even in this respect he is better than he seems, and has been grossly misrepresented. (1863)⁵

This thesis is concerned with the history and meaning of nineteenth-century change in the social character of the North East mining-community. Its major areas of interest are changes in the pattern of Work, changes in the nature of Culture, and changes in the methods of Protest - mainly up to 1850, although there are inevitable excursions beyond that date.

By 1850 all the signal changes that were to produce the perceived 'classic' mining community of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century had begun. More importantly, by 1850 most of the community's rearguard (and, less frequently, vanguard) actions against these mutations and manipulations had been either defeated or absorbed, and the new system was free to develop. Industrial Capitalism as a dominant system developed unevenly in Britain, by industry and region, but by

1850 it had undoubtedly made its first colonization of the North East mining community. What this colonization involved, in terms of real and perceived change, begins with the experience of Work.

Part One is concerned with the miner as a worker, a factor of production. However, an interpretation of changes experienced by the miner as a factor of production can only be made within the context of the miner as a man in society, for society's interpretation of the miners as a social group determined not only the quality of their lives as producers but also the price they could command in the market. Changing nineteenth-century interpretations of the miners as a social group and as a productive group were in reflexive relationship.⁶

Part One begins with a survey of economic growth in the regional industry and the expansion of the labour force which attended it (chapter one). It then goes on to consider changes in the condition, organisation and discipline of work (chapters two and three). Finally, it considers changes in contractual and occupational relations (chapters four to six).

PART ONE

WORK

Chapter One

Economic Growth

Between 1791 and 1843 the North East experienced three major cycles of industrial investment, all of which were closely connected with its coal industry. The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars stimulated all sectors of regional industry (lead, iron, building, transport, shipping), but particularly the coal industry, and between 1791-1815 there were twenty-nine new 'winnings' made in sea-sale collieries (see Appendix, p. 184, Table I). The second cycle may be dated 1822-36, and was led by steam-railway investment as the largest single growth-sector in the region (see Appendix, p. 184, Table II). The considerable stimulation given by railway investment was transcended in the period 1836-43 by a speculative boom which constituted a major investment cycle in itself. Rising national consumption of industrial and domestic supplies, the reduction of ancient duties, and the economic-penetration of previously landlocked areas of the coalfield by railway (as well as its interlinked investment stimulus), saw a corresponding major growth in the number of North East collieries: from sixty-two in 1822 to one hundred and eighty four by 1850 (see Appendix, p. 185, Table III).¹ Coal output consequently increased from an estimated 4,465,000 tons in 1801 to 10,500,000 tons in 1851. The decade 1826-36 saw the largest percentage increase in tonnage, an increase of 62%, surpassed only in 1851-61 with an 85% increase in tonnage during a century (1816-1911), decennial break at 1836-51, which had an average percentage tonnage increase of 30.8% per decade.²

Coal production increased during the first half of the century without

any significant technological innovation at the point of production. Most of the engineering and scientific feats (for which owners and inventors won the very best of Smilesian acclaim) involved either safety or haulage - particularly haulage above-ground. Throughout the nineteenth-century, coal was won by pick, shovel, and tired limbs. At the coalface, and a long way 'outbye', Carlyle's Signs would wait a hundred years to show.³ Thus, as individual output stayed roughly the same, increased production was achieved by a corresponding increase in labour.⁴

Because one cannot be sure that one is comparing like with like, it is difficult to measure the precise increases in labour during the first half of the century. There are distinctions between the Tyne, Wear, and Tees districts of the coalfields, and there is a distinction between those men and boys who worked underground and those who worked above-ground. Various sources are not always clear about to which part or parts of the labour force they are referring, and most of the coalfield's historians for this period have pointed out that their statistics are based on estimates.⁵ In 1800 there were about eleven to twelve thousand men and boys, above and below ground, employed in the North East coalfield. At the time Mr Thomas of Benton Hall considered this to represent a significant increase (although notice that his estimate is deduced and not certain):

... the number increases cannot admit of a doubt since the quantity of Coal wrought amounts to 1/3 more than was wrought 20 years ago; this added to the great advance in the wages of the Pitmen within that period must have occasioned a very considerable increase in their number.⁶

The region's second and third major investment cycles (c. 1822 - c. 1843) increased the total mining force by about - perhaps slightly over - one-third: from about twenty-one thousand in 1829 to about thirty-three thousand in 1844.⁷ It has been estimated that the period of fastest growth in the labour force was also the period of fastest growth in production (1826-36).⁸

One historian has estimated that the average annual intake of new workers into the regional industry between 1800-45 was less than 0.5%. He has deduced from this "persistent trickle" that social assimilation must have been easy.⁹ This approach is not a sufficiently sensitive way of perceiving the social reality. For the shorter period 1841-50, by coal-mining geographical 'sub-regions' for Northumberland and Durham, further research has shown a relatively high immigration into two of the four sub-regions. The percentage increase in net decennial migration for the East Durham Plateau was 24.9% (+6,560); for the North West Durham Plateau, 26.1% (+ 4,912); and for the Mid and Lower Wear coalfield, 6.5% (+ 5,512). Only the Northumberland coalfield suffered a decline, with a percentage decrease over the period of 5.4% (- 2,086). Where research has been undertaken it would seem that most of this coal-migration was short-distance inside Northumberland and Durham. For the new colliery (1840) of South Wingate, in 1851, out of six hundred and eighteen inhabitants, four hundred and forty-three had been born in Durham or Northumberland (71.7%). For the ancient mining village of Cockfield in 1851, out of six hundred and forty-seven inhabitants, five hundred and forty-two had been born within the immediate South Durham locality of the village (83.7%).¹⁰

Moreover, where research has sharpened its focus and counted miners instead of general population, it shows that most miners were born in the traditional areas of the coalfield. For Hetton colliery in 1851, 85% of miners had been born in the two counties, whilst

... long-distance migrants were numerically insignificant and there is little evidence of occupational mobility ... very largely peopled by coalmining folk with a family tradition of employment at the collieries in the oldest established parts ...¹¹

For Cockfield in 1851, 72.4% of miners had been born in Cockfield

itself, and a further 16% in the immediate South Durham locality.¹²

Hetton's population in 1851 tended to have close connections of origin with lower Tyneside and the mid-Wear Valley, and its coalmining population had proportionally closer connections with these two short-distance and established mining areas than had its tertiary population who tended to come from more rural and distant parts.¹³ For the earlier nineteenth-century, ways of tracing the origin of migrants are less certain. However, it is possible to infer some familial structure in the labour force from lists of workers at established pits. For instance, at the East Denton and West Kenton 'binding' in 1804, out of ninety-nine bound, there are only forty-two surnames in the bond - including seven Scotts, seven Greys, six Rutters, four Johnsons, four Morrisons, four Dobsons, and four Hebburns. Michael Sill has found a strong hereditary factor in his study of Hetton's census for 1851.¹⁴

To sum up, the first half of the nineteenth century was a phase of significant economic growth for the North East coal industry. Three major investment cycles (1791-1815, 1822-36, 1836-43), each one shorter yet more energetic than the last, quickened the regional economy. Coal production increased with the number of collieries, the number of collieries increased with the spread of railways, and there were corresponding increases in the labour force, but there appears to have been no incursion on the traditional structure of labour. The factors of production multiplied but the organization and methods of coalmining seem to have remained the same. Families migrated, but it seems to have been more a change of excavation by families which were already from mining communities. Significant short-distance migration sounded a warning of the massive shifting of population the whole region was to experience in the second half of the century.

For the historian, the bare facts of economic growth imply changes

in the size of the structure without changes in the structure itself. Coal poured out and men poured in but the coalminer has been generally regarded as retaining his traditions and conditions as other 'pre-industrial' workers lost theirs in a first half-century of 'Industrial Revolution'.¹⁵ Though some communities died, coalminers only grew in number - expanding nationally to over a million men by 1914 to become the most important corps of British industrial labour. And although the miners had their early unions, their disputes have been interpreted more as 'economistic' confrontations over 'wages and conditions' (a crude phrase in a century of proletarianization) by men at the heart of society's industrial future. As such, the coalminers have had a peculiar position in the mainstream historiography of the British working-class in the first half of the nineteenth-century. Unlike other crafts and communities which were destroyed the miners appeared to be marching with History and not against it.

It should be noted however that this was not how contemporary pitmen saw their situation. Ben Embleton told Miners' union delegates in 1842 that

... if they did not unite and join themselves together for the protection of their trade, in a little time the pitmen would be in as bad a condition as the handloom weavers. These weavers were coming into the coal-trade, not weekly, but daily. And this was naturally to be expected from a class of men, nineteen thousand of whom were living, on an average, upon elevenpence per head in the week ... What were they to do to prevent the trade being ruined? They must adopt a plan which would enable these men and themselves to make their bread together ...¹⁶

The first resolution of this meeting was, "We unite to save ourselves from destruction".

The North East pitmen were in fact uniting to save themselves as a regional labour-élite. The coal-hewers were the core of this elitism. In 1809 there were only one thousand nine hundred and eighty hewers in Tyneside collieries, a core small enough to be known by individual name, ability, and temperament, by the collieries which employed them.¹⁷

The mining community in general formed distinctive minority groups in the region.¹⁸ A sense of elitism, informs the history of the industry in the first half of the nineteenth-century, a history which is rife with industrial conflict. The pitmen entered the century as something of a 'caste': skilled men whose skills were recognized as awesome and peculiar, and whose community was accepted as guardian of those skills. However, economic growth and attendant change reorganized mining methods and re-focussed the social interpretation of the community. The industrial and political conflicts 1800-50 must be seen in this light. Similarly, the systematic importation of outside labour to break strikes not only challenged the caste's skill but it also challenged the community's self-esteem. The ending of an elite was detected in 1832: a correspondent to a local newspaper wrote that "Hitherto the pitwork has been a monopoly" but "it is now thrown open to the world".¹⁹ The miners sensed that the social status of their labour was shifting against them. The quantitative outlines of economic growth fail to give the clue to qualitative changes in work and community. After 1850 the caste of 'true-bred' pitmen was lost just as surely as those stockings or croppers or handloom weavers or any other human anachronism of the season. The fast pace of mining expansion from 1850 blinded society to this loss. The destruction of a community and its character was blurred as a hereditary caste of skilled miners merged imperceptibly into a market of Victorian labourers.

Chapter Two

Craft, Conditions, and Organization

The 'true-bred' pitman considered himself as a miner, trained in a craft. The craft was taught mainly by the family and guarded by the exclusivity of the community, and arguments over workmanship could therefore involve insults to both: as for instance at Benwell colliery in 1810 when two pitmen argued

... about which was the best workman ... that Walton said he was as good a Man as any at Heaton ... Walton said he could pay every Heron amongst them, James Heron said that he Walton could not, on which James Heron put off his Cloaths (sic) to fight ...²⁰

As the industry expanded the community's exclusivity declined and its guardianship of the craft was increasingly difficult. Yet the skills remained much the same and the family managed to remain important in their transmission. Hopton's famous primer of the 1860s, "Conversation on Mines between a Father and Son", was not a conversation but a book which in its title recognized the real medium of instruction. Jack Lawson recalled his first days at work in the 1890s:

Still, I was a man, and I knew it. There was no more drudging at home ... I sat up to the table with my elder brothers and father, black from pit, paraded my knowledge of pit technique, and generally tried to live up to my newly acquired status. It was worth getting up at five o'clock in the morning for that.²¹

As the industry remained conservative in technique, the rapport between craft and kinship remained strong. The persistence of this rapport, compared to the way in which industrial capitalism despatched a whole economy of other trades and other rapports, has left twentieth-century miners with a certain ambivalence about their skills: seen from without as a market of labourers they managed from within to remain a community of the skilled. The coalminer has been found to be historically almost unclassifiable in terms of his skills and status: "A labourer of a very special kind ... In the hierarchy of labour he

defies classification;" "The legitimacy of his claim to be entered among those with the rank and dignity of 'craftsmen' has only recently been conceded;" "... the essence of a craft is its dependence on a precarious combination of manipulative skill embodying a physical training and a judgement ... the essence of a 'knack' is its difficulty of communication".²²

The pitman's craft was inextricably tied to his safety at work. In 1823 John Peile, agent at a Whitehaven colliery, wrote lamenting the cause of a recent explosion there -

... great ignorance in the Workmen, indeed our Pitmen are a most ignorant race & few of them are regularly bred. & the majority composed of Irish and other Trampers, that turn only to us when no other employment can be had, and it may be readily conceived how ignorant they must be of their own safety and how difficult to impress their minds with a proper sense of care & of dangers ...

Peile asked John Buddle, the North East engineer and entrepreneur, for "regularly bred" pitmen "from your numerous band" to come and supervise in Cumberland, but the following month Buddle himself lost fifty-nine colliers after an explosion at Penshaw colliery. Buddle criticized the management and called for pitmanship over friendship:

... none shall be placed or promoted, unless they pass a satisfactory exam as to pitmanship. Such valuable property & such a number of Lives must not on any acct. be entrusted to ignorance or imbecility. Friendship, or relationship must be put entirely out of the question, we must have fit men only.²³

If skills were tied to safety, then safety was tied to a knowledge of the system of the mine.

When William Lowrie of Coxlodge wrote in 1825 asking for work, he knew himself as an expert in a dark and complex system which had to tether the legs of its inexpert child-workers in order not to lose them:

I am a bred Pitman and by long experience I have obtained a knowledge of the Pit System.²⁴

The 1835 Report recognized the sinewy interdependence of each man

below ground:

/on/ the daily, unceasing, strict discharge of duty by every person ... depends the safety of hundreds of men and boys, from minute to minute.²⁵

Edward Allen Rymer, who started in the Durham mines as a boy in the 1840s, recalled the sight of a "bred" pitman in action:

The pillar and wall system of working the coal at these collieries rendered the working much safer and more endurable than any other method with which I am acquainted ... Coal-hewing in the North fifty years ago made many capital workmen, especially where picks, wedges, hammers, and drills had to be used. And to see

THE REAL PITMAN STRIPPED TO HIS 'BUFF'

in short breeches, low shoes, and cotton skull-cap, swinging his 5lb pick, while the sweat runs down his face, is a sight which can never be forgotten.²⁶

The compact skills were not quickly mastered. Boys starting work at ten years old would serve an eleven years apprenticeship from 'trapping' to 'putting' before becoming hewers at the coalface. Learning the system of the mine was a matter of definite knowledge. Commissioner Leifchild cautiously peeked at the system on behalf of the government in 1842, and found the knowledge was not to be easily learnt:

... the lads were necessarily in continual locomotion ... the numerous mining technicalities, northern provincialisms, peculiar intonations and accents, and rapid and indistinct utterance, rendered it essential for me, an interpreter being inadmissible, to devote myself to the study of these peculiarities ere I could translate and write the evidence.²⁷

Leifchild was an outsider by class and region, but even those who were not needed initiation into the craft. Rymer remembered for the 1840s:

During the first few weeks I worked at Leitch Pit, I had to learn the mysteries of underground life of men and horses. With great difficulty I got acquainted with the nomenclature of the mine, and had to adapt myself to the circumstances with which I was surrounded, defective sight causing me endless troubles ...²⁸

To learn the system one had to start young. Ashley's inquiries made the coalowners admit the necessity of experience. John Buddle explained to Lord Lambton about minimum age limits that he and his fellow Viewers were

decidedly of opinion that if they are not initiated before they are 13 or 14 - much less 16, 17 or 18 - they never will become Colliers.²⁹

But the pitman's craft was not only a factual knowledge, it was also an accumulated self-identity. Pitmen were bred as well as trained:

I use the word 'pitman' in contradistinction to collier. If a man comes to me for a situation as overman, or any other situation of responsibility, my first question is, 'is he a regular-bred pitman?' We speak of a good pitman as we would do of a good seaman ... A collier is a man who works the coals; therefore we have a middling good pitman, a thorough good pitman; and a pitman; which latter are the highest degrees.³⁰

The word 'pitman' carried with it certain amulets of craft and social bearing: other men were mere 'colliers' compared to 'pitmen', and others again were mere labourers compared to colliers. There is more scorn than hatred in this account of local men's attitudes to Midlands strike-breakers in 1831. By their action and in their bearing the local men clearly considered them lacking the dignity of the miners:

Lord! what poor wretches they were! They came trooping here, with an old flannel jock a-piece, and a pit-cap without even a brim. They had no furniture to put in their houses; many of them had left their wives and children at home ... They had in their houses a log of wood to sit on, and a bundle of straw to lie on; they eat fat mutton and drank ale, and looked as black and melancholy as a tame raven with his wings clipped ... They seemed no better than Irish. They didn't understand this sort of coalfield neither ...³¹

If the pitman was proud of his craft, then outsiders would recognize the reality of his skills. During the Napoleonic Wars there was a severe shortage of hewers in the coalfield, but agents accepted in the main that they could only recruit from inside the community, and even then admitted craft differences from area to area:

... it is well known that three Strangers will not be able to work as many coals as two men who have been accustomed to work the Hartley Seam ...

In 1801 Thomas Johnston asked Lord Delaval for release from his contract, the Bond:

I was bred a Forgerman to an Iron Factory in the Shire of Ayr North Britain, but the Factory was laid in, for reasons unknown to me, which obliged me to Travel South in order to get Bread for myself and Family, accordingly I engaged myself the last Binding as a Pitman in your Lordship's colliery, but being an entire stranger to the Work I am not able to endeavour for a sufficiency for my said Family ... ³²

The North East coalowners used the argument of the pitmen's craft as a defence of their monopoly, the Vend. Parliamentary committees were persuaded that the break-up of monopoly would mean the demise of the traditional hewing elite and therefore the loss of irreplaceable labour-skills. ³³

But the owners were not as loyal to their arguments in conflict as they were in committee. The 1831-32 and 1844 strikes saw the importation of both mining and non mining labour from other parts of the country. ³⁴ The disastrous aftermath - four major explosions in six months (May to November 1832) and four major explosions in five months (July to December 1844) - offers some support for the 'true-bred' pitmen's claims. Of course, idle pits are dangerous pits and the return to work period would have involved safety problems, but there is evidence that the true bred pitmen blamed the 1844 explosions on unskilled labour working a system which it did not understand. An anonymous broadside, which is clearly from the National Miners' Association, directly blames a deputy, John Brown, for the October explosion at Coxlodge Colliery. Brown, formerly an agricultural labourer, was "a man who went down the pit at the time of the Strike" and who caused the explosion by going into an old working with a naked flame even though the working "was considered by the regular pitmen 'foul'":

There is no doubt but the fault was in Brown's want of experience, had he been thoroughly acquainted with

the state of the 'board' when he so daringly entered, he would never have taken a step towards it with a candle, both for his own sake, and for the sake of those who were working in the pit at the time.

The Miners' Advocate, newspaper of the NMA, backed this view in its editorial.³⁵ Haswell Colliery had exploded three weeks before on 28 September killing ninety-five men and boys. W. P. Roberts, the union solicitor, accused the viewer, George Forster, of neglect, the coroner's court of ignorance, and the owners of hypocrisy in allowing unskilled men to practise potentially lethal jobs:

There is no more general cause of anxiety in a mine than the employment of strange men in those parts which are so far dangerous as to require the use of lamps instead of candles. One of these three men was a stone-mason - another a watchmaker; none of them were ever pitmen before the strike in April last.³⁶

After 1844 the market became the chief determinant of immigration into the coalfield. The second half of the century, with immigration and a huge expansion of the labour force, necessarily demanded forms of safety other than 'pit sense'. However, those trade unionists who could remember traditional sensibilities, and whose memories were sharpened by the rapid change around them, were alarmed at the manner of the immigrant collier. David Swallow told the select committee in 1853 that

There are a great number who are reckless, but they are persons who have been introduced into the mines; they are not persons who have been brought up to mining under the tuition of their fathers or relatives.³⁷

Standards had been waning since the 1830s. At certain collieries in 1842 Commissioner Mitchell had found lads hewing at eighteen years, and some even at sixteen years, instead of the traditional twenty-one. This was particularly prevalent at the new collieries and 'thorough-bred' pitmen like the engineer Buddle did not approve. In 1843, as Lord Londonderry's chief-viewer, he defended George Hunter, Londonderry's agent at Penshaw colliery, for his increasing old age. Hunter's breed, Londonderry was told, was getting harder to find -

Hunter's fort is that of a Pitman - and I do not know a better one ... There are plenty of half bred Pitmen - Young Viewers, which have been reared in the new Mushroom Collieries. But we require a thorough bred one of experience and resource with some Brains in his head. ³⁸

A falling valuation of the craft was accompanied by a rising rate of risk for the miner at work. The North East coalfield had had a reputation for gas since the seventeenth-century and in 1816 J. H. H. Holmes made it clear that

The mines on the Tyne and Wear are considered in a peculiar degree dangerous, from the quantity of gas yielded by their coal. ³⁹

This 'gas' was of two kinds: 'fire damp' and 'choke damp'. 'Fire Damp' is carburetted hydrogen which when mixed with from five to fourteen times its bulk of atmospheric air, becomes explosive. 'Choke Damp' (or 'black damp' or 'after damp') follows the explosion and is commonly known as carbonic acid gas, the product of the combustion of the carburetted hydrogen in air. Fire damp kills by burning, choke damp kills by suffocating. On 28 January 1839 the St. Hilda Colliery at South Shields exploded killing fifty-one men and boys. Rescuers found them victims of both gases:

We encountered in one place the bodies of five men who had died from the effects of the gas, and had apparently died placidly, without one muscle of the face distorted. Then there were three more that had been destroyed by the explosion; clothes burnt and torn, the hair singed off, the skin and flesh torn away in several places, with an expression as if the spirit had passed away in agony. Going with a single guide, we encountered two men, one with a light, the other bearing something on his shoulders; it was a blackened mass, a poor dead, burnt boy he was taking out ... ⁴⁰

In 1830 the government select committee was told that since about 1820 deeper coal-seams had been mined with concomitant increases in capital expenditure, not least in ventilation costs. Most pits had to deal with a permanent yield of gas, and as they went deeper then their ventilation needed to be more effective. Similarly, as pits deepened then the accumulation of gas in 'goaves' or isolated roads or workings became more frequent and the need for effective ventilation

was re-emphasized.⁴¹ By the beginning of the nineteenth-century the basic principles of colliery ventilation included a 'downcast' shaft, an 'upcast' shaft with a furnace at its foot, and a free passage in the workings of the mine for the entrance, transit, and exit of air. Air was to enter the mine randomly, wander the workings, and leave by the suck of the upcast shaft's furnace. About 1760 James Spedding had introduced the method of 'coursing' the air. Here, the workings were coursed into a single one-way air tunnel by a plan of doors and stoppings. This was an improvement, but in the bigger North East collieries a single course could be many miles long and so much accumulated foul air streaming into naked contact with the upcast furnace obviously carried many dangers. They were partly met by 'splitting' the workings into districts - each district constituting its own course. The government select committee into dangerous accidents asked in 1849,

'Is it a certain and ascertained fact that, in splitting a current of air, you obtain from the smaller currents which result from that splitting, carried through smaller spaces, a more effectual ventilation than you would from the whole current carried through the whole distance?' - 'Decidedly'.⁴²

In 1813 John Buddle introduced the 'dumb furnace' (an extra passage to the upcast shaft which by-passed the furnace) and it was he who gained the reputation for splitting his workings to an unprecedented extent. In 1839 the longest 'course' at his large Wallsend Colliery was only four miles.⁴³

From fragmentary seventeenth and eighteenth century evidence it seems that these principles of ventilation had never been satisfactory - hence the traditionally high premium on individual craft in a dangerous job. However, constant nineteenth-century expansion and deepening were increasing both the risk of explosion and the fatality of an explosion when it occurred. In many mines the basic principles were not adhered to. Instead of having a minimum of two shafts, downcast and upcast, such mines had a single shaft which was 'bratticed'. A

brattice was a partition which divided the shaft to serve all uses: downcast air, upcast gas and air, labour, and production, all came and went by the same shaft. By the 1840s, with production increasing, mines deepening and workings expanding, the bratticed shaft came under criticism. In 1849 hewers at Hetton, Washington, Usworth, Seaton D pit, Walker, and Wallsend were complaining of the accumulation of gas in their expanding pits:

... they informed me there that they were working in a very bad atmosphere in the face of the workings, notwithstanding the great quantities of air got down the shafts ...

and the same government select committee heard evidence which was quite uncompromising in its particular condemnation of single shaft pits:

... the chief causes of accidents are, too few shafts,, narrow shafts, constricted shafts, and badly-constructed furnaces.⁴⁴

In 1842 the gentlemen of the South Shields Committee had condemned most of the collieries in the coalfield, double shafts included, for their insufficient ventilation, and had called for the immediate end of bratticed shafting:

... the system and rate of ventilation of the mines in this extensive coal district require a great and important change; for, if allowed to continue, there is scarce a single mine amongst them, with one or two rare exceptions, that in a day or hour may not be plunged by some easy contingency into a destructive explosion ...⁴⁵

The engineer Blackwell was equally adamant in his report of 1850, as was the Thornley pitman who in 1844 specifically condemned bratticed shafts at the neighbouring Wingate, Trimdon, Coxhoe, South Hetton, and Quarrington Hill collieries.⁴⁶ A witness to the 1849 select committee recalled how once on approaching Jarrow he asked a passing pitman the way to Jarrow colliery: "Sir, I do not know of any colliery; but there - [pointing me in the direction of the colliery] - is a butcher's shop." The witness later discovered the remark to be a reference to Jarrow's bratticed and constricted shaft.⁴⁷ In 1835 a select committee had already investigated accidents in mines and had occasionally come across the

question of single shaft workings. When their lesser safety had been mentioned the committee was quick to mention their greater expense:

When Mr Taylor is recommending to that Committee more numerous shafts for ventilation, they asked him 'if he was aware that the cost of sinking a single shaft would ... exceed £100,000?

Similarly for the case of Mr Garforth, witness from Lancashire, who on stating that he could sink an eleven-foot diameter shaft two hundred and fifty yards for just over a thousand to fifteen hundred pounds was told "that in many districts of the north a shaft of the same diameter, and to the same depth, would cost £50,000!" Costs of £50,000 were an exception to the rule and those North East owners on the committee should have known this.⁴⁸

Gunpowder for coal-blasting was introduced into the coalfield about 1813. Gunpowder increased the risk of explosion in nineteenth-century mines whose dangers were already being exacerbated by a devaluing craftsmanship, bigger collieries, deeper workings, and inadequate ventilation.⁴⁹ Blasting gradually replaced wedging and was directly more dangerous in its involvement of a naked flame beside gas. Viewers only slowly came to respect gunpowder ...

At Houghton pit with W. Sinclair and Mr Heckels to examine the longwall workings for the purpose of ascertaining whether it would be prudent to apply gunpowder to working the coal, in the examination of [7,7] goaf gas was found in the return, the united opinion was that gunpowder could not with safety be used ...

Blasting was also indirectly more dangerous in that its implementation militated against the comprehensive use of the safer muffled-flame of the Davy lamp in "open" workings: in the first half of the century viewers could argue that the very dangerousness of gunpowder made the pitman's skills more alert and that the naked flame was therefore preferable to that complacency instilled by the Davy lamp.⁵⁰

Whilst gunpowder put men at greater risk in the 'whole mine' open-workings, the Davy lamp also led them into greater dangers in the

'broken mine' workings.⁵¹ The whole mine was a district of coal which was intact; the broken mine was a district which had already been worked and consisted merely of coal pillars left to prop up the roof. As pits were deepened then coal pillars were thickened to protect the mine from the 'creeps' and 'thrusts' of the roof pressing on the floor.⁵² This method of mining in the North East was called 'board and pillar': the 'board' was the actual excavation, the 'pillar' propped it up; 'headways' led across the pillars to enable coal to be transported away from the face, and whole districts were mined in this the design of a draughtboard. But thicker pillars meant more wasted coal and the nineteenth-century saw increased re-working of the broken mine. Re-working the broken mine involved 'robbing' the standing pillars as far as was safe, and then withdrawing from it, surrendering it to creeps and thrusts and water and gas. This broken, robbed, and collapsing area was called 'the goaf'. The introduction of Davy's safety lamp after 1815 had two indirect effects. First, it discouraged the proper ventilation of mines, tending, as the engineer John Taylor remarked in 1835, "to make the owners of collieries not take the same pains for ventilation that they otherwise would do". Secondly, the lamp encouraged increased robbing of the broken mine. The broken was notoriously gassy. The Davy lamp made it possible to work in this gas and to rob the pillars on a greater scale than ever before. As the 1835 select committee were answered:

'Do you not consider these lamps have enabled you to work where otherwise you never could have done so?' - 'I think so; or else there would have been great hazard of men's lives.'

In 1842 two veteran pitmen, Thomas Batty and Ralph Hall, had told the Royal Commission that there had been no broken working in previous years, but Nicholas Wood, coalowner, had told the 1835 select committee that although the broken was more inflammable

... the value of the pillars [is] sufficient to the proprietor

to justify him in encountering the danger.⁵³

Extensive re-working of the broken heightened the risk of explosion. Goafs were **ramshackled** gasometers; gas would accumulate in these idle and buckled workings, and, given that their proper ventilation was difficult, Davy provided the excuse not to try. John Buddle reckoned that once an area had been made goaf then that area of "the mine is then placed under circumstances beyond our control".⁵⁴

The re-working of the broken also increased the intensity of work for the pitmen. Breathing necessarily got heavier as coal-faces got farther and air got thinner. Robbing in the broken was one of the most disliked jobs. As the pitman approached the coal-face "the air stream is more languid, the warmth augments, the fire damp issues silently," and the broken was much the worst ventilated area of the mine. Dr Clanny testified to the 1835 select committee that

... the excess of foul air in such pits cannot but be detrimental to the workmen, for they have to breathe bad air, and sometimes work in it with Sir Humphrey Davy's lamp, when, they say, they are weakened by it. It is a peculiar affection, producing a sort of nervous attack, a loss of energy of the whole system.⁵⁵

The broken was also susceptible to roof-fall. There was an obvious risk to the traditional practice of tentatively wittling pillars of coal in the second working of an area - there was always the chance of robbing a hundredweight too much, the creak of a crumbling pillar, and a crashing roof about the miner's head. That was a 'thrust'. But as the depth of mines increased and the pillars were left thicker to take the strain, then in some collieries the second working gradually became the most productive operation. Moreover, by the 1840s a new system was being reported at certain collieries where pillars were being worked and then collapsed "nearly simultaneously with the whole workings, or a very short distance behind them". This "drawing the jud", or

'judding', where pillars were robbed and supplemented by wooden props and then knocked away as the work retreated, was a job "the most hazardous in the pit". Lastly, the working of the broken heightened the risk of explosion. Roof-falls, but particularly 'judding', could compress and push-out waves of firedamp gas from the badly ventilated broken and into the whole workings where gunpowder was being blasted with naked flame, with the chance of ignition and explosion.⁵⁶

The Davy lamp had made working in the broken more feasible, and the broken intensified the work and the risk of explosion which pitmen had to endure. The 1835 select committee lamented changes in practice and subsequent accidents through "ignorance and a false reliance upon its merits"; the 1836 committee, set up to examine Trade rather than Accidents, nevertheless published the witness who told them that they

... were induced by that invention to work under greater risk; we are working mines now which could not possibly have been worked without the assistance of the Davy's lamp.⁵⁷

Broken working must be added to a devaluing craftsmanship, bigger collieries, deeper workings, inadequate ventilation, and gunpowder, in the darkening presence of increased danger in the North East coalfield in the first half of the nineteenth century. And yet, such figures as can reasonably be relied upon do not show a progressively increasing rate of death by accident in collieries for the period.⁵⁸ After 1800-30 - which is reckoned to have suffered the highest-ever mortality rates - there was a ...

... spectacular reduction in mortality from explosions during the half century - from the 5.0-6.0 of many years in the first three decades to the 0.9 of 1851-53 - and this can be reasonably attributed to the engineers' progress in coping with gases and to the persistent encouragement of the safety movement.

	Total Deaths	Explosions	Deaths from Roof-falls	Other accidents
1839-45	6.1	3.1	1.3	1.7
1851-53	3.5	0.9	1.1	1.5

Deaths from Violence in 55 North East Collieries, 1839-45, and in all North East Collieries, 1851-53, per 1000 Employed p.a.⁵⁹

We have seen that improvements in ventilation engineering in the first half century were less than "spectacular". A more complete understanding of this dramatic reduction in mortality from explosions would seem to require additional proof. An area of evidence which presents itself concerns the organization of the miners as a labour force, and those efforts towards the greater systematization of their work in turn leads on to moves towards instilling a greater discipline in their character as workers.

Coalmining remained a labour-intensive industry throughout the nineteenth-century. Unlike other industries Coal did not restructure its techniques of production through technological innovation.⁶⁰

Although there were important innovations - and the industry is famous for them⁶¹ - most of the major innovations had little adverse bearing on the system of labour. Major innovations since the eighteenth-century were in water pumping, tram and 'rolley' ways, inclined plane, and railway engines (above ground), air coursing, safety lamps, gunpowder, iron-tubs for wicker corves, long-fuses, and wire ropes.⁶² Of these, only the safety lamp certainly increased the intensity of the work itself by putting men into the broken. Wire ropes were distrusted, but, like the other innovations, this was a question of safety rather than a direct matter of work.⁶³ Iron rails speeded underground haulage but there is no evidence to suggest that they were unpopular with the putters and drivers.⁶⁴ Greater systematization of the pitmen's work was not caused by technology: in the exhaustive detail of their labour, that labour remained much the same:

... begrimed men, kneeling, sitting, stooping, sometimes lying, and hammering at the black wall of coal before them with short, sharp, heavy picks ... The pick and the spade are here the hewer's only weapons; and the intensity of his toil is proportioned to the hardness of the coal and the shallowness of the seam. The best hewers are those who manage, by ingenious shifts of posture, and great endurance, to bring the coal rapidly and freely down ... (1850s)

Imagine a rough, pitch-dark tunnel, three feet wide and four feet high, through which, bent double all the way, and perspiring in a temperature of 75 degrees, you have to shove a wagon holding seven hundredweights of coal. (1842)

"Boys must be employed to drive; and men to hew" and little could be done to lessen human labour.⁶⁵

In a labour-intensive industry men were systematized more by organisation than by technology. In 1842 the standard operation was a single-shift lasting about eight hours for hewers and twelve hours for boys.⁶⁶ But there is evidence in the 1840s of a move away from the single-shift system towards the double-shift. In times of high demand, collieries would resort to a double-day and night-shift system of twelve hours per shift, with two separate shifts of men and boys. This kind of double shift was thought to be morally and physically injurious and at any one time only about five per cent of collieries worked it. Lord Londonderry, one of the major Northern coalowners, put his name to a coal proprietors' defence against Lord Ashley's charge,

'That in the great majority of these mines night-work is a part of the ordinary system of labour, more or less regularly carried on according to the demand for coals, and one which the whole body of evidence shews to act most injuriously both on the physical and moral condition of the work-people, and more especially on that of the children and young persons.'

The proprietors could only reply that the "double shift is now very rare".⁶⁷ However, increased working in the broken was introducing a second kind of 'double-shift' system involving two, shorter, (hewers'), shifts of six or seven hours each:

... when there are two sets they work about six hours, one after the other ... When the pillars are removed, it is necessary to do it quickly, and therefore two parties are put on ... It is less dangerous work when it is rapidly done ...⁶⁸

Moreover, radical innovation in the mode of working the broken, particularly the introduction of immediate judding, led to a move away from the two-man 'board and pillar' operation to the labour-dividing

'longwall' operation.

Board and pillar, and the single shift, was the traditional mode of operation. In it, one hewer, or one hewer and his 'marra', would cut and fill and prop in their stall, thus moving forward and mining the whole workings as a single unit. Longwall working, in contrast, advanced against a 'long' coal-face as teams of miners relieved each other in one operative process - the first team cutting, the second team filling, the third team propping. This longwall operation naturally suggested a two or three shift system. The initial increase in broken working, and then the slow, uneven, introduction of the longwall process after 1850 meant that by the 1890s the double - 'fore' and 'back' shift system was the dominant operation in the North East coalfield: two six-hour shifts of hewers supported by one twelve-hour shift of boys; 'fore' shift from 4 a.m. to 10 a.m., 'back' shift from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. In 1909 the three shift system was first introduced in County Durham at Murton Colliery.⁶⁴

Contemporaries came to compare the double shift with the situation "fifty years ago" when labour was expected to meet the random demands of a market which could claim double or even treble stints: "Not only has the severity of his labour been much lessened, but the duration of it has been considerably shortened."⁷⁰ But for our period it was trade unionism rather than the double shift which made the greatest achievements in more systematic working. In the detail of the pitmen's work, the union was the only possible agent of such change.

At the coal-face, when the pick was thrown from the shoulder, the pitmen were virtually autonomous. Unlike factory workers their labour was not open to constant supervision, and this freedom the pitmen valued as a hallmark of their craft and as a mark of their status. They could produce, and they could not-produce. They had control over their own labour - they could even 'keep' the needy or the weak (although in

this 1844 case, without thanks, as Jerry eventually betrayed his friends):

Jerry is best known by the name of Pie Hatt, he is a poor, worthless creature, merely kept at the colliery for charity, the hewers have to work all his work, and have had to do so for many years. We hope the men in general will take the hint, and in future make those sneaking lazy dupes set their own props and lay their own plates, and not, while we are working their work, suffer them to retire in a state which disqualifies them for their work, to sleep.⁷¹

But the union's case was that the hewers' autonomy had not generally acted for the good of the community; that autonomy had not meant independence, but instead, an anarchy of production where men competed against each other in pride, for price, through a culture which celebrated the virtues of manliness and skill as one. Note, in this example from Merrington Colliery in 1858, a trade unionist's frustration at having to survive in a savage system the opposite of all he knows to be good for his community:

There was

A HEWING MATCH EVERY DAY

at this flat, and in order to satisfy the competitors and keep our turn, Bill and I worked like horses, going home after each twelve hours' shift with sore and tired bones. This kind of thing, which went on year after year amongst miners, broke down strong men, and kept down the score price in every district. In fact, it is only too true that this slavish, ignorant, and clumsy competition kept criminal passions⁷² predominant over the better part of the miners' natures,

The industry also suffered from over-expansion, monopoly, and periodic over-production. As whole markets were considered glutted by monopolistic edict, then communities suffered feast and famine. Under such conditions, the most sensible call would be for prudence. The union called for prudence and opposed "this slavish, ignorant competition".

One of the 1825 union's first deeds was to announce its principled opposition to the traditional detail of the pitmen's work. Whilst admitting the owners' case that some workers could earn seven or eight shillings per day, the union claimed these examples to be

untypical. Some eccentrics of gigantic strength might earn high wages but at "the leading collieries" excess earnings were a "moral impossibility":

... have the pitmen to bury themselves in the pit 12 hours per day, work like irrationals, gormandize like cannibals - then work little, get into their holes and live on their grease?

Once the collective principle had been accepted, it remained for the union to legislate for it. The United Colliers' Rules and Regulations stated that their four thousand members (all hewers) were not to earn more than 4s. 6d. per day, and not to work more than eight hours per day. If any hewer earned more than this then the union reserved the right to fine him the whole of his earnings for the day. As money had made him irrational thus would it make him rational.⁷³

This was 'Restriction' - the elemental strategy of Northumberland and Durham miners' unionism in the first half of the nineteenth-century. Restriction was preached and practised whenever and wherever the union was strong enough to do so. Given the measure of the hewers' productive autonomy, restriction was an economic strategy which demanded the persuasion of individuals. For instance, when John Temperley of Craghead - coalfield 'Big Hewer' of the 1840s - restricted himself to do in two and a half hours what it took most men seven hours to hew, then the union had made a personal cultural conversion towards a collective economic salvation.⁷⁴ On those occasions when restriction was broken at places outside the union's control, it seems that the union used public shaming to enforce its influence. In 1843 six hewers had been sent from South Hetton colliery to begin new operations at nearby Murton. Although all six men had abided by restriction at South Hetton, they broke it at Murton. The National Miners' Association reported their action and named names.⁷⁵

Union influence, if sporadic, was persuasive. By 1842 it was accepted that the miners were more systematic in their labour. The

underviewer at Hetton colliery, one of the biggest in the region and a union stronghold since its opening in the 1820s, thought

They were more headstrong men at that time; now they give themselves an hour or so longer, and work more regularly,

- and miners were thankful for the results:

Men and boys do not strive so much for the mastery as they formerly did. He was the best man that could perform the most work and get the largest sum of money. Hewing matches have been frequent, and very often followed up with fighting. These things have been the downfall of the Miners for many years but I feel very thankful that the Union and restricting principle (under the blessing of Providence) are doing away with these things.⁷⁶

This restricted working, in the context of a total union presence, was necessary to a generation of miners who faced the beginnings of fundamental change in their conditions of work: change not only against the complex tissue of a craft-sensibility, but change also in the detailed grain of their labour. Restricted, regulated working was a means of imposing some control on the conduct of this labour under changing conditions. Although the historian can infer no perfect generalizations - work details varying with the twist and turn of seam and strata - by 1843 pitmen of both counties could concur on a general and recent deterioration in their conditions of work.⁷⁷ In March 1843, at a union meeting near Newcastle, speakers Pyle, Embleton, Watson, Brophy, Cloughan, and Swallow all agreed on a new intensity of labour derived from deteriorating conditions:⁷⁸ on the technical intensities of increased water and damp, the increased gas risk and defective ventilation, and the increasing incidence of thinner seams - "On account of the narrowness of the places, we have to crawl to and fro in the tunnels like beasts of burden"; and on the human intensities of a speedier productive operation, the consequence of short-time working where men paid by the piece were pressed to do three days' work in two, and, so it was claimed, do the work with gradually bigger "corves". Corves were basket-tubs, they traditionally held about ten to thirty pecks

and were the unit-measure of the hewer's pay. For the early 1840s

Ben Embleton claimed

In one colliery, there was once a corf [alternative spelling] so big that it held 41 pecks; and woe to the poor hewer who got this unconscionable corf, for it was sure to clean him out! (Great laughter) At last, a sly pitman asked the viewer, as a favour, to make him a present of the corf, that he might use one end of it for a cow-byer, and the other for a piggery! (Roars of laughter) The corf never showed its face in the pit again ... 79

Chapter Three

New Disciplines

The shift system, greater division of labour, and union restriction policies were the beginnings of fundamental change in the organization of work. These beginnings were later complemented by efforts towards a greater disciplining of the workers. The first public declaration that the pitmen were generically inadequate to their task was in 1813. On 25 May 1812, Brandling Main Colliery at Felling, on the Tyne, exploded and killed ninety-two men and boys. Rev. John Hodgson, vicar of the parish, blessed the dead and rebuked the living and argued that the traditional craft-sense of the pitman was not to be trusted by educated men who knew religion and who had read science. On the day after the explosion veteran pitmen from Tyne and Wear assembled at Felling:

Every one had some example to relate of successful attempts in cases of this kind ... Their reasonings and assertions seemed indeed to be a mixture of those prejudices and conceits which cleave to workmen whome experience has afforded a partial insight into the nature and peculiarities of their profession, and not to be grounded on any memory of facts, or to result from a knowledge of the connection between causes and effects ... 80

By 1835 Hodgson's sort of distrust had flowered into a full critique of the pitman's craft. What, we are told, had once been a simple job calling for burly strength and impetuous energy, now was a more complex and technical operation calling for thought and system. The government select committee reported "a wanton neglect of ordinary caution, and a recklessness of danger in defiance of common discretion"; an owner reported carelessness with gunpowder "and my life has been put in peril by such careless acts as one cannot suppose"; a scientist agreed that pitmen were "extremely reckless of accident", whilst a viewer lamented their lack of interest in ventilation techniques and Nicholas Wood concurred that few miners had knowledge "about what is going on in the pits; they exhibit a sort of indifference in that respect". 81

By 1846 the 1835 critique of craft had in its turn been transformed into a theory of class psychological instability. Whether in work accident, or by political misleading, or trade union foolishness, or because of poverty, or irreligion, the mining community was diagnosed as suffering from a flagellatory taste for crimes of social passion. Thus Commissioner Tremenheere reported to the government on the long strike of 1844

... that there was no cause, in any of the grievances ... for a movement so injurious to others as well as themselves. The immediate and effective cause can only be found in the excitability of their peculiar tone and temper of mind ... 82

Owners saw the disciplining of this "peculiar tone and temper" as increasingly necessary. In 1835 John Buddle addressed himself to the recent Wallsend explosion. He affirmed that even if the owners were only interested in their investment, this concern would in itself lead to measures for the safety of their workers:

I will suppose the coal-owners totally destitute of every feeling of humanity, and that they considered the workmen, and all the people concerned, as mere machines of no value, their interest alone, if they had no other feeling, would lead them to avoid such casualties as this ... 83

Buddle went on to tell the select committee how "our magistrates never fail to punish the workmen when they are proved to be guilty of any neglect endangering life", and how he felt that court prosecution was an effective discipline on men facing greater dangers and for owners facing greater risks on capital.⁸⁴ Brief for Prosecution came from Lord Londonderry's concerns in 1832. It illustrates how example was tempered by law in the owners' ultimate use of the courts as agencies of work discipline. Robert Kennedy, hewer, had been reported for rearranging brattices across air courses to stop his candle from going out:

The present prosecution is instituted more for the sake of preserving regularity and preventing accidents ... than with a view of inflicting any severe punishment upon the prisoner. The workings of the Marquis' Collieries are so extensive, and the lamentable effects which might be

produced in consequence of conduct similar ... has induced the Managers ... to take the present proceedings in the hope thatit may be the means of serving as an example to the many others who are employed in the same works.⁸⁵

No doubt collier Kennedy, who had first responded to the viewer's challenge by raising his pick, was suitably quelled by the court. By the 1840s this half-system of legal threat and studied fortuity was coming to be seen as not fitting to the investments (both human and capital) which coalmining represented: the call was for "an organized system of mining".⁸⁶

The discipline of labour's temper was central to such an organized system. The theory and practice of colliery safety pointed to the need for strict worker-subordination from the early 1850s. John Phillips had baldly stated his Royal Society opinion in 1850 that decent engineering alone

... will not ensure safety in a colliery unless there be a vigilant administration, due subordination of authority, constant inspection, and effective discipline.

- and select committees and their witnesses unfailingly underlined that opinion throughout the decade.⁸⁷ Work-rules began to appear in North East collieries in the late 1840s and, under growing government, Coal Trade, and inspectorate pressure, uniform County Regulations were drawn up in 1854.⁸⁸ These Regulations beat-out the correct tempo of the mine: regular operation, proper posting, graded hierarchy, sober conduct, strict discharge -

Workmen and boys are also required to inform themselves of the rules, for which purpose each workman is furnished with a printed copy, which is to be taken care of, as the loss of it will be considered a delinquency.⁸⁹

Castle Eden colliery then introduced one hundred work-rules in 1847. In them, every movement and action of the pitman was pre-decided and controlled; the regularity of all underground habits was stressed; all relationship between miners and supervisory grades was defined; and all job responsibilities, obligations, and duties were allotted.

As a means for greater safety under more difficult conditions, the aim of the rules was to break the degree of autonomy previously enjoyed and to control the pitmen like so much Panopticon-puppetry. Rule nineteen made Restriction solely the company's privilege:

The overmen to regulate, at the commencement of each day, the workings of the different ways in each pit, and the quantity of coals to be worked by each man, so as to equalize as nearly as possible the earnings of the hewers.

Rule thirty-seven, in its statement of extra duties for hewers, rebuked union demands and insulted a whole tradition:

The hewers are to work the different seams according to the plan and in the manner ordered by the owners or their agents, and they are to stow away such quantities of small or refuse coals as the owners or their agents shall require, and are to do the business of the drivers, and set on tubs when it shall be requisite; and the hewers and drivers are, when required by the owners or agents, to put with trams or act as barrowmen.

Similarly, the 1854 County Regulations stressed subordination and hierarchy and fine and offence but, significantly, did not invite pitmen to the conference which drew them up. Owners, engineers, and inspectors met in London in May 1854, but only workers' petitions were considered.⁹⁰

Although the need for safety and rules was accepted by the miners' union (or, what fragmented bureaucracy of it that remained in the late 1840s), the owners never failed to indicate equally that the government was mistaken in expecting either greater discipline or greater safety from printed rules alone. What mattered was who enforced the rules. The union insisted that effective discipline rested in the character of the deputies and overmen, and that as long as these supervisory grades remained 'morally' unfit for the work then there could be no change. Trade union evidence reinforced the gradual realization of a direct relationship between labour discipline, labour supervision, and safety:

Although the actual occurrence of explosions may often be traced to the ignorance or carelessness of the

subordinate agents, or of the workmen, their primary causes even in these cases, must be generally assigned to the want of skill and care in the management of the mine, which has produced the conditions that render this carelessness dangerous.⁹¹

A depressing picture of incompetence and victimization emerges in the 1850s: of supervisory 'safety' grades who were not given to the industrial disciplines of complex mining, and of miners who were not willing to trade their safety for company favour. As the trade unionist Martin Jude testified in 1853:

'Is it generally well known to viewers what men in each pit are inclined to raise difficulties, and what men are not?' - 'Yes'

'And when they find difficulties of various kinds arise they are very apt to pick out those men who they think have been at the bottom of these disturbances, or these combinations of men, and so forth?' - 'Yes.'⁹²

Many deputies and overmen were picked as favourites rather than able men, and Jude's phrase "moral unfitness" well captures the contempt of men of his sort for men of that sort:

In going to the pit was past Storey's house, and saw Bell, the overman, and Barras, a deputy, singing and drinking in the house. They would have to go down the pit between twelve and one o'clock that night. I consider the colliery generally to be in a bad state, and never in a proper state. (Robert Todd)

Many of them do not attend to their duties; they drink with the overmen and deputies, and when the under viewer drinks, all the others must follow as a matter of course. (Martin Jude)⁹³

Against such incompetence and patronage, those men who were on guard for safety needed to be more independent-minded:

The fact is, that if we wish our fellow-workmen to unite in support of their interests, they tell us we are agitators, that they do not want us on the colliery, and that we must seek work elsewhere . . .

. . . and as soon as the men attempt to combine the leading men of the combination receive notice to quit the colliery. In this way they are prevented from combining, and that is a pretty general thing throughout the county of Durham.⁹⁴

In consequence of their own collective feebleness after 1844, and the managerial neglect already mentioned, the National Miners' Association was a staunch campaigner for a government inspectorate of mines. The 1842 Mines Act (5 & 6 Vict., cap. 99) had appointed the first inspector, Seymour Tremenheere, but he was more an inspector of the conditions of the workers (under the Act), rather than the conditions of the workings. Tremenheere had a certain integrity and proved to be an influential educator, but he was neither a miner, nor an engineer, nor was his brief to report on the technical operations underground. In 1849 the Northumberland and Durham miners petitioned the Lords' select committee for "properly qualified Inspectors of Mines (such inspectors being practical miners) . . .", and Swallow and Jude testified for the union with superb clarity of intention:

What the colliers generally want is some one to point out the danger; and if the masters do not remove it, then subject them to a penalty; but give them the option to remove it.

The owners argued back that their viewers were talented and capable engineers and should not be forced to enjoy unsolicited government advice:

I think that if an Inspector is appointed who has the power to go and order in any way, the mode of working the colliery, he then takes the responsibility, and then I think the mine-owner ought not to be liable for any accident which happens in the mine after such orders are given.⁹⁵

The 1849 Report in fact recommended the appointment of qualified inspectors, and the 1850 Act for Inspection of Coal Mines in Great Britain (13 & 14 Vict., cap. 100) appointed four. The 1850 Act, in the main, accepted the owners' plea and granted the inspectorate only powers of insignificant fining. However, by 1852 the select committee had come round to the union's 1849 position:

To increase the power of the inspector is a . . . delicate matter. To this some of the most intelligent of the managers of mines who were examined objected . . .

Your Committee therefore having full regard to the rights

and privileges of private property, but at the same time forming, to the best of their ability, a due estimate of the value of human life . . . consider that they should fail in their duty if they did not recommend that a power should be placed somewhere to enforce precautions and to facilitate the exaction of penalties, where neglect of such precautions was pertinaciously persevered in; and that until those precautions were adopted, there should exist a power to stop the working of the mine.

The 1854 select committee reiterated the call for a larger, better paid and qualified inspectorate, and a more uniform and rigorous approach to safety, and these recommendations were taken up in the 1855 Mines Act (18 & 19 Vict., cap. 108).⁹⁶ In 1860, after ten years of regulation and inspection, the Mines Regulation and Inspection Bill (23 & 24 Vict., cap. 11) was passed. The new Act not only increased the powers of the inspectorate but also legislated for fundamental changes in the operation of collieries - making them safer and making them more uniform.

Those who stressed discipline also called for education. John Phillips wanted mining schools for officials because

. . . knowledge is nowhere more powerful, obedience nowhere more necessary than in a coal mine.⁹⁷

Education was to supplement discipline. An appropriate schooling would make for "better management and care on the part of the overlookers" and "less recklessness on the part of the workmen". An early-century distrust of the gifts of education was replaced by a mid-century

theory of its uses:

When we look at the enormous money value of the iron and coal . . . the comparative expense of producing auxiliary schools in the country would be next to nothing . . .

and Inspector Mackworth, if he recognized education, also recognized control -

'Do you think that education of the colliers and overmen would be the means of insuring better discipline?' -
'I think that the education of both is of very great importance . . . In the case of the collier, he becomes more careful and attentive; and by adopting a system of reward or promotion for education and intelligence,

I think the best system of discipline may be introduced into the mines ... Education is an instrument of great power for good which position has placed in the hands of the master if he will use it aright.⁹⁸

Because "the elder people are not so attentive to particular orders as might be expected", some mining schooling for children was also advocated. Martin Jude believed in a system of village education in literacy, numeracy, and the socialization of local children in the system of the mine.⁹⁹

This education, properly constituted, was not to be about "merely abstract things, but really valuable knowledge" and was presented as a means of adapting pitmen to their changing conditions of work.¹⁰⁰

Socialization in turn was to counter that endemic collective instability in the community. Education would train characters for discipline as it informed minds for safety. Colliery schooling would help condition the habits and responses of its proletariat: it would regularize its calendar -

[Idle Monday is] ... one of the greatest indications, of the general low condition of intelligence ... and long before there cease to be idle Mondays the population will be better educated, and that will lead to fewer idle Mondays;

it would make for punctuality -

Discussing what this education should be, he enlarged upon punctuality in attendance as of great importance at mining schools;

and it would make for a work-force thoroughly sober, industrious, and "redeemed" -

Educated boys would be less reckless and do better work, and when these boys become men their labour in the days redeemed from dissipation and idleness would more than recompense the employers for any sacrifice they have made in allowing them to go to school.¹⁰¹

This training in proletarian temper represented a bourgeois taste for proper character in its workers. As "Ignorance cannot detect its own wants" the real proletariat had to give up the right to its own authentic existence:

To teach children to read, to write, and to cipher, may be within the capacity of many an ordinary labouring man, made into a schoolmaster after some accident disabling him from work. But all persons are now agreed that that is not education.¹⁰²

What finer referee of a proper industrial character than the insurance companies? Colliery doctor A. Davidson told the select committee in 1866 that whereas in the past no insurance company would accept a pitman they were now actually canvassing the collieries for customers.¹⁰³

The point is that the miners were the subjects of a changing social perception: in 1854 it was explained that the North East pitmen, unlike Cornish iron miners, were straightforward wage labourers and "have to depend more upon other persons", whilst one year later William Whellan's topography praised the "due subordination" "constant inspection" and "effective discipline" -

The great Newcastle mines may be said to be established upon a system of effective and excellent discipline, which has been arrived at by degrees, and has been much improved within a comparatively recent period.¹⁰⁴

That this perception was something of which those who dealt in such things were apparently confident by the last quarter of the century. Henry De la Beche saluted the new miner who "works more as a machine, or a soldier", and in 1870 Rev. J. C. Street said he had once heard the mining community described as "rude and barbarous" but now "Never was there a greater libel published upon an industrial class, so far as the miners of Northumberland were concerned."¹⁰⁵

In 1842 more conservative owners had opposed the growing faith in education on the grounds that it was irrelevant and would damage the ancient line of bred and born pitmen. To be skilled, the miner must start young, "... we cannot well dispense with the service of small boys."¹⁰⁶, Buddle saw any outside interference in the tradition of the job as likely to impair the skills needed:

What we have to guard against is any obnoxious legislative interference in the established Customs of our peculiar race of Pitmen. The stock can only be kept up by breeding - it never could be recruited from an adult population. It is

like bringing Lads up to the Sea - only the Pit Lad's life is incomparably better and more comfortable than the Sailor's. But if our meddling morbid humanity mongers get it infused into their heads, that it is cruel, unnatural, Slavery to work in the dark - and to be imprisoned 12 hours a day in the Pit, a Screw in the system, will be let loose ... ¹⁰⁷

By the turn of the century this bred and born 'stock' no longer existed; it had since been fitfully buried under an eventual 239,000 men, fifty million annual tons, ¹⁰⁸ and the maturation of those work changes we have glimpsed in chapters two and three - loss of caste, shift work, division of labour, re-organisation of labour, regulated and disciplined working. A labour force had changed its social character: "the economy of the mine is not less perfect than that of any well-ordered establishment above ground", and the pitman was more and more seen as one of its operatives. ¹⁰⁹

The pitman's contract of hire, the Bond, was also an article of labour-regulation and therefore changes in its form and content are central to Part I. More importantly, changes at work are rarely unconnected to changes in society ¹¹⁰ - their relationship is reflexive and the Bond can provide integrated evidence on each. A legal contract about productive relations, the Bond also mediated social relations and helps understand the pitmen over time both as a productive and as a social group. ¹¹¹

Chapter Four

The Bond

The first recorded bond is for 26 November 1703-04 at Dawson's Pit, Benwell Colliery, near Newcastle, and is kept at the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, Newcastle.¹¹² Complete bonds exist for the eighteenth-century only in random fashion and there appears to be a dearth until the later 1760s when sporadic examples appear.¹¹³ For the 1760s and after I have discovered sufficient bonds to make some sort of analysis feasible, until, in the early nineteenth-century, the character of the Bond changes so radically, and alternative sources of evidence present themselves so readily, that the insufficiency and randomness of evidence is no longer a serious problem.

The origin of the Bond system for pit labour is obscure, but the most likely explanation is that it was a late seventeenth or early early eighteenth-century attempt by owners to stabilize their labour force.¹¹⁴ In Appendix pp. 187-89 in order to acquaint readers with the style of documentary evidence used, I have reproduced a 1766 bond from Bushblades Colliery in County Durham.

The form and function of the Bond had changed significantly by 1850. Chapter Four will look at the Bond in itself as a contract of productive relations and Chapter Five will consider the history of the binding. Between an analysis of a changing contract and the history of the pitmen's response to that contract there will necessarily be a small element of overlap in the major events of the period.

i) Pay and Economic Structure

As the basis of productive relations the Bond determined how much a pitman could earn from his labour. It did so by contracting rates of pay for his work, rates of fine for any absence or unsatisfactory work, and certain allowances payable by custom or negotiation.¹¹⁵ Although

the logic and organization of bonds became more uniform into the nineteenth-century, the rates of pay, fine, and allowance remained peculiar according to seam, pit, and colliery. Given these differences, and the obvious differences which would have appertained between workers thus paid by the piece, the Bond is a necessary but in no way a sufficient source from which one can make inferences about the collier's actual income. In fact, the Bond alone is unsuitable evidence for the community's standard of living; there are just too many variables according to time, place, and manpower.

Differences in the place of work constitute an obvious variable. Whilst drivers were paid by the day, hewers and putters were paid by the piece.¹¹⁶ Rates of pay could differ in one colliery between different seams. In 1804 at East Denton and West Kenton collieries hewers earned 3s. 1d. per score in the Low Main seam but 5s. per score in the Benwell Main seam. Moreover, a single seam was subject to geological shifts which affected extraction. Thus, at Bushblades in 1766 (Appendix pp. 187-89) there were differences between the Hutton seam and the 'Top' or 'Hard' seam, as well as differences between various areas of the Hutton seam: 1s. 8d. per score for the North and Prosperous pits, 1s. 11d. per score in the Hopewell pit.¹¹⁷ Rates also differed between extraction in the 'whole' mine and extraction in the 'broken' mine. At the Lanchester Fell group of pits the price was 1s. 7d. per score in the whole mine and 1s. 3d. in the broken; at Byker and St Anthony's colliery in 1770 the price was 2s. 6d. per score in the whole and 2s. in the broken; at Denton and Kenton in 1804 the Low Main seam prices were 3s. 1d. per score in the whole, 2s. 11d. in the broken, and the Benwell Main seam prices were 5s. per score in the whole and 4s. 10d. in the broken. Whether the hewer submitted 'round' or 'small' coals also made a difference to his price. At the Delaval pits in 1770 the hewer received 2d. per corve for round coals and 1d. for

small coals; at Byker Hill in 1773 the price was 1s. 3d. per score for rounds and 1s. for smalls, and by 1776 the Delaval pits had increased their prices to 2¼d. per corve for rounds and 1½d. per corve for smalls.¹¹⁸ Although the earliest 1703 bond quotes putters as being paid by the day (1s. 10d.), putters came to be as dependent as hewers on the physical features of their workplace. For instance at Charlaw Colliery in 1767 putters were paid 6d. per score for basic runs of sixty and a hundred yards with 1d. extra per score for every twenty yards over that distance; at Kenton and Denton putters were paid either 8d. or 10d. per score depending on the rate of incline over an average of sixty yards. Similarly for 'headway' work by hewers: at Burnmoor Colliery in 1787 it was priced at 1s. 4d. per yard, whilst at Walker Colliery in 1788 it was priced at 10d. per yard.¹¹⁹

There was also variation between collieries in the measure of their tubs. Tubs (or corves) at Penshaw Colliery in 1793 were expected to measure twenty pecks, with one peck equalling an "eighteen quart Winchester measure"

... of Clean pure Coals both round & small (the round Coals not to exceed 14 or 15 Inches at most Square) mixed together & free from any Mixture of Top or Roof-Coals.

The discrepancy in price between Charlaw Colliery in 1767 at 1s. 1d. per score of tubs may seem enormous until one notices that at Byker hewers had twenty-peck corves and at Charlaw they had eight-peck corves. The peckage of respective corves obviously affected score prices and take-home pay in an important way.¹²⁰

A major wage-variable in a job which demanded so much strength and skill, must have been actual differences in strength and skill between pitmen. For Ouston Colliery 'B' pit in County Durham for the fortnight 28 October to 11 November 1834¹²¹ I have tried to measure differences in pay amongst those twenty-three hewers who worked every one of ten working-days in what should have been a twelve working-day 'fortnight'. (There were forty-nine hewers in

the pit and we are reminded of the further variables of accident, illness, and short time.) 'B' pit's rates of pay were:

Hewers	3s. 3d. per score	49 men
Putters	1s. 5d. per score	20 men
Drivers	1s. 2d. per day	9 men
Trappers	10d. per day	6 men
Rolleywaymen	2s. 4d. per day	2 men
Cranemen	2s. and 1s. 6d. per day	2 men
Helpers-up	1s. 6d. per day	2 men
Barrowway cleaners	1s. 2d. per day	1 man
Water-leaders	1s. 2d. per day	7 men
Shift-workers	3s., 2s. 10d., 2s. 6d., 3s. 4d. per day	9 men
Deputies	3s. per day	2 men
	2s. per day	1 man
Switch-keeper	1s. 2d. per day	1 man

Rates of pay, Ouston Colliery 'B' pit, October-November 1834

For those twenty-three hewers who worked every working-day in the fortnight their pay on 11 November was:

Edward Pigg	£1 16s. 1d.	George Elliott	£1 1s. 11d.
George Eddy	£1 16s. 0d.	Ralph Maddison	£1 19s. 9d.
John Banks	£1 13s. 1d.	Robert Hall	£1 17s. 3d.
John Bainbridge	£1 12s. 0d.	Thomas Smith	£1 13s. 11d.
Wm. Bell	£1 14s. 10d.	John Hall	£1 16s. 4d.
Andrew Smart	£1 15s. 7d.	John Ridley	£1 18s. 8d.
George Dunn	£1 13s. 11d.	Francis Carr	£1 17s. 1d.
Thomas Davis	£1 4s. 7d.	James Haswell	£1 19s. 0d.
John Gray	£1 14s. 10d.	Edward Hall	£1 15s. 11d.
John Simpson	£1 2s. 9d.	Edward Kennan	£1 19s. 6d.

Robert Usher	£1 19s. 6d.	Charles Mayson	£1 18s. 3d.
John Carr	£1 14s. 10d.		

Hewers' pay, Ouston Colliery 'B' pit, 28 October - 11 November 1834

The group's average pay for the ten days was £1 14s. 6d. Significant wage differences are noticeable but it is difficult to know how much difference was due to strength and skill and how much was due to various bonuses for difficult or extra work. For example, Ralph Maddison at £1 19s. 9d. was the best paid hewer: 1s. 9d. of his pay accrued from "ramble" (a thin stratum of shale above the seam which caused separation problems - 4d. per score bonus), and 8s. 4d. accrued from ten yards headway work at 10d. per yard. George Elliot at £1 1s. 11d. was the lowest paid hewer: all of his pay, except one yard headway, was derived from straight score price. Headway prices rose from 10d., to 1s., to 1s. 2d. per yard, as the work grew 'narrower' (less than three yards width); there was 4d. per score more for 'wet work' (John Hall got wet but earned 3s. 8d. extra for his trouble); and 4d. per yard extra was given to headway made by two hewers to work in one board - 'double work'.

Extras, bonuses, and the coal itself could differ from work place to work place. To ensure equal opportunity for good or bad places, traditionally the pitmen would draw quarterly lots, ('cavilling'),¹²² and within significant margins the pitman's wage would differ by the gamble of a lottery. But the pitman did charge a price for his craft; he worked by a tariff of penny prices and faint extras which added up to a wage; and the tariff stood by precedent and by bargain. His bargaining would be ceaseless as his conditions constantly shifted, but his bargaining-power would primarily depend on local demand for pitmen. 'Binding money' seems to have been traditionally an annual payment of 1s. or 6d. to 'seal' the agreement of the bond, but during periods of labour shortage was used to entice hewers to the

colliery in question. In 1766 Bushblades Colliery was a new excavation binding sinkers and drifters (a 'drift' was an exploration for coal; 'sinkers' dug and constructed the shaft) as well as hewers and putters. A new colliery demanded new labour and the binding money was extraordinarily high at £1 2s. for hewers and 11s. for drivers:

67 @ 22/-	£73 14s. 0d.
2 @ 31/6	3 3s. 0d.
35 @ 11/-	19 5s. 0d.
1 @ 3/-	3s. 0d.

To Drink, Brid (sic), & Cheese at

Sundry places - to the 18th Novr. 1766	£10 10s. 0d.
	<u>£106 15s. 0d.</u>

In 1762 the Delavals of Northumberland paid binding-moneys at two rates over the six weeks 25 August to 8 October. The evidence is a mere scrap, but, given the named importance of Thomas Dury, and the fact that only seven were bound at the higher price, we could be dealing here with a hewing elite enticèd for two guineas:

14 bound @ £1 11s. 6d.	Aug. 25-29
Thos. Dury bound @ £2 2s. 0d. on	Aug. 29
7 more bound @ £1 11s. 6d.	Aug. 30 - Oct. 1
3 bound at £2 2s. 0d. on	Oct. 2
10 bound at £1 11s. 6d. on	Oct. 2-8
3 bound at £2 2s. 0d. on	Oct. 8 ¹²³

Thus, in assessing the moving arithmetic of the pitmen's pay the Bond is too inflexible a guide. Ned Rymer recalled for 1860

I started to hew, and got what was to me a hard cavil. I had to make 'juds' and fire shots, and unless this could be done promptly and with great caution, all the labour expended could be easily thrown away. I was unable to earn anything like a sufficient wage in hewing hard coal .∴. 124

No legal article can be wholly trusted for a labour process whose return was attained in distance and volume, whose quality could crumble

in a day, and whose nature was at once so simple and so complex:

You went and worked with a man, with a collier getting the coal. The first man I worked with paid me 2/6 a day. Then, after a while, if you were any good, somebody else would say to you: 'what's he paying you?' 'Half a crown'. 'Right, come with me if you like, and I'll give you 2/9'.
(South Wales, 1906) 125

In spite of inherent difficulties involved in using a source like the Bond, historians have nevertheless attempted general statements about the miners' standard of living in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On wages, general consensus has gathered at a 'stagnant' (or under-researched, or non-committal) eighteenth-century (which could, however, pace Adam Smith and Arthur Young, be more remunerative for miners than for other 'labourers') which experienced rises during the labour shortages of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars only to decline thereafter into the difficult 1830s and 1840s (better years, though, than eighteenth-century stagnant ones) before picking up again in the 1850s.¹²⁶ For wage graphs from two historians see Appendix pp. 190-91. These levels must be used tentatively and only in full engagement with all other evidences. Alone, they do not represent the facts of the matter. The Bond itself is only a guide to income and it differed from colliery to colliery; any estimate of income inferred from bonds can only be an estimate of a guide and to accept this as in some way typical or 'average' for time and place can only in turn be an estimate of an estimate of a guide. For example, Dr Hair tries to come to terms with this wage-enigma by moderately estimating the estimates of contemporaries. Sir Frederick Eden, John Buddle, trade unionists, occasional paybills, Newcastle Courant 3 May 1800, the Penny Magazine and their like are invoked for their estimates of the pitman's wage. And when estimates differ, answers probably lie, moderately, in the middle: in 1825 unionists said 15s. per week and owners said 20s. - "The truth perhaps lay between these two estimates", in 1844 both sides differed again - "The owners said that earnings had

been $3/9\frac{1}{2}$ per day but by now both sides were expert at producing misleading figures"; "In 1825, Jarrow masters and men argued before a magistrate as to whether a peck contained sixteen or eighteen quarts" - sheer joy for Dr Hair to tell us that the magistrate ruled a peck to be 17.5 quarts and that both sides had exaggerated.¹²⁷ In order to indicate shifts in the miners' standard of living Hair transplants Silberling's 1923 cost of living index on to his wages graph. (Appendix p. 190.) Apart from brief spasms at the turn of the century and from about 1817-19, this graph shows wages to be comfortably above costs throughout the first forty-five years of the century. However, Silberling's index is based upon grotesque assumptions of statistical convenience about the British worker during the period and cannot be trusted as a cost of living index at all.¹²⁸

If wage and cost of living indexes are inaccurate due to their impossible historical terrain then the social historian must tread carefully across them. There is no statistical knowledge directly to bear our research. There are instead some random figures, and some intelligent estimates which should be used within a cooperative of evidences about the pitman's social economy.

It is in view of the randomness of evidence that the importance of a run of bonds (Walker Colliery 1780-98) makes itself felt.¹²⁹ Real improvements in rates and extras over the period are matched by efforts towards greater control over production and the breaking by owners of traditional obligations in "idle time". Hewing prices rise from 2s. 3d. per score basic in 1780 to 3s. per score top price in 1798: in 1783 the (newly opened?) Gosforth pit enters at 2s. 6d. per score, and is joined by the Henry pit at the same rate the following year; in 1792 the (newly opened?) Jane pit enters at 2s. 9d. per score, only to go on to 3s. in 1795 with the Gosforth and Henry pits following at 2s. 9d. Putting and driving prices also appear to improve: in

i. Rates and fines, putters and drivers at Walker Colliery 1780-98

	Putting Prices	Extras per 60 yds.	Horse drivers	Fines
1780	8d. per score	1d. per 20 yds.	1s. per day	1s. per fault
1781	8d. per score	1d. per 20 yds.	1s. per day	1s. per fault
1782				
1783	8d. per score	1d. per 20 yds.	1s. per day	1s. per fault
1784	8d. per score	1d. per 20 yds.	1s. per day	1s. per fault
1785				
1786				
1787				
1788	8d. per score	1d. per 20 yds.	1s. per day	1s. per fault
1789				
1790				
1791	8d. per score	1d. per 20 yds.	1s. per day	1s. per fault
1792			1s. per day	1s. per fault
1793			1s. per day	1s. per fault
1794				
1795	8d. per score. 1s. 4d. per day (a)	1d. per 20 yds.	1s. per day	1s. per fault
1796				
1797-1798	11d. per score	1d. per 20 yds.	1s. per day	1s. per fault

(a) 1s. 4d. per day introduced for sledge-horse drivers

11. Rates and rates, newers at Walker Colliery, 1/30-95
 (Jane pit, Gosforth pit, Henry pit)

	Binding Money	Hewing prices	Score: Peck, per corf	Extra for increased peckage	Headway Work	Wall work	Stenting work	Board work
1780	1s.	2s. 3d. per score	20 pecks		10d. per yd.	8d. per yd.	8d. per yd.	6d. per board
1781	1s.	2s. 3d. " "	20 "		10d. " "	8d. " "		6d. " "
1782								
1783	1s.	2s. 3d. " "	20 "		10d.(a) " "	8d.(a) " "	8d.(a) " "	
1784	1s.	2s. 6d. " "	20 "		10d. " "	8d. " "	8d. " "	
1785								
1786								
1787								
1788	1s.	2s. 6d. " "	20 "		10d. " "	8d. " "	8d. " "	
1789								
1790								
1791	1s.	2s. 6d. " "	22 "	According payment	10d. " "	8d. " "	8d. " "	
1792	1s.	2s. 9d. " "(b)	22 "		1s. " "	10d. " "	10d. " "	7d. per board for narrow
1793	1s.	2s. 9d. " "(b)	22 "		1s. " "	10d. " "	10d. " "	7d. " "
1794								
1795	1s.	3s. 0d. " "(b)	22 "		1s. " "	10d. " "	10d. " "	7d. " "
1796								
1797-98	1s.	3s. 0d. " "(b)	22 "		1s. " "	10d. " "	10d. " "	7d. " "

(a) prices higher at Gosforth pit by about 4d. per yard
 (b) these are Jane pit prices. Gosforth and Henry pits moved to 2s. 9d. per score in 1795

(c) introduction of agreement to separate 'round' coals from 'small' coals, and 'kirvings' (smalls from wedging work preparatory to blasting)
 (d) 'band' is an interstratification of stone or shale with coal

Double work	Narrow work	Headway fines	Hewing fines	Notice requested to check measure	Extra hewing	Wet work	band excess	new pillar work
1d. score extra	6d. per yd. extra	3s. per fault	3 quarts foul 6d. per corf	7 days				
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "				
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "	3d. per score extra at Gosforth			
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "			2d. per yd. at narrow if over 2" extra	
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "				(narrow headway if over 2" extra wall stenting)
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "				
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "				
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "				
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "				
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "				
" "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "				
4d. " "	6d. " " "	3s. " "	" "	7 "		3d. per score	3d. per score when band exceeds 2"	2s. 2d. per score for new pillar working

1795 underground horse drivers are introduced at 1s. 4d. per day, and in 1797 putting prices rise to 11d. per score. In 1792 headway, wall, and 'stenting'* work increase by 2d. per yard and board-work is reintroduced for the first time since 1781 at a 1d. per yard more; in 1793 double-work extras rise from 2d. to 3d. per score and in 1797 each 4d. In 1797 extra payments are introduced for wet-work. Headway and hewing fines appear to remain stable.

Although rates and extras rise over the period, three new clauses in the bond appear which had serious implications for the pitman as contractor. First, in 1792 the pitmen undertook to separate 'round' coal from 'smalls' and 'kirvings'; this undertaking was bound to increase the incidence of 'foul' measure and the hewing-fines accordingly.. Secondly, also in 1792, the owners extricated themselves from the payment of idle-time money until fourteen days afterwards; as in the 1793 bond -

... do what ... shall think needful to be done in the said colliery ... from any length of time not exceeding in the whole space of fourteen days without paying.

Thirdly, in 1797 the pitman was made responsible for the refunding of lost or broken equipment..

High war-time demand for labour brought unprecedented prosperity. This prosperity forestalled the potential implications of separation and idle-day agreements of the kind introduced at Walker in 1792. When, after the war, these clauses were applied by owners as instruments for maintaining surplus in competitive conditions then they become major issues of contention and the goad for trade union consciousness.

Post-war difficulties resided primarily in the structure of the Coal Trade itself.

*A stenting is an opening between two headways through which the air circulates.

	Agreement to do each others work where necessary	Coals Allowance	Equipment	Idle Time	Absence from work
1780	Yes	18d. per fother	candles, oil, etc. supplied - not picks	payment for hewers	1s. per day
1781	Yes	18d. " "	" "	1s. per day	1s. " "
1782					
1783	Yes	18d. " "	" "	1s. per day	1s. " "
1784	Yes	18d. " "	" "	1s. per day	1s. " "
1785					
1786					
1787					
1788	Yes	3d. per week	" "	1s. per day	1s. " "
1789					
1790					
1791	Yes	3d. " "	" "	1s. hewers/ 6d. drivers	1s. " "
1792	Yes	3d. " "	" "	1s. hewers/ ^(a) 6d. drivers	1s. " "
1793	Yes	3d. " "	" "	1s. hewers/ ^(a) 6d. drivers	1s. " "
1794					
1795	Yes	3d. " "	" "	1s. hewers/ ^(a) 6d. drivers	1s. " "
1796					
1797-98	Yes	3d. " "	all tools and equipment lost or broken to be replaced	1s. hewers/ ^(a) 6d. drivers	1s. " "

(a) 14 days idle time allowed before owners are obliged to pay idle time-money

iii. Extra agreements, Walker Colliery, 1780-98

The North East Coal Trade was an oligopoly of producers ranging in size from giants like Lord Durham ('vended' in 1828 at 126,484 chaldrons) to the shareholders of Usworth Colliery ('vended' in 1828 at 8,847 chaldrons)*. ¹³⁰ Appendix p. 192 reproduces the Tyne regulation for 1828. 'Vending' was the term given to the limiting of production; limitation was set by 'bases', 'multipliers', and 'issues'. The oligopoly would set an annual base for the Tyne collieries, say, 800,000 chaldrons, and Wear and Tees collieries would be allotted a multiplier of that base, say, two-thirds and one-third. The base was only an approximation of actual output, set for reasons of proportional representation. Actual allowed output was agreed by the oligopolistic executive, the United Committee, every fortnight. The Committee made 'issues': it knew how much it wanted to produce and controlled the competitive element between collieries by the same system of base and multiplier. Thus a colliery with a basis of 50,000 chaldrons would be issued at, say, 25:1000, and allowed to sell 1,250 chaldrons for that fortnight. A tally of 'overs' and 'shorts' related to what collieries were allotted, and what they actually managed to over-produce or under-produce. Proportions per colliery were mainly a factor of their respective capacities, and partly a factor of their ascribed qualities ('best' or 'Wallsend', round coals). Coal prices were made by the bigger collieries stating their intended price for 'best' coals and the smaller producers shuttling into line behind them. Disagreements between parties - usually about overs and shorts - were referred to arbitration and after 1833 a security of £20 per 1000 chaldrons was paid for fining purposes.

The vending mechanism was intended to put North East owners in a situation of permanent monopoly. Levels of profit were not to be left to the vagaries of competition, nor to the guessing-game of demand.

*The 'Newcastle Chaldron' was a measure containing 53 cwt.

The market was to be controlled - fortnightly. The fortnightly quantity was set by comparing those prices fetched in London with the price asked by the Trade at the place of shipment plus the average freighting charge. Then, if the prices fetched were considered to be above a "fair price" ("which is a price something below what the Coals from other districts can be supplied at")¹³¹ then more supply was "issued" and prices moved down, down below the economic prices of other coal producing regions. On the other hand, if fetched prices were considered to be less than "fair" then "issued" supply was curtailed and prices moved up. Because it already dominated the London market, the Coal Trade believed it could permanently keep other coalfields out by tipping supply this way and that as it saw fit. Thus the mystifying Vend muffled its own internal competition and blocked the external competition of South Wales, Scotland or Yorkshire.

All of these intensely material matters were held together by a key concept: the concept of "best coals". Giving evidence before the 1830 select committee John Buddle was drawn into a closely argued sequence over the concept of "round" and "small" coals. Buddle told the committee that there was "no prohibition to the sale of small coal" provided he received "a remunerating price" for it. Questioned further, Buddle answered that by "remunerating" he did not mean cost price, or even a profitable price, but "a price that would pay him as well as the large coal". Apparently baffled by this, the committee asked:

'As a large proportion of this [small coal] is wasted, would not the smallest price he could realize beyond the expense of sending it to the spout be of the nature of a saveall to him?' - 'Not if it prevented him selling a chaldron of round coal'.

Asked if "the refusal to sell the small coal force[d] the use of round coal in its stead?" Buddle replied that that "certainly is our object". "Round" or "best" - often called "Wallsend" - coal, it became clear, was a concept defined neither by aesthetic nor use-value but by a

two shilling "question only of profit":

... if I am the manager of a colliery for any gentleman, he would expect me to make the most profit of it I could, and I certainly should not conceive I was doing him justice or conducting his concern properly if I sold an unprofitable article or an article upon which I could get only 6d. instead of selling an article upon which I could get half a crown.¹³²

The concept of "best" coals kept up prices and served as a marker from which other coals took their price.¹³³ Moreover, "best" coals worked also to the advantage of shippers and retailers. Coal was sold by measure in London and smashed coal meant more measure for the same weight. At every stage between northern "skreening" and metropolitan consuming there was breakage; no "consumer in London ever receive [d] one chaldron of coals in the same large state that it was in when it was delivered to the shipowner".

'When you say there is a taste in the market for the purchase of round coals, do you not believe it to be the taste of other persons than the consumers?' -
'Yes, I conceive it to be the taste of the coalbuyer, because there is more scope for breakage; he can break down the large coal into chingle'.¹³⁴

The rounder the coals shipped, the rounder the profits made from their breakage.

The structure of the Coal Trade obliged its pitmen, on pain of fining, to produce "that fictitious article"¹³⁵ of best coals, a concept which was the crucial unit of oligopoly. Small coals were either held off the market or were dumped abroad at cheaper prices than in England.¹³⁶

'Smalls' only existed to provide the fiction of 'best':

'Are you able to state whether there is anything in the state of what is called the small coal, that is, a coal partially pulverized, that renders it inapplicable to the ordinary purposes of fuel, or is it prevented only by artificial circumstances from being so applied?' -
'It is only by artificial circumstances; the small coal of our collieries is of the best quality'.¹³⁷

By the 1830s the North East Coal Trade was proving to be not only wasteful of natural resources (Buckland fretted about it at Oxford),¹³⁸ expensive for the consumer, and overbearing on its workers, but it was

also increasingly beset by economic problems. An industry structured to constrict was, in fact, expanding; and it was expanding not because it wanted to but because it needed to.

Up to the late 1820s overall demand seems to have been profitably matched by extending supply - although the capacity of the industry, in capital at least, was estimated at between 50% and 100% more than its output.¹³⁹ However, between 1828 and 1834 there was only intermittent agreement to regulate, which led to short-run scrabbling by some owners to make a run on the Vend, and long-run scrabbling by other owners to reorganize it. In "fighting trade" (as bouts of non-regulation were called) prices dropped dramatically (see Appendix p. 193) and collieries competed one with another in games of internecine book-keeping. The severe strikes of 1831-32 bludgeoned delicately-principled "overs" and "shorts" and added further to the disorganization. The Vend managed to re-group in 1834 but found its traditional structure under considerable strain. During the 1830s there was no shortage of capital to finance new colliery inland ventures and the period 1822-43 saw a speculative boom in rail and coal investment [see above, pp. 4-5] More distant, but no less threateningly, Welsh coal was developing a seaborne trade with London.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, the Vend was caught in the geriatric contradictions of its own evolved logic. In order to raise their 'basis' collieries had to expand productive capacity. Newcomers to the Vend were allotted bases well below their real capacity. In this way the monopoly stoked its own expansion to the obvious detriment of its general raison d'etre. Also, not even the Vend could control renegade capital: Brandling was breezily confident about absorbing newcomers in 1836, and the Tees had been formally brought into regulation in 1834, but 1838-42 saw quite desparate efforts to bring recalcitrants into line. To its own great alarm, the Coal Trade was operating under conditions of huge excess capacity:

	1829-36	1836-43
Approximate increase, productive capacity:	40%	60%
Approximate increase, Vend:	30%	30%
<u>Increase in productive capacity compared with increase in Vend</u> (for gross figures see Appendix p. 194)		

As capacity exceeded not effective demand for coal but the existing structure of the industry, against a backdrop of gradually falling prices, then the Vend became more and more difficult to hold together.¹⁴²

Some owners of larger and more efficient collieries, like Nicholas Wood, recognized the economic anachronisms of the Vend and wished to end them. Wood sat happily at the confluence of Political Economy and self-interest and had tried to exploit the 1831-33 disorganization with a thirteen-month (January 1833 - February 1834) refusal to regulate his Hetton concerns. In Wood's evidence to the 1836 select committee one can see the rationale of his actions. He considered the Vend a mollycoddler of weak capital at "an extravagant rate of profit" and wanted to drive the inefficient collieries to the wall.¹⁴³ Selling coals at what another viewer, Matthias Dunn, considered to be below cost price - "So that all now go, helter, skelter",

The Hetton Co. seem determined to carry on with a view of driving certain people to a stand still ...
In the meantime every Colliery is losing money and the Consequences will be ruinous.¹⁴⁴

Asked to explain his ideas in 1836 Wood invoked the imperatives of free trade and the unseen hand of perfect competition:

... the security I should offer would be, that the districts which had other coals to supply, as soon as ever the price got up, to remunerate them for producing them, would immediately produce them. The owner of a coal-field would be naturally anxious to make something of it if it could be made, and he would be limited purely by the consideration whether he could sell to a profit or not.¹⁴⁵

In 1830 it had been estimated that only six Tyne and Wear collieries could survive a period of prolonged non-regulation.¹⁴⁶ The majority of North East owners saw only too well the hand of perfect competition;

they would no doubt have agreed with Dunn's private remarks about Wood's "brutal" approach to the industry; they defended the Vend as a beneficent guarantor of best coals and good employment, and, when its structure generated conflict with its most immediate beneficiaries, the pitmen, they blamed the pitmen.¹⁴⁷

The problems of Labour were generally those "only the penalty of Adam",¹⁴⁸ but specifically according to those other lapses as identified by Malthus.. The structure of the Vend "indulged" the pitmen "with employment"; they suffered from short-time and declining wages because they enjoyed too high wages and produced too many children for the industry to absorb. In 1844 it was calculated that since 1830 labour had increased by 79%, but the Vend's output only by 53%, and that in consequence the Trade was carrying a surplus of 6,800 workers.¹⁴⁹ The Coal Trade thus argued that the pitmen's "feelings of dissatisfaction" were not "guided by a proper consideration of the real cause of depression" because the real cause lay in their own inability to adapt their numbers.¹⁵⁰

Malthusian arguments were pure polemic. They cannot be acceptable comment from an ownership which not only vended coal, but which had also been vending labour since 1806.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless it was the pitmen who were blamed, and who took the brunt of the Coal Trade's gathering difficulties. Fining had always been a clause in Bond agreements. The earliest idle-time clause I have found (1s. per man per day) dates from 1770 and the clause was made standard by Tyne and Wear owners in 1811¹⁵² - but the first half of the nineteenth-century brought changes in the interpretation of both fining and idle-time clauses. They change, as the Bond itself changes, from considerations about the work involved into systematic instruments for the greater rate of exploitation of labour. Thus, as fines were applied more strictly and idle-time payments were avoided as the working-fortnight shortened, then the

pitmen's wages declined. This forty-year deterioration was seized by crises in 1810, 1825, 1831 and 1844, and each crisis was dominated by the issue of fines, idle-time, and a fundamental shift in the nature of the Bond.¹⁵³

ii Exploitation and Control

In 1810 the Trade tried to change permanently the time when the miners were bound from October to January. A January binding would reduce labour's market-advantage of bargaining just before the heavy winter demand for coals. The men objected and broke their bonds. On 10 January 1811, in order to resolve the dispute, the owners made an eleven-point proposal about the terms of the new bond. Four of these points in particular did not accede to the men's demands - one point concerned a January binding (it was later changed to April where it remained until 1845), and another concerned arbitration procedures. The remaining two points of disagreement were about fines and idle-time. Whereas the pitmen disliked the fining system, the owners insisted upon fines for bad measure, foul, splint, or stone; whereas the pitmen wanted immediate payment from the day when the pit was laid idle, the owners insisted that payment (2s. 6d. and 1s. per day, for men and boys) should begin only after three days of continuous idleness. The owners' terms prevailed, but compared with later arrangements these terms were generous: the idle-time clause now applied to the whole labour force, comprehensive sick payments had been incorporated, coal hewed would be paid per corve if the rejected amount was under four quarts, pitmen were permitted to seek work elsewhere if there was none available at their present place.¹⁵⁴

In 1825 the United Colliers published their grievances.¹⁵⁵ They believed their conditions to have declined since 1811. The limit for 'setting-out' corves was now two quarts foul instead of four; there were now more fines for "bad separation" of round and small coals;

fining for short measure was now more frequent. The working-fortnight had been reduced to an average of about nine days, rather than eleven or twelve, and owners were reneging on the guaranteed idle-time payment. Men were laid-off for the three day period and then re-employed on the fourth day to avoid idle-time obligations. The union complained that the result was "sometimes doing nothing, and then again working at extremity".¹⁵⁶ To these changes the owners replied in terms of a depressed trade and market preference for 'rounds' - spontaneous factors conveniently out of their control.¹⁵⁷ The pitmen sensed more definitive reasons: "Our bond is too rigorous" involving

... the removal of many of our privileges ... these things have all been by little and little taken from us.¹⁵⁸

The pitmen claimed that what had once been a bargain was now a fraud and quoted Lord Thurlow's legal judgement that

'If it appear that the person did not understand the bargain he made, or was so oppressed that he was glad to make it knowing its inadequacy, it will show a command over him, which may amount to fraud.'¹⁵⁹

The 1831 and 1832 disputes wrestled over the minutiae of fines and 'set-outs', short-time and idle-time non-payment,¹⁶⁰ but there was a similar sensing of deeper qualitative change. The owners were warned over apparent changes in their attitude to fining,

... the penalty is often too severe ... it seems to me quite evident ... no pitman will voluntarily send up a corf (sic) for which he is likely to incur any fine whatever ...

and further asked to

... particularly guard against the too arbitrary exaction of the terms of their agreements.¹⁶¹

These warnings were not heeded. The 1844 dispute involved the same issues. In December 1843 the Thornley Coal Company took to court three men who had broken their bonds by leaving work. The whole colliery had been on strike since 8 November and the issues raised at Thornley were to be the issues which raged throughout the coalfield during the following summer. Mr W. P. Roberts for the

union defended the three men at the County Court, Durham, and he fought his case on the grounds of recent changes in the interpretation of the Bond. Roberts submitted that to interpret the Bond to rule, as the Company was doing, was not in keeping with its traditional function. He also maintained that recent fining and laying-off procedures had become so bad that pitmen could no longer earn a living at their craft. Roberts had three hundred hewers ready to testify to the truth of this in the manner of John Cookson, first witness:

I don't think a man can get a living if the Bond is to be carried out in its strictness. If a quart of splint is to be fined for, I am sure a man cannot get a living. I will go to gaol before I will go to work under such a bond.¹⁶²

Testimonies like Cookson's could be heard in nearly every colliery. In addition, prices were being reduced as fines were being increased. Coxhoe colliery detailed their reductions since 1837: hewing prices from 8s. to 6s. per score, putting prices from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 1d. per score, driving from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 2d. and trapping from 10d. to 9d. per day.¹⁶³ A joint audit by Thornley, South Wingate, Hetton, Haswell, Kelloe and South Hetton collieries calculated that since 1842 hewing prices had dropped by an average of 23%, putting prices by 26%, driving prices by 10.5%, and trapping prices by 21%.¹⁶⁴ The newspaper of the NMA, the Miners' Advocate, fairly bulged with colliery by colliery reductions through 1843 and 1844.¹⁶⁵ The Coal Trade presented the advances demanded as monstrous, an increase of 28% over 1843 prices,¹⁶⁶ but their figures did not allow for previous decline, a slow fall in wages which had been going on for over a generation. The union replied in the familiar quid pro quo of short-time, low averages, fines and set-outs, although by now there was hoarseness in their tone:

... it is utterly impossible for the most honest and careful workman to avoid sending up a small quantity [of splint and stone]¹⁶⁷

The mining community could not experience a generation of contractual pilfering and remain indifferent to the ideologists of Labour Value. Chartism had snuggled close to the villages during 1838-39 - particularly those clusters of raw, new, capital around Bedlington and Hetton - and these were the networks of men and ideas which were the most confident in their analysis.¹⁶⁸ At South Hetton the pitmen presented their case as creditors, they were owed £204 15s. for hewing, £136 10s. for broken work, £93 3s. 4d. for small coals, £27 14s. 8d. for narrow work, £280 11s. 8d. for putting, £32 1s. 4d. for rolley driving, and £162 10s. for shifting work.¹⁶⁹

Although piecework and the variety of conditions made it possible for contemporaries to argue at length over the rate and extent of the decline, there can be little doubt that there was a decline. The Coal Trade showed an uncharacteristic reticence about the details of the work because it was through detail, in a job paid by detail, that the deterioration was making its effect. Only the very best examples of gross earnings are quoted, only averages projected from rates of pay are used to estimate what could be earned, given constant employment and few fines. Thus the 1842 Commission quoted the fortnightly budget of a family from Urpeth colliery in 1841: there was no Micawberism here amidst the mutton and butter and savings, but the family, with four male wage earners, was an optimum earning unit operating on a full working-fortnight with no instances of fines. The example was not typical and the Trade must have known it. Similarly, the 1836 Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners in its summary of miners' wages since 1816 made no allowance for the deteriorating effect of short-time or fines.¹⁷⁰ The Trade's own published rates, for 1832 and 1844 respectively, admit a decline for those twelve years of about 4s. to 3s. 8d. per day for hewers (score price), and 4s. to 3s. 6d. per day for putters.¹⁷¹ In fact, the 1844 crisis was

precipitated by cuts so large that even the leading coalowner had to admit them to the government as potentially dangerous to the Queen's peace.¹⁷²

In 1797 Sir Frederick Eden's celebrated study had compared the wages of Newcastle pitmen as on a par with Tyneside masons and joiners. Both crafts earned about 15s. per week. In 1834 an optimistic assessment of the pitmen's wage at 15s. per week would only have put them on a par with Tyneside

... persons employed as mere labourers in our Manufactories [who] are paid 14s. or 15s. per week, in processes where no art is required.¹⁷³

This relative deterioration had happened in too short a time for it to pass without feeling. Later, the NMA wryly recalled Adam Smith's eighteenth-century estimate of 18s. to 27s. per week, with employment "as constant as he pleases".¹⁷⁴

At the same time as the Bond's clauses developed into instruments for greater exploitation, the Bond's general function developed into the instrument for greater control.

Of course, the essence of binding had always been to tie down a skilled labour force which was, intermittently, in short supply. This restriction of movement outraged Gladstonian Liberals who later looked back upon an eighteenth-century Bond as virtually feudal in its demands. They reproached it as a bill of serfdom which chained the collier to his employer and retrieved him when he fled. This was not an entirely accurate representation. The Bond was, after all, a bargain of sorts, and 'fleeing' pitmen who were exorted back to their contract, although liable to imprisonment, were usually in a more spirited position than that of the serf. For instance, during the late 1770s the coalfield suffered an acute shortage of labour. In 1778 absconders from the Hartley area were indeed escorted back from the Firth of Forth to Seaton Sluice, but in the same year they won a

'stick', improved their rates, and enjoyed the lucrative attentions of rival employers. In December 1777 the owner of Hartley colliery, Sir John Delaval, suffered the absconsion of five pitmen whose prevailing scarcity-value is illustrated in this letter from Joseph Oxley, cashier for his Northumberland estates:

I am sorry to Say that the Colliers work but badly and that 4 or 5 have within these few days gone off ... [he talks of] ... an enormous sum laid out on binding Colliers and building their House - therefor no Care should be Wonting fo Make up and Overcome that Expence ... 175

In January Oxley wrote explaining that he had "got only 2 of the Colliers back who were absented from your Colliery. The rest being we think set out to Scotland"; but by February "we have the Mortification of hearing that there are young men almost weekly running either to Sea or London service", and in spite of higher pay in March, absconsions and retrievals - "John Crooks is in pursute" - continued throughout the Spring.¹⁷⁶ In April the Hartley men struck work and by June were threatening "to pull down the office; Burn the corves; pull down the Ginns; and pull up the wagon ways".¹⁷⁷ Delaval had to settle with his men but two months later, he suffered further inroads on his labour, this time from the Lambtons at Washington on the Wear. The Coal Trade disapproved of competition and called upon the Delavals and Lambtons to desist. The Lambtons refused and on the morning of a second attempt to lure Hartley men to the Wear, John Crooks had to gallop south to Newcastle and come to an agreement with the Washington agent. This agreement was in the event ignored and Hartley lost nineteen men and two boys. John Crooks wrote his employer a fair story of Coal Trade mutuality. It had not been a good year for the coal concerns of Sir John Delaval:

... it was possitiveley agreed by mutal concent, not to hire of Each others men above Two, & should it so happen, that these were not to have a six pence more than the sum given by Each to their own people. Yet notwithstanding what had passed, the said agent

& Owners of the said Colliery, before many Hours
Elapsed Hired Eleven of Hartley pitmen.¹⁷⁸

Binding times were occasions for competition but the Bond kept that competition to an annual minimum. At times the Trade tried to nullify labour competition altogether - as in 1765 when a new (unfavourable) binding time and a testimonial system of transposing employers was proposed - but never with any solid success.¹⁷⁹ Binding time remained Labour's annual feast when, in times of high demand, the market could jostle for its services.

During the Napoleonic Wars the Coal Trade, faced with a scarcity of pitmen, made determined efforts to nullify competition by organizing the Bond around a Labour-Vend. They were successful and their efforts will be studied later, but after this the Bond began, inevitably, to change its function. As its 'bargain' became increasingly standardized then its controlling function became increasingly marked. This controlling function was grounded in the industry's own excess capacity and the resultant cheapening of labour. Under these conditions the Bond came to be seen as a means for implementing black-lists and getting rid of troublemakers. In 1826 John Wood was rummaging for "unfit subjects to be bound" for Buddle;¹⁸⁰ in 1832 fifty men at North Hetton colliery who had rendered themselves, in their own words, "obnoxious to any of the numerous petty tyrants who lord it over [them]" were unbound to become "ruined and expatriated";¹⁸¹ in 1839 sixty-six men were imprisoned for the Chartist 'Sacred Month' under the Bond and many more victimized at the April bindings;¹⁸² and in the early forties one hears more and more of "what is called the black list", "the list of persons with whom the masters will not enter into a fresh engagement at the end of the year", "so that the work may proceed pleasantly".¹⁸³ Black-listed men were not employed; many of them hailed from Poor Law Unions other than their present one, and, once destitute, the local Guardians could expel them and their families from the parish.

In April 1843 at Wingate, Monkhesledon, and Thornley there were forty such groups of the immigrant-destitute awaiting movement.

As the Bond could unhinge troublemakers, so the Poor Law could push them out.¹⁸⁴

The Bond and blacklist were used sporadically: after the United Colliers' gambit, 1825-26; after Hepburn's strikes, 1831-32; after the Chartist agitations, 1839-40. After the National Miners' Association and the long strike of 1844, Bond and blacklist were used systematically. The strike may have started as an argument over the issue of economic and social deterioration, but it ended as a straight fight for the existence of trade unionism in the coalfield. The owners postulated a monthly Bond and the mining community was only too aware of the kind of control this implied. "P.X." told of the situation where

A refusal or remonstrance to the most unjust demand was answered by the malicious, vindictive threat of,¹⁸⁵
'Why, why, the binding's coming, thou'll be marked,'

but the monthly system would tighten this control twelve-fold. When the strike collapsed in August the owners had won that control. The 1846 Commissioner's Report catalogues a victimized and frightened coalfield. Mr Liddell, manager at Gosforth, thought that

The monthly hiring, by enabling us to get rid of bad characters as soon as they show themselves, will be some security to us ...

and Mr Taylor, for the Trade, felt it was his duty to point out that

... the good workmen will not suffer from it ... only those who are mischievous and idle.

The government Commissioner verified this great moral work,

It is working an improvement in the morals of the people, because they now see that they can be discharged for any misconduct.

Misconduct was a moral question and immorality meant dissent. The Hetton, Ellenmore, and Appleton collieries continued the moral improvement of the people:

We shall very likely have to discharge many before long, and they will be those who engaged in the strike. ¹⁸⁶

By the 1850s the Bond flushed the coalfield of its waste matter once a month and held the miner to productive relations which would have embarrassed former generations. ¹⁸⁷ The 1850s and 60s were hard times for the proselytizing trade unionist. His ministry was invariably an itinerant one. ¹⁸⁸

The Bond changed its form as it changed its function. The 1703 Benwell bond is a simple, gainsharing contract. ¹⁸⁹ Only hewers, 'Barrowmen', and their rates for the job are mentioned. Other matters are left on trust -

If any other Consideracon appear to be deserving either to Hewers or Barrowmen other than that already above menconed it is referred to ye Judmt. of ye viewer.

An Account of the Charge of working Coals etc. in Houghton Colliery from the 14th of September to and with the 6th of October 1771 continues to relate payment directly to work:

To 292 Yards Boreing in the Coal at 3d. per yard	£3 13s. 0d.
To Consideration for the drift Men working wett etc.	2s. 0d.
To John Walker 3 weeks assisting the Overman at 8s.	1 4s. 0d.
To James Lacourt finding Candles, Nails, Oyle, repairing the Horseway & son ^{xx} ₁₃₈ " ^{corv} ₁₉ at 3½d. per	2 0s. 6d. ¹⁹⁰

This is Journeyman Labour's bill on Mr Capital for work done, but it is noticeable that both payment and work have become much more complex matters. They have clearly become, over the years, formal bargaining matters.

In 1805, after nearly a decade of intensifying competition for labour, the Coal Trade decided to resist competitive bargaining between collieries. In the words of a Tyne viewer,

... the demands of the pitmen being so exorbitant, it was tho't preferable to submit to the inconvenience of loss of labour ... the unanimity of the Coal Owners ... will in the end prevail. ¹⁹¹

This decision meant ineluctable changes in the form of the Bond. It changed from a localized myriad of haggings into a more standardized coalfield agreement. Binding money had been the major weapon of inter-colliery competition. The Coal Trade's first action was to fix uniform binding monies for all collieries. This was followed over the next few years by efforts towards "arranging some system of equating the different wages" "to approximate to an equalization of wages".¹⁹² The Binding had always separated and shuffled Labour and Capital, but this change of policy collectivized both parties into a clearer, and hardening, opposition.¹⁹³

The Bond tended towards standardization without fully achieving it, but as mines got deeper and more numerous, and Labour and Capital vied ever more elaborately, the Bond got yet more complex. The Hetton and Elemore bond for 1829 is a nine-page wad of "Rates and Prices ... terms conditions and stipulations ... Penalties and forfeitures".¹⁹⁴ The Ouston Colliery bond for 1835 carries the usual conditions of work but also reaches into the community's social life, "It being distinctly understood and agreed that the Dwelling house provided ... form part of the wages". Workers are allowed no "Galloway, Ass, Gun or Dog" in aforesaid part of the wages, and are made to agree

... that they will not become members of any association by compliance ... [with which] ... they can be prevented from the strict performance of this contract.¹⁹⁵

By the 1820s the Bond had become so complex that the men argued that the traditional way of reading it aloud, once, in the open air, was no longer fitting for the intricate legalistic and technical document which it had become.¹⁹⁶ George Johnson, viewer at Willington Colliery, sought a way round local union cadres who were sent to pick their way through the bond's intricacies. Johnson was advised to appeal over their heads:

If the Union men send their local committees only to hear the Bond read, I shall most certainly adopt the plan, you propose, and not allow it to be read untill the majority of the men are present.¹⁹⁷

But the community clearly had need of their union cadres. Even their squiggly idiosyncratic 'marks' had given way in the nineteenth-century to an anonymous cross, merely the touch on the top of the pen as the viewer marked for them -

...they evidently repose much faith in the viewer, as scarcely one of the witnesses whom I examined could give any outline of the provisions of the agreement to which they had thus formally consented ...

Certainly, Henry Henderson, aged sixteen, had no idea:

Signs the bond himself. Is read over to him in a crowd, but does not much mind what he signs to; thinks it is all right.¹⁹⁸

As the function of the Bond changed from a contract to a control, its form changed from a bargain to a thing to sign if you wanted to work. The pitman with his bargain merged into the labourer with his wage. No matter how unequal respective parties had been, the Bond had undoubtedly once existed as a negotiable contract between Capital, and a Labour force theoretically independent. Attempts to standardize the Bond during the War years had translated negotiation from individual collieries or concerns to the whole coalfield, and by the 1820s inchoate collective negotiation was apparent. At the same time the Bond intensified its controlling and exploitative functions as an ever more complex undertaking. With the introduction of the monthly Bond after 1844 the industry was effectively operating on a free wage-labour basis with one month's notice on either side. The pitmen sensed this deterioration in status and felt that their peculiar craft was being eroded in a political economy of free wage labour. In 1831 they scorned comparison with wage labourers - "we have been compared in point of wages, but not in point of labour"; they recalled their traditional status - "The sun looks not upon any kind of labour that can in the least be compared to hewing and putting"; and they moved to defend an economic anachronism -

The pitman works by the bargain altogether; he works at so much per score, or so much per yard - he gets not a penny, but what is got at the greatest extremity.¹⁹⁹

Chapter Five

The Binding

The history of the Binding is obscure until the 1790s. Wartime labour competition forced the owners into action and, as so often happens in social history, crisis created its own record. Before this the historian has only the occasional bond document and scattered evidences of separate bindings. In this context, for the history of the hiring it is difficult not to agree with T. S. Ashton's comment that "For the student of labour organization in the coal industry the eighteenth century belongs, indeed, to pre-history".²⁰⁰ There is some evidence of a labour shortage in the 1760s with intermittent high binding monies and capitalist attempts to control the labour market;²⁰¹ and there were labour shortages in the 1770s - although it is difficult to know whether the pitmen were able to exploit the situation.²⁰² For instance, Sir John Delaval had labour problems long before the incidents of 1778; in 1772 his viewer told him he had

... very troublesome work withe pitmen this Year ...
some Collys. is giving six pound a man which makes
them very fitt to sit with ...

and in 1773 James Morgan and Michael Stoddart are evidence that Delaval's pitmen were enjoying the advantages of some scarcity:

Mr Waters is inform'd that there is two of his Bound
Keelmen, who have absented themselves from his Work ...
that they are Sinking at Hartley, their Names is James
Morgan + Michael Stoddart, he begs you will be so good
as Immediately discharge them.

Two years later Sir John was suffering "trouble with som of the men who run a way", and although these "promised to behave themselves well for the time to come" we know that the Delavals had this problem at least to the end of the decade.²⁰³ The Walker colliery bonds for the 1780s suggest a new stability in the labour market with binding money steady at a formal 1s. per man, and in 1789 the Tyne collieries were able to

reduce prices due to an excess of men over the Vend. William Thomas, viewer at Denton colliery, reported that his allotted 22,000 chaldrons was

... so much below what was expected woud have been Vended from this Colliery when the last Binding took place that more men were then Bound that the Quantity allowed will admit of being employed to allow them their usual wages of 2s. per day, orders were therefore given to reduce each man to 1s. 6d. ... ²⁰⁴

The early 1790s are packed with labour troubles as seamen, keelmen, and pitmen responded to the general and specific demands of War on the North East economy.²⁰⁵ Towards the end of the nineties the pitmen were clearly in a favourable market position. At first, the owners tried to hide the situation. In 1797 Lord Delaval's agent was relieved to have secured "the necessary Complement, and at a less advance in Wages, than might be expected, from the general appearance of scarcity of Colliers", but in the following year competition from rival collieries forced Johnson to add 5d. to score price, "such concessions as hurt my feelings much".²⁰⁶ The Delaval concerns were around Seaton, to the north-east of Newcastle. As the labour shortage became more noticeable, the main aim of Delaval's agents was to keep their pitmen out of a Newcastle which had become the chief place of inter-colliery rivalry for labour. In May 1800, as the English labouring poor starved from dearth, the Delaval men were supplied with corn to tide them over a lull in trade.²⁰⁷ In the September only twenty out of eighty Delaval men were initially bound and the agent found himself playing a watching and waiting game with the Tyneside owners to the south - who in turn were watching and waiting on the Wearside owners to the south of them:

We have only bound 20, thirteen of them our own, & several from Murton & Blyth or farther ... Many of the collieries in Tyne have got but few bound & am afraid they may not have patience but break out, if they do! or are like to do it! We had better offer a Guinea for our own Men each ... ²⁰⁸

In 1801 Bryers was still trying to save his men from the vulgarity of money, although scenes down on the Tyne were far from modest. They had achieved national notoriety:

The pitmen at those places are hired for twelve months. A particular time of the year in autumn, called the binding time, which continues about a month, exhibits a succession of drunkenness and confusion (to say nothing worse,) equally inconsistent with the interests of the proprietors of mines, as to the peace of society. Public houses are opened for the reception of the workmen of the respective collieries; and should recruiters from other collieries make their appearance ... violence too often follows ... 209

By 1802 the Delaval pitmen are clearly learning of their market strength. At first they bargain cannily and only twenty-five men were bound in two days - "the people came slowly & wished to bargain either for the Boys or better Houses or such like trifles". The new autonomy was difficult to sustain however and in the end they were bound "with some little promises to some of the first rate men which are too trifling to mention". The Delavals had given four guineas binding money per man (four and a half guineas per unmarried man), and although this is an immense sum compared to previous years they could have had more than this had they been aware of their true bargaining strength. Nearby Cowpen colliery had in fact offered seven guineas but, as Lord Delaval's land agent informed him,

Fortunate it was for us that at that time not more than 16 or 18 of our men were unbound ... had we not been so far forward it is not easy to say what would have been the consequence. 210

By 1803 the situation had changed decisively.²¹¹ The pitmen were now appraised of their strength and, in their reluctance to bind for nearly a fortnight there was clearly some cohesion between them. On Friday 30 September Forster announced the bond but the men had already presented a petition and "the general cry was we must have all that is in the petition". Forster went to Newcastle the next day and found a similar situation there: no binding and the pitmen "expect great things supposeing that there would be a scarcity of men as realy is the case".

He rode back in the evening and tried once more to bind his men but without success. On Sunday 2 October he was forced into granting improvements: improvements in the measure at which tubs are laid aside, improvements in the width of the workings, improvements in wet work pay, and 2d. per yard extra for 'holeing' the boards. In spite of this only three men and a boy condescended to be bound. Throughout the following week Forster went "amongst the Colliers" to argue, and took with him the stentorian assistance of Messrs Bryers and Brotherick. After a week of argument only three men had been persuaded, "the others being equally stiff as on the former nights". On Saturday 8 October Forster returned to Newcastle where he found "nothing of consequence" and came back to find his own men equally intransigent. On the Monday the old curmudgeon was finally prised into further improvements by the arrival of competition:

... a man from Hebron Colliery [Hebburn?] came amongst your Lordships workmen and was giving them every information about that Colliery also telling of the great earnings that was there, which inflam'd the peoples minds to a great hight.

At this Forster immediately allowed a further 5d. to score price, 4d. to wall and headway yardage, £5 to £6 Binding money and

... towards the evening they began to come forward but would not still have bound had not Mr Bryers made them a present of a Little hand money ...

of 10s. to £2 10s. according to the calibre of the miner. In 1803, in addition to big binding monies, hewing prices rose by 6d. per score on the Tyne and 7d. per score on the Wear.

In 1804 a 'Brotherhood' had appeared amongst the pitmen.²¹² On 30 September the Hartley colliery bond was read and "heard through very patiently but none would come forward to bind". For the first two weeks of October an uneasy proprietorship waited for one of their number to break, bind, and the scramble for labour which would be the consequence. Moderate advances in score price and binding monies across the coalfield were offered to the Brotherhood "not more than

an Eighth part perhaps of what their petition amounted to" - but the owners dreaded not so much pitmen's eyes facing them across the table as the first fast move of purse-strings under the table. Indeed, Lord Delaval suggested binding first and asking questions afterwards but Bryers warned him of the consequences of such a deed:

But as to this method of going into Newcastle to bind Men, As your Lordship recommended & as I thought then the only likely way to break their combination of Brothering, would be a most difficult business, for it is a fact that if we had begun to bind 20, 40, or 60 Men there, before five could have been agreed with, the whole of the agents would have been authorized by such example to do the best for their respective Collieries.²¹³

On 18 October the fight that everyone feared broke out. After two nights of solid persuasion, Bryers believed he had talked the Delaval men into being bound. However, Wear owners heard of Tyne binding monies of ten guineas and immediately started mentioning twenty guineas, whereupon Bryers put up his money by £1 and in a miasma of promises and rumours the pitmen again refused to bind. At Cowpen colliery nearby, they refused a ten guinea binding. Bryers and the other agents sat in dread of a market explosion. On the 18th agent Bryers was picking his rumours from the roadside,

We met Men & Viewers on the Road this morning & hear at Hadrick's Mill that Agents from Washington on the Wear had engaged several there this morning at 16 Guineas ... Mr Watkin says that for 20 years back such a binding has not happened.

Agent Thomas, on the same day at Denton, recorded even higher monies down on the Tyne;

... on Monday morning several of the Trade began to increase their binding money and to interfere with the Men of the neighbouring Collieries, and before Tuesday night the opposition became generally so violent that Twenty Guineas were given for a single Man ...²¹⁴

Thomas was thankful to get away with injuries to his purse of 1s. and 4d. advances in two seams and a maximum binding money of "seven Guineas to a young Man". Delaval was less fortunate with injuries of twelve

guineas per man and price advances, although his agent was pleased enough with that. He managed to bind on 24 October, but on the following day he recorded bindings of "near thirty" at Plessey colliery and eighteen guineas at Cowpen, and even then "Cowpen it is said has increased their Number but not so good workmen, & Plessey is many short of last year".²¹⁵

This 1804 binding brought the Coal Trade to its monopolistic senses. On 10 September 1805 it retaliated with cuts in binding monies, no advances on prices, a ban on competition between collieries and a vend-allocation for pitmen as they had one for coal.²¹⁶ Binding monies were standardized with a Tyne maximum of £3 3s. for hewers who were householders, and £3 13s. 6d. for bachelor hewers, and £1 1s. for bachelor drivers, and a maximum in the Wear and Blyth-Hartley areas of £5 5s. for householder-hewers and £6 6s. for bachelor hewers "and that each Principal write a letter to the Agent of each of their respective Collieries, on no account to exceed". In addition, the binding was now to be a sober (and cheaper) affair. All men had to be bound at collieries and not public houses,²¹⁷ all collieries were to bind simultaneously after a seven day moratorium, and "no treat or drink shall be given, directly or indirectly, except the usual allowance of Liquor". Moreover, "no person whatsoever" was to "be sent from one Colliery to another to tamper with or hire the Men of such other Collieries, and, except for Wallsend, "so as to put them upon a level with the adjoining Collieries", there was to be no increase in rates or prices. Extra treats, such as bread corn supplies, were to be stopped forthwith.²¹⁸ The most punitive measure was the vending of labour. The basic plan was for an orderly enrolment of workers. The effective supply of labour would be manoeuvred so that its scarcity could not influence the market. Collieries were each allotted a base number of hewers (as they were each allotted an annual base chaldron of coals) calculated from their average hiring

over the previous three years. From this average, to prevent the shortage from showing itself,

... shall be deducted, one Man and Boy from every ten, in order that the new Collieries may be thereby supplied ... And that any surplus Men or Boys that shall remain after the new Collieries are supplied shall be under the direction of the Joint Committee of both Rivers ... 219

The Coal Trade Committee incepted a meticulous organization of labour relations. They presided over the dissolution of a byzantine economy of peculiar arrangements, understandings, bargains, and customs: 220

"Is Thos. Dixon, Underground Horsekeeper to have a Flannel Shirt and drawers? ... from the witness of the Colliery they had always been allowed a Shirt & Drawers."

"Is Mich. Chapman to have Grass for Cows and Galloways at £1 each?"

"Thos. Craswell Hewer, first bound has got 8s. Earnest. Mr Robson says that extra Earnest was always given to the first Man bound."

"Mr John Ramsey says that it has been customary for many years at So. Moor to give the Bankmen & Overmen Binding Money and that he had bound the Men in question previous to the Resolutions of the meeting ... "

"Mr King says that it has always been his custom to pay 10/6 and 5/- to the first and second bound."

"Mr Bryers Ansd. the men at Hartley, Banksmen & Onsetters etc. were always paid the same as Hewers."

At Hartley Mr Bryers delivered Lord Delaval and the Trade of a successful binding. On 12 October 1805 the new regulated Bond was read, "but those that were at Home (for many had gone to Newcastle etc.) seemed very shy & would scarcely take any liquor at your Lordship's expence". The pitmen had massed at Newcastle and "presented a petition according to custom, with a great many advances & demands". 221 But they were to find no bargaining in the city because the Trade

... have desired that no under viewer or other person concerned in hiring of pitmen from any Colliery, do shew themselves there or in the Neighbourhood thereof ... 222

For two weeks the pitmen either stood in vain at Newcastle or tramped around the collieries to try and tempt a bargain - equally in vain. In the end it was Coal Trade unity at Cowpen which manoeuvred labour into binding for Hartley. On 27 October Bryers reported to Delaval:

Our Men were completely beat, they kept off with seeming indifference until about Six O'Clock on Friday Evening when we, as well as they, heard that Cowpen Owners had refused several & that they were coming to Hartley to be bound, which set them a going & very little difficulty was afterwards experienced ...

The Men kept up the good understanding amongst themselves to the very last & had several deputations at us on Friday still lowering in their Demands. 223

Bryers was jubilant. Although he had twenty-one hewers less than in the previous year, "They are I think going to make a good year's work", and those previously "guilty of much mischief & illnature, we shall be clear of them this year, as they are not nor will be bound again". 224

In 1806 binding monies were again cut - this time to a guinea on the Tyne and two guineas on the Wear for householder-hewers. 225 Again the unity of the owners manoeuvred the men into binding. On 11 October at Denton

These conditions were refused on opening the bond and no Hewers were bound, but the Trade refusing to make any alteration which was discovered by the pitmen; the whole number wanted for this Colliery 226 were bound on the above conditions this Evening.

At collieries where there was a Brotherhood the pitmen decided to stick and play the same collective waiting game as the owners. Thus did Labour learn its best games from Capital. Bryers said it was "confidently believed ... that many of the Hartley Pit-men would be very glad to bind were they not affraid", and he blamed

... certain combinator well known by the appellation Brotherhood under which the Men meet together and

agree not to bind etc. unless their unreasonable demands be complied with.²²⁷

By the beginning of November with some men bound but the Brotherhood sticking out, the Trade had to relax its ban on competitive binding in order to accommodate all the collieries.²²⁸

Predictably, by 1807 a general owners' fund had been set up with the "power to provide for cases of hardship or emergency" for collieries facing Brotherhood opposition over the binding period. The labour-vending system was tightened in 1807 and colliery books checked for possible cheating in 1808:

That the Bonds and Condition Books of each Colliery on the Tyne shall be produced here on Thursday next the 10th Inst.

Monies and prices remained the same in both years, except for consecutive reductions for corvers, but a committee was formed in 1807 with the express and crucial purpose of equalizing rates throughout the coalfield:

The situation of the Coal Trade being such as to give no reason to apprehend any difficulty in engaging the Workmen at the ensuing Binding, it appears to this Committee a proper opportunity for correcting certain abuses, and adjusting the Wages etc. of the different classes of Colliery Workmen, proportioning their Recompense to the nature and extent of their Labour . . . If such an equalization of Wages shall appear proper it is recommended to make an accurate comparison of the earnings of the different classes of Workmen in every Colliery throughout the Trade.²²⁹

The attempt made in 1809 to change the binding time from October to January²³⁰ seems to have been successful because we find the Trade insisting again upon a January binding in 1810. The Brotherhood fought the 1810 Bond not only because of the January binding, but also because of its clauses on fines, short time, and arbitration. This complex and encroaching Bond²³¹ was obviously the last straw after five years of consecutive attack on their bargaining position. Some sort of showdown was inevitable and the Brotherhood counterattacked through the October and November of 1810. Thirty-one collieries

supported the 'stick', but others still had to be persuaded. The Brothers "travers[ed] the country, not only individually, but in companies sufficiently powerful to extort by fear".²³² The owners were legally able to prosecute the pitmen for breaking their bonds before their expiry and fell about the leadership. One hundred and twenty of them were imprisoned in Durham gaol and house of correction:

The prisons were so much crowded that about 70 of the prisoners were on Wednesday last removed to the bishop's stables on the College Green.²³³

On 22 November the Coal Trade Committee retracted slightly, and agreed upon an April binding instead of October or January.²³⁴ In December the Rev. William Nesfield of Chester le Street intervened and promised the Brotherhood proper negotiation if they would only fulfil their bonds up to the January. Through December 1810 and January 1811 magistrate Nesfield persevered and had finally reached agreement by the middle of January.²³⁵ There was scant compromise over the peripheral complexities but the main solution had been found in an April and not a January binding. On 16 January William Adey and George Ferry both of Jarrow colliery, Jacob Bell from Rainton, and Richard Aisbitt from Washington replied to the Trade on behalf of thirty-one militant collieries acceding to an April binding. Their reasons for opposing the January binding had not only been economic, there was obviously a rich sense of community amongst men willing to go to such lengths for a binding

... convenient not only to the removal of their families but also to the commencement of the cultivation of their Gardens ...²³⁶

The Brotherhood appears to have been formed in the first wave of prosperity brought by the War. At first the pitmen did not realize their true market strength. By 1803 they were better informed and

trying to tilt the market accordingly. In 1804 we hear of a Brotherhood.²³⁷ Against the Jacobin scare of the 1790s, the Combination Acts of 1799-1800, and the owners' sworn opposition, the Brotherhood is cloaked in some of the "Bend Sinister"²³⁸ rigmarole of the secret society and we know almost nothing about it. Thomas Morrison, a hewer at Jarrow in 1810, knew the Brotherhood but, incredibly, could not remember any of the Brothers:

Some of the pitmen were Brotherhood - a Society amongst some of the pitmen called Brothers - but does not belong to them himself nor can he recollect the names of any that do ...²³⁹

But the pitmen were also a kind of guild, and aspects of the friendly society blend unsinisterly with those of the secret society. On 24 October 1810 "the Bretheren" of the "Colliers' Fund" founded their friendly society at Gateshead and their rules and articles closely resembled the conventional Articles Agreed to by Members of the Brotherly Society in Painshaw, New Winning, in the County of Durham.²⁴⁰

Both societies agreed to protect their members in hard times, pay them in good times, bury and elect them when necessary, and generally organize each other with the moral devotion of true brothers' keepers. Some correspondence in the Tyne Mercury following the 1810-11 dispute suggests a significant Methodist (and Jarrovian) involvement in the Brotherhood, as its "principal founders, supporters, and propagators" and certainly, the language of the Bretheren - "a firm League, Covenant, and Agreement, to establish and confirm a sure, lasting, and loving Society" - smacks of the loving cup, but after that we are told nothing.²⁴¹

If the Brotherhood stopped the owners having things entirely their own way in 1811, the varied nature of coalmining forced the Trade to be less ambitious in their 1812 standardization plans. In December 1811, the Coal Trade sub-committee on the subject resigned.²⁴²

... having served for three years, and having in the course of the last, as well as the present year, made various unsuccessful attempts to establish certain general arrangements ...

In March 1812 the new committee reviewed its remit, but in less ambitious terms. They hoped to arrange

... some system of equating the different wages so as to be beneficial to the Trade but are sorry to say that from the charges being so variously intermixed they are disappointed in their expectations. It is however recommended to the Trade to inspect the schedule of Prices made out from the several Colliery Bills to enable individuals to compare their own particular Hewing Putting etc. charges with others the better to enable the Trade to approximate to an equalization of wages.²⁴³

After the agreement of 1811 there appears to have been a period of peace. Compared with areas such as Lancashire or the West Riding, the North East was politically and economically stable.²⁴⁴ After 1815 there was a marked shift in the deliberations of the Coal Trade Committee away from vending men to vending coal. After 1826 their talk was almost exclusively about coal.²⁴⁵

In 1814 there was still a labour shortage and two Wear owners were warned as "the principal parties exceeding the Numbers agreed to ... to preserve unanimity at the approaching Binding".²⁴⁶ In December 1815 Wear owners resolved to make "a prudent reduction in the price of labour" and although Tyne and Wear were wracked with seamen's and keelmen's strikes in that year, the Wear pitmen waited for the expiry of their April bonds before they acted.²⁴⁷ The Rainton and Newbottle collieries were reported as the centres "of mischief and insubordination" through the April, May, June strike of Wear collieries. There were 'riots' (attempts to rescue prisoners from constables) at Newbottle, Ouston, and Murton (Lady Anne Pit), and efforts to spread the strike to the Tyne, but the action seems to have been unsuccessful.²⁴⁸ This is hardly surprising. Owners estimated from the Tyne labour-vend

that one in twenty pitmen were unbound in April 1816 and such was the ensuing destitution, they resolved that "each coal owner should endeavour to give employment to as many unbound men as he can with convenience". In 1817 a government informer - admittedly not the most reliable source - could refer to the pitmen "whose great privations have rendered them Desperate" as a ready source of trouble, and in 1818 Coal Trade suggestions that reductions should be made were dropped after due consideration of their probable impact.²⁴⁹

The April 1819 bindings on Tyne and Wear passed without comment or commotion. However, in September and October 1819 all the major Tyne and Wear occupational groups made wage demands which were complicated by an outbreak of working-class radicalism on both rivers.²⁵⁰ Whilst there was agreement that "The poor are certainly to be pitied ... their situation cannot be worse",²⁵¹ pity was no antidote for fear.

The mayor of Newcastle told Sidmouth on 20 October that he had

... the most formidable set of Men to contend with, consisting of Sailors, Lightermen [keelmen], Pitmen, and I am sorry to add, of Radical Reformers ...²⁵²

and the crescendo came on 30 October when both

Colliers & Seamen [were] demanding an advance of wages, and taking advantage of the general prevalent commotions²⁵³

Nothing came of the pitmen's demands. The keelmen settled on 22 October; the seamen sailed away, propitiously, on 3 September, and the pitmen were left alone with their politics and their demands to fizzle out by December.²⁵⁴

The 1820 binding was accompanied by stricter controls. Owners were asked "especially in the hiring of Strangers" to request "a written recommendation from their last master". This system had been tried in 1765, but without success. I can find no further reference to its success or otherwise after 1820, except for the coalfield blacklist which appears from the late 1830s.²⁵⁵

In 1822 the Trade attacked again. Owners agreed to abolish binding money, except for the customary 1s. "hand" or "earnest" money, and a sub-committee of five viewers was set up "to revise the wages of all classes of workmen, the Hewers excepted". The Trade previously had found it difficult to standardize hewers' rates, given the variation and complexity of their conditions, and of course the hewing elite was less easily replaced and more easily provoked than the other groups. 'Revision' meant reduction; in March the Lambton and Londonderry concerns agreed on conjoint reductions:

Smith, Mr Lambton's Viewer dined with me here to day - we have compared and regulated the wages of the different classes of our Workmen, and have agreed upon certain abatements to be made at the ensuing Binding ... We have not however ventured to meddle with the Coal Hewers, further than taking off the Bounty ... We think we can accomplish what we shall attempt without much difficulty ...

Buddle was correct; eleven days later, after a neighbouring colliery had left seventy unbound, he reported that

... their men ran upon us to seek employment, which alarmed our men so much, that they bound as fast as their names could be written.²⁵⁶

For 1823 a minute from the General Meeting of Owners reminds that binding was still organized within a labour vend. Owners resolved "that such Colls. as are desirous of parting with any number, or proportion of their bound Pitmen" must do so "on condition of giving up a proportional quantity of their Vend". For 1824 there is no minute - invariably the sign of an easy binding - and at the Londonderry collieries at least, "The pitmen are working like a house on fire".²⁵⁷

Eighteen twenty-five was another quiet binding but the repeal of the Combination Acts had brought the 'Brotherhood' into the light with a declared membership of four thousand hewers, a new name - "the Colliers of the United Association of Durham and Northumberland", and a classic statement of grievances - "A Voice from the Coal Mines".²⁵⁸ The Brotherhood had had a flickering existence for the past fifteen years

and the historian is not allowed to forget its continued presence. Some sort of Tyne-Wear organization seems to have existed throughout the period. On 26 May 1816 a South Shields magistrate informed the government of the Wear strike only when the organization was involved.

A meeting of Tyne pitmen was to take place on the following day:

There has been for a few days a Stoppage of the Pitmen on the Wear but I did not think it of Sufficient importance to trouble your Lordship till Yesterday I learnt a Deputation from them had been at a considerable Colliery on the Tyne which was Quietly at Work but I understand it inflam'd the Workmen ... 259

In 1819 it was thought that a strike could "spread in a single day, thro' the whole Trade, whenever the signal is given".²⁶⁰ It is impossible to make sense of this reliably corroborated evidence unless one makes some allowance for an existing organizational structure within the community. And three years later, in 1822, there is another telling reference to organization when Lambton-Londonderry joint reductions on the Wear were presented as the signal for delegates' "kindly affection[ed] one to another",

I dont know that the Tyne Pitmen have had any communication with the Wear Men, I cannot imagine that they have not, as usual, free intercourse by their Delegates and that if any stop at all takes place it will be general.²⁶¹

The United Colliers had a long list of grievances. Apart from the heaviest "burdens under which they heavily groan" - fines, short-time, idle-time, and the "too rigorous" interpretation of the Bond - they also groaned about more tasks and increased measures which compelled "the workmen to perform more labour than that for which he is paid". There was further complaint about the safety lamp which enabled them to be sent to more dangerous conditions; about money fines for discipline (including the example of 10s. 6d. for cuffing the boys even if "ever so unruly, impertinent, or lazy"); and about

... the insolent and contemptuous manner, in which we are generally treated by the agents and men in office.

Grievances were articulated in the billowing language of Humanity and Reason - "The very Negroes . . . enjoy more of the pleasures of life"²⁶² but they seemed more ready for being than for doing. Their points-scoring in debate with the Coal Trade was consistent but although there was the "strongest possible inclination amongst them, to stop for an increase of wages" the prevailing slump meant that "circumstances have not favoured their views".²⁶³

However, the organization certainly made advances in the freer atmosphere of 1825. Buddle repeatedly used the revealing word 'system' in his description of the burgeoning union. In October 1825 he warned Londonderry that "This Combination is gaining ground on a firm basis, and if any particular demand for Coals should occur, we should immediately feel the effects . . ."; in February he warned the owners to take the union's 'great vigour' seriously, and in March 1826 even the resilient Londonderry wrote nervously to the government of commotions, riots, and that "The Union of the Pitmen is entirely established".²⁶⁴ Angered by the Hetton strike in July 1825 Buddle could "only wish that J. Hume would change places with me for 6 months", and by November, with the Jarrow strikers supported by combinator's (plus £100 from Sunderland shipwrights) and Hetton stirring to emerge as the union nerve centre, he was an anxious onlooker.

Our modern political economists & Northern Feelosophers little know the nature of the Cattle they were to let loose by the repeal of the Combination Laws.²⁶⁵

With old Tory Buddle the pitmen knew where they were: In 1826 the owners announced the standard Bond:

[Jan. 6] 'Resolved that the united Committee proceed immediately to revise the existing Colliery Bonds . . . and to draw up a General form of a Bond which may be adopted by every Colliery in the Trade.'

This was a serious attack on the formerly competitive position of a uniquely skilled community in an expanding industry. The Coal Trade pressed forward and in late March and early April there were strikes against the new Bond. The effectiveness of the action was uneven.

The union could not talk the entire coalfield into solidarity and had to decide whether or not to stand out alone. Disagreement led to internal wranglings and the two counties eventually shuffled into binding by the middle of April, 1826.²⁶⁶

There were evidently unobtrusive bindings in 1827, 1828, 1829, and 1830,²⁶⁷ and the community suffered from a general trade depression over these years.²⁶⁸ In 1828 Londonderry's new sally port of Seaham Harbour was opened with great fanfare, but his chief agent, beset as he was by banks, lawyers, and slump, thought the nation was staggering into "a state of debility":

There is no demand for any sort of activity, not even Coals, and God knows what is to be the end of it - the pitmen etc. are in a half-starving state, but submit with unexampled patience to the great deprivation which they are suffering.²⁶⁹

In 1830 trade was still depressed. The owners admitted to very low wages. Events in France, a new king, a general election, Reform postures, government over-reaction to surrounding agrarian disturbances - and London waited tensely for Northern trouble. In October the London press reported risings and slaughter and, although there was no truth in this, on 11 November Wellington reminded Londonderry, his former comrade in arms, of the more prosaic facts of civil life:

I understand that the Coal owners upon the Tyne and the Wear propose to lower the Wages of the labourers in their Service this Month, and I have been already applied to for the Assistance of Troops to preserve the Lives and Properties of His Subjects.

The interest of Debts is not paid and troops are not supported without Money and Money cannot be found to pay these demands without Taxes.²⁷⁰

Wellington's note sounds like a large hint not to reduce wages to a Trade already under government scrutiny for monopolistic practices. Whatever was meant, on 17 November the Joint Committee of the Coal Trade denied the government's information that they intended reductions.²⁷¹

The struggles of 1831-32 were against the classic grievances such as "the clause which empowers their masters to turn them out of their houses the moment their time of hiring is up". Capitalist apologetics were also becoming classic: the rights of property to do as it will with its own; market comparisons with other workers worse off than the contestants (in fact, the actual comparisons with Southern agricultural labourers were in extremely bad taste - their conditions had led to the scaffold for nine and the transportation ship for four hundred and fifty); the traditional "kindness and charity" of the owners but their unyielding chastisement when provoked; and the eternal impossibility of trade unionism in general -

... labour must always find its level, and that it is worse than visionary to attempt to raise the rate of wages when there is a superabundance of labourers in the market. As well might it be attempted to stem the flowing of the tide, or to arrest the progress of the winds.²⁷²

The owners always presented their case post festum, as if "the turbulent and restless portion" of workers had suddenly "gained the ascendancy" and insisted upon a list of unreasonable demands. In contrast, the pitmen always presented a case of historical deterioration. Their demands could not be unreasonable because they were only redressors. Rev. Brandling reminded owners of the recent past at the outset of the strike:

Many of your men have been here today - & by their account they have endured much hardship for some years - I certainly feel for them as I think I have heard you say that they had endured all with much patience ...²⁷³

At the beginning the Coal Trade was intransigent,

... the Meeting was of opinion, that the only point which the trade ought to concede is, as to the length of the days Works of the Boys.²⁷⁴

This was a minor point. However, by June 1831 the union had led the pitmen to unprecedented victory in most parts of the coalfield. They had won their first collective strike. It could not last. The Coal Trade

counter-attacked at the 1832 binding and by September 1832 the men had been beaten in the field.

In March 1831 the union was openly preparing its offensive, "one, or two, general meetings, and ... organizing their System of Committees, Delegates etc.". Hetton, one of the new (1820) collieries on the East Durham plain, was generally regarded as the heart of the union. Thomas Hepburn and his cadre worked there. The Cock public house in Newcastle accommodated the general and executive meetings of the union and served as delegate headquarters when necessary.²⁷⁵ On 28 March the Coal Trade Committee resolved not to hire men after 5 April unless it was under the old terms. Strictly speaking, the actions of both 1831 and 1832 were lock-outs, and both began after midnight of 5 April.²⁷⁶

Lord Londonderry was the weak link in a cross-county chain of Coal Trade opposition. Among owners, he could least afford a dispute; his Seaham enterprises had involved heavy borrowing and his papers for the period reveal serious cash-flow problems. After a month of standstill Londonderry published a conciliatory pamphlet and met the hewers of his Durham collieries. At this stage both sides were otherwise gripped in the first climax of strength, the pitmen parading their case with zest before a grim and non-conciliatory ownership.²⁷⁷ Londonderry's friendly gestures were met with gasps of disbelief by his colleagues in the Trade. On 9 May Londonderry asked Buddle to renege on the Tyne and to come to an agreement with the men. Buddle, viewer for his Lordship's Durham collieries but also with Tyne investments of his own, was acutely compromised by his employer's behaviour:

I will endeavour to act upon your Lordship's instructions, with respect to the pitmen, as well as I can, but anything underhand is impossible - it would be known through the Trade of both Rivers, in a few hours, and we, one & all must strike our Colours. God avert such an issue, I shall never again be able to raise my head, after such a disgraceful defeat - it will be the death of me.²⁷⁸

It nearly was; in August a disgraced and exhausted Buddle had a nervous breakdown. Nevertheless, Londonderry broke faith with the whole Trade and on 12 May he accepted union terms and his men were the first to bind. This action shocked the union almost as much as it did the Coal Trade.²⁷⁹ Hepburn had sought a unilateral coalfield agreement and the Londonderry settlement clearly threatened this.

In fact, Londonderry's breach had opened a crack in the owners' defences which ran and deepened much more quickly than the crack it had opened in the union's solidarity. As owners seethed at the settlement, the union used it to support the campaign. On 18 May those pitmen who were back at work agreed to contribute one quarter of their wages to those still not working.²⁸⁰ Two days after the Londonderry bindings on 14 May the second great Wear owner, Lord Lambton, started binding at his collieries.²⁸¹ Buddle watched the Londonderry-Lambton settlements aghast. He believed Tyneside owners could never surrender like this, and as for him,

I am determined not to yield . . . to the unreasonable demands of these ruffians. I will quit the Trade, and emigrate to America rather than crouch to them.²⁸²

Three days later (18 May) the third great Wear owner, the Hetton Coal Company, asked the Trade for leave to bind at the hewing prices of Lord Londonderry. On 20 May it did so: "They got their Men bound at Hetton yesterday, by complying with their demands to the fullest extent".²⁸³

With the three biggest concerns now out of the struggle and thus indirectly financing it against other collieries, and producing, it was clearly only a matter of time before the rest admitted defeat. Their cause was now rotten from within. The big Wear collieries were selling without too much concern for the critical balances of the Vend and the smaller collieries could not afford to stand alone as sales and markets were lost. More than this, the union was now firmly wedged

in the crack Londonderry had first made for it. Hepburn was calling strikes and negotiating settlements with a lo here and a lo there; working colliers were supporting striking colliers as owners were set against each other:

The pitmen on the Tyne have laid off some of the Collieries this morning which had agreed with their Masters, and gone to work, because the Men had agreed for lower prices than the Union think they ought to accept. They have also compelled certain Coal-owners to discuss such petty agents as were obnoxious to them, & to hire all the ringleaders & Blackguards.²⁸⁴

In this atmosphere of impending victory, Buddle - as chief spokesman for the Trade - was "beset, hooted & hissed" wherever he went, but the shame of this was nothing to the shame of his association with Londonderry:

I shall be very happy if your Lordship will explain your motives for yielding to the pitmen's terms, to the satisfaction of the Trade, as it has occasioned such a sensation in the Trade, as I never before witnessed.²⁸⁵

On 13 June a fractured Coal Trade met to discuss the situation, but most colliery representatives stayed away and amongst those who did attend,

... little disposition was shewn, to give any assistance to the Collieries which are marked, as victim of the Union ... they were likely to be left to their fate - those who have agreed with their men, seeming to think, that they were tolerably safe.

The victim collieries, alarmed and angered at being deserted, threatened to reintroduce binding monies and the astonishing sum of ten guineas per man was mentioned. On 18 June Buddle observed a supine ownership. All Tyne and Wear except Tyne Main Colliery had bound, and some like Callerton had actually paid two guineas binding monies -

... a bad precedent, and will, certainly bring a general demand for Binding Money next Binding if not sooner.²⁸⁶

It had been clear since the first week of June that the men had won a victory. By 6 June the

Pitmen have now found & established their power, and are devising magnificent plans for their further agrandizement.²⁸⁷

The exact style of the control they wielded will be described in Part III but suffice to mention here that in June not only had they halted years of deterioration but they were also controlling production (maximum output of 4s. per man per day), controlling the labour market ("won't allow a Stranger who is not a regular-bred pitman to come amongst them on any account"), and seeking to control organization by removing unpopular officials and embracing other working groups - deputies, overmen, wastemen, sinkers, surface workers, colliery craftsmen - within their ranks. In that jubilant summer of 1831 the pitmen were assuming more than the desperate lineaments of redressors; practice was stumbling ahead of theory, and in the daily revelation of their power they had begun to appreciate the absurdity of an owning class. In July Buddle recorded what had become his typical day:

I went my rounds at Rainton & Pittington this Morning and regret to say, that the pitmen at both places, are completely masters of the Concerns ... threatening to strike work.²⁸⁸

On 14 July and only two weeks before his breakdown, Buddle described how much 'normality' had been dented, 'reality' traduced, roles reversed:

The Overmen & their Deputies are entering the Union ... My nephew at Percy Main and his Under Viewer were compelled to go with the pitmen to carouse with them, in celebrating their Victory. What is to happen next it is impossible to gues.²⁸⁹

The Coal Trade prepared to counter attack at the next April binding. In January the Joint Committee resolved to "circumvent the Colliers' Union" and set up an indemnity fund payable to "any Coalowner [who] finds it necessary to adopt any Measure which is likely to cause his Colliery to be stopped work by the men".²⁹⁰ Their flanks protected, on 10 March the Committee nervously agreed not to bind any deputy,

banksman, or 'keeker',* nor any unionists from another colliery, and to adhere strictly to the common clauses of a printed bond.²⁹¹

While the Trade prepared for the offensive the union sought to entrench its advances. This proved to be no more difficult than they had imagined. At Hetton for instance, the Winter of 1831-32 involved endless wrangling, mainly over fines and the stowing of small coals, but also over deputies doing hewers' work, a gassy seam, and the negligence of the colliery surgeon. At Coxlodge and Kenton collieries the wrangling was more ominous. The introduction of immigrant leadminers from Weardale had provoked a strike. The local owners were careless about this because the Coal Trade could protect them. They proceeded to evict. On 21 January the whole labour force was reported as homeless. By February, after two months of holding-out, the union was forced to accept the situation and allow the Coxlodge and Kenton men to seek work at other collieries.²⁹²

Hepburn and his delegates should have been warned by this because after the bonds were read in mid-March (only one third of collieries binding and "great bad humour amongst the Colliers") the owners decided to fight. With only half the collieries bound by 14 April they clearly had a struggle on their hands anyway. They dropped their modest clause that deputies, keekers, and banksmen should not be bound as members of the union, extended it to include union delegates (30 April), and all workers (5 May). On 12 May the Committee drew up an oath of fidelity to apply to all bound men:

I do not belong to the present Pitmen's Union, nor will I become a member of any Similar Association by a compliance with the fixed rules or regulations or occasional Resolutions which I can be prevented from the strict performance of any contract that I may enter into with my Employers.

On 30 May the Coal Trade resolved to break the union absolutely and

*The 'keeker' counted the coal-filled tubs and assessed colliers' wages.

permanently.²⁹³

Hepburn had decided to use the same strategy in 1832 as he had in 1831: settling where he could and using monies from working members to support the actions at other collieries still on strike. In April the union was taxing its working membership at 5s. in the £. On 7 April the Committee began to move against this strategy. The earnings of working colliers were reduced to the maximum of 3s. per day - this was 1s. per man per day less than the colliers had been restricting themselves since the previous summer. On 1 June this policy was taken further when the Trade resolved to pay-off working unionists who had not taken the 12 May oath, evict them from their houses, and replace them with non-union labour. On 16 June this eviction policy was made general, and on 23 June a memorandum was issued:

Resolved, That the Rate of Work by all the Bound Collieries shall be the lowest Sum the Bonds will admit of, viz. 3s. per Day, until further Directions.

Resolved, That it be recommended that those Collieries which remain unbound proceed without Delay to eject the Men from their Houses.

Its funds shrinking just as quickly as its members could be evicted, the union was forced in May to increase its taxation of working members from a quarter to a half. Maj. Gen. Bouverie, as officer commanding northern troops, feared for the consequences:

For Hetton Colliery alone I understand that between 8 and 900 Miners have been engaged to supply the Places of ejected Pitmen and as there are few Pitmen without Families, this will give a tolerably accurate notion of the Numbers who are utterly and permanently thrown out of employment.²⁹⁴

Hetton had been recognized as the union's chief redoubt. To overwhelm Hetton was to overwhelm the union. On the same day that the Hetton bond had been read and rejected - "everything wrong the Delegates ungovernable" - its viewer had decided that "a sweep must be made" "As these Men's Movements will be wholly guided by those

of Hetton".²⁹⁵ Two days after the reading, two weeks before the expiry of the old bindings, and over two months before it became general coalfield policy, Hetton decided to import non-union labour: "Leadminers now determined upon". On 10 April Hetton decided to pay for Inspector Goodyear and seven Metropolitan police constables, and by 19 April Hetton alone was guarded by eight professional constables, forty special constables, sixty foot soldiers, and forty cavalry. On 21 April the Company began to evict. Twenty families, "chiefly marked men", were turned into the street. On the 22nd a bound pitman who had left the union was shot dead in the night but this local difficulty was not to thwart company policy: "Turning out [was] determined to be carried on successfully at 20 & 30 per day". On 24 April the Hetton pitmen realized the turn in their employers' attitude, dropped all their price demands, and agreed to settle for union recognition merely.²⁹⁶ There was no chance of this given the identification of Hetton as prime Trade target.²⁹⁷ Through May and June immigrant workers poured into Hetton to replace the unionists: leadminers from the North Pennines, Swaledale, and Arkendale; others from Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and North Wales.²⁹⁸ It seems that although the immigrants proved in many cases to be "Capital good hewers" and did "remarkably well", they lacked craft in the system of the pit and subsequently disappointed their patrons. The work depended upon cumulative experience and this the immigrants. patently did not possess.²⁹⁹

Although Hetton remained the key battle, eviction was carried out throughout the coalfield.

A large reinforcement of miners arrived at Hetton yesterday - Men from all parts of the Kingdom are flocking in, & 'eer long, a sufficient no. of strangers will arrive to supply all the Collieries that are in want of Men.

In June the army was in attendance at daily evictions, Dunn estimated that the Trade had twelve hundred non-unionists in action, and its leaders were rediscovering their confidence. On the 12th Brandling rejected a government suggestion of appealing to the men, refuted the notion that the dispute was over money, affirmed it was about the existence of trade unionism, and boasted that two hundred and fifty North Welshmen had just been recruited without difficulty - the men

... can only be brought to understand their real interests by the Coal Owners introducing new workmen, and shewing them that they can, if driven to it, do without their Services.³⁰⁰

The Coal Trade was showing signs of beginning to recover some of its nerve. The 1831 defeat had shaken them, the March 1832 bonds had brought them back to the fight with tentative claims over who could not be in the union, and in May and June their confidence surged back with every successful eviction, every batch of immigrants. But it was a precarious confidence - impossible without the army.³⁰¹

At the end of June 1832 affairs appeared to turn again. The union had managed on 18 June to enrol forty-seven Welshmen brought in by the Trade the day before - "they marched off in a body this Morning. This has given the Union great Confidence". Moreover, those immigrants who were working were not profitable. On 28 July Buddle noted impatience, "grumbling and snarling" in the Trade at the expense of blacklegging and

Even Hetton, is making but poor work of it, with their large establishment of raw levies & I think Redhead is inclined if he could find a loophole to slip out of to break loose ...

On 8 July Bouverie reported to the Home Office that the pitmen were likely to win the struggle, and only the army delayed victory.³⁰²

It was at this point, between late June and late July that the union could have broken the stalemate and won. Hepburn had predicted the

Trade's impending problems. At a mass meeting on Boldon Fell on 26 May he had been confident of victory as the high costs of labour importation, indemnity funds, special constables, police, and military, mounted. If the union remained firm, rates and bills would do the rest. But a change of tactics was also necessary. Union funds were diminishing daily and there had been some complaining from working members. The union could continue present tactics only if it lifted its own imposed restriction on daily output and earnings. This would ease the pressure on working members and release more funds for the union, but it would also increase output and the stockpiling of coals by the Trade. The taller the stockpiles, the longer the struggle was likely to continue. On the other hand, the union could change tactics dramatically and make "a general stop immediately, in order to bring the dispute with the Coal-owners to a speedy Crisis". On 24 and 25 June the union delegates argued "the expediency" of these problems, and although some were "of opinion that they will be beaten by procrastination" it was agreed to continue the struggle at half-cock for a further ten weeks. This decision proved to be mistaken. After six weeks Hepburn decided to bring his personal influence to bear and at a delegate meeting in Wallsend on 8 August moved for an immediate all-out strike - a last push. Buddle knew the significance of this, "If the majority should be for the stop, I have no doubt a fortnight will settle the question for 20 years to come", but Hepburn's motion was not carried and logistically, the union was finished.³⁰³

Towards the end of July the cholera appeared. On 30 July cases were reported in some colliery villages in Northumberland and Durham, on 11 August there was "havock all around", and by September "Cholera is in almost all the villages to the South of the Tyne."³⁰⁴ The organization staggered on through August and September ("Hepburn and his colleagues . . . indefatigable . . . to keep the

spirit of the thing alive"),³⁰⁵ although drained of their strength more at some collieries than others. Hetton collapsed on 20 September. With "Hebburn (sic) and the other leaders . . . in attendance" the agent and overmen were allowed

. . . to pick out as many and whom we pleased binding them under the declaration contained in the Bond against becoming members of any society acting against the free exercise of their working powers . . . Notwithstanding great feeling prevails for some union of their own - which will I believe be carried on in spite of fate.³⁰⁶

On Christmas Day 1833 a thinly attended meeting was called on Shadon's Hill. The meeting agreed to dissolve the union should the non-unionists not change their minds. On 16 February 1833, to the nervous jocularity of a lately pulverized Coal Trade, the delegates disbanded:

The only piece of intelligence of a lighter line which I have to communicate is, that the Cock Parliament was dissolved yesterday, and the Union Army disbanded. General Hepburn has broken up his Staff & gone into dignified retirement to prepare his defence, against the Assizes where he is to be tried for a riot.³⁰⁷

The following decade was difficult and humiliating for the miners. In March 1833 they were "engaging . . . with their Masters as fast as they can", but the surplus of imported labour meant that "the Masters cannot employ the numbers who are asking for work upon almost any terms". The summer saw "considerable distress" but the community was "perfectly peaceable"

. . . at even lower prices than they contemplated - as the pitmen are possie struck lest they should not get employment.³⁰⁸

The 1834 bindings were quiet: "Nothing but their poverty . . . prevents a general Strike". In 1835 price reductions were considered and rejected; in 1836 they were considered, implemented by 10%, and accepted at the March bindings although they were followed by a ripple of obscure strikes that winter.³⁰⁹

All the bindings from 1837-43 were quiet in spite of a strict labour-vend which kept wages at their lowest optimum. On 3 March 1838

viewers of the Trade reminded owners of the importance of not going over the 1832 agreed-average of 30s. per fortnight and

... not more than 6 men shall be employed at any Colliery from any other Colliery. And the Meeting wish the Committee to remonstrate with those Coalowners who are making extraordinary demands for Men, that the trade may not be inconvenienced and thrown into confusion.³¹⁰

In 1841 all grades of workmen except hewers, no matter their colliery or conditions, were put on standard coalfield pay-rates, [see Appendix p. 195]. In 1843 the Trade cut these rates by a further 10%, and hewers' and putters' prices by 8%. Short time meant that many men were only working a two or three day week for 9s. or 10s: ... "unless trade opens out so as to give the Pitmen better employment, nothing but starvation stares them in the face".³¹¹ Not even the most perfect worker from an economist's tract could be expected to starve and remain stoical.

In 1843 the National Miners' Association, founded at Wakefield the previous November, debouched out of bureaucratic beginnings to make its greatest strides in the North East. By the beginning of 1844 it had recruited nearly the whole of the coalfield and Newcastle had become its vanguard. The bonds were subsequently rejected and on 5 April 1844 the most important coal dispute of the nineteenth-century began. Some form of union organization had survived the events of 1832-33. Its existence had been banned by the new Bond, but its essence remained. In January and February 1834 Hepburn's renewed activity was reported like the rattling of an old ghost, but without panic.³¹² In April 1834 pitmen appeared in Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trade Union and in July 1835 Hepburn and his cadre were agitating at Wallsend Colliery in the aftermath of the explosion there which killed one hundred and two on 18 June. Nothing much appears to have been achieved apart from the excitement and a brief strike at a couple of

Tyne collieries the following month. Poverty was the owners' best defence.³¹³ At this date Hepburn dropped out of the evidence, to reappear again as a leading Chartist during the days of 1838-39. The traditional view, set by Fynes, is that Hepburn was victimized from further work after the 1832 debacle. This is true.³¹⁴ Fynes goes on to say that Hepburn then peddled tea around the villages before accepting work at Felling on the condition that he never again involved himself in trade union activity. Certainly, he does not figure in the NMA nor any other union activity after 1835.³¹⁵

The Chartist enlightenment of 1838-39 had no immediate effect on the terms of the hire. However, Chartism was crucial to the recruitment, theory, and practice of the National Miners' Association in the early 1840s. In 1844 the Trade refused at all times to negotiate - so much had the interpretation of the Bond changed - but the NMA's case is nevertheless interesting in the context of the hiring since 1800. The classic issues remained, but the mounting confidence of the union had articulated positive demands as well as reactive grievances. The miners posed a six month binding agreement from 5 April to 5 October. An October hiring would put them in a competitive bargaining position prior to the heavy winter coal demand - a position they had not occupied for thirty-five years. In earnings, they demanded weekly payments by weight, no payment in lieu, a proper pay-bill; compensation for all small coals rejected, payment for all coals hewed and stone or 'splint' not to disqualify an otherwise full corve; 10s. per week sick ('smart') money, medical attendance, and insurance for widows of 5s. per week plus house and coals for the first year after bereavement. At work, hewers were not to do other men's work if there was no shortage of those men; boy trappers were to replace the recently introduced mechanical 'fly doors'; putters, drivers, and trappers - that is, the

boys and lads - were not to work over ten hours a day; all workers under twenty-one were only to be hired under the Bond and not disciplined by it; and viewers were to be more discriminating in the application of gunpowder, with allowances paid to pitmen using it. In the management of collieries, some definition of a 'fair' day's work and pay, in view of intermittent bouts of glut and idleness, was requested; there had to be either guaranteed work or guaranteed idle-time wages; and coal weights were to be tested by 'beam and scale' registered apparatus and open to government inspection, with all arguments going to arbitration. Lastly, houses were no longer to be a part of earnings but instead be subject to a normal rent of £4 per year (the NMA obviously had eviction-control in mind here), and members were not to be fined for absence when attending NMA delegate or public meetings.³¹⁶ This was the pitman's hope, but the events of 1844 were to show that he was to be disappointed.

Chapter Six

Labourer

The reinterpretation of the Bond as a contract of productive relations in the first half of the nineteenth-century is not about some shedding of eighteenth-century "pre industrial" forms for nineteenth-century "industrial" ones. Neither is the history of the hire during the period about the phoenix growth of Trade Unionism in the face of "bad conditions". Rather, the reinterpretation of the Bond over the history of the hire is about critical struggle within a given economic and social structure between Capital and Labour for respective shares of control.

The pitmen could bargain their unique craft to gain market advantage in times of high demand. This has suggested itself as an intermittent eighteenth-century power which gathered continuity from the 1790s.³¹⁷ The owners sought to break this power from 1805 by standardizing the clauses of the Bond across the coalfield, systematizing and intensifying the exploitation of labour in defence of an archaic industrial structure, and eroding the notion of a bargain in the hiring of that labour. These moves were not made without resistance. The Brotherhood, the United Colliers, Hepburn's Union, the National Miners' Association, all struggled with increasing sophistication to limit the encroachment of Capital into the market and into the organization of the labour process.³¹⁸ This immediate, dense, and precarious struggle has only since been reified into historical chapters from an 'Industrial Revolution' or the 'Growth of British Trade Unionism'.

Such fundamental struggles for control in productive relations were accompanied by struggles in social relations. Given the resistance the pitman was being forced to make, it was important for him to retain his identity as 'regular bred', of unique skill and inherited knowledge. His right to strike a bargain defined his patrimony. But his employers were denying this right: ipso facto

their actions were re-casting him as a labourer.

This reinterpretation of labour was a gradual process related both to the balance of economic control and to the making of class consciousness. To call the pitman a labourer had profound effects for both his productive and social relations.

However, the idea of social interpretation, involving as it does how men see themselves as well as how others seek to see them, involves a second level of perception. The period of prosperity - c. 1797 - 1805 and slowly diminishing thereafter to 1815 - was later fixed as the time from which the deterioration began. Tradition can be made in two generations; this period was invoked in the course of later struggle as the traditional time, the natural preceding order of things which had been upset by capitalist demands "ever since". The pitmen were thus redressors and defenders wanting nothing but their rights: the capitalists were thus speculators bankrupting the standing orders of perpetuity.³¹⁹ It is of course difficult to be exactly sure that the pitmen were not correct, that the prosperity and control they enjoyed during the traditional period did not indeed approximate to their position throughout the eighteenth-century. But I doubt it; certainly what evidence there is does not suggest it.³²⁰ Thus the whole tone of the miners' case throughout the first half of the nineteenth century is informed by a sense of denouément which bore this factitious relationship to the past.³²¹

The invention of tradition needs symbols as well as experiences. The Binding-time was not only an opportunity to renew contracts, it was also a holiday festival which celebrated the pitman's peculiar relationship with his employer. In his revelry, his showy independence, and his ultimate 'bargain', the pitman celebrated his social place. This place was not only set by the cash nexus. In the history of the hire it is noticeable how both the Delaval and Londonderry concerns

had an idea of 'our' pitmen. To some extent the notion was reciprocated. At the Hartley bindings in September 1800 the first two men to bind, who did so without negotiation, were men who were grateful: one Patterson recently out of gaol for rioting, and another Ralph Spooner

Son of an Old Woman your Lordship gives a weekly gift to, who willingly came forward through gratitude. ³²²

The men's skills were recognized: "first rate men" were courted "with some little promises", their calibre usually being recognized in the extra giving of "hand money" to clinch the deal. In 1803 Delaval gave out hand moneys ranging from 10s. to £2 10s. according to the known skill of the pitman concerned. In times of labour shortage all pitmen were courted, irrespective of their calibre - " ... some Collys. is giving six pound a man which makes they very fitt to sit with ... ". ³²³ Drink played an important symbolic role at binding time. Here as elsewhere its acceptance helped to signify agreement:

We read our Bond to the Workmen yesterday afternoon at Hartley but those that were at Home ... seemed very shy & would scarcely take any Liquor at your Lordship's expence ...

At the 1804 bindings Delaval spent £100 on drink and not all of it was the token stuff of agreement. In 1802 unwilling binders "expect[ed] a few shillings given to them privately to drink", and in 1800 drunkenness had been gladly bestowed to keep men from rival colliery bids:

... kept them well supplied with Ale so long as they would drink it ... after which they got Hot Ale & Brandy for some time with an interest to keep them from Newcastle.

In 1801 the drinking sessions at North East bindings were nationally notorious, and it was still part of the expected style of things in 1820:

Our pitman's Binding is to take place on Satdy. and as it is generally a drunken job I don't expect that we shall get much work out of them on Mondy & Tuesday ... ³²⁴

Binding-time revels had been seriously disciplined by the 1840s.

In 1805 the efforts to stop inter-colliery rivalry included a ban on binding at public houses and a stipulation that "no treat or drink shall be given directly or indirectly" although "the usual allowance of Liquor" was still permissible. In 1842 tickets for free beer were given on the day of the binding, quite unlike the days when "they used to have any quantity of ale or beer given them", but there was no more bargaining and this custom, like the binding moneys, hand moneys, and other extras "too trifling to mention" had by then become more perfunctory than celebratory.

The supply of grain was another symbol of prosperity banned in 1805.³²⁶ Again, cheap grain seems to have been intermittently sold to the pitmen when necessary. In 1779 Lord Delaval was selling meal to his colliers at 3d. less than local shopkeepers, and 1781 unpaid corn bills show that he was in receipt of regular supplies.³²⁷ In April and May 1795 Tyne and Wear pitmen were in the van of serious agitations against the high price of bread and possible grain hoarding by merchants. On 7 May six pitmen-representatives gained assurances from Tyne magistrates to halt any hoarding which may have taken place, and this in spite of the fact that "Grain is generally distributed to them at a lower price than other labouring men". It is from 1795 that corn allowances seem to have been made to the mining community.³²⁸ This allowance seems initially to have been in barley, a cereal remembered by one pitman as producing a bread "as course and black as the coal":

... with regard to Barley the Labouring People in the Colliery District cannot bear the Idea of Barley Bread an attempt was made to introduce it in the year 95 by some Coal Owners but without Effect, as the Wk^m rioted and positively refused to use Barley even in mixture with other Grain exclaiming that their Owners wished to feed them like Swine.

Consequently in 1800 "the Coal Owners are under the Necessity of supplying them with Rye at the Rate of 10s. per Boll".³²⁹ It is as

well to remember that the pitmen won rye-bread whilst North East agricultural workers had to make-do or starve:

Our poor people make their Bread altogether of 2 parts Barley & one of Pease unfortunately our Pease failed totally ... The Scots poor all eat out meal in Porrage. Hasty Pudding George Mennin can explain to you. But alas! our oats are all done, which I never knew before ... But last year God knows was a fatal one. However our poor have kept wonderfully quiet.³³⁰

There were other symbols. By the middle of the century colliery celebrations at the owners' expense were likely to be morally-educational. At best, they were little pageants of loyalty to the proprietorship. Earlier celebrations had been much more celebratory of the pit in itself. When Simon Temple opened his South Shields colliery in 1810 a garlanded procession of eight full coal wagons preceded the festivities; when Hetton was formally opened in 1822 workers' flags and bands "marched in regular order", men, women and children danced to "The bonny pit laddie", and the gentlemen "partook of an excellent dinner at Livingston's" where "some of the main coal were displayed at the windows"; at the Gosforth opening in 1829 there was a subterranean ball held in the pit, a thousand feet underground.³³¹

The community's response to these symbols of deterioration was confused. They complained about "the removal of many of our privileges", "the insolent and contemptuous manner, in which we are generally treated by the agents", they lamented life in "the doleful hole" under "a system so ruinous to us", but the substance of this sort of deterioration was so difficult to sift. Prices, fines, hours, measures, could all be hailed and seen; deep swirls in the conduct of social relations were much harder to know. The men's attitude to eviction portrays this well. Most families lived in houses supplied by the coalowner under the terms of contract in the

bond. In 1832 and 1844 hundreds of striking families were evicted from their homes. They had not renewed contract and could expect no more. And yet, what was a contract against a "tradition"? With factitious historical licence the men appealed to a "reliance upon custom" "from generation to generation": "For centuries have they and their forefathers been the tenants of their habitations" and it was understood that should they "give 'a fair days labour for a fair days wage'" then never would they lose their homes. A lawyer's contract could never cope with the subtleties of men who believed in the worth of "time immemorial" founded on a fair day's labour:

The complaint of harsh eviction we found very general among the pitmen; but, from subsequent inquiries we had reason to doubt whether it was quite authentic. They all admitted the right of eviction, but they all thought that they might have been permitted to occupy their houses at least until new tenants came. The houses, they argued, were standing empty. It would have been a great convenience to the men to have been left a few days, and would have entailed no loss on the masters. The tone adopted in these complaints was, however, rather ad misericordiam, than anything like an assertion of rights ... 332

Every eviction symbolized deterioration. Somehow it was just wrong to put families out of their homes. To replace "regular bred" native pitmen with immigrants and farm workers and carry out eviction, was heinous. Both actions were calculated insults to the community and its standing. The owners of course did not care for such ad misericordiam past and present posturing. They had their own posturing to do as they changed society in the name of Economy and silenced criticism in the name of Mercantilism. Want and deference were the twin Corinthian pillars of a society committed to the protection of its poor, from its poor, for its poor:

To excessive Wages may be attributed many of the Vices which attach to the Character of a pitman. They give him more than sufficient to provide the necessaries of life, and from the want of Prudence ³³³ the surplus is dissipated in riot and Intemperance.

The pitmen faced those aspects of social reinterpretation which they could identify. In 1831 they insisted that all workers had to be "native of the county of Northumberland or Durham, and brought up a Pitman".³³⁴ At the beginning of the century there had been no need for this. The unique standing of the pitmen was agreed by all observers - a few agricultural labourers may have sent their sons to nearby collieries "but, for the most part, the work is carried on by regularly bred pitmen and their Families". In a sense, any comparison of such a socially self-sufficient productive group with other workers was a disapprobation, but at least early comparisons were favourable. In 1771 and 1797 estimates by Arthur Young and Eden put pitmen on a par with local journeymen and the best paid "manufacturers".³³⁵ During the 1810 dispute the Newcastle Courant stated that pitmen's earnings were "far greater than those of any other class of mechanics". In 1825, in reply to the claims of the United Colliers, the owners struck a deft blow for reinterpretation. They claimed the demands to be extravagant:

Compare these earnings with those of the robust agriculturalist, or sedentary weaver, and enquire of the hewer whether he will change 'Kavels'?

This comparison hurt. The union resented outside parallels with weavers or labourers; they demanded to be seen in the context of their own history and the industrial changes which they had stoked: the pitman and the mechanic

... reciprocally assist each other: once separate them, the astonishing movements of mechanism must stand still, and its glorious effects cease.³³⁷

But perceptions were shifting. During the 1831 strike Edward Smith, 'An Old Pitman', told Hepburn without fear or favour "... you are not Artists or Mechanics you have not generally served apprenticeships to other professions"; 'Philanthropos', a contending ideologue of

the dispute, downgraded the pitmen even more, "... the wages of the pitmen, do, in point of fact considerably exceed those of the ordinary class of labourers"; and James Losh, a Radical coalowner, answered to his own satisfaction the union's charge to be compared with mechanics: "It is quite plain that the pitmen have good wages, and are in all respects better off than most labourers ...".³³⁸

By the 1840s there can be no doubt that official categorization had redefined the pitman. Sir James Walsham, Poor Law Commissioner for the area and an expert in social categories for a system which lived by them, feared that miners' wages were dropping perilously close to those of the lowest class of Newcastle labourers, but he had no doubt that labourers they must be. For the first time, we hear of the dual class of "agricultural and mining labourers".³³⁹

The qualitative changes in the hire and the Bond over the previous forty years implied reinterpretation of social relations. The NMA in 1843 had enjoyed some legal success against colliery owners who, among other things had imprisoned men for breaking their bonds. Yet the Bond retained vestiges of a contract technically binding on both parties and it was here that the legal victories had been won. George Hunter, agent for Londonderry, pressed for the final act of reinterpretation:

From the conduct of these men ... it is quite evident we must have no more Bindings; they must be offered fair Prices, and if they like to work at them - do so - but never again to allow them the power by any written Documents to haul you before Magistrates whenever they please. My opinion is, that if the Coal Trade pursues this course, and makes the Pitman no more than a common Labourer, to be discharged for every Offence, we will soon crush the Union and have peace again.³⁴⁰

This in fact occurred. The 1844 dispute quickly jettisoned the close arguments of prices and fines to base itself on the issue of the monthly Bond. The possibility of one month's termination of contract in an imperfect labour market reduced the pitman to a "common

Labourer" contractually as well as socially. A general meeting of viewers in March 1844 had recommended this course and one month before the strike even started the owners knew exactly what its terms were to be.³⁴¹

As Labour's standing was redefined then so was the manner of its negotiation. The decade 1799-1809 had hurried on collective relations in the coalfield. The move from colliery or local bargaining between men and masters to coalfield bargaining between Brotherhood and Trade sharpened the sensibilities of division. In 1765 when both sides had been in collective dispute the owners feared the outcome, threatened the law, but promised satisfactory compromise and positively beseeched a return to work:

The Gentlemen in the Coal Trade on the Rivers Tyne and Wear, earnestly recommended to the several PITMEN, to go immediately to their Work as they are obliged by law to do, till the Expiration of their present Bonds.³⁴²

This attitude stiffened in the nineteenth-century into stances which sought only to "break the neck of this formidable combination" and refusals to negotiate at any stage on any point.³⁴³ In 1826 the United Colliers faced a lot of argument but no negotiation. In 1831 it looked as if the same would happen until Londonderry broke rank and negotiated with his men. There does seem to have been the semblance of paternalism between the noble Lord and the men of his ancient pits at Rainton, Penshaw and Pittington. In 1826 the Rainton colliers had expressed their faith in a direct dialogue with Londonderry, and in April 1831 it was he who first snubbed the magistrates as intermediaries and went ahead to make his own bargain in May. Londonderry's language, a polite, distanced, involved, conceit, signed "you shall never be deceived in me", is interesting:

If you will resume your Labours, I will at once give you the Thirty Shillings per Fortnight, and the Fines must be left to my honor and your Viewer's good sense ...

There shall be no difficulty in the way of score work prices, only let me feel I deal with my own, and not with the Pitmen of other Collieries who can neither be attached to us nor our property.

Londonderry dealt with his own and his own appreciated it so much that two years later the noble Lord was prevented from coming north

... as they are sure to get a hint of the intended reduction of Wages, and will most likely be desirous of appealing to your Lordship.³⁴⁴

The Londonderry and Lambton concerns were the biggest but they were also family concerns. Being the first to negotiate they won the loathing of a Trade mainly "in the hands of lessees or adventurers". Of course, Londonderry came to an agreement in 1831 for other more crushing reasons (banks and lawyers) than his sense of paternalism - but it remains interesting that he squared the loathing of his colleagues with the rediscovery of his Noble Lord - responsibilities to his workers.³⁴⁵

In its drive for the monthly Bonded labourer the 1844 dispute was essentially about the destruction of tradition for a market, but Londonderry in his capacity as Lord Lieutenant and coalowner, tried to use the paternalist ploy to break the NMA:

I was all day yesterday & the Day before with my men haranguing & demonstrating the folly & ruin to their union - It will be a great point if I can sever my men from the Union, & she w the example to the rest. You will observe those I have got to Work were Union Men - Three Pits are a good beginning.³⁴⁶

However, by July it was clear that the ruse had not worked. He told Sir James Graham of the combined inspirational and intimidatory effect of union "monster meetings" on his men and the end of their special relationship with him:

It now evidently appears to me that whatever influence individual Coalowners may have over their own people so long as these assemblages & Meetings are permitted ... so long will the power of Mr Roberts & his leaders prevail.³⁴⁷

No matter how much government commissioners could regret the appearance of trade unions and the demise of an economy where "Immemorial usages were considered almost tantamount to law"; and no matter how much "mortification" owners could claim - "notwithstanding their long-continued efforts to cultivate a good understanding with their workpeople ... they were deserted, and lost all influence, from the moment that the delegates came among them"; and no matter what elaborate, mercenary, romantic, notions of paternalism, may have been those of a Londonderry, the fact remains that throughout ten months of dispute and impending dispute - from the first intimations of dissatisfaction in November 1843 to the unconditional surrender of the NMA in September 1844 - the Coal Trade refused at all times to negotiate. Owners may have been mortified, but if so why their "silent contempt"? and what kind of relationship did they want where men were forced to beg an audience "Once more we appeal to you, can we obtain an interview? Tell us how and by what means?"?, and what kind of relationship did they substitute for 'paternalism' in the 1850s - a relationship of victimization lists and united funds?:-

It is agreed that a sum of about £50,000 shall be raised, as the first contribution towards a Fund for the support of Collieries the workmen of which may strike for an advance of wages; and also towards a Fund for obtaining labour from other districts or Counties, unconnected with this district.³⁴⁸

Labour's place in a 'proper' productive relationship had been ideologically prepared by the 1820s. Malthus had made the first significant preparations with his model of a labouring poor petrified by its own instincts within the ordained confines of supply and demand. There was little room in Malthus' social thesis for the intervention of the poor themselves. Similarly for the activities of 'combinations'. Popular Political Economy pronounced them a waste of time in the

matter of wages. An independent working-class were to be nullified in an 'educated' acceptance of Nature's iron laws; when hard times came it was the market's inviolable operations that were at fault, not the machinations of government or masters. As Harriet Martineau affirmed:

... combine against ill fortune instead of against the masters.³⁴⁹

In 1825 the Coal Trade rejected not only the United Colliers' arguments, but even their objective existence - one had to obey the whims of the market and that was that. In 1843 the Newcastle Journal modestly took it upon itself to lecture the NMA in the hard facts:

It would take a long time, however, to explain, the laws which regulate the rise and fall of wages, and at present we have not that time, or the space necessary to spare ... In the meantime, we cannot refrain from expressing a general fact, that no combinations which have ever yet been formed have been effectual in altering wages, either one way or another. They depend entirely on different laws than the will of either master or men. They depend on supply and demand.³⁵⁰

There was nothing natural or objective about the changes the pitmen experienced. Rather, the reinterpretation of industrial relations was integral to the Trade's exertions to regulate, standardize, collectivize, and disperse their hiring of labour.

Professor Harrison has referred to the popular image of the coal-miner as the "original and quintessential proletarian".³⁵¹ This image began to be established from the 1850s, was current by the outbreak of the First World War, and represents a change in 'social character' successfully imbued.

Part I has studied changes at Work relevant to this shift in social character - those changes in productive relations and social relations which were historically attendant upon each other. It has been argued

that by 1850 the key restructuring of these relations conducive to a new social character had taken place. There have been six areas of investigation. First, an unstable background of unprecedented economic growth and the expansion of the labour force. Secondly, the gradual devaluation of the pitman's craft and autonomy - in the new collieries, with a heightened risk of larger, deeper, and more dangerous mines, and by the owners' imposition of more systematic shift work. In response to the deterioration in their conditions and status, the pitmen in turn sought prudentially to organize their labour around a policy of restricted output. Thirdly, the early nineteenth-century questioning of the pitmen's ability to perform their work safely, a tacit inquiry which flowered in the 1830s into a full critique of the temperament and valid experience of the mining community as a whole. From the late 1840s this critique drew the response of more regulation, discipline, inspection, a formal subordination and a 'practical' education - a response which was partly shared, although with different emphases, by the miners' unions. Fourthly, changes in the Bond from a bargain into an instrument for greater exploitation and control, a reinterpreted process made necessary by the weakening position of an ancient North East owners' monopoly under increasing competition from new capitals. Fifthly, consequent changes in modes of bargaining from local and individual bargains to cross-coalfield negotiation involving efforts towards the standardization of agreements and rates, a polarization of labour and capital, and a first half-century of deepening conflict. And finally, the symbolic shifts in work status, dramatized by an invented tradition of past prosperity (c. 1790s-1815), and articulated in the language of political economy. By the 1830s, and much to his dismay, the true bred pitman was being called a common labourer.

The history of Work represents the shedding of a caste of pitmen in order to rehire from a market of labourers. It is a process easier to describe than to quantify. Although political economy's universal concepts of labourer and market came to express the changes they did not determine them. The concepts were rather retrospectively applied to a drawn-out process of crisis and response within the industry. Labour's experience of this process was both cumulative and immediate. Cumulatively, Hepburn's 1832 defeat marked the beginning of the end for the true bred pitman, and yet when he held immediate power in the summer of 1831 he was not to know this, nor were his successors to accept it in 1844. The process occurred in the way it did but there is a sense in which knowing this does not help our history. Right up until the 1850s there were pitmen who hoped and worked for other things. As such it is difficult to assign relative 'weights' of significance to the six areas of investigation as they happened up to the 1850s. One can trace the first expressions of a new social character, and one can squarely identify it with respective industrial power and changes at work, but for the historian there can be no tidy list of lesser and greater 'factors'. For a study which stops in the 1850s, the complexity and inter-relatedness of the process must stand.

Similarly, given Harrison's popular reference to the coal-miner as 'archetypal proletarian', and the changes outlined above, it would be convenient to talk about the making of the working-class. In general and retrospective terms this is acceptable, but for the purposes of this history-as-it-happened, the direct application of the concept could be misleading. At the work-place Industrial Capitalism had a development so uneven that the general phrase, "making of the working-class" can often hide its actual convolutions. The conditions under which class made and re-made itself were also uneven. The

making of class-consciousness (rather than its mere expression)³⁵²
across occupation, place, and time, was more a series of contusions
than an open break. It is the purpose of this study to understand one
such contusion in itself by way of a contribution to understanding the
variety of contusions as related phenomena. In the North East, the
mining community's first class-conscious response to the events
engulfing them was in the language of labour value. Their greatest
inspiration came from Chartism (c. 1837-39), but their use of the
language bears reference to the necessity of their labour, within a
monopoly, as a retort to labourer redefinitions of the mid 1820s.³⁵³
Moreover, the concept of labour value was largely spread by trade
unionists, many of whom were Primitive Methodists with additional
notions of labour's dignity and man's worth. It is the cultural impact
of this Methodist morality and its contribution to a new social character
which is the theme of Part II.

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INTRODUCTION

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- 3 For a wholly original discussion of the question of men restructuring their 'social character' to meet economic transformation, see: E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,' Past and Present, 38, (1967).
- 4 Robert Owen, Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System (1815), and Thomas Carylye, Signs of the Times (1829) were the most articulate prophets. The Romantic Movement was a creative response to the qualitative changes of democracy and industry, see: R. Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950 (Penguin 1968), particularly pp. 48-64. On the early recognition of new social relationships, see: Asa Briggs, 'The Language of 'Class' in Early Nineteenth-Century England', in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds.), Essays in Labour History (1967). G. Best, Bishop Westcott and the Miners (Bishop Westcott Memorial Lecture, Cambridge 1966) has recognized, briefly, a social "deterioration" for the North East miners from the 1860s but has not pursued it in published work. D. J. Rowe, (The Economy of the North East in the Nineteenth-Century: a Survey, Northern History, vi, 1971) has called for some interpretation of the qualitative changes in

the history of the area. B. Inglis, Poverty and the Industrial Revolution (1972), has defended the Hammonds against their methodological opponents thus: "The Hammonds, then, were right; what matter are the changes in the quality of life, which are rarely quantifiable . . . " (p. 31).

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PART ONE

- 1 For detailed investigation into regional investment patterns during the period, A. G. Kenwood, Capital Investment in North Eastern England, 1800-1913 (University of London, unpublished Ph.D 1962). Between 1836-43 there were sixty-one new collieries developed - " ... a rising demand for coal ... set the tone for the burst of capital investment in coal that was to follow the frenzy of speculation of 1836" (p. 87). Kenwood estimates an £8m increase in coal investment 1822-43 (pp. 91-92). Prof. Buxton has warned against overestimating the direct stimulus to coal investment from the major phases of railway construction. The national doubling of coal output from 1830-45 was more dominated by increased London and export demand, and the demands of the iron industry: N. K. Buxton, The Economic Development of the British Coal Industry (1978), pp. 66-68.

A. D. Knighton ('The Development of the Northumberland Coalfield: a study in the concept of cost distance', Northern Universities Geographical Journal, 1967) has estimated coal transport costs as dropping from 8d. per ton-mile in 17th century, to 3d. per ton-mile with the 18th century development of wagonways, to 1d. per ton-mile with the application of steam-power in the nineteenth-century.

- 2 J. W. House, Population Changes since the Early Nineteenth-Century (Kings College, Newcastle, 1954) Table 9, p. 61. Calculations from 1843 support House's 1826-36 percentage increase in output of 62% with a figure of 62.5%. The contemporary author was keen to show that such unprecedented growth proves that a North East owners' monopoly was "the best preservative against

monopoly" i.e. the London distributors and middlemen: Anti Monopoliſt, Remarks on the Present State of The Coal Trade with a retrospective glance at its history (Newcastle 1843), p. 48.

- 3 For the backwardness of the British Coal Industry to invest in mechanization, and its falling productivity in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, see: A. J. Taylor, 'Labour Productivity and Technological Innovation in the British Coal Industry. 1850-1914', Economic History Review, 2nd ser., xiv, (1961-62). If Britain had a poor record compared to international competition (although see Buxton for a reinterpretation of the Taylor thesis on investment and productivity for the pre 1914 and inter-war period, pp. 112-20, p. 184) the North East had a poor record of mechanization compared to other regions. In 1922, 12% of total coal output in County Durham was mechanically cut compared to a national figure of 15%; in 1928 (and precisely ninety-nine years after Carlyle's invoking of 'the mechanical age'), only 6% of the total coal output in County Durham was mechanically conveyed compared to a national figure of 12%. In 1913, 76.5% of American coal output had been mechanically cut; as late as 1956, only 68.1% of total coal output in Durham was cut by machinery, and 77.5% conveyed by machinery, with 8.5% power loaded. (W. R. Garside, The Durham Miners. 1919-1950, 1971, p. 53, p. 419).
- 4 P. E. H. Hair, The Social History of British Coalminers. 1800-45 (University of Oxford, unpublished Ph.D 1955) pp. 6-8. Evidence of non-technological, non-innovatory, methods of coalface production, and a positive relationship between population trends and coal output has also been found in a statistical study of one major colliery town: M. Sill, Hetton-le-Hole. The Genesis of a Coalmining Landscape. 1770-1860 (University of Durham, unpublished MA 1974), vol. i, p. 76.

Similar conclusions have been reached on the 'agricultural revolution' of the period: "Cheap labour rather than invention was the fulcrum of economic growth", R. Samuel, 'Village Labour', in R. Samuel (ed.), Village Life and Labour, (1975), p. 17. It may, however, be added that the cheapness of coalmining labour was not 'cheap' in the same sense, and that the relatively better pay of coalmining over agricultural labour was a factor in its recruitment.

- 5 If with a stagnant technology the ratio between the labour force and production remained approximately the same, then there is some test available on the accuracy of the estimates. However, the existence of the owners' monopoly, the Vend,, meant that during c. 1800-45 the industry was producing in conditions of excess capacity. This implies that the labour:production ratio cannot be more than a rough test. For the Vend, and the effects of over-capacity on the labour force, see pp. 51-57.
- 6 P. E. H. Hair, op. cit., table 3, p. 27c; J. W. House, op. cit., p. 61; Summary of the Condition of the Pitmen on the Tyne - by Mr W. Thomas of Benton Hall to Sir John Swinburne, 1807, N[orth] of E[ngland] I[nstitute] of M[ining] and M[echanical] E[ngineers], vol. Xa.
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- 8 J. W. House, *op. cit.*, table 9, p. 61. House takes his output figures to 1836, his labour figures to 1841. However his labour figures do not tally with those of Dr Hair, Hair's probably being the more accurate. Nevertheless, the general statement would concur with Hair's theory of correlation between labour and output (p. 4, f.n. 4). In 1844 miners' union leaders reckoned that the labour force had doubled in the previous twelve years. However, they took their figures from The Times (6 April 1844) and we cannot be sure about which parts of the coalfield they meant (The Miners' Monthly Magazine, April 1844).
- 9 P. E. H. Hair, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
- 10 J. W. House, *op. cit.*, table 4, p. 56; W. A. Moyes, Mostly Mining (1969), p. 100; Township of Cockfield, Census 1851, D[urham] C[ounty] R[ecord] O[ffice]. Similar trends are indicated in Cockfield for the earlier period 1806-09, (Baptismal Register Book 1806-12, D.C.R.O.) where out of one hundred and sixty-nine total parental registrations, 79.8% give their birthplace as the immediate South Durham locality (145 S. Durham, 20 Yorkshire, 2 N. Durham, 2 Westmorland). William Fordyce found similar trends for the predominantly coalmining Easington Poor Law Union in 1855: The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, (1855), vol. ii, pp. 355-56.
- 11 M. Sill, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
- 12 Census 1851, *op. cit.*

In 1853 it was reported by Nicholas Wood, an important owner and viewer, that there had been very little immigration into the pits from regional agricultural workers, (Third Report from the Select Committee on Accidents in Coal Mines, P.P. (iii) 1853 (820)

- xx,, p. 47). House's figures show a net decline in the Northumberland coalfield of 5.4%. 1841-50, and the fact that this 'sub region' was the oldest established of the four, would also support this view (see above, f.n. 10).
- 13 M. Sill, op. cit., 'birthplaces of the children of coalminers' figs. 23, 24; family-mobility comparisons, figs. 25, 27.
- 14 East Denton and West Kenton Pitmen's Bond, 20 October 1804, N[orthumberland] C[ounty] R[ecord] O[ffice]; M. Sill, op. cit., p. 102.
- 15 "For some kinds of labour, whose conditions did not change fundamentally as yet - again miners and seamen come to mind - the old traditions could still suffice", (E. J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire, 1968, p. 70).
- 16 Gateshead Observer 29 January 1842. In view of the short-distance nature of coalfield migration it seems that Embleton was being somewhat alarmist.
- 17 Committee of Coal Owners of the Rivers Tyne & Wear, Minute Books, October 1809, vol. i, N.C.R.O. For knowledge of hewers, see the Complaints and Deviations section of the book.
- 18 For a full discussion of this 'distinctiveness' see Part II. House's four coalmining 'sub regions', as above, constituted only an individual average of 6.8% of the total regional population in 1841, although of course there were scatterings of miners in his other 'rural-farm', 'farm-mining', and 'urban-industrial' sections: J. W. House, op. cit., table 3, p. 56.
- 19 'Th. S.' to Tyne Mercury 7 July 1832: the correspondent.

reckoned it only so much 'myth' about the pitmen's traditional skills. See chapter five for chronological development of industrial conflict. One is reminded of the severe difficulties facing any group wishing to defend its 'skills' by looking at the strolling versatility of the nineteenth-century category of labourer. Men would turn their hand to most things according to season, cycle, opportunity, or fancy, in a fluid market of skill and status. (See R. Samuel, *op. cit.*, p. 166.).

- 20 "informations of Witnesses taken on an Inquisition held on the Body of James Heron before J. P. Stokoe, Coroner, 21 January 1811". (North East Circuit Assize depositions, P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], ASSI 45/45.). A writer in the 1850s said that in miners' conversations the "apple of discord frequently turns upon personal and professional prowess". (Anon., The Pits and The Pitmen, n.d. p. 22).
- 21 W. Hopton, Conversation on Mines between a Father and Son, (Manchester n.d.); J. Lawson, A Man's Life (1944), pp. 46-47. Prof. Pollard has drawn attention to the undermining of craft and family authority by mass-factory employment during the Industrial Revolution: "The new mass employment removed the incentive of learning a craft, alienated the children by its monotony and did this just at the moment when it undermined the authority of the family, and of the father in particular", in S. Pollard, 'Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution', Economic History Review, 2 ser., xvi, (1963-64), p. 259. Child-labour in the pits remained largely organized and controlled by families in smaller scale areas of the industry. In the North East's larger collieries, organization was becoming more like Pollard's factories but the family remained significant

for the reasons outlined.

- 22 J. Burnett (Ed.), Useful Toil. Autobiographies of working people from the 1820s to the 1920s, (1974), p. 26; R. Harrison, Introduction, in R. Harrison (ed.), Independent Collier: The Coal Miner as Archetypal Proletarian Reconsidered (1978), p. 4; J. R. Harris, 'Skills, Coal, and British Industry in the Eighteenth Century', History, 61, (1976), p. 182. In Independent Collier Harrison rightly says that, in spite of Harris's recent concession, "It has become almost impossible to think of him outside the context of a relatively large-scale enterprise and a highly socialized labour process" (p. 2). It might be remembered that George Orwell only realized the miner's skills after going amongst them: "The miner's job would be as much beyond my power as it would to perform on the flying trapeze", (The Road to Wigan Pier, Penguin ed., 1969, p. 29)
- 23 John Peile to John Buddle, 18 October 1823, D.C.R.O., NCB I/ JB; Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 3 November 1823, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C. 142.
- 24 William Lowrie to John Buddle, 8 April 1825, D.C.R.O., NCB I/ JB. For evidence of seeing "them begin at five or six years of age, with a string tied to them for fear of losing them", see T. Atkinson, in Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into The best Means of preventing the Occurrence of Dangerous Accidents in Coal Mines, P.P. 1849 (613), vii, p. 527.
- 25 Report from the Select Committee on Accidents in Mines, P.P. 1835 (603) v, p. vi.

"Working" a mine was often compared to "fighting" a ship, and indeed, the mutual interdependence of seamen in their work and safety was similar. The more cosmopolitan pits on the Tyne had men who were seasonally employed in both jobs: Children's Employment Commission, Appendix to the First Report of Commissioners, Mines, Part I, P.P. 1842 (381) xvi [henceforward C.E.C. 1842] p. 581, p. 585.

- 26 E. A. Rymer, The Martyrdom of the Mine, or, a 60 years struggle for life, (1898), p. 5, reprinted in History Workshop Journal, nos. i and ii, 1976.
- 27 C.E.C. 1842, p. 514.
- 28 E. A. Rymer, loc. cit., p. 3
- 29 John Buddle to Lord Lambton, 28 May 1842, D.C.R.O., NCB I/JB.
- 30 Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. 134.
- 31 William Howitt, Visits to Remarkable Places (1842), p. 88.
Howitt was summarizing what pitmen had told him. It is strange that they should scorn the "pit-cap without even a brim" when Rymer clearly remembered 'true bred' pitmen wearing skull-caps in the 1840s (f.n. 26).
- 32 Anon., Memorandum, 18 November 1806, N.C.R.O., DE/4/28;
Thomas Johnston to Lord Delaval, 10 February 1801, N.C.R.O., DE/7/6.
- 33 Report from the Select Committee on the State of the Coal Trade, P.F. 1836,(522), xi, p. 24.
- 34 See Part III for a full account.

- 35 For an annotated list of major explosions in North East collieries 1710-1849 see: R. Fynes, The Miners of Northumberland and Durham(1873, repr. 1971), pp. 146-51; 'A correct Account of the Explosion at Kenton Pit on monday October 14 1844' (Newcastle 1844); Miners' Advocate, 19 October 1844.
- 36 W. P. Roberts, The Haswell Colliery Explosion, 28 September 1844 (Newcastle 1844).
- 37 David Swallow in, Second Report from the Select Committee on Accidents in Coal Mines P.P. (ii), 1853 (940) xx, p. 47. Swallow had been a founding member of the National Miners' Association at Wakefield in 1842. By 1866, witnesses were claiming that pit-skills were soon learnt by immigrants, although they were at first reckless: Report from the Select Committee on Mines, P.P. 1866 (431) xiv, p. 190.

I have been unable to trace any similar outcry after the 1832 explosions. This could be due to the fact that Hepburn's union was much more completely destroyed after 1832 than the NMA was after 1844, or the fact that the first 1831-32 wave of strikebreakers did not stay as long in the coalfield.

- 38 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 27 March 1843, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C. 142. Ashton and Sykes in their early work recognized a deterioration in labour skills but were largely mistaken in their diagnosis: [for first half of nineteenth-century] "influx into coal mines of a population that had neither the professional traditions nor technical skill of colliers of the eighteenth-century" in, T.S. Ashton and J. Sykes, The Coal Industry of the Eighteenth Century(1929), p. 159.

- 39 J. H. H. Holmes, A Treatise on the Coal Mines of Durham and Northumberland (1816), p. 30. For the 17th century see account given to the Royal Society, in J.U. Nef, The Rise of the British Coal Industry (1966), vol. i, p. 173. Nef's two volume history, first published in 1934, constitutes the classic early history of the industry, but for some recent correctives in his growth of output statistics and his belief in an early modern English wood shortage see: D. C. Coleman, 'The Coal Industry: A Rejoinder', Economic History Review, 2nd series, xxx, (1977), pp. 340-45, and N. K. Buxton, *op cit.*, pp. 17-20.
- 40 The Report of the South Shields Committee appointed to investigate the Causes of Accidents in Coal Mines; containing an Examination of Safety Lamps, Ventilation, Scientific Instruments, Infant Labour ... etc., published in, Report from the Select Committee on Coal Mines, P.P. (ii) 1852 (509) v, p. 160. The South Shields Committee originally reported in 1842.
- 41 Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the state of the Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830 (663) viii, p. 317. Deeper mining involved deeper shafts and more winding gear, higher underground transport costs, and more investment in pumps and ventilation. The Trade's apologists used this incidence of deeper seams and higher costs as a defence of monopoly: "a price must be given sufficient to compensate the additional expense of working deeper, more distant and less productive Mines". (p. 17).
- 42 Report into preventing Dangerous Accidents, P.P. 1849, *op. cit.*, p. 190. For accounts of ventilation principles, history, and conditions: see South Shields Committee, 1842, *op. cit.*;

- R. L. Galloway, Annals of Coal Mining and the Coal Trade, two volumes (1898, 1904); and N. K. Buxton, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25, 70-76.
- 43 South Shields Committee, 1842, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
- 44 Evidence of Martin Jude, Report into preventing Dangerous Accidents, P.P. 1849, *op. cit.*, p. 529. Jude had previously worked for thirty-four years as a pitman, and was still an activist in the National Miners' Association; evidence of physician to the London Insurance Company, *ibid.*, p. 141. For particular criticism of furnaces see the evidence of George Elliot, coal-owner, in, *ibid.*, p. 282. The same select committee quoted the example of Killingworth Colliery, which, when the South Shields Committee visited it in 1842, had an air-course of 160 miles, *ibid.*, p. 334.
- 45 South Shields Committee, 1842, *op. cit.*, p. 179, p. 181.
- 46 J. Kenyon Blackwell, Report on Ventilation of Mines, 25 March 1850, with Plans, P.P. 1850 (1214) xxiii, p. 21; Miners' Advocate 14 December 1844.
- 47 Report into preventing Dangerous Accidents, P.P. 1849, *op. cit.*, p. 146. Fynes reckoned that between September 1817 and August 1845 there had been six explosions at Jarrow taking one hundred and thirty-five lives, (R. Fynes, *op. cit.*, p. 123). When trade unionism revived in the coalfield during the early 1860s it relentlessly campaigned against insufficient ventilation by too few shafts. The Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1872 made the working of single shaft mines illegal.
- 48 James Mather's independent South Shields Committee took the

1835 Select Committee to task on this issue of unfairly estimating the cost of sinking additional shafts, South Shields Committee, 1842, op. cit., p. 182. And yet the 1835 Report had warned against "The practice of placing wooden partitions or brattices in the ventilating shafts ... the slightest explosion may remove them, thus the whole system of ventilation is destroyed" (p. vi). A second shaft could also be a vital escape route for explosion survivors trapped beneath a destroyed or a blocked first shaft. However, this warning against bratticing was more than outweighed by the committee's over-anxiety on expense and their disinclination to make recommendations to Parliament on the issue of accidents.

(Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. 21, p. 145, p. 147, p. 282)

49 For blasting, a hole was bored with a hand drill, the charge inserted and plugged with clay to be lit by a straw fuse. The blast would drop a section of the seam which the hewer had 'kirved', (or wedged-out), along the bottom of the seam driven about 36" into the coal, and of 16" in height. Before the introduction of gunpowder the 'kirved' section was knocked out by wedge and mallet.

By the middle of the nineteenth-century both methods were in use in British coalfields. For an early description of pre-gunpowder 'wedging' technique, see: John Brand, The History and Antiquities of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne (1789), vol. ii, p. 681.

50 Thomas Crawford, 8 March 1852, Diary 1852-55, N[ewcastle] C[entral] L[ibrary]. For a discussion of the introduction of gunpowder and its danger, see: R. L. Galloway, Annals of Coal Mining (1898) vol. i, pp. 508-11. John Buddle told the 1835 select committee that he considered "it a very great

protection, the using of candles. It keeps every man upon the alert; we never can by the use of the Davy lamp judge of the quantity of air passing so well as we can do with the candle", (R. L. Galloway, *ibid.*, pp. 510-11).

51 "... for a period of twenty years after its invention [invented 1815], in most of the coalfields the lamp was only used occasionally, and to a very small extent; while even in the north of England ... its use was almost solely confined to the pillar or 'broken' working; the first, or 'whole mine' working, continuing to be carried on with candles." (R. L. Galloway, *op. cit.*, p. 509).

52 'creep': "The rising, or heaving, or lifting up of the floor in the excavations in a seam of coal occasioned by the pillars not having been left sufficient or not having a sufficiently large area to prevent them from being forced into the thill [floor] by the superincumbent pressure ... The softer the thill, the greater the liability to creep."

'thrust': "This occurs when both the roof and floor of a seam of coal are hard, and when the pillars, insufficient for the support of the superincumbent strata, are crushed by their pressure."

(from G. C. Greenwell, A Glossary of Terms used in the Coal Trade of Northumberland and Durham, 1849. 1888. reprinted 1970, pp. 26-7, p. 29.

53 Evidence of John Taylor, civil engineer, Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Anthony Winship, wasteman, *ibid.*, p. 37; Thomas Batty (aged 93 years; collier for 78 years), and Ralph Hall (aged 77 years; collier for 70 years), C.E.C. 1842, p. 574; Nicholas Wood, Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

- 54 John Buddle, Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. 143. For a recent account which misunderstands the implications of working in the broken with the Davy lamp - " ... besides adding to the security of life, the effect of the safety lamp was to make possible an increase in output ... " - see N. K. Buxton, op. cit., pp. 75-76. For a full account of goafs and traditional engineering problems in the first half of the nineteenth-century, see: S. C. Crone, 'Observations on Pillar Working in the Northumberland and Durham Collieries,' North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers' Transactions, vol. ix, 1860-61; and C.E.C. 1842, p. 545.
- 55 John Phillips, in J. Kenyon Blackwell, 1850, op. cit., p. 4; Dr William Reid Clanny, Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. 30.
- 56 For a summary of changes in pillar working, and details of their changing depth, size, proportion, and shape over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see: R. L. Galloway, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 230-34; and T. S. Ashton and J. Sykes, op. cit., pp. 14-32. The Dorothea pit at Philadelphia (Co. Durham) and South Hetton colliery were judding during the 1840s, C.E.C. 1842, p. 153. For roof-fall and explosion hazards of drawing the jud, *ibid.*, p. 149, p. 545; and S. C. Crone, *loc. cit.*, p. 22-3.
- 57 Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. vii; Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. 49.
- 58 All conclusions drawn from statistics in the first half of the century must be tacit because the accuracy of the historical record affects the received rate of mortality. Explosion statistics were first published in North East newspapers only in 1812 and after that only major explosions were listed. The

1835 Report on Accidents published returns but the historian of the subject, demonstrating that they were based on newspaper returns, has called them "almost valueless". More minor blasts got into print after 1835 but they remained incomplete until the 1850s and the returns of the inspectors of mines. For enlightening work on this subject, see: P.E.H. Hair, *op. cit.*, p. 112c; and P.E.H. Hair, 'Mortality from Violence in British Coal-Mines 1800-50', Economic History Review, 2nd series, xxi, (1968), p. 551.

The 1842 commissioners found a dearth of records by colliery doctors and surgeons. Nor did the majority of doctors and surgeons feel free to make comment. John Buddle thought that more men were lost in the coalfield over one year by this trickle of accident than by explosion (C.E.C. 1842, p. 553). Hetton was the only colliery with preserved comprehensive medical records, and their list of injuries from January 1837 to June 1840 is reproduced in the Appendix p. 186 (*ibid.*, p. 554).

For a comparison of accidents at Haswell and East Holywell collieries 1849-51, see: Second Report on Accidents, 1854, *loc. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

59 P.E.H. Hair, Mortality, *loc. cit.*, p. 555, p. 553.

60 See above, p. 4 and f.n. 3, 4.

61 One historian thinks that the industry is over-famous for them: "a disproportionate weight of documentary evidence has misled historians into believing that the capital intensive enterprises of the Duke of Bridgewater or the Earl of Durham were the rule rather than the exception". (C. Storm-Clark, 'The Miners, 1870-1970: A Test Case for Oral History', Victorian Studies, September 1971, p. 52.)

- 62 There are good general accounts of coalmining technology in context in Matthias Dunn, An Historical, Geographical, and Descriptive View of the Coal Trade of the North of England (1844), Ashton and Sykes, *op. cit.*, and R. L. Galloway, *op. cit.* The serious student of technological history will find a bibliography of mining technological history by B. F. Duckham in, R. L. Galloway, *ibid.*, vol. i., pp. 11-15. For a more specific account see the report of Commissioner Dr James Mitchell on the technological system of the South Durham district in, C.E.C. 1842, pp. 119-23.
- 63 Edward Potter, viewer at South Hetton, said he would not have wire-ropes at his colliery, except on the railway, and that he preferred flat-ropes as "more pliant in passing over pulleys, and we can see when they may want repairing", (C.E.C. 1842, p. 149). Other owners and viewers disagreed. At the Wingate Grange Colliery in 1843 the pitmen were forced to accept wire-ropes even though they had been revealed as dangerous: R. Challinor and B. Ripley, The Miners' Association. A Trade Union in the Age of the Chartists (1968), p. 96. For coalowners' vexation at the men's objection to wire ropes "on the ground of pretended want of confidence in its safety, they having to ascend and descend the pit in which it worked" see: communication of T. J. Taylor for the Coal Trade to Commissioner Seymour Tremenheere in, Report of the Commissioner appointed under the Provisions of the act 5 & 6 Vict. c. 99, to Inquire into the Operation of That Act and into The State of The Population in The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846 (737) xxiv, p. 10.
- 64 John Robson, viewer at Hetton, had only praise for the way in which rails had eased the labour of putting, and ponies the labour

of 'helping up': John Robson, Report of 1842, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C.142. Also, the evidence of Mr Hunter, overman at Walker Colliery, " ... but the boys were not able to get out before the 18th hour, because there was no facility for drawing coals etc. as now. Thinks the boys now do, perhaps, the same amount of work in a less time". (C.E.C. 1842, p. 627). A contemporary poem, written by a former putter, praises labour-saving metal rails:

"But heavy putten's now forgotten,
Sic as we had i former days,
Ower holey thill and dyels a' spletten' -
Trams now a'run on metal ways."

(Thomas Wilson, The Pitman's Pay; or, a night's discharge to care. Gateshead 1830).

- 65 Pits and The Pitmen, op. cit., pp. 10-11; William Anderson, viewer at St Hilda's Colliery, South Shields, C.E.C. 1842, p. 637.
- 66 Detailed descriptions of this standard operation are in C.E.C. 1842, pp. 126-27, and Pits and The Pitmen, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
- 67 Lord Londonderry (and others), A Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Ashley M.P. (London 1842) p. 14. There appears to be some ambiguity in Ashley's charge because "the great majority" of collieries were not on double shifts, although the standard single shift started in the middle of the night when the hewers went down at about 3.00 a.m., boys following at about 5.00 a.m. For the twelve hour double shift, worked when necessary, see: C.E.C. 1842, p. 586, p. 676. George Johnson, viewer at Willington, Heaton, and Burdon Main collieries, reckoned that five out of every one hundred collieries would be working this

double shift at any one time, *ibid.*, p. 567.

68 C.E.C. 1842, p. 148, and further examples of this double shift system p. 568,,p. 592, p. 610.

69 This is necessarily a cursory summary - the history of the North East miners in the second half of the nineteenth-century remains to be written.

The introduction of hewing pairs (c. 1849) was considered an imposition on established labour practice, F. Atkinson, The Great Northern Coalfield 1700-1900 (1968), p. 13.

There is an account of the technique and history of board and pillar by John Phillips, Report on Ventilation of Mines and Collieries, P.P. 1850 (1222) xxiii, pp. 5-6.

For the national trend to longwall operation possibly improving productivity in the years 1850-80 see: A. J. Taylor, *loc. cit.*, p. 57. In 1835 some engineers suggested that longwalling might be dangerous for the coalfield's geology, *Report on Accidents*, P.P.1835, *op. cit.*, p. 145. Although board and pillar dominated through the century, the first systematic attempt at North East longwalling was at East Holywell colliery in 1844, followed by Seaton Delaval in 1849 and Framwellgate, Usworth, and Monkwearmouth in 1850: R. L. Galloway, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 249-50. For the general prevalence of the 'fore' and 'back' double-shift systems in Co. Durham: J. R. Boyle, The County of Durham (1892); p. 108.

There is an introduction to the implications of the three shift system in, D. Douglass, Pit Life in Co. Durham: Rank and File Movements and Workers' Control (Oxford History Workshop no. 6,1972), pp. 60-61.

70 C.E.C. 1842, p. 127, p. 152; and evidence of Thomas Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 676.

71 SPEAKOUT of Backworth Colliery, Miners' Advocate, 13 July 1844. 'Job control' is a major theme in Douglass' Pit Life, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-45.

The importance of the pace of working by men we more obviously think of as craftsmen is beautifully expressed in George Sturt's The Wheelwright's Shop (1923).

72 E. A. Rymer, *loc. cit.*, p. 7. The 1850s were defeated years for miners' unions in Northumberland and Durham and although some organization remained at colliery-level it was patchy and without policy.

73 A United Collier, A Defence of the Voice from the Coal Mines in Answer to the 'Brief Observations' in reply to that pamphlet (Newcastle 1825), pp. 10-11; Rules and Regulations for the formation of a society to be called the United Association of Colliers on the Rivers Tyne & Wear (Newcastle 1825).

74 In 1846 district secretary William Cloughan stated that restriction "is to the Union what the mainspring is to a watch" (Alan Campbell, 'Honourable Men and Degraded Slaves', in R. Harrison (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 78.)

Restriction, and the context and ideology of trade unionism in general, will be covered chronologically in Part III.

Hewing matches are a fairly common feature of the eighteenth century Newcastle press, for example in 1766 a hewer called Hatherick at Holliwell Main Colliery wagered he could cut a whole twenty-five hundredweight London chaldron in one -

- 9' x 4½' x 3' - piece. (Newcastle Courant 11 October 1766).
 There is an account of John Temperley and other great hewers in, The Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend (Newcastle 1887), vol. i, p. 111.
- 75 Mark Shanks, John Defty, Thomas Burt, Alexander Clark, Cuthbert Patterson, and Johnson Hall (Miners' Journal, 21 October 1843).
- 76 Mr Bailey, C.E.C. 1842, p. 649; A THORNLEY MINER Miners' Advocate, 21 September 1844. By 1866 a colliery doctor could testify that strain and injury from over-exertion was mainly found among young colliers: Dr Davidson, Report on Mines, P.P. 1866, op. cit., p. 352.
- 77 "The inclination of the seam alters the work as to difficulty; no general rule applies largely." (John Harrison, viewer at Newbottle colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 647); Thomas Taylor, owner of Earsdon colliery, *ibid.*, p. 608. 'Cavilling', a free system of balloting whereby new workplaces are allotted by the quarter was a means of equalizing chances for a bad seam and more difficult hewing.

The best description of all facets of working conditions in the period remains the Children's Employment Commission, op. cit., where age, girls and women, children, geological conditions, nature of work, hours, holidays, treatment, accident, wages, and health are all covered in order, with references to the Appendix and the main body of national research. In 1842 the thinnest seam in Northumberland and North Durham was 2' 6" at Shilbottle and the average seam thickness was estimated at 5': C.E.C. 1842, p. 542.

78 Gateshead Observer 18 March 1843. Another complaint of the meeting was how they were forced to work almost naked. As mines went deeper then they got hotter and the technical problems of sufficient ventilation increased. There was concern in the late 1840s about what constituted a comfortable working current of air: 8 mph was inconvenient; 4 mph was better: Report into preventing Dangerous Accidents, P.P. 1849, op. cit., p. 78, p. 191, p. 202. Deeper mines, because of ventilation problems, were also gassier and dustier ("asthmatic"), making for more difficult breathing:

... the laborious work of 'hewing' ... excites, like other violent exercises, a great respiratory action; he breathes deep, and draws into his lungs with avidity this loaded mixture. His chest is bare, and the whole class of his respiratory muscles are in beautiful action; consequently he expectorates black matter; he breathes thick; and he is subject to asthma. If he has a consumptive taint, he speedily falls a victim to that disease, his breathing is rarely natural, that is, inaudible ...

There was no appreciation of what is now called pneumoconiosis; doctors did not understand whether the "asthma" was a chemical or a physical condition of gas, or dust, or both (ibid., p. 603, and, evidence of George Stephenson, inventor and engineer, Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. 167).

79 Gateshead Observer, 18 March 1843. As the owners insisted on more short-time, and the union insisted on restriction, there was an obvious conflict between miners' full earnings, their proper safety, and their loyalty to the union. See also: CHRONONHONTHOLOGOS, Framwellgate Moor colliery, Miners' Advocate, 6 April 1844; handbill, Colliers Appeal to the Country (Newcastle 1844), "for they now have as much coal to get in two days as formerly in three days". Mr Hunter, overman at Walker Colliery, and in the mines since 1798, thought that "the boys now do, perhaps, the same amount of work in a

- less time", C.E.C. 1842, p. 627.
- 80 Rev. John Hodgson, An Account of the Explosion, which killed ninety-two persons, in BRANDLING MAIN COLLIERY, at Felling, near Newcastle upon Tyne, on May 25, 1812 (Newcastle 1813), p. 23.
- 81 Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. vi; John Taylor, Esq. p. 20; W. Reid Clanny, p. 32; Ralph Elliot, p. 44; Nicholas Wood, p. 81.
- 82 The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 13. A report the year before had remarked that the "thoughtless daring" of pitmen was famous, (Sir Henry T. De La Beche and Dr Lyon Playfair, Collieries. Report on the Gases and Explosions in Collieries, 1845, p. 7.) Tremenheere's assumptions played an important role in the character of assisted schooling in the colliery villages thereafter.
- 83 Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. 169.
- 84 Report on Accidents, P.P. 1835, op. cit., p. 169. Buddle told of a pitmen's court at Benwell which had refused the requests of the relatives of a sentenced collier because they agreed with the magistrates. The offender had been sent to a House of Correction for three months for unscrewing the top of his Davy lamp.
- 85 Durham Epiphany Sessions, 2 January 1832, Rex v Kennedy, Brief for Prosecution, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/L.21.
- 86 South Shields Committee, 1842, loc. cit., p. 197.
- 87 John Phillips, P.P. 1850, op. cit., p. 25; Report on Coal Mines, P.P.

1852, op. cit., p. 54, p. 65; Third Report from the Select Committee on Accidents in Coal Mines, P.P. (iii) 1854 (277) ix, p. 56; Fourth Report from the Select Committee on Accidents in Coal Mines, P.P. (iv) 1854 (325) ix, p. 9.

- 88 J. Kenyon Blackwell made strong recommendations for colliery rules in his 1850 Report, op. cit., p. 24. A full account of the County Regulations appears in the 3rd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit.

The Mines Act of 1855 (18 & 19 Vict., cap. 108) introduced seven general rules to apply to all collieries, as well as the requirement that all collieries drew up their own special rules to be subsequently checked by the Home Office. General rules were very broad and, with an emphasis on machinery, put the onus on the owners:

1. An adequate amount of ventilation shall be constantly produced ... to dilute and render harmless noxious gases, to such an extent as that the working places of the pits and levels of such Colliery shall under ordinary circumstances be in a fit state for working.

Special rules dealt more with the specific techniques of underground labour and thus put their onus on the miners:

1. The miners are to build packwalls, and set a sufficient quantity of props for safety supporting the roof, and to renew them as often as necessary, or when ordered by the underviewer or his deputy. Any person disobeying this Rule must be reported to the agent.

(General and Special Rules, Providence Colliery, Wakefield, 1856, cited in B. Lewis, Coal Mining in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, 1971, pp. 110-112.) The rules were extended by the 1860 Mines Regulation and Inspection Act (23 & 24 Vict., cap. 11).

Before legal obligation, the introduction of colliery rules had

been sporadic:

"... a few of them do introduce them spontaneously, but may wait until a serious accident has happened, and then they resort to them," (Joseph Dickinson, Report on Coal Mines, P.P. 1852; op. cit., p. 54).

89 3rd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 79

90 John Phillips, P.P. 1850, op. cit., Appendix 8. The significance of work-rules, even in industries without the independent work traditions of coalmining, has been recognized as vital: "Work Rules, formalized, impersonal, and occasionally printed, were symbolic of the new industrial relationships", (S. Pollard, loc. cit., p. 258). A bibliography of the work-discipline theme exists in Douglas Reid's 'The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876', Past and Present, no. 71, (1976), p. 76.

"Working to Rule" is a railwayman's phrase - and such was the rapid growth and comprehensive regulation of their industry that nineteenth-century railway workers constituted a formidable vanguard of industrial experience: "But the railway became an employer of a new type, pioneering a new form of social contract ... On joining the railway and signing his Rule Book, the Victorian railwayman established a covenant with his employer" (Frank McKenna, 'Victorian Railway Workers', History Workshop Journal no. i., 1976, pp. 31-32.) Also see, Kenneth Hudson, Working to Rule. Railway Workshop Rules: a study of industrial discipline (1970).

91 J. Kenyon Blackwell, P.P. 1850, op. cit., p. 25. Government inspector Tremenheere testified to managerial and supervisory incompetence in, Report into preventing Dangerous Accidents, P.P. 1849, op. cit., p. 25. David Swallow, one of the 1842 Wakefield founders of the NMA said of the 1854 County Regulations

that "we embrace the whole of them", whilst another workhorse of the NMA, Martin Jude, called for more supervisory 'deputies' to improve safety: 3rd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 110; 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1853, op. cit., p. 12. It must be said that the NMA these men represented in the late 1840s and 1850s was quite different in strength and political emphasis from the NMA of the early 1840s.

92 Jude was answering questions after telling the committee of a pitman at Usworth Colliery in 1851 who, after telling him of safety dangers at the pit had his wages cut so drastically that he was forced to leave: 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1853, op. cit., p. 3. Inspector of Mines Matthias Dunn considered victimization in the apparent lack of free communication with him to be an unusual occurrence and said that he "would rather attribute it to their not being sensible of danger", (3rd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 56.)

93 Bell and Barras were expected to examine colliery workings for safety before the first shift came in at 4.00 a.m.: Robert Todd, hewer at Washington colliery in, Reports of Messrs Dunn, Dickinson, and Morton, Inspectors of Coal Mines, to Her Majesty's Secretary of State. P.P. 1851 (1422) xxxiii, p. 14. (Todd had recently lost two of his sons in an accident at the colliery.) Evidence of Martin Jude, 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1853, op. cit., p. 8.

There were still fierce complaints about the patronage system of appointing deputies in the 1860s: George Parker, trade unionist, Report on Mines, P.P. 1866, op. cit., p. 191.

94 George Parker, Report on Mines, P.P. 1866, op. cit., pp. 193-94.

- 95 S.C. ... Dangerous Accidents, P.P. 1849, op. cit., p. 541, pp. 451-52, and p. 528, p. 541, p. 535 for further union testimony; Nicholas Wood, p. 222. Reasons for the failure of four private members' bills to provide for the "stern intervention" of an inspectorate, 1847-49, are given in O.O.G.M. MacDonagh, 'Coal Mines Regulation: The First Decade 1842-52', in, R. Robson (ed.), Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain (1967), pp. 66-69. For Tremenheere's influence see: O. P. Edwards, 'An Account of the Founding of HM Inspectorate of Mines and the Work of the First Inspector, Hugh Seymour Tremenheere', British Journal of Industrial Medicine, xx (1963).
- 96 Report on Coal Mines, P.P. 1852, op. cit., p. ix; 4th Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., pp. 6-8.
- 97 John Phillips, P.P. 1850, op. cit., p. 33.
- 98 4th Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 9; Sir Henry De la Beche, 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 76; Mr H. Mackworth, 1st Report on Accidents, P.P. 1853, op. cit., p. 117.
- 99 Mr J. W. Day, chairman of Houghton le Spring Poor Law Union, C.E.C. 1842, p. 719; 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1853, op. cit., pp. 8-9. For a summary of developments in this field see: D. J. Gillan, The effect of industrial legislation on the social and educational condition of children employed in coal mines between 1840 and 1876, with special reference to county Durham, (University of Durham, unpublished M.Ed 1967).

In 1854, after first gaining the verbal agreement of owners and viewers, Commissioner Tremenheere sought out the miners' opinions on systematic colliery schooling. After three weeks

the union delegates (David Swallow and Allen Tetlow for Lancashire and Cheshire, Martin Jude and Edmund Gray for Northumberland and Durham, and Thomas Philip for Scotland) reported the general agreement of their members on the topic. Additional clauses, like the inclusion of pitmen on school committees, revealed that the union was keen to have some working-class control over the style and content of that education, but Tremenheere noted the measure of agreement on the principle of education: "It thus appears that the colliers of Northumberland and Durham, and also of Scotland, desire even a greater measure of compulsory education for their children, than I have ventured to recommend", Report of the Commissioners appointed under the provisions of the Act 5 & 6, Vict. c. 99, to Inquire into the Operation of that Act, and into the State of the Population in The Mining Districts, P.P. 1854 (1838) xix, p. 42. Tremenheere's recognition of 'principle' assumed common agreement over what this education should be, and here it is clear that his missionary sense had gone beyond the reality of coalfield agreement on the nature and uses of education.

- 100 Sir Henry De la Beche, 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 76. Here, I am only concerned with education as it was interpreted for work purposes.
- 101 Tremenheere, 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 62; Thomas Sopwith, lead company agent, in, Rev. W. A. Scott, 'Education of Miners' Children', Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1870, p. 349; Rev. W. A. Scott, *ibid*, p. 348.
- 102 James Mather, 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 99; Report of the Commissioner appointed, under the provisions

of the Act 5 & 6 Vict., c. 99, to Inquire into the Operation of that Act, and into The State of the Population in the Mining Districts. P.P. 1849(1109) xxii, p. 9.

- 103 Dr A. Davidson, Report on Mines, P.P. 1866, op. cit., p. 352. For the penetration of private assurance schemes and permanent relief funds in the pit villages after c. 1850, see: John Benson, 'English Coal-Miners' Trade Union Accident Funds', 1850-1900, Economic History Review, 2nd series, xxviii, (1975).
- 104 Sir H. De la Beche, 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 75; William Whellan & Co., History, Topography, and Directory of Northumberland, (1855), p. 130.
- 105 Sir H. De la Beche, 2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 75; Rev. J. C. Street, in, Rev. W. A. Scott, loc. cit., p. 353.
- 106 Thomas John Taylor, coalowner, C.E.C. 1842, p. 609.
- 107 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 16 May 1842, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C.142.
- 108 B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics (1962), p. 119, p. 116. Figures are for 1914, for counties of Northumberland, Durham, and Cumberland.
- 109 Rev. J. Christie, op. cit., p. 114.
- 110 "Traditional social habits and customs seldom fitted into the new pattern of industrial life, and they had therefore to be discredited as hindrances to progress." (J. F. C. Harrison, Learning and Living 1760-1960, a study in the History of the English Adult Education Movement, 1961, p. 40.).

- 111 For a general discussion of the law in the eighteenth-century both as an element of productive relations, and as a mediator of class relations, see, E. P. Thompson, Whigs and Hunters. The origin of the Black Act, (1975), pp. 258-69.
- 112 N.E.I.M.M.E. ZB/4.
- 113 There is a bond for Lanchester Fell, Harelaw, Pontop Pike, Harperley and Lintz collieries which might be for 1757 (N.E.I.M.M.E., Watson Collection) and therefore important in a mid-century lacunae. The document is so badly decayed that its date is illegible, but it does bear stamps to the value of 1s. 3d. and the Inland Revenue Office explained to the N.E.I.M.M.E. that this type of stamp lasted from July 1757 to December 1772. However, a clause within the bond stating that owners and agents "shall order and direct without sticking combining or absenting themselves" is more typical of the 1770s than the earlier 1760s.
- 114 The standard work is Hylton Scott's, 'The Miners' Bond', Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, 4th series, (1947), and Scott reckoned that the Bond was not longstanding then. Ashton and Sykes attempted an explanation of origin in their The Coal Industry (op. cit.) - "... it was natural for the land owning coal masters to apply to the underground workers the same rules of hiring as were associated with agricultural employment; and the desire for a 'settlement', which, under eighteenth-century Poor Law practice, was conferred by a year's employment in a parish, would cause the workers to look on this period of engagement with particular favour." (p. 84).
- 115 On 12 November 1778 Sir John Delaval's agent at Hartley Colliery

in Northumberland, Mr J. Crooks, wrote to him explaining binding day expenses plus "Bedmoney & Lent money, the first of which is always given in the Coll^e, to all Young men & the latter is regularly taken off in the Bills Through the Course of the Year", (Crooks to Delaval, 12 November 1778, N.C.R.O., DE/4/4).

Negotiated allowances increased with the increasing complexity of mining.

- 116 Hewers cut the coal and were paid by the 'score' price. A score generally consisted of twenty tubs. Putters pushed the tubs of coal away from the coal-face to the main 'rolley-ways' (underground roads). They were paid by score and distance. Putters were usually adolescent lads working either singly or in pairs according to size and strength. Drivers drove the horses and carts on the roley-ways and were paid by the day. Drivers were usually younger adolescents and boys.
- 117 East Denton and West Kenton Bond, 1804, N.C.R.O., NRO 421.
- 118 Lanchester Fell etc. Bond 1757/72, op. cit.; Byker and St Anthony's Bond, 1770, N.E.I.M.M.E; Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 19 August 1899; Denton and Kenton Bond, 1804, op. cit; Delaval Bond, 1770, N.C.R.O., DE/7/6; Byker Hill Bond, 1773, N.C.R.O., Ms. NRO 421; Delaval Bond, 1776, N.C.R.O., DE/7/6.

Generally speaking, round coals were arbitrarily considered 'best' coals, and small coals - which had been separated by a screening process - were considered inferior, although these considerations were based on their exchange-value rather than their use-value.

- 119 Dawson's Pit, Benwell Colliery, Bond, 1703, N.E.I.M.M.E.,

- ZB/4; Charlaw Colliery Bond, 1767, N.E.I.M.M.E., ZB/1; Denton and Kenton Bond, 1804, op. cit.; Burnmoor Colliery paybill 1787, D.C.R.O., NCB I/JB; Walker Colliery Bond, 1788, N.E.I.M.M.E., Watson Collection. Headway work advanced the coal-face and was paid by the yard.
- 120 Penshaw Colliery Bond, 1793, D.C.R.O., NCB I/JB; Charlaw Bond, 1767, op. cit.; Byker and St Anthony's Bond, 1770, op. cit.
- 121 Ouston Colliery 'B' pit, paybill, 1834, N.C.R.O., ZAN M/17/28.
- 122 "the fundamental way in which the Durham miner managed to maintain an equitable system of work, and managed to stave off the competitiveness, bullying, and injustice of the hated butty system. In essence it was an embryo of workers' control ... ", (D. Douglass, op. cit., p. 26).
- 123 For Bushblades Colliery see Appendix pp. 187-89; Acct. of money Payed out, November 1762, N.C.R.O., DE/7/6.
- 124 E. A. Rymer, loc. cit., p. 8. The author is talking of his years at Spennymoor, South Durham.
- 125 Interview with South Wales retired miner, in. C. Storm-Clark, loc. cit., p. 56.
- 126 J. B. Simpson, Capital and Labour in Coal Mining during the past Two Hundred Years, (1900), pp. 28-33; P. E. H. Hair, Social History, op.cit., pp. 338-44; Ashton and Sykes, op. cit., 45, 63, 121, pp. 134-41; P. M. Squezy, op. cit., p. 44; N. K. Buxton, op. cit., p. 144.
- 127 P. E. H. Hair, op. cit., p. 341, p. 344, p. 383.

- 128 Silberling's index was based on wholesale prices, and did not include government duties which made for a sizeable part of the cost of bread, beer, etc.. Also,
- "... the man whose scheme of expenditure conformed to that drawn up by Silberling had many idiosyncracies. He did not occupy a house, or at least he was not called upon to pay rent. He allowed himself only a moderate amount of bread and very little porridge, and he never touched potatoes and strong drink. On the other hand he got through quite considerable quantities of beef and mutton and showed a fondness for butter. Perhaps he was a diabetic."
- (T. S. Ashton, quoted in, B. Inglis, op. cit., p. 23).
- 129 Walker Colliery Bonds, 1780, 1781, 1783, 1784, 1788, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1795, 1797, 1798, N.E.I.M.M.E., Watson Collection.
- 130 It was a shareholding industry relatively early. In 1829 the Trade's chief witness reckoned that there were only five 'proprietors' on the Tyne and three on the Wear - "all the rest are in the hands of lessees or adventurers". Tory Buddle drew a moral distinction between the patrimony of 'proprietorship' and the brief speculation of 'adventurers': State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 31.
- 131 Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. xv. The evidences of Messrs. R. W. Brandling (chairman of United Committee), J. Buddle, and T. Wood to this select committee form a valuable account of the Vend.
- 132 State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op cit., pp. 280, 281, 282, 281.
- 133 An example of how the two functions were integral to each other, and thus forcing up the price of "best Stewart's Wallsend" from

26s. 6d. to 28s. 6d. per chaldron in 1834, is given in Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. vii.

- 134 Hugh Taylor, owner, and agent to the Duke of Northumberland, State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 82; John Buddle, State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 283. The Lords' committee of 1829 and the Commons' committee of 1830 were followed by the Act of 1831 which removed the excrescence of ancient dues and seaborne taxes which had grown with the Trade. Also, the corrupted London office of coal-meter was abolished and coal was required to be sold by weight rather than by measure: "The Act of 1831 represents the triumph of the principles of free trade and rational taxation ... Henceforth the coal trade was to be free to develop according to its own nature and that of its economic environment" (P. M. Sweezy, op. cit., p. 55).

One of Sweezy's major arguments is that Parliament proved very flaccid indeed over the question of the Trade's monopoly; that the committees of 1800, 1830, and 1836 appear hesitant on the difference between 'free trade' and 'competition' (1836 repealed penalties against combination, passed in the eighteenth-century, in the name of freeing capital and enterprise); and that it was not legislation but its own contradictions which destroyed the Vend. (ibid., chapter eleven, The Limitation and Public Policy).

135. The phrase comes from the committee itself: State of Coal Trade in the UK, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 13.
- 136 Thomas Wood, coalowner and viewer, Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. 179. It has been estimated that before the 1831 Act up to one-third of total output, in the form

- of small coals, was wasted and destroyed (N. K. Buxton, op. cit., p. 48).
- 137 John Buddle, State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 40.
- 138 Rev. Dr. William Buckland, Professor of Geology, called the wastage "a national calamity": State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 240.
- 139 John Buddle, State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 44.
- 140 The Vend considered new competition to be unfair. Initially, Tyne coal and shipping interests complained about taxes they had to pay (the "Richmond Shilling" was the most begrudged), which the Wear also had to pay -, although less, and which the Tees did not have to pay: evidences of Brandling, Cochrane, and Buddle, in State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 11, p. 36; and H. Metcalf and G. Fawcus, in State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., pp. 323-26, p. 337. Later, Tyne and Wear owners bitterly opposed railway ventures around the Tees, particularly Stephenson's Stockton-Darlington in the 1820s and the Durham South West Junction and the South Durham Railways in the 1830s. Railway Acts put a compulsory purchase order on land 'at a fair valuation' thus drastically reducing the large permanent expenses of 'way-leave' renting, always paid by the established owners of North Durham and Northumberland. The Vend petitioned against the South Durham Railway Bill of 1836, declaring that its passage " . . . in the present shape, without Way-leaves, would be a most unjustifiable bonus to the Promoters thereof, subversive of the

long established Customers of the Country, and unjust to the Lessors and Lessees of existing Collieries and Railways"

(Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. xl.).

- 141 P.M. Sweezy, op. cit., p. 112. For figures of decline in 'issues' 1824-44, *ibid.*, p. 119.

Tyne and Wear increased their capacity 1829-36 an estimated 36.9%, and while, for instance, Hetton Colliery had a capacity of 150,000 chaldrons in 1833 it was regulated at a mere 110,000, a figure which it did not accept: Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. xv. In 1836 there were sixteen North East collieries not in the Vend but Brandling did "not know any colliery that has been opened that has not suggested, as soon as they were in a working [he meant fully-operating] state, that they would join": *ibid.*, p. 10.

- 142 See monthly prices of best coal, London market, 1807-44, P. M. Sweezy, op. cit., p. 155.

- 143 Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. 173. Wood estimated an annual return of between 12% and 20%, and some "would be very lowly valued indeed if valued at 25% profit", (*ibid.*, p. 174). In 1830 Brandling had said that most collieries operated at between 5% and 10%: State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 263.

- 144 Matthias Dunn, Manuscript Journal 1831-35, 26 January 1833, 13 July 1833, N.C.L. Dunn's smaller North Hetton colliery was being badly squeezed by Wood's actions.

- 145 Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. 177.

- 146 State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 303.

- 147 Dunn had previously worked for Wood at Hetton. During the lock-out of 1832 the two men had rowed about treatment of the pitmen - " ... suffice it to say that his Conductives was so brutal that it is impossible I can again associate with him in the management of the Colliery", (M. Dunn, Journal, op. cit., 17 May 1832.) For Vend as guarantor of best coals: State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 265, p. 304; Report on State of Coal Trade, P.P. 1836, op. cit., p. 12. For Vend as guarantor of good employment: Report, P.P. 1836, *ibid.*, pp. 23-24, p. 52. Vend apologetics were that free competition of the kind advocated by Thomas Wood might reduce prices in the short-run, but would close collieries, create heavy unemployment and attendant social problems, and ultimately make for a more narrowly-based monopoly in the long run.
- 148 " ... continual croaking about evils which are, after all, only the penalty of Adam". (Anon., A Few Friendly Words to The Pitmen of Durham and Northumberland by one who is well acquainted with them, 1844, W[igan] C[entral] L[ibrary]. The main bulk of research on the 'Strike Collection' in Wigan Central Library was carried out in 1972, and the Library has since suffered the theft of this collection. The remnant recovered has been transferred to the Record Office, Town Hall, Leigh, but this work will continue to refer to Wigan Central Library (W.C.L.) as the repository of material as it was when this part of the research was done.
- 149 John Buddle, State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 33; letter from T. J. Taylor for the Trade to Commissioner Tremenheere, 29 July 1844, in, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846,

op. cit., pp. 10-11.

The surplus labour argument was used to defend monopolistic practices on humanitarian grounds. Here, 'fighting' or 'open' trade, the committee was told, seriously reduced wages: "At present it [pitmen's wages] is very low; there is such a surplus of hands, it is very low. I know, in many collieries, during the open trade, when they were not making more than 8s. or 10s. per week", (Buddle, State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 274). The surplus percentages come from, Anon., A Few Friendly Words, op. cit., and were used by Taylor in his above-mentioned letter.

- 150 M. Dunn, View of the Coal Trade, op. cit., p. 225. Dunn also recognized the excess of capital: "... not only strangers, but persons reputed as the most experienced in the trade, still continue, up to the present time, to accumulate adventure upon adventure, to add colliery to colliery ... " (p. 213). Dunn noted only "gloomy and dispiriting" prospects for ordinary collieries "as the quantum of vend, under the reduced prices, will not yield a profit", (p. 228).
- 151 Committee of Coal Owners, 1 October 1805, op. cit., vol. i.
- 152 Byker and St Anthony's Bond, 1770, op. cit.; Committee of Coal Owners, 16 January 1811, op. cit., vol. i.
- 153 These crises, and the episodic growth of collective bargaining in the mining community, is covered more fully in chapter five.
- 154 Newcastle Chronicle, 12 January 1811.
- 155 A Voice from the Coal Mines addressed to the coal owners, their head agents, and a sympathizing public by the Colliers of the United

Association of Durham and Northumberland (South Shields 1825).

156 A Voice from the Coal Mines, op. cit., p. 13.

157 Anon., Brief Observations in Reply to 'A Voice from the Coal Mines' (Newcastle 1825).

158 A Voice from the Coal Mines, op. cit., p. 14, pp. 21-22.

159 A Candid Appeal to the Coal owners and viewers of Collieries on the Tyne and Wear (Newcastle 1826) p. 1.

160 During the 1829 'open trade' the incursions of short-time were very dire indeed: "With the exception of some of the larger collieries ... at present the workmen are at very reduced work ... many coal owners have reduced their establishments and workings to the very lowest possible scale they can", (John Buddle, State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 67). In 1830 a section of the collieries withdrew idle-time clauses altogether: State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 274; R. L. Galloway, op. cit., vol. i, p. 465.

In 1835 Ouston Colliery allowed applications from men suffering short-time to be free of their bond, thus lessening outlay on idle-time payments: "In case the said Hewers cannot be allowed such a quantity of work, as will yield to them on the average of any three preceeding (sic) pays ... Twenty four shillings per fortnight, then and so often as such deficiency occurs, such a portion of the Hewers shall on application be selected ... and freed from their engagements, as will in the opinion of the said Owners or their Agent, enable them to give such work to the remainder, as will yield to them the said sum of twenty-four shillings per fortnightly", (Ouston colliery, Bond, 1835, N.E.I.M.M.E., ZB/8).

- 161 PHILANTHROPOS, The Two Subjects which Remain In Dispute Between The Coal-Owners And The Pitmen candidly considered, in a LETTER Addressed To The Pitmen Of The Tyne And Wear, (Newcastle 1831), p. 7.
- 162 In. R. Challinor and B. Ripley, op.cit., p. 103. Details of excessive fining at Thornley are given in Miners' Advocate, 2 December 1843, and Anon., Account of the Thornley Strike Trial (Newcastle 1843). Roberts lost the verdict at Durham but subsequently took the case to the court of Queen's Bench where the men were acquitted.
- For further examples of litigation over idle-time and other issues see, Challinor and Ripley, *ibid.*, pp. 94-110, and R. L. Galloway, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 174.
- 163 Miners' Journal, 18 November 1843.
- 164 Miners' Advocate, 15 June 1844.
- 165 For detailed reductions, see the case of Wingate Grange colliery 1840-43, Miners' Advocate, 29 June 1844.
- 166 Report of the Special Committee appointed by the Coal Owners ... respecting the Cessation of Work by the Pitmen. Read at the General Meeting of the Trade (Newcastle, 27 April 1844).
- 167 Report of The Miners' Committee in answer to the one drawn up by The Coal Trade Committee (Newcastle, May 1844): "In reply to this we say, if they are not yet satisfied of the opinion of the 'great numbers' let them attend a general meeting of the Miners (when they will be cordially received) and we fancy they will be convinced." For owners' statistics of Wear collieries see: Newcastle Journal, 4 May 1844.

- 168 See f.n. 164 for the "joint audit" by six collieries in the Hetton area.
- 169 Miners' Advocate, 13 July 1844.
- 170 C.E.C. 1842, pp. 535-36; Miners' Advocate, 21 September 1844.
- 171 Compare the reports: Report by the Committee of the Coalowners Respecting the present Situation of the Trade (Newcastle, 10 March 1832), and Report of the Special Committee (1844), *op. cit.*
- 172 Lord Londonderry to Home Office, 4 March 1843, P.R.O., H.O. 45/349. For details of the reduction see pamphlet Coal Trade. Meeting of the United Committee, (Newcastle, 27 February 1843).
- 173 Sir Frederick Morton Eden, The State of the Poor. A history of the labouring classes in England, with parochial reports (1797, 1928 ed.), p. 268, p. 271; Poor Law. Assistant Commissioner's Report. Appendix A. Part I (Northumberland and Durham), P.P. 1834 (44) xxviii, p. 161a.
- 174 Miners' Advocate, 21 September 1844.
- 175 Joseph Oxley to Sir John Delaval, 25 December 1777, N.C.R.O., DE/4/11.
- 176 Joseph Oxley to Sir John Delaval 10 January 1778, Oxley to Delaval 18 February 1778, N.C.R.O., DE/4/11. On 8 February Oxley had been hopeful as he had "heard from some of them who are willing to come back", but the problem remained as bad as ever: "Have a deal of Troub^e with keeping together the Colliers which I look upon as one of the most difficult tasques we have at

- present", (Oxley to Delaval 8 February 1778; John Crooks, agent, to Delaval 17 March 1778, *ibid.*).
- 177 Joseph Oxley to Sir John Delaval 29 April 1778, N.C.R.O., DE/4/11: "they say they are not able to live on their Earning, things are so dear"; Oxley to Delaval, 14 June 1778. Troubles with his coal-mines were not, however, Sir John's chief preoccupation at this time. This letter had more information on his newly-built glasshouse than his troublesome colliers.
- 178 John Crooks to Sir John Delaval, 12 November 1778, N.C.R.O., DE/4/11.
- Sir John's labour-account was:
- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| lost to rival collieries ... | 30 men and 8 boys |
| lost to the sea ... | 15 " 2 " |
| won from rival collieries ... | 36 " 8 " |
| total shortage of labour ... | 9 " 2 " |
- 179 Testimonials were described by the pitmen as a system "not to employ any Pitmen that has served in any other colliery the year before ... they will be obliged to serve in the same colliery for life ... [thus removing] ... the ancient character of this Kingdom as being a free nation", (Newcastle Chronicle, 21 September 1765).
- 180 John Wood, agent at Mt. Moor Colliery, to John Buddle, 21 March 1826, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 181 Address from the North Hetton Pitmen to the public (May 1832), and there was similar trouble at Burdon Main colliery, To the Public (7 May 1832), in P [icton] L [ibrary] L [iverpool], History of Coal Trade Collection.
- 182 C.E.C. 1842, p. 141.

- 183 C.E.C. 1842, p. 152, p. 141, p. 151.
- 184 Easington Union Board of Guardians, 25 April 1843, Minute Book 1837-1847, D.C.R.O., M.H./Poor Law Union Papers. Most of this Union's work in its first ten years involved getting chargeable paupers back to their places of legal settlement.
- 185 Miners' Advocate, 18 May 1844.
- 186 The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 25, p. 10, p. 16, p. 20.
- 187 Martin Jude bears witness to the systematic discharge of "those men who they think have been at the bottom of these disturbances [on safety questions], or these combinations of men". (2nd Report on Accidents, P.P. 1853, op. cit., p. 3.)
- 188 "In performing this service for the union, I laid the foundation of my own troubles for years afterwards. Of course I was warned by passing events, but my hands were on the plough, and my manhood and my liberty were at stake. Therefore the corn-crake had to do its duty in my hands, and I was consequently driven from Thornley when the bond was read in 1864", (E. A. Rymer, loc. cit., p. 9).
- 189 Dawson's Pit Bond, 1763, op. cit.
- 190 Extract of, An Account ... D.C.R.O. D/X 26/1: "Wrot. at the Bounder Pit in the Main Coal with a 20 Peck Corfe." The sign "xx" refers to a "score", which was twenty corves on the Tyne, and twenty-one on the Wear.
- 191 William Thomas, 19 October 1805, Viewers' Diary, Denton Colliery 1802-12, N.E.I.M.M.E., ZB/19(C).

- 192 Committee of Coal Owners, 12 March 1812, op. cit., vol. i.
The previous lack of unanimity among coalowners when drawing up bonds can be seen in Delaval's 1779 readiness to repulse further Wear encroachments on his labour: "As several of the Colliery Bonds in the River Wear Ends in the course of the next month Tho' ours do not before the 3d of Nov^r. I mean to have a New Bond wrote out the first opportunity to be in readiness least any sh^d. attempt to disturb us", (John Crooks to Sir John Delaval, 17 September 1779, N.C.R.O., DE/4/11).
- 193 A common binding-time had previously occasionally collectivized the men as well as the owners. A correspondent in 1765 recognized the dangers of a pitmen's unanimity: "[the dispute is only] a Stalking Horse, in order to come at the Gold in Hand, at the next Binding; and that all might be free at one Time of the Year, when the Works, and Demand for Coals are at the Height, and consequently when the Pitmen could most injure the Public by a Stop". (Newcastle Journal 28 September 1765).
- Dr.Hair has written on this qualitative change as a forcing "to accept collective action and regular collective bargaining" (P. E. H. Hair, 'The Binding of the Pitmen of the North East. 1800-1809', Durham University Journal, lviii, 1965, p. 1).
- 194 Hetton and Elemore Bond 1829, D.C.R.O., D/X 36/2.
- 195 Ouston Colliery Bond 1835, N.E.I.M.M.E., ZB/8.
- 196 A Candid Appeal, op. cit.
- 197 George Johnson to John Buddle, 21 March 1826, D.C.R.O., NCB I/JB.
- 198 C.E.C. 1842, p. 538, p. 603.

- 199 Broadside address, To the Public (18 April 1831), N.I.E.M.M.E.
- 200 Ashton and Sykes, op. cit., p. 133.
- 201 Acct. of money Payed out 1762, op. cit.,; for a summary of the 1765 dispute see the Annual Register, 1765, p. 130; Bushblades Bond 1766, Appendix pp. 187-89.
- 202 For 1s. binding money, Byker and St Anthony's Bond 1770, op. cit., and Delaval Bonds 1770, op. cit.; for 5s. binding money, Delaval Bonds 1776, op. cit.
- 203 John Allen to Sir John Delaval, September 26 1772, N.C.R.O., DE/6/4; Thos. Yelloley to Wm. Dobson, September 20 1773, N.C.R.O., DE/7/6; Allen to Delaval April 25 1775, N.C.R.O., DE/6/4. Whenever there was a labour shortage it was accompanied by complaints of the kind: "no alteration in the work of Coals the men do not work half the quantity which they ought to do ...", memorandum, anon. 10 September 1776? 1777?, N.C.R.O., DE/7/6.
- 204 William Thomas, 6 March 1789, op. cit. For Walker Colliery Bonds, see above pp. 47-50.
- 205 One specific demand (and more specific than most) was the Royal Naval Impress service: by November 1800 the ports of Newcastle and Sunderland had lost 2,781 pressed men. A further 1,597 from these ports had volunteered. (Henry Grey MacNab M.D., Report from the Committee Appointed to inquire into the State of the Coal Trade of this Kingdom, p. 41, N.I.E.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. vii).
- 206 George Johnson to Lord Delaval, 3 October 1797, N.C.R.O.,

DE/6/6; Johnson to Delaval, 27 September 1798, *ibid.*

207 Hewers were allotted two pecks per fortnight, wives and children one peck: order, Hartley office, 5 May 1800, N.C.R.O., DE/4/24. Some families had ten or eleven pecks per fortnight.

208 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 24 September 1800, N.C.R.O., DE/4/24.

209 Observations on the probable consequences of even attempting by Legislative Authority to obtain a Large Supply of Coal from Staffordshire to the Metropolis, pp. 33-34, N.I.E.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. vii; John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 9 October 1801, N.C.R.O., DE/4/24: "... they still keep up their demands without we believe the least grounds or hopes".

210 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 26 September 1802, N.C.R.O., DE/4/24; John Brotherick to Delaval, 1 October 1802, N.C.R.O., DE/4/40; *ibid.*

211 Paul Forster to Lord Delaval, 17 October 1803, N.C.R.O., DE/6/5, gives a chronological report of the binding from September 30.

212 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 6, 3 March 1805, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27. The growing demand for miners multiplied the competition for labour in adjacent trades: agricultural labourers in the vicinity of collieries were being offered 15s. to 18s. per week, and seamen up to seven guineas per voyage.

213 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 7, 14 October 1804, N.C.R.O., DE/4/26.

214 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 18 October 1804, N.C.R.O.,

- DE/4/26; William Thomas, 18 October 1804, op. cit. The binding monies of this spasm were massive. For a very rough approximation of their significance, compare them with Dr Hair's guide to the collier's daily wage (Appendix p. 190). Another indication of significance is the Willington collier who left his family "The interest of Seventy pounds which is in the Hands of Mr John Watson [viewer] ... payable half yearly ... " plus his own furniture, cow, and provision for his children's education. ('Last Will & Testament, Robert Campble' 1814. N.E.I.M.M.E., Watson Collection).
- 215 W. Thomas, 18 October 1804, op. cit.; John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 24, 25 October 1804, N.C.R.O., DE/4/26.
- 216 Committee of Coal Owners, 10 September 1805, op. cit., vol. i,
- 217 Bryers was sceptical about this innovation: " ... if binding them at a public house at Seaton Sluice could not be brought about - I fear an attempt now to bind them at the Colliery office will not be more successful, when the pitmen think themselves of so much more consequence than they did at that time". (John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 11 September 1804, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27).
- 218 Bryers was equally sceptical about this; he talked of compensating wages for loss of rye meal - directly against the spirit of the resolution. (John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 11 September 1805, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27.).
- 219 Committee of Coal Owners, 1 October 1805, op. cit., vol. i.
- 220 "Complaints and deviations from the resolutions of the Coal Trade for Hiring the Workmen Oct. 1805 with Answers made by the different Agents etc. to the Charges made against them" (Committee of Coal Owners, op. cit.). Examples from the

following collieries: Percy Main, Holywell, Walker, South Moor, Temple Main, Hartley.

- 221 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 13 October 1805, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27.
- 222 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 18 October 1805, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27.
- 223 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 27 October 1805, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27.
- 224 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 27 October, 3 November 1805, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27. Bryers seems to be more relieved than sensible about the situation. Hewers continued to be in short supply and seagoing was equally prosperous. In November he was still scraping the market for good pitmen: "Many Young Hewers & stout Horse drivers (that might have hewed Coals this Year) have gone to Sea on Account of great wages now given to Servants for the Sea (some as high as £70 for three years) ... " (Bryers to Delaval, 10 November 1805, *ibid.*).
- 225 Committee of Coal Owners, 18 September 1806, *op. cit.*, vol. i. Although a tribunal was set up a week later to monitor special claims and cases, the rates were:-
- | | Tyne | Wear |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Householder-hewer | £1 1s. 0d. | £2 2s. 0d. |
| Bachelor-hewer | £1 11s. 6d. | £2 12s. 6d. |
| Drivers | 10s. 6d. | £1 1s. 0d. |
| Putters | £3 3s. 0d. | £4 4s. 0d. |
- 226 W. Thomas, 16 October 1806, *op. cit.*
- 227 Memorandum, 8 November 1806; minutes laid to Coal Committee,

- 20 November 1806, N.C.R.O., DE/4/28.
- 228 Committee of Coal Owners, 1 November 1806, op. cit., vol. i.
- 229 Committee of Coal Owners, 24 September 1807, op. cit., vol. i;
5 November 1808 - there had been some cheating in August:
"that Thos. Whittle & Josh. Gibson came from Murton to Cowpen Colliery under pretence of being bound; but took several of the Cowpen men from the Square to Blyth, and drank and tampered with them" (August 30); corvers made and kept in repair the coal-baskets and were paid by the score of coals drawn, *ibid.*;
17 September 1807, (*ibid.*).
- 230 Committee of Coal Owners, 30 September 1809, op. cit., vol. i.
For details of the proposal, see above p. 58.
- 231 The Bond was becoming so complicated a barrister had been employed by the Trade "to prepare the form of such a Bond, as shall give to both the Coal Owners and their men the utmost security for the reciprocal performances of their respective engagements". (Committee of Coal Owners, 22 December 1810, op. cit., vol. i). So successful had Trade tactics been that some collieries, like Wallsend, were back to the formal 1s. per man binding money by 1810 - although Wallsend's hewing prices were undoubtedly high: Wallsend Bond 1810, N.E.I.M.M.E., ZB/5. Tanfield Moor had lower hewing prices and no recorded binding money: Tanfield Moor Bond 1810, N.E.I.M.M.E., ZB/20.
- 232 Newcastle Courant, 17 November 1810.
- 233 Newcastle Courant, 3, 10 November 1810. Tyneside men (we have no figures) were put in Morpeth gaol.

- 234 Committee of Coal Owners, 22 November 1810, op. cit., vol. i.
- 235 Newcastle Chronicle, 12 January 1811.
- 236 Committee of Coal Owners, 16 January 1811, op. cit., vol. i.
- 237 See f.n. 213.
- 238 See G. A. Williams, Introduction, in J. Gorman (ed.) Banner Bright (1976) p. 3. There is no talk of any prosecution under the Combination Acts. The Coal Trade was probably too conscious of its own monopolistic odour to attract any extra government attention.
- 239 Deposition of Thomas Morrison, "informations of Witnesses" 1811, op. cit.
- 240 Articles, Rules, &c. To be observed and kept by the Members of the Colliers' Fund (Newcastle 1810); Articles Agreed to by Members of the Brotherly Society ... (Sunderland 1810).
- 241 J. L. and B. Hammond, The Skilled Labourer (1919), p. 24; Articles ... of the Colliers' Fund, op cit.
- 242 Committee of Coal Owners, 10 December 1811, op. cit., vol. i.
- 243 Committee of Coal Owners, 12 March 1812, op. cit., vol. i.
On 29 February they had tabulated "a comparative Table of the prices paid for different sorts of work" to aid the process.
- 244 Home Office and War Office papers at the Public Records Office have a low incidence of North East material compared with the disturbed areas. This 'silence' is corroborated somewhat by the low incidence of disturbance in local Record Office and Coal Trade papers. The record increases with crisis - 1815, 1819, 1825, 1831-32, 1838-39, 1844.

- 245 Committee of Coal Owners, op. cit., vols. i-xi. For the growing internal problems of the Coal Trade, see pp. 52-57.
- 246 General Meeting of Owners, 8 April 1814, op. cit., vol. i. There was a serious trike of Tyne seamen in October 1814 which was broken by regular soldiers and marines: Nathaniel Clayton, Town Clerk of Newcastle, to Viscount Sidmouth, 22 October 1814, P.R.O., Ho 42/141.
- 247 Norman McCord, 'The Seamen's strike of 1815 in N.E. England,' Economic History Review, 2nd series, xxi. 1, (1968); Sunderland J.P.s to Sidmouth, 21 March 1815, P.R.O., Ho 42/143.
- 248 Rev. W. Nesfield to William Hutchinson, High Sheriff of Co. Durham, 6 June 1816, P.R.O., Ho 42/151; newspaper cutting, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii; Robert Green J.P. to Sidmouth, 26 May 1816, P.R.O. Ho 42/150.
- 249 General Meeting of Owners, 16 April 1816, op. cit., vol. ii; anon. letter to Home Office, 15 April 1817, P.R.O., Ho 42/163; 7, 10 March 1818, Minutes, ibid.
- 250 The keelmen's strike was the major action, but seamen, ironmen, pitmen, and shipwrights were all involved: see, Norman McCord, 'Tyneside Discontents and Peterloo', Northern History, vol. ii. (1967); and D.J. Rowe, 'The Strikes of the Tyneside Keelmen in 1809 and 1819', International Review of Social History, vol. xiii, (1968).
- 251 R. G. Collingwood, of Sunderland, to Sidmouth, 30 October 1819, P.R.O., Ho 42/197.

- 252 Archibald Reed to Sidmouth, 20 October 1819, P.R.O., Ho 42/197. The keelmen's action had locked an estimated £700,000 worth of shipping in the Tyne and Reed was afraid that it might offer a target to these "most formidable set of Men": Reed to Sidmouth, 17 October 1819, *ibid.*
- 253 R. G. Collingwood to Sidmouth, 30 October 1819, P.R.O., Ho 42/197; see also, Rev. Charles Thorp, of Ryton, to Samuel Marsh Phillips, Home Office, 25 October 1819, *ibid.*
- 254 We first hear of disbandment on 20 November: "the Pitmen at Percy Main Colliery have broken up their [Radical] classes, divided their fund, and the furniture in the private Room in which they held their Meetings" (Archibald Reed to Sidmouth, 20 November 1819, P.R.O., Ho 42/199.) Political Radicalism and the mining community will be more fully covered in Parts II and III.
- 255 Committee of Coal Owners, nd 1820, *op. cit.*, vol. vi. See p. 64 for 1765 testimonial system.
- 256 General Meeting of Owners, 26 February 1822, *op. cit.*, vol. vii; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 13, 24 March 1822, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 257 General Meeting of Owners, 9 November 1823, *op. cit.*, vol. viii; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 3 November 1824, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 258 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 20 March 1825, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142, for trouble-free binding; also, Committee of Coal Owners, January 1825 - April 1826, *op. cit.*, vol. x; A Voice from the Coal Mines, *op. cit.* For details of the dispute see above, pp. 58-59.

- 259 Robert Green to Sidmouth, 26 May 1816, P.R.O., Ho 42/150.
- 260 Rev. Chas. Thorp to S. M. Phillips, 25 October 1819, P.R.O., Ho 42/197.
- 261 "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love", motto, (Romans XII¹⁰), in Articles of The Brotherly Society, Houghton le Spring (f. March 22 1822), P.R.O., F.S. 1. 121; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 21 March 1822, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 262 A Voice from the Coal Mines, op. cit., p. 34.
- 263 At Hetton: John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 22 July 1825, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142; at Jarrow: Committee of Coal Owners, 12, 26 November, 24 December 1825, op. cit., vol. x.

On 23 March colliery carpenters, smiths, masons, and brakesmen demanded 1s. rise per week, and on 25 March it was conceded. Buddle was most concerned about what else might happen should circumstances come to favour the union's views: Buddle to Londonderry, 23 March 1825, *ibid*.

- 264 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 31 October 1825, 25 February 1826, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142; Londonderry to Home Office, 28 July 1826, P.R.O., Ho 40/19.

Buddle implied that the organization of pitmen, for instance at Rainton, had existed prior to the United Colliers by referring to the "first overt act of the Union here". (Buddle to Londonderry, 13 December 1825, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142). The Rainton men continued to call themselves Brothers: The Brotherly Society of Rainton Colliery to Londonderry, 20 February 1826, P.R.O., Ho 40/19.

265 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 26 November 1825, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142. In 1831-32 Buddle's opposition to the union and all of its works was implacable. However, following Londonderry's desertion of the Trade and the union's summer victory, the pitmen appear to have been aggressively magnanimous in their joy.

Previously hated "like a wild beast",

I am complimented for having fought them fairly, like a Man. I was chaired by force last Friday Eveng. at W.end and was obliged to abscond on the Sa. morning, to avoid the honer of being drawn in grand procession from W.end to Newcastle ... I am now in favour again, without stepping out of my way to seek it.

(Buddle to Londonderry, 25 June 1831, *ibid.*).

266 Committee of Coal Owners, 6 January 1826, *op. cit.*, vol. x; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 26 March 1826, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.

267 Coal Trade Minutes during this period are almost wholly given over to Parliamentary enquiries and Vend machinations.

268 See pp. 55-56 above.

269 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 19 February 1828, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.

270 Duke of Wellington to Lord Londonderry, 11 November 1830, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 113.

271 Committee of Coal Owners, 17 November 1830, *op. cit.*, vol. x.

272 Broadside address, To The Public (Delegate Meeting, Black Fell, April, 6 1831); broadside address The Pitmen of the Tyne & Wear (Durham 1831). See also p. 59 above.

273 Rev. R. Brandling to John Buddle, 7 April 1831, D.C.R.O., NCB I/JB.

- 274 Committee of Coal Owners, 26 March 1831, *op. cit.*, vol. x.
- 275 For Hetton men as "the chief instigators of the mischief," (John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 29 March 1831, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142; for the Cock public house, Reports of Messrs Hunter and Forster, 10 April 1831, *ibid.*)
- 276 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 29 March 1831, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 277 In June Londonderry was in such financial difficulties that his bank would only meet the pitmen's pay-bill - refusing credit on everything else. The only way out of the impasse was for Londonderry to sell as much coal as he could but in this he was prevented by Coal Trade vending, and the union's restriction policy. Moreover, he and Buddle were wary of their bank: Buddle reckoned that the bank was deliberately restricting credit to improve its chances of buying cheaply into the Trade over the bodies of bankrupts - thus the banker and "his Lads", "Quaker friends", would find a footing in the industry. (John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 2, 4 June 1831, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142). In the event, Londonderry made a May agreement with his pitmen in 1831, helped the Trade defeat the union in 1832, and produced as much as he could until the new Vend early in 1834 without too much concern for the 'overs' and 'shorts' of Coal Trade colleagues.
- 278 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 8 May 1831, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 279 The binding of the Londonderry men did not please their comrades. It put Tyne colliers "in the worst humour possible", and on the evening of the binding "a party of the Newbottle

- [Lambton's] Men went to Pensher (sic) Office to abuse and intimidate our Men, and to stop the Binding, but they were repulsed by the Pensher men". (John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 13 May 1831, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142).
- 280 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 18 May 1831, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 281 *ibid.*, 15 May 1831.
- 282 *ibid.*, 15 May 1831.
- 283 *ibid.*, 18, 20 May 1831.
- 284 *ibid.*, 20 May 1831.
- 285 *ibid.*, 19 May 1831. Buddle was an intelligent and courteous viewer-correspondent for Londonderry, but with him there was no bowing and scraping. On 4 June Londonderry was directly informed of his viewer's contempt for his actions:
- ... I am still beset on the road & constantly menaced with assassination, on account of having been the chief opposer of the Union, and for having opposed the Coal-owners, in their wish, to comply with the demands of the Men. I have certainly been guilty of this crime & am the Victim of my integrity and efforts to preserve the trade from that state of anarchy & ruin into which it seems rapidly to be falling.
- I may, or I may not survive this storm, but if I do survive, I certainly will be very cautious, how I again, convict myself, in supporting the cause of those who have not the moral courage to support it themselves. (*ibid.*)
- 286 *ibid.*, 13, 18 June 1831.
- 287 *ibid.*, 6 June 1831.
- 288 On production, *ibid.*, 29 May, 4 June 1831; on labour market, *ibid.*, 21 June 1831; on union expansion, *ibid.*, 13, 25 June, 7 July: "They/[the blacksmiths] have formed a general Union,

- with the Blacksmiths, Carpenters, Banksmen etc. of all the other Collieres, and this [petition] is the 1st movement"; on a typical day, *ibid.*, 8 July 1831.
- 289 *ibid.*, 14 July 1831.
- 290 M. Dunn, Journal *op. cit.*, 12 January 1832; Committee of Coal Owners, 21 January 1832, *op. cit.*, vol. x. The fund was financed by taxing coal sales at 2%: John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 5 May 1832, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 291 M. Dunn, *op. cit.*, 10 March 1832.
- 292 M. Dunn, *op. cit.*, 16 November, 1 December 1831; and 25 January, 23 February 1832 (Hetton disputes); 16 December 1831, and 16, 21, 23, 28 January, 22 February 1832 (Coxlodge and Kenton dispute).
- 293 M. Dunn, *op. cit.*, 17, 24 March, 14, 30 April, 5 May 1832; Committee of Coal Owners, 12 May 1832, *op. cit.*, vol. x; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 30 May 1832, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142: "The meeting was quite unanimous as to the necessity of adopting the most efficacious measures to break the Union, under the conviction, that if it is not broken - it will not only ruin the Coal Trade - but every other trade & finally the whole Country will be ruined by it."
- 294 M. Dunn, *op. cit.*, 14 April 1832; Committee of Coal Owners, 7 April 1832, *op. cit.*, vol. x; Maj. Gen. H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 1 June 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; M. Dunn, *ibid.*, 16 June 1832; James Losh, (chairman of Joint Committee of Coal Trade) Memorandum 23 June 1832, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142; Bouverie to Phillips, 2 May, 1 June 1832, *ibid.*

- 295 M. Dunn, op. cit., 17 March 1832.
- 296 M. Dunn, op. cit., 19 March,,10, 19, 21, 23, 24 April,
" ... the main point now hinges on the non employment of
Delegates.... " (30 April) 1832.
- 297 In June Hetton was receiving £2 per imported person in expenses
from the Coal Trade: M. Dunn, op. cit., 8 June 1832. Moreover,
imported labour was being centrally directed to Hetton by the
Joint Committee: " ... that the next batch of Men (strangers)
which arrive be sent to Hetton Colliery", Committee of Coal
Owners, 16 June 1832, op. cit., vol. x.
- 298 M. Dunn, op. cit., 11 April - 26 June, passim.
- 299 M. Dunn, op. cit., 26, 28 June 1832. On 3 May the immigrants
started producing at Hetton with a military escort to and from the
pit; on 14 May Dunn talked of their need for "confidence and
encouragement", and through June and July Dunn seemed pleased
with the hewing of the men but disappointed with the putting and
driving of the lads and boys - see 7 June, 30 May, 11 July. By
8 August one realizes that the ability to hew coal at the face is
not the whole story of successful mining. Dunn was morose about
his new labour force and recorded that the Elemore George Pit
" ... is keeping up the work better than any other ... much perhaps
depending on being longer established and the Coal moreover
being more tender than most of them".
- 300 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 25 May 1832, D.C.R.O.,
D/Lo/C 142; Maj. Gen. H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 12
June 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; M. Dunn, op. cit., 16 June
1832; Brandling to Bouverie, 12 June 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 301 In May 1832 there were two troops of cavalry at Houghton le

Spring, one troop at Shields, one troop at Jarrow, two troops at Newcastle, and one on its way, with infantry companies at Hetton, Jarrow, and Shields. By the end of May there had been a shift of cavalry strength from Shields and Jarrow to Newcastle and Bedlington, and there were by then infantry companies at Durham Gaol, Hetton, Rainton, Shields, Jarrow, Tynemouth, and Bedlington. (Maj. Gen. H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 2, 26 May 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2).

- 302 Maj. Gen. H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 22 June 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 21 June 1832, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142. The Trade warned their labour-recruiter in Wales to be more careful in his choice of recruits. Apparently he had told the Welsh that cholera had caused a North East labour shortage - in view of later events, an ironic piece of deceit¹.

... a letter be written this Evening to Mr Trotter that he be informed that about one half of the detachment under Mr Mitchell, who arrived here on Friday last, proved to be Union Men and came principally from the neighbourhood of Wrexham - that they had almost immediate intercourse with the Union Men here from whom they received Money and set off on their Return home Yesterday - that Mr Trotter should take steps to ascertain whether the Men he engages belong to any Union or not, and those who do, should on no account be sent.

(Committee of Coal Owners, 19 June 1832, op. cit., vol. x).

Buddle to Londonderry, 28 July 1832, *ibid.*; Bouverie to Phillips, 8 July 1832, *ibid.*

- 303 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 26 May, 24, 25 June, 9 August 1832, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 304 Maj. Gen. H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 30 July 1832, P.R.O.

- HO 40/30/2; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 11 August 1832, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142; Bouverie to Phillips, 5 September 1832, *ibid.* For a full account of the epidemic see: R. J. Morris, Cholera 1832 (1976).
- 305 Maj. Gen. H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 12 August 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 6 November 1832, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 306 M. Dunn, *op. cit.*, 20 September 1832.
- 307 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 16 February 1833, D.C.R.O., D/LoC/ 142.
- 308 Maj. Gen. H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 22 March, 26 August, 10 June 1833, P.R.O., HO 40/31/1; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 17 March 1833, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142. Labour prices fell over the decade, and became more strictly controlled. This happened in spite of a growth in the labour force of about ten thousand. It seems probable that labour prices would have fallen by even more than they did if the Trade did not need to recognize the national labour market in order to attract the increase. The first tensions can be seen in the lowering of prices at the 1833 binding which caused the newly imported labour "threaten to go home rather than accept them - this is a knotty point". (Buddle to Londonderry, 30 March 1833, *ibid.*).
- 309 Committee of Coal Owners, [none for 1834 binding] *op. cit.*, vol. xi; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 17 April 1834, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142; Minutes, 11 March 1835, *ibid.*; Coal Trade Circular, 5 March 1836, D.C.R.O., NCB I/JB; some mention of the strikes is made in J. Latimer, Local Records;

- or, Historical Register of Remarkable Events. 1832-57 (1857), pp. 66, 70, but Tremenheere does not rate the 1836 actions in his list of "great" strikes in, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 6.
- 310 Committee of Coal Owners, 3 March 1838, op. cit., vol. xi.
- 311 Committee of Coal Owners, 20 March 1841, 'Wages to the Following Officers, and Workmen for the Ensuing Year', op. cit., John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 26 February 1843, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 312 Hepburn and others' attempts to revive the union in 1834 "proved a complete failure", Maj. Gen. H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 1, 12 January 1834, P.R.O., HO 40/32/1; the revivalists are named as Hepburn, Waddell, Pile, Parkinson ("... that slick headed, ranting Knave Charley Parkinson ...": John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 21 June 1832), and Atkinson, Buddle to Londonderry, 10 February 1834, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 313 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 19 July, 27 August 1835, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142. (Alongside the July letter, telling of Hepburn's renewed activity, Londonderry wrote "All Balderdash!!") The explosion occurred in the afternoon when most of the hewers in the shift had gone home. Thus most of the dead were lads and boys. Only three survived the shift.
- 314 R. Fynes, op. cit., p. 36. Richard Fynes wrote the first formal history of miners' trade unionism. "[Hepburn] ... applied at Backworth Colliery last Thursday to be employed as a Shifter or Stone-workman but was told that we only employed Coal-hewers there." (John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 17 March 1833, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.)

- 315 Challinor and Ripley, *op. cit.*, state without giving their evidence that Hepburn peddled tea for five years (p. 17) before accepting the stated conditions of work (p. 11). This would suggest that his exit from trade union agitation was in 1837. Hepburn's significant absence from the evidence after 1835 would seem to imply that his exit was earlier than this.
- 316 The Miners' Monthly Magazine, April 1844. See also pp. 59-60. The chronology of the 1844 dispute will be discussed in Part III.
- 317 see above, pp. 69-74.
- 318 see above, pp. 74-100.
- 319 We are now in the realm of "invented tradition". For interesting papers on this, see work by E. J. Hobsbawm, P. Morgan, T. Ranger, and J. Keegan in The Invention of Tradition (Past and Present Society 1977). Richard Fynes' 1873 work (*op. cit.*) begins its labour history in 1809.
- 320 For instance, see details from the run of Walker Colliery bonds, 1780-98, above pp. 47-50.
- 321 Hobsbawm talks of a "continuity with the past [which] is largely factitious", in his 'Inventing Traditions in 19th Century Europe', Invention of Tradition, *loc. cit.*, p. 1.
- 322 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 24 September 1800, N.C.R.O., DE/4/24.
- 323 John Brotherick to Lord Delaval, 1 October 1802, N.C.R.O., DE/4/11; Paul Forster to Delaval, 10 October 1803, N.C.R.O., DE/6/5; John Allen to Sir John Delaval, 26 September 1772, N.C.R.O., DE/6/4.

324 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 13 October 1805, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27; Bryers to Delaval, 9 November 1804, DE/4/26; Bryers to Delaval, 26 September 1802, DE/4/24; Bryers to Delaval, 24 September 1800, *ibid.*; Observations, *op. cit.*; John Buddle to John Iveson, 15 March 1820, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.

At the height of their market powers in 1805 Delaval's men were trying to extend their hagiography of days: "The pay Saturday has always been allowed when they wished it, and they now want the following Monday it appears". (Bryers to Delaval, 19 May 1805, N.C.R.O., DE/4/27).

325 Committee of Coal Owners, 10 September 1805, *op. cit.*, vol. i; evidence of underviewer at Benwell colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 620. There were also moves afoot to remove all paying of wages from its connections with drink: Mr Nicholson, owner of Shoreswood colliery dated the process 1804-34 -

When I first entered into the coal business, it was the custom to pay the men in an ale-house. Their employers having all an interest in breweries, they had public-houses established in the collieries for that express purpose, and the men were all obliged to expend a certain sum of money every pay night.

(Poor Law. Asst. Commissioner's Report. P.P. 1834, *op. cit.*, p. 122A).

For an interesting comparison on minework, technology, and drink see: Charles van Onselen, 'Randlords and Rotgut, 1886-1903: an essay on the role of alcohol in the development of European imperialism and southern African capitalism,' History Workshop Journal, no. ii, (1976).

326 Committee of Coal Owners, 10 September 1805, *op. cit.*, vol. i. The community was later assisted in this, although not in kind:

- "That the present high price of Bread Corn renders it expedient to afford the Families of their several Workmen certain pecuniary aid, over and above their earnings" (ibid., 26 June 1812).
- 327 Joseph Oxley to Sir John Delaval, 29 May 1779, N.C.R.O., DE/4/11; John Crooks to Delaval, 3 January 1781, N.C.R.O., DE/4/4.
- 328 Newcastle Chronicle, 2, 9 May 1795; P. E. H. Hair, Binding of the Pitmen, loc. cit., p. 6.
- 329 Mr Hunter, overman at Walker Colliery, but a trapper in 1798, C.E.C. 1842, p. 627; John Buddle to Joseph Smith, London Corn Exchange, 10 February, 3 February, 1800, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.
- 330 George Culley to Warren Hastings, 23 May 1800, N.C.R.O., ZCU/38.
- 331 John Sykes, Local Records; or, Historical Register of Remarkable Events (1833. 1865) vol. ii, April 23 1810; Tyne Mercury, 10 September 1822; Sykes, ibid., 6 February 1829.
- 332 A Voice from the Coal Mines, op. cit., p. 29, p. 36; anonymous letter to Gateshead Observer n.d. (1844) newspaper cutting, 'Strike Collection', W.C.L; Pits and The Pitmen, op. cit., pp. 28-29. In 1844 the NMA's alternative bond suggested that colliery houses should be removed from the contract and rented to the miners for a straightforward rent of £4 per year. Obviously the Trade could not agree to this as it would have made labour importation during strikes much more difficult. See above, p. 99.
- 333 Summary of the Condition, op. cit. A. W. Coats, in his 'Changing Attitudes to Labour in the Mid-Eighteenth Century' (Economic

History Review, 2nd ser., ii, 1958, passim), argues for a gradual change from mercantilist attitudes from the middle of the eighteenth-century, but these attitudes persisted as ideology in the northern coalfield well into the 1840s.

- 334 Rules and Regulations of the Coal Miners' FRIENDLY SOCIETY in the counties of Northumberland & Durham. Established June 4 1831 (Newcastle 1831). The society was to be an important instrument in the establishment of the pitmen's control over their labour: it would control output, and the movement of labour - "That if any Member of this Society have a desire to leave his colliery to go to any other, he be required to get a certificate from the colliery he belongs to ... or be excluded from the Society".
- 335 Arthur Young, A Six Months Tour through the North of England (1771) vol. iii, pp. 320-22; Sir Frederick Morton Eden, op. cit., p. 268-71. Both men chanced on the area during prosperous periods for Tyne pitmen. See f.n. 17 for the Trade's knowledge of individual hewers' skills. An elitist sense as producers had strong cultural and community ties. As late as 1898 E. A. Rymer was anxious to defend the "struggle and dangers that have been met and overcome during the past 60 years, in order that the British miner should become a man and not a machine". (loc. cit., p. 1.)
- 336 Newcastle Courant, 17 November 1810.

For the description "mechanic", Raymond Williams' Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (1976) says that the word "mechanical" took on an early seventeenth-century meaning of "routine unthinking activity" (p. 167) which was socially prejudiced. Williams, however, forgets the later romanticization

of manufacture and the early nineteenth-century assimilation of the description "mechanic" for a person working in manufacture at a higher level than a labourer. For skilled engineering craftsmen, the Friendly Union of Mechanics was founded in Manchester c. 1824 (G. D. H. Cole and A. W. Filson, British Working Class Movements: Selected Documents 1789-1875, 1965, pp. 289-90). Also, the Mechanics Institutes from early century aimed at the more prosperous and skilled working man. George Birkbeck, Lord Brougham, and Francis Place's London Mechanics' Institute dates from 1824.

- 337 Brief Observations ... op. cit., pp. 6-7; A Defence of the Voice ... op. cit., p. 9.
- 338 Edward Smith to Thomas Hepburn, nd. 1831?, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142; Philanthropos, op. cit., p. 6; Edward Hughed (ed.), The Diaries and Correspondence of James Losh (Publications of the Surtees Society vol. CLXXIV, 1962-63) vol. ii. 7 April 1831.
- 339 Sir James Walsham, Report to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, from the Poor Law Commissioners, on an inquiry into the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain; with Appendices, P.P. 1842 (xxvii) p. 431 p. 419.

The Durham Chronicle (5 July 1844) publicly lists the entire household contents of the Richardsons, an evicted family at Seaton Delaval, and then judges them too grand for that labouring class to which the Richardsons belonged: "It will be observed that mahogany is not good enough for the family: they must have rosewood; and amongst the host of articles enumerated, there are many of an ornamental and tasteful description". Only one

item was rosewood, a woman's box, customary possession of pit-wives.

- 340 George Hunter to Lord Londonderry, 21 December 1843, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 149. An account of the NMA action against the Thornley Coal Company in 1843 is given above, pp. 59-60.
- 341 Nicholas Hindhaugh to Lord Londonderry, 11 March 1844, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 148.
- 342 handbill, 31 August 1765, P.R.O., SP/37/4.
- 343 Sir James Graham, Home Secretary, to Lord Londonderry, 29 March 1844, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 80. In May the NMA rather plaintively asked the Trade why they refused to speak to them: editorial, Miners' Advocate, 18 May 1844.
- 344 The pitmen had written to Buddle on 14 January 1826 asking for a meeting with the Trade, and solicitors, to negotiate a new Bond - but without reply: United Colliers Association, A Candid Appeal to the Coal Owners and Viewers of Collieries on the Tyne and Wear (Newcastle 1826); "the Brotherly Society" of Rainton Colliery to Lord Londonderry, 20 February 1826, P.R.O., HO 40/19; on 11 April 1831 owners and union delegates had come before magistrates who stressed that they listened as county gentlemen and not justices of the peace, but the following day Buddle went ahead with direct negotiations for Londonderry: John Buddle to Londonderry, 11, 13 April 1831, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142; "I am desparately low at the thoughts of our being the only beaten party, in the Trade . . ." (Buddle to Londonderry, 9 May 1831, *ibid*); handbill, Durham. Sunday Morning, May 8 1831 (N.E.I.M.M.E., Watson Collection); Buddle to Londonderry, 6 March 1833, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/C 142.

- 345 State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 31; for further information on a shareholding industry, State of Coal Trade in the Port of London, P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 270. See above, pp. 87-89 for Londonderry's break with the Trade, and A. J. Heesom, 'Entrepreneurial Paternalism: The Third Lord Londonderry (1778-1854) and the Coal Trade,' Durham University Journal, 66, (1974), for an interpretation of his attitudes to his employees.
- 346 For the dispute essentially being about the monthly Bond, Lord Londonderry to Sir James Graham, 3 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644; Londonderry to Graham, 29 May 1844, *ibid.*
- 347 Lord Londonderry to Sir James Graham, 21 July 1844, HO 45/644.
- 348 J. R. Leifchild, C.E.C. 1842, p. 516; Seymour Tremenheere, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 7; Address from Special Committee of Coal Miners to Coal Owners of Northumberland and Durham (Newcastle 10 July 1844); Memorandum of Agreement, 2 April 1855, D.C.R.O., D/Lo/B 6.
- 349 For the penetration of popular Political Economy in government by the 1820s, B. Inglis, Poverty and the Industrial Revolution (1972) *passim.*; Harriet Martineau, Strikes and Sticks (nd. 1832?), P.L.L., History of the Coal Trade Collection.
- 350 Brief Observations ... op. cit., pp. 4-5; Newcastle Journal, 20 June 1843.
- 351 R. Harrison, op. cit., p. 2.
- 352 A. Briggs, *loc. cit.*, pp. 43-73.
- 353 See above, p. 106.

PART ONEAPPENDIXTable I. North East England : Capital investment in Sea-sale collieries, 1791-1815

	(i) no. new winnings	(ii) no. new borings	(iii) collieries reopened	(iv) % change in coal shipments
1791-95	5	3	-	-
1796-1800	10	5	-	-1.1
1801-05	6	9	-	+7.5
1806-10	4	4	1	+8.1
1811-15	4	6	1	+7.7

Table II. Capital Investment in Certain Industries of North Eastern England, 1830-50

	1830-36	1837-43	1844-50
Ann. average (£000's) gross investment in,			
Railways	201.1	346.0	846.5
Docks and Harbours	68.6	72.0	105.4
Brick Duty	8.0	11.7	15.7
Collieries (net increase in no.)	21	61	29
Blast Furnaces (net increase in no.)	6	11	20

Table III. Estimated Number of Sea-Sale Collieries in the Northern Coalfield in Selected Years, 1822-50

	1822	1829	1836	1843	1850 (1854)
Tyne	35	41	45	70	83
Wear	14	18	25	28	30
Tees	9*	10	20	47	60
Hartley, Blyth	4	4	4	6	7
Warkworth etc.	-	-	-	4	4
	—	—	—	—	—
	62	73	94	155	184

*landsale in 1822, but transport improvements, particularly the railway, made the Tees collieries increasingly sea-sale.

(Tables I, II, III are from A. G. Kenwood, Capital Investment in North Eastern England. 1800-1913, University of London, unpublished Ph.D 1962, p. 36, p. 163, p. 81).

Injuries at Hetton Colliery, January 1837 to June 1840

	Jan. - July 1837	July -Jan. 1838	Jan. - July 1838	July -Dec. 1838	Jan. - June 1839	July -Dec. 1839	Jan. - June 1840
Admitted contusions	39	55	34	36	27	34	42
Lacerations	32	46	25	20	26	49	22
Fractures	5	17	14	9	9	8	9
Burns	2	5	7	5	8	4	3
Scalds	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Dislocation	1	-	1	2	2	3	1
Punctured wounds	1	6	7	4	-	4	4
Concussion-spine	3	-	1	5	1	1	3
Concussion-brain	1	1	4	-	-	-	1
Eye injury	-	-	5	3	1	1	4
Sprains	-	-	-	3	2	2	5
Total Reported Injuries	84	120	99	87	76	105	94
Died	None	None	One	One	One	One	None

(from C.E.C. 1842, p. 554)

In 1844 Hetton Colliery employed eight hundred and sixty-eight men and boys. (Newcastle Journal, 4 May 1844)

Bushblades colliery Bond, 10 November 1766

Articles of Agreement had made and fully agreed upon this Tenth Day of November, in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Six, BETWEEN George Silvertop of Stella in the County of Durham, Esq., of the one Part, and the several and respective workmen and persons who have hereunto put their Hands and Seals of the other Part, as follows/viz:/ The said Several Workmen and Persons who have hereunto subscribed their Names, in Consideration of One pound two shillings to them severally and respective Binding Money the Receipt whereof they hereby acknowledge AND also in Consideration of the respective Wages or Salaries hereafter covenanted to be paid them by the said George Silvertop his Heirs or Assigns DO HEREBY severally and respectively HIRE AND BIND themselves to and with the said George Silvertop to be his Hewers, Workmen Horse-drivers, Banksmen, Sinkers and Drifters in and at Bushblades Colliery in the said County of Durham from the Date and Year aforesaid to and until the Tenth Day of November One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Seven inclusive AND the said workmen and persons do separately COVENANT PROMISE AND AGREE to and with the said George Silvertop his Heirs or Assigns, as his, or their Workmen or Servants at the said Colliery for the Time aforesaid and with no other person whatsoever AND the said Hewers, Etc., agree to pay and consent, that the said George Silvertop from Time to Time, in the payment, of their Wages, respectively, shall have Liberty to deduct one shilling every Day any of them refuseth to work, or disturbeth the work, or puts any other person so to do, or insists on more Wages than what is hereafter covenanted to be paid them respectively whereby the said Colliery shall be obstructed or laid in; and also shall and will during the said Term, fill all the Corves of Coal by them respectively hewed so, that the same shall come to Bank more than

Wood-full, and no Hewers shall come to Bank until there is only Two Scores of the Day's Working undrawn AND for the true performance of all and every of the Covenants on the Part and Behalf of the said Hewers and Workmen, they do hereby severally and respectively Bind themselves in the sum of Ten Pounds lawful Money, AND the said George Silvertop doth hereby for himself, his Heirs, etc. agree to and with the said Hewers and Workmen who have hereunto put their Hands and Seals in Manner following (that is to say) at the End of every Fourteen Days to pay the Rates and Prices hereinafter mentioned (to wit) for every Score of clean Coals Hewed in the Hutton Seam at the North Pitt in the Whole Mine, the Hewer thereof shall receive One Shilling and Eightpence and for every yard of Headways in the said Pitt and Seam Eightpence in the Whole Mine for every Score of clean Coals hewed in the Hutton Seam at the Prosperous Pitt in the whole Mine, the Hewer thereof shall receive One Shilling and Eightpence and for every yard of Headways in the said Pitt and Seam shall receive Eightpence in the Whole Mine; for every Score of clean Coals Hewed in the Hutton Seam at the Hopewell Pitt in the Whole Mine the Hewer thereof shall receive One Shilling and Elevenpence; and for every yard of Headways in the said Pitt and Seam Eightpence in the Whole Mine. The Corves made use of in the said Pitts and Seam above mentioned to be made and kept Twenty four pecks. For every Score of clean Coals hewed in the Top or hard Coal Seam at the Walker Pitt in the Whole Mine the Hewer thereof shall receive One Shilling and Elevenpence, and for every yard of Headways in the said Pitt and Seam, Eightpence in the Whole Mine; the Corves made use of in the said Pitts and Seam to be made and kept Twenty pecks; For every score of clean Coals hewed in the Top or hard Coal Seam in the South and Success pitts in the Whole Mine, the Hewer thereof shall receive Two Shilling

and Twopence, and for every yard of Headways in the said Pitts and Seam, in the Whole Mine Eight pence, the Corves to be made and kept Sixteen pecks, And if any Pitt or Pitts are sunk or set on in the said Coll'y and any of the above said seams of coal wrought therein during ye said Term, the Respective Prices for Hewing, Headways, etc, to be proportioned as the above Price. All we who have hereunto put our Names agree to be subject to such Orders as shall from Time to Time be given by our Viewers or Overmen and Inspectors AND it is further agreed that for every Corf of Coals that is deemed foul Coals the Hower thereof to pay two Pence per Corf for every such Offence, and he or they refusing to do so shall pay one Shilling the first pay after such Offence. The Horse-drivers to have one Shilling for every Day by them respectively wrought during the above mentioned Term. The Banksmen to have for sledding out three Pence per score and Twelve Pence per Week Odds, AND it is further agreed that for every Score of Coals hewed out of the Walls or Broken Mine to have two Pence less than in the Whole Mine AND for every Yard of Headways hewed in any of the aforesaid Pitts and Seams in the Broken Mine, the Hower thereof to have Two Pence less than in the Whole Mine and the hewers of each respective Pitt to send to Bank at the end of every day, a Stick of Bye-work, gratis. In Witness whereof, we have hereunto put our Hands and Seals the Day and Year first above written.

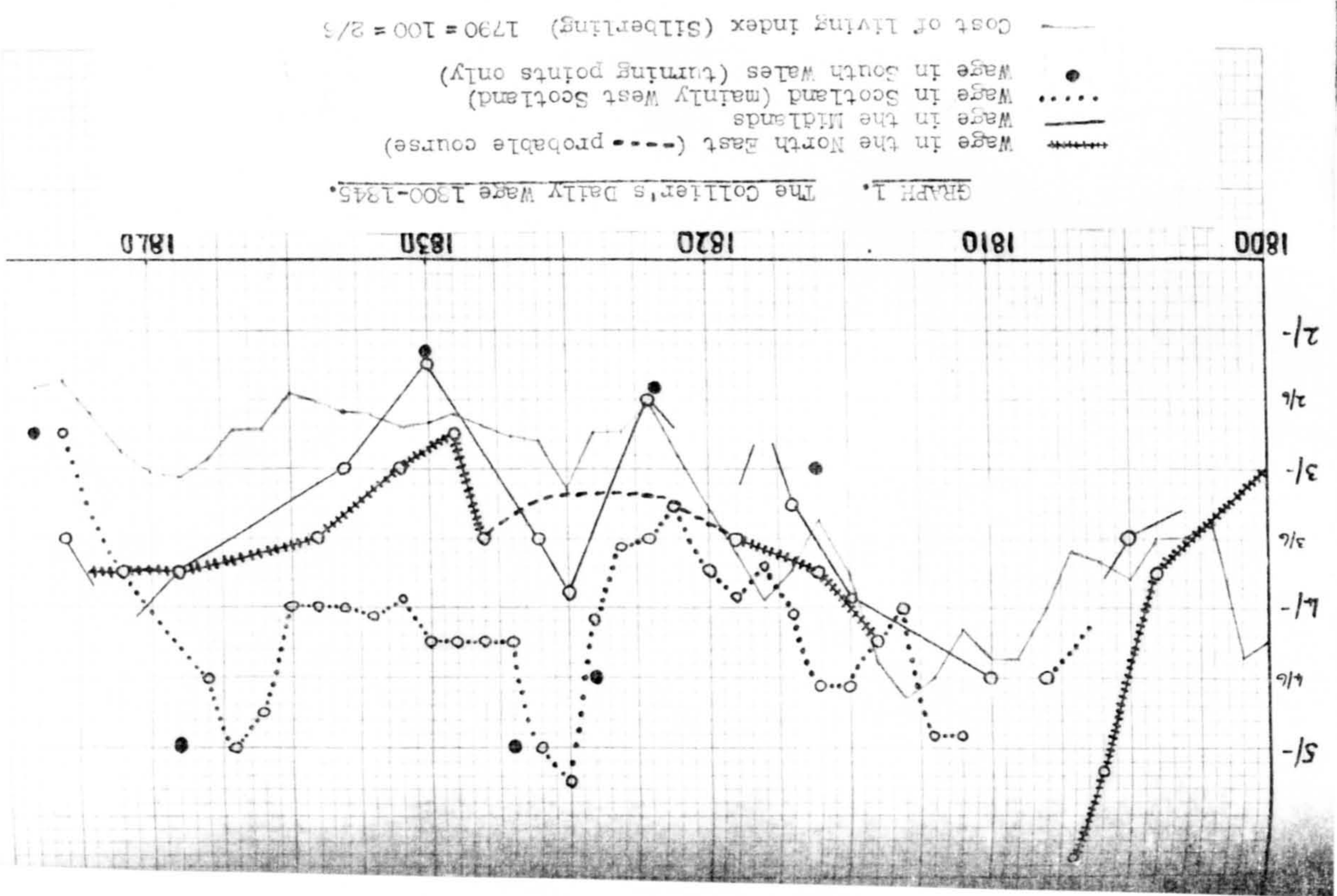
Hewers. signatures and marks

Drivers. signatures and marks

Onsetters
Shilling Lads signatures and marks
Banksmen Below

(from, Bill Dowding, Records Officer, NUM headquarters, Red Hill, Durham)

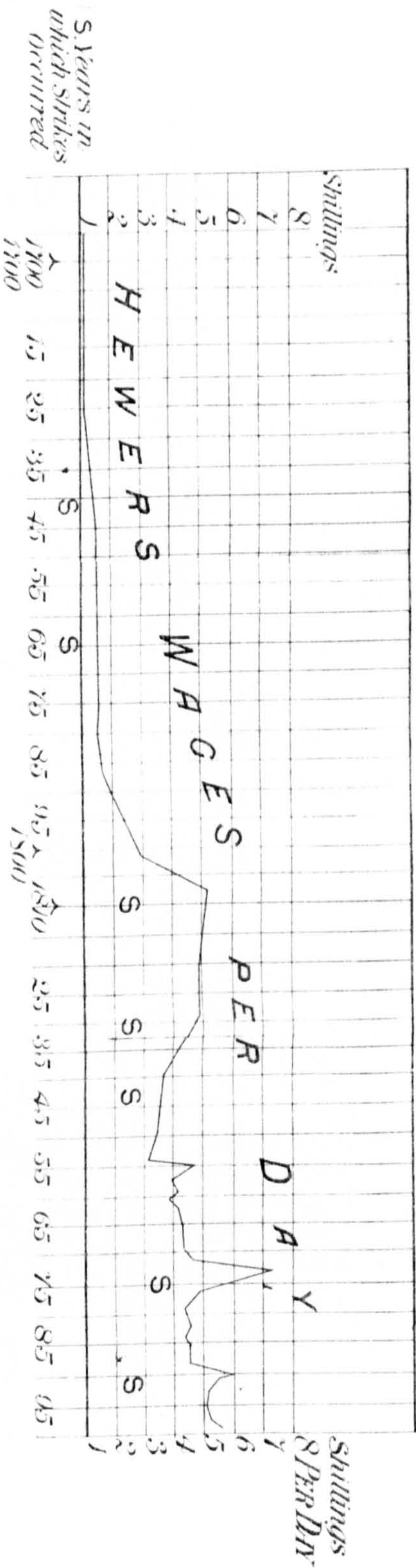
The Collier's Daily Wage 1800-45



GRAPH 1. The Collier's Daily Wage 1800-1845.

(from P. E. H. Hair, The Social History of British Coalminers. 1800-45, University of Oxford, unpublished Ph.D 1955, p. 367a).

Hewers Wages per Day 1700-1900



(from J. B. Simpson, Capital and Labour in Coal Mining during the past Two Hundred Years, Newcastle 1900, diagram no. 2, p. 34)

Vend for Tyne collieries 1828

Backworth	22,836 chaldrons	Low & S. Moor	17,471 chaldrons
Burradon & Killingworth	32,907	Manor Wallsend	19,545
Coxlodge	23,137	Pelaw Main	17,128½
Fawdon	23,325½	Pontop	17,860
Heaton	22,729	Seghill	19,102
Hebburn	21,246	Sheriff Hill	13,410
Holywell	18,683	Springwell	16,308
Hotspur	20,875	Tanfield	15,251
Jarrow	21,917	Team	20,152
Percy Main	34,347	Townley Main	13,551
Wallsend	26,788	Tyne Main	20,710
Walker	21,712	Usworth	8,847
Wideopen	20,969½	Walbottle	15,125
Wellington	25,535	Whitley	9,413
Benwell	13,804	Wylam	12,977
Collingwood Main	20,794		
Cramlington	14,588		
Elswick	16,275		
Felling	12,795		
Heworth	16,191		

(from, State of Coal Trade in U.K., P.P. 1830, op. cit., p. 29)

Drop in prices during Open Trade 1832-33

Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1831	35s.	34s.9d.	27s.9d.	25s.4½d.	29s.2d.	32s.6d.	28s.	27s.9d.	27s.9d.	30s.	29s.	31s.6d.
1833	17s.6d.	17s.	17s.6d.	20s.	15s.3d.	13s.	13s.6d.	13s.9d.	14s.4½d.	16s.3d.	18s.4½d.	17s.7½d.

(from, D. J. Williams, Capitalist Combination in the Coal Industry, 1924, p. 41).

Expansion of capacity and sales 1829-43

	1829	1836	1843
<u>est. number of collieries</u>			
Tyne	41	45	70
Wear	18	18	28
Tees	6	20	22
Hartley & Blyth	4	4	6
	<u>69</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>126</u>
 <u>productive capacity (tons)</u>			
Tyne & Wear only	5,900,000	8,100,000	
Durham & Northumberland		5,444,000	10,300,000
<u>Vend: London & Overseas (tons)</u>	3,700,000	4,800,000	6,100,000
 <u>Aggregate basis for Regulated collieries</u>	3,600,000	5,100,000	8,500,000
 <u>Number men employed</u>	21,000		34,000

(the figures are a collection of contemporary estimates, from:
P. M. Sweezy, Monopoly and Competition in the English Coal Trade.
1550-1850, 1938, Table vi, p. 110)

'Wages to the Following Officers and Workmen for the Ensuing Year'

Overmen	22s. - 24s. p.w.
Back Overmen	20s. - 22s. p.w.
Deputies	3s. 4d. p.d.
Principal Wastemen	18s. - 20s. p.w.
Ordinary Wastemen	16s. - 18s. p.w.
Shifters	2s. 6d. - 3s. p.d.
Rolleywaymen	2s. 6d. - 2s. 10d. p.d.
Onsetters	1½d. - 1½d. per score*
Putters	1s. 3d. per score*
Rolley drivers	1s. 3d. p.d.
Horsekeepers	14s. p.w.
Trappers	10d. p.d.
Banksmen	2½d. - 3d. per score*, or 4s. p.d.
Brakemen	18s. - 20s. p.w.
Firemen	14s. - 20s. p.w.
Furnacemen	12s. - 14s. p.w.
Plugmen	18s. - 20s. p.w.
Foreman Wrights	18s. - 20s. p.w.
Common Wrights	16s. - 17s. p.w.
Engine Wrights	3s. p.d.
Foreman Smiths	20s. - 22s. p.w.
Common Smiths	17s. - 18s. p.w.
Foreman Masons	18s. - 20s. p.w.
Common Masons	17s. - 18s. p.w..
Waggonmen	3d. - 3½d. per chaldron*, or 2s. 6d. p.d.]
Waggonwrights	17s. - 18s. p.w.

* refers to piece rates

PART TWO

CULTURE AND METHODISM

Chapter OneMoral Improvement

As an institution the Primitive Methodists alighted upon the pit villages, literally, from out of the hills. They were founded in Staffordshire in 1811 and reached Tyneside and County Durham from their Yorkshire circuits in 1820. By 1825 they were established in the coalfield, and by 1845 their role was already considered to have been crucial in the moral improvement of the pitmen. They were raw to the life they entered and passionate about the life they preached and in the confrontations which occurred in the twenty-five years between 1820 and 1845 lie insights into the moral and intellectual culture of the mining community.¹

In 1846 Mr J. Wales, underviewer for Lord Ravensworth at Killingworth and Burraton collieries, told the government commissioner of a great and recent moral improvement:

I have known this village all my life; the people are much improved, and bring up their children better; most of them attend some place of worship. Cockfighting, gambling, fighting etc. are nearly gone by. We have had four of the county police in the parish, and they have had a good effect in promoting better habits, in putting down card-playing and gambling in the public houses etc.²

Underviewer Wales went on to single out the village Methodists - Wesleyans, Primitives, and New Connexion - for particular praise in this record of moral improvement.

For the 1840s Wales' comments are typical. In fact, comments of this kind dominated the discussion on the colliery districts. William Morrison, doctor for the Countess of Durham's collieries, considered

that the community was "emerging from the greatest possible moral and intellectual darkness"; George Hunter, underviewer for Lord Londonderry, thought that "although there may be a little dog and cock fighting, there is nothing to compare with what there was formerly"; John Harrison, viewer at Newbottle colliery, observed thankfully that "there are few persons of an openly vicious character here now".³ James Anderson, Home Missionary at Easington Lane, was glad to report that the drinking had declined, and Dr Greenhow believed that the miners now washed more diligently than before.⁴ A catalogue of vice - dog-fighting, cock-fighting, gambling, drinking, bowling, swearing, fighting, shamelessness, ignorance, and illiteracy - was observed to have fallen into recent and dramatic decline. Oswald Herbst heard

... it generally said, that a great improvement in many respects has taken place in the moral condition of the Miners during the last twenty years.⁵

But there were other chronologies: since "eight or ten years back", "within the last ten years", since 1834, "of late years", in ten years, "in the last fifteen years", "fifteen or twenty years ago", "twenty years ago", and for Hebburn both hewer and underviewer could agree that the improvement had first begun some thirty or forty years previous.⁶

Most commentators suggested the Methodists as the responsible body. In the words of Seymour Tremenheere, commissioner appointed under the Act of 1842, "though still leaving much to be desired" the changes were "greatly attributable to their exertions".⁷ Many owners and viewers and vicars looked to Education for future improvement, and some thought the sunday schools or tighter colliery regulations were equally important,⁸ but the overwhelming consensus of middle-class opinion praised the Methodist religious influence. The Church of England is hardly mentioned. George Elliot told of the "great hold" the chapel had "on the pit people", and although quick to point out that

he was not a Methodist himself, the "Methodists have done more to ameliorate the pitmen than the whole church put together". John Reay specified "the instrumentality of the Wesleyan Methodists", John Buddle congratulated Methodism in tandem with Temperance, the Haswell agent mooted the special ability of the Primitive Methodist lay-preachers, William Fordyce talked in terms of Methodism having "neutralized" the traditions of colliery life, James Mather talked in terms of having civilized them.⁹ The correspondent to the Gateshead Observer perfectly caught the tone of the change, and its perception, when without contradiction he declared that,

The day of darkness is beginning to pass away from the mining districts in the north. The Methodist preachers have been the great pioneers - preparing the way for the illumination of the people.¹⁰

Throughout the nineteenth-century the pit itself was portrayed as a place of corruption: a training ground in "deceit and evasion" in 1807, a place where schoolboys went "completely to wreck" in 1866.¹¹ There were always moral problems, but the unprecedented expansion during the 1830s and the accompanying struggle for the redefinition of labour saw a concentration of attention, effort, and fear on the pitman's moral condition. In 1844 the Bishop of Durham walked his cathedral under

... a painful sense of the insecurity, under which Durham and its vicinity, to the SE and SW are exposed ... The whole County from Durham to Hartlepool on the one hand, and to W. Auckland on the other is one vast excavation; teeming with a numerous and ignorant population ...¹²

If the colliery districts had always been thought more depraved than the agricultural districts,¹³ then the new colliery villages of the 1830s both compounded the depravity and deepened it. New excavations not only brought new recruits to the industry, they also tempted families to move away from established pits.¹⁴ Whilst the established pits (for all their instinctive licence) did have some moral sanctions,¹⁵ the new

pits were "naturally the receptacles of the refuse of the old" manned as they were by

... the immediate importation of the very scum and offscouring of a peculiar, mischievous, and unlettered race.¹⁶

For every expanding area, from Auckland in the south, to those collieries west of Durham City, to the new villages of the East Durham plain, the charge is the same: in an industry always recruited "from the dross of society", the men of the new collieries "are the wickedest set on the face of the earth".¹⁷

By the second half of the century these rough and prejudiced remarks have been smoothed into a proper terminology. The 1866 Select Committee on Mines reported not on one mining community but on two. There is the "better type" of family and the lower, more brutal, type of family. The former may at any time be more careful - educated - moral - competent - industrious or well conducted than the latter.¹⁸ The 1830s and 1840s sat at the fulcrum of this social observation. Each community in the 1842 Report is split into two descriptions: a description of the labour process, and a description of the village. The village is then divided into influences of a moral and religious variety, and influences of a drinking, gambling, and dissolute variety.¹⁹ The Methodists were cast as the major producers of the former, and before analyzing the circumstances of their growth and the meaning of their cultural intervention, it is first necessary to account for the material circumstances in which they operated.

Chapter Two

The Mining Village and its Moral Improvement

Part I dealt with the expansion of the industry and its workforce from the 1820s, but up to the 1860s miners and their families could only predominate at the parish level. Therefore, the village is the true unit of study when talking about the Northern mining districts.²⁰

Mining villages could range from places like New Cassop which in 1855 had pitmen's cottages, some retailers, and eight drinking houses - to Wingate, which in 1855 had one hundred and fifty double cottages, two hundred and twenty-eight single cottages, six pubs, various shops, two policemen and a lock-up, a Primitive Methodist chapel, a Wesleyan chapel (made from a converted house), and a station on the Hartlepool branch of the North Eastern Railway.²¹ Although mining villages were usually planted close to older agricultural settlements (New Cassop was one mile away from Old Cassop which Fordyce tells us had four farmhouses, cottages, and a good view of Durham City), and were rural communities,²² their dominating physical feature, the colliery and its railway, was uncompromisingly industrial.

For example, in 1816 Hetton on the Hill in Pitlington parish, was described as "a small village to the North East of Elemore", and, like Thornley in Kelloe parish, nothing more was said of it except who owned the estate.²³ In 1834 Thornley was "three farmsteads; and the village ... contains a public house, and the shops of a blacksmith, and a cartwright and joiner"; nearby Murton contained only five farmsteads.²⁴ In 1831 sinking for coal began near to Hetton on the Hill; in 1834 a successful sinking began at Thornley; and in 1838 operations began at Murton. By 1855 Hetton on the Hill was completely dominated by its colliery neighbour at South Hetton and is not mentioned in topographies, Murton's population had risen from 98 in 1831 to 1,387 in 1851, and Thornley, like the others, had

become a pit village whose 'old village' was insignificant besides its 'modern village' of plant, railway, pitmen's rows, pubs, shops, a colliery school, Primitive and Wesleyan chapels, a Roman Catholic chapel and school, and a library financed by the Thornley Coal Company. In 1831 Thornley had had a population of fifty, by 1851 it had a population of 2,730.²⁵ For the people of the villages the colliery defined the division of labour just as it defined the geography and demography. Apart from domestic service, agricultural labouring, and pauperism, there were few categories for women,²⁶ and apart from farming and seafaring most other occupations for men were in direct or secondary relationship with coalmining.²⁷

Criss-crossed as it was with roads, waggonways, and eventually railways, the coalfield had one of the earliest and most developed transport systems in the country. The villages were easily accessible.²⁸ Between 1840 and 1851 the three coalmining regions of County Durham (East Durham plain, mid-lower Wear, North West plateau) sustained an average net immigration of 15.8%.²⁹ In 1851 the vast majority of mining village inhabitants were born in Northumberland and Durham, and of this North East majority, most were local men and women from the immediate district.³⁰ For the new enterprises, immigration seems to have predominantly come from established and traditional mining areas in the coalfield.³¹ The population had proportionately more men than the national average. In 1849 the mining districts comprised 52.7% men against a national average of 48.3%, and out of the districts' total population of male adults (over 15 years) 60.5% were between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five against a national average of 56.1%.³² The North East mining districts also had a proportionately younger population than the national average: there were more children under the age of fourteen, more young adults (15.- 35) of both sexes, and fewer older (35+) adults of both sexes.³³ Given the nature of the

job and the newness of many of the enterprises, none of these proportions can be considered as surprising. The North East mining family also tended to be larger than that of other working groups in the area.³⁴

With definite exceptions, the mining population appears to have been relatively healthier than the generality of their fellow countrymen. The annual mortality per 1000 of the Houghton-Chester district against the national average (1838-1844), was lower for both sexes from 0-10 years, and then higher from 10-25 years; after that, Houghton-Chester males enjoyed a better average chance of living to 65 years than their fellow-countrymen.³⁵ Durham miners also enjoyed a lower chance of death by disease than all English males, and than their non-mining counterparts in the country.³⁶ As might have been expected, Durham miners' chances of mortality by violence (roof falls, explosions, and miscellaneous at work) were markedly higher than all English males, as was their chance of death by cholera and related disease.³⁷ The women of the village appear to have suffered worse than the national average from chances of death during the childbearing and menopausal cycles (25-35, 45-55). The mining community, like the country generally, suffered from appalling levels of infant mortality up to the age of five years.³⁸

There was little officially-recorded pauperism in the villages.³⁹ The Old Poor Law was not considered to be over-burdened or abused,⁴⁰ and the New Poor Law had a very quiet beginning in the mining areas. In 1842 the Easington Union Board of Guardians decided that "from the infrequency of applications from any able-bodies male paupers in this Union; it is inexpedient to appoint a Supt. with a Salary".⁴¹ The North East in general did not suffer from the kind of mass technological unemployment which afflicted other regions, and the New Poor Law was not an issue in spite of Chartist attempts to make

it one.⁴² About half of the adult population (14+) could read and write.⁴³

The ruling class chose not to be near the mining villages. A distaste for the pit mingled with ignorance about its workings. In 1786 the pit had been suggested to the Home Department as suitable body and soul punishment for the convict. There, the convict like the pitman would be removed from view, the blackness would invite reflection on his soul, the labour would punish his body, and he would

Sigh in Perpetual Darkness, and the whole length of [his] Slavery, will be One Mournfull Alternative, of insinsibility (sic) and Labour.⁴⁴

The pit remained a black mystery for outsiders well into the 1840s.⁴⁵ Local coalowners appointed their agents and stayed away; "The arrival of the pitmen is the signal for the departure of the gentry ..."⁴⁶ As the gentry were neglectful of their ruling responsibilities, so were the clergy. In a century where state-power was heavily dependent upon a clerical magistracy, Northumberland and Durham in general and the mining villages in particular, were bereft of either the Anglican word, or its flesh.⁴⁷ The pitmen were rarely to be seen near the Church of England, "resigned" as they were "to the care of the Methodists":

If the clergy were employed, or would employ themselves thus [keeping a close inspection of the pit villages] - it would add greatly to their usefulness and respectability, and to the support of the church. If the parochial clergy would so employ themselves, zealously, we should not be so over run with Methodism, and all sorts of mongrel Sectarians and Canterers.⁴⁸

In 1859 one of the richest dioceses in Britain had to admit to the worst Church accommodation in the country and to "Spiritual Destitution" in its own backyard. In 1882 the Archdeacon of Durham lamented the miners' "prejudice against black coats" and the clergy's prejudice against black faces. The Church Congress was told that if

... a number of pitmen coming from a nightshift do not always look like men and bretheren [they] need not be afraid of the coal dust. It will wash off.⁴⁹

This prejudice was easier to admit in 1882 than it had been forty years previously. The absence of a substantial middle-class, and the neglectfulness of the Anglicans, in a coalfield creaking and dislocated by expansion were seen as facts conducive to terrible social breakdown. In an era when migration was presented as a moral condition⁵⁰ the curate of Hetton le Hole worried about his lack of time to visit the "distant parts of the parish", the Bishop of Durham fretted from afar about new pit villages "little short of Heathenism" where "there has never been so far as I can learn, any place of worship", and the National Society feared for the corrosion of those golden cords of religious deference and honest settlement by modern frictions. Spurred on by these threatening problems, the fear of Chartism and miners' unionism, and the Methodist rivalry, the National Society had made substantial efforts since the 1830s to put schools in the mining districts. These efforts however were by no means sufficient to their self-appointed task.⁵¹ The government commissioner surveyed a county

Where formerly was not a single hut of a shepherd, the lofty steam engine chimneys of a colliery now send their volumes of smoke into the sky; and in the vicinity is a town called, as if by enchantment, into immediate existence.

The enchantment was all anarchy. Its citizens "are never imbued with that respect for their employers, which long and permanent subordination naturally produces", the old sanctioning structures had been outflanked by a population growth and shift "unaccompanied by adequate means to restrain, instruct, and guide ...".⁵²

However it was in the swelling cities that the threat was considered darkest and where new structures for controlling the Poor were first conceived. Durham's first Chief Constable spent the 1840s calling on the country's "friends of order" to supply more

police "to meet the addition to the population" "being of an unruly description . . . by the extension of Coal & Iron Works etc". But he never wavered in his conviction that Newcastle and Sunderland were the darker threats to order.⁵³ William Anderson was generally supported in his view that although South Shields had three times more schools than twenty years ago "yet the place is more wicked" than a colliery village - "near a town like Shields the colliery boys will be vastly more immoral than in a distant district from the vice around them".⁵⁴ The Sunday Schools were conceived to meet the problems of city streets. Newcastle had her first Sunday school in January 1785, and by June of that year five schools were operating upon those "bred up in ignorance" who "are always the most ungovernable". By 1788 new schools for seven hundred children were teaching in North and South Shields "under the auspices of a Gentleman from the Sunday Schools Association at London". In 1816 the nonconformist Newcastle Sunday School Union was formed with thirty-six affiliated schools and three thousand scholars. In 1835 the Anglican Sunday School Association was founded.⁵⁵

From their inception the Sunday schools were about the problem of order. The first Newcastle schools had been opened with a sermon from Rev. Lushington in All Saints, parish church of the city's most overcrowded and poorest area. It was from the crowded mysteries of All Saints' sloping lanes and shabby tenements that city disorder occurred to a middle-class increasingly settling in houses of fine taste in the upper parts of the city, away from the quayside and its tumult.⁵⁶ The Sunday School Union's first literature was Isaac Watts' rebukes to order, its first tract was by the Bishop of Durham on the "moral disorders" of the Irish Poor. Newcastle's Sunday School Teachers' Association (f. 1835) listed its objectives and three out of four concerned city order: the Town Races and their drinking, gambling, and general disorder; the Harvest Hire of reapers' "most

revolting scenes of tumult"; the drink question and "the revolting scenes of drunkenness which our streets exhibit on the Lord's Day ..."⁵⁷ Other religious forces for civic order came out of the city. Some were internal products of the Sunday school structure: the Newcastle Bible Society was founded in 1809, and staffed with Sunday school zealots; the Newcastle Adult School Society carried the Sunday school impetus to "the Instruction of the Uneducated Adult Poor"; the Wesleyan Methodists, largest single group in the Sunday School Union, founded their Lending Tract Society in 1823; Societies for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge worked in both Newcastle and Gateshead; the Bethel Union Society was founded in 1822, specifically for seamen.⁵⁸ In 1831 Newcastle had four Bible societies and seven tract societies, all founded since 1809 and all operating on Sunday school principles that the ability to read, properly directed, would lead to a regenerate, reverent, and repentent student, nightly agog at the revelations of God and Nature and serious in his home: in the words of Gateshead's S.P.C.K., "led through Nature up to Nature's God".⁵⁹

The urban middle-class were clearly concerned for the moral improvement of the lower orders but it is difficult to judge the success of their efforts. For the pit villages, standing at the missionary margin of civic order, it is even more difficult to follow the line from intention to effect. Certainly there is, and can be, no direct evidence: Rev. Richard Donaldson of Morpeth was circumspect about the means of bringing the people to order:

This is partly done by those very useful institutions the tract societies which are actively labouring to undo the mischief. But this is an engine which works but very slowly & at best uncertainly ...⁶⁰

What is clear however is that as the pitmen were redefined in their work by the Trade from the early nineteenth-century, they were also redefined in their social entity by the cities from about the same period - and that both redefinitions were reflexive in their relationship. A

growing market of moving labourers was seen to threaten a settled society of orderly persons. The process of achieving the former invited a conflict which proved the latter; this proof of threat insinuated a disrespect which encouraged moral judgement on them as mere 'labourers'. Rev. Donaldson's "engine" was essentially an engine of class sensibilities whose first and upward stroke came from city fears, and whose ultimate and downward stroke came from industrial processes. Thus the pitmen, always "so different from the other classes of the labouring Poor", inherited a gathering reputation for "moral darkness", "a right to indulgence", "drinking, gaming, fighting, quarrelling, swearing, and poaching" - the felt tumult of a "self-willed people" whose children were in "want of proper control", who "transmitted natural and accidental defects" which included lying and deception, whose own villages on pay-nights were "scarcely habitable" for want of order.⁶¹ In all of its historical ambiguity, the idea of 'Order' was ranged against them. The Sunday school curriculum timetabled for an order of bells and inspections and silences in a beehive of rote and repetition; the Sunday School Union's reports from the mining villages are obsessed with the achievement of "order and discipline" indoors over that which is "Violent, rude, and ungovernable out of doors"; Rev. Everett dedicated his book on a Methodist pitman to Mr John Reay, "A Promotor of Religion, Sabbath Schools, and Civil Order".⁶²

Local sensibilities were joined during the period by national ones. Apart from the late and uneven effect of the Poor Law Amendment Act, the state made its first significant penetration into the moral life of the pit villages with Ashley's 1842 Mines Act (5 & 6 Vict., cap. 99).⁶³ The Act became law on 10 August and prohibited women from under-ground, boys under ten years from colliery employment, and established a loose inspection system. The provisions of the Act clearly reflected a campaigning bourgeois

attitude towards working-class women, and, by implication, towards their children. Motivations were varied. At the core was a new sensibility of womanhood and its proper refinements. The Gateshead Observer approvingly quoted a letter from the Morning Chronicle which defended the Act and the gentler rights of womanhood from the harsher rights of labour:

Is it among the rights of labour to blot out from that sex all form, and stamp, and character of womanhood ... to divest them of all knowledge of home, and all chance of womanly influence in the humble sphere of the poor peasant's hearth?⁶⁴

This language of a peasantry has a Tory-Evangelical tone to it, but the challenge of disorder must not be lost in its rhetoric for the "form and stamp, and character of womanhood". The 1842 Commission which preceded the Act could generally agree that cleanliness was "a predominant feature in the domestic economy of the female part of this community", but after that there was only criticism. The women lacked "economy and forethought", they had no method and were wasteful, they were indulgent, they needed to be re-educated in a new domesticity having "little or no opportunity of seeing anything but the homely work and cooking of the collier village". Dr Elliot of Newcastle Medical School diagnosed the sort of improvidence this could produce:

I have seen a huge girdle cake, set edgewise on a table, leaning against the wall, from which each little urchin would help himself by tearing off what he wanted with his dirty hands; while the mother set an unopened parcel of sugar on the table, and tearing out a piece of paper with her thumb, left each to thrust his or her spoon in at pleasure.⁶⁵

Equally, the education of women was presented for the 'elevation' of men. The cottage's cosy hearth was cast against the disorderly attractions of the street.⁶⁶ These new sensibilities, and the state's willingness to act upon them, jarred upon the majority instincts of a coal ownership which, although increasingly alert to the possibilities

of moral improvement, resented such "obnoxious legislative interference in the established Customs of our peculiar race of Pitmen". The Coal Trade wanted boys to work rather than be schooled. Londonderry fought Ashley tooth and nail from the Lords, Buddle was scathing about "meddling, morbid humanity mongers" who have

... entirely over looked the existing Laws for the protection of the labouring Infant population - or to imagine how all the abuses complained of could possibly have escaped the notice, and interference of the local Magistracy - the Clergy, and the Guardians of the poor!!!⁶⁷

In fact the Guardians had lost their scope for directing the moral improvement of the villages. As Buddle wrote, the Poor Law bureaucracy in London was insisting upon a uniformly regulated system of poor relief based upon the new Union workhouses. This meant the diminution of that controlling role which the vestries could formerly apply to out-relief. Designating 'sundries' and cash payments according to the known circumstances, prospects, and character of applicants, the vestries had been able to lay a heavy moral sanction over the economy of the village poor. Denied this discretion, the Poor Law Guardians lost an intimate local power.⁶⁸ For their part, the coalowners do not seem to have been particularly interested in achieving a smothering control over village life. Of course, one would not expect official records to be informative on subtle enterprises of this nature, if they existed, but from the sketchy evidences the coalowners were characteristically penny-pinching. Company schools were rare until the 1850s and 1860s,⁶⁹ although some schools received small grants. For instance, at Hetton and Easington Lane, the rich and important Hetton Coal Company patronized the national school (founded in 1834 and teaching 128 boys in 1840) with £21 per year, and the five sunday schools (Anglican, Wesleyan, Primitive, New Connexion, Independent - 600 pupils) with a miserly £12 per year to share between them. The curate of Earsdon parish

in Northumberland had eleven thousand parishioners in an area producing £14000 per year in coal royalties alone - and yet he could complain about his lack of facilities and personal poverty: £20 per year from his incumbency farm, £20 from the Duke of Northumberland, £40 from Lord Hastings, and barely £20 in fees.⁷⁰ The increasing stringency of the Bond and the appearance of colliery regulations tightened Capital's control at work, but apart from some small grants, an interest in police lock-ups,⁷¹ one startling warning on Sabbath gambling, and a preference for other Methodist groups over the Primitives,⁷² the coalowners seemed content to leave village morality to others.

Institutionally, the community had a high provision of "Schools and Places of Religious Worship" by the 1840s. Reports on "nine principal Collieries in the County of Durham" in 1838, and four mining parishes in 1840, show a varying permutation of churches, chapels, meeting houses, schools and sunday schools in most villages.⁷³ All institutions were religious in tone,⁷⁴ but the Methodists dominated. Hetton and Easington Lane (estimated total population, 5,887) had their Anglican church in 1832 and by 1840 the average attendance was about three hundred and fifty. However both the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists had built their chapels in 1824, and by 1840 the Weslyans had an average attendance of four hundred (133 members), and the Primitives an average attendance of three hundred and seventy (150 members). In addition there were smaller groups of Methodist Independents, Methodist New Connexion, and Baptists. The Anglican sunday school had about one hundred and fifty pupils whilst the Methodist groups had a combined total of about six hundred pupils.

The North East teetotal movement was also intertwined with the Methodists, particularly the Primitives, although it received intermittent support from the Church of England and the nonconformist groups. It grew fastest between 1835 and 1844 in artisan strongholds

in the large towns, and in the colliery districts. By 1838 it had an estimated membership of 11,574 but actual regeneration seems to have been first achieved by others: the problem was not so much reforming drunkards "but the willingness of teetotalers to come together". The moral imperatives were clear: when Rev. Tindale visited it, Thornley was

... a place notorious for drunkenness ... amongst both sexes; sunk and degraded as were the people of Thornley, they had not been favoured with the teetotal life boat till some time in last July.

Similarly, employers were reminded in 1840 of

... evidence of the happy change in the conduct of many in their employment - the indolent having become industrious, the careless trustworthy and attentive ... 75

The Methodist penetration was a fact which established authority had to live with, and if there was acknowledgement of their 'moral work' there was also creeping criticism of their independence as a working-class institution. Commissioner Mitchell acknowledged the Sunday schools' work in reading and spelling with scholars but blamed them for putting "no ideas into their minds", while the Privy Council thought the Sunday school

... an institution to which the serious minded will look with deepest interest. It is true that the instruction given at such schools must be very limited, and the teachers are often very little fitted, by their age and their habits of thought, to dig into the minds of others. 76

The coalowners had made efforts "to dig into the minds" when driven to it by more dramatically self-conscious working-class organization, but their efforts had mostly failed. Colliery libraries and reading rooms had been funded after the defeat of Hepburn's union in 1832 and miners' Chartism in 1839, but they were sickly efforts massaged to life by company money. Cowpen Library had only twenty subscribers, at Penshaw it was clear "that pitmen were not the components of the reading society", Seghill's six hundred volumes were "entirely

neglected" by 1846, and there were similar failures at Earsdon, Backworth, and other places. Commissioner Tremenheere regretted the failure to achieve "more sober and temperate habits of thought" after 1831, and Wallsend's nil response for a reading room was attributed to more convivial patterns of life:

They find more amusement at bowling and at quoits, and gossiping together.⁷⁷

There had been similarly inspired efforts to construct an alternative system of saving. The Coal Trade recognized the potential, independent power of working-class saving during the 1831-32 strikes and wished to control it not out of any educative reasoning but from a straightforward need to break unions. In spite of the stringent, almost Judaic, moral codes of their benefit system, the mining community refused to surrender its right of self-imposition and regarded the Trade's monetary help as "a 'take-in', intended as a fraud upon them". The friendly society, with the chapel, represented the most successful form of self-imposed working-class organization and moral sanction.⁷⁸ Early disparate efforts at company schooling were equally distrusted. The pitmen saw "lurking and hidden designs" in them, constant attendance was "extremely objectionable", "Boys must be flogged to school".⁷⁹

Chapter Three

Primitive Methodist Growth

From their foundation as a Wesleyan offshoot in 1811 the Primitive Methodists enjoyed almost continuous growth for the next hundred years. They started the century as a revivalist sect and ended it as a denomination. For the period under discussion they retained most of the characteristics of a sect, in spite of clear trends towards 'denominationalism' as represented by Sunday schools and related activities. Although Primitive Methodist membership as a percentage of national population, and their attendance as a percentage of mining district-population on Census Sunday, were both small - 0.51% and 5% respectively - their influence went beyond formal membership and their strength could be heavily concentrated in certain places.⁸⁰

By the 1870s they were the most important single religious group in the North East coalfield.⁸¹ For our period the Primitives made their fastest national gains between 1827 and 1838 - with an unparalleled average annual growth rate of 11.2% between 1833 and 1835.⁸²

It is easier to report the facts of growth than to explain them. If it is true that "religion has a cultural influence which extends beyond formal membership, but which it is difficult to evaluate",⁸³ it is also true that culture has a religious influence which extends beyond social statistics but which is equally difficult to evaluate. The inclination has been to point out "a general over-all correspondence" between religious growth and socio-cultural change and to leave it at that.⁸⁴ My aim here is to be more specific as to the chronology and context of this correspondence, and, as far as is possible, to try and explain its nature.⁸⁵

Of course, the Primitives were not the first Methodists in the mining villages. John Wesley himself had strafed the ancient Durham and Northumberland collieries in the 1740s, and these societies stand

among the oldest in Methodism. In 1742 Wesley founded the Old Penshaw society and in 1743 preached at Pelton, Gateshead Fell, and South Biddick; he prized the souls of pitmen and his journals take us into a sphere of the cultural which is rare and obscure:

A multitude of people [at Pelton] were gathered together from all the neighbouring towns, and (which I rejoiced at much more) from all the neighbouring pits. In riding home I observed a little village called Chowden, which they told me consisted of colliers only. I resolved to preach there as soon as possible; for these are sinners and need repentance. (1 March 1743)

... I found we were got into the very Kingswood of the North. Twenty or thirty wild children ran around us, as soon as we came, staring at us in amaze. They could not properly be said to be either clothed or naked. One of the largest (a girl about fifteen) had a piece of a ragged, dirty blanket some way hung about her, and a kind of cap on her head, of the same cloth and colour. My heart was exceedingly enlarged towards them ... (8 March 1743)⁸⁶

This mid-Durham district retained an isolated Methodist presence until 1782 when it was connected into the new Sunderland Circuit. This Circuit was formed with 1,014 members, and took in traditional pit communities at Shiney Row and Penshaw (28 members), the Raintons (27 members), Lumley (15 members), Colliery Dykes (57 members), and North Biddick (52 members) - and stretched from Sunderland along the River Wear to Durham City, the area in between Wear and Tyne, and along the South Tyne as far west as Prudhoe.⁸⁷ The Sunderland Circuit cautiously added new societies piecemeal, occasionally enjoyed sudden expansions (Old Penshaw 1806-07; Newbottle, Colliery Dykes, West Rainton 1808-09; Lumley 1820-21; Easington Lane 1828), and in 1836 was split into two circuits to absorb developments in the coalfield. The newly designated Houghton le Spring Wesleyan Methodist Circuit covered the mining area south and west of Sunderland, and began in September 1836 with a members-trialists role of 594, reaching a pre 1850 peak of 742 in March 1844.⁸⁸ When in 1839 we find both Wesleyans and

Primitives coming together to finance the Sunderland Town Mission for the "moral and Spiritual improvement" of the city, it must be remembered that the Primitives came as tyros to join a Wesleyan establishment which had been in the area for well over half a century.⁸⁹

The first Primitive preachers, representing a Staffordshire sect barely nine years old but preaching a salvation self-consciously 'primitive', entered the North East from North Yorkshire in June 1820. They encountered little official opposition. The first society was founded at Ingleton, near Darlington, on 5 June 1820 and from there preachers preached and tiny societies were formed around Darlington in 1820, in Teesdale and Weardale the following summer, at Sunderland, North Shields, and Newcastle in the August, and in South Shields in December 1821.⁹⁰

Their efforts had been renewed in 1821 in an attempt to ride a revivalist wave which had caught up Tyne and Wear Wesleyans in 1820. However, the Primitives did not enjoy revival before the wave of 1822 which first rose in Teesdale in February and continued to surge into Weardale and down into Wearside and Tyneside until early 1824, a revival which appears to have been shared by the Wesleyans.⁹¹ The detail of this sequence of revivals is obscure but the Primitive preachers appear to have been able to exploit a situation in 1822 which they could not so well exploit in 1821. Responses to the word could ebb and flow from place to place, and change in the same place over time, but their explanation seems to lie in an idea of momentum where North Tyne "tears and groans" could touch South Tyne "mighty shaking amongst the dry bones"; a momentum coincidentally paced by extraordinary preaching, nightly meetings, and special services to attract pitmen coming from work where "they dropped from their seats, and trembled like persons

struck with paralitick strokes ...".⁴² Bolstered by revival from branch societies into independent circuits, the North Shields, South Shields, and Sunderland-Stockton Primitive circuits missioned their outlying collieries in the summer and autumn of 1823. Thomas Nelson undertook one of these missions. His labours were exhilarating; he was clearly both the rider and the ridden of a powerful religious swell which swept him across twenty-five different places in thirty-seven days of field-preaching. I have summarized his account of the tour:

- July 20 preached at North Shields camp meeting: many "at liberty".
 " " " South Shields: many deeply distressed.
- July 21 preached at Waggoners' Row: three "at liberty".
- July 22 preached at Usworth: one new member, others listened attentively.
- July 23 preached at Hebburn: five new members.
- July 24 preached at South Shields: "the word ran like fire among dry stuble".
- July 27 preached at South Shields: he thought he preached poorly.
 " " " Templetown: issued new tickets to members.
 " " " South Shields: "many were powerfully wrought upon" and most of congregation "at liberty".
- July 28 preached at Monkton: local squire invites him out of the open into a barn, and "I had a most powerful time indeed I believe I had not one dry thing about me, with sweating so much".
- July 29 preached at Jarrow: suffering from a hoarse voice in the cold air.
- July 30 preached at Templetown: his voice is nearly gone.
- July 31 preached at South Shields: much crying and wailing.
- August 1 preached at East Boldon: a "powerful time".
- August 3 preached at Usworth: "The rain came before I had done ..."
 " " " Chester le St.: hoarseness prevents him from proper praying.
- August 4 preached at Chester le St.: young and old affected in "powerful time".

- August 5 preached at Chester le St.: has previously been a difficult place but now shows encouraging signs.
- " " " Low Flatts: voice still weak but wins four new members.
- August 7 preached at Ouston: to a large audience.
- August 10 preached at East Boldon: some affected, one "at liberty".
- " " " Hebburn: large and powerful meeting.
- August 12 preached at Herrington: difficult place with no success.
- August 13 preached at Ayers Quay: difficult place with no success.
- August 14 preached at Bishopwearmouth: a large audience of hewers only.
- August 15 preached at Whitburn: broke previous "hardness" to form a class of seven members.
- August 17 preached at Hylton: a new class of five members.
- " " " Hetton Houses: many in tears.
- " " " Hetton Downs: much crying and praying, one "at liberty".
- August 18 preached at Hylton: Nelson is ill, but "some of the vilest characters in the place, are turning to Almighty God".
- August 19 preached at Philadelphia: many affected.
- August 21 preached at East Rainton: good meeting - one man would have collapsed "if he had not got hold of the door post ... His word is a hammer".
- August 22 preached at Cox Green: powerful meeting.
- August 24 preached at Houghton le Spring: largest congregation ever saw there.
- " " " "two miles from Houghton": largest open-air congregation he ever saw.
- " " " Shiney Row: to hundreds, many weeping.
- August 25 preached at Sunderland: farewell sermon to "thousands".
- " " " " : Watchnight Service _

The Lord soon began to work powerfully so that both men and women were in distress until the Lord spoke peace to their souls. I cannot say how many professed to get into liberty, but the meeting continued until the next morning. Many were seized so as to be in apparent fits: but the Lord soon set

them free.⁹³

On the same day that Nelson preached his farewell sermon he recorded in his journal that

Last year at this time in Sunderland we had six in Society and one leader; but now we have 275 members, eleven leaders, and a very large chapel building ... What hath God wrought! Shall I say that this has been one of the best and most wonderful quarters I ever saw before?⁹⁴

Nelson left but others took his place, and the colliery missioning appears to have retained its momentum throughout the year. By October there were as many members in the collieries as in Sunderland itself:

A very blessed and glorious work has gone on for some time in Sunderland and the neighbouring collieries. In Sunderland and Monk-wearmouth ... we have nearly 400 members. In Lord Steward's [Stewart's] and Squire Lambton's collieries we have near 400 more ... Indeed, the Lord and the poor colliers are doing wondrously. Our congregations are immensely large, and well behaved. It would do any of the lovers of Jesus good to see the dear colliers sometimes under the word ... Their hearty and zealous exertions in the cause of God would make almost any one love them. We have 5 preachers employed in this Circuit, and a blessed prospect.⁹⁵

It was from this first mission and its "blessed prospect" that the Primitive Methodists established themselves in the North East as a movement dominated by pitmen and their families.⁹⁶

The mid and late 1820s appear to have been years of stagnation and decline in both the Shields and Sunderland circuits, with sharp falls between 1829 and 1831. The North Shields circuit however, appears to have held most of its revivalist gains, and even gone on to add to them between 1829 and 1831. (see Appendix p. 355). The sullen mood of the Durham circuits is confirmed by Rev. J. Petty's colliery tour in the summer of 1831. Judged by his own rigid aim of inciting village convulsions and putting converts "at liberty", Rev. Petty's efforts were a failure. The pitmen were on the verge

of an unprecedented strike victory over the Coal Trade (see pp. 88-90 above) and do not appear to have been as mindful as Rev. Petty of their future state. In July he preached at Easington, his "mind much exercised through not seeing souls converted to God", in August at Middle Rainton with "not much power", and at Houghton in "a barren season".⁹⁷ This situation changed dramatically in December 1831. In the October Sunderland contracted the first of a cholera epidemic which was to rage throughout the country. By the December it was in the pit villages of Tyne and Wear where it remained with "havock all around" for nearly twelve months.⁹⁸ For the first six months of 1832 the coalfield sat expectant of disease and in the gripping immiseration of lock-out. Whereas Petty had preached at Hetton in July 1831 without response, between December 1831 and March 1832 the full and trial membership of the Hetton society rose from fifty-one to two hundred and seventy-eight. Although cholera increased circuit membership,⁹⁹ it is more suggestive to see its impact in the village. Appendix p. 358 shows membership figures for Hetton and seven other colliery societies, plus Monkwearmouth, during the crisis.

Cholera underwrote the preachers' words with a capricious, fetid, death. All of the societies listed in Appendix p. 358 experienced large increases in membership between December and March. The increases at Hetton and Pittington were explosive. The graph tentatively suggests that the larger the initial congregation - perhaps by its greater potential for atmosphere - the more able it was to rouse its own revivalist momentum. The exceptions were Easington Lane which with a large initial congregation of forty-nine was not quite able to double its numbers, and Pittington which with a small initial congregation of nine was able to increase its numbers over eight-fold. If the increases are stunning then so are the

subsequent decreases. The smaller colliery societies, and Monkwearmouth, appear to have had more short-run success in retaining new members than those societies which enjoyed spectacular gains. The volatility of Hetton, major society in the circuit, is especially remarkable. To rise to nearly three hundred and back to under a hundred in twelve months is a quantitative experience which could not have gone without qualitative repercussions. The momentary nature of the response is underlined by the Pitlington membership which continued to fall throughout the last quarter of 1832 in spite of a late and "very fatal" outbreak there in November.¹⁰⁰

Inferences about revival and atmosphere are tenuous. The most solid and the most striking aspect is to do with the nature of Primitive Methodism's appeal. Something has been said, and more will be said, about the leading role of Primitive pitmen in the unions of 1831-1832 and 1844. However, when considering the relationship of Primitive Methodism to the mass of the population, the secular issues of the strike were not a significant factor. The Durham figures for pre-December 1831 show slight increases and slight decreases; in Northumberland it was suggested that union successes in the summer of 1831 had created some indifference to the movement.¹⁰¹ Whatever the precise relationship in secular matters there can be no doubt that in fear of death the community bent, momentarily and impulsively, to the fixed-will of the preachers. Primitive Methodism was meticulous about secular duty and personal morality, but at its core it spoke wildly to the soul. In Sunderland passionate night and day visiting "caused thousands to flock to the houses of prayer, bemoaning their sins, and crying to God for mercy". In Newcastle "The state of this place cannot be described . . .", preachers were exhausted as "Nearly all business is suspended but preaching and praying" to full meetings in villages where

Cards have been banned, and fighting-cocks' heads cut off, and some of the worst characters are seeking the Lord ...

In North Shields the preachers "prayed ... eat and drank and slept among the dying and the dead".¹⁰² Early in 1832 this circuit distributed three thousand tracts which darkly embraced cholera as a metaphysical sign.¹⁰³

Cholera was only an intermittent sign, a sign which was also arguably a warning to all social classes. Colliery explosions however, were much more frequent, more discriminating in their signals, and the interpreting tract always followed the explosion. In 1812 the Brandling Main Colliery at Felling exploded to kill ninety-two. Their forty-one widows and one hundred and thirty-three children were instructed for themselves, and used for the advice of others,

The continuation of life is precarious to all; but particularly so to those who, as it were, carry it in their hands, and may be called upon to resign it in a moment, by the alteration of a current of air. But the greater hazard is in yourselves ...

... when we set too great a value upon men, the Lord, in mercy, often deprives us of a friend or a relative, who had been, as it were, a curtain between us and heaven, hiding us from God, and keeping us in thick, worldly darkness.

... there is no repentance, no forgiveness, no redemption, in the grave.¹⁰⁴

The disaster tract usually came from the outside. Within its puling moralism ("Do not cry, mammy - do not cry"),¹⁰⁵ and morbid lingerings over charred bodies - a style which found popular cultural form¹⁰⁶ - there was a scalding injunction to the soul.

Given this weight of popular admonition and calamity, and that quality of Primitive appeal as inferred from the cholera, one would expect a mass response from the bereaved community to the Primitive society.¹⁰⁷ The best example of a major disaster with available membership statistics is the South Shields June 1839 explosion where

fifty were killed. Unfortunately this example still contains some gaps (see Appendix p. 359) where statistics exist for eight societies in the South Shields Circuit up to March 1839 but do not reappear until June 1840. Nevertheless, whilst the remainder of societies have stagnant or falling memberships over the fourteen intervening months, the memberships of those three societies nearer to the colliery (South Shields, Templetown and Jarrow) are actually increasing. The nearest society, Templetown, increases the most by doubling its membership. The following year the Primitive Methodist Magazine recorded the obituaries of four celebrated members killed in the explosion, Ben Gibson, Thomas Mould, Matthew Gibson, and Thomas Elstable (P. M. Magazine 1840, p. 278, p. 277, p. 297), and described the funeral services as "densely crowded". Thus graph Appendix p. 359 does suggest a community response to the June explosion, although it is as well to remember that all of the societies except one began to enjoy rising trajectories six months before the explosion.

The circuits complained of difficulties from the end of the 1832 lock-out to the end of the decade. Victimization and quickening economic development made for an unsettledness which disrupted society membership patterns. Primitives had been widely implicated in the union: in March 1832 the Sunderland Circuit resolved

That Tuesday evening's service be given up to attend the Union Pray Meeting,

but by September

The Circuit be represented as sinking . The reason of which is the Collier's strike.¹⁰⁸

Next year Sunderland reported "great difficulties through the outward misunderstanding between the coalowners and their workmen"; Shields, "great difficulties owing to the disturbances and movings in the collieries"; Newcastle, a fluctuating membership

"by reason of the unsettledness of the pitmen" - and similar complaints followed for 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838 and 1839 with murmurs of internal strife exacerbating external problems.¹⁰⁹

Graph Appendix p. 355 indicates lower memberships for the North and South Shields circuits, but not for Sunderland. The plateau Sunderland reached in 1832-1834 was much bemoaned.¹¹⁰ but hardly disastrous, and the Circuit's falls in 1836 and 1838 were not due to membership decreases but a hiving-off of societies to form other circuits - Stockton in 1836 and Durham in 1838.¹¹¹ At village level that slender statistical evidence which does exist suggests a greater volatility of Primitive over Wesleyan response during the first part of the decade (Appendix p. 360ABC,¹¹² and a mutual near stagnation till the middle of 1839 (Appendix p. 361). Appendix p. 362 traces Primitive membership in three comparable pit villages from 1836 to 1841, and again there is the indication of a general pattern with potential for differences in human agency between societies.¹¹³

The early 1840s saw a growing confidence and militancy in the coalfield circuits.¹¹⁴ A Spring campaign in the Northumberland collieries combining re-missioning with teetotalism was very successful. The intensity of the campaign is illustrated in the case of West Cramlington, a village which had previously proved difficult for the Primitive cause. In twelve weeks of nightly salvation-meetings the village yielded up one hundred and two new members.¹¹⁵ But the most powerful campaign was in the Durham Circuit. Cleft out of the Sunderland Circuit in 1838 with just over three hundred and fifty members, this Circuit had doubled itself by 1842 and more than doubled itself again by 1843. (Appendix p. 355).

These successes are interesting in view of the fact that the National Miners' Association, founded at Wakefield in November 1842

and brought to the North East union networks immediately after, was recruiting at precisely the same time. By the end of 1843 the NMA was established at every colliery and moved its headquarters from Yorkshire to Newcastle.¹¹⁶ Chartism also penetrated the colliery villages without any obvious inroads upon the Primitives. The circuit recoveries after the disruptions of the 1830s actually begin in 1837, and although the increases are steady rather than strong up to 1841, the North East coalfield coincidentally stood as a Chartist stronghold from 1838 to 1840. In the detail of the villages this pattern is cautiously confirmed. Sherburn Hill, Haswell, Moorsley, and Thornley were all leading Chartist villages. Moorsley was first reached by Messrs. Binns and Lawton of the Durham County Charter Association on 26 January 1839, and the other villages were systematically covered soon after. Meetings continued at these places through the spring and summer and their membership and financial support were among the best in the county.¹¹⁷ In Appendices pp. 361-62 the Sherburn Hill and Haswell Primitives, and the Moorsley Wesleyans enjoyed strong periods of growth from March to December 1839 - months of the most passionate Chartist commitment. Thornley on the other hand was probably the most committed Chartist village and its Primitives suffered a significant drop over the same period. However this negative correlation would look more convincing if the Thornley society had not begun its halting decline from March 1837 - well before the Chartist penetration. In addition, it seems that many of the Thornley Primitives took Chartism to their hearts. On 9 March 1839 a meeting there added sixty new members to the eighty-strong Chartist branch, and

We were glad to see a considerable number of Primitive Methodists present, several of whom came forward and enrolled themselves . . .

The following day saw the first of the Chartist sermons and collections

in the Thonrley and South Hetton Primitive chapels. The sermon was by George Binns for Rev. J. R. Stephens:

Great credit is due to the trustees of this [Thornley] chapel in so generously offering the use of the building. There is many a religious sinner who would have placed the chapel under lock and key, as a Radical Reformer approached. We trust the men of Thornley will know how to appreciate the liberality of the patriotic proprietors.¹¹⁸

One searches the records of Methodism in vain for more than a cursory recognition of the activities of 'secular' movements.¹¹⁹ Miners' unionism and Chartism on the other hand echo with the language and imagery of the Bible, and neither movements record any significant opposition from the Primitives - in fact the situation was often the reverse.¹²⁰ The community's ways of protest will be detailed in Part III, but insofar as membership statistics alone are suggestive, the ideological relationship of the Primitives and other movements does not appear to have been a hindrance and may have been a help. Given the fabulous other-worldliness of the Primitives, this must stand for the moment as an enigma, an enigma in need of more subtle investigation into the rapport the sect could generate with the minds of men alive to the spiritual dimension of the concrete and the concrete dimensions of the spiritual. Lay-preacher Mr Turnbull, speaking at Swalwell Democratic Festival, revealed himself as such a man:

He had been censured by some of those who acted with him in religious matters ... [but] ... Mr T. concluded, by affirming, that the earth, and the fruit thereof, belonged not to a Northumberland or a Londonderry, but to all God's children, the whole human race alike. (Loud cheers)¹²¹

Certainly, the collapse of the strike in the Autumn of 1844 and the poverty and victimization which attended it brought serious downturns in Primitive fortunes. (Appendices p. 355, p. 363). Durham sought financial aid throughout the strike to carry a Circuit whose members could not even afford their penny tickets. By 1845 financial difficulties

had become bodily ones:

... we have had many neglects but they have been accounted for; first the agitation and bad feeling that prevailed during the pit-man's strike and secondly the bodily indisposition of many of our local preachers occasioned we believe, in many instances, by their partial want of support during the strike and the excessive labours subsequently ... (24 March 1845).

That the decrease of Members since March is owing, not to any negligence of Mismanagement of the superintendent but to the illness of our other two Travelling preachers together with the unsettled state of the collieries and consequent removals out of the Circuit of Members and local Preachers ... (22 June 1846)¹²²

The end of the strike and the razing of working-class forms which followed it brought nothing so ecstatic as a rush to Primitive spiritualism. The statistical excitement of the early 1840s was doused as circuits declined and some societies closed. The recovery was grudging (Appendix p. 364), and as late as 1847 Durham still "deeply deplore[d] the low state of the Circuit, the want of influence in our religious services ... "¹²³

The 1840s ended with difficulties but in their first twenty-five years the Primitives had matched and complemented social crisis with energy and will and had registered their presence. Chapels and mahogany pews had been scarcer than the extemporaneous fabric of front-rooms, converted cottages, and rooved gable-ends,¹²⁴ but after 1850 was the time of a chapel for every village (or suburb), and an inflexible 'secular' involvement.¹²⁵

Chapter Four

Conversions and Revivals

In 1791 Thomas Curry, a keelman, sat expectantly in a Methodist service in Swalwell,

No sooner was the text pronounced, 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee', than he was filled with joy unspeakable ... To use his own simple language, 'his heart was like to jump out of his body'. For long after, whenever he mentioned this, his bursting heart found relief alone in a torrent of tears.

Now having "'meat to eat' which the world 'knew not of'", Curry went on to compel his life, and his anxieties, to Jesus Christ.¹²⁶

This kind of experience - Curry's "joy unspeakable", his "heart ... like to jump", his "torrent of tears", his 'elective affinity', in Swalwell, in 1791, beats at the heart of Methodist history. It constitutes a real experience, and an historical problem.

John Wesley identified sure salvation within the movement as a felt experience of knowing God. In the early years of Primitive Methodism this experience of being "at liberty" was usually preceded by mental and physical distress. Robert Young, a Northumberland pitman, was "later powerfully saved" in 1822 after first being "powerfully alarmed with the terrors of the Law"; Cuthbert Colling, a Weardale leadminer, heard Thomas Batty preach in 1823 and

Under his ministry he was brought into deep distress, and vehemently cried for mercy, so that his wife was afraid of his being mentally deranged. In six months he was brought into liberty under Mr Batty's teaching.¹²⁷

This "liberty" was all heart and no mind; it was not connected with morality. The Primitive could be a hearer, or a Sunday school teacher, or even a member, but not have liberty: William Birkbeck of Pitington "was noted for strict morality, but lived destitute of a change of heart" until ultimately receiving "the pearl of great price"

in 1851.¹²⁸ Liberty could be won with other groups,¹²⁹ and it could be purely private - "I was drawn by the cords of love, and cannot state the particular time when I received the pardoning love of God, but I did receive it",¹³⁰ - but its attainment, the swift flight of "groan[s] being burdened" for that "glorious sunshine of the presence and favour of the Almighty", was utterly All.¹³¹

Making general and historical sense of this for the mining community between 1820 and 1850 is fraught with difficulty. There are general theories which have been tested and speculated upon in other works, but the specific nature of the historical enterprise denies direct comparison. In the outline of a theory which is faithful to its specific subject I shall consider a spectrum of ideas borrowed from other works but which nevertheless could suggest themselves as relevant to this work. It will be noticed that some ideas are more suggestive than others but none of them can stand as a single, sufficient explanation.

First, there is no question of revivalism in these years stemming from capitalistic cabals.¹³² Methodism's record of moral improvement was praised by the Coal Trade and others in the 1840s but, moral improvement was not revivalism, the praise was not unqualified, the work was not fully understood, and the help given was minimal. Coal capitalism and the middle-class remained interested in the problem of order, but whatever contributions Primitive Methodism may have made to its solution their revivals pulsated too closely from and to the passions of the Poor to merit support. There are some areas which capitalism ignores, and revivalism received askant rather than interested attention.

Secondly, it would not be accurate to portray revivalism as streaming from the *straight* shafts of the preachers into the *crooked* mind of the crowd. This was the contemporary conservative view,

a process Robert Southey found "disgusting",

A powerful doctrine preached with passionate sincerity, with fervid zeal, and with vehement eloquence, produced a powerful effect on weak minds, ardent feelings, and disordered fancies. ¹³³

There is some similarity with this position in the more recent idea which claims that the sweeping emotional doctrines of the preachers somehow 'fitted' the brutal existence of the Poor, an existence which had to find answer for a life of paradox and injustice. The preachers could be a force for explanation but the relatively high level of moral institutional activity in the villages denied them the role as the only force. ¹³⁴ Moreover, revivals such as the one between 1822 and 1824 could burst open on the preachers in an unexpected way and although they sought to exploit them when they began it was usually from one step behind. Preacher Sam Laister's Journal records quite different responses from village to village before any momentum was achieved; Thomas Batty preached in Weardale for six months in the steps of five other preachers before revival suddenly came and "the country was opening before us". ¹³⁵ Rev. Kendall referred to the slow "anthracite temperament" of the dalesmen, and Rev. Dent witnessed the preachers as adjacent rather than central to the 1823 revival:

There were many cases of prostration in connection with that great work. I have seen more than fifteen at one meeting, some of whom were sober-minded Christians, as humble as they were earnest. And what was very observable, there was nothing in the voice or manner of the preacher to account for such effects; no vociferation, no highly impassioned address. He stood as steadily, and talked as calmly, as I ever witnessed any one do . . . having in many instances, got to know substantially in his closet what was about to take place in the great congregation. He did not take a falling down as a certain proof of the obtaining of entire sanctification; but ascribed much to physical causes - to nervous weakness. I do not recollect that there were any cases of the kind proved to be hypocritical mimicry. It was wonderful how some persons so affected were preserved from physical harm. I remember seeing men fall suddenly backwards on stone flags without

being hurt, and on one occasion, in a dwelling-house, an man fell against the fire place, the fire burning at the time, without being injured.¹³⁶

The preachers and their doctrines held only the theatrical centre; any revival theory which starts from the idea of Methodism's effect on the Poor is unbalanced in its underestimation of the Poor's effect on Methodism, and could not adequately account for the agonized "hard places" and "barren seasons" of the preachers' journals.

Thirdly, it is difficult to see the coalfield during these years as a 'Burned-over District'. Scorched perhaps by raw new agitations of coal and rail feeding and attracting a growing population who faced changing forms - but the coalfield was no frontier.¹³⁷ The new villages were not remote and their inhabitants tended to be local people from traditional mining areas and cognizant with the basic demands of pit-work. The new collieries tended to be more exploitative and troublesome, but it seems likely that the community had long known the risks of mobility,¹³⁸ and apart from higher chances of death by disease and accident they enjoyed relatively good health. The area did not know the chronic technological unemployment of other places, nor the mass induction of the workhouse. Neither could the coalfield be usefully described as an industrial district to compare with the shock towns of Lancashire or the West Riding. Coal production was an obvious industrial nexus, and labour had long been by cash nexus (although the Bond was redefining its contractual status), but the work discipline of the factory simply did not and could not exist. The submissive element of conversion could have had useful effects for the coalowner, but not of the type or scale as envisaged by Dr Ure.¹³⁹ Coalowners were not like other manufacturers. Production was more a leasing of their earth to the pitman's skill and experience and he was paid by what he 'won'. That 'inner compulsion' necessary for the factory operative was not an issue for the pitman.¹⁴⁰ Also,

Primitive Methodism was more successful in the rural village than it was in the industrial town.¹⁴¹ The revivals of 1822-1824 began in the isolated leadmining and smallholding communities of the Pennine dales, and gathered their own momentum before spilling into the Tyne and Wear basins and flooding out across railway plains into the pit villages. The notion of a 'Burned-over District' carries points of contact for this study at the break-neck growth of the new villages, but contact is specific and not general. The coalfield was no black hole of Industrialism nor was it a frontier matrix of the new society.

A fourth possibility derives from E. P. Thompson's application of the idea of a 'chiliasm of despair'. Thompson suggests an oscillating relationship between working-class political or 'temporal' aspirations, their defeat, and a reactive religious revivalism, particularly a Methodist revivalism. Methodist growth up into the 1830s is postulated as a 'big-dipper' of political optimism and pessimism swinging across the conjunctures of class struggle. Thompson stiffens his theory by inserting an "initial propensity" among the Poor to instability, an instability which could manifest itself in the village by "any sombre or dramatic event".¹⁴² Primitive Methodist membership patterns in the coalfield from 1821 support parts of this theory: the first revival followed the political failures of 1819-1820; membership was volatile for the whole period with room for independent climbs and falls at village-level, but circuit patterns had a rough correlation; cholera and colliery explosion were followed by sudden responses to the prophecy, and miners and their families had generally high incidences of unnatural death by disease or accident. However, the theory is not convincing in its notion of an oscillation between temporal and spiritual ambition. Both Chartism and the National Miners' Association grew as the Primitives grew, and, in the case

of the NMA in 1844 and Hepburn's union in 1832, the Primitives fell as they fell. There is some evidence of a certain carelessness towards Methodism at the height of union-power in 1831, but not hostility, and the revivalist dimension of Primitive growth in the early 1840s admittedly followed the Chartist retreat but was coincident with trade-union penetration. Moreover, in a fluid and moving society it is extremely difficult to identify causes of sudden growth among village groups. The reasons may have been "sombre and dramatic event[s]" peculiar to the village, but they may equally have been more mundane. A new building or a famous preacher, the inability to afford class tickets, a sharp change in the population or a subtle shift in its nature, could all have significantly affected membership at village-level.

The last idea is really a variant of previous themes which emphasizes the psychoanalytical or psychological factor. Hazlitt named the Methodists "religious invalids", Southey blamed guilt and sexual repression, and over seventy years ago William James in his famous Varieties of Religious Experience described nineteenth-century revivalism as the "religion of chronic anxiety".¹⁴³ Some historians have pushed this approach beyond what they can reasonably know,¹⁴⁴ but the weight of evidence demands that it be given some consideration. Conversions were undoubtedly brought on by the collective atmosphere of the crowd. During the 1823 revival meeting rooms were so crowded that all furniture, even the lectern, was removed in order to pack people in:

... then some stalwart miner [leadminer] would come forward and stand with his back to the preacher, so that he - the preacher - might find support by resting his arms on the man's shoulders. There was competition for honour of fulfilling this office.

Coming from the crowd, physical emanation invited physical

metaphor. 1824 preaching tours in the coalfield witnessed "quickenings" "shaking" "mighty" "melting" "powerful" times; converts "fell before God" while the "devil was roaring", the people "crying out", and the "Lord made bare his arm" as "many wept and shook like leaves before the wind".¹⁴⁵ Whilst the source of some revivals was inexplicable to the preachers, others were consciously and manipulatively planned. If a full revival was not possible then services or camp-meetings could at least be expected to bear some conversions. When preacher Taylor refers to "class leaders set[ting] their shoulders to the ark", or preacher Batty refers to the efforts of "The noble spirited troops from Shotley Bridge and Newlands ... headed by their officers,"¹⁴⁶ both men are talking about existing members coming together in prayer or exhortation or song to swell the emotions, intensify the spiritual atmosphere, and somehow flood the normal sensibility of the unconverted. Everyone present would be aware that this was the explicit intention, that to be "at liberty" was a proper state, that a sign of change was necessary, and that everyone desired it both for themselves and for others. Behind this intense emotional wall there would be an organizational hinterland of petty obligation and expectation.¹⁴⁷

Apart from looking more closely at individual conversion testimonies, it is difficult for the historian to make further comment. By their own testimony the pre-converted were usually in a state of some anxiety. By definition, the experiences were psychological, the word tells us nothing. It is clear that the emotions were being willingly manipulated in a way which often ended in abnormal, but expected, behaviour. It is also clear that mass impulses towards emotional manipulation had a socially correlative pattern across areas over time, but could nevertheless happen in one place at one time sometimes for obscure, sometimes for obvious, reasons. One

would have expected impulses of this kind to have been current among an intimate and interdependent community:

The pit villages are colonies of themselves and must be treated as such. Whatever direction you give to them it is retained ... 148

More than this it is hard to know what more the historian can prudently say. Theories of sexual repression or patrist guilt or psychic frustration are impossible to illustrate for the mass and difficult, historically, to diagnose for the individual. Primitive Methodism was not the only working-class movement which knew and looked for emotional involvement, and the notion of "disordered minds" would need, impossibly, to apply both to that mass which embraced salvation and to that elite which led the community in its temporal battles. The conversion phenomenon must be taken on its own terms and, after accounting for social interplay, not be reduced to any 'more real' levels of reality. There is no felicific calculus¹⁴⁹ to be applied because at its deep and silent centre the experience spoke only with its subject. It is a brave or foolhardy theory which tries to distinguish between genuine and ungentle spiritual experience.

Later, conversions and their tears were frozen into myth. Wesley's weeping scenes with the Kingswood miners established a tradition. One of Wesley's biographers has him preaching to "white lines on ... black faces ... tears running down ... sooty cheeks"; Nathaniel West writes of "large and silent tears rolling down ... black cheeks ... leaving the white streaks behind" during his coalfield tours in 1823; Owenite James Rigby, "while painting the horror of the old system" at Bradford in 1838 says "tears stole down many a cheek" as "each seemed to feel his own case". By the turn of the century, Liberal ideologues used working-class tears as proof of the individualistic moral conscience.¹⁵⁰ But above all, Methodism's veil of tears unfurls to the central fact of its early history: to what has been

called the "reactive dialectic" of the Methodist penetration into working-class life.¹⁵¹

The preachers came to touch the quick of community life. In turn, the mining community shaped the style and substance of the Primitives. As men and women were the translators of movement to community the exchange was not 'mechanical' and related, but 'organic' and instinctive. As such the reactive perimeters of exchange are not usually obvious. The exchange could operate at the casual level of vigorous female preaching from a vigorous female population, of using village bellmen to raise a congregation, of class-leaders who were also publicans, of classes held in pubs because they were too poor for hall-rent (and from which they were expelled for making too much noise), of classes held in colliery blacksmith's shops (and from which they were expelled during a strike), of lay-preachers who possessed "a good vocabulary into which [they] often threw the pitman's vernacular with effect . . .", or of lay-preachers who were attracted by chapel coffee and beef sandwiches.¹⁵² Or the exchange could operate at the deepest level of life and death. The Primitives' zeal for a righteous death found response in a community whose existing honour of death was profound and whose funeral rituals were meticulous. The Primitives' direct attribution of God's hand in all things found response in a community whose superstition proffered a magical technology of cause and effect. The Primitives' familiar, personal confrontation with The Devil found response in a community given to such popular intimacies as 'Old Nick' and 'Old Harry'. Joseph Spoor would muster a crowd and fill chapels with the declaration that he, personally, was "to sell the devil up and leave him neither stick nor stool"; the incredible Thomas Bates "used to have hand-to-hand encounters with the devil" at Hebburn Colliery. In March 1824 Brother West was confronted at Stockton by a rival preacher

"(who by his sentiments I took to be a millenarian)"; however the man infuriated West only by daring to abuse the Devil, "a work which Michael the archangel durst not attempt", and the Primitives sang him down.¹⁵³

Missioning and preaching rapidly learned the art of public spectacle. Often the preachers quite literally had to contend with the rival attractions of the flesh, and the huckstering methods of market and fair were incorporated into the religious repertoire. Joseph Spoor the keelman preacher duelled with Billy Purvis the Newcastle showman for a crowd in Morpeth market place; Thomas Batty's camp meetings were such "that young men would say to their comrades - 'Come let us away to Ranter Meeting and see them tumble down'"; Rev. Hodgson Casson, a Wesleyan, "whose personal and pulpit eccentricities were only exceeded by his devotion ... created a great sensation in the Gateshead Circuit" in the 1820s and "Crowds were attracted by the notoriety".¹⁵⁴ Extemporaneous preaching by a non-sacerdotal and working-class ministry broke through the defences of dialect, registered the tone of an oral tradition, and matched the taste for excitement and spectacle. Most exhortation and prayer was 'off the cuff' and lost to history. This description of a week-night service from Winlaton in the 1850s from a Primitive who remembered is a rare privilege:

A score of voices of varying timbre, at the invitation of Matthew Pickering ... join in singing 'Thou Shephard of Israel and mine', after which we are led to the Presence by simple heart-language. Jackey Parker prays with open eyes, fixed on the ceiling, and his wheezy voice, and his wrinkles become less prominent as he speaks of guidance and deliverance from his difficulties. William Armstrong, with the wooing note, gently and smilingly leads us from our doubts and fears. Then came the sonorous tones of George Spark, telling of perils manifold, but in the darkness of the mine there was still the gracious light; and how that voice rolled and swelled as he prayed that we might 'like Zachariah and Elizabeth' go 'hand in hand through Emmanuel's land, to fairer words on high'; then it broke as he told of those who had

gone before. Robert Brooks, whose personality was unique, and whose seventy years sat lightly upon him, rejoiced that Jesus was the end of the law. 'He has conquered for Brooks; oh, hallelujah!' ... Then Tommy Warren, the singer saint, took his part; he whose optimistic faith carried him through sorrows and over difficulties which would have paralysed less heroic souls. Ellison Clark, calm and judicial, and others less frequently heard, followed. Women were there, who came to keep their tryst and meet their Lord ... and young people were drawn and held by the mystic contagion.¹⁵⁵

The popular melodies of the day were lifted indiscriminately and put to religious words.¹⁵⁶ Popular melodies from the body of the hall, the prowling rhetoric of the pulpit, the drama of conversion, the daring of Old Nick - the Methodist service was not unentertaining.

The reactive dialectic of Methodism, particularly Primitive Methodism, with working-class life was too sensuous for some people. In an age whose intellectual establishment viewed "The Holy Scriptures rightly understood" as not giving "encouragement to Enthusiasm or Superstition", Southey was condescendingly critical of a movement lacking discretion or intellect, Thomas Trotter attributed religious enthusiasm to common drunkemess, and one "lady in the gallery pews" on hearing William Clowes the co-founder of Primitivism pray in Newcastle in 1839, "rose up, and, walking out, exclaimed 'O, what a mockery'". The reviewer supposed

... she had never before heard any one pray as if God were really present in the congregation.¹⁵⁷

She obviously had not; one wonders what her elegant soul would have made of the pitman John Grieves who was given to "perusing" Matthew Henry's Commentary "with his handkerchief in his hand, wiping away the tears as they rolled down his cheeks".¹⁵⁸ In Weardale the 'respectability' of the Wesleyans was compared with the "din and disturbance" of the Primitives. What could controlling temperaments make of a class which heard "through the medium of their passions" and a movement which deliberately sited its meeting houses next to the sinful, which gladly unhinged the emotions, which kept up the

ancient clamorous lic wacce round the bed of the dying, which courted sexual innuendo with its late-night meetings, which was rowdy even in prayer?

- In prayer they work themselves into a complete phrenzy; sing at the stretch of their voices their hymns to some of the most popular tunes of the day ... and it does not matter whether he or she in the pulpit be preaching or praying, loud 'Amens' 'Praise God' 'I do believe' resound and ring throughout the building.¹⁵⁹

Within the movement the obituary columns of the Primitive Methodist Magazine provide evidence about individual conversion experiences. Of course, the source is limited. The obituaries are highly selective, only stalwarts (and the very young) figure, and most of those comers and goers of a volatile membership do not. In many ways the obituary column is a record of institutionally-defined piety rather than Primitive involvement. Although the columns grow more elaborate and 'secular' as the century progresses the model of piety remains intact: the moment of conversion, the manner of death, the degree of organizational involvement. It was important to identify the preacher. Whose ministry did the converted 'fall under', where, and how? How many 'changes of heart' and 'backslidings' were there before liberty was established? What kind of convert was produced? - and here the emphasis is usually upon the non-intellectual qualities: if a man, then it was common sense and 'plain truth'; if it was a woman then it was honest piety, "An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile". Equally important was the manner of death. It was assumed that for the faithful the closer they nudged death then the closer they nudged what was beyond.¹⁶⁰ Questioning could continue ("Is Jesus precious?") right up to the end. A raised arm, a verse or text, an assurance of Jesus' presence, were the marks of a good death. There is relatively little on the members' secular life. Sometimes not even occupation is recorded.

There are whiffs of a social existence when mention is made of the preconverted state ("bold in the service of sin"), but much of the social record concerned organizational appointments in an ascending scale which started with Sunday school teaching and ended with class leadership.

Most of the obituaries fix the moment of conversion in the meeting-room, chapel, or camp service. The preachers are listed, Casson, Suddards, Branfoot, Nelson, Clowes, Batty, Oxtoby, Branwell and others - men in broad-brimmed hats, silk kerchief and workman's breeches, carrying umbrellas and a bundle of severe books - Wesley, Watts, Fletcher, Baxter.¹⁶¹ Mary Porteous was sung to on her sick-bed by Branwell (1816), Mary Dent fell under "the method and manner" of Clowes (1820), John Kirk was agonized by Oxtoby (1824), Spoor was tormented by the "vivid and realistic imagery" of Casson (1827).¹⁶² If the preachers were not crucial then the atmosphere was: George Clough attended the West Moor revival "through curiosity and a love of fun" before seeing his friend fall and being prised open to "distressing sorrow" himself (1830s); Robert Thompson was converted in a Haswell meeting which "shook the place" (1851); William Wake fell in the charged atmosphere of a South Shields sail loft (1822); Hannah Race (c. 1824) would walk twenty miles for prizes of the sort won by John Maugham, a Hetton miner and Primitive interceder:

One backslider was awakened and cried for mercy, and after long and hard struggling found peace. On that occasion our dear brother manifested a zeal becoming his profession . . . and when liberty was obtained shouted as one having found great spoil.¹⁶³

Many obituaries reveal that Primitives came to the Connexion after involvement with other Methodist groups. It had been disaffected Wesleyans in North Shields and Newcastle who had first invited William Clowes to those places in 1821. Pitmen like George Fenton and Robert Fairley had Methodist New Connexion and Wesleyan

involvement, Jane Smith was with the Independent Methodists, and others like John Wall and John Clark, James Pyburn the Newbottle shoemaker and Sam Lowther of Percy Main had scriptural Sunday school upbringings before settling with the Primitives. Wall was an ardent Sunday schooler before "he was led away by evil companions", and Clark could remember committing "to memory several of Dr Watts' hymns for children "before conversion in adult life".¹⁶⁴ For people like these the reasoning of Primitive Methodism would have been already familiar. Connected with this is some reference to the pressure of marriage on the man's religious consciousness. The coalfitter and pitman John Tulip, not a man "likely to enter upon the married state without serious reflection about his increased responsibilities", was converted three years after his marriage to the Primitive Elizabeth Richardson.¹⁶⁵ Temperance was another antecedent. The Shieldsman William Waugh was converted in 1837 after taking the pledge: "Having become sober, he soon became a thinking man. His reflections led him to mourn over the sins of his past life ..."; George McReeth, "embracing total abstinence principles ... was restored to sober habits, which prepared the way for serious and religious thinking", and conversion followed in 1849.¹⁶⁶

The death of loved ones invited reflection. The deaths of brothers, husbands, uncles, and children are recorded as the grounds for conversion. The Houghton pitman Joseph Fletcher was converted after being "called upon to follow in rapid succession the whole of his nine children"; the Shields seaman Michael Hutchinson was converted in 1837 after the drowning of his brother in the Gulf of Finland, the cabin boy having witnessed "a wave lift him from the wreck when he was earnestly engaged in prayer". Cholera and typhus made their mark: the pitman William Bruce "saw the necessity

of making his peace with God" during the 1832 outbreak, and in this he was not alone.¹⁶⁷

Although "got separated" is a fairly common reference to the organizational activities of stalwarts, the experience of moving from one village to another is rarely mentioned in any traumatic sense as a reason for Primitive involvement. There had always been the assumption of mobility in the coalfield. Members like John Sharp, a shoemaker who left Seaham for Hetton, were already members who would make it their business to meet new bretheren on arrival. Moving might have meant a casual change of allegiance, as in the case of Ann Hutton who changed from Wesleyan to Primitive after shifting from Tudhoe to Shincliffe colliery, or Jane Cooper who was converted in Darlington in 1831 after she "got separated", but only two miners' obituaries vaguely identify conversion with moving.¹⁶⁸

Chapter Five

Discipline and Morality

Those who were saved by conversion were only saved on condition. The 'saved' in Methodism were not an elect; when the Day of Judgement came after death, when "the world cannot" and "He will not" move to save, then the only test of grace was the sanctity of the soul. . Preachers were warned that to loiter was to be "guilty of the murder and damnation of all those souls whom thou dost neglect",¹⁶⁹ and after conversion it was their duty to nurture and protect the souls of the converted. The whole of organized worship gathered round this simple duty. Methodist services were called the "Means of Grace", and their calendar of evening worship, prayers, classes, camp meetings, love feasts, sunday schools and anniversaries all carried this theological significance.¹⁷⁰

The converted were saved, primarily, from this-world which was as a dung-hill. To care for this-world, even an "unwillingness to die", "doth actually impeach us of high treason against the Lord", and the saving of souls was "a higher and nobler charity than relieving . . . bodies".¹⁷¹ To be saved from this-world was to afford the catalogued delights of eternal life, everlasting rest, Zion City of God, in the next. This monumental promise, this total certainty of what was to come, represented a will of pure, abstract, idealist, proportions. So geometrical is the certainty that it cuts across historical empathy. Rev. Everett esteemed the words from God's mouth as more necessary than food, and their promises more desired than fine gold -

The law of the Lord is perfect . . . the testimony of the Lord is sure . . . the statutes of the Lord are right . . . the commandment of the Lord is pure . . . the judgements of the Lord are true . . . ,

- and behind the rhetoric lay an absolute acceptance

of Scripture as the criterion of truth, the arbiter of reason, and the articulation of social life.¹⁷²

Insofar as this theology governed the detail of lived relations it constituted an ideology. It was an ideology which in no way sought to express the social relationship of members to their conditions of existence.¹⁷³ On the contrary, the promise of a life-to-come glimpsed through the pages of a text that was Holy aggressively denied the means of social life. Yet, Primitive Methodism grew during a period of intense social pressure. In general, no religious movement was more the product of social crisis and yet no movement denied society more; no religious membership suffered harsher social conditions and yet no membership denied the significance of those conditions more; no section of that membership was more conscious of conflict with capital than the pitmen, and yet no occupational group aligned themselves with Primitive Methodism more. There were no ideological half-measures. The Primitive Methodists willed the soul of a soulless society between extremes of life and death and in a social space which it is almost impossible for us to appreciate. As we do not know the heartlessness so it is difficult to appreciate their sentiment. Primitive beliefs were as structural and life-giving as they were ethereal and life-denying: they were the precondition of each other for men who lived under the conditions of each.

The actual denial of this-world was seen to rest upon ideological purity. From the beginning the Primitive Methodists set themselves apart as fugitives from the world. Their first class tickets in 1811 were inscribed with Acts 28²² "for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against" - and the Connexion maintained both its cohesion and its apartness by a severe ideological discipline. The circuit inspected the opinions of its preachers,

That Bro. Garnett came on the Plan as A Preacher
on Trial & that he be requested to preach a Trial
Sermon & give an Account of the Doctrines he

professes before the Committee the ensuing Qr. as preparatory to being approved ...

and rooted out any unorthodoxy,

That Bro. Hebbon & Dent wait upon Mr. Mowat as to whether he still maintains the heterodox opinion that the Punishment of the Wicked is not eternal and that they decide as to the propriety of Keeping his name on the plan as a preacher as they find.¹⁷⁴

The entire loyal membership, but the preachers in particular, experienced the movement and its ideology as a systematic 'epistemological break'.¹⁷⁵ For men like Hugh Bourne, founder of the sect, wandering out of his bleak moorland isolation and into struggle with the world beyond, the break was sought. Many were familiar with the essential theology and scriptural fundamentalism, it was after all shared to varying degrees by all the religious bodies. But the Primitives carried the tenets to breaking point and insisted upon separation. Men like Sam Lowther of Percy Main had the break forced upon them: on becoming a preacher in 1829 Sam was "a public character" and "had to pass through much persecution".¹⁷⁶ In tension between the world as it was, and the world as they systematically split it, Methodists made what they could: the weaker plagiarized Wesley (and were reprimanded for it), others relied upon verbatim hymns or texts, some were confused and pronounced it a mystery. Rev. Parker remembered a Methodist meeting in the 1840s when after the hymn 'We are marching through Emmanuel's ground' an old man prayed aloud above the gathering that they might all have a cottage in Van Diemen's Land! Parker asked who could "fully explain the laws of mental association", but, confused in his symbols of moral awe there was clearly a sense in which the old man could not explain what he meant as an intellectually coherent set of beliefs.¹⁷⁷

If out of their theology the Primitives willed a 'soul' then in their discipline they realized its substance. The historical reality of the Methodist soul was realized in the operation of the Methodist economy.

It is possible to overestimate the sophistication of this economy in the years up to 1850, but the reality of the soul it invested took its contours from Methodism's patterns of discipline, its articulation of detail, and its administration of the individual.¹⁷⁸

Above all, the cumulative effect of Methodist membership constrained and disciplined the temperament. The whole moral bulk of the movement swayed in this direction. The first index of temperament was attendance and punctuality and most routine business concerned these duties. The most frequent admonition was for preachers' neglect, the commonest type of 'backsliding' was for members' non-attendance:

That Bro. Finley's name stand on the plan without
apts. in consequence of slackness in attending class
& that Bro. Lister see him as soon as possible.¹⁷⁹

After attendance, patterns of discipline could run into many corners; from the everyday-organizational when Br. Clougham failed to hold a leaders' meeting at New Durham, to the higher-organizational when the Haswell society raised and spent money without permission, to the detailed-organizational when

Bro. Wilson, Butterwick, Coward, and Mason
Compose[d] a Committee for making Rules which
must be observed by those who sit in our Singing
Pew.¹⁸⁰

Finance was close to the business of attendance. With average subscriptions at just over one penny per member per week, local societies were obliged to avoid penury by keeping their membership attendances as high as possible.¹⁸¹

Sometimes it was necessary to check opinions - "That Thos. Carr be requested to lay his political opinions aside . . .", but usually ideological purity was assumed -

A coal miner 6 years and half standing in society,
6 month . . . an exhorter, 9 month . . . a Preacher,
6 month . . . an approved . . . preacher, 18 month
a Class leader

and the major requirements were temperamental:

3. that he is considered to possess improving talents is Pious and Generally useful ...

5. no smoker of tobacco is not imberried in his circumstances has not made any engagements relative to Marriage, has not been a traveling preacher.¹⁸²

For the individual member, there are only hints at the consequences of a life struggle for perfect control. The obituary columns record many 'lion to lamb' experiences, and men like the leadminer Joseph Featherstone whose "sufferings were occassionally intense" yet who was

... exceedingly affectionate, though the last trait was scarcely observable to any but those who were intimately acquainted with him ...

represent emotional surfaces and undercurrents common to many Primitives.¹⁸³ As, after Scripture, God knew all and saw all, then no detail was too small and no second was too short for a searching self-discipline. Once within Methodism the member meticulously built his new soul, but its breadth and depth were angled by the form of the movement. The Methodist soul was articulated through the minutiae of self-surveillance across the smallest fraction of conscious time. The minutiae of detail and the fraction of time, in turn, dissolved into the space and timelessness of a soul that was only detail, and forever immediately accountable. Minutiae and fraction concentrated the individual, but around him stalked his bretheren, his brother's keepers. The Methodist economy sought to control every facet of a member's life:

'That Br. Reed be recommended to resume his acquaintance with the young woman to whom he had promised Marriage ...

'That Ralph Brown be expelled [from] Society in consequence of ill using & beating his wife ...

'That Bro. Jaques spoke unadvisedly to Br. Charlton ... That Br. Charlton acted unadvisedly in circulating Br. Jacques' observation ...

'That John Whitfield is found guilty of circulating slanderous reports of Bro. Edgar ... 184

Demeanour was important in this system of cross-checking morality. For instance it was not obligatory for Wesleyans to be temperate, but drinking in a public place took away a member's 'apartness', his display of a serious temperament, that measured virtue which represented the movement as a whole - and hence the suspension of Brothers Lambert and Wanless in 1848.¹⁸⁵ Given the implications of their theology, the enthusiasm of their ideology, and the scope for mistakes between demeanour and morality, circuits were often plagued with scandal. Slander was built into the Methodist economy. Brother Craggs' three month suspension for "writing scurrilous letters to the Superintendent & Spreading discord in the society" finds its echo in every circuit.¹⁸⁶ This drive for homogeneity created referents which emphasized the individual. The class meeting had always been the main instrument of Methodism. It was here that members accounted for their souls and, with their punctual attendance and ticket subscriptions, sustained the movement. The entire Methodist bureaucracy of body and soul - circuit schedules, class lists, members' accounts, preachers' plans, leaders' minutes - emanated from the class meeting. As the class meeting extolled a general discipline, so did it structure a table of forward and backward spiritual movement which isolated and pressured the individual.

The children were the most impersonally pressured. If the adult was disciplined, then he was also free to discipline; if he was cajoled, then he was also desired. The children did not have this reciprocal choice. Children confronted the circuit and its ideology as a mass, a mass to be ordered, surveyed, disciplined, fragmented, and re-formed as saved individual souls. Their salvation was

perceived in the manner of adults. The most perfect Methodist child was "but wise and stayed as a man", "as serious as a woman of fifty", "punctual in her attendance at school, grave before her class, walked in the fear of God".¹⁸⁷ Isaac Watts's hymns resounded in every Sunday school: even above their teacher, their superintendent, and their betters, God saw every crease and wrinkle of their soul - "Almighty God, thy piercing eye Strikes through the shades of night" - and beneath, quailed their vitality in which Satan dwelled. Watts's Songs Divine and Moral for the use of children pointed to evil in all that was not controlled:

Why should I love my sport so well,
 So constant at my play,
 And lose the thoughts of heaven and hell,
 And then forget to pray.¹⁸⁸

The impetuous displacement of George Fenton,

... sent down the pit at a very early age ...
 In this nursery of sin, he soon became an adept
 in evil ... and impetuously indulged in the low
 pleasures of the ale house, and the sabbath field
 sports ...

is to be compared with the positioned seriality of Jane Lister,

... naturally of a thoughtful, sober, turn of
 mind, retiring in her manners, but cheerful in
 conversation, orderly in her movements, and
 remarkably industrious ... obedient to her
 parents ... sparing in words ...¹⁸⁹

The gesture and organization of the Sunday school gathered, sorted, surveyed, instructed, punished, and flattered the children into its own dynamic. Every failure to achieve attendance, or communication, or docility, resulted in finer checks and more scrupulous efforts. The Houghton le Spring Wesleyan Circuit opened William Street Sunday School in 1827 with a rough project of singing, prayers, and Bible study from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00, "the Scholars going out in rotation", and the teachers attending to absentees. By 1839 the Circuit had been taken to a stricter system. School management was put in the hands of a general

committee before which all intending scholars had to appear; all teachers were to be full members; only the superintendent minister could inflict corporal punishment, and book-buying was to be carefully controlled. As well as management, school discipline was properly formulated: teachers were to avoid "all levity or trifling with or before the children" and fines were listed for teacher-absence; no child was to be admitted "who is not clean and free from all disease"; expulsion "shall be done before the whole school, in order that the example may be a warning ..."; "Neither the art of writing, or any other merely secular branch of Knowledge shall be taught on the Sabbath".¹⁹⁰ All Sunday schools, Anglican or Methodist, appear to have encountered their children as an order to be assimilated. Within an even rota of prayers, paraphrasing, psalms, "short and interesting" addresses, the issue of library books, hymn-singing, - "First class now approach and go through their Hymns, Catechism, & Scripture extracts same as other class" - within this outer rota wheeled an inner rota of class discipline.¹⁹¹ By bell and whistle, clapped hands, and the teacher's subtler disciplinary gestures, the class sat with the school, a part within a whole, and the whole surveyed itself across the body of the hall in a silence broken only on command. The command would come from teachers, lowest in chapel officialdom but high in the eyes of the children:

... [teachers] ought to keep a grave and serious deportment in order to keep the children at a proper distance below them, to prevent a noise which is apt to arise from the teachers being too familiar with the children ... Let all you do be characterized by an impressive solemnity.

I mean the early and punctual as well as regular attendance of the Teachers at the time appointed, nothing is as necessary as this to enforce order, punctuality, and regularity amongst the scholars, which we can not expect to do if we be remiss and

indolent ourselves.¹⁹²

The children confronted their Sunday schools as a mass to be subjected and saved, but they were necessarily appealed to as individuals. Various prize systems were introduced, many of them based upon attendance and Bible knowledge. One of the most interesting operated at the Anglican Sunday school in Fowberry, Northumberland. Here, 'Single Reward Tickets' were the paper currency of control. Issued for attendance and Bible-repetition, they were confiscated for bad behaviour.

... when any girl has rec^d 6 S.R. Tickets she may exchange them for a ticket marked 6 when she has got 2 6 Tickets she must return them and will get a ticket marked P.T. (or prize ticket) two of wh. are valued at 1 penny.

Behaviour - laughing - talking or whispering during school obliges the offender to forfeit 1 ticket if during prayers to forfeit 3 tickets. bad conduct in any other way to be punished at the discretion of the Teacher.¹⁹³

The results of each year's labours were offered-up in the Sunday School Anniversary, one of the most important events in the Methodist calendar. Sitting-up before the congregation, attentive, quiet, performing, clean and best-dressed, the children were in their place for all to survey and be proud of, the privilege of their Mothers and Fathers "in Israel":

The Scriptures and sacred pieces delivered by the children were highly appropriate, containing nothing to amuse, but everything to warn, edify, and instruct ...¹⁹⁴

Methodism insisted upon such 'method' from its members that it had to collide with all that was not controlled. Method began in the soul but showed itself in physical demeanour. The social life of the colliery community either merely gratified the senses like drink and 'carnality', or it involved gusto, like dancing and sport. The measured gesture of Methodism could not but be aghast at the arms and legs and feet of village customs: Mary Cosens put away "every

contrary and carnal principle", John Kirk his "vicious passion" for drink, John Quilt was "drawn from public houses", William Hindhaugh was no more "addicted to cards and cocks", Cuthbert Colling was no more "fond of athletic sports", or John Wall for "drinking and throwing the ball . . . his favorite exercises". Other exercises may have been orderly in their own way but it was seen as an order related to this-world. The Chester le Street bandsman had to give up his dance music for chapel music, the Coxhoe sword-dance leader had to give up his swords to be converted into gully knives to buy Bibles and hymn-books. Drinking was recognized as the most common misdemeanour, for in drink the man lost control of his soul through his body - on John Maugham's 1823 conversion:

Drunkenness; a vice too common in these parts, and more especially among the coal miners, was, prior to his conversion, his besetting sin. To mingle with the motley crowd on the Saturday night at the ale bench . . . and as it is natural to suppose, those seasons of riot and intoxication are generally signalized by quarrellings, fightings, and bloodshed; shrieks and howlings more dismal and terrifying than the war whoop of the Indian savages, frequently stun the ears of the astonished and peaceful traveller.¹⁹⁵

The impetus to teetotalism always existed in Primitive Methodism and the national Conference registered its approval and recommendation of temperance societies as early as 1832. Local relations appear to have been warm and the Sunderland Circuit was famous for its quick adherence to the cause. In 1833 all of the Circuit's preachers and most of its officials were teetotallers, and Hugh Bourne, who had never touched alcohol in his life and who considered Temperance to have joined him rather than the other way round, praised a Sunderland where "the Lord owns the labours of the teetotaller" and a Durham Circuit where teetotalism "was advocated in a religious way".¹⁹⁶ Although temperance and other disclaimers matched, in an oblique way, the ruling concern for working-class order, it is

as well to recognize that its first impulse came from within the Methodist economy. As such, the rigidity of the Primitive position on drink could invite as much criticism from a Coal ownership tied to drinking custom as from their workers who recognized its social significance.¹⁹⁷

Control of the body indicated moral discipline, and moral discipline indicated the state of the soul. To lose control was an affront to the soul and an invitation to the vices of this-world. Was not the public house the home of criminality and destitution? Was not vice and hopelessness the ashen reality of this-world's pleasures? Primitive Methodist discipline and morality conjoined in an intellectual cult of plainness. The plain man exhibited not only his control, but also his existence in the world but not of the world. Plainness began with the body -

4. That Bro. J. Clarke be advised to putt his white trousers off.

5. That Bro. Atkinson give the above advice.

6. That Bro. Brooks be requested to become more plain and grave in his attire."¹⁹⁸

- and ended with the soul,

His piety resembled the smooth, still flowing river,
more than the shallow, noisy brook ...¹⁹⁹

Plainness became the intellectual mark of the Methodist working-man against the frippery of the sensuous and the arrogance of the self-willed. The Sunday black suit marked out men who spent the day in school, chapel and class and not in bed; of men like William Willis who "hurt [him]self very sore to get scholarship", who was teetotal and had "been tried by people but have never broken through, and never intend".²⁰⁰ Willis read the Bible, teetotal newspapers, and "sometimes ... the History of England"; the Haswell pitman William Scott who was "accustomed to sit in a garret for hours

together"; and his fellow hewer, Peter Mackenzie, "imbibed the spirit and letter" of hymn book and Bible. Men like these were too disciplined to waver from plain scholarship.²⁰¹ Although "The library, the house of God, and the bookseller's shop were places where you might seek brother Chapman" he was "not quite so self-opinionated as most self-taught men are"; Brother Simpson "was remarkable for sound sense, rather than subtle or comprehensive thought"; and Brother Charlton,

Though not a deep thinker, nor given to abstract or speculative inquiries ... had a mind of great activity ... [when] ... Dealing with facts which could not be gainsaid ... 202

There was a revolutionary capacity in Methodists like these, disciplined, controlled, and dealing with facts which could not be gainsaid.

Chapter Six

Preacher Vanguard

P.S. I conceive the worst feature in the whole matter, to be that religious fanaticism which prevails among the Pitmen, they are embued with it to a great degree; the delegates are chiefly Ranter Preachers, who have acquired a considerable fluency and even in some cases considerable proficiency in public speaking. The Great Mass are successively ignorant and therefore became the ready tools of these designing individuals - they [not clear] all their speeches with large quotations from scripture which they pervert to achieve their ends; where the men have gone to work and made agreements with their employers, the delegates have been regularly chaired in the same stile as an M.P. and of course long speeches are delivered by them - giving inflated accounts of the Victory they have obtained over their oppressors, and that they were only able to achieve by the support and decrees of Providence - such Doctrines inculcated among an ignorant mob may lead to fearful and fatal consequences.

In the two great unions which led the miners from the 1820s the Primitive Methodist preachers played the leading part. According to Seymour Tremenheere this

... fact is notorious, and was adverted to by every one connected with the principal collieries.

It was a "testimony" which he "found unvaried at each colliery".²⁰³

Coalowners and officials from every part of the coalfield acknowledged the unique strength of Primitive leadership. Tremenheere underlined the union's vanguard role: "No argument had any chance of obtaining access to their minds, except those suggested to them by their own periodical, or by the delegates who addressed them"; and the delegates - "leading men ... able to express themselves"²⁰⁴ - were invariably the preachers. T. J. Taylor, Northumberland coalowner, had faced his axioms with theirs:

Generally the men professing to be Methodists and Ranters are the spokesmen on these occasions, and the most difficult to deal with. These men may be superior men to the rest in intelligence and generally show great skill, and cunning, and circumvention.²⁰⁵

The Durham Chronicle pitted its rehetoric against their oratory:

... the turbulent and restless portion of them have

gained ascendancy ... over the mild and timid ... whom they constantly harrass to attend almost daily meetings of the men belonging to each colliery, and listen to the wild and frenzied declamations of the Ranter Preachers who, on these occasions, play the orator.²⁰⁶

And as well as their energy, these "turbulent and evil disposed" "designing" "educated people",²⁰⁷ brought to their union a missionary's knowledge of uniting and pledging. National Miners' Association delegate-preachers were frequent speakers at teetotal missions in 1843, the chapels and societies were drummed into regular union prayers, union 'lecturers' were distributed and disciplined by Methodist preachers' 'plans', sunday schoolrooms were used when publicans feared for their licence, and all the emotional experience of Methodism was offered up to the sustenance of weary men:

The men are wrought into a state of excitement by first holding prayer meetings ... [then villages combine] ... where after a repetition of the same excesses they are addressed by a lecturer who is a stranger to them. This new method of combining enthusiasm with the infusion of bad principles may still keep the men from work a little longer.²⁰⁸

The preachers turned strike issues into religious issues. Men told Commissioner Tremenheere that they went to union prayer meetings "'to get their faith strengthened'", a local preacher told his astounded employer "that 'according to his religion, he could not go to work'".²⁰⁹ Given their loyalty to the union and to an omniscient God, to this world and to that, the preachers had little ideological alternative but to deliver the union into God's hands. God was invoked as redeemer to their pledge and as punisher of those who broke it. This logic somehow validated the street abuse of strike-breakers, but showed its iron in the absolution of the murder of Errington, at Hetton:

[in 1844] The three leading men in the strike were William Dawson, William Richardson, and John

Nicholson; they were pitmen. They were Primitive Methodists and local preachers. They frequently assembled the people, from 100 to 400 together, on the roadside, and offered up prayers for the success of the strike, and also that the men who were brought from a distance, to work in a colliery, the 'black legs', as they called them, might be injured, either lamed or killed; and they rejoiced when any thing did happen to them.

[in 1832] The Ranter preachers are lauding this act - the murder was the instrument in the hands of the Almighty, to inflict this judgement on the miscreant who betrayed the Union.²¹⁰

Next to God stood His Word. Suffering starvation, humiliation and oppression, the community could recognize the struggles of His people. Undisputable Scriptural analogy -

Everything that could be collected in the Bible about slavery and tyranny, such as Pharoah ordering bricks to be made ~~without~~ straw, was urged to them

- flowed through every speech to the union and from the union back again into Primitivism itself. Professional ministers reinforced the union, preachers who opposed it were dragged from the pulpit, preachers who opposed the strike were expelled, Wesleyans who stood aside were jeered for their treachery.²¹¹ The local press found cause for nervous hilarity in the spectacle of ignorant pitmen making a religious issue out of political economy,²¹² but when the unions had been broken coalowners found reply for the likes of Thomas Hepburn who had made the noble Lord Londonderry kneel and pray before negotiating.²¹³ Through all their correspondence the owners and agents trailed a personal contempt for working-class men who claimed to 'have' Knowledge. Charles Parkinson was a "slick headed ranting Knave", "Ranter preachers are obnoxious men" whose tough bargaining was "not always from taking the correct view of the nature of the disputes", but from self sufficiency and self satisfaction with their superiority.²¹⁴ The preachers' religious knowledge, which would not have embittered had it recognized class boundaries, now burst in as a political threat and was also adjudged to be false:

They are fond of becoming preachers, class leaders etc. themselves, and this opens the door to a vast deal of vanity and conceit; insomuch that I suspect there is more of a vain glory and hypocrisy, than any sounder feeling amongst such of them as have become attentive to matters of religion.²¹⁵

When the strikes of 1831-32 and 1844 were defeated and the monthly Bond introduced, the union officials were the first to be victimized. The Primitive Methodists constituted the majority of these men.²¹⁶

It is not possible to draw the mind of the preaching-vanguard to an intellectual nicety. One must remember the eclectic nature of nineteenth-century working-class self-education, a process which grabbed at the elements of knowledge as they appeared. Thomas Burt chanced upon long words as he spoke them, at meetings, and learned them afterwards by chalk and slate. Men like George Young of Killingworth colliery, a Teetotaler, Methodist, distributor of the Northern Star, trade unionist, and believer in 'Education', were not scholars after some pinnacle of intellectual coherence but men responding, personally, to critical events.²¹⁷ In this sense learning was political and its instincts were practical. The preaching vanguard aspired not so much to a theory of society as to a social physics which put movement before consistency and success before explanation.

The Miners' Advocate, newspaper of the National Miners' Association, is the major formal source for the ideas of pit-politics during the first half of the nineteenth-century. A typical radical newspaper of its day, the Advocate carried eloquent editorial and worthy educational items alongside plagiarized news snippets and a much-encouraged correspondence with the membership. The anonymous 'editorial' of the newspaper came from the pen of the unions' national leadership and the editor William Daniells, a servant of the union who nevertheless held its key intellectual position. The organization of the NMA will be covered in Part III but at this

point suffice to say that none of the national leadership in terms of the union's charismatic speakers and thinkers was a North Eastern miner.²¹⁸ It is true that such men were well represented on the executive committee resident in Newcastle, and there were sharp exchanges within the committee over the union's relationship with Chartist organizations, but the point needs to be made that the tone and structure of the Advocate almost certainly over-emphasizes the Radical-Chartist mentality of the union to the detriment of what was actually being said and felt at grass roots level.

A better indication of local response lies in the open-meeting. Between February 1844 and April 1845 the Advocate reported eighty-nine major open meetings in the North East.²¹⁹ Meetings could range from 'monsterations' on Newcastle Town Moor, thirty thousand regaled in the music and accoutrements of colliery unionism, to evening tours through a straggle of villages by pairs of union 'lecturers'. Speakers ranged from the magnificent Feargus O'Connor who came early and bellowed once, at a monsteration, in October 1843 - to a man called 'Hébdin' who spent August 1844 in the company of a local pitman on tour through the collieries of South Tyne. 1844-45 meetings were addressed by a total of fifty-six speakers. With the exception of William Daniells, the national figures were relatively infrequent speakers.²²⁰ W. P. Roberts and William Beesley appeared at the early meetings, but once the union began to gather support and push inexorably towards a strike in the early Spring of 1844 then it was local faces who were stepping out of the crowd and on to the platform. Thirteen men were the most significant platform speakers with three or more recorded appearances: Mark Dent (Whitwell), Thomas Pratt (Castle Eden), George Charlton (South Shields), Robert Archer (South Hetton), John Tulip (South

Hetton), Robert Henderson (West Moor), Joseph Fawcett (West Moor), Charles Revely (Wallsend), William Jobling (Walker), Edward Richardson (Derwent Ironworks), William Mitchell (Ouston), William Bird (East Cramlington),¹ Martin Jude (Newcastle publican). Of these thirteen, the first five can be definitely identified as Primitive Methodist local preachers. With other Primitive speakers - Christopher Haswell, Charles Parkinson, Ben Embleton, Rev. Joseph Spoor, and William Bell - these men shared platforms with professional radicals like Daniells, Roberts, and Beesley whose rationalist philosophy was far removed from the scriptural fundamentalism of Primitive Methodism.²²¹

This contradiction is not explicable in terms of perfect political theory. The articulated theory of the NMA took the labour-value of the coalminer as its first principle. "What could be done without the coal-miners of Great Britain?" asked John Hall the General Secretary, and the union made it clear that without coal and the labour of its producers nothing could be done.²²² Given this essential labour-value, the pitmen should make themselves "a class worthy of being courted in their turn", and to do this the working-class must "KNOW THYSELF" by "the queenly power of reason". Reason bestrode Knowledge and Freedom but its application was not abstract. John Hall thought that the union's first step should be the formation of schools, reading rooms, and cooperative libraries.²²³ These would enable members to understand, explain, and see. The unions of both decades published booklets in best 'Will Chip' style where union members who 'saw' explained to those who could not. A dialogue between 'Keeker', 'Justice', and '1st and 2nd Banksman' ends with the '1st Banksman': "I now see what I never saw before."²²⁴ "The goddess of reason", properly applied, would not only enable, she would also create; because of her "the pure rivers of knowledge"

would "burst forth and fertilize the moral desert", the working-class would cleanse itself from "the stagnant pool of ignorance", save itself from "the vortex of sensuality":

The long dreary night of ignorance and error, of superstition and violence, of fraud and disunion is fast wearing away, and the bright refulgent sun of truth and knowledge, of peace and unity is appearing above the political horizon.²²⁵

A secular trinity of Reason, Knowledge, and Labour Value beamed upon those pitmen who could spell words, read books, and perform intellectual arguments. Given their 'moral' rather than 'sensual' demeanour, and their wariness of traditional mores, it is clear that the NMA were bound to recruit from the Primitive preachers:

If the lecturer is of good moral character, the Staffordshire men do not inquire much about the rest; but we must have men of good moral character to do this work.

John Hall insisted that "only the provident portion" of the pitmen could save their class,

... the other party would not give an entries drinking for all the information that could be conveyed to them.²²⁶

It seems the village preacher could approach Reason by a similar route to that which he approached Jehovah. However, in its formal theory Jehovah remained more an ultimate intellectual proposition to the NMA than a living reality. God was put well to the back of its reasoning. The union's prize essay claimed that its work was to aid the miners to improve Man, to fulfil the Grand Design, to glorify God; an early editorial of the Advocate claimed dependence

... upon a just God - public opinion - a good cause - and the united and energetic exertion of the Miners.

God was a 'long-stop' to the cause, the NMA invoked Him but only as a last resort, without ontology. Indeed, the union's reality was based upon its own efforts to organize and unite, a rejection of mystery, and a knowledge of theory and practice which looked to the

time when men

... will become omnipotent ... will have reduced all the elements of creation to entire subjection ... in order to procure universal happiness.²²⁷

The union's intellectuals threw themselves into this combat with a zest borne of self-discovery. The pitman's world had no connection with the middle-class, radical or otherwise; the self-learning of the colliery village was wholly and immediately connected with working-class life.²²⁸ This self-taught radicalism was not the threadbare virtue of the city artisan - a democratic Lovett or a fastidious Place, both in daily economic and intellectual nexus with a wider more powerful world - it was rather the grand, rolling, righteousness of the outsider. The NMA lecturers spoke confidently from within the precedent of previous unions ("I suppose you are one of the wits called delegates", "I am sure, Tim, you have turned a fine orator"), and this tradition showed itself in a stiff, elaborate, enjoyment of the written word.²²⁹ But they also spoke within the tradition of the chapel, what one coalowner was wont to call "The Canting Shop" - "cunning, mixed up with an abundance of Cant, and pure Brass ...".²³⁰ Throughout that continuous speaking and writing which held the NMA together, the formal theory of the Miners' Advocate was reproduced in another language:

The letter from an old pitman cannot be inserted in its present form, if he will draw out his statements in midler language we will endeavour to find room for it.

William Hamilton of Willington colliery called for justice:

Shall I show you men stripped and wounded, and left half-dead; they may be seen in our cities, as well as in the highways between Jericho and Jerusalem - shall I show you the tears running down the cheeks of the orphans and widows - shall I call you to hear the cry of the hire kept back by fraud or violence ...?

'one of the labour's meanest sons' called for unity:

Bitter tears have gushed from my eyes to think how we were wasting our energies ... Bretheren, I exhort you, in all earnestness, in the words of the apostle, 'That ye have brotherly love one towards another'.²³¹

In all of this was not only the paradox that a rationalist politics was strongly represented by religious preachers, but also that on one level the preachers denied the validity of this-world and yet on another level supplied the voice for those most deeply involved in its struggles. The South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit lived through Chartism in 1839 and Strike in 1844 without mention of either event. Its minute books record routine organization, discipline, and morality, but nowhere do they register politics or trade unionism.²³² Moreover, formal Methodism continued to exhibit all of that condescension and quietism so beloved of its radical critics. W. Wawn, Newcastle Wesleyan and Sunday school organizer, pointed to the blessedness of the Poor - poverty was Christ's choice and God's blessing:

He has preserved you from the delightful, silken, cords of pleasure, wealth, and honour, that binds down millions to everlasting destruction that he might attract your heart to himself.²³³

The national leadership of the NMA ignored the paradox. In 1844 their Magazine gently ridiculed the "strange but impressive vulgar eloquence" of a Methodist sermon, but the sermon had been in Oxfordshire and they never attempted any sort of intellectual confrontation with the local preacher vanguard.²³⁴ The paradox however, was not lost upon the owners. From the 1820s owners and observers made the distinction between the 'higher' class of pitman and the 'lower'. How could it be that the union delegates, "invariably" "the most intelligent of that class of men", could lead a movement which was so obviously ridiculous?²³⁵

The owners of this colliery lent a house to the Primitive

Methodists, for their religious meetings. At the time of the strike, one of the preachers preached in it in favour of the strike. Another of them took in the 'Northern Star', and regularly every week read it to a meeting of the men.

I asked, during the strike, several of the leading local preachers, why they did not show the men that they were wrong, which as reasonable men themselves, they must know they were; but if they interfered at all, it was against us.²³⁶

A pamphlet of 1832 used scripture to deny the leadership of the union: Christians and servants must always be "a yielding side",

And when you read the Scriptures ... do not read so much (I find many do this) the threatenings of God against unjust and oppressive masters, as the duties of servants, and the blessing of those who are faithful and obedient.²³⁷

Such appeals did not have the intended effect. Local supporters of the Coal Trade, with their anonymous 'kind words' and open letters, sought to deflect the scriptural convictions of the preacher pitmen away from militance and into quietism; the formal politics of the NMA, with its translucent Reason and overbearing Knowledge, ignored the preachers' convictions, and by editorial implication, denied them. But both of these patterns failed to invade the organic relationship Primitive Methodism had with the community, and the relationship the preachers had with themselves as men who had been revealed by their own interior need and effort. In combat, it was as difficult for them to take up the neat politics of the Advocate as it was to submit to the quietist elements of religion. Both patterns were merely intellectual surfaces across the regenerative meaning religion had come to have for the preachers - a meaning re-charged when the class found itself under attack and the preachers were cast as true shepherds to their flock. In this social and personal crisis the thunder of the righteous was to be heard both above the shrill appeals for quietism, and the deep beneath the statements of reason:

'That the labourer shall receive the first fruits of his labour'

'The labourer is worthy of his hire'.

'Rob not the poor, because he is poor'.

'Cursed is he that oppreseth the poor'

'He that oppreseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker'.

'Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker, and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished'.

Gehazi took from the Syrian General, under false pretences, money which did not belong to him; for this he lost his health - his honour - his place - and his peace'.

'I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord'.²³⁸

At the beginning of the strike Robert Archer told a Black Fell meeting that "they were assured on the authority of God that the servant had a right to be paid for his labour"; at the end of the strike Ben Embleton took the chair in South Hetton "and proved that the Union was founded on Scripture".²³⁹ Chapter and verse was quoted against all those who opposed the strike: a local preacher was reminded to "look into the word of God, a work which he should have been well versed with" to save himself from becoming like Gehazi, Achan, Judas, or a wolf of the tribe of Benjamin; a Gateshead minister was reminded the same; strike-breakers were appealed to on grounds of religious brotherhood - "your bretheren have wept over you"; Christians were appealed to on grounds of theology - "Beware of striving at gnats and swallowing camels"; owners were educated on the true designs of God:

... it is a complete frustration of the designs of Divine benevolence that such men should have to fritter away nearly the whole of their lives in ill paid, toilsome labours to the neglect of the cultivation of those powers which distinguish him from the brute creation ... [it is] ... an insult to his Creator ...

We believe that God created us to be free. He has given us a nature that is only in its element when it is free. We were born not to be slaves - we were born to be free ... we do not want to be masters as you charge us with - we want to be servants but not slaves ... 240

In specific practical matters the preachers' paradox could be enrolled for the cause. Their rhetorical skills, their confidence and moral weight were all useful attributes. In the moral question of Drink the preachers' teetotalism was shared neither by the national leadership nor by the majority of their comrades, but in the close bargaining over the shifting minutiae of contract, measure, and price, the preachers carried an absolute superiority in their stand against a factor which had cheated generations of pitmen. The drink custom was one aspect of a supposed 'moral economy' cynically used by the owners both as a facade to their actual imposition of new 'political' economic relationships, and as a straightforward method of exploitation. A drink at the owner's expense could signify agreement. The owners desired contractual agreement to each bond but not through the market relationship of Capital and Labour, at least, not when that market favoured Labour. Instead, they sought to nullify market forces by securing local colliery agreements as rapidly as possible by the supply of free drink. To take a drink suggested agreement; to take a number of drinks added amity to agreement. As we have seen in Part I the Napoleonic Wars put the pitmen in a favourable bargaining position. In 1800 Lord Delaval's agent was plying his colliers with drink to keep them from Newcastle and prevent them from realizing their market strength:

... [he] kept them well supplied with Ale so long as they would drink it ... after which they got Hot Ale & Brandy for some time with an interest to keep them from Newcastle if possible on the Saturday.

By 1805 the men were learning that their collective refusal to take a drink was crucial to their tactics:

... if binding them at a public house at Seaton Sluice could not be brought about - I fear an attempt now to bind them at the Colliery office will not be more successful, when the pitmen think themselves of so much more consequence than they did at that time.²⁴¹

We will see in Part III how both unions of the 1830s and 1840s extended sobriety to wider forms of protest - but these were large, strategic matters which occurred only irregularly. A memorandum of John Buddle to Lord Londonderry written in 1824 gives a rare insight into the use of the drink-custom as a daily method of exploitation. Within the annual framework of the Bond contract the ever-changeable nature of mining necessitated constant revision of terms and prices. Buddle informed his master that

When letting Bargains of Stone drifting, ridding Stones, cutting levels etc. to a Co. of pitmen; the Viewers, by softening them with a few shillings worth of ale, generally save a great deal more in money.

Moreover, drink was encouraged as a substitute for money, symbolic of deeper work relationships, across the whole mining economy:

When this happens [an example of horsekeepers being called out to attend sick animals underground] a small allowance of ale is given, as if it is but for half an hour, or an Hour that a person is employed in this way. If he is paid in money at all, it cannot be less than either a half or whole shift - 1/6 or 3/-, but if rewarded by Allowance (lowens) a Tankard of ale satisfies him. This is the case with innumerable jobs about collieries. If a Man has to put on his pit Cloths & go down the pit, for a job ever so trifling, if paid in money, he must have his shift, or half shift. But he will do the same job cheerfully for his "lowens" - a tankard of ale.²⁴²

This system could never apply to the teetotal Primitive. Also, as the industrial struggle intensified from the 1820s, and the relations of master and men came under increasing scrutiny, then the teetotaler

found his opposition to 'traditional' mores momentarily at one with the needs of his class. In one of those critical moments of history, the preachers' paradox was briefly resolved.

Of course, for individuals, the strains of paradox could be damaging. Robert Fairley and Ben Gibson were converted in 1829 and 1830 respectively but their obituary columns record that in the 1831-32 strike they lost their faith. Fairley "was induced to take a prominent part" in the combat and "his spiritual ardour was much diminished"; Gibson "was shorn of his strength" through union involvement.²⁴³ It is not clear whether their religious convictions were sapped by connection with a rationalist union politics (as was certainly the case with Thomas Hepburn),²⁴⁴ or because their initial belief in the righteousness of the cause met with utter obliteration. Whatever the reason, it is clear that the union represented for these men spiritual as well as political confrontations. Others suffered for holding too closely to their convictions. Made righteous by God they were not to compromise with reality. Mark Dent, victimized since 1844 found himself hopeless in 1847 -

... a situation ... out of the reach of the oppression of the masters, and the low grovelling envy and black ingratitude of their men.

Ben Embleton, another victim of 1844, found himself close to destitution but faithful to, at least the language, of his religion:

For the sake of Union principles I have borne your reproach; I am become a stranger unto my bretheren, an alien unto my mother's children, for the zeal of the Union hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproacheth the Union are fallen upon me! May every friend of humanity in the Miners' Association give me a helping hand, to help me out of the deep waters of want, and not suffer the flood of poverty to swallow me up.²⁴⁵

Methodist morality represented a cultural intervention in the life of the mining community. The notion of 'culture' is as difficult as it is rich and it is not my intention here to discuss its theoretical countours²⁴⁶ other than to say that culture as a 'way of life' has become, in my view, an ordering concept for the manner in which the elements of a social structure are each the condition of the other.

Methodist morality sought to change in its entirety what it perceived as the existing 'way of life' of the mining community. We have seen that there were other, ruling, forces, which had the same boldness of aim and in their work for the 'moral improvement' of the lower orders they aspired to an intellectual and moral domination of areas of society which they considered disorderly or threatening. These particular efforts can be seen as aspiring to a dominant 'hegemony'.²⁴⁷ Later in the century, when the previous threat of disorder was thought to have been resolved then Methodism was cast as the major historical agent of a new 'way of life' for the miners and their families. The history and historiography of this later process will be dealt with elsewhere, but for the period of this thesis the Methodist intervention is instructive to the general matter of class control.

Hegemonic achievement was by no means total. Not only did class struggle ultimately throw up resilient forms of community defence - crowned by the powerful 'county unions' from the 1860s - but the outside moral improvers of the 1830s and 1840s failed to impose themselves on extensive areas of working-class life. In the pit villages the moral, ontological, and intellectual areas were largely left to Methodist and Radical representation. Coal Capitalism made only reluctant efforts, and with the exception of the Anglican National Society from 1831, the local middle classes, gentry, and clergy tended to stay away from the villages. What efforts they did make were diffuse and originally prompted by city fears. However, whilst the hegemonic only partially

penetrated the mining community its most total success lay in binding the moral and class sense of its own busy and indignant practitioners. Changing their moral perspective, which was involved, with a class perspective, which was apart, the drive to domination permitted a misunderstanding of what Methodism was doing. The Methodist soul and its public display won the movement early applause for its apparent pacification of the pitmen. Methodism's public demeanour was thought to correspond favourably with those prescriptions for moral improvement being made in higher places - for passive over vigorous forms of working-class life. But this observation of moral improvement rarely went beyond the chapel door. Inside its doors Primitive Methodism in particular was fusing with emergent class expression in a way which most startlingly revealed itself during strike actions, but which also revealed itself, and the class tensions behind it, in the specific distaste the middle classes and others could show for Primitive 'emotionalism'. There was genuine dismay at the revelations of strikes or revivals because apart from public appearances the rulers and improvers had very little knowledge of those areas of working-class consciousness which surfaced during them. Later, the Methodist role in moral improvement through revival was praised for producing Respectable men and women - but the fact that revivals were contemporaneously disliked and that those same men and women were victimized after strike into poverty, separation and emigration was not accounted for in the late-century chronicles of Respectability. This 'political' aspect of Methodist involvement was recognized in the Lib-Lab histories and biographies of the day.

That dominant Lib-Lab moral power achieved by the Durham Miners' Association in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century had its seeds in the preacher-vanguards of the 1830s and 1840s. The preachers emerged in crisis as the intellectuals of their class. The reception of

the Primitive Methodist word and idea among hewers, putters, and drivers was class mutated. Neither the printed rationalist opinions of the NMA, nor the distanced homilies of established religion could seriously challenge a Methodist consciousness so organically connected to the community. The points of connection are clear: the quality of Methodist appeal in a coalfield too often sickened by violent death; the self-manipulative revivalism of a people known for their physicality; the room for lay-involvement in the Methodist economy; the interaction of Methodist and class cultural forms; the self-disciplining, respecting and educating elements of a growing, dislocated, redefined community, increasingly forced to reconsider its own amelioration. Of course, the paradoxical logic of this-world and the next remained, but the making of class consciousness does not proffer the resolution of abstracts: it was not an intellectual process in the sense of an attained philosophical coherence - nor did its makers have time to dwell on (the ideologue's ? problem of) the contradictions of theology. They were rather faced with the immediate and practical problems of piece rates, contractual conditions, safety, and strikes. Class consciousness was made and re-made in pursuit of these struggles and not speculated upon as an adjunct to them. If the form this consciousness took was made through the necessities of resolve, defiance, and collective association, and was articulated in the language of Jehovah and the righteousness of the oppressed, then so be it, the preacher vanguard can be asked by no one to be other than themselves.

The later power of the Durham Miners' Association was carried by another kind of class-intellectual who sought continuity with his past. Methodism provided the obvious line of continuity because, unlike the Brotherhood, or the United Colliers, or Chartism, or the NMA, or any number of deceased formations, Methodism had survived to enlarge its numbers and influence. It remained where others had fallen and, although

a different movement from that of the 1830s, its historical role was validated as a continuum. Anglican homilies had never threatened it, it is difficult to imagine what comfort a rationalist politics could have provided for mass burial - the chapel's paradox invited an hegemonic misunderstanding, and permitted its own ambiguity and shift. Formations less organic than Methodism could not have maintained their position, formations less ambiguous would have never been allowed to. Such was the accredited resilience and power of the late nineteenth-century chapel, the whole 'culture' of the pit village as an entity - as a pre-existing 'way of life' in continuity with its present - was founded on the presence and history of the Methodist moral intervention.

THESIS REFERENCES

PART TWO

- 1 Part II will mainly be about the Primitive Methodists. My sources for these chapters are wide, but partly because of the relative scarcity of direct evidence, and because of the occasional quality of other, literary, sources - particularly that of the Wesleyan Methodists - I have sometimes gone beyond solely Primitive evidence. The origin of sources is always indicated, and when applying, for example, Wesleyan evidences to general themes, such as the Sunday schools or moral improvement as a whole, I have used my judgement to ascertain whether there was likely to be any qualitative difference in organization or experience. At the same time, it is as well to note that contemporaries often referred to Methodism and its works without distinction and in a generic sense.
- 2 Evidence of J. Wales, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 24.
- 3 Evidence of W. Morison, C.E.C. 1842, pp. 726-730; evidences of G. Hunter, *ibid*, p. 647. Four putters at Hetton Colliery agreed with Hunter about the dog-fighting and cock-fighting, and added swearing "not so much as formerly by a vast" (*ibid.*, p. 649); J. Harrison added that adjective so beloved of Francis Place: "anything gross seldom occurs". (*ibid.*, p. 647).
- 4 Evidence of J. Anderson, C.E.C. 1842, pp. 655-56; evidence of T. M. Greenhow, *ibid.*, p. 665.
- 5 Miners' Advocate, 24 August 1844.
- 6 Evidence of J. Scott, underviewer at Haswell colliery, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 64; W. Bailey,

underviewer at Hetton, Ellemore, and Appleton collieries, *ibid.*, p. 20; Wesleyan local preacher in Earsdon, *ibid.*, pp. 25-26; Mr. A. Bryden, underviewer at South Hetton colliery, *ibid.*, p. 21; Rev. Dr Besley, rector of Longbenton, C.E.C. 1842, p. 676; Mr Robson, viewer of Hetton colliery, *ibid.*, p. 648; William Morison, doctor, *ibid.*, p. 669; T. Rutherford, and R. Laycourt, *ibid.*, p. 601, p. 613.

- 7 Seymour Tremenheere, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
- 8 For sunday schools, Martin Greener, viewer at Tyne Main colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 629; Mr A. Bryden, *ibid.*, p. 658; clerks to Northumberland justices of the peace, *ibid.*, pp. 674-675. For colliery controls, Mr W. Bailey, *ibid.*, p. 649. Later, William Fordyce mentioned the Methodists, but also "the establishment of reading rooms and lending libraries, and the diffusion of cheap literature", (*op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 183).
- 9 George Elliot, viewer at Washington and Belmont collieries, C.E.C. 1842, p. 641; John Reay, agent of Wallsend Colliery, *ibid.*, p. 716; 'Viewer and Owner' of Wallsend colliery, *ibid.*, p. 625; agent of Haswell colliery, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, *op. cit.*, p. 19; W. Fordyce, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 183; James Mather, South Shields merchant and philanthropist, C.E.C. 1842, p. 670.
- 10 'FORMER TRAPPER BOY', Gateshead Observer, 10 August 1842.
- 11 Summary of the Condition, *op. cit.*; evidence of Thomas Burt, Report on Mines, P.P. 1866, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
- 12 Bishop of Durham to Sir James Graham, Home Secretary, 15

April 1844, P.R.O., H.O. 45/644.

- 13 Rev. Broughton of Washington, Co. Durham, told the commissioner that he "was not prepared to witness so much carelessness, irreligion, and immorality, having before [he] came here [having] lived in an agricultural district". (C.E.C. 1842, p. 530).

- 14 Evidence of John Mackey, underviewer, at St Laurence Main Colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 622. Mackey "never knew of so many removals in the colliery district" as at the last Bond. At his colliery, thirty or forty out of one hundred and sixty families left; Commissioner Leifchild reported on 20/90 families at Wallsend, 20/115 families at Townley, and 60/120 families at Sacriston (ibid., p. 624, p. 617). In spite of all the complaints about increased mobility, and the reasons ranged from more perfect competition, to inter-colliery comparisons, to escape from debts, no one mentioned the blacklisting activities of the Coal Trade and the intensifying clauses of the Bond (see above, pp. 60-61).

- 15 See the evidence of Dr Elliot for the "old pits", "being generally superior in morals and intelligence" to the "new pits" (C.E.C. 1842, p. 667). George Elliot, chief agent to Lord Londonderry reiterated this in 1854: Second Report on Accidents, P.P. 1854, op. cit., p. 17.

- 16 Evidence of Rev. Broughton of Washington, C.E.C. 1842, p. 530; J. R. Leifchild, ibid., p. 519. Also, evidence of George Johnson, viewer at Willington colliery, ibid., p. 568. Broughton blamed most of the mobility on higher wages at the newer collieries.

- 17 Evidence of T. A. Cockin, colliery manager in the Auckland

- district. C.E.C. 1842, p. 151; William Hunter, viewer of Walbottle colliery, on Sacriston and Charlaw, *ibid.*, p. 617; Dr R. S., on a colliery he refused to name, "the plague spot of the district (*ibid.*, p. 6). This "plague spot" is a new colliery, notorious, and in County Durham. It sounds like Thornley, "The men at Thornley are more blackguard men than at other collieries" (evidence of John Young, putter at Seghill colliery, *ibid.*, p. 611).
- 18 Report on Mines, P.P. 1866, *op. cit.*, p. 12, p. 334, p. 353, p. 354, and *passim*.
- 19 See for instance the descriptions of South Hetton and Clarence Hetton collieries, C.E.C. 1842, pp. 149-150. The growing government interest in popular education generally bracketed available schooling in the same category as religious provision: Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee of Privy Council on Education, relating to the Conditions on which the Parliamentary Grants for the promotion of Education in Great Britain is distributed, 1840-1841, Appendix 3, Instructions respecting an Inquiry into the State of Elementary Education in the Mining Districts of Durham and Northumberland, P.P. 1841, xx, *passim*.
- 20 P.E.H. Hair, Social History, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25, p. 27a. Between 1822 and 1850, one hundred and twenty-two new sea-sale collieries opened in the two counties, but coalmining remained behind Commerce, Trade, other Manufacturing, and Agriculture as an employer of percentage occupied population: A. G. Kenwood, *op. cit.*, p. 81; J.W. House, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- 21 W. Fordyce, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 381, p. 386. Significant zoning patterns have been discovered for the cluster of cottage

rows, country lanes, and town streets which went to make up the mining landscape of Hetton le Hole. Zoning ranged from areas with over 80% of households headed by a miner, to over 45%, and a mingling with craft and service sectors - to areas with under 45% of households headed by a miner, and a random variety of pitmen, tradesmen, craftsmen, agricultural labourers, and clothing and domestic goods workers. Nearby, Hetton Lyons had its "Quality Row" comprising of colliery officials and skilled metal-workers: M. Sill, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 148-149.

Physically, the essential features of colliery villages by the 1850s were cottage-rows, shops, pubs, and chapels. Schools were rapidly being constructed - or had only recently been constructed in an 1840s glut - and the larger villages might have had a post-office, tradesmen's premises, or a church. In 1855 Hetton le Hole had, in addition to its cottage rows, provisions shops, an inn and several pubs, a district police station, a railway station, a church, and Baptist, Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist, and Kilhamite Methodist chapels.

- 22 "It should also be remembered that only a small proportion of the area [3%] was actually covered by the settlement ... the early mining settlement was more accordant with the rural landscape than the mining towns of the late 19th century which were frequently characterized by a grid-iron pattern of monotonous terraces". (M. Sill, op. cit., vol. i., p. 88).
- 23 R. Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham (1816) vol. i., p. 120, p. 83.
- 24 E. Mackenzie and M. Ross, An Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive View of the County Palatine of Durham (1834) vol. i., p. 419, p. 380.

- 25 W. Fordyce, *op. cit.*, vol. ii for South Hetton p. 361, for Thornley pp. 382-385; W. Page (ed.), The Victoria History of the Counties of England. Durham (1907) vol. ii, census returns 1801-1901, p. 269, p. 270.
- 26 At the 1851 census the Poor Law Union of Easington (21,795 inhabitants) contained 125 female domestic servants, 60 female agricultural labourers, 36 female paupers, and 33 female housekeepers. These were the major female groups out of a total female population of 10,329. (W. Fordyce, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 355-356). Michael Sill had similar findings for his study of Hetton le Hole (*op. cit.*, p. 136, pp. 139-140), and the situation remained for the mining and heavy engineering districts of the North East until well after the turn of the century: E. H. Hunt, Regional Wage Variations in Britain 1850-1914 (1973), p. 123. Agricultural Northumberland on the other hand had a greater proportion of female agricultural labourers than any other English county (*ibid.*, p. 122). The employment of women in the pits (above and below ground), so prevalent in other mining regions, had begun to decline in the North East in the mid-eighteenth century, and there were no women workers in North East collieries by the early nineteenth-century: John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 14 May 1842, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C. 142. For evidence of above ground women workers at Newbottle and Burnmoor colliery, see payments to "Eliz. Hall & Sist." et al, on the Pay Bill, 1787, D.C.R.O., NCB I/JB.
- 27 Major occupations for men in the Easington Union in 1851 were coalmining (2742), seafaring (387), and farming with 185 farmers and 71 agricultural labourers. (W. Fordyce, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 355-356). For a smaller, more rural mining village, that

of Cockfield in South Durham, see Appendix p. 345 for an occupational breakdown of adult heads of families in 1851. (Census 1851, Cockfield Township, D.C.R.O.). The hewers were the largest, most important, and most influential group in each colliery.

- 28 In 1840 HMI Allen was pleased to report on the ease of travel in the coalfield: State of Elementary Education, P.P. 1841, op. cit., p. 52. The identification of North East coalmining with the birth of the railways is famous, but it has been proposed that rural Northumberland had an effective turnpike system before the railway mania: B. Eccles, The Development of Internal Transport in Northumberland (unpublished Manchester University dissertation towards B.A. (hons) degree, 1969). For a general account of nineteenth-century mining in the context of urban development see, N. McCord and D. J. Rowe, 'Industrialization and Urban Growth in North East England', International Review of Social History, xxii, (1977), pp. 30-38.

- 29 Population changes have already been mentioned in Part I Chapter One in the context of economic growth. J. W. House, op. cit., Table 4: Net Decennial Migration, with absolute and percentage changes, by geographical sub-regions, 1841-1931. After 1851 Northumberland and Durham were the fastest growing regions in a country where "The excess of births over deaths accounted for by far the greater part of population change in almost every region" (E. H. Hunt, op. cit., p. 220, p. 225). The degree of annual mobility between mining villages was thought by contemporaries to be related to overall industrial expansion and changes in the conditions of the Bond. Dr Hair estimated

mobility in 1805 for Tyneside collieries to be about one-third, and that this period of high demand and rapid change in the conditions of the Bond established an approximate 30% norm of annual migration to other collieries (P. E. H. Hair, *op. cit.*, p. 37).

However, there is evidence to suggest a fairly high level of mobility well before this turbulent period. On one-year, three-year, five-year, and ten-year tests for Walker colliery between 1780 and 1795, I discovered an approximate labour-force stability of two-thirds over one year, 43% over three years, 30% over five years, and a mere 18% over ten years. These are tacit conclusions from what was, given the primary sources to hand, a complex and assumptive piece of research. For further details see Appendix pp. 346-49 at the end of this Section. (Walker Colliery Bonds, 1780, 1781, 1783, 1784, 1788, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1795, 1797-98. N.E.I.M.M.E.).

30 See Part I, pp. 6-7, f.n.s 10, 11, 12, 13.

31 Michael Sill's detailed examination of Hetton le Hole revealed that the colliery, first raising coals in 1821 and the most important new enterprise of an enterprising decade, had an 1851 labour-force mainly recruited from the Mid Wear District and Northumberland "Note the concentration of birth-places of coalminers in locations in the old-established coalmining area close to the River Wear, and also in the part of the exposed coalfield further away from the river, immediately to the west and north west of Hetton"; "There is an overwhelming concentration of birthplace locations on lower Tyneside and in the south east section of the coalfield ..."
(M. Sill, *op. cit.*, vol. i, figs 21, 22).

32 These figures are based upon Dr P. E. H. Hair's statistical work (op. cit., p. 112a), which used as its source the Appendix to the Ninth Annual Report of the Registrar General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, P.P. 1849 xxi. In order to penetrate through to the mining population (or as near as he could get to it), Hair had to select his 'mining district' four sub-categories (Bishop Auckland, Lanchester, Easington, and Houghton-Chester) from the twelve government categories in the 1849 Report: Darlington, Stockton, Auckland, Teesdale, Weardale, Durham, Easington, Houghton le Spring, Chester le Street, South Shields, and Gateshead. Hair's fifth Northumberland 'mining district' sub-category of Longbeuton was in the government category of Tynemouth. Even then, Hair's statistics do not exactly relate to purely mining populations as even his 'mining district' sub-categories contained significant minorities who were unconnected with coalmining.

33 England and Wales' proportion of children under 14 yrs out of total population : 35%. N. E. 'mining districts' proportion of children under 14 yrs out of total population : 38.5%,

England and Wales' proportion of young adults out of total population : 55.6%. N. E. 'mining districts' proportion of young adults out of total population : 58.8%.

England and Wales' proportion of older male adults out of total adult population : 21.2%. N. E. 'mining districts' proportion of older male adults out of total adult population : 20.8%.

England and Wales' proportion of older female adults out of total adult population : 23.2%. N.E. 'mining districts' proportion of older female adults out of total population : 20.5%.

(P. E. H. Hair, op. cit., p. 112a)

34 In Hetton le Hole in 1851 the average mean family size for coalminer heads of household was 4.45; for Hetton's total population, 4.03. Sill also tested miners' family size against comparative working class groups in York for 1851 and found it larger. (op. cit., vol. i, p. 102).

35 P. E. H. Hair, op. cit., Annual mortality per 1000 living at each age 1838-1844, Table 6. These figures are also based on the Report of the Registrar General, P.P. 1849, op. cit., and compare the Houghton-Chester 'mining district' sub-category with other areas and the national average. These figures are therefore subject to the same qualifications as in f.n. 32. The Houghton-Chester annual mortality per 1000 living at each age 1838-1844 compares with the national average as follows:

	England		Houghton-Chester	
	male	female	male	female
0-1 yrs	205.10	154.40	174.57	154.15
0-5	70.52	60.37	57.53	53.97
5-10	9.26	9.00	8.91	8.34
10-15	5.04	5.48	6.78	5.62
15-25	8.05	8.32	9.25	10.00
25-35	9.68	10.09	8.58	11.30
35-45	12.49	12.42	9.68	12.06
45-55	17.76	15.48	16.16	17.48
55-65	31.41	27.82	30.07	23.98
65-75	66.13	58.85	69.01	45.89

36 P. E. H. Hair, op. cit., Annual mortality from disease per 1000 living at each age 1849-1853, Table 9.

37 P. E. H. Hair, op. cit., Annual mortality from violence per 1000

living at each age 1849-53, Table 8. For an account of work-safety in the collieries and the chances of mortality by violence, see Part I p. 23.

Annual Mortality from various diseases of males about 15, per 1000 living. 1849-53, Table II, ibid. For the later century there is evidence based on the returns of Northumberland and Durham medical officers of health to suggest that the mining community suffered a radically higher average mortality than that of adjacent agricultural areas: J. Y. E. Seeley, Coal Mining Villages of Northumberland and Durham: a study of sanitary conditions and social facilities 1870-1880 (unpublished Newcastle University M.A. thesis, 1973) p. 17.

- 38 See f.n. 35. It may be added that if County Durham's, and England's, infant mortality rates were appalling, Merthyr's were horrific: Merthyr, annual mortality per 1000 living at ages 0-10 years, 1838-1844 (P. E. H. Hair, Table 6) -

	male	female
0-1 yrs	248.71	204.85
0-5	107.78	101.76
5-10	14.6	12.05

(And the town appears to have known worse in the 1820s: for indications of infant mortality during that decade, see G. A. Williams, The Merthyr Rising, 1978, p. 50).

- 39 "There are no able bodied paupers among the pitmen ... Pauperism amongst colliers is at as low a point as is consistent with the dangerous nature of their employment" (evidence of T. J. Taylor, coalowner, C.E.C. 1842, p. 609).

- 40 Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into

the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws.

Appendix (A), Part I : Assistant Commissioner's Reports

(Northumberland and Durham) , P.P. 1834, xxviii. The Report

made it clear that there was no crushing pauperization in the two counties. It attributed this to the sparseness of Northumberland's "peasantry", to competitive demand on Tyne and Wear for pitmen, and to the expansion of coal, iron, and railway works in South Durham. Although the mining community considered its position to be under attack during the first half century, its battle with Capital was different from that being so desperately fought by, say, the Lancashire handloom-weavers. When in the early 1840s the pitmen claimed that increasing short-time and fines were impoverishing them, it seems that the intensive family networks in the coalfield were able, intimately and minutely, to absorb that primary poverty which in other regions might have found its way into the daunting official registers of the workhouse. Also, it must be remembered that the ideology of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act did not fit the realities of pit village pauperism. Boards of Guardians continued as elsewhere to distribute bits of out-relief to widows and the disabled in spite of central government disapproval.

- 41 21 June 1842, Minute Book 1837-1847, Easington Union Board of Guardians, D.C.R.O. After the Board's first meeting in the vestry room at Easington on 27 January 1837 the first ten years appear to have been uneventful. Most of the fortnightly business was concerned with out-relief to widows and unmarried mothers, with getting chargeable paupers back to their places of legal settlement, and with the checking of rates, expenses, vaccination, and the recording of births, marriages, and deaths.

- 42 There was a mass meeting of the Northern Political Union in Newcastle on 1 January 1838 to protest against the Poor Law Amendment Act, "and on behalf of Canada". The issues do not seem to have caught the region's imagination because in spite of important speakers (J. P. Cobbett, Feargus O'Connor, John Taylor, J. R. Stephens) the crowd does not seem to have been large nor is there any mention of pitmen being present. The Sunderland Beacon reported the meeting as a flop; the Northern Liberator, tocsin of North East Chartism, does not deny the fact nor does it try to estimate the size of the crowd. Nevertheless, Rev. Stephens threatened revolution "to the knife - to the death" if "an unjust, unconstitutional and illegal parchment blot was carried in the pockets of the Poor Law Commissioners . . . " (Northern Liberator, 6 January 1838). The cry of Ashton found no echo in Newcastle.
- 43 T. J. Taylor, coalowner, made this rough estimate on the basis of his returns for Earsdon and East Holywell colliery. Actual figures for adults were 51.6% could read and write, 30.3% could read only, and 18.1% could neither read nor write: State of Elementary Education, P.P. 1841, op. cit., p. 65.
- 44 Suggestions for imprisoning convicts in Coal Mines, 1786, anon. MS, P.R.O., H.O. 42/7.
- 45 Sir John Swinburne's 1807 categories of enquiry are clearly from a 'society' which has little knowledge of, or contact with, its miners (Summary of the Condition, op. cit.). Moreover, the courage to dare descend a pit-shaft became a typical problem for south-country travellers in the 1830s. William Chatto had the courage and looped himself to the rope which "suspends you

for a second over the mouth of the pit ... you are ten fathoms deep in the bowels of the earth before you have time to bless yourself with 'Domine, salvum, me fac'" (W. A. Chatto, Rambles in Northumberland and on the Scottish Border, 1835, p. 38). Rev. Pearson, however, excused himself when he reckoned it impossible "without running the risk of breaking his neck in the descent, or having a crick in it from continuous stooping, and without the prospect of 7 ablutions in seven different pails": Rev. W. Pearson and R. Atkinson, A Journal of an Excursion to the North of England, 1838, Ms. Diary, N[ewcastle] C[entral] L[ibrary].

- 46 Lord Londonderry had to ask his chief agent for an account of the living and working conditions of his colliers in order to prepare him for the debate in the House on Shaftesbury's Act. It is interesting to note that this was necessary in spite of his Lordship's fondness for the old Tory rhetoric of an intimate paternalism: John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 9, 14 May 1842, D.C.R.O. D/LO/C 142; J. R. Leifchild, C.E.C. 1842, p. 519. In 1846 Commissioner Tremenheere reported that the coalowner Charles Carr was the first resident gentleman "at or near" the populous Northumberland mining area of Seghill: The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 27. As late as 1855 a regional topographer could still comment that "strange indeed is their manner of life" (W. Whellan & Co., op. cit., p. 133).
- 47 By the end of the eighteenth-century, one quarter of the nation's magistracy were clergymen: W. R. Ward, Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850, (1972) pp. 2-3. John Wesley had been a ceaseless critic of Anglican neglect - for South Shields see, N. Curnock (ed.), The Journals of The Rev. John Wesley A.M.,

- (1938), vol. iv, p. 460. In 1792, twenty-three out of forty-nine Northumberland incumbents were non-resident: G. Neasham, North Country Sketches: notes, essays, and reviews (1893), p. 133 and pp. 133-139. The Church's National Society made significant efforts from the 1830s to put elementary schools into mining districts. One reason for this was to make-up with the children what the Church had lost with the adults: Annual Report of the Society for the Encouragement of Parochial Schools in the Diocese of Durham and Hexham, 1832, p. 6, P.R.O., Ed. 7/25, 7/26.
- 48 J. R. Leifchild, C.E.C. 1842, p. 533; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 13 June 1842, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. In 1807 Thomas Benton reported the pitmen as being almost completely outside the orbit of the Church: Summary of the Condition, op. cit. E. J. Evans has pointed to the connection between rural anti-clericalism and increased tithe demands, c. 1750-1830, whilst W. R. Ward has traced some causal connection between growing Anglican enclosure and the success of Nonconformist and Methodist revivalism: E. J. Evans, 'Some Reasons for the Growth of English Rural Anti-Clericalism c. 1750 - c. 1830', Past and Present, no. 66, (1975); W. R. Ward, op. cit., pp. 9-11. The Church itself was increasingly aware of Methodist rivalry in the pit villages, and hoped that its new elementary schools would wean the community off Methodism: see National Society Letter File (Church House, Westminster) as detailed in Brendan Duffy, Debate, Past and Present, forthcoming.
- 49 Statement illustrative of the amount of Spiritual Destitution in the Diocese of Durham, relative to the recently formed Durham Diocesan Society for the Employment of Additional Clergy,

November 1859, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 176. Between 1837 and 1843 Cathedral revenue for Durham was £183,809 17s 11d, and most of it came from coal royalties and rents (W. Fordyce, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 136); G. Neasham, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

In other places, less prejudiced and class conscious perhaps, the worshipping Church of England could stir itself. James Obelkevich has studied 1830s Anglican efforts in Lincolnshire to reconstitute and reunify the parish as a worshipping community in the face of critical social change: J. Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, South Lindsey 1825-1875 (1976).

- 50 The Irish were continuously contrasted as a destabilizing element compared to the permanently-settled, orderly, communities of Dales Leadminers and Northumberland 'peasants': see, Operation of Poor Laws, P.P. 1834, *op. cit.*, p. 126A, pp. 138-139A, p. 122A. For Roman Catholic problems in the mining town of Seaham Harbour, for the 1860s see, R. J. Cooter, 'Lady Londonderry and the Irish Catholics of Seaham Harbour: 'No Popery' out of context', Recusant History, 13 (1975-76), pp. 288-98.
- 51 Evidence of Rev. J. Nichol, C.E.C. 1842, p. 718; Dunelm to Lords Council, 9 January 1840, Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee of Privy Council on Education ... 1839-1841, P.P. 1839 (177), xli, *op. cit.*; Report of the National Society (1843) p. 6. Brendan Duffy (*op. cit.*) has compiled an estimate of Church of England elementary schools built in the coalfield between 1820 and 1869:

1820-24	9	1845-49	31
1825-29	18	1850-54	17
1830-34	10	1855-59	18

1835-39	16	1860-64	24
1840-44	33	1865-69	15

However the existence of these, and other, schools in mining parishes must not be confused with moral education. Government inspectors in the late 1830s and early 1840s were very critical of educational provision in the mining parishes and in many cases contended it represented a moral risk to the children. Of course, in the eyes of most inspectors just to be working-class was a moral plight in itself: State of Elementary Education, P.P. 1841, op. cit., pp. 52-68.

Between 1801 and 1851 the Church of England had increased its national accommodation by 24%, whilst population had grown by 101.6%: G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England (1966) pp. 191-195.

- 52 Dr J. Mitchell, C.E.C. 1842, p. 143, p. 142; Seymour Tremenheere, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 26.
- 53 Chief Constable's Reports, presented to the County Quarter Sessions, Winter, 1842 and 1847. D.C.R.O., Q/S/OB 25. In 1841 there were eighty-one policemen for County Durham. Newcastle and Sunderland had one hundred, and fifty-four, policemen respectively (Michelmas Sessions 1841).
- 54 Evidence of William Anderson, viewer at South Shields colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 637. See also the corroborating evidences of Thomas Bailes, underviewer at Felling colliery, *ibid.*, p. 635, and George Elliot, headviewer at Monkwearmouth colliery, *ibid.*, p. 642, and Commissioner Leifchild himself who thought that the moral order of a colliery village was a function of its distance from a large town, "especially of a sea port town",

(ibid., p. 533). Prof. Pollard long ago alerted historians to the distrust of early entrepreneurs for seaports as possible factory locations: S. Pollard, 'Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution', Economic History Review, 2nd ser., vol. xvi, (1963-1964), p. 255.

The question of class control was central to the early problems of 'town planning'. Great care was taken with the new ironmaking town of Consett, high in the Durham moors. The housing was solid, the wage-dealing was open, five policemen were appointed, and "The last requisite for the satisfactory progress of these new industrial colonies . . . is the provision for RELIGIOUS SUPERINTENDENCE AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION". Eight day-schools under company supervision were built, and two churches - the sects were considered zealous enough to look after themselves (Gateshead Observer, 7 September 1849).

- 55 Newcastle Courant, 22 January 1785, 11 June 1785; Newcastle Journal, 16 February 1788; Rev. W. Walters, The History of the Newcastle on Tyne Sunday School Union: from its formation, to the close of its fiftieth year (1869); Newcastle Journal 14 February 1835. The first Sunday school was opened in Gloucester in 1780 by a local journalist named Robert Raikes with the help of an Anglican clergyman. Raikes' ideas quickly spread and were successfully systematized in cities like Leeds and Birmingham. The civic-controlling intentions of this systematic imitation were made clear in an important article in 1951 by A. P. Wadsworth, 'The First Manchester Sunday Schools', reprinted in Essays in Social History (eds. M. W. Flinn and T. C. Smout) 1974, pp. 100-122. By 1850 the Sunday schools had a combined attendance of two million children and under a quarter of a million

teachers. Although a recent history is available (T. W. Laqueur, Religion and Respectability - Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850, 1976) there is still an urgent need for much more research into this subject. For instance, after their Newcastle formation in 1785, with "a very great overflow of applications" (Newcastle Courant, 22 January 1785), there were serious non-attendance problems by 1790 (Newcastle Courant 27 November 1790). It would be proper to know the dynamics of this, and later, fluctuations.

- 56 Newcastle Courant, 11 June 1785. There is an interesting aside on the developing 'polite culture' of the upper town middle-class during the period in David Harker, Introduction, to Rhymes of Northern Bards (1812. 1971) pp. xxxv - xxxvi; and, for the class conscious institutions of a late eighteenth-century bourgeoisie, Sydney Middlebrook, Newcastle Upon Tyne : Its Growth and Achievement (1950. 1968 ed.).
- 57 Rev. W. Walters, op. cit., p. 43; Second Annual Report of the Newcastle Sunday School Teachers' Association for Promoting the Due Observance of the Lords Day (1836) p. 4, p. 5, p..10. The other objective was to stop Sunday rail travel.
- 58 Tyne Mercury, 4 November 1817; the Newcastle Bible Society, adjunct of the British and Foreign Bible Society, was led by Messrs Angas and Wawn, founding members of the Sunday School Union, and the Newcastle Religious Tract Society, with twenty-eight officers and two hundred and twenty subscribers, had many of the Sunday School Union's stalwarts on its committee - Wawn, Angas, Fenwick, Pengilly, Brunting, and Annandale (The Report of the Newcastle Religious Tract Society for the Year 1817, 1817);

First Reports of the Committees of the Adult School Society, formed for the Instruction of the Uneducated Adult Poor of Newcastle On Tyne, 1815: "When Sunday Schools became general, the demand for bibles increased as the poor were taught to read them: hence originated that national ornament and blessing 'the British and Foreign Bible Society' and one of the innumerable advantages which have arisen from this noble institution, has been the formation of adult schools" (p. 8); E. Mackenzie, A descriptive & historical account of the town & county of Newcastle Upon Tyne including the Borough of Gateshead (1827) vol. ii, p. 573.

- 59 Thomas Oliver, A New Picture of Newcastle Upon Tyne (1831) pp. 40-42. There were also nine missions operating extra-murally in the city for the conversion of its people. For an account of Sunderland's missions and tract societies see: W. Parson and W. White, History, Directory, and Gazetteer, of the counties of Durham and Northumberland (1827) p. 333.

Newcastle Journal, 21 December 1833.

- 60 Rev. Richard Donaldson, Vicar of Morpeth, to Lord Sidmouth, 3 January 1820, P.R.O., H.O. 42/203.
- 61 Summary of the Condition, op. cit.; Report of Newcastle Religious Tract Society, op. cit., p. 24; G. A. Cooke, Topographical and Statistical Description of the County of Durham (1824) p. 54; evidence of the Governor of Durham gaol, C.E.C. 1842, p. 660; evidence of William Browne, medical attendant at Jarrow Colliery, *ibid.*, p. 637; evidence of Dr W. Morison, *ibid.*, p. 663; evidence of an 'Eminent Engineer', *ibid.*, p. 152, Chief Constable's Reports, op. cit., Winter Sessions 1840.

- 62 Rev. W. Walters, *op. cit.*, p. 34, pp. 204-205, pp. 110-112, p. 305; Rev. J. Everett, The Walls End Miner: or a memoir of William Crister (1835), dedication. Everett also took pleasure in quoting the Duke of Bedford's remark that, "I consider the prayers of God's ministers and people as the best walls round my house" (p. 113). The Mechanics Institutes made little penetration into the mining community, but they were nevertheless seen as important allies in the movement for civic order, teaching "prudence, industry, economy, and sobriety" (booklet. Rev. J. Davies, Mechanics Institutions as Affecting the Character of the People, Gateshead 1848, p. 14). Any estimation of the effectiveness of Sunday school order must bear in mind what Richard Johnson has called "the sheer habitual weight" of a school's timetable. For an example of the order, discipline, solemnity, and distance this timetable could carry, see the Anglican Felton Sunday School Teachers Union Meeting Minute Book (1819-1821) N.C.R.O., N.R.O. 347/121.
- 63 Marx and Engels both later pointed to England's "polycentricity of power and its dispersal through the provinces" in contrast to the more centralized and bureaucratic state power of the continent: R. Johnson, 'Educating the Educators: 'Experts' and the State 1833-39', in A. P. Donajgrodzki (ed.) Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain (1977), p. 79. The resulting 1842 Act went much less far than Ashley's first bill, which was subjected to numerous weakening amendments by the Lords Select Committee: O. O. G. M. MacDonagh, Coal Mines Regulation, in R. Robson (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.
- 64 Gateshead Observer, 30 July 1842. For new sensibilities in social reportage on women and children, stemming particularly from Metropolitan journalism see: Celina Fox, 'The Development

of Social Reportage in English Periodical Illustration During the 1840s and Early 1850s', Past and Present, no. 74, (1977), pp. 94-98. Angela John considers that the pitwoman stood as the symbolic opposition to Woman's "true nature", as it was propagated, in the 1840s: A. V. John, By the Sweat of Their Brow. Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines (1980) p. 11, p. 21. The pitmen's unions, when making their appeals to 'the public', could also reveal a marginal but significant concern for the proper refinements of womanhood and childhood. This particular appeal verges on the melodramatic, and in this and its call to "ye British Females" it reminds one of older, more baroque and free-born, traditions:

"/females/ compelled to drag your infant, five or six years of age, from its bed . . . give it a crust of brown bread and a little milk and water, and in the very cloud of night to turn it from your door, half naked, whilst, perhaps, the lightnings glared across the heavens, the hoarse thunder roared, and the 'pitiless pelting storm' descended upon its tender frame . . ." (W. Scott, booklet, An Earnest Address and URGENT APPEAL, to the People of England, in behalf of the oppressed and suffering PITMEN, Newcastle April 1831, p. 9).

65 Evidence of Dr W. Morison, C.E.C. 1842, pp. 662-663; *ibid.*, pp. 726-730; Edward Boyd, viewer at Urpeth colliery, *ibid.*, p. 661; Dr J. Mitchell, *ibid.*, p. 144 (Mitchell blamed the lack of opportunities for doing domestic service); Dr R. Elliot, *ibid.*, p. 669. Elliot divided colliery women into the notorious two types of orderly and disorderly, provident and improvident etc., whereas eight years before Eneas Mackenzie described the women as a rude, but merry, whole:

"A long cart, lent by the owners of the colliery for the purpose, is sometimes filled with the women and their marketings, jogging homeward at a smart pace; and from these each wayfarer receives a shower of taunting coarse jokes, and the air is filled with loud, rude merriment" (E. Mackenzie and M. Ross, *op. cit.*, p. cxv).

One cannot but wonder how often Dr Elliot and his kind were

showered in the wayside from these carts, and to what extent the experience could have prejudiced their ever finer judgement?

- 66 The Mining Districts, P.P. 1853, op. cit., p. 26.
- 67 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 16 May 1842, D.C.R.O. D/LO/C 142; *ibid.*, 13 June 1842.
- 68 "laimed in the Pit" was a common application: Select Vestry, 23 April 1823; for sanctions, checks, encouragements, and control, see, recorded payments, Select Vestry, 20 August 1821; 'Temporary Relief etc. paid Sundries' 1827. (Usworth township, poor rates, overseers accounts, 1819-1836. D.C.R.O. UD/Wa 3, 4).
- 69 Robert Colls, 'Oh Happy English Children!': Coal, Class, and Education in the North East, Past and Present, no. 73, (1976). See also J. Y. E. Seeley, Coal Mining Villages, op. cit., for sample evidence for an impression of the dates of later colliery schools, p. 35, p. 41, p. 46, p. 73, p. 76, p. 89, p. 102, p. 116, p. 125, p. 136, p. 145, p. 164, p. 166, p. 169, p. 175, p. 197, p. 199, p. 210, p. 219, p. 245, p. 264, p. 269, p. 282.

The coalowners joined the National Society in the 1830s in efforts to increase the number of elementary schools in the pit villages, but the crucial question concerns the nature and quality of the schooling provided. It is my opinion that overall, this was not high: see Messrs Colls, Duffy, and Heesom, Debate, Past and Present, forthcoming.

- 70 State of Elementary Education, P.P. 1841, op. cit., p. 57; The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 26. South Hetton had a company school for one hundred and thirty boys provided in

1840 (evidence of Edward Potter, viewer of South Hetton colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 149), a church built in 1838 by company subscription, and the gift of free land from the landlord of the coal royalty (ibid.; evidence of Mr Bryden, underviewer, ibid., p. 21). The only evidence I have discovered of direct company involvement in religious revivalism, for their own sake is later, and slender indeed, and concerns the hire of a preacher, William Gelley, in the 1860s, to tour the villages (W. Patterson, Northern Primitive Methodism, 1909, p. 278). In 1818 the Newcastle Sunday School Union had to ask coalowners and others for help to meet increasing demands: "The owners of collieries are respectfully entreated to recollect how much they owe to this society" (quoted in Rev. W. Walters, op. cit., pp. 104-105). North East Primitive Methodism was perpetually concerned in the 1830s about its financial solvency in relation to missionary tasks - see for example, letter to the General Committee, 22 January 1836, Sunderland Primitive Methodist Circuit, Quarterly, Local Preachers, and Committee Meeting Minutes 1831-1842, D.C.R.O. M/Sus. 80.

- 71 Chief Constable's Reports, op. cit., Winter Sessions, 1842, for Wingate. The underviewer at Hetton reported company regulations on drinking, fighting, stealing, and gambling at work: evidence of Mr Bailey, C.E.C. 1842, p. 649. Joseph Dawson, hewer at Auckland, commented ruefully that since neither the owners nor the police would allow fighting 'the only amusement is eating and drinking' (ibid., p. 159). Patterson reports rare aid in Primitive chapel building schemes at Seghill and Cramlington in 1838-1839, and the 1840s, W. M. Patterson, op. cit., p. 347, p. 349.

72 "Information having been given that several of the Workmen of South Hetton and Murton Collieries are guilty of playing at Cards, and other sorts of Gambling, on the Sabbath Days; they are hereby required to take Notice, that whoever is detected doing so, will be immediately discharged ... and the Police have orders to watch strictly, and give the names into the Colliery Office of those who may be found acting in such unchristianlike manner" (Poster, Thomas Forster, viewer, South Hetton Colliery Office, 15 July 1852, N.C.R.O. ZFO/1).

In 1848 the owner of Willington and Sunnybrow collieries refused to bind Primitive pitmen unless they joined the Methodist New Connexion, of which he himself was a member: W. M. Patterson, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

73 Statistical Tables of nine principal Collieries in the County of Durham - respectfully dedicated to the British Association for the advancement of science (Newcastle 20 August 1838), D.C.R.O. D/X 260/1. "Schools and Places of Religious Worship" constituted the same category, and the nine collieries were at South Shields, Monkwearmouth, Newbottle, Hetton, South Hetton, Haswell, Thornley, and Coundon in Auckland (Black Boy Colliery). State of Elementary Education, P.P. 1841, *op. cit.*, p. 57. The four parishes were Wallsend, Heworth, Chester le Street and Hetton.

74 *ibid.*

75 I found W. D. Cooper's dissertation useful for information on the spread of teetotal societies on Tyneside and in the colliery villages during the period: The Teetotal Movement with particular reference to the North East of England 1835-1860 (unpublished Durham University dissertation towards B.A. (hons))

degree, 1968) Appendix pp. 58-59.

Northern District Temperance Record, October 1838; W. D. Cooper, op. cit., p. 8; NDTR, March 1839; Newcastle Teetotal Society, Fifth Annual Report, 1840.

The Rechabites were particularly prominent in County Durham's mining districts, and in 1844 they appealed to the Wesleyan Methodists in the area for more commitment to the cause: The Northern Temperance and Rechabite Almanack, 1843 (Newcastle 1844).

- 76 State of Elementary Education, P.P. 1841, op.cit., p. 57. Commissioner Leifchild reported that the majority of colliery sunday schools were Methodist: C.E.C. 1842, p. 533. Of nine chapels built in the Seghill area since 1827, four were Wesleyan, four were Primitive, and one was Presbyterian (evidence of Charles Carr, coalowner, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 27).

There had been sunday schools in the pit villages since at least the turn of the century, but a stable momentum does not seem to have been achieved until the 1820s: Summary of the Condition, op. cit.; Rev. W. Walters, op. cit., pp. 110-112, p. 155, pp. 185-188, p. 231, p. 248; C.E.C. 1842, pp. 143-144; State of Elementary Education, op. cit., p. 63. Primitive Methodist sunday school strength in the colliery area of north County Durham stood at over a thousand. With the Newcastle Circuit sunday school strength at 540, and Darlington Circuit at 548, North Durham was their strongest district. Details were as follows, and note the relative strength of the mining villages compared with the larger towns such as Durham City,

Sunderland and Monkwearmouth:

	Boys	Girls	Total
Sunderland	75	105	180
Hopper St. (S'land)	64	66	130
Monkwearmouth	43	35	78
Middle Rainton	35	35	70
Hetton	120	190	310
Easington Lane	56	40	96
South Hetton	50	50	100
Southwick	36	34	70
Durham City	18	25	43
Thornley	120	80	200
			1277

(Source: Primitive Methodist Magazine, 1837, p. 339)

The Primitives do not seem to have suffered the outright persecution from North East authority of the kind they encountered in other regions such as the Midlands and South West (see Rev. W. Dent, in Primitive Methodist Magazine, 1884, p. 287).

77 Evidence of Mr Brown, agent, Cowpen colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 165; Commissioner Leifchild, *ibid.*, p. 717; Charles Carr, coalowner, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Four years before Carr had presented the Seghill Library as a success (C.E.C. 1842, p. 613) but

"The strike knocked it all up" (The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, p. 27),

ibid., p. 121; evidence of 'An Eminent Engineer', C.E.C. 1842, p. 151.

78 There was extensive benefit and friendly society provision at every colliery in the coalfield: Second Report on Accidents, P.P. 1853 (740) xx, p. 27; C.E.C. 1842, p. 724. The Rechabite

(Temperance) societies were organized around a freemasonry of elders, stewardesses, tents, tent-keepers, senior matrons, Levites, and "Sisters in Israel". Their societal regulations were also a moral code and both code and regulations insured organizational coherence and financial solvency. Societies had fines for offences which included absence, unpunctuality, intoxication, disorder, quarrelling, swearing, obscenity, prejudice of another, gambling, for men "the Foul Disease, Pox, or Clap", and for women on those "who bear[s] a bastard" or who bring children to meetings "except such as suck at the breast": W. B. Leighton, The Regulations and General Laws of the United Order of Female Rechabites (Newcastle 1841); Articles agreed to by the Friendly Society, held at John Ovington's New Lambton, 16 October 1813, P.R.O. F.S. 1. 118; Articles of the Friendly Society of Women, Easington Lane, Hetton le Hole, 7 March 1840, P.R.O. F.S. 1. 122. For a general history of this important but neglected subject see, P. H. J. H. Gosden, The Friendly Societies in England 1815-75 (1961)

'An Eminent Engineer', C.E.C. 1842, p. 151.

79 Evidence of W. Morison, C.E.C. 1842, pp. 726-730; Mr Boyd, agent at Urpeth colliery, *ibid.*, p. 716; John Buddle, *ibid.*, p. 625. See also the evidences of Mr Robson, viewer at Hetton, and T. J. Taylor, coalowner, *ibid.*, p. 648, p. 609.

80 For total membership of major Methodist denominations, 1801-1851, see Appendix p. 350. For membership of Methodist denominations as a percentage of population, 1801-1851, see Appendix pp. 351-52.

In the Chester le Street, Castle Ward, Easington, and Houghton 'mining districts' on Census Sunday 1851, 11% of the population went to the Church of England, 8% to the Wesleyan Methodists, 5% to the Primitive Methodists, and 4% to other nonconformist groups: P. E. H. Hair, *op. cit.*, p. 293. 'Members' were the hard-core of each 'class' or 'society', but they were by no means the only section or the most numerous section. In 1846 Murton Wesleyans made application to their Circuit to build a chapel. In presenting their case they outlined their strength: in addition to the eighteen full members, the trial members, and the sunday school scholars, the society had one hundred "average number of hearers" (Houghton le Spring Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, Circuit Schedules 1836-1847, 13 March 1846, D.C.R.O. M/HO 54).

"Hearers" did not find their way into Methodist statistics but if this Murton figure is any way near-typical, it greatly increases the percentage of the population under the Methodist influence. The point is supported by P. Stigant in his 'Wesleyan Methodism and Working Class Radicalism in the North 1792-1821', Northern History, vol. vi, 1971.

- 81 For relative chapel provision from a sample of 102 colliery villages in Northumberland and Durham in 1873 and 1877, see J. Y. E. Seeley, *op. cit.*, p. 317.
- 82 For average annual growth rate of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist denominations by triennial periods, 1821-1850, see Appendix p. 353.
- 83 Robert Moore, Pit-men, Preachers, and Politics (1974) p. 25
- 84 James Obelkevich, *op. cit.*, p. 256. Obelkevich also accepts a similarly generalized correspondence between the more obscure

phenomenon of Primitive revivalism, and social change: "Indeed it can be suggested that the 'pardon' offered to labourers by Primitive Methodism was for a guilt and unworthiness that had been induced in them not by the preachers but by the dominant social classes, quite outside the religious sphere" (p. 231). Robert Currie also accepted broad correspondences between "external factors" and religious growth in his Methodism Divided (1968), p. 94.

The 'up-down' 'religion-social change' correspondence has been accompanied by a sometimes similarly bland correspondence across cultural institutions. This tendency has been for example, to pronounce Radicalism as "a very real alternative" to Methodism "for the articulate, intelligent artisan" (P. Stigant, Religion and Social Control: Methodism 1790-1830, paper presented to Newcastle University Conference on Social Control, January 1973, p. 7).

- 85 Edward Thompson made heroic moves to explain Methodist growth and its possible relationship to social change in his The Making of the English Working Class in 1963, and later made plain the need for detailed chronological analysis, *ibid.*, (1968 ed.) pp. 917-923.
- 86 N. Curnock (ed.), *op. cit.*, vol. iii, pp. 68-69. Wesley continued to visit colliery societies three or four times a decade until his death in 1791.
- 87 Rev. F. Young, Early History of Methodism around Houghton le Spring (Hetton 1927); Sunderland Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, List of Members arranged by societies and classes, 1782-1836, four volumes, D.C.R.O. M/Sus. 147-150.

- 88 For revivals at Old Penshaw and Easington Lane, F. Young, *op. cit.*; for expansions at Newbottle, Colliery Dykes, and West Rainton, Sunderland Wesleyan, List of Members, *op. cit.*; figures for Lumley, and Sunderland and South Shields, are (inexplicably) contained in North Shields Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, Names of Members in Society 1811-1873, D.C.R.O. M/SS 1; Houghton le Spring Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, Circuit Schedules 1836-1847, D.C.R.O. M/HO 54.
- 89 Sunderland Town Mission, Committee minutes, 3 July 1839, D.C.R.O. H/Sus 205. The 1842 Children's Commission felt bound to comment on the institutional strength of Tyneside Wesleyanism, C.E.C. 1842, p. 723.
- 90 Details of this penetration can be found in Rev. H. B. Kendall, The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church (1905) vol i; and J. W. Fawcett, Memorials of Early Primitive Methodism in the County of Durham 1820-1829 (1908). The Primitive Connexion enjoyed large national gains in the early 1820s in an atmosphere of Radical retreat and political repression. Their activities, and those of other Methodist offshoots such as the Tent Methodists (1820) were considered by many as seditious; see letters of 'J. S.', an informer, to the Home Department, 6 April, 23 April, 2 May 1821: "Great numbers of the Methodists have separated from the orderly and regular Westlean [Wesleyan] body and are forming plans for Preaching in Tents in the fields this Summer in all parts of England and it is among those that the Seditious are directing their attention ..." (P.R.O. HO 40/16).
- 91 For indications of Wesleyan revivals 1820-1821, 1822-1823, see Appendix p. 354, Memberships of Philadelphia, Lumley, South Shields, North Shields, and Sunderland Wesleyan Societies

1816-1823.

- 92 Journal of Bro. Jeremiah Gilbert, North Tyne July 1823, Primitive Methodist Magazine 1823, p. 279; South Shields, March-April 1824, P[rimitive] M[ethodist] M[agazine] 1824, p. 228; Rev. Branfoot, Hebburn, November 1823, PMM 1824, p. 255. In February-March 1823 Bro. Joseph Spencer had great revivalist success all along the North Tyne, except in Newcastle which he described as "barren" - yet on his return there in four months ten persons were set "at liberty", an event which he described as "marvellous in our eyes" (PMM 1824, pp. 250-251). See also the journal of Bro. George Wallace, July 1823 - February 1824, PMM 1824, pp. 222-226.

In 1905 Kendall pronounced that "The laws which govern the origin and course of great revivals are obscure and difficult to trace" (Rev. H. B. Kendall, *op. cit.*, p. 10). This difficult subject will be gradually pursued but for the moment one must see revivalism as the product of both human and structural agency. Both agents obviously affected each other but their balance of effectiveness could change. These revivals of the early 1820s were earnestly sought and desired but they clearly burst upon the preachers in an unexpected and surprising way - a fact which suggests deeper sources than Methodist self-generation.

One must not assume that all societies were founded in the heat of revivalism and social undercurrent - as Kendall reminds us, "The sinking of a pit has always meant the establishment of a society; for, amongst the sinkers and miners drawn to the spot, there were sure to be some Primitive Methodists, who might be counted upon to abide true to their Church, and who, if there were no society already, would see to it that one was founded". (*ibid.*, p. 183).

- 93 This is an abridged abstract of Nelson's own tour account, published in the PMM 1825, pp. 69-72.
- 94 Journal of Thomas Nelson, 25 August 1823, quoted in Rev. H. B. Kendall, *op. cit.*, p. 202.
- 95 Journal of Nathaniel West, 15 October 1823, quoted in Rev. H. B. Kendall, *op. cit.*, p. 203. For the membership of four major coalfield circuits, 1823-1845, see Appendix p. 355: Membership of Sunderland, Durham, North Shields, and South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuits, 1823-1845.
- 96 See Appendix p. ~~36~~57: Occupations of fathers of those children baptized by Primitive Methodists in Monkwearmouth 1843-1853, and parts of County Durham 1841-1850. (Sunderland Primitive Methodist Circuit, Baptisms solemnized in the Parish of Monkwearmouth, 1843-1953, D.C.R.O., M/Sus 68: Register of Baptisms 1841-1850, in Durham Primitive Methodist Circuit, D.C.R.O., M/Du 25).

In 1824 the Northern 'District' was set up comprising of six circuits, Hexham, Carlisle, North and South Shields, Newcastle and Sunderland - with twenty travelling preachers, sixty-one local preachers, and 3632 members. (W. M. Patterson, *op. cit.*, p. 14).

- 97 PMM 1832, p. 149.
- 98 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 19, 29 December 1831; Nathaniel Hindhaugh, colliery agent, to John Buddle, 20 January

1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142; Maj. Gen. Sir H. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, Home Office, 30 July 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; Buddle to Londonderry, 11 August 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142; Bouverie to Phillips, 5 September 1832: "Cholera is in almost all the villages to the South of the Tyne" (P.R.O., HO 40/30/2).

- 99 PMM 1832, p. 48, pp. 227-229, p. 385.
- 100 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 23 November 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 101 PMM 1832, pp. 227-229. See also Appendix p. 355.
- 102 PMM 1832, p. 385, pp. 227-229.

In 1849 Thomas Beatty, surgeon to the Easington Poor Law Union remarked that any family in South Hetton which suffered diarrhoea had great difficulty in finding nursing help, and therefore ran the risk of pauperization due to "such terror of cholera" (Thomas Beatty to the Commissioners, 15 November 1849, D.C.R.O., M.H./12/3053).

- 103 "One of the worst streets, parallel with the Tyne was said to be swept of confirmed drunkards from one end to the other . . ." (M.C. Dixon, An Affectionate Address to the inhabitants of Newcastle and Gateshead . . . on the present alarming visitation of Divine Providence in the fatal Ravages of the Spasmodic Cholera, 1832, tract for the General Union of the Newcastle Religious Tract Society).
- 104 Rev. J. Brewster, M.A., A SERMON preached in the Parish Church of Boldon . . . for the benefit of the Families of the Poor Sufferers, from the Late Dreadful Explosion at the Felling Colliery (1812) p. 11; Rev. J. Hodgson, An Account of the Explosion, which

killed ninety-two persons, in BRANDLING MAIN COLLIERY, at Felling, near Newcastle upon Tyne, on May 25, 1812 (1813) p. 72; Liverpool Religious Tract Society, Narrative of a Dreadful Occurrence at Felling Colliery (1812) p. 11.

See also, for the praise of someone who was well prepared for death, T. Lessey (ed.), A Short Account of the LIFE and Christian Experience of JOHN THOMPSON, One of the persons killed by the explosion which took place in the Felling Colliery, on Monday, May 25, 1812 (n.d.) in, History of the Coal Trade Collection, P.L.L.

- 105 Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, Colliery Tale; or Village Distress (1835) p. 15. Great Northern Advertiser, A Letter from the Dead to the Living; or the Collier Boy and his Mother (1841); for the story of the sunday school teacher gassed in the after damp with the corpses of his class around him, see: Rev. J. Everett, op. cit., p. 162.
- 106 As a subject of popular music and doggerel in the area: A Descriptive Poem on the late Lamentable Occurrence which took place at Wallsend Church Pit, on Thursday, June 18, 1835, by which 101 Men and Boys Lost their Lives (chapbook, Newcastle, 1835); The Collier; Or, the dying hour of William Johnson, who unfortunately Lost his Life, by the falling in the Shaft in which he was at Work on August 28 1836 (broadside, Newcastle, 1836).

The extent to which the disaster figured in the popular imagination is indicated in the amendments to a printer's proof of The Willington Colliery Explosion (n.d.) in the North East Institute of Mechanical and Mining Engineers (Bell Collection, vol. xix, p. 304). 'Willington' is replaced by 'Wrekenton' and the dates,

number of survivors, and predominant families are all amended:
 breakfast
 "Their dinner scarce ended ... An explosion took place".

- 107 Of course, the community made its own responses before the offices of the SPCK, the Liverpool Religious Tract Society, or even the Primitive Methodists. Penshaw colliery exploded in 1823 to kill fifty-nine and for reference to custom and ritual see, John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 3 November 1823, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 108 Quarterly, Local Preachers', and Committee Meeting Minutes 1831-1842, 15 March, 10 September 1832, D.C.R.O. M/Sus. 80.
- 109 PMM 1833, pp. 376-377; 1835, pp. 313-314; 1836, pp. 310-311; 1837, p. 266; 1838, pp. 381-382; Quarterly, Local Preachers' ... Minutes, op cit., 16 September 1839. There were reports in 1839 of a North East improvement and reconciliation: "The cause is the united energies of our preachers and praying labourers ... being accompanied by the power of the mighty God of Jacob". (PMM 1839, p. 449).
- 110 Quarterly, Local Preachers' ... Minutes, op. cit., 16 September 1833.
- 111 PMM 1837, p. 267; PMM 1839, p. 449.
- 112 These graphs must be interpreted with caution. The Wesleyan figures are for full members and only exist for the month of July in 1829, 1832, 1833, and 1835. The Primitive figures are for full and trial members and are taken from the June quarter for 1829-1836. Moreover, the smooth curve, used to overcome comparative differences, could be against the essentially volatile character of the period. On balance it seems unlikely - give our

knowledge from non statistical sources - but the Wesleyan societies theoretically could have experienced massive increases and decreases in the missing years.

- 113 For Appendix p. 362, Haswell, Thornley, and Sherburn Hill were each new mining villages, commencing operations in 1831, 1834, and 1835 respectively. Between 1831 and 1841 they all experienced dramatic increases in population, Haswell 263 - 3,981, Thornley 50 - 2,730, and Sherburn Hill 337 - 1,946 - and all three lay within three miles of each other. In spite of this general comparability there are multifarious possibilities of relationship between the incoming population and the Primitive society, undetectable from census returns and for which the historian cannot account. For instance, Primitive society growth, may simply reflect a rate of incoming population. Equally, the rising fortunes of the Haswell society over the others from December 1839 to June 1840 may have been due to the settlement of a number of established Methodist families in the village. Similarly, individual societies with declining numbers could start their own re-missioning programmes which could sometimes prove satisfactory - as with Bro. Lupton's efforts in and around South Shields in June 1838 (PMM 1838, pp. 99-103) and those of the Kelloe society from December to January 1843 (PMM 1843, pp. 217-218). On the other hand, such programmes could prove unsatisfactory - as with the Westgate attempts in 1836: "... we were not sufficiently cautious in giving in the new converts. Some of these having no roots in themselves fell away ..." (Reports to District Meeting, including membership, accounts, preachers' careers, chapels, lists of failures etc. 1836-1932, 4 March 1837, Westgate P.M. Circuit, D.C.R.O., M/We 93).

The use of Methodist membership statistics as a hand on the pulse of the emotions of the Poor continues to have possibilities, but the historian must be wary of the more mundane historical and demographic factors which can affect the statistical index of this relationship. At the same time fleeting village incidents of emotional significance may have occurred which cannot be known to the historian. This research problem of social causation, general theory, and literary-statistical evidence is, for the discrete phenomenon of Methodism, not usually given to straightforward analysis. The historian is forced to accept the limitations of his craft.

- 114 PMM 1842, p. 135.
- 115 For details of Rev. Moses Lupton's 1842 campaign in West Cramlington, Howden, Willington, Cramlington, Seghill and Seaton Delaval see, PMM 1843, pp. 141-144.
- 116 The Durham Circuit was enjoying massive camp meetings right up until the beginning of the NMA's ill-fated 1844 strike: Minute Book for Durham Circuit P.M. Connexion for Quarter Days and Circuit Committee Meetings, 13 April 1844, D.C.R.O., M/Du. 25. At village level in the South Shields P.M. Circuit it is necessary to note that only one out of seven colliery-connected societies enjoyed significant gains during the period of NMA recruitment: Appendix p. 363.
- 117 Northern Liberator, 26 January, 23 February, 2 February, 4 May 1839. The speed of the penetration is apparent when one considers that a new enrolment of forty-five members at Sherburn Hill in late February (ibid., 2 March 1839) came only one or two weeks after Chartists Reeves and Garry had visited the village to hold

a meeting: " ... the first of its kind, the people know nothing of the Chartists, and the only papers taken in here were three tory ones - their doom is sealed. The people now know the Chartists, and seek to know something about the Democratic press" (ibid., 23 February 1839).

118 Northern Liberator, 16 March 1839.

In 1909 it was a surprise to established Primitives that Winlaton, iron-town on the banks of the Tyne and Radical-Chartist stronghold for twenty years, had also been a Primitive Methodist stronghold in the late 1820s. Winlaton existed as a circuit from 1827-1829, covering twenty villages, with two travelling preachers, sixteen local preachers, and thirteen exhorters. (W. M. Patterson, op. cit., p. 204).

119 Sunderland Primitives minuted in 1839 "That the Circuit has Suffered by the influence of Chartism" (Quarterly, Local Preachers ... Minutes, op.cit., 16 September 1839) . This evidence must be respected and might be seen as relating to what growth might have been achieved without a Chartist influence. At the same time it may have been said in reference to coalfield disruption which followed the Chartist peak, of a similar but smaller kind as that which followed the defeat of Hepburn's Union after 1832.

120 There are very few references from the Chartists to Primitive opposition. Those few that there are, are usually vague asides as concerning the use of Thornley chapel (above), or are directed at incidental rivalry for the attentions of the crowd, as at Hetton -

" ... although there was a missionary meeting, and great efforts were made to lessen the attendance at

the Chartist gathering, yet the room was crowded to excess ... " (Northern Liberator, 16 March 1839)

In April there were references to pro-Chartist Wesleyan sermons around West Auckland and Aycliffe (ibid., 13 April 1839).

- 121 Northern Liberator, 16 March 1839.
- 122 Minute Book for Durham Circuit P.M. Connexion, op. cit. See also, Accounts of Monies and Members 1837-1850, South Shields P.M. Circuit, September 1843, September 1844, D.C.R.O., M/SS.29.
- 123 Minute Book for Durham Circuit P.M. Connexion, 19 June 1847, op. cit.
- 124 The Anglicans considered themselves at a serious disadvantage in their mission, when they compared their lone parson against the whole lay-officialdom of Methodism, their demands of consecration against the makeshift flexibility of the meeting room: (Prefactory Minute ... relating to a Manual of Vocal Music, Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education ... P.P. 1840-1841, op. cit., p. 61). The Church of England had recognized this problem well before Primitive Methodist activity:

"The discipline of the Methodists is such an artful and well-linked chain of dependence that every man is either an office bearer, or under the immediate superintendence of some other person of his own rank and near his own size of understanding. The framers of the Church of England contemplated no such state of things as this. They provided one guide to one flock ... Accordingly the parish minister now stands single against a host of bands, classes, and nameless authorities all acting with the compact and uniform force produced by combination." (Rev. T. D. Whitaker, MS paper read to Elland Clerical Society, 1813, quoted in, John Walsh, 'Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth-Century', in R. Davies and G. Rupp (eds.), A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain (1965), vol. i, p. 312).

- 125 For a collection of cheap and makeshift meeting rooms from the 1830s - a cottage and public house 'long room' in Murton, a cottage in South Hetton, a schoolroom in Easington Lane, a gable-end in Jarrow, see: Rev. W. Brown, Centenary of Primitive Methodism in the Hetton Circuit (1923), and W. H. Walton, Centenary Celebration, Primitive Methodist Church, Jarrow on Tyne 1822-1922 (1922). Early Primitive Methodism relied upon the enthusiasm of pitmen like John Bell for its premises: at three different collieries, Bell's own home served as a meeting room, PMM 1870, p. 422. For a spurt of colliery chapel building after 1850 at South Hetton, Seaham, Murton, Middle Rainton, Newbottle, and Hetton: Sunderland PM Circuit, Circuit Schedules 1838-1850, D.C.R.O., M./Sus 75.
- 126 C. N. Wawn, Thomas Curry, the Pious Keelman (an authentic narrative), (1822) pp. 10-11, p. 12.
- 127 PMM 1847, Robert Young (1802-1847), p. 457; *ibid.*, 1856, Cuthbert Colling (1794-1856), p. 401.
- 128 PMM 1865, William Birkbeck (1838-1865), pp. 115-116. Also, *ibid.*, 1857, James Potts of Westgate (1801-1856), pp. 184-185; *ibid.*, 1846, Betsy Goodchild (1825-1846), p. 188; *ibid.*, 1850, Sarah Lowther of South Hetton (1829-1850) p. 249.
- 129 PMM 1843, William Hindhaugh (1784-1843) converted 1818 at Hexham by unknown preacher, pp. 322-323; *ibid.*, 1862, James Pyburn (1798-1862) converted in 1838 by Newcastle Wesleyans after six years a sunday school teacher, p. 593.
- 130 PMM 1862, Matthew Raisbeck (1820-1861), Hetton miner converted in 1834, p. 253.
- 131 Experience of Timothy Hackworth, Wylam colliery blacksmith,

mechanic, and preacher, converted there in 1811 after three months convinced of sin, in, W. D. Lawson, Wesleyan Local Preachers: biographical illustrations of their position in the connexion, utility in the church, and influence in the world (1874) p. 155.

- 132 Overall judgements relating to theoretical ideas on revivalism will be based on the whole of the study so far.

In his famous study of the Gastonia cotton strike of 1929 Liston Pope found evidence of company-paid revivalist preachers being invited to deflect attention from the communist-led strike: see, Liston Pope, Millhands and Preachers. A study of Gastonia (Yale 1942).

- 133 Robert Southey, The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism (1820), 2 vols, p. 298, p. 246.

- 134 John Walsh, op. cit., pp. 313-314. To be fair to Walsh, his essay is about eighteenth-century experience. When this level of activity would be far less.

- 135 J. W. Fawcett, op. cit., pp. 17-18, p. 20.

- 136 Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., vol. i, p. 142, p. 147. Wesley was often embarrassed by the hysteria often manifest at his meetings. "How fond he is of the word 'calm'!" (R. A. Knox, Enthusiasm, 1950, p. 452). Robert Currie has pointed to the impetus for revivalism from the congregation as often causing dispute with their professional ministers - as James Everett, the North East's own "hellfire lad" put it, "Whence are the people to look for their REVIVALISTS? Not, alas! to a college" (Rev. J. Everett, The Disputants; or, The Arguments in Favour

- of the Newly Established Theological Institution among the Methodists Brought up to the Test, 1835, p. 76, quoted in Robert Currie, *op. cit.*, p. 48).
- 137 Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District: the Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca N.Y. 1950). Writing of millenarianism during this period Prof. Harrison says "it is tempting to extend the idea to a metaphorical frontier of the new industrialism in Britain - to see in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, where so many millennial sects had their strongholds, another 'Burned-over District'" ... "The total impact of economic change and the consequent upheaval in social relationships is the only context in which all the manifestations of millennialism can be understood". (J. F. C. Harrison, Robert Owen and The Owenites in Britain and America, 1969, p. 102, p. 138).
- 138 Judgements on working-life are derived from Part I.
- 139 Dr Andrew Ure (Philosophy of Manufactures, 1835) was the decade's prime apologist for machine manufacture, the factory system, and the need to discipline the sensibilities of an oft-refractory labour force: "It is, therefore, excessively the interest of every mill owner, to organize his moral machinery on equally sound principles with his mechanical ... " (p. 417).
- 140 Edward Thompson had argued cogently (if speculatively) for the Methodist conversion, in its submissiveness, as a major factor in the making of a factory-disciplined English working-class. He takes his chapter heading, "The Transforming Power of the Cross" from Dr Ure: "Where then shall mankind find this transforming power? - in the cross of Christ ... it is ... not only the motive

to obedience, but the pattern of it". (E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, 1968 ed., pp. 385-440; Dr A. Ure, op. cit., pp. 423-425).

141 As late as 1905 the movement was lamenting its relative failure in the industrial towns and cities, Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., p. 298.

142 " ... it is possible that religious revivalism took over just at the point where 'political' or temporal aspirations met with defeat ... The suggestion is tentative. To take it further, we should know more about, not the years of revivalism, but the months; not the counties, but the towns and villages."

"Given the initial propensity to instability, it may be set in motion by any sombre or dramatic event - a Lisbon earthquake, plague, famine, national crisis, war, a local pit disaster, or (in a village) the sudden death of an individual". (E. P. Thompson, op. cit., pp. 428-429, p. 919).

Thompson's theory oscillates between the extremely bold and the extremely tentative, and both features hardened under the criticism the theory subsequently attracted. Thompson's suggestions of chiliastic 'despair' range from the Industrial Revolution in general, to War and Counter Revolution, to millennial expectancy, to industrial and political unrest, to, "above all", "misery and war weariness" (pp. 417-429 passim). In addition, he adds the endemic instability of the village, and the infinite possibilities of self-induced revivalism (p. 919). Given such a range of potential revival causes - from general contexts to direct external factors to internal generation - the theory can lose much of its force. There is also a problem of

chronology and location. The theory applies to circumstances for the years from 1780-1820; or the War years in particular - with possibilities in rural-mining areas for being "long continued"; or up to 1832, and even beyond considering the attributed Methodist influence on factory discipline (pp. 918-921). Sometimes, Edward Thompson's 'worker', when faced with Wesleyanism, loses his capacity for reinterpretation according to experience - a capacity he keeps when in contact with political Radicalism or Owenism (eg. p. 402). At other times Methodism is held as being softened and modified by this experience manifest in the mutuality of working-class community (p. 416). This sort of difficulty is sub-divided by Thompson's contrast (in their recruits, if not their methods of recruitment) between Primitive Methodism and Wesleyan Methodism: "We can scarcely discuss the two Churches in the same terms" (p. 436).

There is a summary of some of these issues in a national context in A. D. Gilbert, 'Methodism, Dissent, and Political Stability in Early Industrial England', Journal of Religious History, 10, (1979), pp. 381-99. The article does not however make any serious contribution to the subject, in spite of its claims.

143 W. Hazlitt, 'On the Causes of Methodism', The Round Table (1817), quoted in E. P. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 406; R. Southey, *op. cit.*, *passim.*; W. James, The Varieties of Religious Experience: a study in human nature (1904), p. 95.

144 Prof. Cohn's study of Medieval millenarianism fixes a marginal people on the edge of urban society who could react to events, particularly disasters, with a paranoid "mass disorientation and anxiety". The book seems to me heavily political: N. Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium (1962), p.v. G. R. Taylor tries

to psychoanalyze Puritan man in his The Angel Makers: A Study in the Psychological Origins of Historical Change (1750-1850), (1958).

145 Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., pp. 145-146; PMM 1824, pp. 212-214; *ibid.*, 1825, pp. 32-34.

146 PMM 1824, pp. 212-214; J. W. Fawcett, op. cit., p. 34.

147 Even, (or particularly?) the eminently sensible Ashbys felt the irrational potential of chapel atmosphere: "A service in the thin fine light of a sunny spring morning or in the fresh cold of a wet day was an ordinary rational experience compared with an evening service". (M. K. Ashby, Joseph Ashby of Tysoe 1859-1919, 1974 ed., p. 170). I was reminded of the punishing effects of manual labour and its status on reading the anonymous autobiography of a Victorian navy:

"When a workingman don't hear anything but swearing, and jeering, and laughing all the week round, for month after month, he can't hardly get it out of his head again rightly; but, if somebody will come on the works at dinner-time, and read, or talk to us, the men will mostly like it, and be glad to listen. It always does some good, if it is only the being spoken to, now and then, like as if we was the same flesh and blood with other people. We are wonderful tender-hearted, too. A 'navvy' will cry the easiest thing as is. If you'll only talk a little good to him, you can make a navy burst out crying like a child in a few minutes . . ." (in J. Burnett, op. cit., p. 60).

There is some attempt to trace the pattern of eighteenth-century Methodist conversion in J. Lawson, 'Our Discipline', Methodist Church, op. cit., p. 204.

148 Evidence of Nicholas Wood, coalowner, C.E.C. 1842, p. 588.

149 I am grateful for the insight of this phrase to John Walsh's review of James Obelkevich's work (op. cit.) in, History

- Workshop Journal, no. 5, (1978), p. 207.
- 150 Frances Bevan, The Story of John Wesley (n.d. 1860s?) pp. 102-103; Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., p. 203; New Moral World, 28 July 1838, quoted in J. F. C. Harrison, op. cit., p. 133. Two outstanding examples of ideological tears in later century are Ramsay Guthrie's (Rev. C. Bowran) novelettes, Kitty Fagan: a romance of pit life (1901) and The Old Folks at Home. The Romance of the Aged Miners (1919). I deal with Methodist 'hagiography' at greater length in my The Collier's Rant, op. cit., pp. 166-178.
- 151 E. P. Thompson, op. cit., p. 437. Kendall, when talking about the Primitive revivals after 1815 and the political swings which sandwiched them, makes interesting if ambiguous comment on the Primitive capacity for 'reactive dialecticism':
- Churches of long standing naturally made it their chief solicitude to keep their people from being 'drawn away and enticed' by the lawless spirit abroad. They drew a cordon round the fold and tried to isolate their flock. But as yet our missionaries had no such necessary work to engage them. They themselves were outside the cordon, and any work they did must be carried on within the infected area. (Kendall, op. cit., pp. 220-221).
- 152 For reference to the vivid quality of early female preaching and later regret at its demise, see PMM 1850, obituary of Jane Curry (1807-1850), p. 647; *ibid.*, 1884, p. 28. Preacher William Clough from North Shields reported that Berwick had no bellman but "a boy goes round with a wooden trencher and stick" (*ibid.*, 1829, pp. 175-178); Templetown's first Primitive class leader was the local publican, *ibid.*, 1884, p. 285; the Gateshead society in the 1820s met in the 'Brandy Vault' (W. M. Patterson, op. cit., p. 325); the South Shields Templetown class were ejected from the blacksmith's shop in 1832 (Patterson, p. 232); of Newark Featonby (Patterson, p. 288); the beef sandwiches allegations

were made by the men of Sacriston after an ex-lay preacher, Thomas Carr, had left the strike and joined an evicting party (Miners' Advocate, 24 August 1844). Carr might have had a taste for the conviviality and sandwiches of associational life: he had previously been a Chartist speaker and teetotal lecturer before asking for a job with the Advocate.

- 153 There are interesting accounts of funeral practice in S.P.C.K., Colliery Tale, op. cit., and The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, 5 August 1837. For an excellent introduction to the mass of "folklore, ritual, and superstition surrounding death and burial" of the Eighteenth-century Poor see, Peter Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot Against the Surgeons', in Hay, Linebaugh, Thompson, (eds.) Albion's Fatal Tree. Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England (1975), pp. 109-111. I am grateful to the chapter on Popular Religion by James Obelkevich, op. cit., for insights into the relationship of magic and religion, pp. 259-312. William Morison, doctor to the Countess of Durham's collieries, testified that it would prove "endless" to give examples of village superstition, a frame of mind which "often sets the dictates of reason at defiance". It is important to add that Morison included 'Ranting' (the Primitives were nicknamed 'Ranters') in the same irrational category: C.E.C. 1842, pp. 726-730. For Rev. Spoor, Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., p. 119; for Bro. Bates, W. M. Patterson, op. cit., p. 238; for Rev. West, Journal of Nathaniel West, PMM 1825, pp. 213-215. I also deal with the 'reactive dialectic' of Methodism and the community in The Collier's Rant, op. cit. pp. 131-147, and passim.

- 154 Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., p. 136 (the defeated Purvis ended the duel with a last shout to Spoor through his trumpet - "Ah war'n thou thinks thysel a clever fellow noo!"); PMM 1824, pp. 58-61; ibid., 1870, pp. 423-427.
- 155 W. M. Patterson, op. cit., pp. 207-208. Strong dialects and oral traditions were usually portrayed as defences to the working-class and obstacles to the penetration of others: J. Brand, Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain: chiefly illustrating The Origin of Our Vulgar and Provincial Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions (1844 ed.), Preface for 1745, pp. x-xi; Lady Anon., Life Amongst the Colliers (1862) pp. 12-13, p. 153; "Many of these songs [about pitmen] are highly poetical and full of wit and humour, but of course unintelligible to any who does not understand the peculiar slang and dialect ..."
(The Penny Magazine, 5 August 1837). North East Teetotalism also adopted the procession, band, singers, and banners of popular spectacle but one of its pledged complained in 1839 of teetotalers' "zeal ... on the one hand by meetings and spoken addresses - and the apathy which they show on the other hand, in respect of that species of information which is furnished by periodical publications ... " (Newcastle Journal, 24 June 1837, 15 June 1839; Northern District Temperance Record, August 1839).
- In 1837 travelling preachers in the Sunderland Circuit were paid 17s. per week, which was about 2s. more than a hewer could expect to earn in a good week (Sunderland PM Circuit, Quarterly, Local Preachers; and Committee Meeting Minutes 1831-1842, 16 February 1837, D.C.R.O. M/Sus. 80).
- 156 For use of popular melodies see: Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., pp. 32-33; Rev. J. Everett, op. cit., p. 133; Jos. Ritson, The

Romance of Primitive Methodism (1909), p. 268.

- 157 The 1795 Norrisian Theological Prize at Cambridge was won by Mr Thomason, undergraduate of Magdalen College, for his essay of that title, Newcastle Chronicle, 2 May 1795; Southey op. cit., on hymnology, p. 481; T. Trotter, An Essay, medical, philosophical, and chemical, on Drunkenness and its Effects on the human body (1810), p. 33; PMM 1884, p. 156.
- 158 PMM 1851, obituary of John Grieves of Willington (1786-1851), p. 67.
- 159 J. R. Featherston, Weardale Men and Manners, (1840), pp. 45-47. Lic was Anglo Saxon for a corpse, and wacce for a vigil; the modern euphonious word is 'lake-wake'. In 1825 it was commented that the lake-wake was still observed in a mediated form by the religious, but by 1898 it was observed that the wake had degenerated into an excuse for "indecent revelry" round the coffin of the already dead (E. Mackenzie, An historical, topographical, and descriptive view of the county of Northumberland, 1825, vol. i, pp. 205-206; William Andrews (ed.) Bygone Durham, 1898, p. 261). The Wesleyan, Rev. Dr Adam Clarke made a good comment on the nature of revivalist scenes: "'The common people, who have never had the advantage of mental cultivation, hear through the medium of their passions. Every thing that affects them, arrests and fixes the attention, and then sacred Truths have, as we phrase it, fair play in their minds ...'" (quoted in Rev. J. Everett, op. cit., p. 3)
- 160 "I am in the river, but I shall soon be over! She several times repeated 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit!' then waving her hand in token of triumph she cried 'Victory, victory!' and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus" (PMM 1855, obituary of Eleanor Wall of

Pittington (1832-1855), pp. 633-634). There are many examples of this fixation with the last moment, see Primitive Methodist Magazine for 1849, Ralph Lonsdale, leadminer (1805-1849), p. 698; 1861, Anthony Young, pitman (n.d.-1861) pp. 517-518; 1879, Robert Grieves, pitman (1816-1879) pp. 243-244; 1888, Mary Foster of Castle Eden colliery (1858-1888) p. 308. Wawn's pious account of Thomas Curry the pious keelman devotes eleven out of twenty-six pages to his death (C. N. Wawn, op. cit.).

161 The difficulties of locating from the obituaries the exact occupation and locality at the time of conversion made it impossible to usefully tabulate from the Primitive Methodist Magazine. Instead I covered the Magazine from 1823 to the end of the century, checking generally on all those members who were quoted as being coalminers, or as coming from colliery districts, or from the leadmining district of the North Pennines, which was a spiritual home for North East Primitive Methodism. For a description of the early preachers and their small, essential, travelling library, see: J. Ritson, op. cit., p. 114.

162 PMM 1861, Mary Porteous (1783-1861), pp. 520-523; 1870, Mary Dent (1809-1870) pp. 246-248; 1849, John Kirk the leadminer (1787-1849), p. 641; 1870, Rev. Joseph Spoor the Tyne keelman (1813-1869) pp. 423-427.

See also Primitive Methodist Magazine for 1853, Ralph Punshon, pitman (1821-1853) c. 1838 on hearing a new preacher in another village, p. 719; 1852, Robert Clasper the keelman (1796-1852) c. 1832 on hearing an Independent preacher on Felling Shore, p. 574; 1847, Robert Young, pitman (1802-1847) c. 1822 under Branfoot, p. 457; 1834, Phebe Longman of Easington (1793-1854)

c. 1820s under Nelson, pp. 30-32; 1854, William Grieves (1798-1854) c. 1823 at North Shields under William Clowes, p. 129; 1848, Joseph Featherstone, leadminer (1801-1848) c. 1823 under Batty, pp. 132-134; 1858, William Bell, leadminer and pitman (1796-1858) c. 1823 under Batty, pp. 129-130.

- 163 PMM 1878, George Clough, pitman (n.d. - 1876) pp. 121-122; 1869, Robert Thompson, pitman (1825-1867) p. 628; William Wake (1798-1865) converted in South Shields, pp. 685-686; 1888, Hannah Race of Weardale (1792-1888) p. 632; 1826, John Maugham, pitman (1798-1825) pp. 265-269 - and for another zealous 'interceder' who "did not stand or sit as a mere spectator" see the obituary for Eleanor Goodchild of Sunderland (PMM 1848, p. 759).

See also Primitive Methodist Magazine for 1855, Eleanor Wall (1832-1855) c. 1848 at Pittington revival, pp. 633-634; 1850, Jane Curry of Washington Staithes (1807-1850) c. 1822 at Offerton camp meeting, p. 647; 1832, Jane Hetherington of Weardale (1770-1832) c. 1824, pp. 27-28; 1832, John Durham (1787-1832) c. 1824 at Sunderland revival, p. 329; 1832, Edward Gray (1802-1832) c. 1828 at Earsdon, North Shields camp meeting, p. 398; 1894, William Thompson, pitman (1806-1891) c. 1820s "attracted by [the] hearty singing", pp. 391-392.

- 164 PMM 1842, George Fenton, pitman (1782-1842) c. 1820, pp. 292-294; 1867, Robert Fairley, pitman (n.d. - 1865), c. 1829, pp. 316-317; 1853, John Wall, pitman (n.d. - 1853) c. 1851, pp. 634-635; 1847, John Clark, pitman (1805-1847) c. 1819, pp. 257-258; 1862, James Pyburn the shoemaker (1798-1862) c. 1838, p. 593; 1832, Sam Lowther of Percy Main (1802-1832) c. 1811, p. 330.

See also Primitive Methodist Magazine for 1883, John Robinson, leadminer, (1824-1883) c. 1847 by Wesleyans, but moving to Primitives in 1850 because of the Connexional disputes, pp. 310-311; 1855, Jane Smith of Durham (1809-1855) c. 1840 by Independents before moving to Primitives in 1848, p. 383; 1861, Mary Porteous the Newcastle domestic (1783-1861) c. 1816 by Wesleyans before moving to Primitives in 1825; 1832, Mary Cosens of Birtley (1797-1832) c. 1816 by Wesleyans before moving to Primitives in 1824.

- 165 PMM 1890, John Tulip the pitman and coalfitter, (1811-1888) c. 1841, p. 311. See also, 1878, George Clough, pitman (n.d. - 1876) c. 1830s, pp. 121-122; and 1886, Ben Robson, pitman (1814-1884) c. 1854, p. 55.
- 166 PMM 1866, William Waugh of South Shields (1809-1865) c. 1837, p. 41; 1855, George McReeth of South Shields (1807-1855) c. 1849, p. 382. See also Primitive Methodist Magazine for 1851, William Aisbit, pitman (1833-1850) c. 1850 after becoming teetotal in 1848, p. 124; 1890, John Tulip, pitman and coal fitter (1811-1888) c. 1841 after taking pledge during 1838, p. 311; 1848, John Quilt the soldier (1799-1848) c. 1840 after taking the pledge and needing social support to help him keep it, p. 638.
- 167 PMM 1871, Joseph Fletcher, pitman (1810-1870) converted at Colliery Row, p. 434; 1841, Michael Hutchinson, pitman (1812-1841) c. 1837, p. 239.

See also Primitive Methodist Magazine for 1856, John Lonsdale, leadminer (1832-1856), his death prompted the conversion of four of his sisters, p. 700; 1848, Jane Cooper of Hetton (1775-1848) c. 1826 on death of pitman-husband, p. 62; 1850, Oswald Ferguson,

- Shields seaman (1798-1850) c. 1825 on death of brother, pp. 123-124; 1852, Jane Halliday of Hetton (1775-1851) c. 1840 after widowhood, pp. 124-125; 1852, William Fairley, pitman (1801-1852) c. 1831 on death of uncle, p. 712.
- PMM 1859, William Bruce, pitman (n.d. - 1858) c. 1832, p. 120; 1853, John Dixon, pitman (n.d. - 1852) c. 1849 "awakened to a sense of his danger" by cholera, p. 255; 1848, Eleanor Goodchild of Sunderland (1814-1848) c. 1831 after cholera had crowded Flag Lane chapel "with serious hearers", p. 759; 1850, Mary Jackson of Weardale (1812-1849) c. 1827 after typhus affliction, p. 251.
- 168 PMM 1857, John Sharp the shoemaker (1834-1857) pp. 190-191; 1874, Ann Hutton, pitman's wife (1813-1874) p. 559; 1853, Jane Corner of South Shields (1804-1853) c. in Darlington, p. 440; 1850, John Weatherston, pitman (1785-1850) c. 1832 after his move to Hetton, p. 573; 1853, Ralph Punshon, pitman (1821-1853) c. 1838 after his move from Hetton to St Helens Auckland, p. 719. The famous Wesleyan keelman, Thomas Curry, is held to have felt his first 'distress' after moving from agricultural labouring near Durham City to Alum Works, near Whitby, in the early 1790s: C. N. Wawn, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
- 169 The quotations are from Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest: or, a treatise on the Blessed State of the Saints, in their enjoyment of God in Heaven (1809 ed.) p. 37, p. 54. Baxter, a Seventeenth-century Presbyterian Divine, was prescribed reading for all Primitive preachers and stood as an ultimate in theological standards.
- 170 The participatory nature of Methodist services, in quest of each

man's Grace and in pursuit of his religious consciousness, is well contrasted with the external and public forms of Anglican worship. See J. Obelkevich, op. cit., p. 187.

171 R. Baxter, op. cit., p. 191, p. 161.

1/2 Rev. J. Everett, op. cit., pp. 12-13. Because so much preaching was extemporaneous it is impossible to know the exact words of many prayers and sermons. Preachers' required reading however, well expresses their Scriptural literalism. Bunyan's Christian was opposed to the human rationale of Talkative who "doth delight to talk of the history or the mystery of things" and who "will beguile with this tongue of his twenty of them that know not". (J. Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress, 1968 ed., pp. 111-112).

Baxter was characteristically positive:

"Let sinners be convinced that you speak not of your own head. Turn them to the very chapter and verse where their sin is condemned ... The voice of man is contemptible, but the voice of God is awful and terrible". (R. Baxter, op. cit., p. 159).

In 1809 the Wesleyan, Rev. D. McAllum, preached awfully and terribly in South Shields among other things on how Jesus' promised twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26⁵³) meant 72,000 foot and 8760 horse (Rev. D. McAllum, The Substance of the first Sermon, preached in the New Chapel, Chapter Row, South Shields, 26 February 1809 (1809).)

In 1848 the Durham Primitive Circuit requested Bro. Wilson "to abstain from preaching in the pulpit, his particular views on the personal reign of Christ - the inefficiency of the Gospel, the new dispensation etc. etc." (Minute Book for Durham Circuit of the Primitive Methodist Connexion for Quarter Days and Circuit Committee Meetings, 19 June 1848, D.C.R.O., M/Du. 25).

- 173 For a discussion of ideology pertinent to this approach see L. Althusser, For Marx (1977) p. 232, pp. 233-234. Marx himself expressed the religious dimension within the problematic of his theories of alienation. see: Introduction to A Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1844. 1975 ed.): "Man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is indeed man's self consciousness and self awareness as long as he has not found his feet in the universe ... Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." (p. 244).
- 174 Minute Book for Durham Circuit, op.cit., 20 December 1841; Sunderland P.M. Circuit, Quarterly, Local Preachers' ... Minutes, op. cit., 10 September 1838. For further disciplinary reports see: South Shields P.M. Circuit, Quarterly Meeting Minute Books 1833-1845, 23 May 1844, D.C.R.O. M/SS 13, M/SS 14; Houghton le Spring W.M. Circuit, Local preachers' meeting minutes 1836-1838; 24 December 1838, D.C.R.O. M/Ho 58. Rev. J. Barker, previously of the Methodist New Connexion, carried the apartness to the hilt in his The Duty of Christian Churches to Provide for their Poor Members, and the impropriety of professing Christians connecting themselves with benefit societies, Rechabite societies, life insurances, loan funds or with any societies founded on worldly principles. (Newcastle booklet, 1845).
- 175 The phrase comes from another context in L. Althusser, op. cit., p. 249.
- 176 On the strange, sorrowful, remote, disposition of Bourne see

- Rev. H. B, Kendall, op. cit., p. 35, and J. Ritson, op. cit., p. 12. PMM 1832, Sam Lowther of Percy Main (1802-1832) p. 330. Hopefully, Bro. Lowther found solace in his copy of Bunyan - for Christian, on fleeing from the wrath to come, became "a gazing stock to the world" where "neighbours also came out to see him ran, and as he ran some mocked, others threatened" (J. Bunyan, op. cit., p. 41).
- 177 Houghton le Spring Local Preachers', op. cit., 24 December 1838; Neddy Rymer remembered on his first day down the pit in 1844 being scared of the dark and being sung to by the wagonman: "In darkest shades if Thou appear, My dawning has begun" (E. A. Rymer, op. cit., p. 3); Rev. J. Parker, A Preacher's Life, an autobiography and an album (1899) p. 6.
- 178 Pioneer work into what he calls the historical reality of the soul is to be found in Michel Foucault's intellectual history, Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison (1977) - which I have found useful in spite of its frequent and unnecessary obscurity. Robert Moore's study of late-century Durham Methodism found that the main social aspect of Methodist membership was the "consequential" aspect of an open ethical behaviour: R. Moore, op. cit., p. 119. The sophistication of the Methodist economy was related to the number and character of its buildings - chapels and schools in particular.
- 179 Durham P.M. Circuit, Minute Book, op. cit., 22 March 1847, D.C.R.O. M/Du 25; and *ibid.*, 2 December 1841 for admonition of preachers Barrass, Hardy, Foster, and Punshon. For praise of life-long punctuality and attendance see PMM 1865, Adam

- Maddison of Sunderland (1805-1865) pp. 492-493, and Rev. J. Everett, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Everett considered Sunday, with its full schedule of services and prayers, to be the anchor of a volatile membership (p. 206).
- 180 Durham P.M. Circuit, Minute Book, *op. cit.*, 18 June 1842, 18 December 1848, 24 October 1842.
- 181 See Appendix p. 365.
- 182 Durham P.M. Circuit, Minute Book, *op. cit.*, 5 November 1841; recommendation of Bro. Barrass to the North Shields Circuit as a travelling preacher: Durham P.M. Circuit, Accounts and Minute Book 1836-1848, 10 September 1841, D.C.R.O. M/Du 25. See also the recommendation of Bro. Tindal, *ibid.*, 16 March 1840.
- 183 PMM 1848, Joseph Featherstone the leadminer (1801-1848) pp. 132-134; 1852, Robert Clasper the keelman (1796-1852) p. 574; 1871, George Bird the sailmaker (1809-1869) p. 234.
- 184 South Shields P.M. Circuit, Quarterly ... Minute Books, *op. cit.*, 8 February 1834; Sunderland P.M. Circuit, Quarterly, Local Preachers' ... Minutes, *op. cit.*, 1 April 1836, and 14 May 1836; South Shields P.M. Circuit, Quarterly ... Minute Books, *op. cit.*, 1 July 1842, 9 June 1841, and 22 February 1834, 25 June 1842.
- 185 Houghton le Spring, W.M. Circuit, Local Preachers' ... minutes, *op. cit.*, 28 September 1848.
- 186 Sunderland P.M. Circuit, Quarterly, Local Preachers' ... Minutes, *op. cit.*, 12 September 1836. One of the most famous scandals in North East Methodism concerned the case of Miss

Bell of the North Shields Wesleyan Circuit, her engagement, and the intervention of her Superintendent Minister. It is a poisonous correspondence of deceit and sanctimonious prying which reveals the potentially 'incestuous' nature of the Methodist class. (The Cause of truth defended; a plain statement of the facts connected with the two trials of Rev. T. Hill, Methodist preacher, for the defamation of character of Miss Bell of North Shields, 1827).

For evidence on the petty, squabbling, character of Rev. Hill see Letters of Rev. Thos. Hill, North Shields Local History Box, Wesleyan Methodist Records Centre.

- 187 N. Curnock (ed.) op. cit., vol. v, p. 469, Wesley was describing some of the 'old' yet young children of Weardale after the 1771 revival; PMM 1847, Ann Punsheon of Hetton (1819-1847) pp. 379-380. Rev. Everett recalled a boy with the Wallsend Wesleyans popularly nicknamed 'The Little Old Man' "because of his stability, good sense, and sedative habits", (Rev. J. Everett, op. cit., p. 127).
- 188 For songs on the control of all careless things, including lying, quarrelling, fighting, swearing, idleness, mischief, evil company, vanity, disobedience, getting out of bed slowly, thieving, and play, see Isaac Watts, Songs, Divine and Moral for the use of children (Alnwick 1840) p. 12, p. 23, p. 27, p. 28, and passim.
- 189 PMM 1842, George Fenton, pitman (1782-1842) pp. 292-294; 1849, Jane Lister (1833-1848) p. 319.
- 190 Houghton le Spring Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, William Street Methodist Church, Sunday School Teachers' Meeting Minutes 1827-1834, and Rules, D.C.R.O. M/HO 98; Houghton W.M. Circuit, Rules, Attendance, and Notes of the Wesleyan Sabbath

School, 1839, D.C.R.O. M/HO 99. The 1830s saw the growth of sunday school offshoots and subsections: Bible associations, selective classes, serious singing groups, roads of visitation and recruitment, festivals, library and savings schemes, juvenile temperance branches.

- 191 Fowberry Sunday School, Rules and Proceedings 1823, N.C.R.O. Z/CU/38. This was an Anglican institution.
- 192 Felton Sunday School Teachers' Union Meeting Minute Book, 1819-1821, 6 October 1819, 26 July 1820, N.C.R.O. 347/121. This was also an Anglican sunday school.
- 193 Fowberry, Rules, op. cit.
- 194 Newcastle Nelson Street Sunday School Anniversary, PMM 1846, p. 504.
- 195 PMM 1832, Mary Cosens of Birtley (1797-1832) pp. 451-455; 1849, John Kirk, leadminer (1789-1849), p. 641; 1848, John Quilt the soldier (1799-1848) p. 638; 1843, William Hindhaugh converted in Hexham in 1818 (1784-1843) pp. 322-323; 1856, Cuthbert Colling, leadminer (1794- 1856) p. 401; 1853, John Wall the pitman (n.d. - 1853) pp. 634-635. Bowling is described as the pitmen's favourite "diversion" in Newcastle Chronicle, 5 October 1805.

Miners' Advocate, 23 March 1844; W. M. Patterson, op. cit., p. 285. PMM 1826, John Maugham, pitman (1798-1825) pp. 265-269. For the circumstantial relationship between ale houses, gambling, sport, and assault see North East Circuit Depositions 1784-1786, P.R.O. Assizes 45/35. The symbols of chapel control vied with other symbols in the pitman's cottage as ornamental decoration: "From them [ornaments] we can easily perceive the

tendency of the mind of the owner. You find in one, Tom Sayers, Bob Brettle, and the Manchester Chicken; in another the Primitive Methodists, New Connexion, or Wesleyan Methodists' preachers' plan ... " (R. Wilson, The Coal Miners of Durham & Northumberland: their Habits and Diseases, A paper read before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, at Newcastle, September 1863, p. 4). Other ornaments included Madonnas and Child, bird cages, and the emblems of friendly societies.

John Wesley did not appreciate the physicality of North East miners; he records their Sunday "grand assembly ... to dance, fight, curse, and swear, and play at chuck, ball, span-farthing, or whatever came next to hand". (N. Curnock (ed.) op. cit., vol. iii, p. 73-- for 1743). Another factor was that for most working-class people Sunday was the only possible day for their recreation and the Sabbatarian instincts of Methodism could only oppose any form of secular enjoyment on that day. For admonitions against Sunday pleasure trips see, Sunderland P.M. Circuit, Leaders' Meeting Minutes, 2 June 1842, 3 July 1845, D.C.R.O. M/Sus 111:

That Bros. Harrison & Sevan see Bro. Noals and enquire what are the measures which the Flagg Lane Choir have taken relative to a Pleasure trip to Stockton. That a note be read on Sunday next from the Flagg Lane Pulpit dissuading our Members from Such trips and announcing the disapproval of the leaders' Meeting.

This can be contrasted with the Sunderland Zion Chapel Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society's 1878 decision to have "an excursion up the River" on 3 August and "That each member of the class have the privilege of inviting a lady friend (if they please to do so)": (Minutes 1877-1879, 27 June 1878, D.C.R.O. M/Sus/30).

196 For friendly local relations about the use of the chapel: South Shields P.M. Circuit, Quarterly ... Minute Books, op. cit., 15 June 1839; PMM 1833, p. 77; Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., p. 473. In 1834 County Durham had the fourth highest concentration of British and Foreign Temperance Society members per 1000 of population (10.4) in the country; Northumberland had 5.5 (B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians. The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872, 1971, p. 109).

197 The Coal Trade and the Drink Trade were structurally connected by the tradition of paying men in public houses. Many lessees of pits had money in local brewing and some overmen owned beershops. However, by 1807 the Coal Trade's concern for order was beginning to challenge its concern for money, and some owners, making "their pays at private houses, avoiding the temptation to intemperance held out at their usual payhouses, as well as the necessity of spending their 4d. or 6d. a piece, for what they call the good of the house". (Summary of the Condition, op. cit.).

Newcastle quayside dockers swore by ale for their health and wind, and the opening of new collieries, or the high-days of ownership' were often celebrated by dinners and dances "where all the mirth and glee peculiar to that class of people, shone forth in native simplicity" - "and though all, before they went away, were excessively drunk, no other accident happened than one man burning his face by putting it too near a cannon that was firing". (T. F. Dibdin, A Bibliographical, Antiquarian, and Picturesque Tour in the Northern Counties of England and in Scotland, 1838, p. 330; East Benton colliery feast, Newcastle Courant, 16 December 1786; Fenham owner's son's birthday feast for four

- hundred pitmen, Newcastle Chronicle, 9 June 1802).
- 198 Sunderland P.M. Circuit, Quarterly, Local Preachers' ... Minutes, op. cit., 14 September 1835.
- 199 PMM 1854, William Grieves (1788-1854) p. 129.
- 200 The chapel best suit was a definite mark, "and a stranger seeing them would hardly suspect them to be the men whom he had seen coming up from the pits begrimed with sweat and coal dust, and as black as negroes", (Commissioner Mitchell, C.E.C. 1842, p. 143); evidence of William Willis, fifteen year old driver from South Hetton colliery (ibid., p. 163), whose remarkable self-improving exertions make a useful contrast with the Sunday sleeping, games-playing, and roving of W. Hardy, seventeen year old putter from Auckland (ibid., pp. 160-161).
- 201 PMM 1857, William Scott, pitman (n.d. - 1857) pp. 394-395; Rev. J. Dawson, Peter Mackenzie. His Life and Labours (1896) p. 55. Mackenzie was also an avid reader and re-reader of Bunyan. Tempted one day to "join the rollicking throng" of a Haswell pub, the "sight of Pilgrim and City of Destruction filled his mind and he ran from the pub, fingers to ears, shouting 'Life! Life! eternal Life!'" (p. 85).
- 202 PMM 1873, George Chapman, pitman (1815-1871) pp. 175-176; 1854, Charles Simpson of Durham (1823-1854) p. 129; quoted in Rev. H. B. Kendall, op. cit., pp. 193-194.
- 203 Thomas Crawford, viewer, to Maj. Gen. Bouverie, 8 June 1831, P.R.O., HO/40/29/1; Seymour Tremenheere, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 8, p. 25. Tremenheere referred to joint Methodist-Chartist leadership of the NMA, whilst Mr Liddell,

viewer at Gosforth colliery, testified to the lack of Chartist "headway" compared to Primitive Methodist "great influence" (ibid., p. 25).

204 The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 8; evidence of owners and viewers of Wallsend colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 625.

205 C.E.C. 1842, pp. 608-609.

206 The Pitmen of the Tyne & Wear (broadsheet, from Durham Chronicle, 16 April 1831).

207 Thomas Crawford to Maj. Gen. Bouverie, 8 June 1831, P.R.O. HO/40/29/1; Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 26 May 1832, HO 40/30/2; George Johnson, viewer at Willington colliery, C.E.C. 1842, p. 568.

See also The Pits and The Pitmen (n.d. 1850s?) for their "rude energy and picturesque fluency" (pp. 5-6). This book also referred to the preachers as "the natural leaders and encouragers of every popular movement" (p. 22). For details on such preachers see articles by R. Richardson, Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review (1883), and Thomas Burt, ibid., (1882), and R. F. Wearmouth's chapter in his Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England 1800-1850 (1937) pp. 221-238.

208 Rev. J. Miller, Vicar of Pitlington, to Lord Londonderry, 19 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. For NMA teetotal preachers see for example Messrs Nicholson, Tulip, Archer, and Dixon at South Hetton where "thirty signatures were gained to the pledge" (The Northern Temperance Advocate, Sunday School Teachers' Manual, and Messenger of Peace, February 1843);

for prayers, Sunderland PM Circuit, Quarterly, Local Preachers' ... Minutes, op. cit., 15 March 1832, and The Mining Districts P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 8, and below; Plan, January 1844 in, W.C.L.: for publicans disallowing NMA meetings on their premises in the Thornley area, Miners' Advocate, 14 December 1844, and January meetings consequently in Primitive schoolroom Miners' Advocate, 8 February 1845.

- 209 The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 8; evidence of Charles Carr, owner of Seghill colliery, *ibid.* p. 25.
- 210 Manager of Seaton Delaval colliery, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 25; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 27 April 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. This is hostile evidence indeed. However, in the case of Buddle, although it is true to say that he disliked the Methodist personality it is equally true that he was an honest man and an attentive reporter.
- 211 R. Elliot, underviewer at Penshaw, Rainton, and Pitlington collieries, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 16; Rev. Spoor preached for the union in Mr Dobson's long room at Willington on 17 June (Miners' Advocate, 13 July 1844); a preacher was dragged from his pulpit at Wingate (Newcastle Journal, 13 April 1844); "I know some of their local preachers who were obliged to leave their own body because they would not join and encourage the strike", "All our ministers discouraged the strike ... The Ranters used their influence to disaffect our members towards our body" (evidence of Wesleyan local preacher, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 26).

The Wesleyans, with many more professional ministers in their circuits, appear to have been more successful in keeping clear

of the dispute: "the lower and less educated classes of local preachers, belonging chiefly to the sect of 'Primitive Methodists' frequently had recourse to appeals to the religious feelings of their hearers to keep up the excitement in favour of the strike" (evidence of R. Elliot - as above).

- 212 Newcastle Journal, 22 June 1844.
- 213 Thomas Hepburn had made Lord Londonderry bend the leg in prayer with him, observing that "he never entered upon the consideration of important matters like that in dispute, without first praying to God to give him right direction; and he insisted upon their offering up a supplication to the Deity ... the noble Marquis, it is added, piously joined in the act of prayer" (Durham Chronicle, 14 May 1831).
- 214 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 21 June 1832, D.C.R.O. D/LO/C 142; Mr Liddell, C.E.C. 1842, p. 593; evidence of George Johnson, *ibid.*, p. 568.
- 215 T. J. Taylor, coalowner, C.E.C. 1842, pp. 608-609.
- 216 The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, *op. cit.*, where Tremenheere describes the majority of the victimized as "dissenters", p. 28; *ibid.*, p. 8; evidence of Mr Bailey, underviewer of Hetton, Elemore, and Appleton collieries, *ibid.*, p. 20; evidence of Messrs Lawson and Booth, managers of St Helens Auckland and Evenwood collieries, *ibid.*, p. 23; evidence of the manager of Seaton Delaval colliery, *ibid.*, p. 25.

In the case of local strikes at single collieries - strikes which usually occurred during the contractual obligation of the Bond rather than organized coalfield strikes which occurred at the

expiry of the annual Bond - the owners were able to prosecute their workmen for breach of contract. Only local leaders were taken. For the expeditionary nature of such arrests see, the Thornley dispute which started in 1843, and the Chief Constable's dawn arrest of three local leaders by twenty-five policemen: Lord Londonderry to Home Secretary Graham, 29 November 1843, and Col. Wemyss to Lord Londonderry, 29 November 1843, P.R.O., HO 45/349.

- 217 R.A.S. Redmayne, Men, Mines, and Memories (1942) p. 26; Cousens, schoolmaster, C.E.C. 1842, p. 591. Those who desired education for the purposes of class control and integration were alert to the eclectic character of self-education: "Such men are ignorant, turbulent, and self-willed ... never had opportunities of proper instruction when young, and have never come into contact with educated minds capable of giving a right direction to their thoughts, and implanting sound principles within them" (The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 29).
- 218 The charisma belonged to W. P. Roberts, the radical solicitor from Bath who had successfully defended the men in court over Bond-contract; David Swallow, a Yorkshire miner who had been one of the NMA's founders at Wakefield in 1842; William Beesley, a professional working-class Chartist journalist and agitator who attached himself to Daniells early in the movement and who received the greatest vituperation from the local bourgeois press; William Daniells, editor of the Miners' Advocate; and, in the early phase, Feargus O'Connor, whose Northern Star was an avid instigator of union through 1842-1843.
- 219 For a chronological list of these meetings see Appendix pp. 366-68

220 Daniells was probably the most frequent speaker, but in trying to assess the most significant speakers I could not rely merely upon the number of times an individual was named as being a speaker. This was not judged to be a useful indication of significance for two reasons: first the Advocate does not always detail every meeting - often only a list of villages is reported as having been visited by a posse of speakers with no details of how often and where; secondly, because after the defeat of the strike in August 1844 the union used small groups of lecturers to visit large numbers of villages in order to try and raise support. It is likely that by this time these men were professional speakers - either because they had always been so, like Daniells, or because they were victimized pitmen employing their talents as best they could. Men who had been significant during the strike are not heard of, either because they were back at work, or because they had been forced to leave the coalfield. Thus, as a rough index of speakers' significance I have kept to those meetings reported in detail before and during the strike, where individual speakers were named in platform-order. These relevant meetings are asterisked in Appendix pp. 366-68.

221 Sometimes, the preaching vanguard composed half or nearly half of the platform: Appendix pp 366-68 for mass meetings on Shadon's Hill, 2 March 1844, 8 April 1844, on Black Fell, April 1844. Preachers Dent, Haswell, Pratt, and Charlton shared the platform with W. P. Roberts at Shadon's Hill on 2 March 1844; preachers Bell and Parkinson with William Beesley at Wallsend on 10 April 1844; preachers Dent, Archer, and Pratt with William Daniells at Newcastle Town Moor on 30 July 1844.

222 The Coal and Iron Miners' Journal, 10 June 1843. For an

- eloquent statement of labour value see Robert Forbes' "prize essay" in the Miners' Advocate 19 October 1844. I have gone into more detail on this subject in The Collier's Rant, op. cit., pp. 118-131.
- 223 Letter of John Hall, The Coal and Iron Miners' Journal, 10 June 1843; Robert Forbes, op. cit.; letter of John Hall.
- 224 A United Collier, A Defence of the Voice from the Coal Mines in Answer to the 'Brief Observations' in reply to that pamphlet (Newcastle 1825). The same piece perfectly summarized the union's disgust at non-rational man in its claim that the operation of the Vend expected the pitmen to "work like irrationals" (p. 11).
- 225 Robert Forbes, op. cit., Miners' Advocate, 1 June 1844.
- 226 Miners' Advocate, 27 January 1844; letter of John Hall, op. cit. Ignorance and Vice is sharply contrasted with Knowledge and Virtue in Miners' Advocate, 6 April 1844. The Manchester Guardian thought that the NMA delegates at Conference in the city were "'a credit to the class; and a proof that those who sent them were not destitute of judgement ...'" (Miners' Advocate, 27 January 1844).
- 227 Robert Forbes, op. cit.; Miners' Advocate, 2 December 1843.
- 228 For a respectful account of the pitmen's clannishness which, within its own confines, was accredited dignity and spirit, see: Operation of Poor Laws, P.P. 1843, op. cit., p. 130A. Thomas Burt recalled the ease of self-learning on becoming a hewer and only working eight hours a day: Report of Mines, P.P. 1866, op. cit., p. 6.

- 229 A PITMAN, A Dialogue between JACK AND TIM upon Reform and the Duties of Pitmen and Proper Remuneration for their Labour. Addressed to The Pitmen of the Tyne and Wear (Newcastle booklet, 1831), p. 8, p. 9. A United Collier, A Defence of the Voice from the Coal Mines in Answer to the 'Brief Observations' in reply to that pamphlet (Newcastle 1825), passim. See the Miners' Advocate's praise for "talented" and "eloquent" speeches at the Glasgow conference from the North East delegates, two of whom were Primitive preachers: Miners' Advocate, 6 April 1844.
- 230 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 28 September 1821, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 231 Miners' Advocate, 24 February 1844, 9 March 1844, 1 June 1844. For a beautiful account of his trade union labours in the imagery of Biblical and Methodist labours, see E. A. Rymer, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- 232 South Shields P.M. Circuit, Quarterly ... Minute Books, *op. cit.*
- 233 W. Wawn, *op. cit.*, p. 28. For condescension, Methodism having "reformed the moral and religious state of that class in the community which is most numerous and which was the most in need of information", see, Sunderland Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, Quarter Meeting Minutes 1801-1839, 6 January 1820, D.C.R.O., M/Sus 142.
- 234 "I am not one of your fashionable, fine-spoken, mealy mouthed preachers; I tell you the plain truth. What are your pastimes? Cards and dice, fiddling and dancing, guzzling and gutling. Can you be saved by dice? No! Will the four knaves give you a

passport to heaven? No! Can you fiddle yourselves into a good berth among the sheep? No! ... I will not oil my lips with lies to please you ... Ammon, and Mammon, and Moloch are making Bethoron hot for you! Profane wretches! ...'" (The Miners' Monthly Magazine, June-July 1844).

- 235 Second Report on Accidents, P.P. 1853, op. cit., p. 6. John Buddle divided the men into 'long heads' and 'wrong heads' as early as 1826 (Buddle to Marquis of Londonderry, 22 February 1826, P.R.O., HO 40/19), and for later, more studied, division, see: Report from the Select Committee on Mines; together with the proceedings of the Committee, minutes of evidence, and appendix, P.P. 1863 (431) xivl, passim, and Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, with appendix, P.P. 1864 (3416) xxviii, p. 516.
- 236 Evidence of a colliery official at Earsdon and Backworth, and of Charles Carr, owner of Seghill colliery, The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, op. cit., p. 25. Commissioner Tremenheere reported that although the majority of victimized 1844 strike leaders were Methodists (pp. 28-29), at the same time it was to their credit "that the improvement that has taken place within living memory ... is greatly attributable to their exertions" (ibid., p. 30).

From a middle-class point of view, the paradox could occasionally resolve itself:

"When James Wilson, a 'victim' of the pitmen's strike of 1844, settled in Crook, the few members worshipped in a cottage. Through his labours and those of other worthy bretheren, the membership multiplied; a chapel was built, which had to be enlarged in a few years; and in the erection of the more recent handsome premises,

the victimized pitman had a principal hand, he having risen to be one of Crook's foremost citizens." (W. M. Patterson, op. cit., p. 88).

- 237 Anon., A Kind Word to the Pitmen from a Friend in the Country (Newcastle booklet, 1832) p. 7.
- 238 A selection of quotations used by the NMA during 1844, and taken from the Wigan Central Library 'Strike Collection' (see Part I, f.n. 154).
- 239 Newcastle Journal, April 1844 (cutting in Wigan 'Strike Collection'); Miners' Advocate, 21 September 1844.
- 240 Letter from BETA, Percy Main colliery, Miners' Advocate, 23 March 1844; letter, OUSTON MINER, *ibid.*, 24 August 1844; broadsheet from Strike Committee, To the Decieved and Deluded WORKMEN now employed on the collieries in Northumberland and Durham (n.d.); letter from Robert Forbes, Miners' Advocate, 29 June 1844; letter, 'Late Trapper Boy', *ibid.*, 24 February 1844; letter from Walker colliery, *ibid.*, 24 August 1844. CHRONONHONTHOLOGOS of Framwellgate Moor colliery compared the pitmen's recent economic and social decline with a current moral decline and called for "moral and social redemption" (*ibid.*, 6 April 1844).
- 241 John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 24 September 1800, N.C.R.O., DE 4/24; Bryers to Delaval, 11 September 1805, N.C.R.O., DE 4/27.
- 242 'Explanation of the Colliery Allowance Bill charged in the Pay Bill', John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 24 May 1824, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 243 PMM 1867, Robert Fairley, Monkwearmouth pitman (n.d. - 1865),

pp. 316-317; 1840, Ben Gibson, South Shields pitman (1784-1839), p. 278. We are told that both men later returned to Primitive Methodism - Fairley in 1839.

244 PMM 1865, Thomas Hepburn, pitman, leader of United Colliers, prominent Chartist, (1796-1864) pp. 546-547. Hepburn had attended Sunday school and could read the Bible at eight years old. He was converted in 1822, lost his faith in 1832, and "[re]-found the long lost pearl of great price" in 1850.

245 Miners' Advocate and Manx Intelligencer, June 1847.

246 See R. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-82.

247 'Hegemony' in this sense was first explored by the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci. The hegemonic concerns those ways other than 'economic' that a ruling-class maintains power - ways Gramsci labelled 'ethico-political'. Hegemonic values are presented as seeking to permeate the whole 'common sense' consciousness of a society. I find Gramsci's use of the word useful to describe general aspects of this history. This is not to say that I accept the grand theory which surrounds it.

Richard Johnson has argued that hegemony is the best applied concept for general description of nineteenth-century English popular education (*op. cit.*, p. 91).

For Gramsci's thought see, James Joll's Gramsci (1977) and Hoare and Nowell Smith's Selections from the Prison Notebooks (1971).

There is a burgeoning theoretical appreciation of the word in Hall, Lumley, McLennan, 'Politics and Ideology: Gramsci,' in On Ideology. Cultural Studies 10 (University of Birmingham, C.C.C.S., 1977).

PART TWOAPPENDIX

Occupational Breakdown of adult heads of families in the Township of Cockfield,, 1851 (source, Census Returns, Durham County Record Office)

1 coalowner	1 viewer
69 coalminers	2 cokeburners
16 farmers (+ 3 retired)	2 laundresses (1 part-time labourer)
33 agricultural labourers	1 curate
20 domestic servants	1 policeman
10 quarrymen	1 rentier
9 general labourers	1 schoolmaster
6 dressmakers	1 miller
6 grocers, drapers, confectioners etc	1 flourdealer
5 shoemakers (+ 1 retired)	1 stonemerchant
4 enginemen	1 cartwright
4 tailors	1 gardener
4 housekeepers	1 leadsmelter
4 publicans (1 part-time mason 1 part-time blacksmith)	1 gatekeeper
3 stonemasons (+ 1 apprentice)	1 midwife
3 blacksmiths (+ 3 apprentices)	1 tallow chandler
3 schoolmistresses	1 potter
3 annuitants	1 sawyer
2 joiners	
2 brewers (+ 1 retired)	
1 brewer's clerk	
2 butchers	

Labour-force mobility and stability at Walker colliery 1780-1798.

(source, Walker Colliery Bonds, 1780, 1781, 1783, 1784, 1788, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1795, 1797-98, N.E.I.M.M.E.)

Colliery bonds are useful sources for the historian to trace shifts in pay-rates and conditions of work. Moreover, because employed colliers were listed on the bond, alongside their signature or mark, bonds are also a source for indicating the degree of labour-force mobility and stability from year to year. In this case I tried to study the rate of labour turn-over for Walker colliery between 1780 and 1798.

Difficult problems were encountered. The first problem was that the series was not complete. Bonds only existed for 1780, 1781, 1783, 1784, 1788, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1795 and 1797-98. To try and overcome these breaks in series I followed collier's names over four tests:

- a) The One-Year test: 1780-81; 1783-84; 1791-92, 1792-93.
- b) The Three-Year test: 1791-92-93.
- c) The Five-Year test: 1791-92-93-/94/-95.
- d) The Ten-Year test: which took those colliers who worked the three years 1791-93 consecutively and tried to test which ones had been there ten years before in 1783, nine years before in 1784, and five years before in 1788. These were by no means perfect tests, but as good tests as the evidence would permit. Their results are only suggestive.

There were also technical problems of just reading the evidence. The bonds contained ambiguities and anomalies and gaps which might not always allow the researcher to test that which he thinks he is testing:-

- (i) The surname spellings were not always uniform

In a semi-literate community of strong dialect, surname

spellings in the written bond can change over time, eg.

Clough could have been 'Cleugh'.

Mason could have been 'Mayson'

Dyal could have been 'Dial'

Friar could have been 'Fryar'

Pile could have been 'Pyle'

Liddell could have been 'Liddle'.

The only way to check this was by constant awareness of the problem and some inspired guesswork. As an example, it is unlikely that a man who was hewing in 1780 was the same man with a similar name who was driving in 1781, although he might have changed jobs 'upwards' to deputy or wasteman. Driving was a job usually for boys and adolescents whilst hewing, deputy-work, or work in 'the waste' were jobs usually for men.

(ii) The first-names could be imprecise

"Ra" is presumably "Ralph", but "R" could have been "Ralph", "Robert", "Robin", or "Robinson". Fathers and sons could have had exactly the same name, and different families could have had the same surname. Inspired guesswork was again necessary, although it was in this case assisted by categorizing men and boys into their various jobs and assuming they tended to do the same job.

(iii) Family name, and social stability

Although an individual leaves the colliery, the family might remain. Certain surnames - Chicken, Wilkinson, Thompson, Simpson, Pigg - were common on the bonds, suggesting an extended family unit. Thus individuals' statistical instability can overestimate real social instability.

Similarly, age could have been another factor affecting the

tests. For example, on the Ten-Year test, a single family name could remain on the bonds over the decade, but older men may drop out to be followed imperceptibly by sons carrying the same name. This could give an inaccurate picture of labour stability.

(iv) Men could change collieries but continue to live in the same village

This is more likely for the expanding nineteenth-century than the eighteenth-century, but a Tyneside colliery such as Walker definitely had rival enterprises in the same vicinity. However, the overall possibility of this is diminished by the fact that most pit families lived in colliery cottages and for a head of household to leave the colliery would in this case mean that they also left their cottage.

The One-Year test: 1780-1781, % number of workmen who moved from the colliery after the expiration of 1780 bond:

$$\frac{39}{111} \times 100 = \underline{35.1\% \text{ moved; } 64.9\% \text{ stayed}}$$

1783-1784, % number of workmen who moved from the colliery after the expiration of 1783 bond:

$$\frac{40}{126} \times 100 = \underline{31.7\% \text{ moved; } 68.3\% \text{ stayed}}$$

1791-1792, % number of workmen who moved from the colliery after the expiration of 1791 bond:

$$\frac{58}{152} \times 100 = \underline{38.1\% \text{ moved; } 61.9\% \text{ stayed}}$$

1792-1793, % number of workmen who moved from the colliery after the expiration of 1792 bond:

$$\frac{54}{142} \times 100 = \underline{38.02\% \text{ moved; } 61.98\% \text{ stayed}}$$

Over four One-Year tests an average of 35.7% moved after the expiration of the annual bond. The proportionate size of the movement seems to quicken slightly in the 1790s. This could be connected to changes in Bond conditions and prices. In 1791 all hewers are either from the immediate vicinity or are known to Walker agents, but in 1792 hewers from other collieries with their previous place of work are listed: Hewers, Matt. Beamson (Hartley), James Renwick (Lambton), Roberty Currey (Washington), Thos. Gowland (Rainton), Richard Wilson (Lambton), James Armstrong (Plessey), John Wall (Beamish); Drivers, John Turnbull (Shiremoor), Martin Currey (Washington).

The Three-Year test: 1791-92-93, % number of workmen in 1791 who remained at the colliery over the three years:

$$\frac{70}{164} \times 100 = \underline{42.6\% \text{ stayed}}$$

The Five-Year test: of the 70 workmen who remained 1791-92-93, it was discovered that 49 were still at Walker in 1795. As the 1794 bond does not exist, it is suggested that over the five year period:

$$\frac{49}{164} \times 100 = \underline{29.8\% \text{ stayed}}$$

The Ten-Year test: of the 70 workmen who remained 1791-92-93, it was discovered that 29 had been at Walker colliery in 1783, with additional checks for 1784 and 1788. It is therefore suggested that over the ten year period:

$$\frac{29}{164} \times 100 = \underline{17.6\% \text{ stayed}}$$

Total membership of major Methodist denominations, 1801-1851

	Bible Christians	New Connexion	Primitives	Wesleyans
1801		4,851		89,529
1811		7,448		145,614
1821		10,404	16,394	200,074
1831	6,650	11,433	37,216	249,119
1841	11,353	20,506	75,967	328,792
1851	13,324	16,962	106,074	302,209

(source, Robert Currie, Methodism Divided, 1968, p. 87)

Membership of Methodist denominations as a percentage of total population, 1801-1851

	Bible Christians	New Connexion	Primitives	Wesleyans
1801		0.05		0.85
1811		0.06		1.22
1821		0.09	0.12	1.42
1831	0.04	0.07	0.23	1.53
1841	0.06	0.11	0.41	1.77
1851	0.06	0.08	0.51	1.45

(source, Robert Currie, *op. cit.*, p. 90)

Membership of Methodist denominations as a percentage of population
aged 15 and over, 1841-1851 .

	Bible Christians	New Connexion	Primitives	Wesleyans
1841	0.10	0.17	0.64	2.79
1851	0.10	0.13	0.79	2.25

(source, Robert Currie, op. cit., p. 90)

Average annual growth rate of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist
denominations by triennial periods, 1821-1850

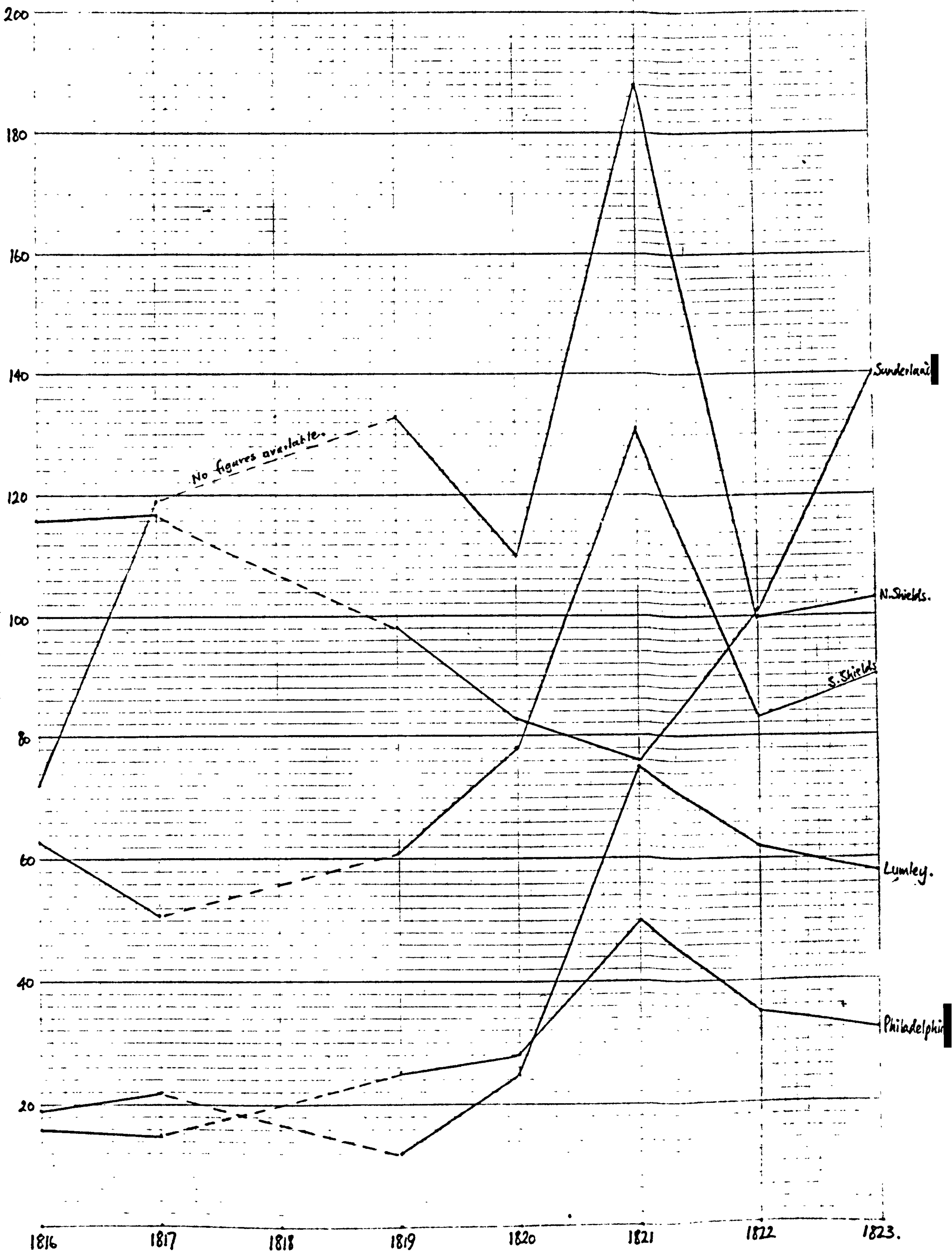
	Primitives	Wesleyans
1821-23	60.0	4.7
1824-26	4.6	1.7
1827-29	6.2	2.4
1830-32	7.0	1.2
1833-35	11.2	4.4
1836-38	6.2	0.7
1839-41	4.0	3.5
1842-44	4.8	0.9
1845-47	-0.9	0.2
1848-50	6.4	1.9

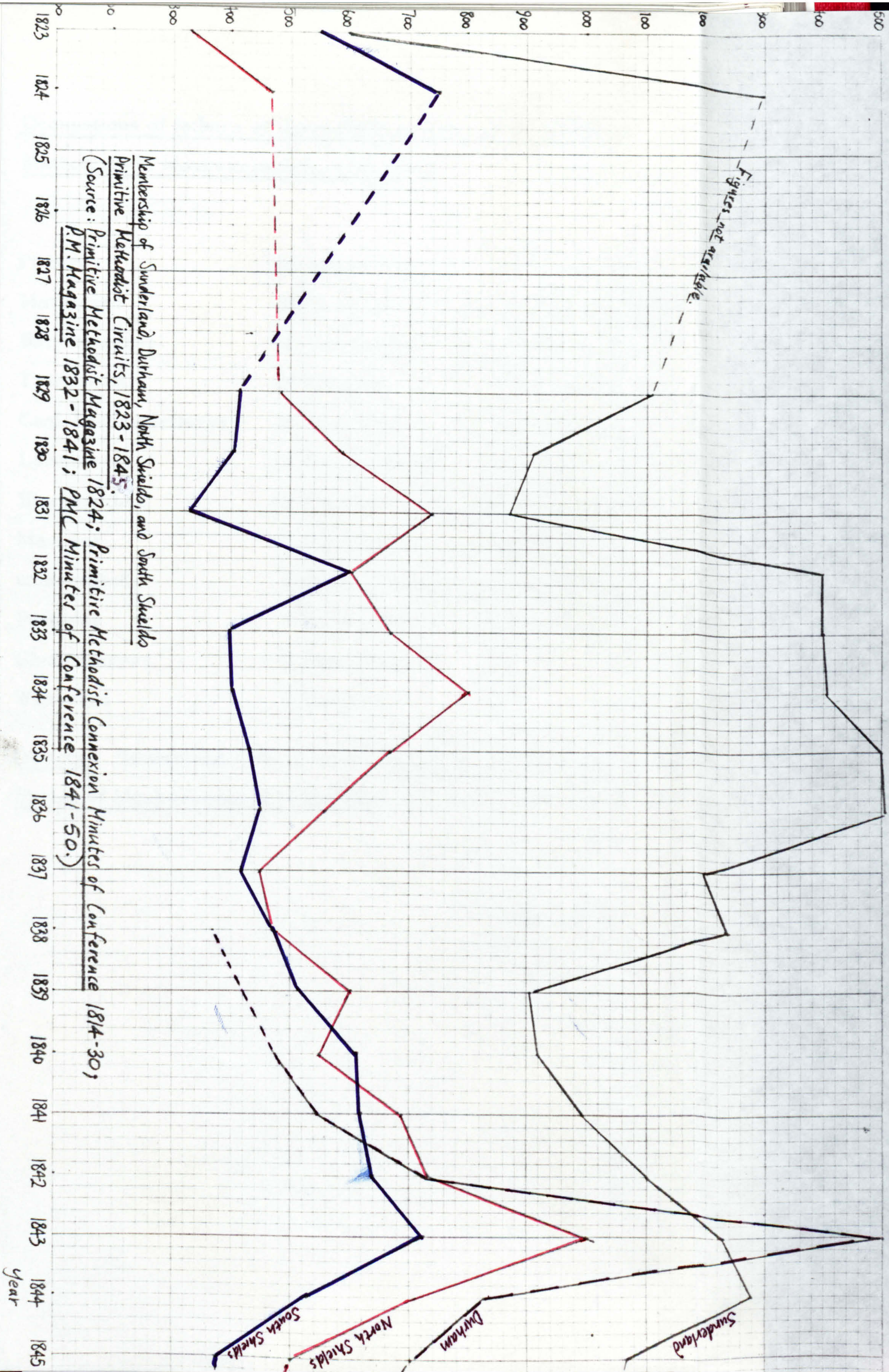
(source, *ibid.*, p. 95)

Members

220 Memberships of Philadelphia, Lumley, South Shields, North Shields, and Sunderland Wesleyan Societies, 1816-23.

(Source: Names of Members in Society 1811-73, OLRD. M/SS. 1.)





Occupations of fathers of those children baptized by Primitive
Methodists in Monkwearmouth, 1843-53

Pitmen:	126	Ropemakers:	4	Husbandmen:	1
Mariners:	42	Sawyers:	4	Cinderburners:	1
Shipbuilders:	31	Butchers:	4	Sailmakers:	1
Tradesmen:	25	Wrights:	4	Barbers:	1
Coal Trade-tertiary:	25	Business:	4	Mechanics:	1
Labourers:	13	Blockmakers:	4	Teachers:	1
Blacksmiths:	10	Postmen:	4	Publicans:	1
Masons:	9	Keelmen:	4	Carters:	1
unidentified:	8	P.M. ministers	3	Cordwainers:	1
Potters:	7	Brickmakers:	2	Soldiers:	1
Chainmakers:	5	Ironworkers:	2		
Weavers:	5	Coopers:	2		

(source: Sunderland P.M. Circuit, Baptisms solemnized in the
Parish of Monkwearmouth 1843-1876, D.C.R.O., M/Sus. 68))

Occupations of fathers of those children baptized by Primitive
Methodists in parts of County Durham, 1841-1850

"Coal miner"/"collier":	557	Teachers:	5	Farm Servants:	1
Coal Trade- tertiary:	31	Colliery overmen:	3	Painters:	1
Labourers:	20	Cordwainers::	3	Waggonwrights:	1
Blacksmiths:	19	Stationmasters:	2	Brickmakers:	1
Tailors and Shoemakers:	18	Gardeners:	2	Carters:	1
Carpet weavers:	18	Nailers:	2		
Stone masons:	9	Butchers:	2		
Farmers:	8	Colliery managers:	2		
unidentified:	6	Quarrymen:	2		
Joiners:	6	Publicans:	1		
Shopkeepers:	6	Grinders-cutters:	1		
"Preacher of Gospel":	5	Moulders:	1		

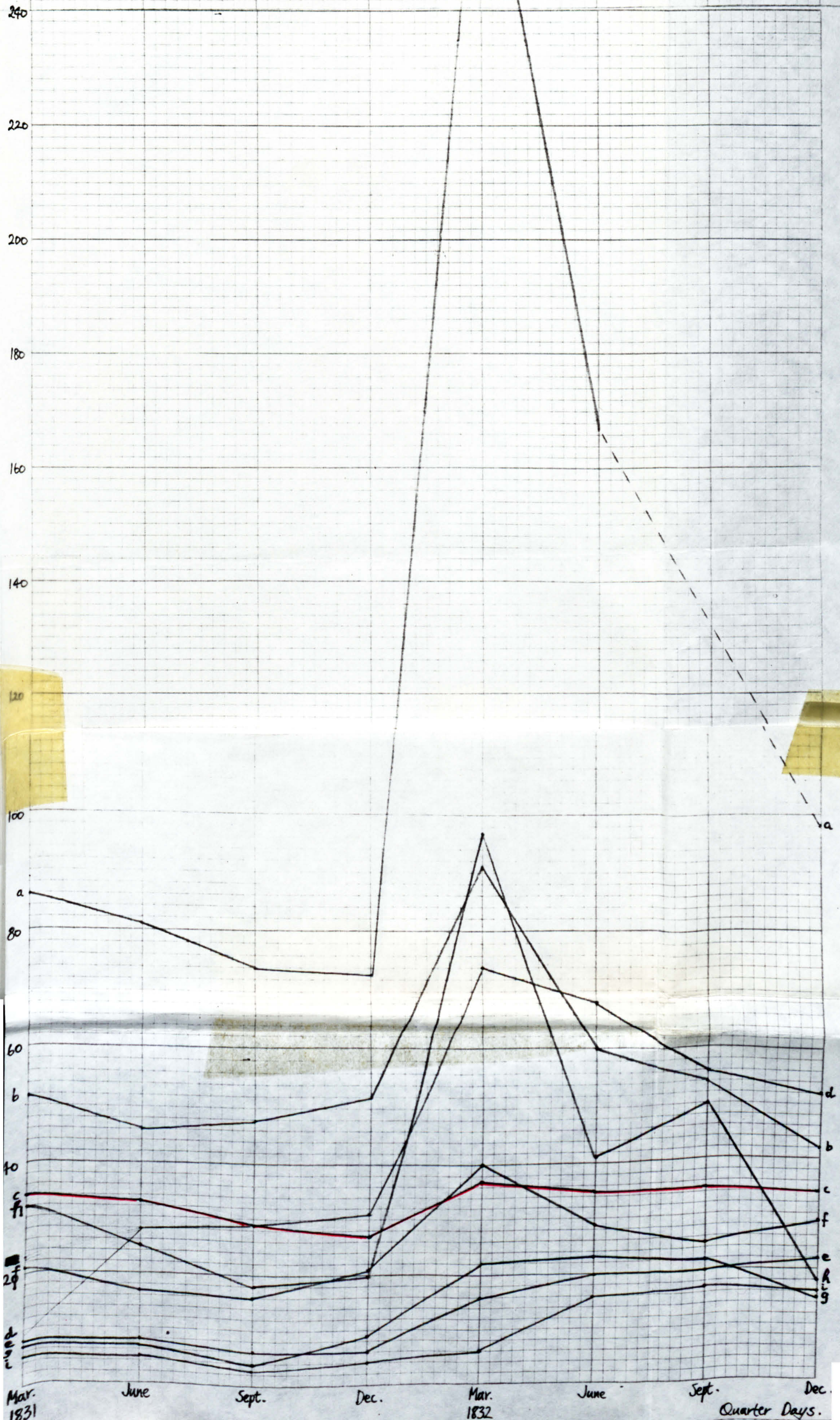
(source: Durham P.M. Circuit, Register of Baptisms 1841-1850,
D.C.R.O. M/Du 25)

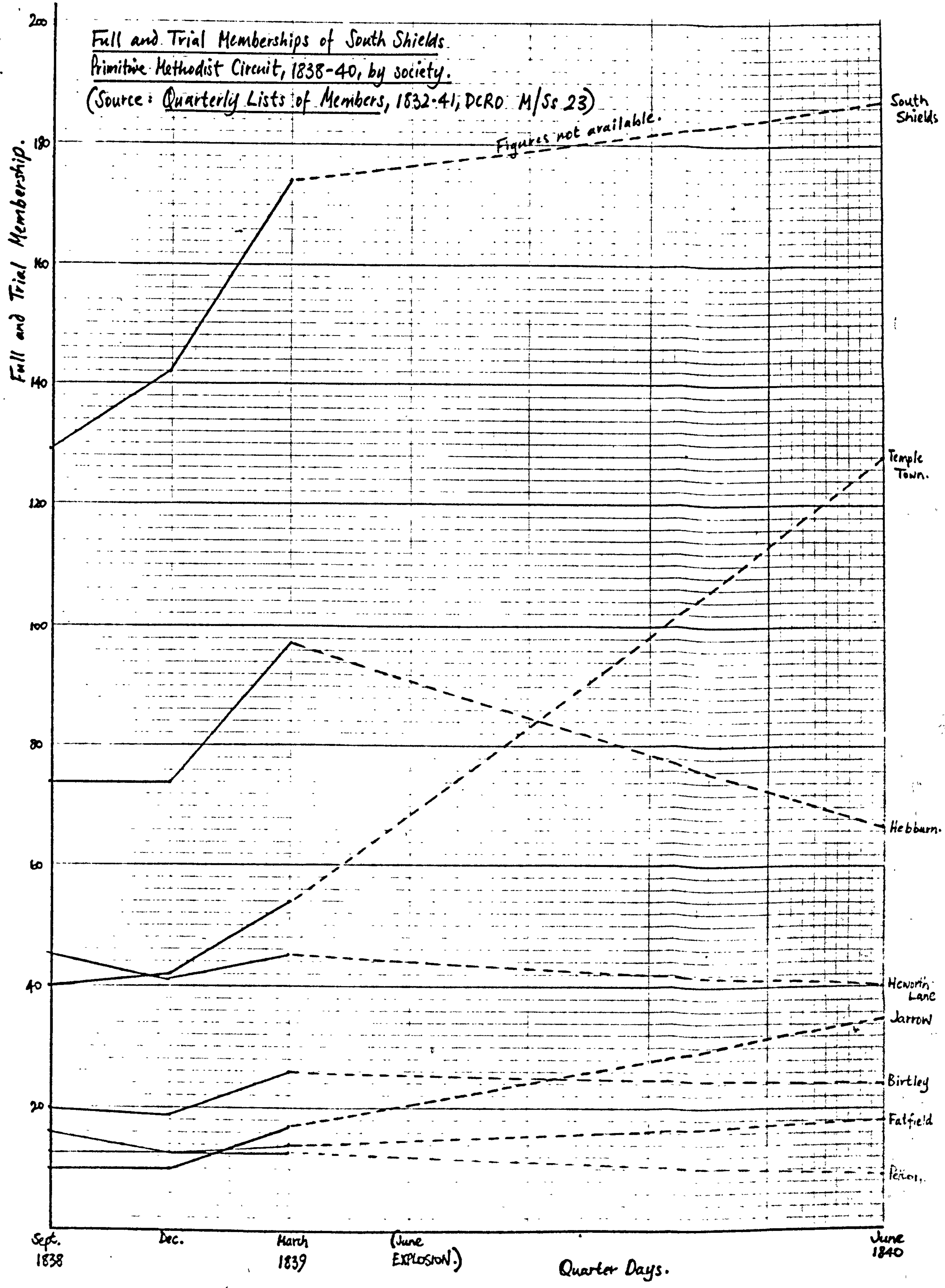
Full and Trial Memberships

Full and Trial Memberships of various Primitive Methodist Societies in the Sunderland Circuit:

(Source: Accounts of Monies and Members, D.C.R.O. M/Du.34)

- a) Hetton
- b) Easington Lane
- c) Monkwearmouth
- d) Pittington
- e) Colliers Row
- f) Houghton
- g) Newbottle
- h) Hetton Downo.
- i) New Panshaw, March 1831 - December 1832.

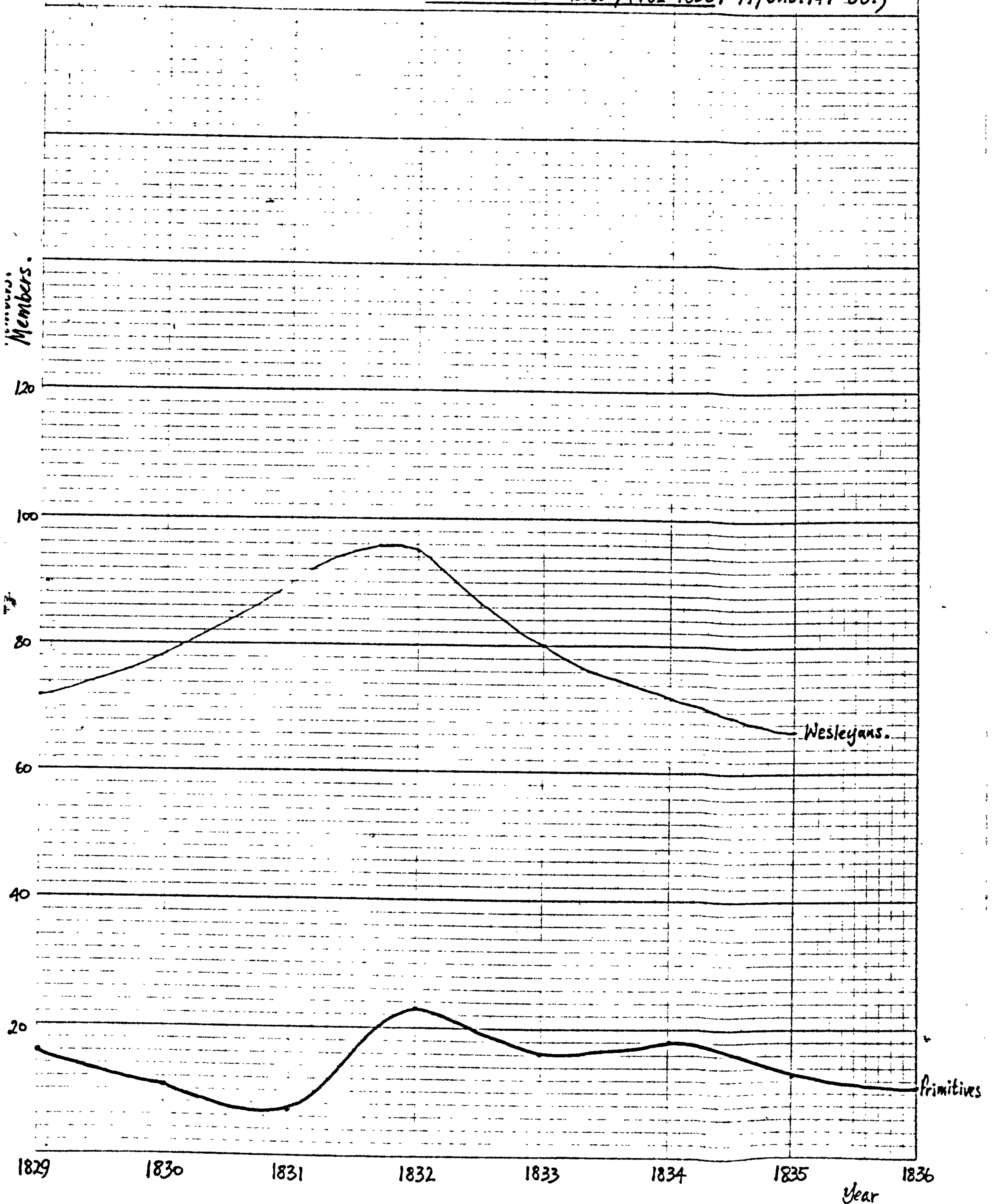




Membership of Primitive and Wesleyan Methodist Societies, 1829-36,
in Newbottle.

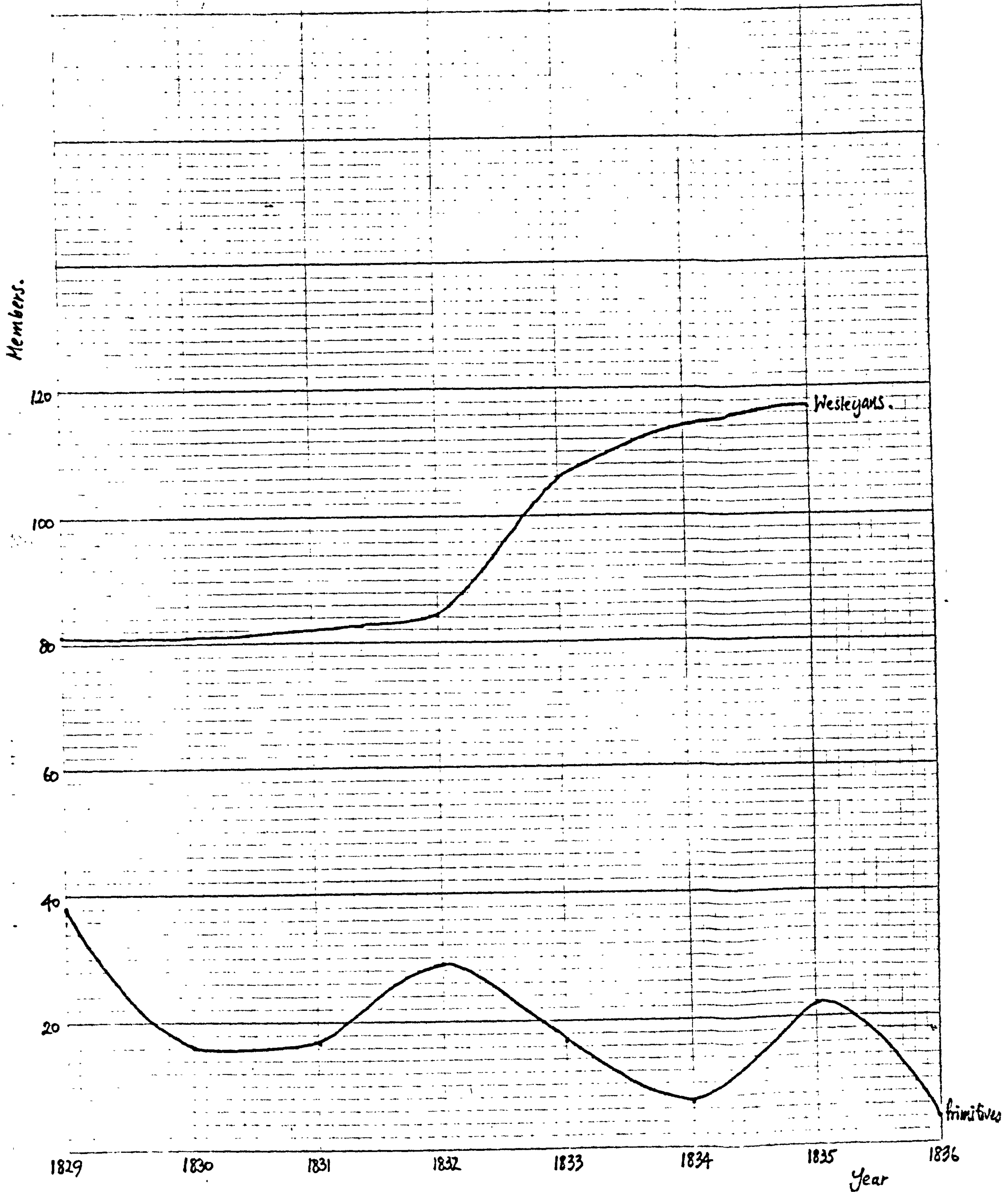
360A

(Source: Accounts of Monies and Members, DCRO. M/Du. 34; [Sunderland Wesleyan] Lists of Members arranged by societies and classes, 1782-1836, M/Sus. 147-50.)



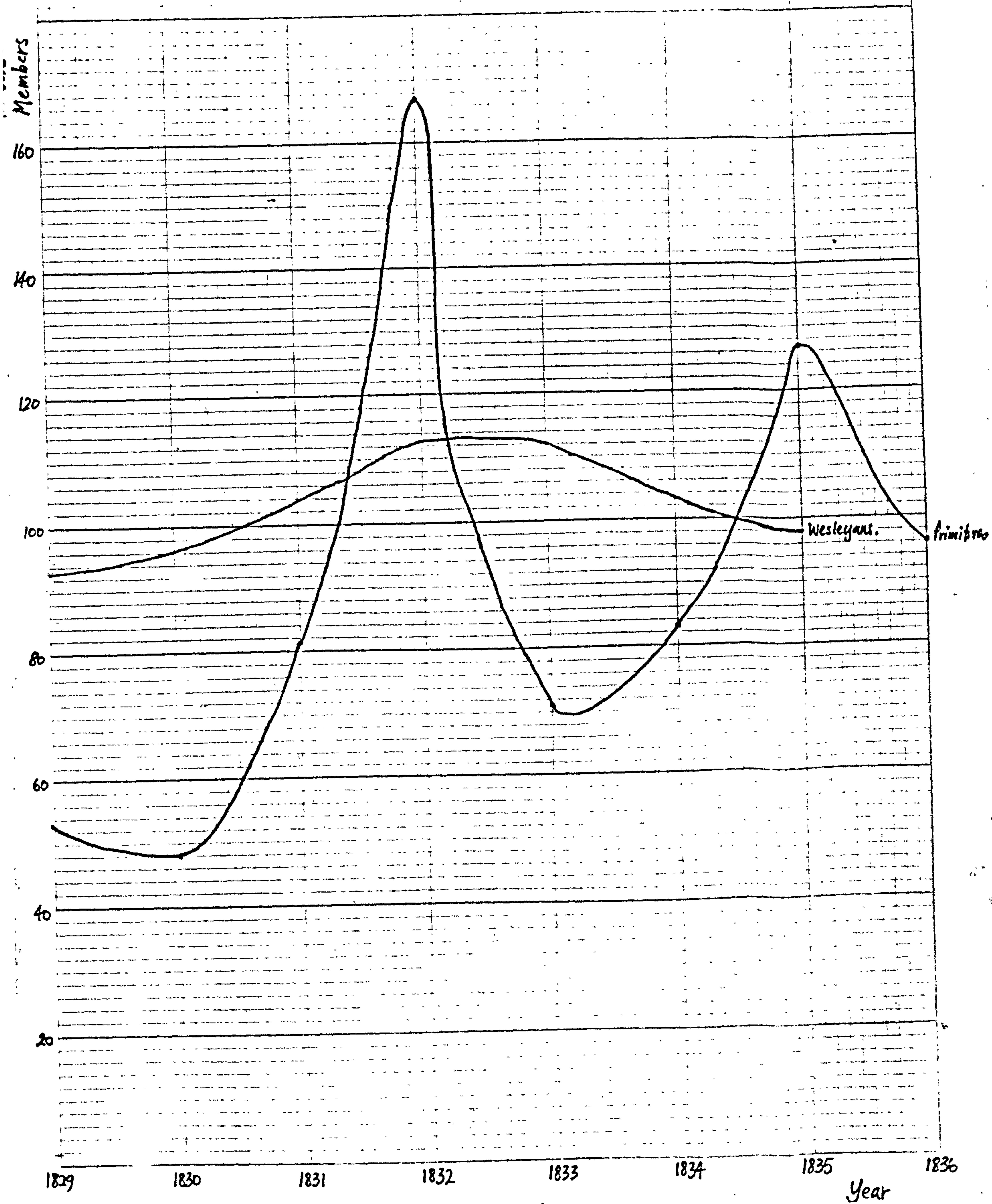
360B

Membership of Primitive and Wesleyan Methodist Societies, 1829-36.
in Houghton.
(Source: ibid.)



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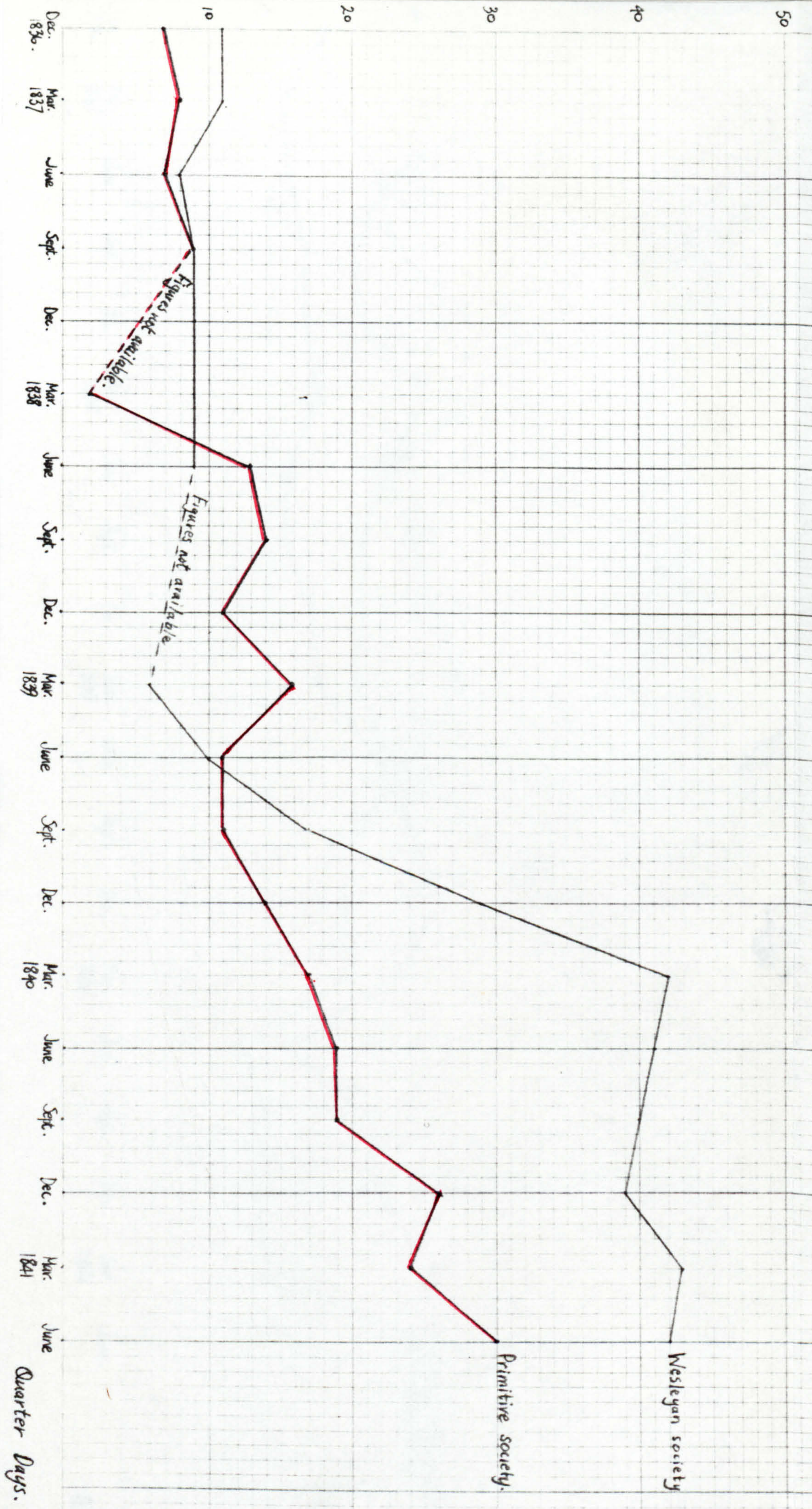
Membership of Primitive and Wesleyan Methodist Societies, 1829-36,
in Helton.
(Source: ibid.)



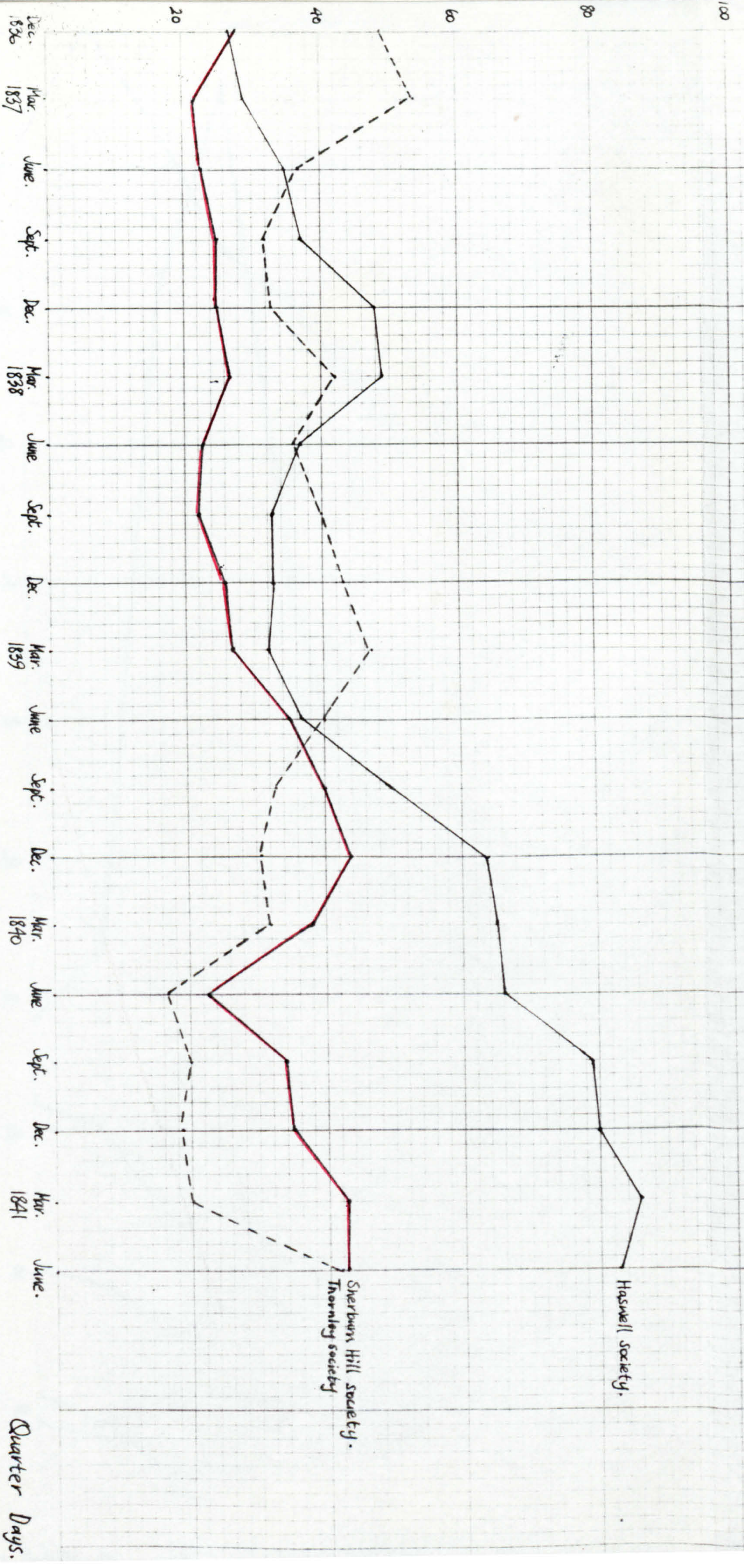
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C

Fall and Trial Memberships, Moorley Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Societies, 1836-41.

(Source: Houghton le Spring Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Schedules, 1836-47, DCRD. M/HO. 54; Account Book, DCRD. M/Du. 25)



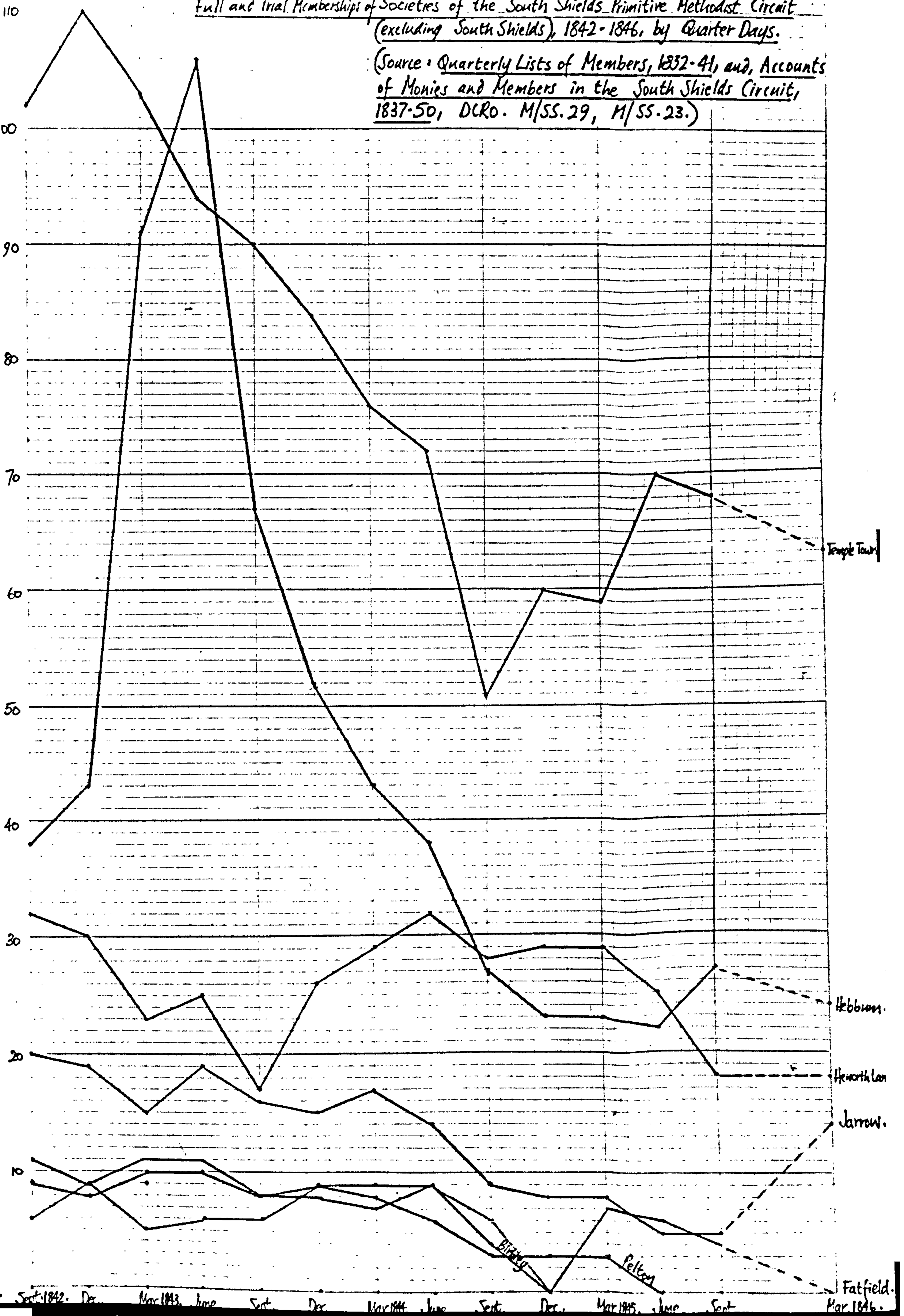
Full and Trial Memberships of Primitive Methodist Societies in
 three comparable mining villages, 1836-41.
 (Source: Account Book, DCR0. M/Du.25)



Full and Trial Memberships of Societies of the South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit
(excluding South Shields), 1842-1846, by Quarter Days.

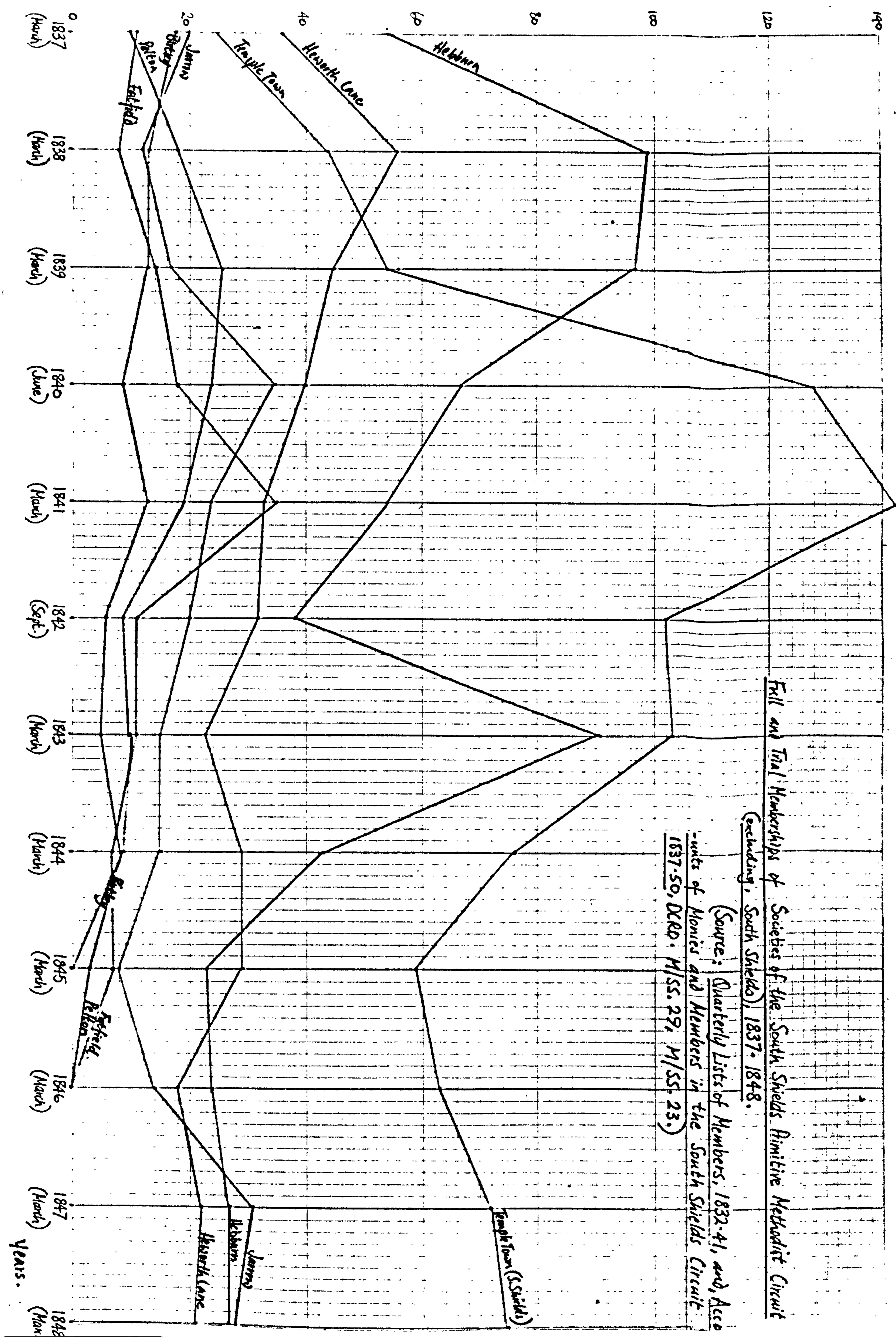
(Source: Quarterly Lists of Members, 1832-41, and, Accounts of Monies and Members in the South Shields Circuit, 1837-50, DCRO. M/SS.29, M/SS.23.)

Full and Trial Memberships.



363.

Quarter Days → Sept 1842. Dec. Mar 1843. June Sept. Dec. Mar 1844. June Sept. Dec. Mar 1845. June Sept. Mar 1846.



Full and Trial Memberships of Societies of the South Shields Primitive Methodist Circuit (excluding, South Shields) 1837-1848.

(Source: Quarterly Lists of Members, 1832-41, and Accounts of Monies and Members in the South Shields Circuit, 1837-50, DCRD. M/SS. 29, M/SS. 23.)

Primitive Methodists' voluntary contributions, 1828-36, 1836-41,
in selected villages

<u>P.M. Societies</u>	<u>Total Contribution</u>	<u>Contribution per member (quarterly, in old pennies)</u>	<u>Contribution per member (weekly, in old pennies)</u>
<u>1828-1836</u>			
Sunderland	£949 9s. 4d.	17.186	1.327
Easington Lane	£77 0s. 9d.	11.038	0.849
Hetton	£121 3s. 5d.	14.822	1.140
Houghton	£45 12s. 4d.	14.835	1.141
Newbottle	£27 2s. 3d.	10.791	0.830
New Penshaw	£23 8s. 6d.	15.236	1.172
<u>1836-1841</u>			
Durham City	£77 0s. 5d.	19.255	1.48
Pittington	£27 8s. 6d.	20.067	1.54
Moorsley	£17 19s. 7d.	16.668	1.28
Carrville	£27 12s. 2d.	18.406	1.42
Sherburn	£38 7s. 0d.	15.787	1.21
Haswell	£65 2s. 6d.	16.113	1.24

(source: Selected villages from Sunderland P.M. Circuit, Accounts of Monies and Members 1828-1836, and Durham branch of Sunderland P.M. Circuit, Account Book 1826-1848, D.C.R.O., M/Du. 34, M/Du. 25. I am most grateful to Mr Robin Watson, late of the University of York, for his invaluable assistance in dealing with these figures out of some complex historical evidences.)

Major open meetings of the National Miners' Association in
Northumberland and Durham, 1844-1845

20 February 1844, at Sunderland*: J. Williams, W. Daniells, W.
Hammond, N. Morgan, Mr Barker,
Mr Stokes.

2 March 1844, at Shadon's Hill*: M. Dent, C. Haswell, T. Pratt,
E. Richardson, W. Mitchell,
G. Charlton, W. Hammond, W. P.
Roberts, M. Jude.

7 March 1844, at West Moor*: M. Jude, W. Daniells.

9 March 1844, at East Cramlington*: W. Daniells, Mr Birrel, C.
Haswell, Mr Bird, Mr Foreman.

12 March 1844, at Kenton and Fawdon*: Mr Birrel, M. Jude, W.
Daniells.

April 1844, at Black Fell*: M. Dent, G. Charlton, R. Archer, J.
Tulip, W. Jobling, E. Richardson,
J. Beeston, W. Mitchell.

8 April 1844, at Shadon's Hill*: M. Dent, G. Charlton, R. Archer,
J. Tulip, W. Jobling, Edward
Richardson, T. Pratt, J. Beeston,
W. Daniells, W. Mitchell, Mr Byrne.

10 April 1844, at Wallsend*: J. Dobson, E. Hall, R. Jobling, W. Bell,
William Bell, G. Hunter, W. Jobling,
W. Beesley, J. Fawcett, C. Parkinson,
W. Woodworth.

15 April 1844, at Fawdon*: W. Thomson, J. Hay, R. Henderson,
W. Lumsden, J. Bolam, H. Young,
W. Sharp, J. Fawcett, W. Daniells.

early May 1844, meetings at Cullercoats Sands, Scaffold Hill,
Newburn, Pittington Hill, Tynemouth Sands, North Shields, Throckley
Fell, Sunderland, Ballast Hills, Shadon's Hill, Newcastle, addressed by
Messrs. G. Hunter, W. Mitchell, T. Pratt,
G. Charlton, J. Tulip, W. Beesley,
J. Fawcett, Mr Davies, T. Clough,
W. Daniells, W. Jobling, C. Revely.

7 May 1844, at Sunderland*: M. Dent, T. Clough, J. Tulip, W. Mitchell.

11 June 1844, at Tantoby*: M. Elliot, W. Bird, J. Norman, G.
Armstrong, T. Hay.

17 June 1844, at Willington*: Rev. J. Spoor, C. Revely, W. Bell,
R. Henderson, J. Fawcett, A. Stoves.

17 June 1844, at Scaffold Hill" : A. Stoves, E. Hall. Rev. J. Spoor,
C. Revely, R. Henderson, R. Turnbull,
W. Jobling, J. Fawcett.

11 July 1844, at Nelson Street, Newcastle*: J. Hardy, J. Fawcett,
G. Charlton, E. Richardson.

30 July 1844, at Town Moor, Newcastle*: M. Dent, J. Hardy, T. Pratt,
R. Archer, T. Wakenshaw,
T. Hay, C. Revely.

26 August to 7 September 1844, meetings at Springwell, Sherrif Hill,
Hetton, South Hetton, Urpeth, Ouston, Worwood (?), Oxclose, addressed
by

Messrs. R. Henderson, W. Daniells, R. Hardy,
W. Mitchell, B. Embleton, R. Archer.

30 August to 4 September 1844, meetings at Felling, Jarrow, Hebburn,
Heworth, addressed by Messrs R. Henderson and Mr Hebden.

30 August to 4 September 1844, meetings at Seaton Burn, West Moor,
Gosforth, Fawdon, North Elswick, Kenton, addressed by J. Fawcett.

early December 1844, meetings at Coxhoe, Trimdon, South Wingate,
Thornley, Castle Eden, Monkwearmouth, Haswell, Shotton Moor,
addressed by Messrs. T. Clough, J. Fawcett, M. Halliday.

early January 1845, meetings at Sunderland, the Cramlingtons, Cowpen,
Monkwearmouth, Coxhoe, Thornley, Trimdon, West Moor, addressed by
M. Halliday.

early January 1845, meetings at East Holywell, Oxclose, Stanley,
Springwell, addressed by J. Hardy.

early January 1845, meetings at Lumley, Lambton, Seaton Delaval,
Earsdon, East Holywell, Harton, Jarrow, Percy Main, Wallsend,
addressed by Messrs. T. Clough, J. Fawcett, W. Daniells.

14 January to 29 January 1845, meetings at South Wingate, Wingate
Grange, Trimdon, Haswell, Thornley, Kelloe, Shotton Moor, Castle
Eden, addressed by W. Daniells.

April 1845, meeting at Thornley, addressed by W. P. Roberts.

(source: The Miners' Advocate 1844-1845; for asterisk, see f.n. 220)

PART THREE

PROTEST

I argued the point with him at great length stating as the groundwork of my argument that if he sent me home without money for the pay, no argument which it would be in my power to urge with our people wd. convince them that the Bank was not actually broken: and that by 3 o'clock in the afternoon he might expect to be beset by 500 or 600 of the pitmen. For a long time he stared out, saying this wd. be a less evil than having money to find for the Notes tomorrow, and that he shd. tell the pitmen, that it was yr. lordship who owed them their Wages and not the Bank, and that they must look to yr. lordship for pay etc. etc. At length I prevailed with him ... ¹

The viewer prevailed with the banker because of the pitmen. The groundwork of his argument was the pitmen's reputation for protest which directly and actively confronted the objects of their opposition - men and their property. If they were not paid, the pitmen would "beset" the banker for an explanation. To beset was a direct and personal act.

The district had known direct action of this kind, and its threat, long enough for it to have become a traditional form of protest by the time of Buddle's prevailing over the bank in 1825. Part III will first establish the characteristics of direct action and show how it was more than a form of protest; it was a technique of social change which was not only understood but reciprocated by those in authority. This Part will then look at the political and trade union experiences of the mining community during the first half of the nineteenth-century with a view to showing how the community gave up the direct techniques of their forebears in order to face the new encroachments of their antagonists.²

Chapter One

Direct Action

On 25 October 1731, Richard and William Crofton, Thomas and John Bailey, Richard Oyston, William Davison and about one hundred other pitmen assembled at Newbottle colliery and,

... Armed with staves forceably enter'd into the said Engine House broke several lead Pipes by which the Engine was hindred from working & kept forceable Possession of ye said Engine House for a Night & a day and then gave Publick Notice to these Informants that if the Engine was repaired or set to work before they had brought their Masters to their Terms they won'd pull it down to the Ground and Murder the said Informants ... that these Informants made several Attempts to repair ye said Engine but were constantly disturb'd by ye said Pittmen, so that the Engine continued unwrought for the space of three weeks. And the Steward of the Rt. Hon. the Earle of Scarborough was Obliged to Submit to the unreasonable Demands of the said Pittmen, Otherwise the Colliery won'd have inevitably been drowned and lost.³

A week later another gang of pitmen, "armed with Clubbs & Staves", went to Moaborn Smith's, in Murton, "and did great Damage" to his

... fire engine ... and to his pump Work & Coal Shafts ... and threatened to take away his Coals ... destroy his Fire Engine and did break open his Granary ... & carried away thirty Coal Corves ... & burn & destroy the same.⁴

At the same time, a few miles away, Anthony Laverick with seventy others had marched on Henry Lambton's pit at Bowes Biddick

... and then & there with force and violence threw ye Roller down the Engine Shaft ... and also severall pieces of Timber ... lying there and also a Grindstone and other things to ... stop the said Engine from Working or drawing Water.⁵

On the following day, 3 November, the overman and engineer covered the shaft mouth "with strong boards firmly nailed down to prevent any further damage", but on 4 November Laverick and his men were back with reinforcements from Murton. They broke into the locked engine-room and

... with force bruised the Waste pipe together and knocked it aside, pulled down the lead pipe call'd the feeding pipe and broke of the Cock there of and broke a hole in the boyler Topp and Curs'd and swore they would pull down the Engine while others of them were endeavouring to pull up the Scaffolding over the ... Engine Pitt ... and to damage the Engine shaft and pumps ... 6

Engine, coal corves, and timber were set alight and the gang moved north to the house of J. Harrison, staithman, at Fatfield and there, "Armed with staves" they forced an entry. After they had "Drunk and Wasted Several quantities of his Ale and Wine & eat & Carried away his victuals, and ... Several pair of Shoes, Silk Handkerchiefs ... a Hatt and Perriwig",⁷ they went on to the home of another staithman, Samuel Anderson, and caused further damage.⁸ On 11 November we hear of gangs moving from colliery to colliery on the upper Tyne, calling on the men there to come out. On the twelfth two delegates from each colliery agreed to meet the owners at Ravensworth Castle, where they assembled on the fifteenth. This intended negotiation was disastrous: the delegates grouped in such a manner that the Riot Act was read, and from this, Tyne-Wear allegiances appear to have been promised for combined direct action on 17 November. At 11.00 a.m. on that day a body

... Composed of Tyne Water & Wear Water Men⁹ to ye Number of Near One Thousand ... proceeded from Chester with a design to throw down all Ginns & Corves wherever they found them Standing & to resist in Case of opposition, and that this design came from the Wear Water Men who said they would do the work

The pitmen were barred by military force at Urpeth,¹⁰ and no more evidence exists concerning the aftermath.¹¹

The evidence for this account is not disinterested, yet it is clear that the bearing of the protest involved a controlled crescendo of violence against men and property. In its direct threat to capital investment; in its calculated closure of production and halting of distribution; and in its candid intimidation of individuals, these

actions of 1731 are characteristic of coalfield protest in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. In 1765, amidst a protracted and relatively disciplined dispute, men of six Wear collieries "resolved ... to destroy all the Engines, Ginns etc. belonging to all the Collieries on that River", and on both rivers they "burnt and otherwise destroyed the utensils of many coal pits, set fire to the coals both above and below ground, and broke up the coalways".¹² In 1778 the men of Sir John Delaval's pits "threatened to pull down the office; Burn the corves; pull down the Ginns, and pull up the wagon ways", and in 1789 men from Tyne collieries did, with precision, "commit divers acts of violence to the machinery &c".

'... he saw one William Ford ... take the Rope from off the Wheel of the Engine used for Drawing the Coals ... & put the same over the pulley wheel belonging to the said Engine ... by which great Damage was done ...

'... Wm. Coxon of Carville ... [who] ... in fixing a clog of wood on the said Engine ... by which means this same Engine ... was very much damaged ...

'... but the said Rioters not being satisfied with such mischief did cut down the legs of such Engine ... for the purpose of pulling down the wheels ...'¹³

As late as 1829 John Buddle could testify to a Lord's Select Committee on the real possibility, if he cut wages any further, of the "destruction" of the mines, "with all the machinery and the valuable stock vested in them".¹⁴ Direct action not only confronted the means of production but also the product itself. The marching gang could call out workers in other collieries, destroy, scatter or confiscate the coal at bank, or prevent its transportation to market. In 1765 the Newcastle Journal criticized a loose force of pitmen ready to call out, and keep out, workers from other collieries; in 1771 Tyneside gangs moved "from Colliery to Colliery to put a stop to all work, they are at present at the Collierys on the Sunderland River"; in 1793 Walker colliery was prevented from working by a hail of coals thrown by men assembled

at "the underside of the Heap" and aimed at "every person near the Shaft"; whilst in 1800, much to the alarm of the local agent, a "great number" of pitmen from Cowpen and carpenters from Blyth,

... have passed through this place this morning with Bludgeons in their Hands, supposed for Hartley to raise the Men there & have on their way taken Mr Wright's Carpenters with them and endeavoured to lay off the Wagon men ... & how far they may do mischief on their return we do not know ...¹⁵

The wagon men were an important group to lay off if the owners were not to rely on coal reserves to enable their resistance. The pitman's economy could not withstand a long encounter, his action had to be short, sharp, and effective. The 1765 dispute saw the overturning of "Waggons laden with Coals" and "mischief to the Waggon ways" throughout the coalfield.¹⁶ The following year Joseph Blacklock and twenty-two others were prosecuted for "Obstructing Seven Coal Waggons" and "throwing Wasting Scattering and destroying" coals at Lamesley and Whickham; in 1775 Robert Beverley and others were prosecuted for

... Riotously forceing compelling and obliging divers persons employed in loading and conveying Coals in Waggons ... & preventing such persons from loosing their Horses from the said Waggons for the space of eight Hours and upwards and for breaking and destroying such Waggons and consuming the Coals therein ...

At other times, the capacity for direct action ranged to threats to burn ships at the quayside.¹⁷

In spite of the authorities' tendency to exaggerate reports, perhaps out of panic or for their own advantage, there can be no doubt that attacking workings or wrecking the production and distribution of coals intimidated opposing interests and was intended to do so. Buddle had warned his banker about being 'beset', Robert Beverley and others were prosecuted for "violently besetting" and thus "greatly terrifying and disturbing the said George Wilson and his Family ...".¹⁸ This experience was not pleasant and was not sought. Viewers and under-managers were very conscious of the pitmen's capacity for action. They

faced intimidation from below and responsibility from above.

Potentially troublesome situations could be met by selling the community cheap meal as in times of dearth, or by making idle-time payments during natural or Vended interruptions to normal working.¹⁹

In March 1789 Denton colliery's vend was cut to 22,000 chaldrons and its viewer estimated that this would cut average wages from 2s. to 1s. 6d. per day. He knew that this colliery was under threat and that prudence was his best course:

[Pitmen from collieries below the Tyne bridge] ... assembled yesterday in great numbers and laid in all the Collieries on the North Side of the River below Bridge at several of which they did considerable damage. Being informed that they had reached Newcastle and were proposing to continue up the North side of the River to the collieries above Bridge it was thot prudent to lay in our Pits, preferring the payment of £8.14. 6 p. day to Men and Lads for lying Idle ... to the hazard of incurring much greater Injury to the Colliery by acting in opposition to the intentions of so dangerous a combination.²⁰

The next day the viewer was yet to see the below-bridge gang but still feared their rumour, and thought it wise to "discontinue our workings this day likewise". Four days later the men of his own colliery "assembled and laid in all the pits" without difficulty. An offer was immediately made by the owners but ignored until the 20 March by which time "a large Body" had moved to lay in pits to the west of Denton, but with "no other injury".

The Denton viewer's recognition of threat and his response to circumvent its course, testifies to the pitmen's known capacity for retribution.²¹ The mining communities' social cohesion and distance from authority clearly made them a potent force.²² This reputation was well attested both locally and nationally²³ and the army, of course, took due note.²⁴

The keelmen and seamen also enjoyed equally deserved reputations for direct action.²⁵ For the keelmen, stoppage and riot were almost

synonymous. In April 1768 the Newcastle keelmen stopped work and hired a solicitor to fight their case. The city authorities, however, knew the likely outcome of stoppage:

... if these men remain quiet, their lying Idle will not be of much Damage, but it is scarce to be expected that they will long remain without work or without Mischief ... a few days will determine Peace or War with 'em.

Three years later again the city was poised between peace or war:

... no Riots have yet happened here, but it can scarce be supposed that such a Number of Men can remain long idle without breaking the peace ... ²⁶

"War with 'em" would mean the men's direct confrontation with the means of production. In the keelmen's case, the river was the target and their action aimed at immobilizing its commerce by blockading it with their keels.²⁷ Similarly, they resented the arrest of comrades and at times made their release a condition of settlement.²⁸ The river was also the scene of conflict between the seamen and their employers. Here, their technique was to hinder the sailing of vessels whose owners had not come to terms: "the sailors is stoping all the ships that gos into shields & sunderland and will not lett them go out to any other port untill matters is mad up."²⁹ In 1787 hundreds of Tyne mariners

... did unlawfully and Riotously assemble and gather together in divers Boats on the River Tyne with an Intent unlawfully ... to obstruct and hinder every Ship or Vessell there on the River Tyne ... from going ... out of the Harbour ... unless the Master or Owner of every such ship ... should by Notes in writing ... promise to pay every Mariner ... wages at the rate of five Guineas per Voyage.³⁰

On 16 January 1816 the Tyne Mercury reported in full one argument between shipowner and strikers, taken from the evidence of William Coppin at Newcastle Sessions, who with his brother was trying to break the seamen's embargo. After the mid-river duel the deck is invaded and the vessel seized:

'At this time the boats with seamen were plying on the river, and one of them, with Dale in it, came alongside ...

Dale: Where are you going with the ship?

Coppin: You have no business with that.

Dale: You have a good berth, and had better not leave it - I am determined she shall not go to sea.

Coppin: I have no hands on board (meaning seamen) and will go. [By this time the ship 'Joseph' is surrounded by seamen in boats.]

Dale: We are coming to board the ship.

Coppin: I will mark the first man who comes on board.

Dale: We can play at that game as well as you; that is the worst word you have said this day.'

The seamen appear to have had a fine theatrical sense in times of dispute. In 1768 they took their case to the streets and marched with flag and drum "and threatened Destruction wherever They came". This was not plunder however, but collective bargaining by disciplined 'riot' - "the men are proceeding with flags displayed and Drums beating to the great Terror of the Country" ...

Notwithstanding the Presence of the Detachment at Sunderland,, the Sailors marched in a Body thro' the Town by beat of Drum, abstaining however from committing any Violence ... 31

Pitmen, keelmen, and seamen were all considered to have a "Disposition" for action. After disturbances at Hexham in 1761 the Duke of Northumberland admitted to not having "been informed of any further particulars", but nevertheless felt free to comment that "from the riotous disposition of the Colliers and Keelmen in that part of the Country I fear greater mischiefs ... ". Sunderland's "Principal Inhabitants", unlike the Duke, lived within this fear of greater mischiefs. In 1785 a petition of magistrates, leading merchants, and shipowners complained that

... they have ... much to dread from the turbulent spirit of the Seamen, Keelmen, and Labourers belonging to the said Town and Port and particularly

the former who have lately assembled in large Bodies, demanding exorbitant Wages, Threatening, and doing much Mischief . . .

If Sunderland's leading citizens feared trouble from within, they also feared it from without:

That another description of Men called Pitmen who work in the Collieries adjacent to the said Town, from their number and habits of Life discontents frequently arise, which call for the interposition of the Civil Power aided by a Military Force.

Their request was for a permanent barracks of soldiers.³² In 1793, after a sequence of actions by all three groups, the Mayor of Newcastle asked for a barracks of horse because of the "turbulent Disposition" of the seamen and the "tumultuous spirit" of the pitmen.³³ Connected in their work and lack of it by their industrial interdependence, it was joint action which most frightened local authorities. In June 1740 the Sheriff of Durham began to panic when he heard that Stockton bread rioters had called on the pitmen for reinforcements, and in the same month the Mayor of Newcastle, faced by a bread riot of pitmen, feared for its consequences upon the keelmen:

For they on Wanting Work will be too Apt to Joyn those Rioters, which will make a most formidable Body not to be restrained by any Civil Authority.

The prospect of united action remained distasteful for both civil and military authorities well into the 1830s:

If the Pit men continue refractory they will be awkward persons to deal with; one pit man being equal to 3 weavers at the least, and should the discontent spread to the Keelmen & Sailors it may become very serious and the force at present in Newcastle would be very soon harrassed to death.³⁴

So the disposition for joint action was encouraged by joint issues. Coal was such an issue, but here their respective action tended to be serial. More spontaneous action was provoked by the periodically high price of wheat where pitmen, keelmen, seamen and other labouring, craft, and smallholding groups could act together, bound by their mutual dependence as petty consumers on bread as a stable food.³⁵

The year 1740 saw high prices nationally but it had been preceded on Tyneside by a hard winter which had stopped the Coal Trade.³⁶ In early June crowd actions forced large reductions in wheat prices at Durham, Sunderland, Stockton, and Carlisle.³⁷ In Newcastle the mood was uglier. On 9 June the city 'mob' was embodied and on 10 June a counterveiling irregular militia was raised, with promises from Alderman Ridley that a fixed price of 7s. per boll would be imposed on corn factors.³⁸ The promise was not kept and on probably 19 June the pitmen, keelmen, and town 'poor', with assistance from Wearside pitmen and their families, stormed the granaries, seized a rye-laden vessel, and proceeded to sell the grain to themselves at the promised price. On the following day substantial taxation populaire actions took place in Sunderland, and on 23 June the principal inhabitants there petitioned for troops. In Newcastle the militia and gentle persuasion seem to have broken the crowd's momentum, but either on the 25th or early morning of 26 June, the "Colliers, Wagoners, Smiths, and other common workmen" caught the militia off guard and re-entered the city, taking de facto control. Frenzied negotiations between mayor, corn factors, and the crowd followed, but a panic shooting affray between the remnant of the militia and the crowd resulted in a frontal attack on the Guild Hall and the ransacking of the town court and chambers: "the most outragious Riot that ever happen'd in this Town" -

Stones flew in among us from without thro' the Windows like Canon Shot ... at length the Mob broke in upon us... They Spared our lives indeed but Oblig'd us to quit the place Then fell to plundering and destroying all about them.³⁹

That evening the army clattered in from Alnwick, scattered the crowd, made forty arrests, and stayed for a month. The August Assizes inflicted seven years transportation on William Kid "for feloniously taking Money belonging to the Mayor and Burgesses" and six others

"for being concerned in the late Riot".⁴⁰

In the spring and autumn of 1795 there were other serious examples of crowd action in the area. Again the poor responded to a national dearth with an "illegal and temporary regulation of the market".⁴¹ On 25 April Stockton and Durham acted, on 27 April Darlington, and on 30 April Chester le Street market was regulated by "colliers and other workmen bordering on the River Wear". A week later Tyne pitmen laid in pits and factories, drew the Light Dragoons, and on 7 May negotiated at Byker with magistrates, constables, and army over the hoarding of supplies by factors.⁴² The following October one thousand Weardale leadminers gathered at Wolsingham "for the purpose, they said, of regulating the market"; and at Newcastle on 10 November

... a number of workmen employed in this neighbourhood assembled in this town, and in the several markets seized the different articles of provision, which they in the presence of the town's officers sold out to poor and labouring people at reduced prices. The butter intended to be conveyed to the hucksters they retailed at 8d. per lb; the wheat then in the market at 12s. per boll (the ordinary price in former years); - and after obtaining a knowledge of the depositions of the forestallers of potatoes, they sold them publicly at 5s. a load (the usual price, but one third less than they have lately been retailed at) and immense quantities were disposed of at that rate.⁴³

Food was the most common but not the only issue for joint action. In 1757 the government sought to make up for the loss of regular soldiers to the Seven Years War by raising county militias. The Act of 1757 laid down that each county's quota was to be filled by a ballot of all eligible males. Although the Act allowed for (expensive) substitutions, its enactment of compulsory service was met with rioting.⁴⁴ The Northumberland Militia was first raised in January 1760 and the following year, as stipulated in the Act, amended lists to include newly eligible eighteen year-olds were to be presented to Deputy Lord Lieutenants. Early February presentations faced

disturbances in County Durham: in Durham City hundreds assembled "whereby the Inhabitants are put in bodily fear". On 28 February the East Chester magistrates were stopped in their duty at Gateshead by being forced to surrender their ballot-lists to a large crowd. A broadsheet declared that "it is a thing that none of us will submit to, to be balloted after this manner ...". On 2 March lists were seized and destroyed at Morpeth and on the following day at Whittingham.⁴⁵ By now much of Northumberland's labouring population seem to be on the move determined to resist the Act. The Deputy Lieutenants for the County resolved to stand firm at the Hexham presentation of lists on 9 March. Six companies of the North Yorkshire Militia were called to the town where they formed a scarlet and green square before the Sessions Hall against a large crowd of husbandmen, small farmers, labourers, pitmen, weavers, tailors, shoemakers, domestics, and moor-wallers.⁴⁶ The lists were taken and the Lieutenants heard some petitioning but would not desist from their duty. After being under arms for four hours - two hours "wth. their Bayonets touching the Brests of the Mob and the Mob great part of that Time braving them with their Clubs flourishing about Heads" - an attack was made on the Militia's left line. An ensign was shot, the line broke, and the magistrates "gave the Command to Fire which was well observed":⁴⁷

The Grenadiers fired but once, which cleared our front, and in a minutes time there was scarce a man left but the dead and wounded. As soon as ever the smoke of the first fire had cleared away, and I saw that the resistance had ceased, I ran up and down the line to make the men give over firing.⁴⁸

One minute of fire into a dense crowd at short range had to take its toll. Estimates of the dead have ranged from twenty to one hundred and twenty but with many staggering away wounded into ditches and churches, it was not possible to know.⁴⁹ As late as 1794 the North Yorkshire were still nicknamed 'The Hexham Butchers'.⁵⁰

Chapter Two

Street Theatre

The actions of 1740 and 1761 were without doubt great 'risings of the people',⁵¹ but the way in which an action could become a 'riot' was not just a question of legal definition by those in authority.⁵² It was also an immediate matter of the crowd, their target, and the magistrates whose business was the King's peace. Crowd actions were dynamic; what they were, and what they became, moved across a spectrum of popular thrust and establishment parry which changed from moment to moment. The eventual outcome depended on direct acts and power relationships: a magistrate who was afraid of the lower orders could, by his own alarm, turn an action into a 'riot' - both legally and actually; a crowd intent on its objective could do the same - no matter how sage the authorities might be in their response. In this sense, although there were patterns and even rituals of direct action, each action needs to be understood on its own merits. Moreover, these patterns - the march, the public display of grievance, the style of violence - constituted techniques of social agency which were common to the culture.

The possession of colours and bands to march and celebrate was common for labouring groups with a strong sense of their own craft. In 1763 the coalowning Delaval brothers led three hundred of their workmen to celebrate the King's birthday, "and the Rear [was] brought up by a great number of working Colliers, all in their Best Dress ... who marched four abreast, with Colours flying carried before them, and a genteel Band of Music ... ". In 1822 Hetton colliery was opened by "the Newbottle band of music, attended by about one thousand workmen, with flags flying and cockades in their hats, march[ing] in regular order".⁵³ The Seamen's Association

concluded their annual general meeting in Shields by going "in procession to the church, attended by their colours", the keelmen marched annually through Newcastle to music "accompanied by their wives, daughters &c", as did the cordwainers in celebration of their patron saint St Crispin.⁵⁴ In 1767, at the laying of Hexham bridge foundation stone Sir William Blackett led gentlemen, freeholders and workmen - "a Pair of Colours being carried before them, Drums beating, Music playing, attended by the Company of Butchers with Marrow bones and Clevers ... followed by the Company of Free Masons"; twelve years later Newcastle Corporation gave dinner for workmen on their new bridge, "to which they proceeded with music and colours flying".⁵⁵ South Shields' "sure, lasting, and loving" Friendly Society laid it down in article 12 that bretheren should march at the funeral of bretheren "in proper order according to Seniority".⁵⁶

Public display had other uses a good deal less stately. Working groups in towns would use its narrow streets and standing 'public' to shame individuals who had offended them. The hapless Newcastle undertaker William Scott, was seized by joiners' apprentices at Pilgrim Street gate one April evening in 1768 and then "by force" was "hoisted upon a stang and carried shoulder height thro' the streets; till at last they came to the Side, where he was rescued by some of his friends".⁵⁷ The stang, and riding it, takes its place with cucking stools, rough music, whirligigs, and pillories as a direct form of popular sanction against those who had bruised community mores.⁵⁸ A long pole to which the offender was strapped by his shoulders and dragged, the stang seems to have been most favoured by the seamen. In 1783 Sunderland tars returned to port to seek out those who had informed on them to the press: the informers were mounted on a stang "and carried through the principal

streets, exposed to the insults and assaults of an enraged populace, the women in particular bedaubing them plentifully with dirt etc."⁵⁹ Tyne seamen who refused to join the strikes of 1792 and 1815 were similarly humiliated by this "cruel and brutal practice"⁶⁰ - although it must be said that the stang, like the entire action, was done with a precisioned discipline which impressed the authorities. In 1792 and 1815 all strikers were roll-called daily and subjected to an exquisite control which included those who had degraded the action as well as those who had shunned it.

(1792) ' ... yesterday three of the Sailors who had not been quite punctual at their Meetings were stripped Naked and made to walk in that situation up the street of South Shields and around the market place.

(1815) ' ... and some of the Men so assembled took Tar and paint and put the same upon the Face of a certain Man ... And then the said Man ... was put upon a Pole and carried to different parts of the Town and then to ... Jane Forsyth's Field and he was there punished by knocking him down ... ⁶¹

The keelmen also used the stang, but there were other, incidental, forms of public humiliation - like stripping, nose pulling, jostling and jeering, and, as with His Majesty's press in 1792, the seamen "compelled them, with their jackets turned inside out, to march out of the town".⁶²

When street theatre was employed for hostile ends against property or authority we see its techniques most vividly. On these occasions, the display not only proclaimed the threat of action, it also embodied it. Moving through the district with commotion, the march retained a fine sense of discriminating riot. There was the impression of physical force, but the essential aim was moral suasion by an overbearing display of self confidence. What violence existed was mainly a reserved violence. In 1740, after storming the granaries, the Newcastle crowd, "elated with this Success" proceeded "in Triumph about the streets ... huzzaing and blowing horns ... well armed with

Cudgels". The pitmen's later capture of the city and release of its prisoners saw them march "in great Order through the Town with Bagpipes playing Drum beating and Dirty clothes fixed upon Sticks by way of Colours flying ...". In 1768

On Saturday the 3rd Inst. about 4 or 500 Sailors at Tinmouth [Tynemouth], joined by great Numbers from Sunderland, assembled in a tumultuous manner, with Flags and Drums, to the great Terror of the Inhabitants ... upon the Pretence of demanding an Advance of Wages ... On the Day following a Body of Sailors, to the Number of 400 at least, marched up to Newcastle with a Flag, and a Boatswain and His Whistle, to call to Order and threatened Destruction.

The seamen were "awed from proceeding to Violence and by Persuasions" by soldiers drawn up on the Sandhill. They waited till morning when they went to Sunderland "where They did great Damage by extorting Meat, Drink, and Money from many People by Violence ...". Meanwhile the Newcastle soldiers had been ordered to Sunderland in pursuit, but the seamen "their Number being augmented by other Sailors at Sunderland ... returned to Shields, where they did great Damage to the Shipping and threatened to do more that Evening". The seamen thereupon returned to Sunderland for a final blast of defiance:

Notwithstanding the Presence of the Detachment at Sunderland, the Sailors marched in a Body thro' the Town by beat of Drum, abstaining however from committing any Violence, and after They were without the Town They dispersed.⁶³

This action frightened the authorities all the way down the line to the Secretary at War's office in London. Lord Barrington was moved to make enquiries about stationing a permanent force in the area.⁶⁴

It is interesting to note that in his original request for assistance the Mayor of Newcastle drew specific attention to the accoutrements of intimidation - "the men are proceeding with Flags displayed and Drums beating to the great Terror of the Country"⁶⁵ - and in general the magistracy were alert to the ferment of the march. Magistrates' letters to the Home Department do not lack detail in matters of symbolism.

In 1819 North Shields justices permitted a Peterloo protest meeting by the Political Protestants only "upon a pledge being given ... that everything should be conducted in the most regular and peaceable manner - that no Music or Banners and no Sticks or Staves ... no appearances of marching or arraying themselves in any manner", and were relieved that the meeting eventually took place without the plangency of threat.⁶⁶ Newcastle magistrates were less prudent: the Town Moor Peterloo protest paraded beneath an overarching forest of catchword and symbol - black banner with a red border We mourn the massacred at Manchester, gold letters on a blue flag Rachel weeping for her children, and others.⁶⁷ That each side recognized the role of street theatre is shown both by the authorities' sensitivity to it and the radicals' efforts to play down its meaning. The editorials of the Tyne Mercury agitated the horrors of Peterloo for seven consecutive weeks but at the same time tried to remove any offensive sting from a demonstration which, if without sting, had no meaning:

... there are banners at it, but they bear for their inscriptions 'Justice', 'Annual Parliaments' &c. 'Order, Order', 'Liberty or Death', and such like expressions, the last of which is, or was, universally to be found in the song books, among toasts and sentiments, and on soldiers' caps, and is as common a phrase as 'God Save the King' or 'Rule Britannia'; there is marching, but one witness says that he has seen that used by benefit societies; there are sticks, but two or three witnesses deny that there are any clubs, or any thing but what is commonly employed by a countryman ...⁶⁸

The threat of action was always present and the imagery of the crowd declared it: the martial bravado of smugglers or poachers; the speared loaf, drum, dirty-clothes banner and other insignia of bread-rioters; the horns of Highland crofters or Welsh, 'Scotch Cattle'; the invisible intimidatory presence of a Ludd, Swing, or lesser correspondents; the symbolic chest of Lewsyn yr Heliwr;

the effigy-burning of bishops, viewers, or reactionaries -

A mob of 10,000 at least, paraded the Street last night insulting every person they could meet with, who was supposed to be in our interest. Bramwell the ... Fitter was maltreated - Kaye's house was beset & Crow the upholsterer who voted for Mr Trevor was burnt in effigy before his own door - his wife was so frightened, that she has continued in fits ever since.⁶⁹

It was from this whimsical world of symbolic imagery that the crowd took their initial styles of class loyalty. The broader culture of public 'terror' ran to the depths of the early labour movement as a form of internalized, self-induced, 'terror'. Buddle passed eight hundred parading pitmen "with music & Colours" insisting Nail your Colours to the Mast, Death or Liberty for Owen's Grand National in 1834, but this insistence, and its dramatic posture, did not cease on the Shields Road. In the year of Tolpuddle it continued in the secret initiations of colliery cells, at night, in the villages:

The ceremony is performed in private, and one of these Vagabonds is wrapped in a White Sheet, and the other in a Black Cloak during the inauguration - with open Bible, naked Sword, lighted Candles etc. Nothing but their poverty ... prevents a general Strike ...⁷⁰

If the Poor practised one form of street theatre, then authority practised another. Eighteenth-century English Law acted as a controlling ideology through the awesome, and self-consciously public, spectacle of Assize and gallows.⁷¹ The surge of eighteenth-century capital statutes, most of them related to specific property interests, included the Coal Trade with major Acts in 1736, 1769 and 1800 for the protection of collieries against arson, sabotage, and destruction.⁷² However, when this ideological force broke down, then the black cap majesty of the Law was replaced by the red coat terror of the Army. Except in times of war, the regular and irregular army was not big enough to dominate the country. Thus, from its inception as the most important coercive instrument at the beginning of the eighteenth-century to its demise around the

middle of the nineteenth, the army relied more upon the show of force than its actual use.⁷³ Like the marching crowd, theirs was more a reserved violence:

[at Kersall Moor, Manchester, May 1839] 'One wing of the 10th came by a morning train yesterday; the other by an evening train, which made everybody suppose two regiments had arrived. We made also a great show on the 23rd, and it is generally thought we had then 3000 men under arms: we had not 1000!

'But I lay down as an axiom, and our first, greatest principle, that the queen's troops must not be overthrown anywhere, because the effect in the three kingdoms would be fearful ...

'... the prestige of mastery is with them ...'⁷⁴

The prestige of mastery could not be dented; the army dressed and manoeuvred to make the state strong, itself brave, and others afraid. An 1821 Radical tract recognized the prestige of soldier-red for the labourer and sought to demystify it. The Volunteers represented more a display of loyalty than a military force and therein lay their power:

The coarsest manufacture that can be made of wool, dyed of a brick-dust colour, goes down with him, because it is in imitation of scarlet or crimson cloth ... these fine allurements ... have drawn in and been the destruction of more men in reality, than all the killing eyes and bewitching voices of women ever slew in jest. Today the swineherd puts on his red coat, and believes every body in earnest that calls him gentleman; and two days after, Serjeant Kite gives him a swinging rap with his cane for holding his musket an inch higher than he should do ...

The people, it must be owned, in the simplicity of their hearts, gape with admiration at the passing spectacle, ... and feel themselves awestruck with the grandeur of the cavalcade which would trample them in the dirt ... Politicians, observing this effect of finery and parade on the minds of the ⁷⁵ unthinking, take care to dress up the idol ...

However, the defeat of even a single sergeant and his men could upset that controlling poise which was meant to exist between army and Poor. During the North East labour disputes of 1792-3 cavalry were used to "frighten[ed] the Pitmen in a Return to their Duty",

but this fright depended upon an impression of ubiquitous mastery: "you will as far as possible avoid exposing yourself ... to any hazard of an ineffectual attempt".⁷⁶ The authorities ultimately relied upon the show of terror to a "turbulent" people,

... notwithstanding the discreet and lenient use which the Civil Magistrate hath in all instances made of that [military] Force, Experience hath shown that the powers delegated to him by the Legislative would on every occasion be defeated if it was not for the terror of a Military Aid ...⁷⁷

These same magistrates and merchants had needed the services of a Militia against the seamen only two years' before - "their numbers had so increased that the drums of the North Yorks Militia beat to arms ... the regiment paraded the streets ... the mob dispersed"⁷⁸ - but the 'terror' of soldiers who had no prestige could easily collapse into mockery. The North Yorks had been reduced to shooting at Hexham in 1761, and the Newcastle riot of 1740 had been encouraged by ridicule - "the white stocking regiment" - heaped upon a city militia hastily assembled to deter the mob. At five o'clock in the afternoon there was a quite different response in the face of one hundred and fifty manoeuvring regulars who at least looked as if they would fire as soldiers under discipline:

... when they were come near St Nicholas Church, word was brought that the Rioters in number about a thousand were coming up the Side with great Fury most of them armed, Capt. Sowle upon this order'd his men to halt, and immediately load their Musquets & fix their Bayonets, which was done in the face of the Rioters, and had a great effect, for they were now convinced that the Soldiers had power to fire upon them, which they before imagined cou'd not be done, since the Affair of Capt. Porteous at Edinburgh. This circumstance, and the appearance of the Soldiers drawn up in Order ... struck such a Damp upon the Spirits of the Rioters, that they fled with the utmost precipitation...⁷⁹

Chapter Three

Reciprocal Elements

Regular soldiers tended to have the desired effect but magistrates were not always in a position to use them. There were usually very few troops available in the area,⁸⁰ the means of calling them out was cumbersome,⁸¹ and the army did not relish the job.⁸² Moreover, the army at home was unpopular. Apart from their expense and off-duty reputation, there was a constitutional suspicion of regulars going back to at least 1688; Blackstone decreed that "[our laws] know no such state as that of a perpetual standing soldier", the condition emanated from "temporary excrescences bred out of the distemper of the state".⁸³

The regular army was small, unpopular, unenthusiastic, and untrained for domestic combat; irregular forces were all these things and worse: the militia lacked discipline and morale, they tended to be under-strength, they had no prestige of mastery.⁸⁴

The Country rings around with loud Alarms,
And raw in Fields the rude Militia swarms;
Months without Hands; maintain'd at vast Expence,
In Peace a Charge, in War a weak Defence;
Stout once a Month they march a blust'ring Band,
And ever, but in times of Need, at hand:
This was the Morn when issuing on the Guard,
Drawn up in Rank and File they stood prepar'd
Of seeming Arms to make a short essay,
They hasten to be Drunk, the Business of the Day.

(John Dryden, Cymon and Iphegenia, 1700)⁸⁵

In 1793 James Rudman complained to the Home Secretary that, threatened by a general strike in Coal, the North East had insufficient troops, and a militia four-fifths of whom were useless; Thomas Sanderson complained that Sunderland had thirty soldiers against a thousand keelmen "exclusive of their Wives and Daughters"; Charles Brandling complained that the militia had made no impression whatsoever on the

seamen, and marines were needed to take their place.⁸⁶

Local magistrates did not have constant means of coercive aid and were hemmed in by a confused legal position on their right to use it. The 1715 Riot Act had tried to clear up common law confusion on the difference between an illegal assembly and a riot, and the civil power's rights to intervene with military assistance. But magistrates remained unsure: the Riot Act could not always be properly read or heard, the army was not trusted, the point at which force of arms was legal was unclear, magistrates and soldiers remained equally liable to prosecution for forced dispersal (as after the Wilkes Riots, 1763-68) and for negligent dispersal (as after the Gordon Riots, 1780).⁸⁷

In May 1740 the Sheriff of Durham, facing county bread-riots, was wrapped around with all these problems. He and his magistrates had no military force, were conscious of its political implications, and were uncomfortable as to their legal powers of intervention. At Stockton

... severall persons were taken up but lett go again upon promises of being quiet, but I rather believe the Gentlemen were in no condition to force them away. I presume my friend Hodsworth so near a new Election wou'd not be overforward to think of soldiers.⁸⁸

Troops were ordered from Berwick,⁸⁹ but by the second wave of crowd actions in June, Sheriff Williamson was forced to raise the posse comitatus. His magistrates were ordered to "command all persons from fifteen to sixty to attend me at Sedgefield ... in order to march to Stockton". Williamson was ill and in a quandary: thinking aloud to the Bishop of Durham he rehearsed his strategy - if faced by a mob he will read the Riot Act, take prisoners if there is no subsequent dispersal, and, should there be resistance, condescend "to a generall battle". If there was no mob by the time of his arrival, "I know nothing but to march back again". This in itself was a problem because Williamson could not afford to pay and feed his men on stand-by

duty, and a dismissed posse might be difficult to raise again. The Sheriff resolved that his best plan would be to persuade the merchants against exporting their corn.⁹⁰ In fact, no strategy was required because there was to be no confrontation. Arriving with his force at Sedgefield,

Mr Hedworth and Mr Bowes [local magistrates] insisted on it, that when I came there, their Power ceased; and that if necessity required it, I was to give the orders for firing.

Williamson replied

... that the Justices were the proper Persons, for in Obedience to their Warrant I had raised the County; and that I was to be commanded by them.

A legal huddle followed where Williamson could not be advised by his lawyer. This does not appear to have calmed his nerves, and, eager nevertheless to insist on his valour, the Sheriff of Durham opted for discretion:

'... relating to the giving orders to fire he [the lawyer] exprest thus that it was too delicate a Part for him to determine ... but he told me by word of mouth twice, that if he was in my Case, he would not give orders to fire ... I would willingly have done what was right, but the Thoughts of Shedding Blood, and being tried for it, to me, I own, was terrible.

'I said to let you see I will go as far as any of you, if you Mr Bowes, Mr Hedworth, and the other Justices, will sign such an order, I will joyn with you in it, but I will not do it alone, and thus we parted'.⁹¹

It was this weakness of authority which, by default gave the crowd in action some standing. If coercion was cumbersome, if magistrates were dubious about their exact role as coercers, if the crowd felt its actions to be legitimate and its techniques typical, then it is clear that in that delicate and precarious theatre of the street, the Poor met their rulers in a situation which admitted reciprocity. Indeed, crowd actions as a method of social agency were often actually connived at

by the rulers themselves. The 1710 Sacheverell riots were openly encouraged by Anglican clergymen; taxation populaire was occasionally enacted in the presence of local magistrates; the city 'mob' could be raised for political or religious pressure. Wesley was no stranger to the Establishment mob, he thought its Newcastle delegation "have commonly some humanity left", and Barnard Castle's squirearchy even provided their mob-captain with gold-laced hat and sword who "thus equipped ... paraded the streets ... sounding a horn, call[ing] the people together at his pleasure".⁹² The Wearside mob seems to have served the Lambton political cause. In 1761 General Lambton's defeated election opponent mused that "A greater number would have appeared at the Poll but that General Lambton or his Friends had sent for the Pittmen of Lambton which occasioned such a Riot that no business could be carried on ...". In 1819 'Radical Jack' Lambton himself led keelmen to smash a loyalist Address, and two years later local Tories regretted how easily Sunderland Whigs could use their network to raise a crowd:

The fact is, that the 'Running Fitters' - the link in the chain between the Fitters, and their Keelmen & Coasters - are the real moving political pivots, of Mobility in Sunderld.

On all publick occasions, the fitter has nothing to do, but to give his running Fitter a hint, what side he wishes his men, alias his mob, to take; and the said Running Fitter, can (by certain strings, of which he has the complete management) work them as well, as a Show-man, manages his Puppets. The Lambtonians are tolerably expert at this kind of acting ...⁹³

Of course, factional puppetry of this sort was dangerous play for men who ultimately believed in the process of their own rule. At the core of the crowd's reciprocity with their rulers was the coercive weakness of those rulers. If the crowd's action had a standing and needed to be negotiated, it was generally because authority had no other recourse. In 1820 the landowners of Knaresdale were plagued

by poaching leadminers: their authority was ad hoc; they were reluctant to use troops, special constables had failed, local men would not join a posse, the leadminers had no deference for property when it claimed the birds of the air, the lead companies were not willing or able to exert pressure, the terrain was difficult. In the end it was necessary to negotiate:

... after that the Gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Alston, got the Business settled between Mr B. & the Poachers, by their agreeing to dispose of their Dogs & Guns & Shoot no more on his liberties - I am inform'd that it cost Mr B. £200 Pounds before he got it settled.⁹⁴

Both the North East's major riots of the eighteenth-century had been preceded by negotiations between magistrates and crowd. In 1761 the crowd had presented petitions in Hexham before the militia were attacked and the shooting started.⁹⁵ In 1740 Newcastle magistrates had bargained frantically when it became clear that the hastily raised militia could not handle the situation: "we therefore Could have resource only to Persuasions and Arguments with the Chief of them to disperse and return to their Work. But all in vain till the Merchants proposed to sell on the next Market Day",⁹⁶ "at the price it actually cost them & they produced the Invoices of the several parcels to confirm the Truth of the same".⁹⁷ Later, after the first charge at the Guild Hall, Alderman Ridley went beyond reciprocity by coaxing the people to the quayside and begging them to unload a ship of its corn - "some seem'd to be satisfied with this but in ten minutes they withdrew one after another and left him almost alone in the ship, they had indeed more tempting Game in View ...". After the Guild Hall had been looted, the crowd "safely conducted the Magistrates to their own houses in a kind of Mock Triumph, Mr R. seeing now the true Design of the People ... They were not to be brought to Reason".⁹⁸

What one historian has called the "probing confrontations"⁹⁹ of

crowd action included negotiation. A marching gang did not dismiss negotiation, it invited it. In 1765 the coalowners "earnestly recommend[ed]" and "used all possible means of persuasion" to prevail with the pitmen; in 1768 marching seamen were blocked by troops in Newcastle "and after some discourse with them by the magistrates" returned to Shields; in 1786 the keelmen dispersed after "the timely interposition of the Right Worshipful the Mayor, and other Gentlemen concerned".¹⁰⁰ If reciprocity did not spill over into sympathy, the predictability of direct action was at least accepted. Courts appear to have been lenient on pitmen guilty of sabotage, riot, obstruction, and assault; taxation populaire for bread was one thing but taxation populaire for butter was "inexcusable" as "butter is not a necessary of life to the poor".¹⁰¹ On the other side, trusted magistrates or solicitors might be asked to arbitrate or advise by pitmen, seamen, or keelmen,¹⁰² and even as the authorities felt they had lost control, as in January 1793, the seamen were insisting upon their loyalty "under a constitution which we admire and venerate".¹⁰³

The predictability of action and how to cope with it, was inextricably connected to how the Poor were regarded as a whole. Control was not just a question of the Riot Act, or soldiers, or negotiation, but involved a complex, total, relationship with the lower orders. There was a sense in which those in authority, up to a point, fully expected a degree of turbulence from people whom they saw as originally lazy or shiftless, and needing the discipline of poverty to make them work, whose minds were "unletter'd and untutor'd", where temperaments were "like spoiled children".¹⁰⁴ In 1819 the Duke of Northumberland, reporting a fracas in a North Shields pub, was anxious to know whether it had been political or just "one of those casual disorders which are of such frequent occurrence . . . on the Evening of Saturday".¹⁰⁵

The difference mattered a great deal to his expectation of the Poor, its reciprocal implications for him, and hence his capacity to rule. Similarly, keelmen could harrass passers-by, intimidate men still working, and steal bread and vegetables all in an afternoon, but the Tyne Mercury could still praise them for acting so well; seamen could forcibly detain ships and create serious hold-ups but, a coalowner's agent could still see them as "Arbitrary poor fellows".¹⁰⁶ As late as 1844 Lord Lieutenant Londonderry could still refer to Durham as "a County who must always be subject more or less to the Freaks and Bustings out of a great mining population".¹⁰⁷

Londonderry expected nothing less from pitmen he liked to call his own; why should he expect more from a swinish multitude whose very swinishness made his rule such a duty? In 1761 most of Northumberland's tenantry appear to have been in rebellion against the Militia Acts. Sir Lancelot Allgood of Nunwick House, near Hexham, went with the county magistracy to Newcastle leaving his wife Jane at home. On the day of the Hexham massacre, Lady Allgood's tenants escorted her from home "telling me it was for my own safety that they were coming to burn the House".¹⁰⁸ Taking her through a wood they stopped at a gate. Here, she turned and confronted them. Her account of the confrontation is a remarkable expression of the psychology of the gentry as an eighteenth-century ruling class. Lady Allgood was probably afraid, perhaps nearly hysterical, but she could not surrender herself to fear of a folk she saw as inferior and whose behaviour she saw as pathetic. Contempt sharpens her confidence: God will defend her and religion will civilize them; she is sure of her victory and their defeat and invokes terror of army and Assize as proof; terror grinds on mercy - there will be favours and indulgences for the contrite and the innocent. But behind the verbal whipping and the sanction of force lies the recognition that even in situations where

her authority is challenged to the hilt she must retain the appearance of authority, she must show the flag.

... I stopt & asked what was the matter I was not affraid if they were all surrounding me I knew God would protect me & he was all sufficient let who wou'd be against me & just came by at the time half a hund^d - like so many theives & dogs whip'd to their Kennel I lectured them most stoutly told them they deserved what they met with wou'd not take my advice who had told them what they must expect for I had sent up the day before to let them know their assembling themselves in that manner wou'd be deemed Rebellion & must be treated as rebels & if any of our Tenants or whoever they were that lived upon any part of our estate went with the rebellion even they nor none belonging to them should have habitation here again & this morning I have sent to tell them if they don't behave themselves quietly & decently as loyal subjects ought to do in a christian Country they shall have a regiment of Soldiers to drive them like a flock of sheep to Slaughter & teach them what it is to go to fight because they won't learn to fight like a parcell of wild Irish as they are. I have sent a message to R-- of Smalesmouth that in regard to his father & Mother I wou'd indulge him if he wou'd make publick submission to the Gentlemen [JPs] when he was sober for what he had said & done wnen he was drunk if not I had witnesses enough to hang him at the next Assizes & Robson of Shittlington a lying good for nothing fellow came cringeing & fawning to beg I wou'd not be angry he cou'd not help it they forced him when I knew all the time he was a ring leader ...

[she tells them to return to their work]

... they went as quietly by here as cou'd be said they only wanted to right themselves I told them that was nothing but rank rebellion & as such they should be treated. Mrs Reed and her family ... was here for about an hour & we both agree'd leaveing the Country was giveing the people too much encouragement for their wickedness & leave no check upon them ... I am in no sort of apprehension for any bullies & threats I tell them their Curses are blessings to me but redoubled curses upon their own heads God knows everything they say think or do tis dareing him not me & they may depend upon it they'll meet with their doom his hand is not slackened he can make pharoahs of them now as he did in defence of the Children of Israel pray make com^{ts} & best thanks to the Gentlemen Officers & Common Men of the Militia for proveing themselves freeborn English Men & doing their duty so properly & if ever shou'd be in my power to serve any of them the meanest of them may depend upon it.

my com^{ts} attend all the Gentlemen who I congratulate upon haveing that true spirit of liberty to dare putting the laws of their Country in execution tho bullied & Hectored. 109

During these few critical days Lady Allgood's performance constituted the illusion of authority. Soon after the incident she tries to defend her house, but she knows that her real authority exists beyond rusty guns:

'[their son] came yesterday to defend me as he said but I told him he looked so frighted I rather thought he meant I was to defend him. Jack Baty has got four of my father's old Blunderbusses out he says he knows the good they have done they are as rusty as if they had been taken out of the river I survey'd all their warlike accoutrements last night & laughed most immoderately they put me so much in mind of Falstaff's company ... Mr Beaumont staid all night part of our body guard tonight is Will Coulson of Simonburn and Joe Corven I told Beaumont I wou'd appoint him Capt. of the guard tonight his bulk will best suit Falstaff's. 110

'... a child might take every man of them ... I find my threatening a regiment of Horse has terrified them out of their senses the acct's of their simplicity makes me laugh to think that a woman as I am without arms or any offensive weapon should subdue a whole count ry ... here all was peace & serenity only we laughed at the simple amazement of the poor creatures & our own armaments'. 111

The threat of cavalry, and events at Hexham, were reminders of whose was the ultimate power, but it is apparent that Lady Allgood's continuing authority was woven through a thousand threads of personal relationship which together made up a social system. Her self confidence as a ruler existed first through her perception of the ruled as "poor creatures". In so far as they were poor creatures, they needed her; in so far as they needed her, their independent actions were pathetic; in so far as theirs were pathetic, hers were just, and they needed her. Of course, the pitmen, keelmen, and seamen were a different proposition from the tenantry - their confidence and freedom from 'paternalism' was all the greater - but the psychology of rule in eighteenth-century England basically depended upon its successful and minute practice. Individual relationships might

carry the controls of social bearing and distance, if the mob did not then there were always the troops to call on, but the strategy of the troops was only a more awesome manifestation of the psychology of bearing and distance: the mob, "poor creatures" as they might be, can only go so far and no more. Later, when considered by a radically politicized middle-class the reciprocal elements are seen with a new significance:

A mob they [the ruling class] know, and would always have them dispersed by the military, as soon as two or three are gathered together; but the people, as a part of the constitution, they could never discover.¹¹²

The people in this 1821 context are those tradesmen and professional people who clothe and boot and work for the gentry, and whose intelligence is insulted by a bearing and distance which intensifies the harder it is squeezed:

... if there be any body in the neighbourhood very low indeed, so low, as to be removed from all possibility of clashing with his importance, such a one he will make a companion, and shew him most marvellous marks of humility and condescension. ... Indeed, for the sake of obtaining a little popularity, he will notice cottagers and poor children at play, and make extremely free with clowns, jockeys, grooms, huntsmen, ... But keep your distance, ye little squires, parsons, and professional men, who make saucy pretensions to knowledge or ingenuity.¹¹³

This argument corrupts at the point where the "mob", the "very low", and "clowns, jockeys ... " etc. become the poor as a whole. The author notes the elements of reciprocity, the relationship between haughtiness and swinishness, and castigates them as the same evil.

He is abjectly servile to his superiors, insolent and neglectful to the middle ranks, and free and easy to the humble sons of poverty, who will bear a volley of oaths whenever he thinks proper to discharge them, and who, if spit upon, will not spit again, because they are his workmen or tenants.¹¹⁴

From the French Revolutionary Wars one can see a distinct change in the climate of authority between rulers and ruled: the volleys of oaths and the spitting increases, but the bearing does not.

Chapter Four

A Changing Climate

In the North East the war period and after suffered a rash of serious industrial disputes with pitmen, keelmen, and seamen,¹¹⁵ and the impression is gained from all sides that relations were experiencing irreversible shifts. Nationally, relations were characterized by a nervous anti Jacobinism, the market constructs of Political Economy, and legal steps towards repression in 1795 (Two Acts), 1799-1800 (Combination Acts), and 1820 (Six Acts).¹¹⁶ For the pitmen, Parts I and II showed how they were redefined in their work by a series of concerted attacks which began in 1804, and redefined as a social-moral entity by city fears which began at about the same time. Having come through the formative Bond struggles of 1804-10, and out of the post-war repressions and difficulties of 1815-20, the pitmen entered two decades of unprecedented coalfield expansion, and conflict, in the 1820s. Encompassing all this was the general fear of that disorder brought by a new industrial system to its manufacturing districts. The Newcastle Radical printer Eneas Mackenzie warned in 1827 of political and moral threats to authority:

They move in crowds; and hence, when they suffer any temporary distress or deprivation, they easily receive the impulse given by bustling or designing individuals, and readily become infatuated by the acts of theological or political demagogues.

Happily the writer could report that Tyneside was not yet a manufacturing district, and urban chaos had been avoided - a state attributable to "the wise moderation of the magistracy, who permit the utmost freedom of discussion, and resist the acts of weak and designing alarmists".¹¹⁷

Mackenzie's commendation of the magistracy's good sense against political threat was quickened by his knowledge of its post-war fear

of political motivation. He is in fact commending good sense over fear knowing that fear could have prevailed.

The rash of industrial disputes and actions in the early 1790s appear to have occurred without political trappings. Tyne seamen were in action in November 1792, a prelude to the wider seamen-pitmen-keelmen-shipwrights' disputes of 1793, but Christopher Blackett could report from Newcastle that "No Seditious Handbills have been circulated here; nor have I heard of any Pamphlets of such a Tendency".¹¹⁸ From the absence of any contrary evidence Blackett's judgement seems correct for 1792 and the remainder of the war years. It is not until 1819 that the fear of political consciousness wedded to industrial dispute gripped the minds of the magistracy. In 1817 Whitehall expected disturbances at Shields, Newcastle, and Sunderland because they were ports and pitmen, keelmen, and seamen had been, and would be, happy to indulge expectations from the latter's action in October 1814 - yet in 1818 a government secret committee did not include the North East in its schedule of dangerous (and thus political) places.¹¹⁹ The events at Peterloo on 16 August 1819 prompted the resurgence of Newcastle and Gateshead's Political Protestants, a resurgence made more fearful by the direct actions of Tyne keelmen during September and October. On 11 October an estimated thirty-thousand Tyneside Radicals including iron-workers and seamen marched onto Newcastle's Town Moor to cheer invective against Old Corruption: tax "vampires", war-mongers, and usurpers of liberty, they had forfeited their right to rule.

We may compare the borough-mongers to cow keepers,
and surely they are bad cow keepers, for they not
only bring us home leaner and fewer, but they sabre
us without mercy.

Three days after this there was a serious quayside clash of keelmen, magistrates, and marines where one keelman was shot.¹²⁰

Although there is no direct evidence that the keelmen were ever politicized,¹²¹ from the first apparent confluence of their action with the Political Protestants' resurgence, local magistrates feared the worst: a simultaneous action of pitmen, keelmen, and seamen, led by Radicals who "have appeared amongst them".¹²² On 2 October Castle Ward magistrates called for a crushing military force, and on the day after the Town Moor demonstration Chester Ward magistrates told the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham that they could not guarantee civil order.¹²³ After the keelmen's affray two days later the rest of October saw magistrates, mayors, and Lords Lieutenant writing letters of unprecedented desperation: on 20th the Mayor of Newcastle reminded Sidmouth that the keelmen have £700,000 worth of shipping locked in the Tyne, easy targets for "the most formidable set of Men to contend with ... Sailors, Lightermen, Pitmen, and I am sorry to add, of Radical Reformers"; on 24th the Duke of Northumberland wrote that all magistrates fear the seamen and clamour for marines; on 25th Charles Thorp reported political and military training of "the labouring ranks" and his letter was followed on 27th with another from a Gateshead ironmaster calling for the spiking of port cannon; on the same day the government was told by Mr Riddell J.P. that his colleagues were good but living under "A considerable degree of alarm ... as our population is very great, and a part of it ripe for mischief"; on 29th and 30th Sidmouth was informed from Newcastle and Sunderland respectively that the pitmen, seamen, and others were ready to rise - and on 2 November 'others' were given to include Wearside's "manufactory classes" who "would I fear come forward if any commotion should take place". Virtually all of these reports stressed the need for heavy military assistance, requests which were sealed with approval by Northumberland's 30 October instruction to his county magistracy to enrol as many special constables as possible and, "where the nature of the Population requires it, an

armed Association".¹²⁴

By November the keelmen were back to work but by now the magistracy's fear of political infiltration had become self-sustaining. There is an impression that they had lost their powers of discrimination. If the keelmen had been in dispute unscathed by politics, the pitmen - not in dispute but most surely scathed - became the new objects of fear. On 10 November Mr Clark had to admit there were no signs of trouble but remained convinced that "in case of extremity", whatever that might be, "no reliance can be placed on a very large proportion of the Pitmen".¹²⁵ On 15 November, his colleague Thorp at Ryton went close to defining this extremity by reporting pitmen's plans to take middle-class hostages, "particularly the ladies, to attend with them, in order to secure themselves against the attack of soldiers".¹²⁶ But it was the senior magistrate, Archibald Reed, Mayor of Newcastle, who most clearly reflected the changing climate of relations. In the month between 11 November and 10 December he sent five letters to Sidmouth which described the pitmen as proto-revolutionaries: first they were "ripe for mischief", then they were "rapidly arming", "as bad as possible", in possession of gunpowder, and fully armed. Reed's accounts were short on facts and long on fear; from 20 November Whitehall was noticeably circumspect about his objectivity and must have felt justified in this on receipt of his 10 December missive containing four affidavits from informers, astonishingly presented without qualification as to their veracity.¹²⁷ Magistrates like Reed and Thorp succeeded in creating their own field of nervous force. The area was so tense that it was impossible for Thorp to leave his house for one night without rumours of what this might indicate.¹²⁸

The autumn of 1819 represented a critical break in the attitudes of North East authorities to protest. A heightening sensitivity to what was deemed 'political' activity hardened ruling relationships,

reinforced current redefinitions of social status and cultural entity, particularly respecting the pitmen, and ultimately destroyed what reciprocal elements remained in their attitudes to protest. Political consciousness, by definition, denied reciprocity and forfeited negotiations: what compromise could there be with political men who not only quarrelled with you but who even rejected the structure of the quarrel? Of course, changes in sensibility of this kind do not happen at once, and there is overlap, but one can perceive in the enactment of later disputes a fear and intransigency which was not there before.¹²⁹ The pitmen's strikes of 1831-32 and 1844 were fought to the death with the magistrates standing back, and when their unrest was considered purely 'political,' as with collier Chartism in 1838-39, the response was appropriately immoderate:

'... all of them armed, and at any time they might choose to come to this town ... What would be the consequences of their visit here? every house would be pillaged and even human life sacrificed to the shrine of ambition, by those Idle vagabonds ...

'... [they are defenceless] from an attack of the Pitmen in our Vicinity who might continue in the undisturbed power of committing every imaginable Outrage & Violence on Persons & Property in this City for several Hours before it would be possible to obtain Relief ...¹³⁰

Before the political fear of 1819 it had been mainly seamen's actions which had probed the confidence of authority. Their 1793 tirade against the Impress Service involved daily marching and speech-making in defiance of Newcastle magistrates' wishes, and at Shields the seamen would "not allow any of their body to go to jail".¹³¹ After the war when the overall withdrawal of military and naval presence coincided with the demobilization of North Eastern Tars, the seamen's 1815 action was hurriedly met with calls for massive military forces to retain order and break the stick. Magistrate Green wanted cavalry and "about 200 infantry", Mayor Cramlington wanted nine hundred, magistrate Fairles, witness "During the last thirty-five years ... [to]

... disgraceful tumults on the River", wanted a river police.¹³²

When the seamen repeated their action the following year, local and central government immediately buckled their belt - five hundred constables were enrolled, regular troops were put on standby and two Royal Navy sloops cruised off Tynemouth.¹³³

In 1818 even the faintest glimmer of trouble was enough to have Newcastle's Mayor Forster complaining that the area had "only two weak troops of Horse".¹³⁴

This jittery decay of confidence was not inconsequential for the pitmen.

Scattered actions in North Durham in 1816 met with a refusal to negotiate and the rapid arrest and imprisonment of Rainton and Newbottle leaders who were "not only very refractory and insolent, but ... disposed to persist in their schemes of mischief and insubordination".¹³⁵

As a sign of the changing climate the Newcastle Chronicle thought it lamentable

... that these men have not yet learned that it is not by tumult and riot that such an object can be accomplished and that such proceedings only bring misery and ruin upon themselves.¹³⁶

Ideally, magistrates would have preferred disputing workmen to submit to their judgement. If this was not done and "tumult and riot" was the resort then, in spite of the magistracy's coercive weakness, tumult did at least have its own predictability: the game had been played before. What confounded local authority was the disciplined action of the mass who held back from tumult. Obviously, as has already been explained, the line between theatre and violence was precarious, even the simple demonstration of grievance carried with it a reserved violence which might or might not become actual, but from the 1790s disciplined mass action became more common and with it the magistrates' control became more questioned. The 1765 concerted strike of all Tyne pitmen did eventually break into sabotage and violence, but at one point both the magistrates and owners were at a loss as to how to deal with it.¹³⁷ They had the right to imprison men

who had broken their bonds, but as well as the local difficulty over disagreement as to when the 1764 bonds had finished, there was the greater strategic difficulty of imprisonment. It was

... very well, where two or three or a dozen men desert their Service, and has been many times properly executed with good Effect, but where there is a general Combination of all the Pitmen to the Number of 4000, how can this measure take Effect? ... [the House of Correction] does not carry with it the least Appearance of Terror so as to induce the remaining part of so large a Number to submit.¹³⁸

The 1800 authorities faced a variation on the same problem. At a time when pitmen were in short supply and coal was in high demand, Lord Delaval's Cowpen men refused to work. Imprisoned men could not win coal, legal examples could not be made of men who, at that point, had not rioted:

... your Pitmen do neither molest nor threaten any one, but obstinately refuse to go to work. I need not inform your Lordship that under these circumstances they cannot properly be said to be Riotous.¹³⁹

These are only glimpses of a problem which was to have its hydra head in the 1830s. However, it was the distorting effect of these first glimpses which drew local magistrates into conflict with owners during the war years. The owners were intent on changing relations, and their conflict with the magistrates, and the latter's declining confidence, only hurried the process along.

In November 1792 Tyne seamen demanded a rise in voyage-money from £2 10s. to 4 guineas. According to the Navy they seized the river in the traditional manner, and with calmness and civility allowed to sea only those ships which had negotiated the rise.¹⁴⁰ From the magistrates' first attempt to conciliate through the mediation of Capt. Leakey of HMS Racehorse, an aboard ship meeting which failed, they incurred criticism from the shipowners. Thomas Powditch, North Shields shipowner, complained to Pitt of their "supineness" -

[the owners!] ... experience of near thirty years had

convinced them that no reliance could be placed on the Magistrates of the River Tyne for the Protection of their property or on County Magistrates for the Protection of either Persons or property.¹⁴¹

This view was corroborated from an unexpected quarter five days later. Rowland Burdon M.P. claimed acts of violence had occurred and yet "the Magistrates do not think the time yet come to show themselves ... [they] are either diffident of their power, or unwilling to exert it". Another shipowner on the other hand had to admit there had been no violence but nevertheless condemned County magistrates for irresolution after their general meeting on the eighth.¹⁴² In spite of criticism and pressure to intervene against the action, the magistrates beavered away and on 13 November won the seamen's agreement to submit to their umpirage. However, on the fourteenth the owners refused terms. Undeterred, the magistrates strove to make the system work and five days later managed to effect a settlement.¹⁴³ The army acknowledged the magistrates-owners split and, unfairly, criticized both sides for their failure which had resulted in the need to call in troops; the navy restricted its criticism to the owners, whom they claimed, had not helped the civil power; the Member of Parliament, once he involved himself in negotiations, made amends for his earlier remarks by praising the magistrates' role in an unprecedentedly difficult situation:

There has been thro' the whole of this affair, a degree of system & order unknown in former riots, so much so, as to make the Part the Magistrates had to act, embarrassing and difficult.¹⁴⁴

During the 1793 disputes it was the coalowners who pushed the Mayor of Newcastle to ask for a permanent barracks of horse, and pressed the courts to inflict heavy sentences. The Mayor complied but magistrates Fenwick and Bigges' propensity to negotiate and settle lost "a fair opportunity ... of making a very necessary example for the benefit of the Trade ... Alas! The Arm of Justice in this Country is Nerveless".¹⁴⁵

The remaining war years are quiet in terms of evidence but in

1815 the shipowners returned to the offensive, this time parading their lack of confidence by going over the heads of magistrates and applying directly to Admiralty and Home Department for military intervention - "the step originates with the Committee alone".¹⁴⁶ In 1816 Sunderland magistrates were reprimanded for their lethargy,¹⁴⁷ but by 1819 the creeping revulsion of magistrates at the prospect of political infiltration seems to have satisfactorily coalesced with the fears of the owners.¹⁴⁸ At least, the magistracy's revulsion had attracted sufficient "Military of one sort or other" to use if their courage was great enough. In 1819 it was left for owners to criticize owners:

I understand the Men alledge that their employers load the keels with more than the usual quantity of 8 Chaldrons (which overquantities the Coal Owners give to the Ship Owners instead of reducing the Price and only pay the same wages; this is not a time my Lord for Masters to do any thing that looks like oppressing their labourers).¹⁴⁹

The rapid change in protest relations after 1815 was prodded by political fear but accelerated in the North East by the receding presence of military force. The war had brought not only the embodiment of the Militia and the expansion of fencible and regular forces, continually in movement across the country, but also the raising of new irregular forces - the Volunteer Corps and Armed Associations of 1794-95, the supplementary Militia in 1796, and the Local Militia in 1808.¹⁵⁰ At any one time authorities seemed able to call out a considerable show of local force - as at the King's birthday celebrations in 1804 when Newcastle Corporation mustered eight thousand uniformed men from a twenty mile radius. Most of these men were irregulars of varying regularity: the Derwent, Gateshead, Sunderland, Usworth, Chester, Hexham, Newcastle, and North and South Shields Volunteers, the Staffs and Fifeshire Militia, the Newcastle and Wallsend Rifle Corps, the Usworth, Durham, Gibside, and Axwell Cavalry. Only the 7th Dragoon Guards

were regulars, and they manoeuvred in the centre.¹⁵¹ There are occasional examples of ready-access to war-time force in times of industrial dispute,¹⁵² and the threat of the Impress Service was seen by some as another deterrent. Apart from a short hiatus in 1802-03, the Impress continued active service in the North East from 1793 to 1815. Early in 1793 when contending with the major labouring groups, including tradesmen, Joseph Bulmer of South Shields hoped for the press to round up the leaders,¹⁵³ and Thomas Sanderson of Sunderland thought the "Gov. ought to make a sweep among them":¹⁵⁴

I am well convinced that a smart Impress among the Keelmen - 300 of them can well be spared - will restore us to peace, but I would not for the world that this hint should fall from your lips, so as to find its way by any means to the North.¹⁵⁵

The following months saw "most desperate contest" on ship and off between the press and seamen,¹⁵⁶ but the Service continued to press. In April 1793 two hundred and fifty North Shields men were taken and detained aboard armed ships until the regulating officers selected forty of them.¹⁵⁷ The Newcastle Impress was dismantled for the Amiens peace of 1802-03 but resumed operations with a 'hot press' in 1803. The flow of men from the North East was heavy; under the manpower levies of 1795 Newcastle and Sunderland together were second only to London. In 1809 the Service played a major part in restoring order after the Tyne keelmen's dispute of that year, and the Admiralty instructed a second 'hot press' the following year. In 1811 when Newcastle was suffering "many outrages . . . in the streets . . . chiefly by sailors and ships' carpenters" it was recalled

The streets of North Shields were lately infested in the same manner, but a few visits from the impress officers had the effect of restoring good order, and we understand that a good many prime seamen were by that means obtained for the navy.¹⁵⁸

After the war only the regulars and the Yeomanry¹⁵⁹ remained. The regulars were thinly spread, down to 64,000 in 1820 after a

wartime peak of 237,000.¹⁶⁰ The propertied-part timers of the Yeomanry had disgraced themselves at Peterloo and were "not men".¹⁶¹ In 1816 Northumberland and Durham had thirteen troops of Yeomanry but even in the 1819 scare the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham was warning his magistrates against their use.¹⁶² The aura of incompetence which surrounded them prevailed. In 1830 John Buddle explained to Londonderry that they were a "laughing Stock":

I have frequently seen the military called out, in our Pitmen & Keelmen's sticks - both Yeomanry and regular Cavalry. The former, were generally, a laughing Stock, to the mob, while the latter were always feared & respected ... A painted Staff, with G.R. upon it, is more awful, in the hand of a Special Constable, than a Sabre in the hand of the same individual, as a Yeomanry Man.¹⁶³

Given the paucity of regulars and the unreliability of irregulars, the response of authority to the mounting challenge after 1815 was strangely scrappy. There were faltering steps towards a regular police, but they were not an effective national force until the second half of the century. Newcastle, Sunderland, and South Shields had small regular forces in the 1830s, but in spite of (post-strike) 1833 resolutions from magistrates and coalowners for a proper police, pushed by government hopes for a capitalist-financed regional force, it was not until 1839 that a County force was recruited.¹⁶⁴ Durham's County force only had eighty-one men but was nevertheless highly unpopular among rate-payers. In 1841 memorials from one hundred and ninety-six townships prayed "for the dismissal of the Constabulary or for their withdrawal from the rural Districts and relieving them from being taxed for their future support". The magistrates, who had the responsibility, voted against this by a majority of twelve, but when their Lord Lieutenant tried to augment the force after the 1844 pitmen's strike they met him "with violent opposition".¹⁶⁵ The piecemeal muster of special constables featured as a response to civil disturbance but the regular army remained the only serious aid to

the civil authority from the end of the war to the 1840s. The hardening post-war attitude to protest, the concurrent fading of reciprocity, and the unwillingness to form an adequate police, meant nothing short of dependence upon the army. The army's nerve was not in doubt but its presence was provocative and its tactics resented in an embittered coalfield of deepening struggle.

Chapter Five

Political Protestants and United Colliers

Although the fear of politics swayed ruling sensibilities (and reports) in 1819, there is enough evidence to reveal some sort of Radical penetration. The first significant Radical stirrings were in July from "mostly low Tradesmen . . . discussing their rights as they call it".¹⁶⁶ Soon after Peterloo Radical 'Reading Societies' and Manchester emissaries appear in Sunderland among those "chiefly of the lowest description", the South Tyne iron villages of Winlaton, Swalwell, and Blaydon quickly make their political mark, and seamen and other sections of "the working classes of the community" are reported at the Town Moor demonstration.¹⁶⁷ The rank and file leaders were that classic blend of artisans, workers, and miscellaneous intellectuals: Layton, a schoolmaster; Douglas, "an Atheistical or Deistical Shoemaker"; Drummond, "an apple seller in the streets"; Turnbull, a master joiner; Hogarth, a watchmaker; Ramsey, a Wallsend pitman; the Hodgson brothers, weaver and ironman.¹⁶⁸ The pitmen were never the committed revolutionaries of some magistrate's minds, but the spectrum of evidence is enough to convince that in the Autumn of 1819 the mining community received its first political education.

First mention comes early in October: a "system" of political classes was reported on the Wear, and Tyne colliery representatives were in conference with the Radicals.¹⁶⁹ Rev. Thorp's judgement can be suspect but John Buddle's is more reliable:

They went home full of enthusiasm and burnt their Backy, but did not disclose the resolutions of the meeting. It is clear however that their heads are quite full of the 'grand meeting' at Newcastle: and as it is reported that Hunt is to be there, I fully expect that they will lay the pits idle, to go to the meeting, which will occasion the loss of two days work at least . . .

I don't know what all you clever fellows in London are about, not to send Wooler and his Black Dwarf to the D 1. it is he, who is doing all the mischief amongst us. Hitherto we have fought our Cocks, drunk our yell & chewed our Backy quietly. and on a pay night amused ourselves with a 'canny bit on a fight, nobit to ken whee was the best hewer'. But now we read the Black Dwarf, damm the Greatins, burn our Backy, and talk of 'puttin aw t'reets'. Why dont you send Wooler to Botany-bay & melt his types into pewter spoons?

Hunt did not attend the grand meeting on the eleventh but contingents of Wear pitmen did.¹⁷⁰ For the rest of October classes were reported forming in the North Durham-Tyne collieries, with respective centres at Penshaw and Hebburn.¹⁷¹ At Mount Moor colliery on Gateshead Fell "all the Pitmen except 5 have joined the Radicals"; at Heaton colliery classes doubled in a few days and "one Rick Wilson" was reported to be training them in "the exercise of the Pike (with a stick) as to be used both against Cavalry and Infantry"; at Penshaw the pitmen read and executed the rule-book of the Political Protestants:

The Colliers here meet every evening in the Fields ... They ... frighten everybody into complete subjection, by what they call 'marking'. If the Landlord of a public House says, or does anything real, or imaginary, to offend them, he is marked, and no one will enter his house again, until he makes his peace with them & the same thing with Shop keepers & Tradesmen of every description. Hence we have the 'Shoemaker of the People' - the 'Taylor to the People' etc.¹⁷²

From this late-October peak, November was quiet - Buddle thought the crisis was over - and the December reports clearly reflected the self confidence or lack of it, of the reporter: the pitmen were either secretive, or sullen, but they were not demonstrative.¹⁷³ Apart from some demand for higher wages, politicization brought no industrial action and by January 1820 the tide had turned.¹⁷⁴

Unless the impact of the Six Acts was qualitatively greater than previous repressive legislation, it is hard to know what to make of this climax and recession unless one sees it in revivalist terms. Certainly the December Acts must have had a silencing effect but the

enthusiasm was waning before then and it could be that the contemporaneous Methodist experience described in Part II is relevant here. Both the sudden prescience of the political inspiration, and the unexpected speed of colliery recruitment, "with the rapidity of lightning", suggest tenuous parallels:

Until within these few weeks, our Colliers ... never troubled their heads with politics. But within a very short period, their very nature in this respect seems to have been completely changed.¹⁷⁵

The Political Protestants grouped in classes of twenty to learn. A new class leader was elected monthly, and subscriptions were one penny per week. The class existed to pursue practical politics, but its essential duty was to "read or cause to be read interesting extracts from papers and other political publications" because "We sincerely believe that political ignorance has been the principle cause of all our unparrallell'd misery and degradation". Recommended works were Major Cartwright's Bill of Rights, Wade's Black Book, Bentham's Reform Catechism, Cobbett "on gold", Sherwin's Political Register, and Wooler's Black Dwarf.¹⁷⁶ The Black Dwarf was everywhere, and was everywhere spoken against; one zealot went so far as to propose the withdrawal of licences from "every Ale House, Spirits Shop, Eating House" which took it.¹⁷⁷ How the community received the shining reason of Enlightenment politics it is difficult to tell. The pitmen and their families left no record of their education. Their observers saw only sedition and misinformation. The misinformed class leader contrived only to "dispel[s] their supposed prejudices". The sedition class is caricatured as a political scrimmage crouched round their leader where "conversa tion is carried on in a low tone" to "prevent disclosures" to cupped-hand-to-ear magistrates.¹⁷⁸ The pitmen's capacity for learning is described in a way which only reflects the prevailing prejudices of the Trade itself. A belief in universal

suffrage grotesquely misconstrued as a belief "That we shall all suffer together"; an ingenuous concern for money which deduces "that their wages for 160 days out of 260 working days ... goes to pay Taxes ... They extend their views of reform to every subject".¹⁷⁹ Little can be learned from these fleeting observations. But more important than intellectual instruction from the Political Protestants was their stress on the temperamental need for self-control. The movement put itself into the hands of the class leader who was to discipline the political activity of his charges: if a member "does not reform, he is to be expelled, as unworthy of associating with the true hearted friends of the people". The very act of associating, by rules, to learn, was a controlled form of protest which Mackenzie said "rendered them sober and thoughtful".¹⁸⁰ At the Newcastle demonstration Hodgson the ironman, after an astonishing peroration on English Law, Taxation, the exemplary Socrates and the United States of America, finished on the politics of Order. Order assayed the people and challenged an Establishment who only knew mob and Riot Act:

If you wish them to drink vinegar at your expense gentlemen, go home when you leave this place, and do not let them say you were guilty of the slightest disorder or irregularity.¹⁸¹

And 'vinegar' was swallowed: the classes marched away, no stragglers were left behind, the Shields seamen refused their ale, drank water, and proved their true mettle. The government was duly notified:

A most formidable Meeting passed off without Tumult, but the order and organization of such a Body was more frightful, as to the future, than Violence.¹⁸²

The repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824 prompted the first open declaration of a miners' union. A Brotherhood had existed since 1804, and although it had fought trade union actions - particularly and with some success in 1810 - it had only publicly admitted to a friendly society role.¹⁸³ Repeal clarified the situation and a dissembled combination within a reticulate Brotherhood emerged in 1825 as the United Association

of Colliers on the Rivers Tyne and Wear. The new Association began on the Tyne in March, had a delegate structure by July, and seems to have entrenched itself on both rivers by October. Hetton colliery assumed leadership and graced itself with a purpose-built union hall the following year.¹⁸⁴

The United Colliers were a union of hewers postulating a labourist political economy. Rejecting the traditional techniques of direct action their objective was to counter Coal Trade encroachments and to achieve some systematic control over their conditions of work. Over the whole body sat a General Committee of elected representatives from each colliery, meeting monthly at the Cock Inn in Newcastle and appointed for one year. Below them sat colliery sub-committees, elected from the membership and meeting every fortnight, whose job it was to collect subscriptions (4½d per fortnight), to regulate membership (hewers only, with normal friendly society actuarial safeguards); and to review rules and policy. The Association observed usual friendly society functions, but also sought to control the commodity market by restricting coal output (no more than 4s. 6d. per man for an eight hour day, surplus to be surrendered to the union); to control the labour market by the issue of transfer certificates to migrating members and by insisting that all bindings be approved by an appointed solicitor; and to preserve its own continuation through a disciplined membership.¹⁸⁵

Their economy was informed by a Radical politics. Although members were barred from "speaking against the King or his government" during union business,¹⁸⁶ the United Colliers' apologetics were founded in a progressive Reason. Reason was "the gift of God to man", but God's gift annulled God's mysteries. Christianity was only a greater Owenism: "In proportion as this benevolent doctrine [Christianity] is received and acted upon by mankind, will vice, oppression, extortion, and every

evil be diminished". Men had to act to avoid their own degradation. Restriction of coal output and control of labour input would check competition, "an infamous system" under which they laboured, whilst their own discipline would "avoid uproar and confusion" and give the owners the opportunity to restructure the industry.¹⁸⁷ The United Colliers spoke as men who knew their own value within a political economy of capital and labour. They organized and reasoned after a blend of friendly society prudence and Radical enlightenment.¹⁸⁸ Buddle referred to the "long heads" and "wrong heads" amongst them: the former wished to build the union and restrict output and so distend a change, the latter were "for trying their strength at the ensuing binding".¹⁸⁹ The latter had their way at the 1826 binding when a more uniform Bond was introduced and the Trade tried to victimize local leaders. The response was uneven, the strike was defeated, and the United Colliers refrained from combat until Thomas Hepburn assumed their leadership in 1831.¹⁹⁰

The structures of the Association were reported to be hardening again in March 1831. It is likely that they had remained intact since the mid 1820s but were now preparing themselves for unilateral action against the 1831 Bond.¹⁹¹ There is some difficulty here because although their organization remained, the 'United Colliers' title appears to have been dropped by June 1831,¹⁹² and for the next eighteen months the organization was confusingly referred to as just the 'Pitmen's Union'.

Part I traces the chronology of 1831-32; Part II explains the role of the Preacher Vanguard in those struggles. There is no doubt that Hepburn and his delegates wielded unprecedented organizational power. In spite of arguments within the union over the conduct of the action, Hepburn's tactic of support for those branches which had not settled from those which had, within an overall strategy of restricted output,

represented a revolutionary change in coalfield protest. Not only had the organization and policy developed, but it was sustained in the face of Coal Trade opposition. The 1831-32 strikes were seen by generations of later trade unionists as the beginning of their history and the end of their pre-history. By will-power and persuasion the delegates held the Union together. They recognized the central fact that a relapse into traditional methods of direct action against an ownership which despised them, a magistracy no longer so given to reciprocity, and an armed force primed by a government in crisis, would be instantly crushed. Moreover they recognized that to be crushed would bury any hopes of stemming the deterioration in work and status which they had suffered for over twenty years.

The personal sway of the delegates was known to be crucial. In April 1831 Buddle greedily looked for dissension between leaders and led, in November 1832 he had to admit that "Hepburn and his colleagues are indefatigable . . . to keep the spirit of the thing alive"; in April 1831 the Trade saw the spirit "which binds them together", and only in January 1833 could they pronounce that "Hepburn & his brother delegates" could no longer "keep up the esprit de Corps".¹⁹³ In the press, the delegates were libelled and ridiculed for

' . . . unsettling men's minds by their preposterous and nonsensical doctrines, teaching them to consider their masters as ruthless tyrants, unreasonable and unjust task-masters, slave drivers &c., and designate honest labour to be worse than negro slavery, Egyptian bondage &c., and decent servitude, unworthy degradation, abject dependence, slavish submission &c., and put the unmeaning (in their case) words of liberty! independence! &c. into their mouths.'¹⁹⁴

' . . . Deputies Hepburn, Arkle, Atkinson, and others of them . . . having 'the gift of the gab' find it much easier to speechify about 'natural rights' than to dig coal; and much more profitable to have the fingering of the Union Funds than to be simply in the receipt of wages produced by honest industry'.¹⁹⁵

From the beginning of the dispute in April 1831, to Londonderry's collapse in May and its domino-effect on the Trade, to near total

victory in June, and established control through the summer, Hepburn's delegates assumed an increasing power. As the union swelled with colliery carpenters, smiths, wagoners, and enginemen during April and May so did ambition mount. There was April talk of bringing "all classes of labourers into it ... even the Farmer's servants", and May talk "of fixing a maximum price on Corn, Butchers Meat etc., And ... to raise the Wages of their Women who work in the Fields". By the end of May delegates were in the fields fixing milk prices with farmers and meat prices with butchers. The June victory even inclined the "petty-officer group", overmen, deputies, wastemen and sinkers, into their ranks. Buddle saw "nothing left for the Viewers & Agents but to do the same".¹⁹⁶ The restriction policy meant that the men at the coalface and not the viewers determined production: this was seen as the seat of power - the pitmen "have now found & established their power", they "continue to work steadily at their own rate ...".¹⁹⁷ But more than this fundamental inversion of authority the union sought to pervade at every level. Under weekly instructions from the delegates the men tried to determine the number and nature of the work-force, the appointment of managers, the appropriate labour for the old and infirm, the contractual conditions of the Bond.¹⁹⁸

The union strove for control under the wary eye of the army. Apart from the recruitment of special constables, some little-used Yeomanry, and the importation of a squad of Metropolitan police into Hetton, the problem of order lay with Major General Sir Henry Bouverie. When the threat of disorder was greatest, in the Spring of 1832, Bouverie had a force he considered unequal to the task.¹⁹⁹

At first Bouverie had been persuaded by the owners to force the opening of key collieries. He did this at Lumley on 7 April 1831, but a counter-attack by unionists three weeks later, accompanied by incessant demands from the owners to force more collieries, led the

Major General to a reappraisal of his field of operation. On 8 and 22 May, having realized the Trade had put him in a situation he did not like, Bouverie refused their requests to force more collieries, and also told them he would not protect non-working collieries, a "Rule which I have laid down ... [because it is] ... absolutely necessary to draw a line somewhere".²⁰⁰ Reluctant to be drawn into the battlefield of Political Economy, the line Bouverie opted to draw was the traditional one of upholding law and order by the 'prestige of mastery'. However, if Capital's battle with Labour was distasteful, the magistrates' pursuit of law and order was artless. In May 1832, obliged to protect blacklegs and uphold order while hired ruffians turned families out of colliery houses, the magistrates slid into fights with the community. At Frairs Goose, on the Tyne, after first being repulsed by fisticuffs, the constables returned to a gun battle where they were defeated a second time, their carbines broken and thrown into the river, their number scattered: the "pitmen fought gallantly and charged the 1st Division of Constables - overthrew & disarmed them". Only the arrival of cavalry, and forty-one arrests, saved the day. Bouverie knew the courage of his adversaries and the delicacy of his prestige. He rebuked the magistrates for their incompetence: they must never act

... in a loose and desultory manner without Consent or Communication, [or] the result must inevitably be that the Constables will be overcome and discouraged, the new hands will be frightened away, and the engagement of others rendered unprofitable, and the troops being always called for after the thing is over, will in a very short time become the laughing stock of the Country ...²⁰¹

For their part the magistrates began with the intention of fulfilling their traditional role and suggested to both sides that they might arbitrate. Major Reed of Newcastle was not very sanguine about the chances of this for, as he told Col. Sir Henry Rofs, "so far from the Coal Owners being anxious to come to an immediate accommodation with their Workmen the very reverse is the case" - they hoped a coal

shortage would raise the price.²⁰² Reed also suspected that as long as magistrates and army held the ring, the owners could look forward to higher prices and a sound thrashing of the union; he was consequently anxious "to throw those Gentlemen upon their own resources".²⁰³ On 7 April Northumberland magistrates made their offer of arbitration. The owners were embarrassed. Keen for the fight they feared arbitration would be seen as "cribbling" to the union; on the other hand a refusal to negotiate would be bad for their public image.²⁰⁴ On 11 April owners, delegates, and magistrates met to talk, but on the following day delegates and owners met without inviting the third party. The magistrates were huffed: they withdrew as arbitrators and reverted to law and order. It seems from this juncture that most of the active magistrates were men with interests in the Trade. Bouverie particularly disliked this feature of the civil power, and after the disputes were over and the union beaten a government report strongly urged the appointment of stipendiary magistrates in the coal districts for "as the majority of magistrates in this District being themselves Owners or interested in Collieries - their Decisions and proceedings were often liable to misrepresentation".²⁰⁵

The senior courts took a harsh anti-trade union view from the outset. Sentences at the Durham Assizes in 1831 and 1832 were heavy.²⁰⁶ At the trial of the pitman William Jobling, accomplice in the murder of the ageing magistrate Nicholas Fairles, Mr Justice Parke took the opportunity to say that the deed "might be directly attributed to those combinations ... [which must] ... one day or other, be put down":

I am afraid this is one of the melancholy consequences of that combination amongst workmen which has prevailed in this country for so long a time ... To that cause I attribute that want of moral principle which could induce you to stand by and assist a person in inflicting a mortal blow on that Magistrate ...²⁰⁷

Parke was no doubt stiffened in his animus by the Home Secretary's letter to all North East magistrates two weeks before. Melbourne reminded them to be vigilant against violent, unjust, seditious, tumultuous, and inflammatory trade union actions, and in so doing affirmed where the government's sympathy would lie.²⁰⁸ Parke, "after placing the awful emblem of justice on his head", sentenced Jobling to be hung, covered in pitch, encased in iron stirrups and bars, and then re-hung in chains at the scene of the crime. On 3 August 1832, flanked by fifty cavalry, eight Hussars, and fifty foot, Jobling's coffin carriage trundled from its Durham City scaffold through the colliery district to the Shields turnpike at Jarrow Slake. There, his head thrown back and his face covered in a white sheet, Jobling's body was raised to swing in the river wind "as a warning to all others".²⁰⁹

The owners saw the conflict as exemplary. Although always capable of internal disunity, the United Trade heeded the union as an external threat which could not be compromised with. Once they had recovered from Londonderry's May 1831 desertion and the pitmen's subsequent victory, they resolved to break the union utterly. In January 1832 they began a fighting-fund, in March they decided not to bind anyone who was a member of the union, in May they embarked upon mass eviction and blacklegging.²¹⁰ If the army could be persuaded, perhaps, to go beyond their duty, then so much the better. On 27 May 1832 Bouverie told the Home Office that magistrates, whom he saw as synonymous with owners, were trying to alarm him with stories of the pitmen's capacity for insurrection. He admitted he had yet to see such acts - "nor do I believe that they seriously entertain any such notion".²¹¹ As the army beheld the owners' intransigence they grew more and more uncomfortable in their role.²¹² On 12 June the leading coalowner and magistrate, Robert Brandling, summarily dismissed Bouverie's suggested negotiation and clearly stated that it must be a fight to the

finish.²¹³ After this Bouverie could be in no doubt, and five days later he despondently viewed the prospect of defeat by starvation in a region where lives and property were defended only by "almost military occupation".²¹⁴

Hepburn's first strike statement was an exhortation to

... keep good order, and every man to take care of and protect his neighbour and prevent injury being done to any one. He would allow no person to be stripped, as had been threatened to strangers coming amongst them; and should any transgress the order, or occasion any breach of the peace, he would himself represent such person to the magistrate, and get the delinquent punished; as it was only by good order and a peaceable demeanour they could hope to obtain the approbation of the magistracy and the good will of the community at large. A cart with ale, he observed, had been brought on the ground; the object of the proprietor was well known, it was to make money; but he hoped none of his bretheren would taste it, or encourage him; let him go elsewhere and sell his ale ...

It will be asked, how are pitmen to better their condition? the answer is, by union and fidelity one man to another.²¹⁵

These words were not protocol, they were strategy. If Bouverie worried about the forms of prestige and mastery of a previous era, the union looked to new forms of prestige and mastery. William Scott and the delegates themselves gave notice of the demise of reciprocity, and the new elements of protest:

' ... satisfy the public that you are not that idle, disorderly, demi savage crew, which your oppressors wish to represent you ... Be, therefore doubly guarded in your conduct by night and by day, at home and abroad. To transport or hang a few of you would feast the savage eyes and hearts of your enemies ...

But I would counsel you, to a man, to be doubly guarded against that individual amongst your own body who proposes to offer violence or injury ... let PEACE and ORDER be your motto ... for on this alone depends your ultimate victory ... Many efforts may probably be made by your enemies to entrap some of you into a breach of the peace, and, after so entrapping you, they will then have what you have not hitherto given them viz. a shadow of an excuse for calling out the soldiers ... to overawe you by calling out many of your sons and brot hers, armed with a gun and bayonet, to frighten you ...²¹⁶

'To accomplish their own sinister purposes, they have employed every means, every stratagem, in their power, but hitherto in vain - viz. hiring the Press to circulate statements which the least boy that enters the Coal Mine can contradict - threatening to starve us! - swearing in Special Constables to intimidate us! - calling up the Yeomanry Cavalry and bringing troops, both horse and foot, from various parts of the Kingdom, and also some Naval force - In some cases the Riot Act has been threatened to be read amongst us, when peaceably assembled to discuss our grievances! All this has been done with a view to intimidate us,, and, we believe, to excite us to a breach of the peace; but, thank God, hitherto without any effect, or indeed any prospect of accomplishing their wicked purposes'.²¹⁷

These are not the words of the politically innocent. On the contrary they are calculated efforts to politicize the perspectives of the community. Hepburn and his delegates sought to remove actions from the streets and to base them in the context of political economy, to give the membership an understanding of their whole oppression, to forfeit the traditional impulse to act directly and replace it with a reasoning organization which executed policy: "Knowledge is Power". Scott reiterated the ideology of the Political Protestants and the United Colliers - the feudal slavery of the Bond, the freedom of Reason, the value of Labour, the dignity of Englishness; Hepburn called for a reading, thinking, and political community with a library in every village; he challenged the silent owners to argument where "he would beat them at all points"; the delegates praised the Northern Political Union, defended their morality, denied smears that they were "wild and frenzied" preachers - far from this, the preachers had "by their character ... made use of this influence to repress the forward from acts of violence".²¹⁸

Delegates Arkle and Edgar made the case:

They were at first described as a few wild and visionary enthusiasts; and afterwards as a lawless banditti of ignorant savage barbarians ... But did their opponents know that the more any society of men are persecuted, the firmer becomes their bond of union? Let them examine history, religious and civil, and the proofs would be found ...

The Delegates, though they had been reviled, had been acknowledged to display intelligence as well as intellect.

They were valiant in their cause - not with zeal without knowledge, but with zeal governed by knowledge.²¹⁹

In the early stages when the Trade sent two emissaries to meet the General Committee and dissuade them from negotiating through the magistrates, they

... found the Delegates assembled, to the amt. of about 200 all seated, at tables so contrived as to bring them all into one large room. Hebburn [sic] was chairman, & Dixon (of Cowpen) was secretary - Pen, Ink, and Paper was placed at the corners of all the tables. When Hunter & Forster were introduced by a Backworth delegate, Hebburn was on his legs speaking. After reprimanding the delegate, for having introduced 'the Viewers' so unceremoniously without first duly announcing them, & stating the object of their visit - they were asked, what they came there for?²²⁰

Hepburn's etiquette of the educated was not for all. He was never such a complete master of the collieries as he was of the Cock Inn. His first call for discipline was hardly made when there were traditional attacks on Netheron, Bedlington, and Jesmond collieries. Pit head gear was smashed and burning hay was thrown after it down the shaft: the men struck at midnight, "spoke not a word - nothing was heard but the trampling of feet".²²¹ In May 1831, with the Wear owners defeated and the Tyne owners panicked into tentative evictions, riverside viewers and agents were subjected to traditional intimidations - burning effigies, rough music, harassment on the roads, 'Rebecca' attacks on their homes:

A system of terror and annoyance ... against the Viewers & Agents of all the Colls. which have not complied ... Men assemble in the night dressed in Women's clothes, fire guns and pistols, break their Windows, destroy their Gardens etc. etc.²²²

In June and July harassment continued against those owners who were pressing convictions at the Assizes, and at South Moor six arrested men were rescued from the constables.²²³ Nevertheless, the first round of struggle passed with surprise at the system and order of the pitmen. In their collective strength by the rule book they had "surpassed all previous expectations".²²⁴

Apart from a mass attack on the working Waldrige colliery in

December 1831, an attack which was not missed as an opportunity to spite the union - ("Where were these reasonable, restraining ... unionists upon this occasion?"²²⁵) - Hepburn managed to control affairs through to the next binding in April 1832. By then it was obvious that the owners intended to destroy the union. Bouverie saw that the Spring policy of eviction and blacklegging could only provoke violence and grieved at the prospect. He prayed that the men would now see the folly of their ways.²²⁶

The avalanche of violence he predicted broke quickly in April with a 5 a.m. attack on South Shields colliery, the daring rescue of those arrested, and the murder of the blackleg, Errington, at Hetton. In May there were pitched battles and mass arrests at Friars Goose (Tyne Main colliery), in June the magistrate Fairles was murdered, in July the pitman Cuthbert Skipsey was shot dead by a policeman during a repulsed attack on Chirton High pit.²²⁷ As evictions mounted and blacklegs moved in from all over the country, the invitation to localized, direct actions increased. As they increased then so did the provocative presence of army and police. Hepburn's control fell like sand through his fingers. Privately, the owners understood the delegates' dilemma:

They prefer Boldon Fell, as being out of the immediate neighbourhood of any Colliery - to keep the men out of the way of doing mischief as much as possible ...' For Genl. Hepburn, like the Duke of York, can lead his Men into the field, but cannot answer for bringing them off again'.²²⁸

By August the union could no longer contain its members against the influx and the cholera had arrived.²²⁹ Hepburn's union was effectively dead.

The owners had slain the beast but some of them appreciated its uses. They soon set about forming their own friendly societies where the pitmen surrendered control for payment of one-sixth contributions.²³⁰ Others appreciated the shift in protest the 1831-32 union had represented.

Major General Bouverie, if not Viscount Melbourne or Mr Justice Parke, had finally learned that unions were not about violence or direct action; the Radical, Mackenzie, saluted the preacher vanguard in 1834 for "exciting the men to union, perseverance, and order"; the coal viewer Henry Morton told the commissioner in 1842 that "It is much to their credit that, during the great strike . . . scarcely a solitary instance of the destruction of colliery machinery occurred"; and, such is the refraction of history, the mid-Victorian minister Walters could later praise the reasoning men of 1831 as creatures of his Sunday schools.²³¹

Chapter Six

Chartists and the National Miners' Association

The Chartist successes of 1838-40 were preceded by 1836 reductions and the continuation of a vend in Labour. The miners responded to Hepburn's defeat with day-time quiescence and night-time sabotage. There was an inconsequential wave of isolated strikes in 1836.²³²

The Northern Political Union was revived under Chartist headings in June 1838 but the miners stood back, merely emblematic for an active working-class: an NPU rally on Christmas Day 1838 toasted 'The Pitmen of the Tyne and Wear', but Hepburn had to make apologetics from the platform for their lack of involvement.²³³

The first significant Chartist penetration of the pit villages came from the Durham County Charter Association, founded in Sunderland in November 1838. At their quarterly meeting in Mr Hill's Coffee House on 7 March 1839 delegates from ten collieries were warmly welcomed; since January there had been seventy-four Chartist meetings in colliery districts.²³⁴ NPU and DCCA proselytizing continued through the Spring but it was not until the national excitements in July that it bore action. As the Convention met and Parliament considered the petition, Chartist speakers were receiving rapturous applause in the villages and strikes broke sporadically across the two counties. Pitmen in the Easington area hijacked wagons of the Durham and Sunderland Railway and rode in triumph to swell the ranks of the Chartist rally on Sunderland Town Moor. William Redhead of Thornley declared them the bees who make the honey, and in the euphoria Williams and Binns of the DCCA presented themselves as the pitmen's political leaders.²³⁵ Around Newcastle the NPU had created a crescendo of Chartist activity from early July led by nightly meetings on the Forth from 8 to 17 July - eleven days of intense politicization. Serious fights with city police on 20 July were

followed by orders from the Home Secretary "to repress and put down ... unlawful meetings" and the arrest of the local leadership in August. Williams and Binns had been taken quietly in Sunderland on 22 July.²³⁶

All of this pressure looked to the Convention for resolution. The Commons had rejected the national petition on 12 July and a thinned and tormented Convention (only thirty members) narrowly declared on the seventeenth for a 'sacred holiday' of the working-classes to bring down the government. This general strike was planned to last three days from 12 August, but the intervening weeks found the Convention wavering in its resolve. O'Brien came out against the plan on 22 July, O'Connor was sceptical then hostile, local reports were not encouraging: on 5 August the Convention council called on the movement not to strike. As London wavered amidst internal splits, resignations, and arrests, the NPU and DCCA backed the strike. Only the pitmen followed, they had been stocking up for the contest since July. On 12, 13 August Northumberland and Durham saw a splutter of strikes in hard-core Chartist collieries,²³⁷ but

... their stopping in this neighbourhood or continuing to work, will hinge upon the intelligence the newspapers bring tomorrow - as to the extent of the Strike in the South. If it appears that the strike has not taken place to a considerable extent in the manufacturing districts - the pitmen will I think go to work again on Thursday ...

On 14 August, "as other Classes of Workmen had not come forward" the DCCA called Durham back. The Northumberland collieries around Bedlington stayed out longer but they were back by the eighteenth, and by the twenty-fourth arrests under the Bond had been made and pikes confiscated or handed in.²³⁸

This was by no means the end of Chartism in the coalfield for (as we shall see) the movement was to exist in other guises through the 1840s. However the high summer of 1839 was the beginning of the end of that brand of tumescent politics which called for class revolution without class hegemony. In December 1839 the NPU District Convention

reported an organization badly damaged by failure, arrests, and the withdrawal of pub licenses from meeting places. The pitmen were not mentioned with the builders, shoemakers and coachmakers as vigorous supporters. Chartist speakers continued to tour the pit villages but by June 1840 the government saw fit to withdraw troops and marines from the area.²³⁹

The magistrates had looked on as Chartism penetrated the collieries during the winter and spring of 1839. They were uneasy but took no steps. It was only after the call for a general strike as local sporadic strikes snapped around their heels that the magistrates took positive action. On 18 July Lord John Russell informed them that it was "of great importance that the Pitmen . . . should not . . . be led to join the Meetings of the Chartists" and on the two succeeding days Sunderland and Durham City asked for troops.²⁴⁰ As the mining community prepared for 12 August the magistrates recruited hundreds of special constables and the Home Office authorized their equipment of cutlass and pistol.²⁴¹ While the army waited, confident about its ability to handle a fight,²⁴² the authorities based their tactics on the knowledge that although "in all the Collieries the Chartists are numerous . . . taking the Miners collectively, there is a considerable Proportion of them disposed to be quiet". The pitmen would be overawed by the presence of soldiers and a 'snatch' of individual ringleaders. Where it was enacted the plan seemed to work. In Northumberland, magistrates, police, and dragoons toured the villages as an intimidatory and assuring exercise: on 14 August Matthew Ridley "proceeded with a Troop of Dragoons to Seghill in order to intimidate the refractory" and arrest four men - on 15 August Seghill was partially back to work; at Gosforth the commital of men to the House of Correction "had the effect of inducing the Gosforth pitmen to resume their labour . . . I do not apprehend now any general outburst of a violent nature".²⁴³ Nor was there; given the executive weakness

of the Convention, once the pitmen had struck for a political end, there was nothing more they could do but retreat. The owners recognized this and kept out of the struggle, thus isolating 'politics' at the level of its own rhetoric and giving its practitioners no immediate cause for connection. They threw out the suggestion that the collieries should employ their own special constables because what they

... dread more than the Chartists, is lest this excitement, which is at present purely political & of which the men are beginning to tire, should by the interference of the masters be diverted into discontent against themselves ... they think and with reason that a Pitman's strike for wages is a far more serious & unanimous affair than a strike for Chartism.²⁴⁴

At an NPU Christmas Day rally in 1838, Dr Taylor, delegate to the Convention, called on the "Men of Northumberland and Durham, and you men of Winlaton who in 1819 so nobly did your duty" to hear him.²⁴⁵ North East Chartism, like Chartism nationally, stood squarely in the historical and intellectual traditions of 1815-20. The year 1819 symbolized what men might achieve when so moved. Movement was an essentially rational process against "a system ... which has no other foundation than error, robbery, and fraud". According to the zetetic principle, Chartism would apply the force of learning and association, men would come to Knowledge and Reason, Old Corruption would shift, and Democracy would operate. From Newcastle the Northern Liberator insisted on the "Moral and Religious Obligation to Study Politics", that only at their peril did the people remain "ignorant of the principles of political relationship"; from Sunderland the DCCA urged self-instruction by classes "especially" in "the history of our own country, discussing its great events philosophically, not as mere matters of fact, but noting their bearing on our present state".²⁴⁶ The best 'means of gaining our object is to spread and diffuse knowledge' and Chartists should "take up these Questions like Men, and calmly and rationally discuss their truth or falsehood".²⁴⁷

The enemies of the people remained the aristocracy. Politically, of course, THE THING was genetically opposed to the rights of men. But more than this its very presence in the structure of society was worthless. The aristocracy contributed nothing to the wealth of society and yet took the greater part. In an economic debauche made possible by illegal encroachment on the property and privileges of the people, the "perfumed Lordlings" had driven the country to want and ruin: the loss of eight million acres of common land in seventy years; the game laws and the persecution of those "manly Sports and Recreations which were once the Health and Pride of Englishmen"; from 1776, crushing taxation through bad laws, wars, and debts; the battles of 1819, 1832, the insolence of 1839 - rejecting the petition "as if ... mere children". In an apt remark on landed power George Williams called for the aristocracy to be swept "from the face of the earth as cumberers of the ground".²⁴⁸

This economic dimension posed tantalizing questions for North East Chartism in its attitude to the middle classes. The movement was not a political cicerone, it did not stop at the old cry à bas les aristos. Rather, it configured political democracy (lineage back to Alfred, "England's one good King") with a dichotomous view of society's productive and unproductive classes in the style of Wade's Gorgon or the Owenite Crisis. Here was the chance for a middle and working-class detente as co-producers of the nation's real wealth and "necessary articles":

I ask the middle classes of Sunderland, will they support the man who supports the people, and will the people support both? The object we are contending for is not the robbery of a faction - it is not the robbery of a few, or the robbery of the many ... it is the assertion of a principle that all men are equal ...

... Tell me not that property ... is in mortar, bricks & stones. No; all property is in your blood, bones, and sinews - in a poor man's life, wife, and children ...

[and] ... when that property is infringed upon, in order to aggrandize an idle and profligate aristocracy, I say we are not preserving peace if we allow protection to property.²⁴⁹

In the NPU's Address to Middle Classes of North of England the appeal was made precisely on these grounds. However, the productive-unproductive view of society was not without an ambivalence of class relationship for with it went a strong belief in the labour theory of value. This theory not only criticized the absurdity of the aristocracy, but also, and on the same grounds, the absurdity of the 'middleman'. The middle classes were distrusted not only in their apparent unwillingness to support the cause - "Gentlemen, We address you in the language of Brotherhood probably for the last Time" (NPU Address to the Middle Classes) - but also by reason of their economic position. Binns told a Chartist meeting of his conversation with a North Shields shopkeeper. He had told the hapless shopkeeper to supply credit during the forthcoming general strike and when the response had been unenthusiastic, had bullied him into support by threatening his property:

'But I showed him that the best way to get 20s. in the pound for every debt, was for him to act with and stand by the people ... there would be little security for his coffee, tea, sugar, bacon, or bread ... when six millions ... were driven to the dreadful alternative of force ...

'... There is not a Star that shines upon the breast of a lordling, there is not a coat upon the back of a middleman - not a parson wears a lawn sleeve, but is indebted for it to your industry. Their grandeur emanates from your industry; and if the loom were shut up tomorrow ... and each labourer were to demand the Charter before he cut it down [the golden harvest] - and if every department of industry were stopped at its source - I ask, how these middlemen would shrink into the littleness of their nature, when they saw all their wealth & grandeur in society was a humbug ...' ²⁵⁰

The 'sacred holiday' would test the theory. As 12 August approached the tone gets sharper. The NPU pamphlet General Strike, sold in Newcastle for a ½d., refers to "Money-mongers" as well as lordlings, and makes it

clear that the working classes can expect to be on their own - "For seven years we reposed with confidence on the Justice and Patriotism of the Middle Classes", "your labour is your own, you can do with it what you please":

... the Lesson now about to be taught to the idle and impudent consumers will have the speedy Effect of admitting those Men into the Constitution without whom the Waters of England would be without a Ship and her Lands would be a solitary and noiseless Desert.²⁵¹

If there were elements in the ideology which bore obliquely on the pitmen - a deteriorating status, the 'taxation' of fines and wage cuts, a middleman class of agents and viewers, the political tonality of 1819 and 1832 - it was the theory of labour value which best grouped these elements, and expressed them. Williams, Binns, and the Convention delegate Robert Knox spent months in the coalfield articulating the theory with a Cobbett-like instinct for the concrete:

[Queen Adelaide, widow of William IV, lived on £100,000 p.a.] ... What would it do? I will tell you. If there are 2000 persons in the town of Hetton, that sum would give a little fortune of £50 to every man, woman, and child, in the town every year ... Another woman, called Victoria, receives five times the amount of the other ... Throw the two queens and the young one's mother together, and their united beggings would support the half of the population of the county of Durham in their present condition ... Now allow me to pop the question. Where do these titled beggars get this money? What rights can they show for it? Did they earn it by any labour either of their head or hands? In good sooth most of them are of no use to themselves or any body else, and not fit to produce sixpence worth of that wealth which they squander so lavishly ... Who is it that produces all this wealth? It is the working men - the men who labour with their hands - who produce all that is eatable, drinkable, or wearable, or that affords shelter for all.²⁵²

The argument from labour by hand and head moves to hands alone in the final call, a dangerous argument for a Sunderland bookseller, but Hepburn had said he would vote for Dr Taylor's election to the Convention if he were a doctor or a blacksmith and the authentic voice of pit-Chartism shared his disinclination to quibble. William

Redhead had come up from the pit to join the fight believing that when the contest was on, his duty was plain. Why had the miners come?

Whoy, to struggle for liberty. Are we to hev liberty? We must hev it ... This is a movement for you! ... I was up to my knees when the news came ... I did not expect to hear such an electrified speech from Mr Duncan. What do I see? I see the bees who makes the honey. When the bees come out of their hives, then the grey headed drones go in and get the honey. (loud laughter) They get it out of your employment, but we will not let them have it any more as they have done. Let them go to themselves - It is the duty of every shopocrat and every publican's duty to join this glorious cause, and let every man have a voice in making the laws. We have got down to this monsteration, and if you want a lift, our friends are ready to give you a lift ... Let us be continually on the look out, and when we get news from any place, let us be up and at it.²⁵³

With labour value went the attendant tactic of controlling the retail trade by preferential purchase. This plan, which had been practised by the mining community in 1819 and 1831-32, was suited to the pit village and seemed to give an impetus to the Female Political Unions which were founded in the coalfield in 1839.²⁵⁴ However, labour value was not only rehearsed as an economic 'fact' or as a source of class dignity, it was also presented as the means of effecting political revolution. Dr Taylor

... hoped they would carry out their objects by peaceable means ... There was at this moment one body that would gain a bloodless victory - he meant the colliers. (Hear, hear) If these but struck work for one month London would be one ruin. Let them refuse to 'howk' coals either here or in the North, and very soon the Aristocracy would neither have victuals or a fire to cook them.²⁵⁵

In a wry piece of political journalism, published on the day of the Newcastle riot, the Northern Liberator both guarded and hailed, assured and threatened, the revolution:

[Chartist] meetings are conducted with all the regularity of a piece of mechanism; their proceedings are not characterized by that violence that springs from want bordering on destitution ...

The County of Durham is making very little noise; the Riot Act is never read; the torch of the incendiary is unlighted; the bleating of the sheep may be heard; the cattle on a thousand hills ruffling the midnight

silence, there is no watchdog barking at the approach of midnight depra-dators; the man of property may have a bolt upon his door, but he is safe without it; the heavy tramping policeman may be in the streets when the world is sleeping and the sun is set, but he walks alone and he walks in peace. But mistake not this general calm; the spirit of freedom is progressing; the work of organization is going on. Against the present corruption, numbers, honesty, talent, courage, and skill are leagued, and none can doubt the issue of the contest.²⁵⁶

Chartism was in deadly moral earnest. Just as Hepburn had called for a discipline and cohesion nourished by moral resolve, Chartism preached that moral declension was political declension. When the NPU had organized a counter-demonstration to Victoria's coronation festivities in June 1838, infantry and dragoons had wheeled round the periphery of the meeting, harassing and splitting the crowd. O'Connor, who had been speaking, protested that this provocation had deliberately sought a conflict in order to inflict a defeat: "Supposing one unadvised or intoxicated man . . . had commenced a collision, where would that collision end?"

Did these tinselled troops yonder think by parading before him their cannon, their sabres, and their bayonets, to unnerve him or shake his resolution? If they did, they had mistaken their man. He thanked them for their support . . . They had proved to the world that as peaceable men are always determined, so also determined men were always the most peaceable.²⁵⁷

Thus the act of political involvement in a way eschewed the traditions of direct action.²⁵⁸ But in another way it embodied them. General strike theory was in fact a call to direct action which muddled the theory at the point of action. Some theorists like Harney called for this show of strength but were willing to use that strength in a blow at state power along the lines of the French Revolution. The Convention, and through it the people, would defend themselves from the State's attack and thus their defence would turn into their (counter) attack. Others like O'Connor blurred their theory at the point of the blow: if moral force failed, physical force "like an electrical shock" would "effect what the other had failed to accomplish".²⁵⁹ In Newcastle

Harney had backed J. R. Stephens with the words "For children & wife, War to the knife", and Ayre had warned that "if a hand was lifted" against the Convention Newcastle would be another Bristol and "he should have an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, blood for blood". Somerville's dissuasive Warnings to the People on Street Warfare was sold on the streets of Newcastle for a penny in May 1839.²⁶⁰

Between Harney's ARM! ARM!! ARM!!! at one end of the strategic spectrum and the fluid gradations across to moral force at the other, the movement initially seemed to rest its theory in the hope that the language and presence of physical force would somehow of itself enact the change - a politically sophisticated version of that reserved violence of the direct action tradition. Thus Dr Taylor could boast, without foundation, in Alston that seven hundred men with rifles were ready to support them in Winlaton; thus the astonishingly brutal language of Edward Charlton's advocacy of Chartism based on "God's Holy Word" at the Groat Market Chapel in Newcastle; thus the solicitor's warning that had Williams and Binns "wished to appeal to brute force, they could have brought down 20000 miners in three hours notice"; thus the NPU's ludicrous overestimate of miners' strikes on the day of the petition - 25,000 men with another seven thousand following; thus Chartism's running battle with the press over coverage and numbers - "an outcry . . . not only for refusing to report the trash which they vomit forth at their meetings, but also for misrepresenting . . . the number, intelligence, determination, and love of order of the persons assembled on such occasions".²⁶¹

The very language is insurgent, it is employed to intimidate. The England of the Chartist speakers is an England where every errand boy is contemptuous of death - what chance then for the "bludgeon policemen" or "musket soldiery" against the entire people? The point is not so much that these propositions were or were not 'true',

but that at critical moments their spirit appears to have deluded the movement itself. Williams and Binns both blur the issue of armed insurrection at the crucial point of the manner of its execution.

We are left with the rhetoric of inference and veiled suggestion:

'If you are not prepared to support him [Convention delegate Robert Knox] by all means, you must quickly be prepared for it ('we are prepared') - This country is on the verge of a mighty crisis. We are living in excited times, and we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. The first signal of insurrection on the part of the country may be a flame which will wrap England in light. (George Binns)

'... you must prepare yourselves for the worst ... Why the gentleman who sits on his four-footed stool, who, I suppose, is dubbed Sir Oracle, told me today that this is a recommendation to arm. I care not what it is, or what the consequences may be to me as an individual. I know it is my duty to tell you of these things. It is your duty to act up to them at once. I have one word more ...'(George Williams)

These words certainly frightened some magistrates if not the army²⁶² but when the day was finally named and the Chartist collieries moved to the political hilt, some of them armed with pikes as at Thornley and Bedlington and crouched behind six pound cannon as at Cowpen,²⁶³ they were defeated by muddled theory, confused strategy, and the unmistakable reality of the troops and arrests they had suffered seven years before.²⁶⁴ The pitmen's political commitment to the theory of labour value was demonstrated but it was their misfortune that the theory had been used more to adjourn the realities of power and protest rather than to explore ways of confronting them.

The debate was resumed on 7 November 1842 with the foundation, at the Griffin Inn, Wakefield, of the National Miners' Association.²⁶⁵ By August of the following year the NMA had twenty thousand members, and in January 1844 an estimated fifty to eighty thousand members from all coalfields, a growing fund, its own newspaper, and forty professional 'lecturers' in the field. Northumberland and Durham had nearly total adult membership and by 1844 Newcastle housed the Association's

headquarters.²⁶⁶

Grouped around its newspaper, The Miners' Advocate, the NMA was an intensely political union.²⁶⁷ By creating a national organization of coal, lead, and ironstone miners at all grades, its leaders hoped to make an effective weapon for the theory of labour value. From its origins Chartists were at its intellectual centre. The first traces of revived unionism in the North East are a letter from George Binns in the Northern Star calling on two counties delegates to attend a meeting in Chester le Street on 22 January 1842, and an advertisement in the same issue "by order of the Thornley Colliery Union" calling for a meeting "to adopt measures for resistance".²⁶⁸ From the summer of 1842 to the summer of 1843 Chartist speakers from within the region and without were active in the coalfield with O'Connor's Northern Star in support. Two months after the Wakefield foundation, David Swallow the Yorkshire miner, Chartist, and first General Secretary of the Association, came to speak at Scaffold Hill near Newcastle. After this he was taken round the coalfield by Ben Embleton, veteran trade unionist and Primitive Methodist preacher,²⁶⁹ (their conversations must have been priceless), and in March 1843 Embleton again presented Swallow to twenty thousand at Scaffold Hill for the formal inauguration of the Association in the North East. He was followed by P. M. Brophy, a professional Chartist lecturer, who delivered a pungent class analysis of the nation's difficulties and was warmly applauded.²⁷⁰ In May 1843 the Association chose Newcastle as the venue for its annual conference, and in the July one hundred and twenty Northumberland and Durham delegates were called to assembly at the Black Swan in the city.²⁷¹

The Chartist connection was soon challenged. In view of the debacle of 1839, the disastrous efforts of O'Connor and others to ride the Plug Plot storm of 1842-43, and the obvious existing strength

of an independent trade union structure and tradition in the North East, the Association's intimacy with Chartism at the higher levels met with opposition. At the March 1843 rally on Scaffold Hill, Ben Pyle, previously one of Hepburn's cadre, and William Clougham, the Scottish leader, had both warned of the dangers of an overtly political involvement. Ben Watson criticized Chairman Pyle for implying that Chartism was destructive: they were not opposed to property, only that working men should receive so little for their property, their labour. Pyle accepted this but warned them again "not to split upon politics, or they would never be firmly organized. They must use moral force and then they would be safe and powerful. (Cries of 'We know all that, but you said the Chartists were destructive')". In July the Elswick branch came into the open with its Address to Union, which repeated Pyle and Cloughan's warning but based its critique on William Beesley, an ex-chairmaker from Accrington turned professional Chartist and union organizer. Beesley had an irascible temperament and the Elswick men feared that although "he may accomplish his own ends" to "induce them to a premature strike", "the Union might be severed to atoms thereby". Undeterred Beesley went on to press "the subject of the people's Charter" and in the same month secured the creation of a North East law fund, persuading the delegates to employ W. P. Roberts, a Chartist solicitor from Bath and relative of Frost and friend of O'Connor, as their attorney. Roberts joined the Association as 'Solicitor General' in August 1843 with Beesley as his clerk.²⁷²

Roberts' subsequent legal successes and his acid political rhetoric only served to increase the strain with the non-Chartist lobby. Trouble came to a head in February 1844 when Elswick again attacked the political connection, adding that Roberts had broken rule eleven of the constitution, drawn up at the May 1843 conference, by his encouragement of partial strikes at single collieries. Their pamphlet was put in every copy of

the Miners' Advocate with the connivance of the Executive Council. Roberts immediately answered, calling on the Durham delegates for a vote of confidence, which he duly received.²⁷³ The Northern Star then pitched in with a startling attack on the Executive Council: "too idle to work, and too poor to live without labour", they were, it said, in league with the owners.²⁷⁴ The Council, who with the exception of the Association's president - John Hall an ex-flax dresser from South Shields - comprised of miners or ex-miners, gave its reply on 1 March appealing to local knowledge of their record and experience. The next day Roberts repeated the Star's charge at a mass meeting on Shadon's Hill, spicing it with tales of drunken evenings with coalowners. A second reply followed on 6 March where the Council re-asserted their virility: "time will tell who is sold to the masters, and who will give the masters battle when the struggle comes".²⁷⁵

The arguments were brought to the national conference at Glasgow in April 1844. Although the conference succeeded in patching up the quarrel it also decided to let Northumberland and Durham go it alone with a strike to begin that month. The question of a national strike had been raised and deferred at the Newcastle and Manchester conferences of September 1843 and January 1844, but at Glasgow the North East delegate committee, after being defeated on the issue of a national strike, won their appeal for a two-county contest.

Strategically, the idea was a nonsense. It was contrary to the spirit of the Association, it ignored the existence of large coal stocks, its partiality did not accord with the lessons of labour value. However, the North East delegates, smarting from the 10% and 8% reductions of the 1842 Bond and confident of their independent strength and value, asked only that their brother counties should keep blacklegs out of the fray. It could also be that the Chartist connection had provoked their militance. The committee of eight included two members of the

Executive Council, John Hall and John Stokoe, as well as three Primitive Methodist lay-preachers, Messrs Haswell, Tulip, and Embleton. Roberts, along with Martin Jude the treasurer, had actually argued against a strike.²⁷⁶ The pitmen of Northumberland and Durham went into the hardest protest of their lives with their leadership at odds with itself and a theory which remained untried. This was a situation which the local press was not slow to exploit:

We need no better proof of the movement being in connexion with Chartism, than the fact of its being promoted by such men as Beasley [sic], Daniels, Roberts, Byrne and the whole tribe of Chartist orators ... and conspirators in this district.

We respect the honest miner ... but we tell him that a change so desirable will never be so consummated on the plan laid down by the Chartists in politics and infidels in religion, in whom he now blindly reposes confidence.²⁷⁷

This was not accurate comment on the reality of the split. The original argument with Chartism had been tactical. When it became personal it got out of hand. But the body of the union remained politicized. Although the official Chartist connection had been rebuffed by the exclusion of O'Connor from the Manchester conference and the rejection of a Chartist handbill at Glasgow, the chief national posts in the Association remained staffed by committed Chartists. And although the Advocate was unstamped and constrained in its coverage of political news, it nevertheless presented the struggle in the context of political economy under the classic calls to reason, organizational discipline, and labour value.

The Newcastle conference of May 1843 had decided the constitution of the NMA. Apart from the recruitment of union lecturers at 18s. - 21s. per week. and the national dimension with its conferences and executive council, the organization was similar to that pioneered by the United Colliers and Hepburn. Each colliery formed a branch, elected delegates, took subscriptions, reasoned policy, operated by

the rule-book, and enforced a restricted coal output.²⁷⁸ The funds were subject to much speculation in their day, but it is likely that reports were exaggerated.²⁷⁹ Certainly, it appears that the Association was unable to afford regular strike payments.²⁸⁰

It was at branch level that organizational discipline was fought and won, and it was recognized at the outset that the conduct of the strike lay in the hands of the local delegates. Their ceaseless meetings and "inflammatory harangues" maintained discipline. It was the

Delegates with their local Committees ... [who] ... may best succeed in Keeping the Men who are off work in a state of delusion, & in inducing those who have resumed work to discontinue their labour.

Londonderry's early hope that meetings could be legally banned was rejected by the Home Office.²⁸¹ Whereas eighteenth-century pitmen had demonstrated as a sharp, abusive, form of intimidation on specific property and person, by 1844 the demonstration was more about publicizing the self-discipline and value of 'Labour' over a long drawn-out contest with 'Capital': "In order to convince the Inhabitants that there are not such a 'GREAT NUMBER' of Miners left the Union A PROCESSION will take place". At this demonstration, one of the last, seventy-two colliery branches beneath their banners listened in the pouring rain on Newcastle Town Moor to their delegate leadership.²⁸² Meetings such as this where the speeches "sunk deep into my very soul" were "Mighty incidents" to the pit boy Ned Rymer.²⁸³

The first call was always to order. Roberts brought all his great eloquence to the question. Speaking of the troops stationed in the coalfield, he cleverly inverted the miners' frustration into that of the soldiers' -

Theirs has been no ordinary trial of patience: they were told that their sabres should be fleshed - blood red and black - that they should 'have a shot' at living men - real colliers - with an occasional splash

through a colliery 'town' - scouring the cuddies - frightening the children - and drunk (after the victory) through the night .

How miserably have they been deceived: - not a skirmish - not a row - no 'pitchforking the natives'.
Up and down - and down and up again - over the bridge and back - looking at the water - gazing at the omnibus - journeying to the farrier's forge - pulling up a horses' foot and letting it fall - drunk, sober, or fuddled - walking, riding, or eating beef - they breath and move - a glorious and honourable demonstration of the power, the might, and the majesty of THE PITMEN'S UNION.²⁸⁴

Order was a deduction of Reason. The Advocate taught reason at every opportunity: headed 'Knowledge is Power' it educated the membership in everything from the irrationality of swearing to the economic history of property, from the bourgeois misunderstanding of crime to the twin evils of society, competition and over-production - "HYDRA HEADED MONSTERS".²⁸⁵ The pitmen seem to have been able pupils. The vicar, the Chief Constable, and the Lord Lieutenant all testified to their order with no cases of direct action on plant or property.²⁸⁶ This should have been clear before the strike: it was a changed pitman indeed who went to the soldiers' barracks to dissuade them from their duty, who scoffed the owners' threats and bribes:

He has threatened to starve us into compliance. He has likewise promised to give us 6 half Barrels of ale, which we have refused determined not to be won over by such like insinuations.²⁸⁷

The case for order had been hugely assisted by the creation, in July 1843, of a Northumberland and Durham Law Fund and the appointment in August of W. P. Roberts. Roberts engaged the owners at close quarters over individual colliery disputes before the magistrates. In the autumn and winter of 1843-44 the court rooms rang with his invective against the anomalies and absurdities of the Bond. Being acquitted on a legal technicality by taking the case to a higher court, Roberts' victory in the Thornley case in January 1844 made him a hero in the coalfield. It also seemed to prove the case for reason and order.²⁸⁸

The Chartist inspired theory of labour value informed the whole union strategy. The manner of the action, a withdrawal of labour preceded by a policy of restricted output, rested on the premise that this labour and its product were valuable and could not be done without. Once labour was withdrawn all one should do was wait. To be drawn into other forms of action was destructive and unnecessary. By restriction and labour withdrawal the commodity would become scarce, the Vend policy of overproduction of cheap coal would end, and the 'middleman' who filched the surplus value would starve. The extraction of surplus value was seen in the classic Radical fashion as a tax. His filching and fattening was seen in the most literal way. Branch presidents and secretaries worked out the exact amount for their collieries and sent them to the Advocate:

Main seam hewing prices 1842: 9/6 per score 21 tubs at $7\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. tub.
 " " " " 1843: 8/5 per score 21 tubs at $7\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. tub.
 - Equivalent to 1s. $4\frac{3}{4}$ d. per score reduction 1842-43.
 " " £26 17s. $4\frac{3}{4}$ d. per fortnight
 " " £698 12s. $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per year

Reductions on putting 1842-43 equivalent to £166 16s. 8d.
 Reductions on narrow work 1842-43 equivalent to £68 18s. 0d.

Total Reductions in the main seam 1842-43, £934 6s. $11\frac{1}{2}$ d.²⁸⁹

Proof of the labour value pudding was in the eating:

I heard that a certain Noble Marquis, some years ago, declared that the whole of his collieries, for the last four years, had not brought him in as much as would buy him a pair of boots. And he is one of the most extensive coalowners in England, or in the world. Most of his understrappers are 'gentlemen' to whom, if you approach, it must be hat in hand. He has unshipped several of them, but not before they had 'feathered their nests well'.²⁹⁰

John Buddle's death just before this letter had been followed by news of his £150,000 will. Buddle had been chief viewer to a 'Noble Marquis'.²⁹¹

The agents and viewers, a growing managerial class in view of coalfield expansion and the influx of speculative money, "cribbed" the men's money "in the shape of fines",²⁹² and made themselves rich, "they had

scarcely thrown aside the pick when they obtained their carriage".

It was here that the argument from labour value, based on an analysis of productive and unproductive classes, began to warp. The pitmen were never previously in doubt about whom their opponents were, and certainly the thrust of their 1842-44 agitation remained directed at 'owners' and 'masters', but the theoretical position of the leadership through the Advocate was reformulated. The pitmen were productive through their labour which was their property, and, by a quid pro quo, the owners were productive through their capital which was their property. The Association existed to redress the balance of one form of property, Capital, over the other, Labour. Both forms had their place and both now had their representative defenders: the Vend, which kept coal scarce and rewarded Capital; and the Association, which sought to make coal scarcer still and reward Labour. Recent deteriorations in the pitmen's work and status were received accordingly:

The last four years we know full well, our wages have come down,
As far as 25%, five shillings in the pound;
The cause of this we do not know, but we feel the effect,
We're meanly fed and poorly clad, and treated with disrespect.

Our masters say we might have earn'd, more money the last year
But live and let our Neighbour live, this is the course we steer;
Had we not restricted ourselves that each might have a share,
One-fourth of us would paupers been to live on Workhouse fare.

I wonder how the masters can find so much fault with men,
For joining in a Union themselves for to defend;
These twenty seven years or more they've had their monthly Vend,
For to keep up the price of Coals, which they to market send.²⁹³

If Labour's money had been legitimately earned as members of the productive classes, then so had Capital's; if both sides were suffering deterioration then the fault lay in an over-expanded coalfield whose symptom was the 'middleman-agent'. It had been suggested that

'... the Miners' Union was established to set the men against the masters, we deny this in toto, and we wish to give it the most unqualified contradiction ...

'We are not so ignorant as to believe that he who sinks his capital should not be remunerated: . . . But while we admit this, we claim the same protection for our capital, namely, our labour'.²⁹⁴

Both sides would gain from a restriction of output, based on the Vend model, awarding just wages to Labour and proper profits to Capital. It was even suggested that there were owners "who know nothing about the fines taken from their men", and that owners and men should be on guard against "a disposition on the part of some of the (newer) Owners to break up the vends altogether, and sell what they can".²⁹⁵

'Ask what it is that has reduced your profits and our labour? We say over-production and competition. When we worked less hours we were better paid . . . your profits were greater.

'We unite to reduce the hours of labour, to call into employ the unemployed, and ultimately to make the product of our labour scarce in the market, and thus give an advance of profit to the employer and better wages to the workmen'.²⁹⁶

This was a labourist political economy posed against the market, with Radical concepts. The Capital-Labour division was assumed, but its current 'Tyranny' was a malfunction, The malfunction would only be corrected by Labour realizing its true predicament and forcing its solution upon blocked minds and narrow interests for the good of all. Labour had lost its property just as men had lost their political rights: in the same way Labour would re-claim its property in the name of precedent, natural justice, and its own productive value. To win the strike would mean economic franchise, to lose it would mean dispossession. Just as Chartism swerved from constitutional libertarianism to social revolution and back again as the best way to win the political franchise, so did the Association dither between the constitutional rights of all property (including Labour), and social revolution as the best means to win the economic franchise. In this case revolution was posited as an answer to the question of why are men inevitably hypocrites. The link between political economy and

total human worth reveals an Owenite strain:

... society is based on a wrong foundation, and from its very constitution - from its arrangements into the classes of capitalists and labourers - from the unprincipled competition of the former, and the unhappy dependence of the latter, truth and goodness exist in our vocabulary to cloak selfishness and malignity.²⁹⁷

For a union so politicized, the Association propagated a class view of the economy which was strangely vacant on the issue of class as a social formation. Even if its interpretation of class was inadequate,²⁹⁸ the miners nevertheless received an education in political economy whose deficiencies in class analysis would be made up in the course of the struggle.²⁹⁹

The owners were implacably opposed to the union. They were united in their opposition at the beginning, and at the end, and refused throughout the five months of struggle to negotiate on any point.³⁰⁰ In May, with the support of the Lord Lieutenant and the Home Office they began a policy of selective eviction, beginning in each village with the president and secretary of the NMA branch.³⁰¹ As the cottages were emptied of families and furniture, blacklegs were brought in from other coalfields and the Londonderry estates in Ulster. Chief Constable Wemyss knew that these measures were intended to "bring matters to a crisis".³⁰²

As Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, Londonderry was responsible for law and order.³⁰³ As the leading coalowner he also had to look to his business interests. At the commencement of hostilities, in April, the Londonderry concerns had high stockpiles of coal. The strike meant that this stock, which "in the late state of the Trade it had become difficult to say how it was to be got rid of" could now be sold "at excellent prices", "converting the Old Heaps into Money".³⁰⁴ His chief-viewer, Nathaniel Hindhaugh, made his employer's civil and commercial duties plain:

As Lord Lieutenant and head of the Magistracy, your

lordship will maintain the peace of the County; but as a Coal Owner your interest is directly opposed to any communication with your Pitmen having for its object the immediate resumption of their labour. They are perfectly quiet, and it is for us to let them remain so while their services are not wanted.

On 24 April Hindhaugh had informed him that "a cessation of the Strike in less than three Weeks would be positively injurious to your Lordship's Interest", and Londonderry followed his advice.³⁰⁵ After a suitable gap of five weeks, and with an elaborate flourish, Londonderry resumed his duties as a Lord Lieutenant of impeccable paternalist credentials:

'I was all day yesterday & the Day before with my men haranguing & demonstrating the folly & ruin to them of their union ... It will be a great point if I can sever my men from the Union ...

'I had a long meeting of the men employed in my Collieries to Day. They were very civil & seemed deeply weighed down by their position. On several little points of Detail they made Grievances but the greatest one of all is the Bond, now continued to a Monthly instead of a 12 Months Agreement'.³⁰⁶

Londonderry, by now eager to settle for commercial as well as civil reasons,³⁰⁷ immediately took this overbearing grievance to the Trade. His fellow owners however were intent on this point for above all others it reduced the pitman to labourer, freed the market in labour, and secured their control:

The real objection which the Men have to the Month's Hiring is, that it gives the Power to the Coal Owners to discharge any man for ill behaviour on a Month's Notice. It is considered by the Trade at large that such a Power ought to be possessed by the Owners.³⁰⁸

Londonderry continued, unsuccessfully, to press the Trade for a settlement. As a consolation, the extent of his failure could always be presented as the extent of his good sense and paternalism. The pitmen had no such consolation.

No arguments would induce them to make a move towards the Pitmen. In vain I urged in my opinion the propriety after 10 weeks resistance of endeavouring to open a Door to negotiate on the Bond ... In vain I pressed that clauses might be introduced in the Yearly agreement to compel the men to do the stipulated work in respect of the Bond. In vain I entreated the Experiment might be

tried when my men declared their only object now was to be sure of their Houses & Home for a year. It was all to no purpose. I had to make my choice under these circumstances of standing by the Trade or leaving them, and although I think them quite wrong I could not under the present position of affairs do otherwise than adhere entering my protest & my reasons on the Records of the Trade.³⁰⁹

The magistrates' first and only instinct was to call for more troops and police.³¹⁰ Except through Londonderry's independent offices with 'his' men, the magistracy made no attempt to arbitrate and the only reason why the counties were not swarming with uniforms was the Home Office's refusal to supply Metropolitan police and the magistrates' own reluctance to fund additional County police.³¹¹ In the event their only recourse was to Special Constables. They were recruited with difficulty and without conviction: in areas "where the population is nearly all of one class" they were "a force upon which very little reliance can be placed". The pitmen's discipline and strategy in fact excused them from the test, but had it come there would have been no doubt about the result. Owners thought them unable "to act by themselves", magistrates thought them "quite inefficient from their fear of the Unionists", the pitman Joseph Peel thought he was worthy of tougher opponents as he rescued his brother from their grasp: "Before my brother shall be taken out of Bigge's Main, the Soldiers will be to fetch, and then they will find some difficulty before they get him". The Chief Constable's confidence in his specials seems a fair summary,

... I have none, they have none in themselves, neither have the owners, nor the men who are disposed to work.³¹²

With oversight over the entire situation the government showed a Peelite intelligence. As early as January 1844 Peel himself had refuted panic responses to an Association which had remained within the law.³¹³ Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, was sure of the need to "break the neck of this formidable combination", but with the day to day matter of order on his mind he advised magistrates to

show the "utmost patience and forbearance" and the army discretion. In view of the traditional awesome role of the army the Home Office's advice to Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Arbuthnot was a sign of changing times:

... it will be very inexpedient to bring up a Military Force within sight of the Meeting (which might have the effect of exciting and irritating the people assembled, as if done for the purpose of overawing) ... [troops] ... should rather be stationed at a convenient and safe distance.³¹⁴

The strike opened with a meeting on Shadon's Hill on 8 April 1844. Most of the men and boys of the two counties appear to have attended. They marched in by branches behind bands and gathered on the natural amphitheatre of the hill. The Advocate was "glad to see that the meeting was honoured and cheered by the presence of a great number of the 'fair sex'". The voice of Primitive Methodism opened the proceedings. Mark Dent took the chair: "we will abide by our Association - we will stand together till we obtain our rights - we are determined to be free!" Dent was followed by three other delegates, each of them Primitives. George Charlton moved the first resolution, that it was their "lawful and inherent right" to obtain a proper price for their labour. This was seconded by Robert Archer, that this right was supported by men's and God's laws. John Tulip moved the second resolution, as "the bees who produced the honey" they would not sign the Bond, and he was seconded by William Jobling who called for unity and lawfulness, "liberty or death". The third resolution was moved by Edward Richardson, that they should support the alternative Bond, as compiled by Mr Roberts, and Thomas Pratt seconded with a summary of their grievances: long hours, intense work, low boys' wages, poor ventilation, dangerous innovations such as canvas doors and Shetland ponies below ground. Joseph Beeston moved the fourth resolution for order and negotiation, and William Daniells, editor of the Advocate, congratulated the men on their peaceful conduct to

date. The last resolution came from William Mitchell who called upon the government to withdraw the export duty on coal and prayed that the "iron arm of oppression will soon be broken". To laughter the Chartist Robert Byrne then called for peace to "masters, blacklegs, blue legs, or any other legs", and others joined in the joke: George Charlton envisaged the masters stripped and sweaty filling coal tubs before they could appreciate labour value, Mark Dent said he had once heard of a master who tried to hew and had "blushed his hands". The meeting ended with criticism of Joseph Pease the Darlington Quaker and financier, for his anti union stance and support for slave-owner compensation, and preacher Dent's benediction that in the battle between Labour and Capital "RIGHT WILL OVERCOME MIGHT".³¹⁵

The primary battle was by labour with labour to control itself. Northumberland and Tyneside seem to have been fairly solid, but the newer mid-Durham collieries contained minorities of workers who continued to work after 8 April. The days immediately following the Shadon Hill meeting saw the effective intimidation of these men and some women from filling waggons at the pit-head. South Hetton was stopped on the eighth, Thornley, Pittington, Rainton, Penshaw, and North Hetton on the ninth, Haswell, Shotton, Kelloe, and South Wingate on the tenth, and Castle Eden, Trimdon, Evenwood, Coxhoe, Cassop, Ludworth, Murton, Monkwearmouth, and Edmondsley by the twelfth - "In short the Pit District is now in the hands & at the mercy of the Pitmen".³¹⁶ Intimidation was paralleled by the recruitment of special constables. County Durham had completed its recruitment by early May, Northumberland by late May - although the magistrates of both counties were never happy about the quantity nor the quality.³¹⁷

Intimidatory tactics, used first on local men who continued working, and extended later to blacklegs coming in from outside the area, were

disciplined and selective. The community reapplied the techniques of direct action, but now, within the larger strategy of a political economy, the techniques were limited in their use against Labour. Intimidation is a violence, but physical violence was rare: the objective was to frighten or to humiliate. Going to and from work blacklegs had to run the gauntlet of an entire community in wrath: "the people don't attempt to injure ... but they get Tin Pans & every Tin Vessell they can lay their hands on, to make a noise, and annoy the people on the way Home":

On their coming to bank at 12 o'clock they found a large crowd assembled, who assailed them with loud shouts and threats, the sound of a trumpet, and other noises, and the men were hustled by the crowd, but eventually succeeded by the assistance of the viewer, in reaching home without sustaining any serious injury. Hunter, one of the wastemen, spoke to being pushed on and off the road, until he was landed in the hedge by Atkinson and Richardson; and another of the wastemen deposed to Grant having a tin trumpet and shoving him from behind, and to Vasey attempting to trip up his heels.³¹⁸

Sometimes the "hissing and groaning", bustling and "clapping their hands at him" was spiced by stones and buckshot. Coal-filling was stoned at bank; William Stoves at Castle Eden sat till 9.30 pm in his pit clothes as the crowd stoned his home; at Thornley shotguns were fired outside cottage doors.³¹⁹ Rough music played in the daylight and 'Rebecca' struck at night. Wallsend, Thornley, Fawdon, and Monkwearmouth were all visited by her 'daughters' who inflicted abuse and harassment. Thomas Johnson, engineman at Castle Eden, was told by "the Mother of so Numourous a famely" that if he was "inclined to live a little longer" he "Must Join the Union as Soun as Posable and Be As a Man in the Land of Freadem"; the fillers at North Hetton were told by 'Swing' to do their duty or "take your fate like the dog and the Bull".³²⁰ The women of the village were "generally put in the front, when ever a tumult is to take place". Their particular role was the humiliation of men who could not or would not hit back. At South

Wingate

... a rattle was sent round the village and a number of women assembled had proceeded to the pit heap ... and began to take away the men's shovels. A body of men followed the women, and incited them on to attack the men at work, by different exclamations and encouragements ... A body of women took hold of one of the men named Young, and were forcing him towards the pond, and beginning to strip his clothes off ... ³²¹

Intimidation was well coordinated as a system both within and between the villages. At Kelloe on 10 April a crowd marched out behind their delegate with their banner at the head and met the men and women of Cassop who were arrayed the same. The force then went on to East Hetton colliery to stone fillers and police. The Newcastle Courant testified to the high level of coordination between villages. ³²² It was so high that even individuals moving from one colliery to work at another faced intimidation on leaving as well as arriving. John Shipton's removal cart was surrounded at Coundon, banging tea trays scared the horses, stones were thrown, the road was blocked, the contents of a chamber pot were tipped over him. ³²³ Within the villages, Thomas Wood viewer of Thornley, testified to a "very violent & well organized ... continual system of terror". ³²⁴ 'Sentinels' were posted to watch for incomers and when sighted the alarm was called:

The cry of 'all out' is not used for a meeting. The men are then summoned by a rattle sent round the place, with an intimation that a meeting is to be held at such and such a place and that all men are requested immediately to attend. The cry of 'all out' is only raised when there is to be a tumultuous meeting. ³²⁵

The police were usually the cause for alarm. Jostled by the crowd, arrests unaided by soldiers were always at the constable's own peril - "He said if I did not relinquish my hold he would knock my bloody brains out". ³²⁶

The community could impose its own rough-handed control on fragments of workers who would not strike; Burdon told the government

in June that "The system of intimidation is nearly universal". Small squads of constabulary were quite unable to defend strike-breakers from crowds numbering hundreds. However, the May decision to evict delegates from their homes and force the opening of selected collieries aided by concentrations of police and troops proved to be more than the community could handle.³²⁷ As strikers were evicted and 'strangers' installed, the cases of riot, assault, and intimidation increased.³²⁸ By 12 June the situation in the major Durham collieries was as follows:

	Men hewing	Men having left NMA	Families evicted
Lambton's collieries	141	18	107
Hetton colliery	148	52	174
S. Hetton and Murton	178	126	69
Londonderry's collieries	282	78	176 ³²⁹

Fearful lest their general control would collapse in a random scatter of small riots and arrests, the NMA responded by demonstrations of strength. The first evictions at Tanfield were greeted in the festive atmosphere of a mass meeting where the evicted were celebrated as heroes: the place was carefully chosen as "an outside and thinly populated portion of the Colliery district ... for the purpose of awing and intimidating the orderly and well-disposed portion".³³⁰ Rallies like this were stepped up through late June and July. The NMA moved new professional lecturers into the field and these joined with local Primitives in highly enthusiastic union 'prayer-meetings' from village to village. As late as 29 July only 1,467 men had left the union; disconsolate at the news of Roberts' re-appointment Londonderry commented that "This does not look like giving in. I am almost fearful of bringing over more Irishmen".³³¹

The union's defiance belied terrible suffering. At the outset families

requesting workhouse-relief were turned away on the refusal-to-work principle. Some heads of household then faked desertion in order to legitimately throw their wives and children on the parish, but they too were refused. Anxious for their children "many of the women left the board room threatening to take their children to the overseer at night".³³²

By 11 May even the hostile Newcastle Journal had to admit to "the greatest distress" prevailing, with some too weak to leave their beds.

Starvation was reported by Mr Hawley, Assistant Commissioner:

Multitudes of them resort to the sea shore living & sleeping amongst the rocks, where they exist on refuse fish, and any other eatable matter they can collect; many of them are provided with Guns, and the small birds which they procure by this means have for some time contributed to afford them the means of subsistence; and begging is extensively resorted to.³³³

All the theory of labour value in the world does not feed hungry children, nor warm them at night. In the second and third weeks of August the mass move back to the collieries began. The Bond was signed on the terms and conditions offered previous to 5 April. To stem the flood the NMA called for an orderly and negotiated return; some of the militant collieries retrenched and redeclared the battle, but by 10 August with over six thousand hewers already at work there were more men than jobs. The Advocate asked the Trade to employ local men being of a higher moral character than the "mean crouching slaves" who had replaced them. The Executive Council, beaten into an owners' market and no longer in control of labour thought they "must in future, proceed with more caution".³³⁴ The National Conference, meeting at Wakefield in November, changed direction. It denounced strikes as acrimonious, internecine, painful; it talked of a "new light", of action through public opinion, parliament, and its own circumspection.³³⁵

Some hard-core branches like Cramlington and Thornley agitated on. In December the militants called on the two counties to "shake

off our apathy"; in January they lectured in the moonlight because the pubs were closed to them. But there was no mitigation: the monthly bond would very soon secure their unemployment, the community needed to work almost on any terms that would feed it. In February 1845 the Oldham strike fund received not a single North Eastern contribution, in April W. P. Roberts could only muster a small crowd at Thornley, in March 1846 the former president of the NMA was driven from Haswell after trying to raise money for the Lancashire strike.³³⁶ An era of protest had ended.

The National Miners' Association had injected a theory of political economy into a trades dispute. From the Brotherhood's efforts at controlled bargaining early in the century, through the political penetrations of 1819, the emergence of the United Colliers in 1825, Hepburn's disciplined strategies of 1831-32, and the Chartist enlightenment of 1838-39, the pitmen had gradually assimilated the theory and practice of trade unionism.

From within the community this consciousness grew reactively and tensely with traditional, direct, modes of protest. For example, the sense of labour-value reacted with an older sense of the true bred pitman and the national importance of coal; Hepburn's call to order demonstrated the tension of a union control which was in fact precarious.

From without the community there had been parallel developments. After 1819 the reciprocity of direct action, the cohesive role of the magistracy, and the coercive weakness of government, were diminishing factors. Labour and Capital, already moving apart by financial and structural changes in the industry, were more and more left to their own devices. The magistracy increasingly evacuated the middle ground and relied upon the army to keep the peace. This dissolution of reciprocity and cohesion lessened the usefulness of

direct action as a technique of social protest. By 1839 Chartist agitators had recognized these developments politically, and charged the magistracy with a responsibility born of their own neglect:

... the magistrates, the dispensers of law, the redressors of grievances in the constitution, as it is called - it is to them we look - at their feet we will lay all the acts of blood that may take place ... 337

The NMA met the new situation with a theory and an action to accompany it. The 1844 strike represented a climax of new developments, a coalescence of a political-economic view of labour and its orderly, united withdrawal as a form of social pressure. The idea of a strike is premised by the idea of labour value. Their policy looked 'backwards' in so far as it tried to unite Labour and Capital as common property interests against the market, and in its intimidatory direct acts against strike-breakers. However, the owners' unwillingness to join them belied the former, and the latter was directed against labour itself. Such was the measure of change both from within and without the community, the union's most besetting problem was now posed by labour itself.

In the midst of defeat the Executive Council had appealed to young pitmen to "Read ... Think for yourselves ... Associate ... Learn to speak in public".³³⁸ These men were to make the next generation of trade unionists and the new era of county unionism in the 1870s. It was this generation which surrendered to the employers' immediate control of the market and, in their conciliation and sliding scale schemes took that market as the standard by which Labour was to be remunerated. Concurrently, they accepted the idea of a free market in labour. The industry experienced a massive growth in manpower, nationally there were half a million miners by 1873 and over a million by 1913. If Labour and Capital had each withdrawn to their respective places, the distinctiveness of each was emphasized. The character of

the new protest and the circumstances under which it was made - class consciousness, federation, caution, benefit, negotiation, the strictest control of labour by labour for labour, a Labour Party even - had their origins in the defeat of 1844.

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to study social change. The phrase 'social change' is simple but its human processes are dense and complex. Prompted by Robert Owen's observation that the "general diffusion of manufactures throughout a country generates a new character in its inhabitants", I have endeavoured to build the density and complexity of social change around Owen's idea of 'new character'. Social character has been understood as an insight into human experience: the structurally changing community as it saw itself, in relationship to how others saw it, grouped around the categories of Work, Culture, and Protest.

At the core of this change was the shift from a caste of 'true-bred pitmen' to a market of labourers. This change in productive relations was accompanied by integral changes in social relations. Becoming a labourer was not only a work-experience, it also had cultural-moral-religious and power-protest dimensions. Nor was the change enacted 'one way', from those above onto those below. Those above may have initiated change, but they by no means controlled its process. As we have seen, the initiations were critically and immediately connected to crises of power, as were the responses, and the outcomes.

The 'classic' mining community of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century referred to in the Introduction took its form from these formative changes. The pit village was an overwhelmingly proletarian community based on a glaring division of Labour from Capital. The division was at its clearest at work, but labourer status had fomented other characteristics. The Methodist cultural intervention had come to dominate the prevailing image of the community: it was now a community more plain and sober, its workers more disciplined. The solidity of this image was to assume an essential view of the English working-class. Similarly, modes of protest

had accommodated themselves to labourer status in the market; the miner's whole social organization was geared to this fact and afforded his protection from it. Work, cultural, and protest relations, as they had meaning for human experience, were not divisible - they were the condition of each other. It can come as no surprise then that the classic figure of this classic community represented both the unity and tension of these relations. The Methodist pitman, chairman of his lodge and a Lib-Labber in politics - in so far as he faced the market was a trade union organizer and disciplinarian, in contemporary parlance, 'a labourite'; but in so far as he faced his own soul (and its triumphant passage), held to liberal notions of the moral individual in the market.

Thomas Burt was such a man. In 1893, as M.P. for Morpeth and a leader of his class, Burt met the ageing Gladstone. He hung on the Prime Minister's every word:

Then, turning to me, he said: 'Mr Burt, I think on the whole matters are going very well, I take a sanguine view of the future, so far as our working men are concerned. The workmen have great power, social and political. Their faculty for organization is marvellous, and gives them enormous influence ... Yet there are, in my opinion, dangers ahead. While the working men of the country rightly value union, I am not sure that they recognize in the same degree the vital importance of individual liberty. That they must be taught, or they will suffer for it, and inflict grievous injuries upon themselves and others. One thing gives me unqualified satisfaction; it is that the workmen know how to select their leaders. They do not choose charlatans to represent them in Parliament.'

This in substance, if not exact phraseology, was what Mr Gladstone said. My own part of the conversation I need not put on record. Mr G. seemed inclined to continue the conversation, but seeing others waiting to speak to him, we retired. 339

Burt was one of the second generation referred to on p. 458. The development and meaning of his kind of class consciousness, awaits another history which begins where this one has ended.

THESIS REFERENCES

PART THREE

- 1 John Buddle, head viewer, to Lord Londonderry, 16 December 1825, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. We are told the banker was white-faced and his wife was crying.

- 2 Part III will not concern itself with quantitative analysis of pitmen's protest in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. I consider enumeration to be a valid concern, but from the nature of the primary sources, inevitably incomplete. For problems of War Office, Home Office, Court, and Press evidences in building up an index of actions, as well as the personal quirks of individual magistrates in reporting them, see: R. Wells, 'Counting riots in eighteenth-century England', Bulletin of the Society for the study of Labour History, no. 37 (1978) pp. 68-72, and A. J. Hayter, The Army and The Crowd in Mid Georgian England (1978) p. 2, p. 16. Eighteenth-century JPs had many offences to consider under the Game Laws, but because they tended to execute the laws summarily, there is not much legal record in existence today. (D. Hay, 'Poaching and the Game Laws on Cannock Chase', in D. Hay et al, op. cit., p. 192). Editors Quinault and Stevenson (Popular Protest and Public Order, 1974) accept the incompleteness of sources in their introduction (p. 29), but Dr Stevenson forgets this in his later more strident remarks on the incidence of riots in the North East during the dearth of 1795 (p. 50).

- 3 Deposition of J. Potter and M. Hobson, 26 November 1731, P.R.O., S.P. 36/25.

- 4 Deposition of John Johnson, Thomas Woodmass, and Francis Sellar, 26 November 1731, P.R.O., S.P. 36/25.

- 5 Deposition of John Cooper, William Jackson, Thomas Thompson,
and George Watson, 2 December 1731, P.R.O., SP 36/25.
- 6 *ibid.*
- 7 Deposition of J. Harrison, 26 November 1731 before J. Hedworth
J.P., P.R.O., SP36/25. Harrison the witness was staithman for
Hedworth the magistrate.
- 8 Deposition of J. Nicholson, J. Galloway, R. Harrison, 24 November
1731, P.R.O., SP 36/25. 'Staithes' in 1731 were depots for the
storage of coal stocks. By the nineteenth-century the term came to
be used for erections at the place of shipment to facilitate the easier
transfer of coal to keel, or, ultimately, directly into the ship's hold.
- 9 "Wear Water Men" etc. is not a reference to keelmen but to pitmen
producing coal for either Tyne or Wear staithes.
- 10 Deposition of Thomas Tinn, 18 November 1731, P.R.O., SP 36/25.
- 11 The North East Circuit Assize depositions for 1731-34 (P.R.O.,
ASSI 45/19) contain no evidence concerning this protest.
- 12 Matthew Ridley to Earl of Northumberland, 13 September 1765,
P.R.O., SP 37/4; Annual Register, 1765, p. 130.

For fuller accounts of the 1765 dispute, which in eighteenth-century
terms was on a grand scale, see accounts in Newcastle Chronicle,
21 September 1765 and Newcastle Journal, 21 September 1765.

Actions became so threatening that regular military force was
eventually supplied - three troops of dragoons from York (Duke of
Grafton, Secretary of State, Northern Department, to Secretary
at War, Entry Book 17 September 1765, P.R.O., SP 44/194).

Surviving legal records for the North East in the eighteenth-century

are few, but in 1742 there is "The King against Byerly" for setting fire to Jesmond colliery (Northumberland Assizes, August 1742, P.R.O., ASSI 45/22).

- 13 John Oxley, agent, to Sir John Delaval, 14 June 1778, N.C.R.O., DE 4/11; Newcastle Chronicle, 14 March 1789; deposition of John Turner, 14 March 1789, North East Circuit Assize depositions, P.R.O., ASSI 41/36 pt. II, deposition of Andrew Gascoyne, 16 March 1789, *ibid.*

There is a detailed description of traditional methods of machine-sabotage to block shafts and flood workings in, J. R. Boyle, The County of Durham (1892) p. 108. Significantly, the threat of damage alone could incur prosecution. In 1754 one Valentine Mackartney was given three months gaol "for Declaring and Threatening that he would Drown the Colliery and Coalmines of Nicholas Lambton Esq." (Durham Quarter Sessions Order Books, October 1754, D.C.R.O., Q/S/OB 11).

- 14 State of Coal Trade in the U.K., P.P. 1830, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
- 15 Newcastle Journal, 21 September 1765; Ridley to George Ward, 14 June 1771, N.C.R.O., ZRI 38/L; letter of Thomas Barnes, viewer of Walker colliery, 23 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/23; John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 29 April 1800, N.C.R.O., DE/4/24. For marching gangs moving systematically from colliery to colliery see: Newcastle Courant, 3, 10, 17 November 1810.
- 16 JPs of Northumberland, Durham, Newcastle, and parties from the Coal Trade, to the Duke of Grafton, 16 September 1765, P.R.O., WO 1/872. See also, report of the trial of A. W., pitman, Newcastle Courant, 19 October 1765.

- 17 Durham Quarter Sessions Order Books, July 1766, D.C.R.O., Q/S/OB 13; *ibid.*, July 1775; John Bryers to Lord Delaval, 6 March 1805, N.C.R.O., DE 4/27. In view of the 1766 action it is worth noting Rudé's comment that during the famine and high bread prices of July-August 1766 the North East was untouched by popular protest, although there is no direct evidence to suggest a causal relationship between this and Blacklock's behaviour. (G. Rudé, The Crowd in History, 1964, pp. 38-39).
- 18 Durham Quarter Sessions Order Books, July 1775, *op. cit.* The War Office was aware of the pitmen's ability to cow local authorities by roving intimidation, see: marching command, War Office to Col. Burgoyne, Lincoln, 6 September 1765, P.R.O., WO 5/53. It was sometimes alleged that marching gangs pressed other trades into their ranks against their will - as in 1800 at Hartley and Cowpen with ships' carpenters: anon., to Lord Strathmore, 5 May 1800, N.C.R.O., DE 4/24.
- 19 Cheap meal was distributed in the Delaval collieries in 1779 and 1781: John Oxley to Sir John Delaval, 29 May 1779, John Crooks to Sir John Delaval, 3 January 1781, N.C.R.O., DE 4/11, DE 4/4. In 1800 when cheap meal was distributed throughout the coalfield, Houghton pitmen took their employers to court over irregularities in its contracted price. The men won and a local newspaper was not slow to comment that "... it is always best for the pitmen to lay their complaints before the magistrates ... as their assembling in a riotous manner for the purpose of getting redress can only add to their grievances ...". (Newcastle Courant, 24 May 1800). The owners, apparently had difficulty in obtaining sufficient rye supplies: John Buddle to Joseph Smith, London Corn Exchange, 3, 10 February 1800, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. In January 1789

Denton colliery made idle-time payments when bad frosts had interrupted keeling above bridge: Viewer's Diary, William Thomas and John Smith of Denton 1787-90, N.E.I.M.M.E., ZB/19(b).

- 20 Viewer's Diary, 12 March 1789, op. cit., On 14 March two Acts of Parliament concerning the felonious wilful destruction, fire, or dismantling of colliery plant were printed by the Newcastle Courant, 14 March 1789.
- 21 The mining community also had a reputation for rescuing those who were arrested for their behaviour. See for instance Newcastle Courant, 19 October 1765 concerning A.W.'s rescue by "Mary Wilson, his Sister (along with many others)"; Nathaniel Clayton, Mayor of Newcastle, to Chas. Brandling, 23 December 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/22; trial of William Wilkinson and Martin Lewis, Durham Quarter Sessions Order Books, July 1800, D.C.R.O., Q/S/OB 16.
- 22 It is worth reflecting on the comments of other historians on other occupational groups when looking at pitmen's direct action. Winslow's explanation of the informer as the greatest threat to Sussex smugglers has less force for the more tightly-knit and smaller mining community (C. Winslow, 'Sussex Smugglers', in D. Hay et al, op. cit., p. 144). Thompson's point in the same volume on how labourers and servants working in close proximity to the gentry had to develop an overt obsequiousness also does not apply to the pitmen (E. P. Thompson, 'The Crime of Anonymity', *ibid.*, p. 307). Samuel's later observation on the anarchic reputation of Headington Quarry 'roughs' living outside the orbit of middle-class controls and expectations is relevant here (R. Samuel, op. cit., p. 155).
- On how the reputations of places might be gilded by late eighteenth-

century literary plagiarism and incompetence, see: Arthur Young, A Six Months Tour through the North of England (1771), vol. iii, p. 8. Of pitmen near Coventry it was said in 1756:

Ye Circumstances of Colliers are very different to any other Men not only as they all act in league & would stand by one another thro'ought the Kingdom, & are desperate Fellows ... but besides ... they think they can at any time hide themselves & They know that Ye kingdom cannot do without Coals ... ('E.F.' to Earl of Holderness, Secretary of State, Northern Department, 30 August 1756, P.R.O., SP 36/135).

- 23 See evidences of Henry Morton, agent for the Countess of Durham's collieries, and Dr Elliot, lecturer at the Newcastle School of Medicine, C.E.C. 1842, p. 646, p. 669; Summary of the Condition, op. cit.; informer's letter to Home Office, 15 April 1817, P.R.O., HO 42/163; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 22 October 1830, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142; William Howitt, op. cit., p. 88: Dr Elliot thought the pitmen picked on weaker trades; Mr Thomas compared their riotous temperament with that of the ascetic, stable, farm labourer; the informer thought their "extreme ignorance and stupidity" made them fit persons for conspiracy and riot; Buddle reported on how the London newspapers had invented "a rising" based on their reputation where, after military intervention, "the slaughter was great".
- 24 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to Lord Fitzroy Somerset, 1 April 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 25 The nineteenth-century regional chronicler, John Sykes, paid due attention to the activities of both groups. He recorded keelmen's direct actions in 1709, 1710, 1794, 1803, 1815, 1819 and 1822, and seamen's actions in 1768, 1775, 1793 and 1815 (John Sykes, op. cit., vols. i and ii).

- 26 Matthew Ridley to George Ward, 29 April 1768, 28 June 1771, N.C.R.O., ZRI 38/L. In 1751 Newcastle keelmen were tried for riot (North East Circuit Assize Court Minute Book, 13 August 1751, P.R.O., ASSI 41/2), and in 1800 merely the "apprehensions" of riot were sufficient to win the keelmen a rise in pay. (Newcastle Courant, 15 February 1800).
- 27 Cooper Abbs, of Sunderland, to Rowland Burdon M.P., January 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/24; Thomas Sanderson to Rowland Burdon M.P., 23 February 1793, *ibid.*; J. Beckett of Home Office to Mayor of Newcastle, 8 November 1809, P.R.O., HO 43/17; and for river blockade as a traditional technique for keelmen and seamen, N. McCord and D. E. Brewster, 'Some Labour Troubles of the 1790s in North East England', International Review of Social History, xiii, (1968).
- 28 " ... they now make a point to have some that are in custody for beating and ill using of their Bretheren, 45 discharged and they will go to work, but I presume the magistrates will not comply with a Demand of that kind ... " (M. Ridley to G. Ward, 29 April 1768, N.C.R.O., ZRI 38/6); and, Thomas Sanderson to Rowland Burdon, 18, 20 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/24; Mayor of Newcastle to Home Office, 11 November 1809, P.R.O., HO 42/99.
- 29 John Allen to Sir John Delaval, 11 March 1775, N.C.R.O., DE 6/4. Both the rivers Tyne and Wear, with their heavy concentrations of shipping, the inflammable nature of their cargo, and the national need for coal, were seen as soft targets for an enemy. Here, the 'enemy' is foreign: Mr Mowbray, Bishop Wearmouth, to the Secretary of State, Northern Department (Hon. George Grenville), 1 October 1762, P.R.O., SP 37/1.

- 30 Deposition of William Wake, sea captain, North East Circuit Assize depositions, December 1787, P.R.O., ASSI 45/36 pt. 1. See also, John Brotherick to Lord Delaval, 2, 5, 11 May 1785, N.C.R.O., DE 4/32; Newcastle Courant, 24 October 1789; and for combined river actions by seamen and others, J. Bulmer to Rowland Burdon, 1 November 1792, Thomas Powditch to William Pitt, 3 November 1792, Rowland Burdon to Home Office, 3 November 1792, Hon. Capt. Cochrane, HMS Hind, to Henry Dundas, Home Office, 20 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 42/22.
- 31 Duke of Northumberland to Viscount Weymouth, Home Office, 12 April 1768; Edward Mosley, Mayor of Newcastle, to Viscount Barrington, War Office, 2 April 1768, P.R.O., SP 44/142.
- 32 Duke of Northumberland to Earl of Bute, Home Office, 12 March 1761, P.R.O., SP 37/1. Petition, 10 June 1785, P.R.O., HO 42/6.
- 33 Mayor of Newcastle and others to Henry Dundas, Home Office, 28 March 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/25. For reports of joint action see Newcastle Chronicle, 3 November, 1 December 1792, 23 February, 2, 9, 23 March 1793.
- 34 John Williamson to Bishop of Durham, 10 June 1740, Cuthbert Fenwick to Home Office, 20 June 1740, P.R.O., SP 36/51; Maj. Gen. Bouverie to Lord Fitzroy Somerset, Home Office, 1 April, 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 35 My concentration on the behaviour rather than the motivation of the crowd is not intended to understate the complex nature of crowd actions. Dr Williams, writing on the death of 1766, concludes that there was "no direct causal relationship between

deprivation and protest. Hunger therefore is necessary, but it is not in any way sufficient, to explain the incidence of the 1766 riots". (D. E. Williams, 'Were 'Hunger' Rioters Really Hungry? Some Demographic Evidence', Past and Present, no. 71, 1976, p. 74). This suggests the need for a study of crowd action in context - a comprehensive and chronological history of its incidence rather than any simplistic causal assumptions.

- 36 Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend, 1890, vol. iv, p. 83. For the 1740 dearth see J. M. Beattie, 'The Pattern of Crime in England 1660-1800', Past and Present, no. 62, (1974), p. 88. For English crowd action and the economy of wheat in the eighteenth-century see: E. P. Thompson 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', Past and Present, no. 50 (1971). See also Elizabeth Fox Genovese, 'The Many Faces of Moral Economy: A Contribution to a Debate', Past and Present, no. 58, (1973).
- 37 Monthly Chronicle, 1890, op. cit.; Newcastle Journal, 21 June 1740; Newcastle Journal, 30 August 1740.
- 38 This was the very price imposed by the Durham action some days later: "Wheat at 7s. Rye at 5s. old Oats at 2s. 6d. and Marsingham at 5s. 6d. per Boll". (Newcastle Journal, 21 June 1740). An MS account of the riot (N.C.R.O., ZRI 27/8) states that the city militia was not raised until 20 June. In this and other details the MS account differs from other accounts. I have endeavoured consistently to synthesize the various sources.
- 39 Cuthbert Fenwick, Mayor of Newcastle, to Bishop of Durham, 20 June 1740, P.R.O., SP 36/51; Fairles Smith, Sunderland, to John Hedworth JP, 20 June 1740, P.R.O., SP 36/51; MS

account, op. cit.; E. Mackenzie, Account of the town and county of Newcastle Upon Tyne, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 52; Newcastle Journal, 5 July 1740, 19 July 1740; Cuthbert Fenwick to Home Office, 27 June 1740, P.R.O., SP 36/51. The Mayor had admitted in a letter to the Duke of Newcastle on 19 June that the pitmen "Appeared manifestly too strong for the Magistrates to control" (P.R.O., SP 36/51).

40 Newcastle Journal, 26 July, 16 August 1740. The other thirty-three arrested were acquitted of felony but the riot indictment remained against them until the next Assizes on 8 August 1741. They remained imprisoned until then, when all were discharged except Robert Pigg who received an additional six months.

41 E. Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 72.

42 Newcastle Chronicle, 2, 9 May 1795. The city authorities had themselves been hoarding under government instructions: Richard Chambers, Mayor of Newcastle, to Duke of Portland, Home Secretary, 6 January 1795, P.R.O., HO 42/34.

43 Newcastle Courant, 31 October 1795, Newcastle Chronicle, 14 November 1795. Newcastle and County Durham magistrates had asked in July and August for permission to detain vessels in port with corn for export. The government were adamant that "this application, from a variety of circumstances cannot be complied with" (Duke of Portland to Bishop of Durham, 1 August 1795, P.R.O., HO 43/7). See also, Portland to Francis Johnson, Mayor of Newcastle, 25 July 1795, Johnson to Portland, 31 July 1795, and Charles Speerman J.P. to Portland, 20 July 1795, P.R.O., HO 42/35. There was a crowd action against the price of wheat in Sunderland in April 1801, Newcastle Courant, 4 April

1801.

- 44 Neither the regular army nor the militia were popular institutions in eighteenth-century England. An account of this general theme is given by S. Palmer, 'Calling Out the Troops. The Military, the Law, and Public Order in England 1650-1850', Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research lvi, no. 228 (1979). In Yorkshire, rioting against the 1757 enactment of the militia ballot was connected with the high price of wheat in that year: R. B. Turton, The History of the North York Militia, (1907. repr. 1973) pp. 174-75.
- 45 Marching Book, 24 February 1761, P.R.O., WO 5/48. Newcastle Journal, 21 February 1761; Monthly Chronicle, 1889, vol. iii, p. 557; R. B. Turton, op. cit., p. 44; A. J. Hayter, op. cit., p. 177. Professor Dickinson believes that the impetus behind the opposition was the poor's mistaken belief that there was to be "large scale conscription for full-time military service" rather than the mere amendment of old lists: H. T. Dickinson, 'The Hexham Militia Riot of 1761', Durham County Local History Society, 22 (1978) p. 3.
- 46 "We are assured that the Deputy Lieutenants for Northumberland, have, by a Number of Persons met in a riotous Manner, been disturbed and insulted ... for receiving from the Constables ... Lists of all Men now residing within their respective Parishes ... liable to serve in the Militia ..." (Newcastle Courant, 7 March 1761). See also report of riot in Newcastle Courant, 14 March 1761. The occupations come from a list of the dead and wounded in the diary of Capt. John Dawson of the Northumberland Militia in, The Surtees Society, North Country Diaries (1910), vol. i, pp. 254-57.

- 47 Ralph Heron to Sir Matthew White, major in Northumberland Militia, 10 March 1761, N.C.R.O., ZAL 40/12. Heron's report was based on an eye-witness account.
- 48 From Lt. Allen's diary in Monthly Chronicle, 1889, op. cit., p. 558. The Riot Act had been read twice and the affair was considered so serious that the Secretary of State decided to put it in the King's hands on the morning of 13 March: Lord Holderness to Lord Ligonier, Commander in Chief, 12 March 1761, Entry Book, P.R.O., SP 44/139.
- 49 Contemporary estimates include 120 dead (Robin Hymers, a servant: diary of Capt. Dawson, f.n. 46); 45 dead (Lt. Allen's diary, f.n. 48); 30 dead (letter of Ralph Heron, f.n. 47); 21 dead (letter of Holderness, f.n. 48). Stanley Palmer (op. cit., p. 213) accepts Rudé's figure of 42 dead (G. Rudé, op. cit., p. 35), whereas J. R. Western puts it as "twenty dead at least" (The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century, 1965, p. 298) which refers to Turton's account (R. B. Turton, op. cit., p. 45). However, Turton himself acknowledges William Allen's diary which estimates 45 dead! (see above). Dickinson (op. cit., p. 5) reckons that eighteen were killed on the spot and quotes a Hexham attorney, Mr Armstrong, for a final tally of fifty-two dead.
- 50 R. B. Turton, op. cit., p. 45, p. 58. Regular soldiers were not ordered to Hexham until May (letter book, 4 May 1761, P.R.O. WO 4/64).
- 51 E. P. Thompson, Moral Economy, op. cit., p. 79. Thompson selects great risings for bread as in 1709, 1740, 1756-57, 1766-67, 1773, 1782, 1795, 1800-01.

- 52 See A. J. Hayter, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-15. Nor, it should be added, are 'riots' simply a question of structural definition by historians. Hayter distinguishes three types of riot - the spontaneous brawl, the short-lived, predictable, affray as at fairs or race meetings, and the risings of the people with direct objectives (pp. 39-41). It was quite possible given the particular circumstances and the people involved, for one to become another. The word 'riot' is of course inadequate to the task, and can carry ideological connotations (E. P. Thompson, *Moral Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 76).
- 53 Newcastle Courant, 11 June 1763; Tyne Mercury, 10 September 1822. Marching and display was not only the province of the 'poor'. Elections, national events, and entertainment-spectacles drew celebrants from all classes. In Sunderland after Admiral Vernon's naval victories "The Night was usher'd in with drinking loyal Healths, while the Drums beat, Musick play'd, Bells rung, and Guns fir'd; the People round the bone-fires were treated with Liquor, and Money thrown among them. About Eleven the Gentlemen paraded the Town ... with Drums and Musick"; in Newcastle a Tory election parade of eight hundred gentlemen and burgesses "march'd in a regular Body through all the publick Streets, with Colours flying and musick playing before them ..." (Newcastle Journal, 30 May 1741, 27 December 1740). See also the Local Records series, John Sykes (*op. cit.*), John Latimer (1857), and Thomas Fordyce (1866).
- 54 Newcastle Courant, 10 January 1801; Tyne Mercury, 31 December 1822; E. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 88. As a sign of the times Mackenzie thought that "considering the rapid increase of knowledge" the cordwainers' coronation and parade "is probably the last exhibition of this kind that the craft will exhibit in this

place".

- 55 Newcastle Courant, 17 October 1767, 18 September 1779.
- 56 1765 Articles of South Shields Friendly Society, submitted 1794 to Registrar of Friendly Societies, P.R.O., FS 1/115.
- 57 Newcastle Journal, 23 April 1768.
- 58 See G. T. Brown, 'Riding The Stang', Antiquities of Sunderland (1910) vol. xi, pp. 23-36. In eighteenth-century Wales, for the use of the 'ceffyl pren', "the wooden cock-horse and mock village trial used to enforce communal discipline" see G. A. Williams, The Merthyr Rising (1978), p. 77. For seventeenth-century popular sanctions against 'criminal' offenders I am indebted to a lecture by J. Sharp, Crime and Community in the Seventeenth Century at the Newcastle Conference, Social Control and the Ruling Class, January 1973. For a sidelight on community control by humiliation and ridicule, based on The Pinder of Wakefield (1632) see, B. Capp, 'Communication: English Youth Groups and The Pinder of Wakefield', Past and Present, no. 76, (1977). Edward Thompson has made efforts to integrate these popular sanctions into a cohesive eighteenth-century plebeian 'class' culture in a series of articles: 'Rough Music: le charivari anglais', Annales E.S.C., 27^e Année II (1972); 'Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture', Journal of Social History, vii, 4 (1974); 'Eighteenth Century English Society: class struggle without class?', Journal of Social History, iii, 2 (1978).
- 59 G. T. Brown, op. cit., p. 33; J. Sykes, op. cit., vol. i, 13 February 1783. In 1793 South Shields shipwrights, suffering from sudden unemployment, stopped production and threatened a

- dockowner, Mr Blenkinsop, with a stanging (Joseph Bulmer to Rowland Burdon M.P., 19 March 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/25).
- 60 Newcastle Chronicle, 3 November 1792.
- 61 J. Bulmer to R. Burdon, M.P., 1 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 42/22. Deposition of William Coppin, 17 October 1815, P.R.O. HO 42/146.
- 62 Newcastle Chronicle, 23 February 1792; Thomas Sanderson to Rowland Burdon M.P., 18 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/24, Thomas Powditch to William Pitt, 3 November 1792 (quoted in A. Aspinall, The Early English Trade Unions, 1949, p. 13), Newcastle Courant, 3 August 1793; North East Circuit Assize Court Depositions, 1830-34, information of Parker Gamble and Daniel Rowland, 30 July 1833, P.R.O., ASSI 45/63; Newcastle Chronicle, 23 February 1792.
- 63 Duke of Northumberland to Viscount Weymouth, 12 April 1768, P.R.O., SP 44/142; MS account, op. cit.
- 64 Lord Barrington to Viscount Weymouth, 13 April 1768, P.R.O., SP 44/142. At first the War Office had been difficult with the Newcastle magistracy. After agreeing to send dragoons for disorders occurred, they told the Mayor that they had "to add that it is not without some inconvenience to the Service ..." (War Office to Mayor of Newcastle, 5 April 1768, P.R.O., WO 4/83).
- 65 Edward Mosely, Mayor of Newcastle, and magistrates of Newcastle, Northumberland, and Durham, to Viscount Barrington, 2 April 1768, P.R.O., WO 4/83.
- 66 Copy of Minutes of application of Messrs Layton, Forrester, and Wilson in George Tavern, before magistrates, 9 December

1819, P.R.O., HO 42/200; Messrs Wright, Scott, and Wright JPs, to Duke of Northumberland, 13 December 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/201.

Given the sensitivity of North East authorities to crowd symbolism, E. P. Thompson's comments are apt:

I think that symbolism, in that century had a peculiar importance, owing to the weakness of other organs of control . . . This was, at times, a delicate social equilibrium, in which the rulers were forced to make concessions. Hence the real contest for symbolic authority may be seen, not as a way of acting out ulterior 'real' contests, but as a real contest in its own right. (Eighteenth Century English Society, op. cit., pp. 158-59).

67 Tyne Mercury, 12 October 1819.

68 Tyne Mercury, 7 September 1819. I. J. Prothero reckons that there has been too much identification of popular protest with violence: "Such an identification should be wholly unacceptable to the student of popular protest, as whether violence occurred or not was usually fortuitous; the whole question of violence has been inflated by historians out of all proportion, and is not a very important matter in itself". (I. J. Prothero, Review, Literature and History, no. 4, 1976, p. 114). I consider this view to be partly mistaken. Prothero is generally correct if one is talking of deliberately inflicted, specific injury, but if one is talking of the structure of popular protest - particularly for the eighteenth but also for the nineteen-century - the intimidatory style seems to me crucial. The atmosphere of riot, or potential riot, was a definite characteristic and liable to frighten authorities. Certainly, the marching crowd and all of its display could well give an impression of pullulating plebeian activity and I believe it was intended to do just that. By the same token, the furling of banners and the dispersal of the crowd could give an (equally prejudiced) impression of popular

retreat, or even, contentment. In 1766, a Thames Valley farmer allowed a marching gang to sleep in his yard. During the night he "could hear from his Chamber that they were telling one another whom they had most frightened, & where they had the best success" (Thompson, *Moral Economy*, op. cit., p. 112).

If some historians have taken reports of the violent 'mob' too literally then I would suggest that Dr Prothero does not take them literally enough. The question of the thin dividing line between 'physical' and 'moral' force was of course much rehearsed by the Chartists. I am suggesting that the question as discussed by J. P. Cobbett in The Charter, 17 February 1839 (quoted in G. D. H. Cole and A. W. Filson (eds.), British Working Class Movements - Selected Documents 1789-1875 (1965) pp. 362-63) had a longer if perhaps less articulate history than the Chartist movement.

- 69 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 24 March 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. Smugglers and poachers - essays by C. Winslow and D. Hay respectively in D. Hay et al, Albion's Fatal Tree, op. cit., pp. 119-66, pp. 189-253; bread rioters - A. Booth, 'Food Riots in the North West of England 1790-1801', Past and Present, no. 77 (1977), pp. 93-99, and J. Stevenson, 'Food Riots in England 1792-1818', in Stevenson and Quinault (eds.) op. cit., pp. 61-62; Scots and Welsh - E. Richards, 'Patterns of Highland Discontent, 1790-1860', *ibid.*, p. 90, and D. Jones, Before Rebecca. Popular Protests in Wales 1793-1835 (1973) pp. 86-113; Ludd, Swing and others - G. Rude, op. cit., pp. 79-92, E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (1968), pp. 598-659, E. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, Captain Swing (1969), and E. P. Thompson, Anonymity, in D. Hay et al, op. cit., pp. 255-344, and G. A. Williams, op. cit., p. 117; effigy burning

in Rainton, Bishop Auckland,, Carlisle and Haltwhistle - "Nothing of material importance . . . but I was tried, condemned, and hanged in Effigy, at Rainton on Thursday Evening" (John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 16 April 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142), Van Mildert, Bishop of Durham, to Londonderry, 25 October 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 108, William Hatton to Hon. Thomas Wallace, 17, 26 November 1820, N.C.R.O., ZMI S76/48.

In 1826 Wallsend colliery pitmen broke their bonds and with some ritual marched in pairs to Hetton colliery where they expected better terms (Tyne Mercury, 4 April 1826).

- 70 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 15, 17 April 1834, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. For insight on this see: G. A. Williams, in J. Gorman (ed.), op. cit., pp. 1-6.
- 71 There is work on this theme in D. Hay et al, op. cit., particularly Hay's excellent essay, 'Property, Authority, and the Criminal Law' (pp. 17-63). For a regional example of the gallows spectacle see the Newcastle tract, A Particular Account both of the Private and Public Behaviour of William Alexander while in Prison and at the Place of Execution (1783).
- 72 Hay, *ibid.*, pp. 18-20; R. Nelson Boyd, Coal Pits and Pitmen: a short history of the coal trade and the legislation affecting it (1892) pp. 4-6.
- 73 See A. J. Hayter's chapter, *Tactical Methods of Troops*, loc. cit., pp. 166-186; S. Palmer, op. cit., p. 200.
- 74 W. Napier, The Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles James Napier (1857) vol. ii, p. 39, p. 14, p. 59.

- 75 Newcastle Magazine, March 1760; Newcastle Journal, 26 July 1740; Newcastle Courant, 26 September 1761; Newcastle Courant, 8 June 1799, Newcastle Chronicle, 9 June 1804; through uniform "military neophytes turned in an instant into battle-hardened warriors ... East Anglian ploughboys into pandours from the Hapsburg military frontier ..." (J. Keegan, 'Inventing Military Traditions', Past and Present Conference, 1977, p. 99); Anon., The Spirit of DESPOTISM. Dedicated to Lord Castlereagh (1821), p. 42, p. 53. In this spirit of despotism see also a Tyneside popular song from the Napoleonic era, Bob Cranky's Adieu. On going with the Volunteer Association, from Gateshead to Newcastle, on permanent Du ty, by John Shield:

It's but for yen and twenty days,
The foulks's een aw'll dazzle, -
Prood, swagg'ring i' my fine reed claes:
Oddsheft! my pit claes - dist thou hear?
Are waurse o' wear.

(in John Bell (ed.), Rhymes of Northern Bards,
(1812. 1971 edn.))

- 76 Nathaniel Clayton, Newcastle, to Charles Brandling, London, 23 December 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/23; Lord Grenville, War Office, to Col. Delaney, 13 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 51/147.
- 77 Petition of Sunderland J.P.s etc, 10 June 1785, P.R.O., HO 42/6.
- 78 R. B. Turton, op. cit., pp. 53-54.
- 79 MS account, op. cit.
- 80 A report of Lt. Col. Morrison (18 April 1768) made it clear that the War Office's thirteen regiments of foot were stretched to the limit and no regulars could be made available for permanent duty in Newcastle (P.R.O., WO 4/83). In the eighteenth-century there was an average of not over 20,000 soldiers available for domestic policing and the army remained the chief means of order well into

- the nineteenth-century (S. H. Palmer, op. cit., p. 198, p. 206). During the serious pitmen's actions of 1765 - "the greatest Riots and Outrages" - the nearest regulars were stationed at York (Entry Book, Duke of Grafton to Secretary at War, 17 September 1765, P.R.O., SP 44/194).
- 81 The usual way of calling out troops meant communications from magistrates to the Secretary of State, the Secretary to the War Office, the War Office to the stationed troops, the troops to the calling magistrates. After the 1766 bread riots there was an ad hoc delegation of responsibility for calling troops from the Secretary directly to the magistrates themselves. This was not always observed (S. H. Palmer, op. cit., p. 204).
- 82 A. J. Hayter, op. cit., pp. 20-26.
- 83 Quoted in S. H. Palmer, op. cit., p. 202. Namier related the smallness and unimportance of the professional army to the coherence and strength of central government. Both aspects he in turn related to Britain's freedom from foreign invasion and its natural frontiers - "due to the obvious fact that Great Britain is an island". (L. B. Namier, England in the Age of the American Revolution, 1930, 1970, ed., p. 7).
- 84 For the North Yorks Militia, who often did duty in the North East, see R. B. Turton, op. cit., pp. 34-35, pp. 50-51, p. 56, pp. 63-64, pp. 87-88, p. 100. J. Stevenson, op. cit., comments on an unreliable militia along the south and east coasts in 1795, and for details of the spectacular taxation populaire of the Oxford Militia in that year see Dudley Edwards, The Soldiers' Revolt (Spokesman pamphlet no. 62, 1978).
- 85 James Kinsley (ed.), The Poems of John Dryden (1958) vol. iv, pp. 1741-1757. Dryden thought the militia only capable of the destruction of roast beef and capon!
- 86 James Rudman to Henry Dundas, Home Secretary, 13 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/23; Thomas Sanderson to Rowland Burdon M.P., 1 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/24; Charles Brandling to Burdon, 5 February 1793, *ibid.*

- 87 A. J. Hayter, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11, p. 19; S. H. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 207, pp. 210-11.
- 88 J. Williamson, Sheriff of Durham, at Monkwearmouth, to Home Office, 24 May 1740, P.R.O., SP 36/50.
- 89 Marching Book, 29 May 1740, P.R.O., WO 5/34.
- 90 J. Williamson to Bishop of Durham, 10 June 1740, P.R.O., SP 36/51.
- 91 Williamson to Bishop of Durham, 15 June 1740, P.R.O., SP 63/403.
- 92 For example see G. Holmes, 'The Sacheverell Riots', Past and Present, no. 72, (1976) pp. 68-69; the 1795 taxation populaire in Newcastle was done "in presence of the town's officers" (E. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 72), and E. P. Thompson, *Moral Economy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-98; G. Rude, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-65, pp. 135-48; N. Curnock (ed.), *op. cit.* vol. iii, p. 81, Anthony Steele, History of Methodism in Barnard Castle (1857), p. 32.
- 93 E. Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-63; Anon., to Viscount Sidmouth, Home Secretary, 14 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 28 September 1821, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. The 'fitter' was a coal factor who arranged the sales between coalowner and shipowner.
- 94 William Hutton to Hon. Thomas Wallace, 7 September 1820, N.C.R.O., ZMI S76/48. For wider argument on the relative internal weakness of the Whig state, and the limits of its rule, and the consequent reciprocity of crowd and authority see, E. P. Thompson, *Eighteenth-Century English Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-46.
- 95 R. B. Turton, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- 96 Cuthbert Fenwick, Mayor of Newcastle, to Bishop of Durham,

20 June 1740, P.R.O., SP 36/51.

- 97 MS Account, op. cit.
- 98 *ibid.* Sir Walter Blackett, Newcastle's Tory M.P. from 1734-77, was famed in 1741 as a "Father of the Poor" - "an appellation justly merited ... never perhaps did the poor of Newcastle ... receive more support or relief than from Sir Walter Blackett" (quoted in L. B. Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III, 1929, 1963 ed., p. 95). Namier lists his philanthropic enterprises.
- 99 A. J. Hayter, op. cit., p. 29.
- 100 Handbill, 31 August 1765, P.R.O., SP 37/4; Justices of the Peace of Northumberland, Durham, Newcastle and parties from the Coal Trade, to Duke of Grafton, 16 September 1765, P.R.O., WO 1/872; Matthew Ridley to George Ward, 8 April 1768, N.C.R.O., ZR1 38/L; Newcastle Courant, 26 August 1786.
- 101 Durham County Quarter Sessions Order Books, July 1766, D.C.R.O., Q/S/OB 13; July 1775, Q/S/OB 14; July 1800, Q/S/OB 16. Butter action in Darlington, Newcastle Courant, 27 September 1800.
- 102 In 1815 Rev. Nesfield, the Chester le Street magistrate, was asked by the seamen to arbitrate after they had been refused by Rev. Robert Gray J.P. (Gray to Sidmouth, 3 November 1815, P.R.O., HO 42/147). Nesfield had arbitrated for the pitmen five years before. The magistrate and barrister James Losh had helped the seamen in dispute: "Some time ago I had been applied to by the seamen themselves for advice which I readily gave them in writing" (E. Hughes (ed.), Diaries and Correspondence, op. cit., 24 October 1815). Losh was of a radical persuasion and had substantial investments in North East industry. In 1768 Newcastle keelmen hired a solicitor called Harvey but the authorities still expected direct action. (Matthew Ridley to George Ward, 29 April 1768, N.C.R.O., ZR1 38/L).
- 103 Capt. Peter Rothes, Newcastle Impress Officer, to Philip Stephens, Admiralty, 30 January 1793, P.R.O., HO 28/9.

- 104 See A. W. Coats, 'Changing Attitudes to Labour in the Mid-Eighteenth Century', Economic History Review, 2nd series, ii, (1958); Newcastle Journal, 28 September 1765; Rev. Miller, Vicar of Pittington, to Lord Londonderry, 19 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.
- 105 Duke of Northumberland to Sidmouth, 18, 19 December 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/201.
- 106 Tyne Mercury, 8 October 1822; George Douglas to Sir John Delaval, 21 March 1775, N.C.R.O., DE 4/8.
- 107 Lord Londonderry to Sir James Graham, Home Secretary, 19 June 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 80.
- 108 Lady Jane Allgood to Sir Lancelot Allgood, 10 March 1761, N.C.R.O., ZAL 40/12. (Lancelot Allgood (1710-82), High Sheriff of Northumberland 1746, Tory M.P. for the county 1748-53, knighted upon the accession of George III, 5 December 1760; Jane Allgood (1721-1778), relative of Lancelot, heiress of Robert Allgood of Lambley and Simonburn. Lancelot came to his Simonburn, Shitlington, Lambley and Seghill estates by his marriage to Jane).
- For evidence suggesting there was trouble across most of the county see letters from Lady Allgood, 10, 13 March 1761. I am assuming that Lady Jane had been escorted from her house the day before she wrote to her husband. Nunwick House was new, Sir Lancelot having begun to have it built in 1749.
- 109 Lady Allgood to Lord Allgood, 10 March 1761, N.C.R.O., ZAL 40/12.
- 110 Lady Allgood to Lord Allgood, n.d., after 10 March, N.C.R.O., ZAL 40/12.

- 111 Lady Allgood to Lord Allgood, 13 March 1761, N.C.R.O., ZAL 40/12. One has the impression that her comments are not without provocation. She implores the magistracy to come out of Newcastle and show itself - "the sooner you show your courage the better". Her husband, former High Sheriff, Member, and knighted only four months before, certainly did not well acquit himself in the eyes of a lampooning pamphlet, The Will of a certain Northern Vicar, published shortly after the Hexham massacre:

'I give the corpulent Kitt Reed
 My lecture upon gingerbread.
 And leave him too (tho' not for Fun),
 For fear of Harm - a Wooden Gun;
 At the same time (in case of Riot),
 A Cockloft, for to keep him quiet:
 A Ladder too (Fame do not tattle),
 To aid him in the day of battle.
 And to his worthy Comorade,
 Who with 'im such a Figure made,
 A large Birch Rod, that He may be
 Tickled most exceedingly.'

The rumour was that Sir Lancelot and his friend Mr Christopher Reed hid in a hayloft on the day of the massacre. (R. Welford, Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tweed, 1895, p. 42).

- 112 Spirit of DESPOTISM, op. cit., p. 62.
- 113 *ibid.*, p. 56.
- 114 *ibid.* For perceptive comment on the ruling psychology of eighteenth-century Whiggery see E. P. Thompson, Whigs and Hunters (1975), pp. 190-191, p. 197.
- 115 There were major disputes in 1792, 1793, 1795, 1800, 1804, 1809, 1810, 1814, 1815, 1816, 1818, 1819, 1822, 1824, 1825. For further information on the pitmen see Part I, and generally N. McCord and D. E. Brewster, 'Some Labour Troubles of the 1790s in North East England', International Review of Social History, xiii, (1968); N. McCord, 'The Seamen's Strike of

- 1815 in North East England', Economic History Review, 2nd series, xxii, (1968); D. J. Rowe, 'The Strikes of the Tyneside Keelmen in 1809 and 1819', International Review of Social History, xiii, (1968); D. J. Rowe, 'The Decline of the Tyneside Keelmen in the Nineteenth-Century', Northern History, iv, (1969); N. McCord, 'Tyneside Discontents and Peterloo', Northern History, ii, (1967).
- 116 The Combination Acts do not seem to have made much impression on this rash of disputes. For background and consequences of the Acts see, A. Aspinall, *op. cit.*, pp. xvii-xxix.
- 117 E. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 730, p. 731.
- 118 C. Blakett to Home Office, 22 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 42/23. He did however remark that one thousand copies of Tom Paine, were sold at 6d. each the previous summer.
- 119 List of riots "or where from the appearance of the Lower Orders of the People Disturbances may be expected" (1817), P.R.O., HO 40/9/4; Report of the secret committee (1818) P.R.O., HO 40/3/7.
- 120 A Full Account of the General Meeting of the Inhabitants of Newcastle upon Tyne and the vicinity held on the Town Moor, on Monday 11 October 1819, agreeably to public notice, for the purpose of taking into Consideration the late Proceedings in Manchester (chapbook by J. Marshall, Newcastle 1819, price 2d.) p. 14; E. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-3. There had been difficulty in persuading Newcastle magistrates to permit the demonstration. Mackenzie, who later praised the city magistracy for their good political sense, had been a leading speaker at the demonstration. This might explain his commendations above, f.n. 117.

- 121 Duke of Northumberland to Sidmouth, 1 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196: the dispute "has originated solely ... about additional Wages, & is I believe totally unconnected with Politics".
- 122 Nicholas Fairles to Sidmouth, 30 September 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/195.
- 123 East Division Castle Ward J.P.s to Duke of Northumberland, 2 October 1819; Earl of Darlington to Sidmouth, 13 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196. The Duke and the Earl were Lords Lieutenant for Northumberland and County Durham respectively.
- 124 Archibald Reed, Mayor of Newcastle, to Sidmouth, 20 October 1819; Duke of Northumberland to Sidmouth, 24 October 1819; Charles Thorp J.P., Ryton Rectory, to S. M. Phillips, Home Office, 25 October 1819; William Stanley Hawks, Gateshead, to Sidmouth, 27 October 1819 (one month later fifty small cannon were reported to be found at Hawks' Iron Foundry and twenty more at a nearby rope factory - Messrs Askew and Collinson J.P.s, to Sidmouth, 27 November 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/99); Mr Riddell J.P., Ravensworth Castle, to Sidmouth, 27 October 1819; Archibald Reed to Sidmouth, 29 October 1819; Mr R. G. Collingwood J.P., Sunderland, to Sidmouth, 30 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197; Robert Gray J.P., to Sidmouth, 2 November 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/198; Duke of Northumberland to Sidmouth, 30 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197. It may be added that the keelmen were not shifting their attitudes to protest as rapidly as the authorities. On the day after the shooting of a keelman on 14 October "the mob went to the Magistrates to demand a warrant to apprehend the officer who ordered the marines to fire - to take the 'Murderer'!!" (John Buddle to John Iveson, 15 October 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150).

- 125 Mr Clark J.P. of Benton House, Newcastle, to Sidmouth, 10 November 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/198.
- 126 Charles Thorp J.P. to Sidmouth, 15 November 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/198.
- 127 Archibald Reed to Sidmouth, 11, 17, 20 November, 6, 10 December 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/198. Some hewers kept supplements of gunpowder for coalface work. On 20 November Reed warns of risings in one sentence and reports the disbandment of a colliery radical class in another - the government asked him to look on the bright side. Lambton criticized Reed's scare-mongering at higher levels but it is fair to add that Maj. Gen. John Byng of Northern Forces supported the accuracy of Reed's descriptions claiming that Lambton was not in a position to know the facts. Byng, it should be noted, wrote from his army headquarters in Pontefract. The officer in Newcastle was suspicious of the city's magistrates. He thought it was his "duty to make an immediate report" to Sidmouth "lest an exaggerated statement might reach your ears". (Maj. Gen. Byng to Home Office, 8 December 1819; Maj. Gen. Barnard, Newcastle, to Sidmouth, 10 December 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/200). On 15 December Reed wrote again, this time with relief, "... the Radicals are declining ... the Pitmen in particular are tiring of paying their Pence ..." (Reed to Sidmouth, 15 December 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/201).
- 128 Charles Thorp J.P. to Lords Strathmore and Sidmouth, 6 December 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/198. Thorp had spent the night in Newcastle whilst away on business and was keen to reinstate his courage and integrity. He lived near the Radical iron-village of Winlaton. It would be wrong to identify Thorp and Reed merely as magistrates

in a panic. That there was a kind of politicization will be made clear later, and on 18-19 December there was a meeting of thirty-eight North Durham magistrates to discuss armed Radicalism. We do not know whether this meeting was a response to a general conviction, or merely the unease of a few senior magistrates. (newspaper cutting, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii, p. 77).

- 129 See letters eager to ascertain the extent of political infiltration in the Tyne keelmen's disputes of October-December 1822, and the Sunderland shipwrights' strike of 1824: Duke of Northumberland to Home Office, 29 October 1822, Mayor Bell, Newcastle to Home Office, 7 December 1822, P.R.O., HO 40/17; Lt. T. P. Hawkins to Gen. Byng, 30 May 1824, P.R.O., HO 40/18.
- 130 Thomas Powell, Hartlepool, to Lord John Russell, Home Secretary, 18 July 1839; Messrs Fawcett, Fenwick, and Spearman, Durham City J.P.s, to Russell, 21 July, 15 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42. Hartlepool had no resident magistrate at the time but was connected by rail to the new (and therefore dangerous) collieries of Thornley and South Hetton.
- 131 Capt. Peter Rothes to Philip Stephens, Admiralty, 30 January 1793, P.R.O., HO 28/9; Joseph Bulmer to Rowland Burdon M.P., 19 March 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/25. Shields had no resident magistrate or police at the time.

The pitmen's action in 1810 had been promptly met with the brief arrest of 163 by the Royal Carmarthen and Forfar Militias, and the 4th Dragoon Guards. Details of the dispute are in Part I. There is surprisingly little evidence relating to the action (newspaper cutting, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii, pp. 71-74).

- 132 Robert Green J.P., South Shields, to Home Office, 8 October 1815, P.R.O., HO 42/146; Green to Home Office, 1 November 1815, P.R.O., HO 42/147; Mayor of Newcastle to Sidmouth, 12 December 1815, P.R.O., HO 42/147; Nicholas Fairles J.P., South Shields, to Sidmouth, 13 November 1815, P.R.O., HO 42/147. In Sunderland earlier in the year the keelmen had "thrown down" the magistracy and fired staithes: Thomas Thompson, Bishopwearmouth, to Sidmouth, 21 March 1815; Sunderland magistrates to Sidmouth, 21 March 1815, P.R.O., HO 42/143.
- 133 Duke of Northumberland to Sidmouth, 16 September 1816; R. Barker, clerk to the magistrates of East and West Divisions of Castle Ward, to Sidmouth, 12 September 1816, P.R.O., HO 42/153.
- 134 Joseph Forster, Mayor of Newcastle, to Sidmouth, 6 October 1818, P.R.O., HO 42/18.
- 135 Rev. Nesfield J.P. to Wm. Hutchinson, High Sheriff of County Durham, 6 June 1816, P.R.O., HO 42/151.
- 136 Newcastle Chronicle, 1 June 1816.
- 137 Mayor Blakett, Newcastle, to Home Office, 12 September 1765, P.R.O., SP 37/4. J.P.s and owners had met to discuss measures the day before.
- 138 Matthew Ridley to Earl of Northumberland, 13 September 1765, P.R.O., SP 37/4.
- 139 Mr Fenwick to Lord Delaval, 5 May 1800, N.C.R.O., DE 4/24.
- 140 Hon Capt. Cochrane, HMS Hind, to Henry Dundas, 20 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 42/22.

- 141 Thomas Powditch to William Pitt, 3 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 42/22. Law and order on the river was the responsibility of Newcastle Corporation. Powditch goes on to look over his shoulder in a way which was to become characteristic of correspondents: " ... when I look round and see this country cover'd with Thousands of Pitmen, Keelmen, Waggonmen, & other labouring men, Hardy fellows strongly impressed with the new doctrine of equality ... " etc.
- 142 Rowland Burdon M.P. to Home Office, 8 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 42/22. (Burdon had also written on 3 November stressing that South Shields had fourteen thousand inhabitants, a large and expanding investment, and no resident magistrate or even candidate for the post, *ibid.*); Joseph Bulmer to Mr Nepean, Home Office, 9 November 1792, *ibid.*
- 143 Burdon to Nepean, 13, 14 November 1792, Burdon to Mayor of Newcastle, 19 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 42/22.
- 144 Col. Delaney to Lord Grenville, Home Office [Grenville had in fact moved from the Home Office to the Foreign Office in April 1791], 21 November 1792, Hon. Thos. Cochrane to Henry Dundas, 20 November 1792, Rowland Burdon M.P. to Home Office, 20 November 1792, P.R.O., HO 42/22. Burdon's part in the negotiations was highly praised by Captain Cochrane.
- 145 Mayor of Newcastle and his J.P.s to Henry Dundas, 28 March 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/25; Thomas Barnes, viewer of Walker colliery, to Home Office, 23 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/23.
- 146 General Committee of Shipowners to the Home Office, 10 November 1815, P.R.O., HO 42/147. At the beginning of the action they

had applied directly to the Admiralty (correspondence in HO 42/146). In 1818 the magistrates were still trying to recover the £500 they had spent in raising five hundred special constables. They turned to Whitehall after the shipowners had refused to contribute! (Northumberland J.P.s to Home Office, 26 January 1818, P.R.O., HO 42/173).

- 147 Mr A. H. Robertson, Sunderland, to Sidmouth, 6 October 1816, P.R.O., HO 42/153. Robertson described himself as "a native of this Town and having some property at stake".
- 148 John Buddle, usually a very perceptive observer, reckoned that Radicalism had penetrated the collieries and a strike was imminent - "the mischief will spread in a single day, thro' the whole Trade, whenever the signal is given". (Buddle to Rev. H. Phillpotts, Durham City, 25 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197. Phillpotts then despatched the letter to the Lord High Chancellor).
- 149 John Buddle to John Iveson, 15 October 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150; J. Bulmer to Sidmouth, 28 September 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/195. Discord between shipowners and magistrates seems to have persisted into the 1830s. In 1835 the armed cutter HMS Seaflower was sent to Sunderland to prevent disorder amongst the seamen. The magistrates disliked its presence as provocative, "the Ship Owners have no doubt whatever that those acts of violence which the Seaflower was sent to prevent will take place that being the only species of force by which these men are deterred" (Sunderland shipowners to Sunderland J.P.s, 21 August 1835, P.R.O., HO 44/28).

In his article Prof. McCord suggests how, between 1800-50 on Tyneside, neither the magistrates, nor the armed services, nor

central government, were prepared to be deferential to the demands of local employers involved in disputes with their workers. (N. McCord, 'The Government of Tyneside 1800-50', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, vol. xx, 1970, p. 9, p. 12, p. 19).

- 150 The North Yorks' 1795 tour of duty was at Sunderland where on arrival they found six regiments of the line in waiting (R. B. Turton, *op. cit.*, p. 60). For a full correspondence on North East Volunteer Corps and Armed Associations from 1794 to 1813, see, P.R.O., HO 50/333; and for the officer-establishments of County Durham's seventeen units and Northumberland's thirteen units in 1804, see A List of the Officers of the Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry and Volunteer Infantry of the United Kingdom (War Office, 1 October 1804) pp. 225-32, pp. 535-42.
- 151 Newcastle Chronicle, 9 June 1804. For similar shows of irregular force on the King's birthday in 1799 see Newcastle Courant, 8 June 1799.
- 152 The Delaval Volunteers acted against Cowpen pitmen in 1800 (Newcastle Courant, 10 May 1800); the Royal Scotch Greys were used against fishermen-seamen in 1806 (Newcastle Chronicle, 25 October 1806); Dragoon Guards and Scottish and Welsh militia were used to imprison and guard pitmen in 1810 (f.n. 131); regular troops and marines presented "so imposing a force" against seamen in 1814 (Nathaniel Clayton, Town Clerk of Newcastle, to Sidmouth, 22 October 1814, P.R.O., HO 42/141); marines stiffened the resolve of Yeoman Cavalry who were used to scatter the seamen's organization at Shields in 1815 (Tyne Mercury 31 October 1815).

- 153 J. Bulmer to R. Burdon M.P., 22 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/24. See also Newcastle Chronicle, 2, 9 March 1793.
- 154 Thomas Sanderson to R. Burdon, 23 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/24.
- 155 'T.S.' to R. Burdon, 18 February 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/24.
- 156 Newcastle Chronicle, 23 March 1793, 15 March 1794, 17 May 1794. In December 1793 relations with the seamen had deteriorated so much that Mayor Rudman of Newcastle had to persuade the Impress Officer to stand off: Rudman to Henry Dundas, 2 December 1793, P.R.O., HO 42/22.
- 157 Newcastle Chronicle, 4 May 1793.
- 158 McCord found a praiseworthy discrimination by the Service in restricting its operations only to those who were eligible. Attempts in 1803 and 1810 to press keelmen were met by opposition from the men, and from the Coal Trade who needed their labour and feared the tenacity of their resistance. Not all those in authority regarded the Impress as a means to discourage dispute. (N. McCord, 'The Impress Service in north-east England during the Napoleonic War', The Mariners' Mirror, 1968, p. 169, p. 163, p. 173, p. 168, p. 174; and Newcastle Courant, 2 February 1811). The press had also been seen as a deterrent before the war: "On Monday last the impress service ceased in this port, and the several press gangs were discharged; immediately after which, a large body of sailors assembled in boats on the River Tyne, with a declared intention of preventing all the ships ... from proceeding on their respective voyages, unless the owners or masters would, by writing ... oblige themselves to pay their Mariners wages at the rate of five guineas

per voyage". (Newcastle Courant, 10 November 1787). The action was unsuccessful.

- 159 The Newcastle Impress 'rendezvous' was dismantled in 1815 (McCord, Impress Service, op. cit., p. 177); the Volunteers had begun to fade after 1805 and many were absorbed by the Local Militia in 1808 (J. W. Fortescue, The County Lieutenancies and the Army 1803-14, 1909, pp. 214-19); the Militia were gradually run-down and neglected until their mid-Victorian revival in 1852. (R. B. Turton, op. cit., pp. 121-32).
- 160 Correlli Barnett, Britain and Her Army 1509-1970 (1970) p. 258, p. 278. In August 1819 the whole North Eastern area had only two troops of Dragoon Guards at its disposal (Troop Placements, 2 August 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/191).
- 161 Speech of E. Mackenzie at Newcastle Radical demonstration, Tyne Mercury, 2 November 1819.
- 162 Report, October 1816, P.R.O., HO 42/154. (West Riding of Yorkshire had the largest Yeomen forces at twenty-five troops); Earl of Darlington to Sidmouth, 15 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196. The Mayor of Newcastle had great difficulty in raising city Yeomanry in 1819: Archibald Reed to Sidmouth, 6 November 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/198.
- 163 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 11 December 1830, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 164 R. H. Saunders, Additional Report on the Coal District, gov. MSS, 4 February 1833, P.R.O., HO 44/26. They had been encouraged by the respect accorded to the six officers of the Metropolitan Police stationed at Hetton during the strike. In

1842 there were only 1700 regular policemen in the English counties.
(S. H. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 198).

- 165 Durham County Quarter Sessions, Chief Constable's Report, Michaelmas Sessions, Winter Sessions 1841, D.C.R.O., Q/S/OB 25; Lord Londonderry to Sir James Graham, Home Secretary, 6 October 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 80.
- 166 Deputy Mayor of North Shields to Home Office, 19, 20 July 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/189.
- 167 Rev. Robert Gray J.P. to Sidmouth, 18 September 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/195; Mr Collingwood to Sidmouth, 11 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196; Gray to Sidmouth, 14 October 1819, *ibid.* There were arms searches at Winlaton and Swalwell which found nothing: Rev. C. Thorp J.P. to Sidmouth, 21 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197. See also, Archibald Reed to Sidmouth, 30 October 1819, *ibid.*, E. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 81, and Reed to Sidmouth, 12 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196.
- 168 William Richardson J.P. to Sidmouth, 14 December 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/201; John Buddle to Rev. H. Phillpotts, 25 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197.
- 169 Rev. C. Thorp J.P. to Sidmouth, 4, 6 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196; John Buddle to John Iveson, 8 October 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150. According to Buddle the Hodgson brothers were the most effective Radical penetrators of the pitmen: Buddle to Phillpotts, 25 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197.
- 170 John Buddle to John Iveson, 15, 20 October 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150. Nicholas Fairles of South Shields reported that the keelmen and pitmen had taken "little Interest" in the Town Moor

demonstration: Fairles to Sidmouth, 12 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196. The situation is complicated by the holding of the Durham pitmen's favourite fair, the Houghton Feast, on the ninth, a fair which traditionally meant time off work: "The pitmen have been enjoying themselves - devouring Geese and drinking Ale ..."
(John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 10 October 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150).

- 171 John Buddle to John Iveson, 25 October 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150. In December at a meeting of North Durham magistrates the following colliery areas were identified as Radical locations - Jarrow, Sheriff Hill, Penshaw, Rainton, Houghton, Newbottle, Hetton, Hebburn, Washington, Fatfield, Mount Moor, Winlaton, Team, Felling, Sunderland, and Shields (newspaper cutting, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii, p. 77).
- 172 Archibald Reed to Sidmouth, 27 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197; John Buddle to Rev. H. Phillpotts, 25 October 1819, *ibid.*; John Buddle to John Iveson, 21 October 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150.
- 173 John Buddle to John Iveson, 12, 17 November 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150; Archibald Reed to Sidmouth, 15, 24 December 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/201. See also, Messrs Wright, Scott, and Wright J.P.s to Duke of Northumberland, 13 December 1819, *ibid.*
- 174 R. G. Collingwood to Sidmouth, 30 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197; Rev. R. Donaldson, Morpeth, to Sidmouth, 3 January 1820, P.R.O., HO 42/203.
- 175 John Buddle to Rev. H. Phillpotts, 25 October 1819; Rev. C. Thorp J.P. to S. M. Phillips, Home Office, 20, 25 October 1819, P.R.O.,

HO 42/197. Enaes Mackenzie, master printer and Political Protestant, reckoned that "the principles of Radical Reform were spread, and spoused 'with all the fervour of a moral or religious feeling'" (op. cit., p. 81).

- 176 Declaration & Rules of Political Protestants, October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197; Declaration of Political Protestants of North and South Shields, 2 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196.

The argument against political ignorance was fundamental to Radical Constitutionalism. It was also an argument of some malleability.

In 1817 the mildly reformist Tyne Mercury could praise Rev. Barrow's Young Briton's Social Catechism of their Rights and Duties because "most of the present difficulties of Britain are owing to the ignorance of the mass of the people in their social and political rights". (Tyne Mercury, 6 May 1817).

- 177 Mr Ranney, North Shields, to Sidmouth, 26 August 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/193. John Marshall the printer was accused of selling five to six hundred per week with "murderous effect" (Anon., information, n.d., October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197); Thorp said it was "received with avidity" (Rev. C. Thorp J.P. to Sidmouth, 4 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196); Mackenzie said Wooler and Cobbett were central texts (op. cit., p. 81); Buddle said it was "to be found in the Hat Crown of almost every pitman you meet" (John Buddle to Rev. H. Phillpotts, 25 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197).

- 178 Rev. C. Thorp J.P. to S. M. Phillips, 25 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/197; Thorp to Sidmouth, 4 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196.

- 179 John Buddle to Rev. H. Phillpotts, 25 October 1819, P.R.O.,

HO 42/197; John Buddle to John Iveson, 8, 17, 25 October 1819, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 150.

- 180 Declaration & Rules, op. cit.; E. Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 81.
- 181 Tyne Mercury, 2 November 1819, Hodgson spoke from a hustings inscribed with the words 'Truth' 'Order' 'Justice' hung round with a black mourning cloth for Manchester.
- 182 E. Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 82; Report, 12 October 1819, P.R.O., HO 42/196.
- 183 See Part I.
- 184 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 20, 23, 25 March, 22 July, 31 October 1825, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. The miners' hall in Hetton was adjoined to the 'Brewer's Arms' (Sunderland Echo, 18 February 1960).
- 185 Rules and Regulations for the formation of a society to be called the United Association of Colliers on the Rivers Tyne & Wear (Newcastle 1825). The Association's democratic structure is illustrated in their reply to a Coal Trade 1826 proposal to set up a joint relief fund:
- " ... every new regulation before it can be acted upon, must be made known to every Colliery to have the sanction of at least, a majority of the members ... We, therefore, desire to wave your proposition at present, until we have laid it before the various branches of the Association, and obtained their advices."
- (Thomas Herron, Cock Inn, Newcastle, to John Buddle, secretary to the Committee, 28 January 1826, N.C.R.O., Committee of Coal Owners, op. cit., vol. x).

How much the United Colliers were a response to owners' encroachments since 1805 - a more uniform Bond, the vending of

labour, references for migrating workers from 1820, the abolition of binding money from 1822 - can be seen by reference to Part I.

The pitmen had an example of disciplined and effective action to consider during 1825-26. The Seamen's Association paid out £1064 3s. 7½d. to their sick and unemployed through 1826, and their preference for orderly strike over direct action made military intervention impossible (Statement of Seamen's Association accounts, November 1826, P.R.O., HO 40/21; Lt. Col. T. P. Hawkin to Gen. Byng, 8 January 1825, P.R.O., HO 40/18; North Shields Society of Shipowners to Robert Peel, Home Secretary, 15 July 1826, P.R.O., HO 40/20/2).

186 Rule no. XV, Rules and Regulations, op. cit.

187 A Voice from the Coal Mines ... addressed to the coalowners, their head agents, and a sympathizing public by the Colliers of the United Association of Durham and Northumberland (South Shields 1825).

188 We do not know whether the labourist political economy of Cooperativism influenced the United Colliers. Certainly their statements seem to suggest it, and the propagandist Cooperative and Economical Society (1821) and London Cooperative Society (1824) were well-timed to raise the possibility of connection. Stricter Labour value theories appeared later with Thomas Hodgskin's Labour Defended (1825) and William Thompson's Labour Rewarded (1827). The only evidence of Cooperative influence is in Richard Fynes' classic The Miners of Northumberland and Durham (1873). Written partly from memory, and oral interview, Fynes records a pitman named Mackintosh at Hetton colliery who advocated cooperative principles in 1825, but who "Like Galileo ... lived before his time" (p. 16). Mackintosh,

we are told, was victimized and forced to emigrate to the U.S.A. The orderly, disciplined, combination of workers was also defended and recognized by cooperative and liberal political economy. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge praised 1824 repeal as a freedom from "ancient prejudices, monopolies, and exclusive interests" but reminded workers that the market must decide wages and that forbearance, management, and economy was their only answer to its dictates (S.D.U.K., A Short Address to Workmen on Combinations to Raise Wages, 1831). In 1833 the distinguished political economists Nassau Senior and Thomas Tomlinson gave their view of combination to the government expressing reluctance to endanger those means of working-class order and independence:

"We attach such value to any Institutions which tend to give habits of foresight and prudence to the working classes & to the feelings of Independence connected with those habits that we could not run the hazard of injuring those Institutions unless it should be proved that the evil of the Combination system cannot be subdued at a less price".

(Report, presented to Right Hon. Lord Viscount Melbourne, 21 August 1832, P.R.O., HO 44/56).

- 189 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 22 February 1826, P.R.O., HO 40/19.
- 190 John Wood, Mount Moor colliery, to John Buddle, secretary to the Committee, 21 March 1826, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 191 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 6, 29 March 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. Hetton remained the leading union colliery: in 1829 we know that Thomas Hepburn, Charles Parkinson, and Robert and Christopher Haswell - all leaders in 1831 - were working side by side at Hetton as hewers (Hetton and Elemore labour force, 1829, D.C.R.O., D/X 36/2).

- 192 Rules and Regulations of the Coal Miners' FRIENDLY SOCIETY in the counties of Northumberland and Durham, established June 4 1831 (Newcastle 1831). The aims and functions of the United Colliers remained: delegate structure and discipline, friendly society care, issue of transfer certificates to migratory members, restriction of output. Restriction was down to 4s. per day, and the clause on membership reflected their deepening concern for their 'true bred' status: a member could only be "a native of the county of Northumberland or Durham, and brought up a Pitman".
- 193 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 14 April 1831, 6 November 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142; Report from Coal Trade Office, 13 April 1831, Buddle to Londonderry, 1 January 1833, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 194 'Castor', A Letter on the Disputes Between the Coal-Owners & Pitmen, Addressed to the Editor of the Tyne Mercury, Newcastle, 29 February 1832, N.C.R.O.
- 195 Newcastle Journal, 23 June 1832. This argument is ever-present in the minds of authority: see John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 28 April 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142 - "... they have 5/- per day for talking which is much easier, than hewing for 3/6".
- 196 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 12 May, 23 April, 4 May, 29 May, 13, 25 June, 7, 14 July 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. There were also negotiated deals with retailers and tradesmen: Thomas Crawford to Maj. Gen. Bouverie, 8 June 1831, P.R.O., HO 40/29/1.
- 197 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 20, 29 May, 6, 19 June 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 198 Thomas Crawford to Maj. Gen. Bouverie, 8 June 1831, P.R.O.,

- HO 40/29/1; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 20 May, 4, 21 June, 8, 30 July 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 199 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 2 May 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; Bouverie to Maj. Gen. Fitzroy, 7 April 1831, P.R.O., HO 40/29/1.
- 200 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 6, 30 April, 8, 22 May 1831, P.R.O., HO 40/29/1.
- 201 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 7 May 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 5 May 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142; Bouverie to Robert Brandling J.P., 6 May 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 202 Col. Sir Henry Rofs, Newcastle, to Maj. Gen. Bouverie, 4 April 1831, P.R.O., HO 40/29/1.
- 203 *ibid.*
- 204 Poster, 7 April 1831, P.L.L., History of Coal Trade Collection; John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 10 April 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 205 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 11, 13 April 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142; Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 12 April 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; R. H. Saunders, Additional Report on the Coal District, government MSS, 4 February 1833, P.R.O., HO 44/26.
- 206 Durham Assizes, July 1831, newspaper cutting, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii, p. 388; Report of the Trial of THE PITMEN for The Riot at Waldrige Colliery, at the Durham Spring Assizes 1832 (Durham 1832); Report of the Trials of the Pitmen And

Others concerned in the late Riots, Murders etc., in the Hetton and other Collieries, at the Durham Summer Assizes 1832 (Durham 1832).

- 207 Report of the Trials of the Pitmen And Others ... including a full report of Mr Justice Parke's Charge to The Grand Jury, op. cit.; Fairles had been pulled from his pony by William Jobling and Ralph Armstrong when he had refused their request for money. Jobling had held him under the pony while Armstrong hit him with a stone. Attacked on 11 June, the unfortunate Fairles died on 21st. (Deposition of Nicholas Fairles, J.P., 15 June 1832, P.R.O., HO 44/29; R. Fynes, op. cit., pp. 33-34). Armstrong was known to be hiding in South Shields but for reasons inexplicable to the army the magistrates failed to arrest him: Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 29 June 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 208 Newcastle Courant, 28 July 1832. Melbourne's letter was dated 16 July.
- 209 Report ... including a full report, op. cit.; Monthly Chronicle, 1888, op. cit.; Fynes, op. cit.; Report ... ibid.
- 210 See for instance Thomas Taylor to John Buddle, 10 March 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 211 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 27 May 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 212 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 12, 20 April 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 213 Robert Brandling J.P. to Maj. Gen. Bouverie, 12 June 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.

- 214 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to Maj. Gen. Lord Fitzroy Somerset, 17 June 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 215 An Account of the Great Meeting of the Pitmen of the Tyne and Wear, on Newcastle Town Moor, 21 March 1831 (Newcastle 1831). This exhortation is to be compared with Buddle's warning that as the men believe there are no troops in the area "they may, therefore, do as they please". (John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 29 March 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142).
- 216 W. Scott, An Earnest Address, and URGENT APPEAL, to the People of England, in behalf of the oppressed and suffering PITMEN (Newcastle, April 1831).
- 217 Union broadsheet, The Coal Owners and the Pitmen (Newcastle May 1831).
- 218 W. Scott, op. cit.; Account of the great Meeting of the Pitmen of the Tyne and Wear, at Black Fell, 14 April 1832 (Newcastle 1832); John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 27 June 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142, and for reports of Hepburn and delegates touring the collieries with a Reform petition, and attendance of North Tyne pitmen at the Newcastle Northern Political Union demonstration, see John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 12, 15 May 1832, *ibid.*; 'A Pitman', A DIALOGUE between JACK AND TIM upon Reform and the Duties of Pitmen and Proper Remuneration for their Labour. Addressed to The Pitmen of the Tyne and Wear (Newcastle 1831); 'Carbonarius', letter 6 August 1832 to Newcastle Chronicle, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii, p. 551; The Pitmen of the Tyne and Wear, 16 April 1831 (Durham 1831) and its reply To the Public, 18 April 1831 (Newcastle 1831).
- 219 Newcastle Journal, 2 June 1832.

- 220 Reports of Messrs Hunter and Forster, enclosures in, John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 10 April 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 221 Newspaper cutting, 26 April 1831, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii, p. 297.
- 222 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 18, 19, 28 May 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 223 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 25 June, 30 July 1831, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.
- 224 'Vindex', Coalowners and Pitmen, June 1831 (Newcastle 1831). The army also came to understand that violence on property does "not form a part of the system of the Union" (Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 5 July 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2).
- 225 Newspaper cutting letter 9 January 1832, Newcastle Chronicle, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii, p. 388. There had been quarreling amongst the attackers about whether or not to smash the engine-house and flood the workings, a proposal which was rejected on the spot: Report of the Trial of THE PITMEN for the Riot at Waldrige Colliery, at the Durham Spring Assizes, 1832 (Durham 1832).
- 226 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 26 May, 1, 12, 22 June, 8 July 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 227 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 2 April 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2; newspaper cutting, 12 April 1832, N.E.I.M.M.E., Bell Collection, vol. ii, p. 419; Bouverie to Robert Brandling, 6 May 1832, Bouverie to Phillips, 7 May 1832, *ibid.*, John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 5 May 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142;

Report of the Trials of the Pitmen And Others, op. cit.; depositions of Police Constables M. Raine and R. Falcus, Northumberland Summer Assizes, 1832, P.R.O., ASSI/45/63.

- 228 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 13 June 1832, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142. See appeals for blackleg labour in the Watson Collection (N.E.I.M.M.E.): To the Miners & Pitmen of the Principality of Wales, 1 June 1832, and General Description of Hetton and Elemore Collieries, 20 April 1832. There was a riot in Leeds in late April when sympathetic Yorkshire workers attacked a coach carrying Chesterfield colliers bound for Hetton. (Leeds Mercury, 2 June 1832. I am grateful to my former colleague Dr M. Drury for this reference).
- 229 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 12 August, 5 September 1832, P.R.O., HO 40/30/2.
- 230 Rules of Hetton Colliery Agents and Workmen's Friendly Society, 11 February, 1832, Rules of the Rickleton and Harraton Outside Collieries Relief Fund, 23 September 1833, Percy Main Colliery Relief Fund, 6 December 1834, P.R.O., FS/120; Hetton Coal Co. Relief Fund Notice 1834, D.C.R.O., D/X/126/2; C.E.C. 1842, p. 724; Newcastle Journal, 18 January 1834. As early as 1831 'Philanthropos' had suggested that the union's rejection of direct action for disciplined organization did in turn pose the need for new methods of owners' control: "I am not unaware of the probability of such a plan being objected to on the part of those who have been accustomed to exercise a more arbitrary power over the men . . ." (The Two Subjects which Remain In Dispute Between The Coal Owners And The Pitmen Candidly considered in a LETTER Addressed To The Pitmen Of The Tyne and Wear, Newcastle 1831).

The pitmen, fearing owner-control, had always rejected joint-fund proposals: A Candid Appeal to the Coal owners and viewers of Collieries on the Tyne and Wear (1826); John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 10 November 1823, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142.

231 Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 17 February 1834, P.R.O., HO 40/32/1; E. Mackenzie and M. Ross, View of the County Palatine of Durham, op. cit., vol. i. p. cxvi; evidence of Henry Morton, agent to Countess of Durham's collieries, C.E.C. 1842, p. 646; Rev. W. Walters, op. cit., p. 236.

232 For details on the period see Part I.

W. Burdon J.P. to Home Office, 12 October 1833, P.R.O., HO 44/26; Maj. Gen. Bouverie to S. M. Phillips, 20 May 1834, P.R.O., HO 40/32/1.

233 Northern Liberator, 29 December 1838. This account is not presented as a full analysis of the pitmen and North East Chartism, 1838-40. It is instead a summary of critical events and postures over the period in so far as they bear on the major themes of Part III. For differing accounts of the Chartist impact on the collieries in 1839 see W. Maehl, 'Chartist Disturbances in North Eastern England, 1839', International Review of Social History (1963), viii, and D. J. Rowe, 'Some Aspects of Chartism on Tyneside', ibid., (1971) xvi.

234 Northern Star, 9 March 1839. For the representation of pitmen and their wives at a D.C.C.A. "glorious Radical Festival" at Bishop Wearmouth in February, see Northern Star, 5 February 1839.

235 Sunderland & Durham County Herald, 12 July 1839; Mr Headlam J.P. to Lord John Russell, Home Secretary, 13 July 1839, P.R.O.,

HO 40/46, Richard Pemberton J.P. to Russell, 19 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42, Messrs Fawcett, Fenwick, Spearman J.P.s, Durham City, to Russell, 20 July 1839, *ibid.*; the Convention's advice against partial strikes and for "universality of action" was read out at a Forth meeting in Newcastle, John Fife, Mayor of Newcastle, to Russell, 19 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/46; John Kidson, clerk to the Justices, Sunderland, to Russell, 13 July 1839, *ibid.*; Sunderland & Durham County Herald, 12 July 1839.

- 236 Northern Liberator, 13, 20 July 1839; depositions, Newcastle Spring Assizes 1840, P.R.O., ASSI 45/65; S. M. Phillips to Sir John Fife, 22 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 41/14; Fife to Lord John Russell, 15 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/46, Phillips to Fife, 17 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 41/14; Sir Hedworth Williamson J.P. to Russell, 22 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42.
- 237 Newcastle Journal, 27 July 1839; depositions, Newcastle Spring Assizes 1840, *op. cit.*, Thomas Kidd was arrested for selling the handbill General Strike in Newcastle on 10 August; Sir John Fife to Lord John Russell, 12 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/46, Marshall Fowler to Russell, 14 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42, clerk to the Justices, East Division, Castle Ward, to Russell, 14 August 1839, *ibid.*
- 238 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 12, 13, 14, 18 August 1839, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142; clerk to the Justices, East Division, Castle Ward, to Lord John Russell, 24 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42.
- 239 Northern Liberator, 6 December 1839; Marquis of Normanby, Home Secretary, to Duke of Northumberland, 19 December 1839, Normanby to Earl Talbot, 23 June 1840, P.R.O., HO 41/15.

- 240 Clerks to the Justices, Stockton, to Lord John Russell, 17 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42; Thomas Powell, J.P. Hartlepool, to Russell, 18 July 1839, *ibid.*; S. M. Phillips to Messrs Shippenden and Fawcett J.P.s, Durham City, 18 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 41/14; Richard Pemberton J.P. to Russell, 19 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42, Messrs Fawcett, Fenwick, Spearman J.P.s, to Russell, 20 July 1839, *ibid.*
- 241 Messrs Bainbridge and Spurrier J.P.s, to Home Office, 31 July, 2, 3, 13 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42; clerk of J.P.s, East Division, Castle Ward, to Lord John Russell, 14 August 1839, *ibid.*; S. M. Phillips to Sir John Fife, 24 July, 1 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 41/14.
- 242 General Napier, in command of Northern forces, was never happy about the diffusion of his soldiers. How seriously he considered the pitmen can be seen from his comments of 27 April 1839: "My men should be in three masses, one around Manchester to watch the manufacturers; one around Newcastle-upon-Tyne to watch the colliers; one around Leeds and Hull to watch the other two . . ." (W. Napier, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 22). But for his confidence about professional troops' ability to handle a mob-fight see p. 39, p. 42, p. 60, p. 66, p. 69, p. 90.
- 243 Summary of answers to circular sent to all colliery managers in mid-Durham requesting information on the extent of the Chartist penetration (Messrs Fawcett, Fenwick, Spearman, J.P.s, to Lord John Russell, 20 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42); Charles Bigge J.P. to Russell, 25 July 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/46; Matthew Ridley J.P. to Duke of Northumberland, 15 August 1839, *ibid.*

- 244 Information regarding examination of leading owners, viewers, agents, sent to Home Office, 13 August 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/46.
- 245 Northern Liberator, 29 December 1838.
- 246 Speech of George Binns in Sunderland and Durham County Herald, n.d., in P.R.O., HO 40/42; Northern Liberator, 17 February 1838; quoted in R. F. Wearmouth, Some Working Class Movements of the Nineteenth Century (1948), p. 142.
- 247 Speech of George Williams, in Sunderland and Durham Herald, n.d., in P.R.O., 40/42; Handbill, Address to Middle Classes of England (1839), P.R.O., HO 40/42.
- 248 Northern Political Union, Address to Middle Classes of North of England, and handbill, General Strike, and speech of George Williams in Sunderland and Durham County Herald, n.d., in P.R.O., HO 40/42. For comment on the local leadership of North East Chartism, Williams and Binns in Sunderland, the Irishman Cronin in Bedlington, and the pitmen Redhead, Watson, and Garry, see, clerk to Sunderland J.P.s to Lord John Russell, 11 May 1839, and William Longridge, Bedlington Iron Works, to Russell, 4 June 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42.
- 249 Speech of George Binns, *ibid.*
- 250 *ibid.*
- 251 General Strike, P.R.O., HO 40/42.
- 252 To a meeting of pitmen in the Easington area, Northern Liberator, 15 December 1838.
- 253 Northern Star, 29 December 1838; Sunderland & Durham County

Herald, 12 July 1839.

- 254 Newcastle Journal, 20 July 1839; Northern Star, 9 February, 30 March 1839. Julian Harney, a great hero in the North East, told a meeting there that he "looked to the Women of the North, for they knew that they would propel onward the men of the North", and the Newcastle leader James Ayre "insisted" at the same meeting "that the females were, if possible, still greater victims than the men to the present damnable state of society" (John Grey to Lord Normanby, 16 November 1838, P.R.O., HO 40/46).
- 255 Northern Liberator, 25 May 1839.
- 256 Northern Liberator, 20 July 1839.
- 257 Northern Liberator, 7 July 1838; 30 June 1838. See also Northern Star, 30 June, 7 July 1838.
- 258 Politicization was posed against the pettier forms of traditional 'violence' in the Northern Liberator, 20 July 1839: "Twelve months ago colliers met at the cock pit, or delighted in a dog fight; now, they read the Liberator and Star; the cockpit is lost sight of in the intensity of political feeling and determination".
- 259 Northern Star, 27 April 1839; for Harney's uncompromising theory see London Democrat, 20 April 1839.
- 260 John Grey to Lord Normanby, 16 November 1838, P.R.O., HO 40/46; Northern Star, 29 December 1838; Warnings to the People on Street Warfare, 18 May 1839, P.R.O., HO 40/42.
- 261 Northern Liberator, 29 December 1839; Northern Liberator, 1 December 1839; Newcastle Journal, 27 July 1839; letter from Northern Political Union, 12 July 1839, published in the Charter,

21 July 1839; Newcastle Journal, 25 May, 1 June 1839. Thomas Ainge Devyr's The Odd Book of the Nineteenth Century (New York 1882) makes astonishing claims for the degree of revolutionary military preparation in Newcastle. He says that by November 1838 there were 60,000 pikes made and shafted on Tyneside and Wearside, that in November 1839 the area had sixty-five armed districts ready to follow Frost. Devyr, a renegade Irish intellectual who became corresponding secretary for the NPU before his (hurried) emigration to the United States, is good on detail (13" shells and 5" grenades) but often mistaken on dates and place names. His claims need to be assimilated in a study of North East Chartism more detailed than can be attempted here.

- 262 Speech of Williams, unidentified newspaper report, P.R.O., HO 40/42; Sunderland and Durham County Herald, 12 July 1839; Williams, unidentified newspaper report, op. cit.; W. Napier, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 66.
- 263 For events at Cowpen see newspaper cutting, 23 August 1839, P.L.L., History of the Coal Trade Collection.
- 264 See Tyne Pilot, 23 August 1839.
- 265 For another history of the NMA in addition to Raymond Challinor and Brian Ripley, op. cit., see A. J. Taylor, 'The Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ireland, 1842-48: A Study in the Problem of Integration', Economica, new series, xxii (1955).
- 266 Miners' Advocate, 13 January 1844; NMA Balance Sheet, April 1844, W.C.L., Strike Collection. Some areas of the North East coalfield had larger memberships than the entire memberships of other counties: Yorkshire had 996 members, the Wingate colliery area alone had over 3000 members.

- 267 The NMA's first organ was The Miners' Journal, which first appeared on 21 October 1843 and ran to three issues before its replacement on 2 December 1843 by The Miners' Advocate. By February 1844, three issues of the Journal and six issues of the Advocate had run to 77,000 copies - of which total Northumberland and Durham had taken 49,000 (NMA Balance Sheet, February 1844, W.C.L. Collection).
- 268 Northern Star, 15 January 1842.
- 269 Sir James Graham, to Lord Londonderry, 20 August 1842, 6 June 1843, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 80; James Wemyss, Chief Constable of County Durham, to Lord Londonderry, 23 September 1842, P.R.O., HO 45/246, and Wemyss to Londonderry, 3, 4, 5, 6 March 1843, 13 June 1843, P.R.O., HO 45/349. Thornley was a favourite place for speakers and the village had clearly continued to uphold its Chartist allegiances since 1839. Wemyss' close interest in the Chartist connection demonstrates the serious response of authority to political infiltrations: see his Private Orders, County Constabulary Office, 13 June 1843, P.R.O., HO 45/349.
- Northern Star, 11 February 1843.
- 270 Gateshead Observer, 18 March 1843.
- 271 Challinor and Ripley, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
- 272 Gateshead Observer, 18 March 1843; Elswick NMA, Address to Union, 10 July 1843, W.C.L. Collection; Gateshead Observer, 15 July 1843. For pertinent comment on Messrs O'Connor, Harney, McDouall, and Cooper, and their actions and arguments during the Plug Plot riots of 1842-43 ending "in a flood of mutual recriminations",

see G. Rudé, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

- 273 Challinor and Ripley, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89; the Elswick pamphlet was presented anonymously.
- 274 Northern Star, 24 February 1844.
- 275 NMA Executive Council, Address to Members, 1 March 1844; Address to Members, 6 March 1844, W.C.L. Collection.
- Roberts and Beesley started their independent Miners' Magazine in March 1844 which ran alongside the Advocate as the more didactic of the two. First Beesley and then Roberts had edited the Miners' Journal (from 21 October 1843), before withdrawing due to (claims of) overwork. William Daniels succeeded them as editor of the Journal's successor, the Miners' Advocate.
- 276 Reports in Newcastle Journal, 6 April 1844, and Miners' Advocate 6, 20 April 1844.
- 277 Newcastle Journal, 18 May 1844. See also the same for 13 April and 11 May 1844. On the eve of the strike the executive posts in the union were held by Chartists, none of whom were working miners: William Daniells, editor of the Miners' Advocate, Scots ex-carpet weaver; William Prowting Robers, attorney, solicitor from Bath; William Beesley, lecturer and assistant to Roberts, Accrington ex-chair maker; John Hall, general secretary, South Shields ex-flax dresser; Martin Jude, treasurer, Newcastle publican and ex-coller. The Executive Council was comprised of miners and ex-miners with the exception of Hall: J. Hall (general secretary), M. Jude (treasurer), William Woodworth and John Stokoe. However, as Part II makes clear, it is possible to make too much of official posts - most of the speaking throughout the strike was done by local delegates and lecturers.

- 278 There is evidence that some branches published their own constitutions, see for instance The Bye-Laws of the Miners' Association of Castle Eden, W.C.L. Collection.
- 279 Challinor and Ripley, op. cit., pp. 82-84. At its 1844 peak, the authors estimate annual income to be no more than £8000.
- 280 Gateshead Observer, 27 July 1844.
- 281 Thomas Wood to R. Burdon, 8 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644; unidentified correspondent to Lord Londonderry, 29 July 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 80; Londonderry to Sir James Graham, 21 July 1844, ibid.
- 282 Posters, 30 July, 6 August 1844, W.C.L. Collection; Miners' Advocate, 24 August 1844.
- 283 E. A. Rymer, op. cit., p. 3.
- 284 Miners' Monthly Magazine, June-July 1844. Both the Magazine and the Advocate stress the need for order in every issue.
- 285 See Miners' Advocate, 2 December 1843, 24 February, 21 September 1844. For a fuller account of the Advocate's educational role within a specifically educational context see, Robert Colls, 'Oh Happy English Children!' Coal, Class, and Education in the North East', Past and Present, no. 73 (1976).
- 286 Rev. Duncombe Shafto, vicar of Houghton le Spring, to Lord Londonderry, 7 June 1844, James Wemyss to Londonderry, 12 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644; Duke of Northumberland to Sir James Graham, 2 August 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/646. Northumberland praises all parties, magistrates, special constables, and pitmen who have "shown an endurance worthy

of a better cause". His relief was probably heightened by his neglect. He took little part in the struggle, sending only two letters to the Home Office - one to say it had begun and another to say it had ended. See also in Gateshead Observer for triviality of breaches of the peace (26 April 1844).

- 287 John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 2 July 1843, P.R.O., HO 45/349; Appeal of Wingate Grange Colliery, 4 July 1843, D.C..R.O., D/LO/C-142.
- 288 See Northern Star, 16 September 1843, 27 January 1844, and Miners' Advocate, 24 February, 10 March 1844, and Challinor and Ripley, op. cit., pp. 94-110.
- 289 Summary of letter from Thomas Pratt, Castle Eden colliery, to Miners' Advocate, 4 May 1844.
- 290 Letter from 'GARWIN GRUMBLER', Sacriston colliery, Miners' Advocate, 2 December 1843.
- 291 Miners' Journal, 21 October 1843.
- 292 *ibid.*
- 293 Miners' Advocate, 30 December 1843; song, anon., Owners' Vend and Miners' Union, handbill in W.C.L. Collection.
- 294 Miners' Advocate, 30 December 1843, 24 February 1844.
- 295 Miners' Journal, 4 November 1843, Miners' Advocate, 30 December 1843. This distinction prevailed throughout the strike. As late as 27 July the union's Special Committee pleaded for negotiation with the Coal Trade: "We have not been kindly treated by your agents ... all the kindness we court is to have an interview with our real employers". (Miners' Advocate, 27 July 1844).

- 296 Miners' Advocate, 24 February 1844.
- 297 Miners' Advocate, 13 July 1844.
- 298 See Part I on the structure of the Coal Trade and workings of the Vend.
- 299 The union made class appeal for support to other trades. Miners' Advocate, 18 May 1844 lists support from the following: glass cutters, quarrymen, sail-weavers, chainmakers, brass workers, iron workers, shoe-makers, sawyers, leadminers, coachbuilders, timbermen, boilermakers, carpet-weavers, and mechanics. 'Shopocrats' were pressed to accept reasonable prices and extensive credit on the grounds that as the first and true producers of their 'secondary' wealth, the miners deserved their support (Durham Chronicle, 26 April 1844). For warnings to grocers, Miners' Advocate, 4 May, 13 July 1844; for the grocers' ingratiating advertisements in *ibid.*, 19 October 1844; for fair prices and credit, John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 27 June 1843, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142, James Wemyss to Londonderry, 25 May 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.
- 300 In Buddle's case, his fear of the union had been compounded by its political connections: John Buddle to Lord Londonderry, 28 May 1843, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 142, 11 June 1843, P.R.O., HO 45/349. On 18 May 1844 the Miners' Advocate asked why it was that the owners had refused to negotiate.
- 301 Sir James Graham to Lord Londonderry, 29 March 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 80; Londonderry to Graham, 27 May 1844, George Hunter, viewer, to Londonderry, 27 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. In June the Trade suggested mass evictions but were dissuaded in this course by Londonderry. (Londonderry to Graham, 27 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644).

302 James Wemyss to Lord Londonderry, 25 May 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.

303 He was appointed on 3 February 1844. He wanted the post and was grateful to receive it: "... the cheering Reflection in advancing life That while I trod my early paths of Ambition & publick service under the fostering hand of a Castlereagh, The Climax & Consummation of my Hopes & Desires were consolidated by a Peel" (Lord Londonderry to Sir Robert Peel, 6 February 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 96).

In spite of this Londonderry had to be called from Paris by letters from the Chief Constable, Hindhaugh his head-viewer, and the magistrates, about the impending struggle. (Londonderry to Sir James Graham, 15 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644).

304 Nathaniel Hindhaugh to Lord Londonderry, 17, 23 April 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 148.

305 N. Hindhaugh to Lord Londonderry, 24 April 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 148.

306 Lord Londonderry to Sir James Graham, 29 May, 3 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.

307 By 14 June the strike was described as "very disagreeable" to his concerns (N. Hindhaugh to Lord Londonderry, 14 June 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 148).

308 Reply of Special Committee of the Coal Trade, 8 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.

309 Lord Londonderry to Sir James Graham, 20 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. The Lord Lieutenant had been pressed by local

clergymen, who were shocked at the owners' unconciliatory and "one sided view of the subject" (Rev. Miller, vicar of Pittington, to Lord Londonderry, 3 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644, and similar from Rev. Duncombe Shafto, vicar of Houghton le Spring, 6 June 1844, *ibid.*). By 4 July Hindhaugh reckoned that the strike was doing "incalculable" damage to his concerns (N. Hindhaugh to Londonderry, 4 July 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 148).

On 21 July Londonderry finally bowed to the collapse of whatever hopes his peculiar notion of paternalism had lent: Londonderry to Graham, 21 July 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.

- 310 On the ancient dread of thousands of pitmen intent on destruction the magistrates could not "for a moment consider ourselves secure from violent riot" (R. Burdon, Chairman Durham City J.P.s, to Sir James Graham, 8 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644); S. M. Phillips to Burdon, 12, 16 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 41/18. The major troop detachments were from the 37th Regiment of infantry and the 8th Hussars, under Maj. Gen. Brotherton.
- 311 Chief Constable Wemyss considered his eighty County police inadequate: Chief Constable's Reports presented to County Quarter Sessions, Midsummer, Michaelmas, and Winter 1844, D.C.R.O., Q/S/OB 26. Some of the owners of the more troubled Durham collieries maintained police squads at their own expense - Shiney Row, Castle Eden, Trimdon, Thornley, Coxhoe, Kelloe, and South Hetton (*ibid.*, Winter Session).

The request for a Metropolitan force had originally come from the Tyneside-Northumberland dominated Coal Trade Committee and a group of Durham magistrates who went over the heads of Londonderry and the main body of county magistrates: Resolution,

Coal Trade Committee, 3 June 1844, and, nine Durham magistrates to Sir James Graham, 4 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. Graham rejected this request (to Lord Londonderry, 11, 20 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 41/18) and the request itself incensed Londonderry:

"I do not think a Committee of Agents of Coal Owners in answering more probably for numerous small collieries in Northumberland rather than knowing the state of Durham should change the Decisions & opinions [meeting, 1 June] of the Durham Magistracy".

(Londonderry to Graham, 7 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644).

Thereafter Londonderry forced all of the County magistrates to reconsider, and reject, by fifteen to ten, the request for Metropolitan police (Londonderry to Graham, 19 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644), but his relations with the Durham City chairman Mr Burdon continued to sour (Londonderry to Graham, 12 June, 5 July 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644), as did his relations with the other magistrates when they rejected his proposal for more County police due to "The jealousy between the Agricultural & Colliery Districts & the impossibility of obtaining a fair & satisfactory arrangement as to the assessments between them . . ." (Londonderry to Graham, 19 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644).

It would seem that the Durham magistracy had given up one role as mediators and conciliators without the willingness to commit themselves to their other role as policers.

- 312 Thomas Hood to R. Burdon, 8 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644; Resolution, Coal Trade Committee, *ibid.*; nine Durham magistrates to Sir James Graham, 4 June 1844, *ibid.*; deposition of Thomas Harrison, Northumberland Summer Assizes 1844, P.R.O., ASSI 45/67; James Wemyss to Burdon, 8 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. See also Edward Potter, viewer of South Hetton colliery, to Burdon, 8 April 1844, *ibid.*

- 313 Miners' Advocate, 27 January 1844.
- 314 Sir James Graham to Lord Londonderry, 29 March 1844, D.C.R.O., D/LO/C 80; Graham to Londonderry, 23 July 1844, P.R.O., HO 41/18; S. M. Phillips to Maj. Arbuthnot, 14 June 1844, *ibid.*
- 315 Miners' Advocate, 20 April 1844.
- 316 R. Burdon to Sir James Graham, 12 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. And the following correspondence: E. Potter to Burdon, 8 April; Thomas Wood to Burdon, 9 April; George Hunter to Burdon, 9 April; Thomas Foster to Burdon, 10 April; deposition of Cut hbert Allison, 10 April; M. Seymour to Burdon, 10 April; and statement of Anthony Brydon, 13 April 1844, *ibid.* Some of the intimidation, as at Thornley, was directed against colliery enginemen to stop the water pumps. There was no case of direct action against plant apart from the cutting of railway wire "& many yards of it carried away during the night" at Tanfield (E. Shipperd son to Sir James Graham, 24 April 1844, *ibid.*).
- 317 For recruitment by colliery villages see letters, J. Wemyss to Durham J.P.s, 8 April; Messrs Burdon and Liddell to Sir James Graham, 13 April; Burdon to Graham 22 April; E. Shipperd son to Graham, 24 April; Burdon and Liddell to Graham, and statement of Thomas Forster, 21 May; magistrates of County Durham and Gateshead to Lord Londonderry, 24 May; J. W. Hays, clerk to magistrates, to Graham, 29 May; examination of William Baylie, viewer, 31 May; Messrs Jobling and Bigge to Graham, 15 June; Hays to Graham, 6 July 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.
- For Northumberland, see letters of local magistrates to Home Office, 20 April, 1, 2, 27, 28 May 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/646; and Messrs

- Carr and Lorraine to Graham, 14 May 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.
(The latter concerned Bedlingtonshire which, although 'geographically' inside Northumberland, remained until after the strike technically a part of County Durham.)
- 318 George Hunter to Lord Londonderry, 30 May 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644; at Stormont Main colliery, Gateshead, Durham Chronicle, 6 July 1844, reports of Durham Midsummer Quarter Sessions. Most of the pitmen in court were young hewers in their twenties and thirties.
- 319 At Heaton colliery, depositions of Thomas Harrison and George Steel, Northumberland Summer Assizes, 1844, P.R.O., ASSI 45/67; Durham Chronicle, 6 July 1844; depositions of Richard Clough, James Defty, Nicholas Wearmouth, Stephen Bones, and William Craddock, 13 February 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.
- 320 Newcastle Journal, 11 May, 1 June 1844; letter from Rebeckah to Thomas Johnson, Castle Eden colliery, reprinted by Durham Chronicle, April 1844, in W.C.L. Collection; and letter from Swing to fillers at North Hetton, 6 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.
- 321 Durham Chronicle, 6 July 1844. At Byker, blacklegs scampered to work under a hail of offal from fishwives (Newcastle Courant, 19 April 1844).
- 322 Durham Chronicle, 6 July 1844; Newcastle Courant, 19 April 1844.
- 323 Durham Chronicle, 6 July 1844.
- 324 Thomas Wood to R. Burdon, 8 April 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.
- 325 Durham Chronicle, 6 July 1844.

- 326 Durham Chronicle, 6 July 1844.
- 327 R. Burdon to Sir James Graham, 9 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. "The Coal Trade Committee have . . . determined not to turn the men out of their homes, 'en masse', but by getting hold of the delegates and forcing them away from their Dwellings, Examples will be first made of the few, the most mischievous" (Lord Londonderry to Graham, 27 May 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644). By 8 June the Coal Trade had come to the conclusion that it would not retreat on wage reductions, that it would not argue over fines and weights, and that the real battle was over the men's right to have a union - which they absolutely rejected (Reply of the Special Committee of the Coal Trade, 8 June 1844, *ibid.*)
- 328 J. Wemyss to Lord Londonderry, 9 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. The Newcastle Journal was adept at fanning the flames by extensive reporting of the influx of strangers, with liberal (and inaccurate) comment on how easily they could do the work and how quickly they could master the pitman's skills: Newcastle Journal, 18 May, 1, 8 June 1844.
- 329 George Hunter to Lord Londonderry, 12 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. See also letters of Londonderry to Sir James Graham, 20 June 1844, and Hunter to Londonderry, 27 June 1844, *ibid.*
- 330 Information, complaints, and resolutions of various owners and agents, 5, 6 June 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644.
- 331 Rev. J. Miller to Lord Londonderry, 19 June 1844; Coal Trade Office, Circulars, 13, 20, 27 July 1844; Londonderry to Sir James Graham, 21, 29 July 1844, P.R.O., HO 45/644. The Coal Trade Committee, concerned at their apparent lack of success, considered

printing and distributing a report of the trial of some Sheffield rioters who in July had been sentenced to fifteen years transportation (Hugh Taylor, for the Committee, to Londonderry, 24 July 1844, *ibid.*).

- 332 Easington Union correspondence 1834-35, letter, Rev. Liddell to Commissioners, 24 April 1844, D.C.R.O., MH 12/3052.
- 333 Newcastle Journal, 11 May 1844; Easington Union, Mr Hawley to Commissioners, 9 May 1844, D.C.R.O., MH 12/3052. In June an eighteen-year old pitman from Elswick colliery died from starvation: "Many are reduced to so weakly a state that there is little chance of their ever being again able to undergo the fatigue of a days work". (Newcastle Journal, 22 June 1844).
- 334 Miners' Advocate, 24 August 1844.
- 335 Miners' Advocate, 16 November 1844.
- 336 Miners' Advocate, 11 January, 8 February 1845; Durham Chronicle, 4 April 1845; The Mining Districts, P.P. 1846, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
- 337 Speech of George Binns, *op. cit.*, P.R.O., HO 40/42.
- 338 Miners' Advocate, 24 August 1844.
- 339 T. Burt and A. Watson, Thomas Burt, M.P., D.C.L., Pitman & Privy Councillor (1924), p. 301.

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