Urban associations: class, culture and the enlightened spirit, Derby c.1700-c.1900

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

September 2018

Abstract

Essentially an urban biography, this thesis is a social history of Derby's transformation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It emphasises the distinctive status of Derby as a county town and examines the synergy of its associative culture, sustained economic growth, thriving knowledge economy and the influence of both elite and plebeian leadership.

In analysing the town's industrial revolution and socio-cultural evolution, the thesis addresses the relative neglect of the historical literature in identifying Derby as a nationally important urban centre. In so doing, new light is shed on the timing and nature of the industrial revolution and adds to the debate on the role played by urban associations in shaping class identity and what Joel Mokyr has referred to as the 'enlightened economy'.

Issues relating to hierarchies and associations, aspirations and ambitions, are at the heart of the study. The paradoxical characteristics of the associational world are highlighted in promoting both social cohesion and fragmentation. The nature of power, control and self-determination is explored within the context of industrialisation and the town's cultural awakening.

Wealth creation and social emulation, patronage and the corporate culture of the Midland Railway are shown to be significant factors in forging a 'creative community' of industrialists, intellectuals and artists. A strong bourgeois elite created an 'urban renaissance' and a 'knowledge economy', whilst union action, co-operation and an emerging radical agenda forged a self-determined and politically ambitious workforce. The challenges of industrialisation and social change were met through the collegiality of vibrant and diverse associations. This resulted in the 'little State' of Derby rising up the urban hierarchy to become a provincial capital.

Word count: 99,912

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Acknowledgements

My thanks to Professor John Beckett and Associate Professor Richard Gaunt for their patient support, challenging conversations and unstinting guidance.

Thanks are also due to Chris Wrigley, Emeritus Professor of Modern British History at Nottingham University, for the opportunity of contributing to the Arkwright Society conference in 2017 and subsequently being published in *The Industrial Revolution and Industrialisation Revisited: Cromford, the Derwent Valley and Beyond*.

This thesis is dedicated to Barbara.

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Abbreviations

DLSL Derby Local Studies Library

DM Derby Mercury

DRO Derbyshire Record Office

TNA The National Archives

Chapter 1: Aims, historiography and methodology

Introduction

This thesis aims to explore the growth of Derby's associational world and its inter-relationship with commerce and industry and an emerging class identity. The study covers some two hundred years in which the socio-economic, cultural and political landscape of the town was transformed by the industrial revolution, population growth and urbanisation. Within this transformational urban context, the thesis explores how the town's elite participated in a range and variety of institutions, societies and civic committees. The study counterbalances this by examining the associational world of the workers and the impact of crowd action, co-operation, trade unionism and leisure activities. It is argued that the political and cultural elite throughout the period saw themselves as the ambassadors and representatives of the town and their associations reflected this status; the workers' associative culture, on the other hand, tended to be at a more parochial level, very much centred on the neighbourhood pub, chapel or church.[1]

The thesis explores the paradoxical characteristics of associations in promoting communal well-being and solidarity, whilst having the inherent potential to create division.[2] This potential for social fragmentation is explored through the prism of town and neighbourhood, bourgeois and popular culture, trade disputes and the politics of Chartism. The social harmony of 1850 to 1890, the 'age of equipoise', is explored through the lens of leisure and recreation, religion, and the corporate culture of the Midland Railway — an era of social

[1] D.J.V. Jones, *Before Rebecca; Popular Protest in Wales, 1793-1835* (1973), p.32 (place of publication is London unless otherwise stated); C. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1982), p.180; M. Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester, 2007), pp.21-2.
[2] See P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000), pp.470-91.

pragmatism and rapprochement, which emerged after the years of strife from 1830 to 1850.[3]

Fundamentally, the synergy of economic development, the growth of an associative culture, and the evolution of class identity are explored within the contested space of urban living.[4] Consideration is given to economic and political struggle and an emerging sense of social compromise. An evolving sense of identity and empowerment for both the urban elite and the workers are key outcomes of Derby's associations. This introductory chapter provides a historiographical context and research framework by exploring the characteristics and the causes of the industrial revolution and its subsequent timing in relation to traditional interpretations and to what Mokyr has referred to as the 'enlightened economy', based on knowledge, intellect and rational ideas of the industrial world.[5] This is followed by a focus on the development of a consumer market and the growth of a leisure economy. The potential outcomes of the industrial revolution, in terms of a class perspective and cultural diffusion, complete the historiographical background.

The study sheds new light on the national importance of Derby. It is argued that the town's associative culture was key to an understanding of its industrial growth and class formation. Such an approach breaks new ground in the history of Derby during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The early works of A.W. Davison and W.A. Richardson present a generalised picture of the town's history and R.S. Fitton and A.P. Wadsworth's book on the Strutts and the Arkwrights, whilst useful, is very specific to the cotton industry.[6] Local historians, such as Roy Christian, Harry Butterton and Maxwell Craven, have provided worthwhile studies and Evelyn Lord has written a recent account

[3] W.L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise* (1964); M. Hewitt (ed.), *An Age of Equipoise? Reassessing mid-Victorian Britain* (2000); D. Cannadine, *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom, 1800-1906* (2017) refers to 1852-65 as the years of 'equipoise and angst', chapter 7, pp.288-335.
[4] D. Smith, *Conflict and Compromise: Class Formation in English Society, 1830-1914* (1982).
[5] J. Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1850* (2011).
[6] A.W. Davison, *Derby: its rise and progress* (Wakefield, 1970); W.A. Richardson, *Citizen's Derby* (1949); R.S. Fitton and A.P. Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights, 1758-1830: a study of the early factory system* (Manchester, 1958).

entitled *Derby Past*.[7] The national literature has tended, however, to ignore Derby's contribution to the industrial revolution and social identity. The town's low profile in the historical literature may well be the result of Nottingham's high profile as the 'capital' of the East Midlands. John Beckett has suggested, for instance, that 'Derby tended to take second place to Nottingham as the regional capital'.[8] Richard Arkwright and his cotton mills in Manchester and Cromford have overshadowed the achievements of the Strutt family in Derby and Milford. Although Jedediah Strutt was a financial backer and early partner of Arkwright, he shunned the limelight and, unlike his friend, was rather reclusive. Allegations of industrial espionage and stolen inventions, resulting in the patent trials of the 1780s, gave Arkwright national notoriety and took attention away from the achievements of the Strutt family and Derby itself.[9] The balance has been redressed somewhat by more recent works by John Beckett, George Revill and Paul Elliott.[10]

The study is timely. Niall Ferguson's latest book, *The Square and the Tower*, highlights the importance of social and commercial associations and networks in relation to hierarchical structures in the struggle for global power. A central theme of his book is the tension between associations and networks, and hierarchical organisations. His title, based on a visit to Siena, symbolises 'two forms of human organisation' — the tower (*Torre del Mangia*), which represents secular power; and the *Palazzo Pubblico*, which symbolises a public space used for all kinds of informal human interaction.[11] According to Ferguson, associations and networking 'have always been more important in

[7] R. Christian, *Derby in the Making: the development of a city* (Coventry, 1990); H. Butterton, *Victorian Derby: a portrait of life in a 19th-century manufacturing town* (Derby, 2006); M. Craven, *John Whitehurst of Derby: Clockmaker and Scientist, 1713-88* (Ashbourne,1996) and *An Illustrated History of Derby* (Derby, 2007); E. Lord, *Derby Past* (Chichester, 1996).
[8] J.V. Beckett, *The East Midlands from AD 1000* (1988), p.225.
[9] See R.S. Fitton, *The Arkwrights: Spinners of Fortune* (Manchester,1989), pp.91-145.
[10] Beckett, *East Midlands*, pp.189-298; J.V. Beckett and J.E. Heath, 'When was the Industrial Revolution in the East Midlands?' *Midland History*, 13 (1988), pp.77-94; G. Revill, 'Railway Derby: Occupational Community, Paternalism and Corporate Culture 1850-1890', *Urban History*, 28 (2001), pp.378-404; P.A. Elliott, *The Derby Philosophers: science and culture in English urban society, 1700-1850* (Manchester, 2009).
[11] N. Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower: Networks, Hierarchies and the Struggle for Global Power* (2017), p.425.

history than most historians, fixated as they have been on hierarchical organisations such as states, have allowed'.[12] Emma Griffin, likewise, has stressed the significance of the market place in relation to the 'urban renaissance' and its importance as a public space. Historians, she argues, should 'look beyond the smooth words penned by those in power and consider the messy and disordered spaces themselves'. Whilst urban enterprise certainly led to an improving civic life, the use of public spaces, such as the market place, resulted in social division and conflict. Competition for control of urban spaces was a recurring theme of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Derby. As Griffin emphasises, 'the urban renaissance was not the outcome of a one-way process of improvement, but an uneven and complex process that proceeded through compromise and conflict.'[13] Complementing these recent additions to the historiography was the recognition of the industrial heritage of Derby and the Derwent Valley as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2001. This was followed in 2017 by a successful lottery bid of £9m to provide a range of educational facilities at Derby's Silk Mill, 'the first great landmark of the industrial age'.[14] This study analyses the town's contribution to the industrial revolution and, also, recognises the significant influence that elite and plebeian associations played in industrialisation, the evolution of class identity, and the use of power.

The Industrial Revolution

Two broad interpretations of the industrial revolution are examined. The core questions are: what were the factors which underpinned the causes of this industrial transformation; and when precisely did the 'revolution' occur? One perspective tends to focus on the speed and rapidity of economic growth and technological innovation, which resulted in a detrimental impact on working

[12] Ibid., p.xxv.
[13] E. Griffin, 'The Urban Renaissance and the Mob: Rethinking Civic Improvement over the Long Eighteenth-Century', in D. Feldman and J. Lawrence (eds.), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011), pp.54-73.
[14] *Derby Evening Telegraph*, 5 October 2017; J. Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends who made the Future* (2002), p.9.

conditions, standards of living and social divisions in society. The second interpretation takes a more evolutionary approach by stressing slower and more gradual economic development and concentrating on longer-term social and cultural, rather than economic, perspectives.[15] The traditional views of the industrial revolution frame the first section that follows; subsequent sections explore social and cultural aspects.

Traditional interpretations

Contemporary observers of the industrialising urban landscape of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had no doubt of the dramatic and radical changes to society; they were disturbing and shocking. Patrick Colquhoun, for example, in 1815, suggested that the speed of change 'exceeds all credibility' and that 'it was impossible to contemplate the progress of manufactures in Great Britain within the last thirty years without wonder and astonishment'.[16] Grave concern was also expressed about the unwelcome changes in social relations and the potential for class conflict in the industrial society. Thomas Carlyle observed in 1829 'how wealth has more and more increased, and at the same time gathered itself more and more into masses, strangely altering the old relations, and increasing the distance between rich and poor'.[17] Writing to Lord Melbourne in 1834, Peter Gaskell described in cataclysmic terms the emergence of a dual society desperately divided by wealth, living conditions and dire work relationships. The situation was so desperate that he declared that 'the peace and well-being of the kingdom are at stake'.[18] Marx viewed the industrial revolution as marking a major transformation of the way in which goods and services were produced and distributed. A move away from local to commercial markets, the divorce of the workforce from the land, and the rise

[15] For a comprehensive overview of the causes of the industrial revolution, see D. Cannadine, 'The Present and the Past in the English Industrial Revolution 1880-1980'*, Past and Present,* 103 (1984), pp.131-72; E. Griffin, *A Short History of the Industrial Revolution* (Basingstoke, 2010); see also E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (2014).
[16] P. Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Wealth, Power and Resources of the British Empire* (1814), p.68.
[17] T. Carlyle, 'Signs of the Times' (1829), quoted in A.H.R. Ball, *Selections from Carlyle* (1929), p.107.
[18] Quoted by A. Briggs in 'The Language of Class in Early Nineteenth-Century England', in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds.), *Essays in Labour History* (1960), p.63.

of a proletariat, created a division of labour and its greater control by the capitalist employers. For Marx, the new mode of production was intimately connected with a radically changing society. Relations of production were increasingly based on a cash nexus between capitalist employers and wage-dependent employees. The rise of a new bourgeoisie of industrial employers resulted in a major change in government, in the social hierarchy, in class perceptions and in political alignments and actions.[19]

In the later nineteenth century, Toynbee judged the industrial revolution as 'sudden and violent…a period as disastrous and as terrible as any through which the nation ever passed'. His thoughts echoed closely those of Marx. It was a period of stark and dramatic contrasts with a great increase of wealth into the hands of the capitalists at the expense of the workers, resulting in social alienation and division. Toynbee saw a significant break in the economy around 1760, followed by a period of intensive industrialisation to 1850, a time during which the old order 'was suddenly broken in pieces by the mighty blows of the steam engine and the power loom.' His interpretation stressed the rise of the competitive market society, urbanisation and the rapid growth of population, which was made possible by increased productivity. He saw the substitution of the factory for the domestic system arising directly from mechanical innovation, which he argued was a central element of the revolution. The 1760s saw a significant cluster of mechanical innovations, including the invention of the rotary steam engine and new spinning and metallurgical technologies.[20]

This strong sense of the unique and radical nature of industrialisation and the legitimacy of ascribing a relatively precise start — the late eighteenth century — was shared by early twentieth-century historians, such as Mantoux and the Hammonds. Exploitation and hardship of the labouring poor were recurrent

[19] M. Hendrich, *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital* (New York, 2012).
[20] A. Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution of the Eighteenth Century in England* [1884] (1920). Quotations are from p.31; see also D.S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe, 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge, 1969).

themes in their work.[21] Rostow's five-stage model for economic growth identified the fundamental and profound break in the economy (stage 3) between 1783 and 1802, a period of high growth sectors, such as canal construction and textiles.[22] Hobsbawm also identified the 1780s as the decade epitomising a 'sudden sharp, almost vertical turn upwards', which marked the economic take-off, which resulted in unemployment, poor urban conditions for the workers and the political suppression of discontent.[23]

Whilst Schumpeter accepted Toynbee's idea of a clustering of inventions as a central element of the industrial revolution, he rejected the view that this was a unique and 'one-off' event, which transformed the economy. What was significant for Schumpeter was the cyclical nature of economic and social change, epitomised by long waves of development (of 30-50 years), in which the upturns marked the clustering of innovations, sparked by dynamic, risk-taking entrepreneurs. One major 'clustering' focused, for example, around James Watt's engine (1760s-1770s), but there was another wave around the 1830s-1840s (with railways) and a third in the 1870s-1880s associated with steel-making innovations.[24] Kondratieff's economic cycles of fifty years were marked by waves of technological innovations, which stimulated trade and investment for several decades before the system settled down to await the next wave. The industrial revolution was one of the most significant periods of innovation marking the 'crest' of a wave, but he denied its unique status as a disruptive and decisive period of transformation and recognised the wider repercussions of social and cultural life.[25]

The work of Schumpeter and Kondratieff foreshadowed the prevailing interpretations of research in the 1980s, which emphasised a much slower and

[21] P. Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century* (1928); J.L. and B. Hammond, *The Rise of Modern Industry* (1925).
[22] W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, 1960).
[23] E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (1962), p.28. See also M.W. Flinn, *Origins of the Industrial Revolution* (1966); R.M. Hartwell, 'Introduction', in Hartwell (ed.), *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England* (1967).
[24] J.A. Schumpeter, *The Theory of Economic Development* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934).
[25] N.D. Kondratieff, 'The Long Waves in Economic Life', *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 17 (1935), pp.105-15. See also R. Lloyd-Jones, 'The First Kondratieff: The long wave and the British

more gradual economic growth.[26] For some historians, this slower economic growth was linked to one of the dominant interpretations of the industrial revolution — that of the triumph of the bourgeoisie in economic and political life. It has been argued that Britain's apparent lack of commitment to a growth mentality could be traced back to the industrial revolution when the patrician land-based society never gave way to the new industrialism. The power and influence of industrialists, though increasing, failed to gain the ascendancy over the landed elite. Power remained in the hands of the landed aristocracy and metropolitan finance; gentlemanly capitalism prevailed, and the industrial revolution was viewed as a minor deviation in a gradual and continuous process. Indeed, the middle class took shape during the nineteenth century 'in union with the aristocracy, not in opposition to it, thereby perpetuating the consensual acceptance of aristocratic values and leadership'.[27] Indeed, Cain and Hopkins have argued that it is impossible to understand the nature and evolution of the British economy without considering the growth of the financial sector, centred on London, which played a crucial role in shaping British economic development. This represented a shift in emphasis from seeing provincial manufacturers as the driving force of the industrial revolution.[28]

The whole period from the industrial revolution to the decline of British economic supremacy was a transitory episode between one rural based, rentier society and another: between the old and a new feudalism.[29] Britain had a flirtation with industrialisation and factory culture, but the industrial revolution was 'a flash in the pan'. Thus, in the late 1980s, the logical extension of the 'limits to growth school' replaced the notion of Rostow's fifth stage of

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Industrial Revolution', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 20 (1990), pp.581-605; see also T. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution 1760-1830* (Oxford, 1948).

[26] See, especially, N.F.R. Crafts, *British Economic Growth during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1985), ch.1; Crafts, 'British Economic Growth, 1700-1831: A Review of the Evidence', *Economic History Review*, 36 (1983), pp.177-99.

[27] J.V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (1986), pp.2-13, quotation on p.12; see also pp.359-73, which explore the social leadership of the aristocracy.

[28] P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Overseas Expansion: The Old Colonial System, 1688-1850', *Economic History Review*, 39 (1986), pp.501-25.

[29] J. Bellini, *Rule Britannia: A Progress Report for Domesday 1986* (1981), pp.5, 6, 63.

economic development of 'take-off into self-sustained growth'.[30] Not all historians, however, have accepted this perspective, most notably, perhaps, Berg and Hudson. They also expressed reservations about Craft's macro-accounting framework. Berg and Hudson regretted the analytical shift away from that of class formation and consciousness, typified by E.P. Thompson and John Foster, and insisted that the social and cultural foundations of the industrial revolution rested on 'much more than conventional measures of industrial or economic performance.'[31] A recent article by Emma Griffin has emphasised that 'cultural change lay at the heart of Britain's industrial transition'. It was, indeed, 'the key to understanding the social distribution of the nation's newfound wealth'.[32]

The 'enlightened economy'

This shift to the social and cultural facets of the industrial revolution leads to the second part of the introduction. The fundamental questions here focus on the impact of an enlightened economy. To what extent did aspiration and social emulation create public sociability and an associative culture from which emerged a nascent middle class? What influence did the urban elite have on wealth creation, public sociability, an associative culture, and class identity? Over the past thirty years, historical research linking economic growth and socio-cultural development, each 'supporting the other', has come to the fore.[33] Mokyr, to take one notable example, has argued that the Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution laid the foundations for the social and intellectual elements of the industrial revolution. His connecting concept of the 'industrial enlightenment' suggests that material progress and economic growth could be achieved through increasing useful knowledge and making it accessible to

[30] See P. Anderson, 'Figures of Descent', *New Left Review,* 161 (1987), pp.20-77; M.J. Weiner, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge, 1981).
[31] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1991 edition); J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (1974); M. Berg and P. Hudson, 'Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review,* New Series, 45 (1992), pp.24-50.
[32] E. Griffin, 'Diets, Hunger and Living Standards during the British Industrial Revolution', *Past and Present*, 239 (2018), p.111.
[33] R.C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, 2009), p.11.

those involved in the production process. He has identified three major factors that resulted in the favourable economic climate for growth that emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century. The first was the demise of the 'rent-seekers' (local notables, corrupt officials) — people who 'pillaged and plundered', rather than engaging themselves in economically productive activities. The second factor was the triumph of laissez-faire and the free market and the third was the drive to expand the accumulation of useful knowledge and direct it to practical use.[34]

Mokyr declared that 'the century after Waterloo was not the age of Enlightenment but it was an enlightened age'.[35] This 'enlightened age' epitomised a complex interaction between what people believed and knew, on the one hand, and their economic actions on the other:

> Under the right circumstances, as they occurred in eighteenth-century Britain, this interaction produced a positive feedback loop that created the greatest sea-change in economic history since the advent of agriculture — the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of sustained economic growth.[36]

The driving force behind this economic transformation was the intellectual rather than material forces. Mokyr's 'vital few' innovators made the technological breakthroughs in steam, cotton, iron, porcelain and civil engineering. The growth of a thriving associative culture provided a positive feedback loop between intellectuals and producers, the 'savants' and the 'fabricants', through which a 'knowledge economy' emerged, promoted by natural philosophers, manufacturers and professionals. These 'vital few' met in their philosophical societies, dissenting academies and Masonic lodges where they exchanged ideas and information with itinerant lecturers. Savants

[34] Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, pp.7-10; see also Mokyr, *The Gifts of Athena: Historical Origins of the Knowledge Economy* (Princeton, 2002).
[35] Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p.487.
[36] Ibid., pp.2-3.

and fabricants did not come from the working class — 'the Industrial Enlightenment was not…a mass phenomenon…it was a minority affair confined to a fairly thin sliver of a technological elite of well-trained and often literate men'.[37] Mokyr's 'enlightened age' and McCloskey's 'age of innovation' encouraged influential entrepreneurs to share ideas, establish codes of behaviour and forge shared values about commercial life and enterprise. It was a widespread shift in public opinion about the life and activities of these entrepreneurs, their technological innovations and their commercial enterprise, which led to a distinctive middle class culture based on 'bourgeois dignity'.[38]

Porter has referred to this shift in public opinion as a 'revolution in consciousness', epitomised by enlightened values and rational politeness.[39] His upbeat comment encapsulates the excitement of eighteenth-century enlightened ideas: 'The times seemed pregnant not just with change but with improvement, and halcyon days beckoned: would not trade, industry, enterprise and the new science spell a sparkling contrast to all that was *passé*, vulgar or rustic?'[40] Porter's vital few were the 'thrusting achievers', who were fascinated by science, keen to innovate, and dedicated to the diffusion of rational knowledge — be it practical, artistic or intellectual; they promoted and gave legitimacy to the pursuit of materialism and leisure.[41] This was not, of course, a new social theory. David Hume, writing in the eighteenth century, suggested that economic and social progress was closely associated with the 'middling rank of men' (the vital few), who developed urban associations in which 'industry, knowledge, and humanity' were 'linked together by an indissoluble chain'. These 'middling rank of men' took full advantage of their

[37] Ibid., p.57.
[38] See D.N. McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World* (Chicago, 2010); H. Clark, 'Review of Deidrie McCloskey's Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World', *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics*, 4 (2011), pp.83-8.
[39] R. Porter, 'Science, provincial culture and public opinion in Enlightenment England' in P. Borsay (ed.), *The Eighteenth-Century Town 1688-1820* (1990), p.260; R. Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (2000), p.42.
[40] Ibid., p.34.
[41] Ibid., p.47.

urban experience; they loved to 'receive and communicate knowledge, to shew their wit or breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture…particular clubs and societies are everywhere formed'.[42]

These clubs and other sociable institutions were a significant part of enlightened society and what Coleridge referred to as a 'clerisy' of 'learned and literary people wielding cultural authority'.[43] They nurtured what Habermas has referred to as the 'public sphere' — a world of bourgeois public discourse, debate, and interaction, of 'public sociability' — which contrasted with the state and private spheres.[44] Increasingly, associations dominated urban social spaces and had a significant impact on the emergence of a new, more sophisticated society.[45] Clark has gone so far as to argue that associations both 'exemplified and underpinned' the status of the most dynamic centres in the urbanising world — those with good communications and a substantial elite of landed, professional and commercial groups. Local circumstances, such as the role of individuals, the needs of different social groups, and economic trends, determined the number and nature of clubs and societies in any one town.[46] The shared codes of behaviour, social aspirations and collective action of an emerging middle class became closely identified with membership of these associations. Networks brought together the 'middling sort' by promoting social solidarity and status recognition, which appealed to the gentleman amateur, to professionals, such as medical men and lawyers, and to 'an ethic of politeness'.[47] Jacob was left in no doubt about the complex nature of associations and their symbiotic relationship with culture and the material

[42] D. Hume, 'Of Refinement in the Arts', *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* [1752] (1825), p.161.
[43] D. Cannadine, *Victorious Century,* p.321.
[44] J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. T. Burger and F. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass., 1989).
[45] P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), chapters 2 and 3; M. Reed, 'The Transformation of Urban Space, 1700-1840' in P. Clark (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History*, vol. 2: *1540-1840* (Cambridge 2000), pp.641-72.
[46] Clark, *Clubs and Societies*, p.93; J. Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Associations and the Middling Sort', in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People* (Basingstoke, 1994), pp.84-112.
[47] Porter, 'Science, provincial culture' in Borsay (ed.), *The Eighteenth-Century Town*, p.256; Clark, *British Clubs and Societies,* pp.94-6; D. Sunderland, *Social Capital, Trust and the Industrial Revolution, 1780-1880* (2007), pp.50-84.

applications of knowledge. She suggested that they were 'the work of human beings encoded with values, entwined within social networks, decorated with symbols of status, people whose ideas are glorified or forbidden by religious beliefs and practices'.[48] Jose Harris has noted that Victorian society was 'characterised by an immensely vigorous associational and reformist culture: by groups of people who regularly came together to improve, reform, rationalize, and revolutionize social institutions and to bring them into harmony with the perceived requirements of the modern world'.[49]

The upsurge in new clubs and societies after the 1780s ran parallel to the major changes affecting the economy and society due to accelerating industrialisation, population and urbanisation. The creation of these associational and social spaces promoted the exchange of ideas and information, from which ideologies were developed.[50] Morris's research into voluntary societies and associations in Leeds was 'the basis for the formation of a middle class identity across the wide status ranges and the fragmented political and religious structure of the potential members of that class'.[51] Koditschek's study of Bradford adds further support to the view that voluntary associations were 'designed as vehicles to meet the social and political needs of the emerging bourgeoisie'.[52]

Consumerism and the commercialisation of leisure

If associations provided the social spaces for the 'middling sort' to meet, acquire status, and participate in polite and genteel society, then it was consumerism and its offshoot, the leisure economy, which symbolised middle class spending and recreation. The following paragraphs, therefore, seek

[48] M. Jacob, *Scientific Culture and the Making of the Industrial West* (Oxford, 1997), p.1.
[49] J. Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (1993), p.36.
[50] R.J. Morris, 'Clubs, societies and organisations', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, vol. 3, *Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.419-30.
[51] R.J. Morris, 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850: An Analysis', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), p.96.
[52] T. Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society: Bradford, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.293- 4; N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1982), pp.217-30.

explanations for the growth of the capitalist economy by reference to the social and cultural elements of the thriving consumer market of the eighteenth century. Indeed, according to Allen, the desire for specialist consumer goods provided 'a cultural basis for the Industrial Revolution'. He supports Jan de Vries' thesis that the success of the economy may well have been due to the 'industrious revolution' of harder work and more vigorous entrepreneurship to satisfy the desire for consumer goods; the high wage economy gave the workers, shopkeepers and proto-industrialists the cash to turn their dreams into reality.[53]

This was not a new idea. As early as 1767, Sir James Steuart's 'aspirational' theory linked a thriving economy with ingenuity, taste and fashion, and a consumer society. He noted that:

> Where industry is made to flourish, the free hands…will be employed in useful manufactures, which, being refined upon by the ingenious, will determine what is called the standard of taste; this taste will increase consumption.[54]

This view resonates with Perkin's levels of profundity in explaining the socio-cultural causes of the industrial revolution which, he suggests, were initiated by invention and technology, followed by a laissez-faire philosophy, which gave an impetus to industrial innovation. His third level of causation was intellectual — a spirit of scientific curiosity — which led to improvements in industrial and agricultural developments. At the deepest level lay the religious causes, particularly those of the Methodist and Dissenting entrepreneurs, who instilled in their children a 'need to achieve' and the philosophy of self-

[53] Allen, *British Industrial Revolution*, pp.13, 51; J. De Vries, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution', *Journal of Economic History*, 54 (1994), pp.249-70; *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008).
[54] Sir J. Steuart, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, ed. A.F. Skinner, N. Kobayashi and H. Mizuta (1998), pp.53-4.

improvement.[55] At the core of Perkin's causal framework was the social structure of the hierarchical pyramid. At its apex was the aristocracy, whose power rested on property and patronage; at the bottom were the landless, but wage-earning, labourers. Patronage, referred to as 'vertical friendship' by Perkin, resulted in a top-down series of social and commercial interactions, which might include one's relations, members of the household, political helpers and 'men of worth.' What differentiated eighteenth-century social structure in England from the continent was the 'size and ubiquity of the groups in between, the long, unbroken chains of the middle ranks'.[56] This created a rich associational world, based on patronage, paternalism, deference, status, and a desire for social betterment, which manifested itself in social emulation and imitation of the spending habits of one's betters. In 1763, the *British Magazine* commented that 'the present rage of imitating the manners of high-life hath spread itself so far among the gentlefolks of lower-life, that in a few years we shall probably have no common people at all'.[57] Social snobbery was endemic in this finely graded social structure. The wealthy indulged themselves in a spending spree on houses, furniture, porcelain and silver, as well as clothing and draperies. 'On such luxuries', Perkin suggested, 'industrial revolutions are based'.[58]

Indeed, the third quarter of the eighteenth century was a watershed in the consumption of manufactured goods. McKendrick has argued that this period ushered in a conjunction of rising incomes and rising desires and led to a 'consumer revolution'. Like Perkin, he argues that the population was spurred on by social emulation and class competition in the 'pursuit of novelty' and the 'hypnotic effects of fashion', so much so that it promoted 'an unprecedented propensity to consume: unprecedented in the extent to which it penetrated the lower reaches of society and unprecedented in its impact on the

[55] H.J Perkin, 'The Social Causes of the Industrial Revolution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 18 (1968), pp.123-43.
[56] Ibid., p.128.
[57] *British Magazine*, iv (1763), p.417, quoted in Perkin, 'Social Causes', p.140.
[58] Perkin, 'Social Causes', p.130.

economy'.[59] The pursuit of genteel status and the acquisition of polite manners went some way to uniting the middling ranks, members of which, Langford argued, had a 'limitless appetite…for social status, as powerful a motive to enterprise and industry as the lust for worldly goods'. There was a great desire for 'acceptance into that class of gentlemen and ladies'.[60]

Genteel cultural and leisure activities such as theatre-going, musical concerts, and art provided an important *entrée* into this polite and fashionable society. Such activities gave the concept of leisure an additional dimension — it was not only a consumer product, but also a recreation.[61] This cultural capital interacted with economic, political and social structures and, in tandem with financial capital, was a means of influence and control, which divided social groups.[62] As well as this connection with power and class, cultural capital was nurtured in the nineteenth century by close ties between religion and recreation. Reid suggests that 'much church-going could be defined from a utilitarian point of view as having the essential social qualities of other leisure-time pursuits, namely their voluntary, non-remunerative, pleasure-seeking nature'.[63]

Historians have tended to argue that leisure was a product of the industrial revolution, a time when it became recognisable, and when industrialisation forged separate spheres of work and recreation.[64] Indeed, interpretations of leisure tend to reflect the contrasting interpretations of the industrial revolution — those of a fundamental and radical discontinuity or a process of evolution and continuity. Burke has noted that 'implicitly or explicitly, most recent work

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[59] N. McKendrick, 'Consumer Revolution in Eighteenth Century England' in N.B. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth Century England* (1982), p.11.
[60] P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p.65.
[61] J.K. Walton, 'Towns and Consumerism', in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,:1840-1950*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 2000), pp.723-4.
[62] For a comprehensive overview of leisure, see P. Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500* (Basingstoke, 2006), especially pp.17-41, 74-106.
[63] D.A. Reid, 'Playing and Praying', in M. Daunton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History*, p.745.
[64] J. Clarke and C. Critcher, *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain* (Basingstoke, 1985), p.58; P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (1978), p.4.

[on leisure] has been based on one central hypothesis, that of a fundamental discontinuity or great divide between pre-industrial and industrial society'. He has, however, questioned the viability of the 'discontinuity thesis' by identifying a series of 'discourses' (educational, legal and political, theological-moral, and medical), and sources of evidence, which included courtesy guides, paintings, academies, the use of time, and rational recreations, all of which point to the 'invention of leisure' in pre-industrial, early modern Europe.[65] Cunningham has also expressed grave doubts about the 'implicit assumption that society before the industrial revolution may be satisfactorily described as 'traditional', 'pre-industrial' or the 'old society' and suggests that continuities are just as important as changes.[66] It may well be that, as with the historiography of the industrial revolution, 'neither the continuity thesis…nor the opposite thesis of sharp discontinuity are completely satisfactory'.[67]

In addressing this conundrum, Borsay has suggested a theory of continuity, based on six phases of recreational culture.[68] The fourth phase, dating from the mid-eighteenth century, and the fifth phase from the mid-nineteenth century, mark significant periods of industrialisation and the commercialisation of leisure. The new leisure economy of the eighteenth century established high-status pastimes and products as part of the public market place.[69] Brewer argues that, in the early eighteenth century, church and state reduced their role as patrons of the arts, creating a 'cultural vacuum' into which poured the providers of commercial leisure.[70] Music, theatre, and painting became highly marketable products. Clark and Houston maintained that, in the art world, 'a dense network of informal clubs gathered together artists and patrons on a more equal footing, de-emphasising old-style, seigneurial patronage

[65] P. Burke, 'The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present*, 146 (1995), p.136.
[66] J.H. Plumb, *The Commercialisation of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century England* (Reading, 1973); H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c.1780-c.1880* (1980), pp.9-10.
[67] P. Burke, 'Debate: The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present*, 156 (1997), pp.174-91 quotation on pp.190-1.
[68] Borsay, *History of Leisure,* pp.13-15.
[69] Plumb, *Commercialisation of Leisure.*
[70] J. Brewer, 'The most polite age and the most vicious: attitudes to culture as a commodity, 1660-1800', in A. Bermingham and J. Brewer (eds.), *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (1997), pp.342-5.

relationships in favour of more commercial arrangements'.[71] The widespread adoption of the subscription system by which recreations and luxury products — such as musical concerts and books — were funded on a collective basis, provided a half-way house between the patron and the market place.[72]

The mid-nineteenth century marked the emergence of recognizably modern leisure, Bailey suggesting that 'the most crucial stage in this transformation comes in the last quarter of the century' and Cunningham arguing that this period ushered in a new phase in the history of leisure.[73] Key to these two phases in the commercialisation of leisure is the development of the communications network, which integrated the supply and demand for recreational activities. A flourishing print economy of books, newspapers, broadsheets, and pamphlets widened the opportunities for recreational reading, as well as advertising leisure events. The development of a more sophisticated transport system of turnpike roads in the eighteenth century and the growth of the railway in the mid-nineteenth century eased travel to urban entertainments from the surrounding countryside. Railways sustained touring theatre companies and musical concerts, encouraging London actors and musicians to perform in provincial towns. Itinerant lecturers brought science to provincial lecture halls and small-scale entrepreneurs, such as peripatetic actor-managers, developed a network of commercial theatres.[74]

Social status and class identity

The synergy of the market economy, consumerism, leisure activities, and the growth of an associative culture, created the seedbed for an emerging collective identity and a consciousness of class. Just as people's ideas and

[71] P. Clark and R. Houston, 'Culture and Leisure, 1750-1840', in Clark, *Cambridge Urban History*, pp.575-613.
[72] Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.219-21.
[73] P. Bailey, 'The Politics and the Poetics of Modern British Leisure: A Late Twentieth-Century Review', *Rethinking History*, 37 (1999), pp.131-75, quotation from p.132.
[74] Borsay, *History of Leisure*, pp.104-5; Porter, *Enlightenment,* pp.38-40, 269-70.

visions of society, and their place and sense of identity within it, changed over time, so too have historical interpretations of class.

The emergence of cultural studies and the 'linguistic turn' have challenged both 'the old assurance of a formative link between social structure and culture', and the appropriateness of grand modes of explanation or 'meta-narratives'.[75] Indeed, class began to lose its cachet as a master concept in the 1980s. Robert Morris, for example, has argued that 'social class has lost its privileged position in the narrative of British social history'.[76] It is now seen as one of several other collective identities, such as community, gender, or ethnicity.[77]

Nevertheless, class remains an important concept, and it is to this class perspective that the historiographical context now turns. Central to this are questions which revolve around the influences underpinning people's life experiences and their visions of society and how these related to lifestyle, status and social structures. Indeed, what follows confirms the compelling inter-relationships which existed between the industrial revolution, an enlightened age of the associational world, consumerism, the leisure economy, and class formation.

Contemporary observers were in no doubt of the cataclysmic and divisive society of the nineteenth century. As was noted earlier, Peter Gaskell, in 1834, wrote to Lord Melbourne of a dual society desperately divided by industrialisation and urbanisation and the rise of a working class:

> Since the steam engine has concentrated men into particular localities — has drawn together the population into dense masses — and since an imperfect education has enlarged and to some degree distorted their views, union is becoming easy and from being so closely packed,

[75] P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), p.9. For an overview of class, see D. Cannadine*, Class in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 2000) and M. Savage, *Social Class in the 21st Century* (2015).
[76] R.J. Morris, in J. Cannon (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to British History* (Oxford, 1997), p.217.
[77] See Borsay, *History of Leisure,* pp.74-106.

> simultaneous action is readily excited. The organisation of these working class societies is now so complete that they form an empire within an empire of the most obnoxious description. Labour and capital are coming into collision — the operative and the master are at issue, and the peace and well-being of the kingdom are at stake.[78]

This view foreshadowed Marxist interpretations of class and reflected many of the aspects of the radical associations of unionism and Chartism in Derby during the 1830s and 1840s.[79] There is little doubt that environmental degradation, economic exploitation, and the disparities between wealth and poverty, ignited the flame of dissent and eventually led to the Chartist activity of the 1840s.[80] Briggs' central theory was that class relationships and outcomes were explained by the interaction of general movements and changes with the specific nature of local, urban economic and social structures.[81] As Jones points out, it was in local, urban neighbourhoods and communities that workers acquired a unity, discipline and leadership more easily than the rural labourers.[82] In these closely-knit neighbourhoods, the workers sought to defend their traditional status and values, and their 'customary rights'.[83] This communal spirit, which Thompson refers to as the 'rituals of mutuality', was forged in deprivation and the dire living conditions of unplanned urbanisation. The pace and nature of work, especially that of the factory, were taken out of the hands of the workers, leading to a loss of autonomy and an increasing reliance on industrialists to provide employment. Thompson has argued that these changes in the workplace, rapid urbanisation, the partiality of the justice system, and overt military repression, spawned the political unrest and working class agitations of the late eighteenth century through to the mid-nineteenth century.[84] Whilst hardship and struggle

[78] See above, p.5; quoted by A. Briggs, 'The Language of Class', p.63.
[79] See below, pp.180-214.
[80] See M. Chase, *Chartism*, pp.21-2.
[81] A. Briggs, 'The background to the English Parliamentary Reform Movement in Three English Cities', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 10 (1950-52), pp.293-317.
[82] Jones, *Rebecca* (1973), p.32.
[83] Calhoun, *Class Struggle,* p.180.
[84] Thompson, *English Working Class*.

resonate with the Marxist theory of a society divided into 'us' and 'them', he realised that class and social identity were much more nuanced and contingent than traditional Marxist historiography would suggest.

Thompson was at pains, therefore, to emphasise the positive social transformation in manners and behaviour of the workers in the nineteenth century due to the discipline, routines and regularities of the workplace, economic growth, and improvements in living standards. He stressed that class was a relationship, and not a thing. For him, patterns of people's relationships, their ideas, and their institutions were built up over a period of social change, in which men 'live their own history':

> Classes do not exist as separate entities, look around, find an enemy class and then start to struggle. On the contrary, people find themselves in a society structured in determined ways (crucially but not exclusively in productive relations), they experience exploitation (or the need to maintain power over those whom they exploit), they identify points of antagonistic interest, they commence to struggle around these issues, and in the process of struggle they discover themselves as classes.[85]

Class, for Thompson, was not a 'structure' or a 'category', but something which, in fact, happens in human relationships; for him, it was, essentially, a social and cultural phenomenon.[86] He stressed that, within this socio-cultural framework, it was important to recognise that economic activity was a major source of inequalities in life chances. He documented a growing identity of interests between diverse groups of the working population as distinct from the interests of other classes. These interests were manifested in the emergence of strongly based and self-conscious working class culture based

[85] E.P. Thompson, 'Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?', *Social History*, 3 (1978), pp.133-65, quotation, p.149.
[86] Thompson, *English Working Class,* pp.8-10.

on institutions and movements, such as friendly societies, trade unions, educational and religious institutions, co-operatives, working class periodicals, and Chartism.[87] Thompson's notion of social class and allied issues, such as social control, were linked closely to what might be termed the bi-polar model of cultural relationships, which juxtaposed popular and elite, plebeian and patrician cultures, and little and great traditions.[88] The crucial distinction between plebeian and bourgeois cultures was, essentially, that 'between alternative ideas of the nature of social relationships', the former 'collective and mutual', the latter 'individualistic'.[89] Investing in the community was a practical way of safeguarding against the risk of falling seriously into poverty, and providing a support network that could be called upon when times proved difficult.[90] This stark contrast between the polite and fashionable lifestyle of the urban elite and the workers' experiences of squalid living conditions, long working hours and limited cultural and recreational opportunities, drove what Borsay has referred to as 'a cultural wedge' between the upper and middling ranks and the workers. Polite society created a 'dividing membrane' between the urban elite and what Mokyr refers to as the 'unwashed poor'.[91] Such cultural differentiation 'sowed the seeds of social polarization' which, Borsay argued, saw a 'true class society' emerge during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[92]

The social and cultural inequalities, exacerbated by the industrial revolution and economic activity, led Perkin to suggest that three broad and mutually antagonistic classes emerged, comprising the landed aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the mass of the wage-dependent working population. These

[87] Ibid., pp.456-69.
[88] E.P. Thompson, 'Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture', *Journal of Social History*, 7 (1974), pp.382-405; Thompson, 'Eighteenth-Century English Society', p.151; P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2006), pp.23-9; H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c.1780-c.1880* (1980).
[89] Thompson, *English Working Class,* pp.456-69; R. Williams*, Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (1958), pp.312-13.
[90] Bailey, *Leisure and Class,* pp.65-72; P. Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (1998), pp.13-29.
[91] Borsay, *Urban Renaissance,* p.307; Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy,* p.364.
[92] Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.318-19.

three conflicting sources of income were a determining factor in class formation, because each could raise its share only at the expense of the others. Perkin also argued that the catalyst for class antagonism and social conflict was ideology — notably, the opposing ideas of the profit-seeking, free market entrepreneurial ideal against that of co-operation between productive, independent workers. Whilst ideology and cultural differentiation might prove socially divisive, Perkin also emphasised the complexity of social structures and relationships when highlighting patronage, 'vertical friendships', social emulation, and what was, fundamentally, the concept of social and cultural diffusion.[93]

Cultural diffusion and self-determination

A regime of top-down diffusion emerged from the 1830s, typified by rational recreation, and exemplified by more regulated sport and the promotion of leisure activities as life-enhancing, character-building, and self-improving. The urban elite justified rational recreation on health grounds, as a way of improving physical fitness and reducing stress.[94] The hidden agenda of the urban elite and the gentry, anxious about the socially and politically divisive and degenerate impact of industrialisation and urbanisation, was an attempt to harmonise social relations and improve the working class. Popular recreations seemed to be an alternative to religious endeavours and a source of perennial temptation, so much so that the annual races in Derby were suppressed in 1835. The urban elite, although sharing the pleasures of the races with the workers, succumbed to severe Evangelical censure.[95] This was followed in 1845 by the mayor of Derby pronouncing that the popular sport of street football was illegal. The factory paternalism of the Strutts and Evans, and the patronage of the local gentry and aristocracy in their support of local

[93] H. Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society* (1969), esp. chapters 6 and 7. See above, pp.14-15.
[94] J. Towner, *A Historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World, 1540-1940* (Chichester, 1996), pp.97-8.
[95] A. Delves, 'Popular Recreation and Social Conflict in Derby, 1800-1850', in E. Yeo and S. Yeo, *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure* (Brighton, 1981), pp.107, 90.

scientists and intellectuals, provide further significant examples of top-down diffusion.[96]

Potentially, this method of social control was a powerful tool for social amelioration, as was social emulation — the desire for worldly goods and the need to copy the lifestyle of one's betters. Social snobbery and aspiration proved to be significant catalysts for movement up the social ladder. This would suggest, of course, that cultural forms were not necessarily fixed to specific socio-structural formations, and that 'common cultural values spill over across tidy social demarcations'.[97] Cultural forms, in fact, travel up as well as down the social structure with constant movement in either one direction or the other, typified by interaction, interchange, and cross currents.[98] This flexible cultural movement along the social hierarchy — the shared culture thesis — did, indeed, engage different social groupings in the same cultural pastimes. This did not, necessarily, result in the blending of classes or social groups. Different elements in the social order engaged in the same pastimes, but they frequently did so in very different ways, which tended to accentuate rather than mitigate differences of class. Leisure pursuits, therefore, may be shared, but invariably they were shared in very different ways that reflected inequalities in wealth, power, and status. The playhouse, for example, typified this social differentiation by being physically divided into boxes, pit, and gallery, with separate entrances for different sections of the audience. Likewise, the railway emphasised the class divide by organising its passengers into first, second, and third-class compartments.[99]

Top-down diffusion ultimately foundered, because working class culture resisted penetration and control from outside, and the middle class was unwilling to fund fully the initiative involved and sacrifice the exclusivity of its

[96] See below, pp.76-9, 165-8.
[97] B. Reay, *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (1998), quotation on p.1.
[98] P. Burke, *Popular Culture,* p.58.
[99] Ibid., p.213.

own cultural and leisure pursuits.[100] F.M.L. Thompson has suggested that 'the respectable working classes wished to be respectable not because some middle class pundit told them to be so, but because they liked it and disapproved of shiftless and sluttish ways.' As far as he was concerned, the working class was 'eminently capable of generating its own cultural evolution and development in response to aspirations and needs experienced by different groups within it.'[101] Crafts shares this view of the workers' growing independence. Having looked at the organisation and conditions of work, including the development of trade unions, technology and labour management, he concluded that industrial workers were less effectively subordinated by the ruling classes and, in fact, retained a wider variety of experiences and attitudes.[102]

Were the workers, therefore, engaged in a long-term process of selective retention and rejection of socio-cultural opportunities? Certainly, historians have argued that those parts of traditional culture which no longer suited workers' notions of an urbanising, industrial society, were rejected; and new forms of cultural practice, some drawn from the polite and improving culture of the urban elite, were created and absorbed.[103] This social and cultural capital proved to be all-embracing and created a cultural diffusion, which was in a state of constant interaction and inter-change.[104] A fluid cultural osmosis typified associational activities and relationships, especially after 1850, when participants chose socio-cultural elements which suited their purpose and rejected those that proved inappropriate and unproductive. This cultural diffusion, aptly referred to by Roger Chartier as 'appropriation', helped shape

[100] J. Brewer and R. Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (1994), pp.40-2, 208, 274-7, 294; Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution,* pp.90-2, 99-107, 123-7; Bailey, *Leisure and Class*; Delves, 'Popular Recreations', pp.115-6.
[101] F.M.L. Thompson, 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *Economic History Review*, 34 (1981), pp.189-208, quotation, p.196.
[102] Crafts, *British Economic Growth.*
[103] J.M. Golby and A.W. Purdue, *The Civilization of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England, 1750-1900* (Stroud, 1999), p.200; see also Cunningham, 'Leisure and Culture', pp.279-339, quotation, pp.319-20.
[104] See J. Towner, *Historical Geography*, pp.267-9 for a critique of 'top-down' cultural diffusion.

aspirations, values, and social identity.[105] E.P. Thompson concluded that this philosophy of independence and self-determination was nurtured by an ideological vision of society, with its ancestry in the previous century and was, essentially, a political ideology. He argued that:

> the line from 1832 to Chartism is not a haphazard pendulum alternation of 'political' and 'economic' agitations but a direct progression, in which simultaneous and related movements converge towards a single point. This point was the vote.[106]

This political ideology was based on the traditional rights of the free-born Englishman, freedom of speech, and a desire for fairness and justice; and couched in a common language, which reflected social reality, as well as actively constructing reality and experience.[107] Griffin has suggested that this common language developed a political dimension.[108] The language of Chartism was not a class language, according to Stedman Jones, and did not reflect workers' experience of social and economic change. It was a political language. It appealed to, and was used by, the politically excluded; political identity mattered far more than class consciousness.[109] It was the 'constitutional idiom' that shaped the political debate and activity of the nineteenth century.[110]

Workers' disenchantment with their life experiences and their perception of social inequalities during the 1830s and 1840s made Derby a hot-bed of dissent, the culmination of which was Chartist activity. The central question here is the extent to which the town's Chartists reflected the 'constitutional

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[105] See E. Griffin, 'Popular Culture in Industrializing England', *Historical Journal*, 45 (2002), p.630; Brewer and Porter (eds.), *World of Goods*, pp.40-2, 208, 274-7, 294; Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.284-308.
[106] Thompson, *English Working Class,* p.909.
[107] Ibid., pp.913-15.
[108] Griffin, 'Popular culture', p.622.
[109] G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History* (Cambridge, 1983).
[110] J. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual and Symbol in England 1790*-1850 (New York, 1994).

idiom' and a political ideology and how far their agitation was based on economic factors and a class consciousness? Certainly, Chartism reflected a juncture of economic, social and political attitudes, and, as such, its failure can be explained by a divergence of these attitudes, once the Chartist message had proved ineffective. Not only did 1839, 1842 and 1848 prove unsuccessful, but also conditions began to improve even without the Charter. A restricted franchise did not necessarily mean the oppression of the manual workers. Examples of this are the Mines Act (1842), Factory Acts (1844, 1847), repeal of the Corn Laws (1846), abolition of the Poor Law Commission (1848) and Public Health legislation (1848). The unified forces of Chartism were fragmented by the flexible attitude of the state which, while suppressing all opposition, was not seen to be hostile to the welfare of the people.[111] The language of Chartism, perhaps, never outgrew the language and symbols of radicalism, which were developed in the eighteenth century before the language of class. Radicalism was the language of those excluded from political power, and therefore appealed to both the urban elite and the manual workers before 1832. Socialist analyses of class never superseded this older language, which remained as an important common platform during the years 1831 to 1848.[112]

Dorothy Thompson has argued that the culture of Chartism was forged in local urban communities and, as communities grew, the nature of work changed, police forces were extended, and the scope for the Chartist movement was limited.[113] It was not so much defeated, or failed, but transformed into less transitory formal associations, such as trade unions, co-operatives, friendly societies, and working men's associations.[114] Whilst Chartism clearly failed in delivering the six points of the Charter, it did bring a new urgency to the philanthropic motivation of private individuals, and the initiation of a pragmatic

[111] J. Saville, *1848. The British State and the Chartist Movement* (Cambridge, 1987).
[112] G. Stedman Jones, 'Rethinking Chartism' in *Languages of Class. Studies in English working class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1984).
[113] D.Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (Aldershot 1986) pp.5-6.
[114] Ibid., pp.336-9.

self-help philosophy for the workers. It could be argued that the Chartists' greatest achievement, however, was Chartism itself, 'a movement shot through not with despair but with hope'.[115] This hope rested on a significant shift away from crowd action and the mass platform to a system of just and fair law-making, parliamentary reform and social harmony in addressing plebeian problems.[116]

Methodology

This thesis is an urban biography, which provides 'the empirical bedrock for systematic analyses of the processes at work within the town'.[117] The urban space of Derby has been chosen as an organising concept to illuminate not only local but national issues of empowerment, hierarchy and class identity. It is the study of an individual town as a social entity located in different phases of its history, and cognizant of the wider operation of power in the urban system.[118] Within this spatial framework, the thesis has moved beyond the purely economic and industrial and focused on the interplay between these aspects and the town's social and cultural evolution over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Essentially, an integrated approach has been adopted.[119] The purpose has been to examine the structures and concepts which have determined the course of Derby's history and the evolution of its associational world, whilst also contributing to the national historiography.[120]

It is not another celebratory account of Derby, such as those written by Stephen Glover and William Hutton.[121] The approach is one of investigation and analysis, with an emphasis on socio-cultural practices and processes, such

[115] E. Royle, *Chartism* (1980), p.95.
[116] See S. Roberts (ed.), *The Dignity of Chartism: Essays by Dorothy Thompson* (2015), pp.181-2.
[117] R. Rodger, 'Urban History: prospect and retrospect', *Urban History*, 19 (1992), p.8.
[118] D. Reeder, 'The Industrial City in Britain: Urban Biography in the Urban Style', *Urban History*, 25 (1998), pp.368-78.
[119] S. Ewen, *What is Urban History?* (Cambridge, 2016), p.1.
[120] See W.G. Hoskins, *Local History in England* (Harlow 1959).
[121] S. Glover, *Glover's Derby: The History and Directory of the Borough of Derby* (1843); W. Hutton, *History and Antiquities of the Borough of Derby down to 1791* (Derby, 1791).

as kinship, family, and sociability — the so called human capital — which was nurtured in the town's clubs and societies. This has been complemented by research into the impact of industrialisation, urbanisation, and economic growth, all of which are set within the wider context of urban issues, such as class, the industrial revolution, and leisure.[122] As H.J. Dyos argued in 1966:

> The study of urban history must mean not merely the study of individual communities, fixed more or less in time and space — what might be called the urban aspect of local history, but the investigation of altogether broader historical processes and trends that completely transcend the life cycle and range of experiences of particular communities.[123]

Lefebvre has suggested that the human-environmental relationship was a dialectical one, so ultimately the nature of Derby as an urban space was shaped by what its inhabitants made of their surroundings and how they used them. People's lives and identities tended to be defined by local landmarks, the street, the market place, the workplace, family and neighbourhood.[124] In choosing Derby as a contested urban space, there has been an acute awareness that contemporaries could perceive or experience their local environment in a multiplicity of ways. Cultural markers of local identity or social status, such as myths, customs and the use of language, have proved challenging to capture, because they are mutable and subjective and cannot be quantified.[125] Indeed, George and Yanina Sheeran have argued that there is the possibility that the past of any locality might be re-invented in our own image for our own time.[126] To off-set this, a careful, thorough and wide-ranging use of local manuscript sources, minute books, parliamentary reports,

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[122] J.V. Beckett (ed.), *A Centenary History of Nottingham* (Manchester, 1997), p.2.
[123] H.J. Dyos, 'Agenda for Urban Historians', in H.J. Dyos (ed.), *The Study of Urban History* (1968), pp.1-46, quotation, p.7.
[124] H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991).
[125] P. Hudson, 'Regional and Local History: Globalisation, Postmodernism and the Future', *Journal of Regional and Local studies*, 20 (1999), pp.5-24.
[126] G. and Y. Sheeran, 'Reconstructing Local History', *Local Historian*, 29/4 (1999), pp.256-62; 'Discourses in Local History', *Rethinking History*, 2 (1998), pp.65-85.

newspaper articles and census data has aided research into the everyday reality of the lives of both Derby's urban elite and its workers. Their hopes and aspirations, values and visions of society have given the study an authentic, contemporaneous perspective.[127]

A long time frame has been adopted to make sense of these formative and evolutionary issues. Information from the plethora of primary sources mentioned above has made it possible to identify what were the 'salient events' and 'transitional moments' of Derby's eighteenth and nineteenth century.[128] Whilst each chapter has identified a specific period in analysing the emergence of bourgeois or plebeian identities, it has not been the intention to present an overly neat, linear picture of associative culture, or a simple, dichotomous, and Marxist vision of class. Indeed, the thesis has emphasised the somewhat messy and complex nature of clubs and societies and the synergy between socio-economic, cultural and political trends in their shaping and defining of social identity. As Asa Briggs emphasised:

> the world of Victorian cities was fragmented, intricate, eclectic, messy; and no single approach to their understanding provides us with all the right questions and answers or leads us to all the right available evidence.[129]

A wide and diverse range of source material, therefore, has been essential in the completion of this thesis. The Derby Local Studies Library has provided a wealth of information to address the research issues. It has one of the UK's largest and oldest collections of printed and manuscript materials relating to Derby and Derbyshire. The vast majority of the collection is now in Derby Libraries' online catalogue and links have been established with the National

[127] See E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn* for an account of what first-hand witnesses tell us about their sense of empowerment.
[128] Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy,* pp.390-1; *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton, 2017), pp.55-6; Thompson, *English Working Class,* p.733.
[129] A. Briggs, 'The Human Aggregate', in H.J. Dyos and M. Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, vol. I (1973), pp.83-105, quotation on p.83.

Archives at Kew.[130] A newly located and refurbished Local Studies and Family History Library opened in 2015, located at the Riverside Chambers, a Grade II listed building in Full Street, which has been restored to its former glory. This apt location was the street to which the polymath Erasmus Darwin moved in 1781. The new archive is home to the records of six hundred years of the town's history with an extensive reference collection of over 60,000 books, photographs, maps and plans, local newspapers and magazines and many historic manuscript documents relating to Derby and its area.

Whilst county and town histories, such as Pilkington's history of Derbyshire, published in 1789, and Hutton's *History of Derby,* published two years later, have provided invaluable background detail, they both tend to be a little too celebratory, as does Glover's town history. Many printed primary sources (indicated in the bibliography), on the other hand, yielded a great deal of information, which gave a more authentic flavour to the research. The main manuscript materials have included the Strutt Family Correspondence, which has provided information relating to industry, commerce and 'polite society' for the period c.1750 to c.1850. Minute books, records, and reports of the Derby Co-operative Society and the Mechanics' Institute and a plethora of box files and notes on freemasonry, philosophical and corresponding societies, the Derby Lock-Out, Chartism and the Midland Railway have furnished the research with specific, yet wide-ranging data.

The *Derby Mercury*, displayed on microfilm in the Local Studies Library, and available online, gives an overview of two centuries of Derby's history and, crucially, provided significant information relating to the town's clubs and societies. The newspaper was founded in 1732 by Samuel Drewry, a local printer, and replaced the *Derby Postman* of 1726. It stayed in the Drewry family until 1839, when the business was sold to William Bemrose, a leading printer for the Midland Railway.[131] Care has been taken to offset the *Mercury's*

[130] https://emlib.ent.sirsidynix.net.uk/client/en_GB/derby.
[131] *DM*, 3 June 1840; A. Rippon, *The Book of Derby* (Buckingham, 1980), p.98.

elitist bias, especially in favour of Tory politics and the Church of England, with numerous references to the Whig-Liberal *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* and 'working class' publications, such as the *Pioneer* and *Northern Star*. The *Pioneer* supported the Derby Locked-Outs and the General National Co-ordinated Trades' Union; the *Northern Star* was the mouthpiece of the Chartists, published between 1837 and 1852 and owned by Feargus O'Connor. By the summer of 1839, its circulation was a staggering 50,000. George Julian Harney, a frequent visitor to Derby, became its editor in 1845. The *Record* reported on the activities of the Derby Co-operative Society and supplemented the Society's minute book, on which most of the research for this topic was based.[132]

The Derbyshire Record Office, located in Matlock, has provided some additional information to supplement the myriad of resource material of the Derby Local Studies Library. Extra details relating to the Strutt family and its business enterprise, the close social and political connections of the Cavendish family with Derby over two centuries, and the links between the county gentry and the urban elite have provided additional lines of research.

Summary of chapters

Given the importance of urban communities in the forging of socio-economic experiences and visions of society, including social identity and class, the natural starting point for the thesis is an examination of the local context. Chapter 2, therefore, provides the background for Derby's knowledge economy, including the links between patronage and industrial innovation, which placed the town in the vanguard of the industrial revolution. In charting the move from silk and cotton production to a consumer-based economy and the development of railway engineering, the chapter seeks to analyse the

[132] For the *Pioneer*, see pp.180-91; for the *Northern Star*, see pp.196, 197, 199, 204, 207-9; for the *Record*, see pp.242-3. See also J. Epstein, 'Feargus O'Connor and the Northern Star', *International Review of Social History*, 21 (1976), pp.51-97; J. Allen and O.R. Ashton (eds.), *Papers for the People: A Study of the Chartist Press* (2005), pp.25-53; Chase, *Chartism,* p.119.

impact of urbanisation and population growth, communications, and the rebellious culture of eighteenth-century food riots and the Pentrich Rebellion of 1817. It is shown that the timing and impact of industrialisation and Derby's distinctive role as a county town are key in determining the changing nature of its associative culture and class formation. Indeed, it is argued in this chapter that Derby experienced a cultural awakening during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which was to transform it from a sleepy backwater into a thriving creative community.

The next two chapters consider the making of a nascent middle class. Chapter 3 covers the years from c.1700 to the death of Erasmus Darwin in 1802. It concentrates on the bourgeois bonding inherent in commercial and intellectual associations, such as the freemasons, the philosophical society and the Derby Society for Political Information. The chapter examines the links between the urban elite, the local gentry and the Cavendish family through patronage, social emulation and commercial exploitation, and the impact of the knowledge economy. Chapter 4 overlaps Chapter 3 in chronology (c.1760-c.1845). It explores the emergence of the polite and fashionable society of the assembly rooms, the literary connections of William Strutt, the print economy, book clubs, the art of Joseph Wright, musical concerts, and the theatre. This is followed by an examination of the town's urban regeneration, including the work of the urban commissioners and civic committees, the opening of the Derbyshire General Infirmary in 1810, and the surge in the building of new chapels and churches to meet the religious needs of an expanding population. The Temperance Society, the establishment of the Mechanics' Institute in 1825, the opening of the Arboretum in 1840, and attempts to suppress street football, frame the final section in relation to rational recreation and popular culture.

Chapter 5 provides a counterpoint to the previous two chapters in examining those factors which shaped social division, widened polarisation, led to cultural differentiation, and brought the town's manual workers together in a collective

response to their grievances. Four workers' associative actions epitomise this period — the framework-knitters' strike of 1824, the Reform Bill riots of 1831, the Derby Lock-Out of 1833-1834 and Chartist activity from 1839 to 1848. These years were a period of intersection, when the struggle for fairness and justice took on a distinctly political perspective from which a powerful sense of working class identity emerged.[133] The pragmatic alliance between the town's Chartists and members of the middle class Anti-Corn Law Association is examined in the light of the urban elite's duplicity during the passing of the 1832 Reform Act.

Chapter 6 determines the characteristics of the social shift that were to define and shape workers' social status and class identity during the years 1850-1890. Three significant aspects of the links between associations and social relationships are explored. The first highlights the impact of corporate culture and paternalism on the Railway Literary Institute, the Midland Club and the Derbyshire Rifle Volunteers. This is followed by an examination of religious influences in the establishment of the Working Men's Association, educational and cultural activities and team games, and the Temperance Movement. The third aspect focuses on the growing independence, self-reliance and self-determination of the town's workforce by exploring the progress of the Derby Co-operative Society, railway unionism, and popular leisure pursuits.

At the heart of this thesis is an investigation of important issues relating to hierarchies and associations. The challenges and opportunities of an industrialising society are explored in relation to the nature of power, control and self-determination, and the aspirations and ambitions of the urban elite and the workers within the contested urban space of Derby.

[133] See P. Joyce, *Visions of the People;* J. Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).

Chapter 2: The making of an enlightened and industrious town

Introduction

In 1924, W.H. Mills emphasised the decentralised nature of the nineteenth-century state as a major factor in underpinning the important influence of the local and the parochial. It was, he commented, 'astonishing to reflect how…the State had left us high and dry. And knowing so little of the central state, we had built little States of our own, thinking to abide in them for ever'.[1] This chapter explores the impact of the 'little State' of Derby in shaping and defining an enlightened associative culture, which created what Porter refers to as a 'revolution in consciousness' and Hewitt 'a revolution of feeling'.[2] New ways of thinking and novel ways of doing things challenged the status quo, which were reflected in the symbiotic relationships between industry and commerce, elite and popular culture, and social identity. It led one eighteenth-century commentator to draw a link between a modern commercial town and civility: 'The prosperity of a town depends upon its commerce; as that increases, knowledge, freedom, taste, luxury, power and civilization increase.'[3]

The task of this chapter is twofold. First, it is to present the contextual framework in which urban prosperity and enlightenment flourished. In so doing, the local setting goes some way to explain the growth of clubs and societies, co-operatives and unions, which forged a public sphere of ideas, a diffusion of knowledge and a growing awareness of the opportunities presented by the emerging urban, industrial society. Novel ways of looking at the workplace, the built environment, social relationships and politics were nurtured as Derby's industrial and urban growth took hold. Within this age of

[1] W.H. Mills, *Grey Pastures* (1924), p.95, quoted in S. Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2007), p.21.
[2] R. Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (2000), p.42; R. Hewitt, *A Revolution of Feeling: The Decade that Forged the Modern World* (2017).
[3] W. Hutton, *History of Derby from the Remote Ages of Antiquity to the year 1791* (Derby, 1815), p.154.

heightened awareness and enlightenment, the struggle for status and empowerment was pre-eminent.

Secondly, it attempts to explain the urban conundrum of this 'little state' of Derby. How did a relatively small town in the East Midlands become the progenitor of the factory system and arguably the birthplace of the industrial revolution? What factors created a golden age of enlightened ideas? Why was Derby propelled onto the national stage during the mid-nineteenth century? Indeed, how did this relatively isolated, inward-looking town, blossom into an urban creative community, a metropolis of industry and art with a rich associative culture, whilst also experiencing social tensions, conflict and power struggles? Underlying answers to these questions revolve around several inter-related factors — location and population growth; Derby's special status as a county town; industrialisation and consumerism; links to a flourishing knowledge economy; transport networks and urbanisation; and a popular and rebellious culture. Unlike earlier histories of the town, which reveal rather general and piecemeal descriptions of its development, this chapter contributes towards an in-depth explanation of Derby's evolution from an insular, backwater 'little State' to a cultural capital of real significance.[4]

The local context

Population growth

In the eighteenth century, the 'little State' comprised the five parishes of St Alkmund's, All Saints', St Michael's, St Peter's and St Werburgh's, which were situated around the confluence of the River Derwent and the Markeaton Brook.[5] The town's restricted urban space was reflected in Glover's description of the town's location:

[4] See M. Craven, *An Illustrated History of Derby* (Derby, 2007); *Derbeians of Distinction* (Derby, 1998); E. Lord, *Derby Past* (Chichester, 1996).
[5] S. Glover, *Glover's Derby: The History and Directory of the Borough of Derby* (1843), pp.11-15.

> The western bank, on which the town is built, rises with a bold but not abrupt sweep, in several undulated heights from the water's edge. These heights are indented by a valley, through which flows a strong brook from Markeaton.[6]

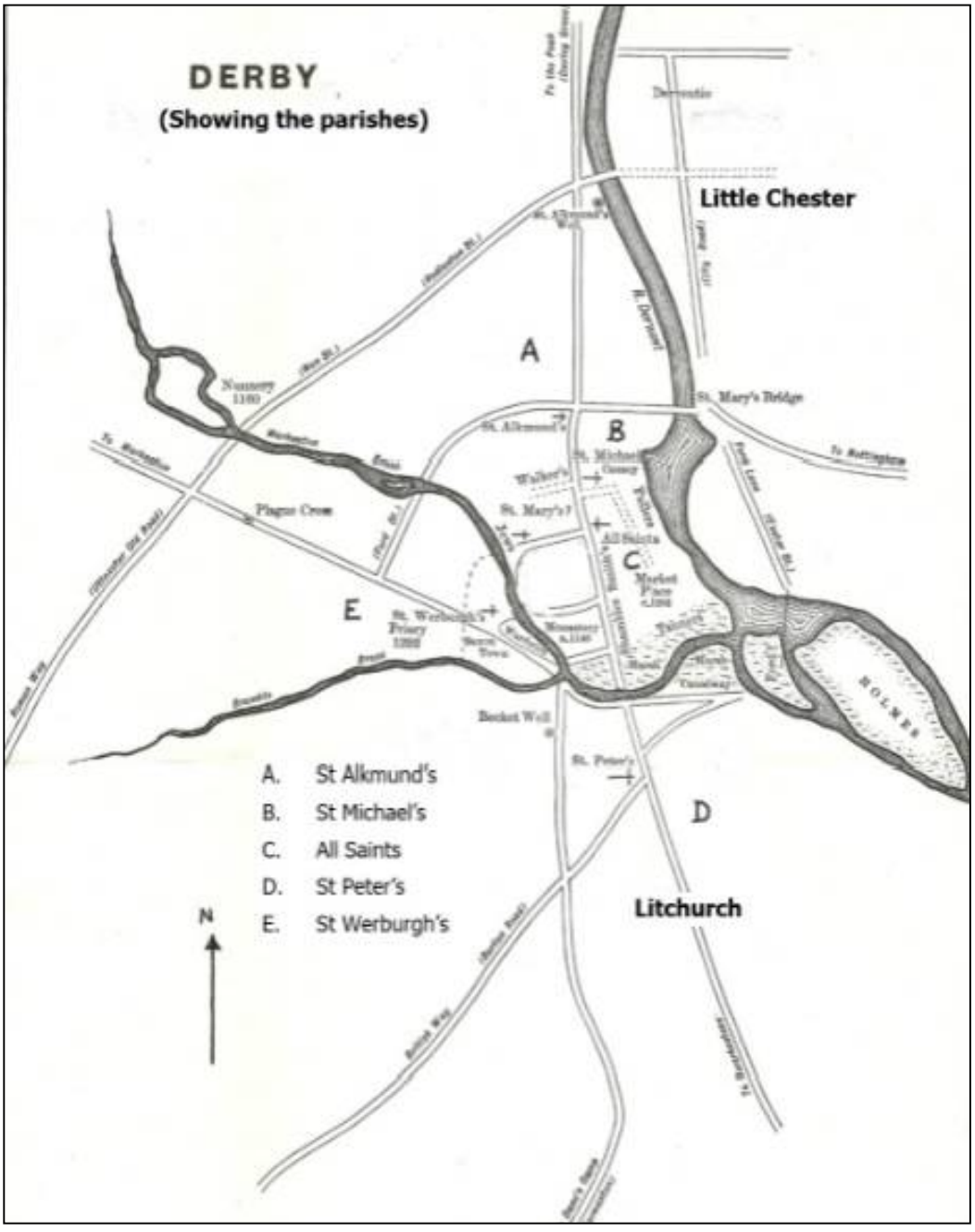
The town's urban core, a mile long and half a mile wide, was built on a ridge above the flood level, running north and south, extending from St Alkmund's and All Saints', southward towards the market place and on to where the Markeaton Brook flows between the Cornmarket and St Peter's Street. St Werburgh's, located close to the Markeaton Brook, was the only parish church not to be situated on this 'spinal column'.[7] For much of the eighteenth century, the town's growth was confined by the river and flood plain on its eastern boundary and by the common land of Nun's Green to the west. A 'tight corset' of privately owned landed estates also hemmed in the town.[8] Early industrial development was limited to the riverside, mainly around St Mary's bridge, with the main thrust of industrial and residential development in the eighteenth century restricted to north of the market place, in the parishes of St Alkmund's, All Saints' and St Michael's. Davison defines the town's boundaries as 'St Helen's House…on the north, the Spot formed the southern limit, and whilst crosswise it extended from the river to the county prison on Nun's Green.'[9]

In addition to the five parishes, there were two small settlements, independent of the borough, located adjacent to the town's boundaries. To the north of St Alkmund's was Little Chester, the site of an early Roman encampment. To the south of St Peter's was the ancient township of Litchurch, which was given its own separate local government in 1866, comprising a local board of elected representatives under an executive chairman, a clerk, surveyor, rate collector and medical officer; in essence, 'a separate town contiguous to the ancient

[6] Ibid., p.2.
[7] J.V. Beckett, *The East Midlands from AD 1000* (1988), p.227; R. Christian, *Derby in the Making: The Development of a City* (Coventry, 1990), p.5.
[8] Christian, *Derby in the Making*, p.18.
[9] A.W. Davison, *Derby: its Rise and Progress* (Wakefield, 1970), p.126.

borough', which became the 'Railway Derby' of the mid-nineteenth century. In 1877, both Little Chester and Litchurch were incorporated into what was the first extension since the borough boundary was designated in 1704. In 1888, Derby became a county borough, assuming most of the functions of the newly established county councils. [10]

Fig 2.1 DLSL, Moneypenny's map of Derby (1791) showing the ancient parishes.



[10] Christian, *Derby,* p.1; Craven, *Illustrated History,* p.166.

Population growth was slow during the seventeenth century, rising from approximately 3,000 in 1600 to 4,000 in 1712.[11] By the 1770s, there were 7,000 to 8,000 inhabitants and, by the end of the century, the population of the five parishes was 10,832, an increase of 171 per cent.[12] Overall, the town's population grew by some 90,000 from the late eighteenth century to 1901. This trend indicates the industrial development of the town, the most obvious impact being the advent of the railway in 1839. With 24,334 in 1831, the town's population tripled by the end of the century, mainly in St Peter's and St Werburgh's parishes, which were closest to Litchurch, the aptly named 'Railway Derby'.[13] The older industrial sectors, sited close to the river and the Markeaton Brook in St Michael's and All Saints' parishes, and in Little Chester, indicate the location of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century textile mills and iron foundries. It was in these parishes that the poorer workers lived, close to their employment, in extremely poor environmental conditions, which were highlighted in the 1840s, for example, in reports to the Board of Health.[14]

St Michael's, the smallest of the five parishes, saw a population increase in the mid-nineteenth century due to an influx of Irish families in search of employment in the newly established railway works. Immigrants from Tyneside and Yorkshire tended to reside in the Litchurch area, also attracted by employment opportunities on the railway. The 1841 census underscores the impact that the railway had on population growth and the increasing number of newcomers residing in Derby. In that year, there were 33,960 inhabitants; thirty years later, the population of the town was 61,371.[15] In 1841, St Werburgh's parish had 23.6 per cent of its population from outside the county; All Saints' parish 27.8 per cent; St Michael's 40.2 per cent; St

[11] Glover, *Glover's Derby,* p.13.
[12] J.D. Standen, 'The Social, Economic and Political Development of Derby, 1835-1888' (M.A. thesis, University of Leeds, 1958), p.10; R.S. Fitton and A.P. Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights 1758-1830* (1958), p.111.
[13] G. Revill, 'Railway Derby: Occupational Community, Paternalism and Corporate Culture 1850-1890', *Urban History*, 28, (2001), pp.378-404, quotation on p.379.
[14] W. Baker, 'Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Derby', in *Local Reports on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England* (1842); E. Cresy, *Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Enquiry into the Sanitary Condition of the Inhabitants of the Borough of Derby* (1849).
[15] DLSL (copies), census returns for 1831, 1841, 1871.

Peter's 30 per cent; and St Alkmund's parish 25.8 per cent. In total, 8,951 (27.3 per cent) were born outside Derbyshire. By 1851, 63 per cent of the population were born outside the borough. These newcomers brought with them fresh ideas, different values and new ways of looking at society.

Fig 2.2 Census returns: population of the civil parishes, Derby 1801-1901

Year	St Alkmund		All Saints	St Michael	St Peter		St Werburgh	Total
	In Borough	Little Chester			In Borough	Litchurch		
1801	2002	181	2862	771	2231	35	2966	11048
1811	2516	173	3211	815	2696	52	3805	13268
1821	3462	177	3745	925	3974	93	5317	17693
1831	6004	191	3776	774	6704	516	6369	24334
1841	8601	364	4443	1064	10538	855	8095	33960
1851	10993	430	4396	1036	13702	1720	10482	42759
1861	11409	431	4049	961	13450	6560	13222	50082
1871	12566	478	3934	980	14145	11083	18185	61371
1881	12685	571	3821	960	15021	18307	26071	77436
1891	13999	966	3381	705	14699	23003	32586	89339
1901	15001	2156	2889	520	12962	25445	37910	96883

The county town

It may have been a 'little State', but Derby's status as a county town placed it at the heart of the county community, acting as the hub of the political, administrative, social, cultural and economic life.[16] As with other shire towns, Derby was tied to the county through its role as administrative capital by providing the location for the county assizes, quarter sessions, petty sessions

[16] J. Ellis, 'Regional and county centres, c.1700-c.1840', in P. Clark (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 2: *1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000), p.637.

and county courts. Activities of the county elite were coordinated and administered in the county town, with a range and variety of meetings being held there routinely, including those of the land tax commission, local militia and so on. Such gatherings served to cement the position of the county town as a symbolic representative of the 'county community'.[17]

The composition of the urban elite comprised local gentry, industrialists, intellectuals, and artists. They shared the fruits of the industrial society, unfettered by the central state. They supported industrial development and championed natural philosophy, cultural endeavours and the development of the town's infrastructure. Membership of the corporation was evenly spread across different occupations, with a notably larger proportion of professionals than, for instance, in Leicester and Nottingham.[18] Crucially, three generations of the Strutt family provided a continuity of leadership from the 1760s to the late 1840s, which bound together Derby's urban elite. Members of the family, such as Jedediah, William, Elizabeth, Joseph and Edward, espoused the knowledge economy and enlightened ideals; they combined entrepreneurship, wealth creation and political acumen with innovation, invention and a love of the arts. Their dynamic and proactive leadership was a major factor in sustaining Derby's strong associational world.[19] They were supported by an eclectic mix of talented individuals, who in turn benefitted from highly influential aristocratic patronage. Together, they represented a powerful group of enlightened thinkers, the members of which fostered associations with the Royal Society and the Lunar Society, thus extending the town's social networks.[20] In contrast to the conventional picture of towns as fractured along political, religious and economic lines, Derby's urban elite was united in its

[17] A. Everitt, 'Country, County and Town: Patterns of Regional Evolution in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 29 (1979), pp.79-108.
[18] Ellis, 'Regional and county centres, p.642.
[19] See below, pp.81-91, 93-107, 111-6.
[20] See below, pp.88-9, 100.

support of natural philosophy, philanthropic endeavours and cultural activities.[21]

Derby was highly distinctive. By the end of the eighteenth century, many county towns were in general decline, due to a slowing down in the growth of real incomes, which had sustained widespread urban growth in service centres during the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Many county capitals, therefore, began to have rates of population growth well below the national average. Contributory factors to this relative decline were twofold: the lethargy and conservatism amongst urban elites and the competition from other towns, which had more favourable locations for new transport networks, more fashionable and sophisticated shopping facilities, or more dynamic industrial and commercial sectors. For example, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds began to take on the economic and social roles previously associated with traditional county centres. They became the focal points for the diffusion of new scientific and technological ideas through surrounding areas and set new intellectual and cultural standards.[22]

This was not the case for Derby. The town was unusual amongst English county centres in experiencing sustained growth *throughout* the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The town's prosperous industries took full advantage of the fast-flowing water power of the River Derwent and, later, readily available supplies of coal from the Erewash Valley for steam power.[23] Derby was a vigorously commercial and industrial centre using local metals and minerals in instrument-making, ironwork and gem-cutting. A 'consumer revolution' from the 1760s and thriving textile and engineering industries

[21] See R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds, 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990).
[22] See Ellis, 'Regional and County centres', p.678.
[23] See E.A Wrigley, *Continuity, Chance and Change: The Character of the Industrial Revolution in England* (Cambridge, 1990) and 'The Transition to an Advanced Organic Economy: Half a Millennium of English Agriculture', *Economic History Review*, 59, 3, (2006), pp.435-80.

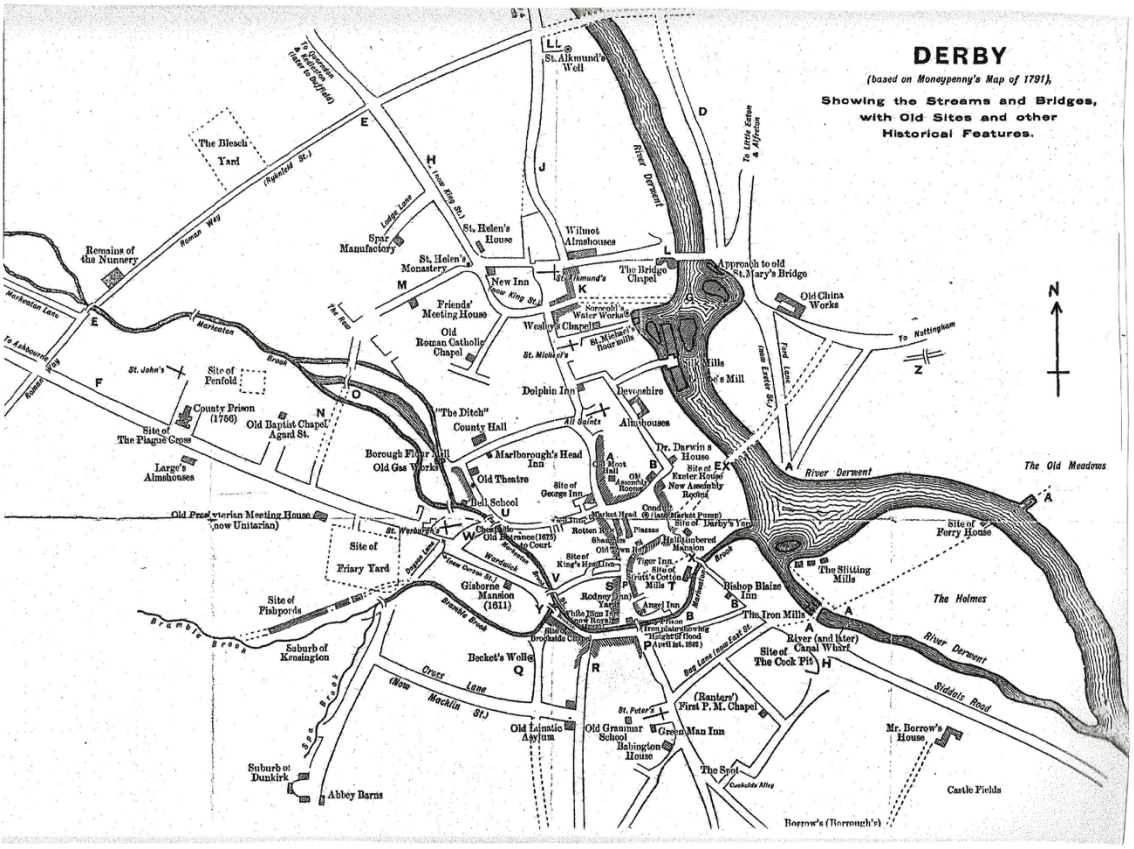
guaranteed strong economic output to the late nineteenth century.[24] Population growth epitomised its healthy economy. Along with other East Midland towns, such as Leicester and Nottingham, and to a lesser extent, Northampton, Derby was the only county capital to move up the rankings of English provincial towns.[25] Between the 1660s and 1801, Derby moved up fifty places in the list of the largest provincial towns, to 48th position. In the period 1801-1841, Derby grew faster still, as did Leicester and Nottingham, outstripping all county centres in every other English region. The population of most county centres doubled or trebled between the late seventeenth century and 1841, whereas Derby grew by up to sixteen times.[26]

Unlike many county towns, Derby also became the main industrial centre of the county with its silk and china manufacture, brewing, iron production and engineering. It became one of the principal silk throwing towns in England.[27] William Hutton noted in 1791 that 'silk is now the staple trade of the place', with more than 1,000 people employed in the industry.[28] The textile sector, however, comprised only 12 percent of all the town's occupations, with larger proportions of the workforce employed in the building trades, services and professions. In comparison to Leicester and Nottingham, for instance, Derby experienced an increase in the building and services sectors between 1700 and 1830, as did Northampton.[29] Interestingly, the East Midland towns

[24] J. De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008); N. McKendrick, 'Commercialization and the Economy', in N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J.H. Plumb (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1982).
[25] See J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (1974), p.293, for the decennial growth of Northampton.
[26] J. Langton, 'Town growth and urbanisation in the Midlands from the 1660s to 1801', in J. Stobart and P. Lane (eds.), *Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands, 1700-1840* (Leicester, 2000), p.27; J.G. Williamson, *Coping with City Growth During the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.4-5; P.J. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982), p.183; P. Borsay (ed.), *The Eighteenth-Century Town 1688-1820: A Reader in English Urban History* (1990), p.101.
[27] Lord, *Derby Past*, pp.31-3; S. Chapman, *Hosiery and Knitwear: Four Centuries of Small-Scale Industry in Britain, c.1589-2000* (Oxford, 2002), pp.21-2.
[28] Hutton, *History and Antiquities*, p.168.
[29] C. Townsend, 'Town, County and Region: Spatial Integration in the East Midlands, 1700-1830' (University of Leicester, PhD thesis, 2006), Table 4.3, p.13; P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), pp.35, 312.

benefitted from London's 'export' of hosiery to Leicester and Nottingham (there was less benefit to Derby), and shoe-making to Northampton.[30]

Fig 2.3 Map of Derby 1791 (based on Moneypenny's map)



Industrialising Derby

Until the early eighteenth century, industrial growth had been slow, so much so that the town appeared to have 'crept silently through the ages without much connexion with commerce'. Its economy was based on tailors, hat-making, weavers and shoemakers, until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when 'the frame, the river, the silk-mill, the porcelain, etc., awakened her drowsy talents to riches, increase and notice'.[31] This industrial awakening was driven by the first ever attempt to throw silk by power-driven machinery in 1702 by Thomas Cotchett. Whilst the project failed, it provided the technological prototype for Thomas Lombe's silk mill, which was established

[30] Foster, *Class Struggle,* p.85; Corfield, *Impact of English Towns,* p.74.
[31] Hutton, *History and Antiquities*, p.172.

between 1718-1722. The mill wheel and millwright work were completed by the 'brilliant designer' George Sorocold, who had established his reputation by constructing a piped water supply for the town in the late 1690s.[32] He was, according to Beckett, 'one of the most important water works engineers of the eighteenth century.'[33] The partnership of the Lombe brothers and Sorocold was the prelude to Derby's enlightened economy — the coming together of the 'vital few', the 'fabricants' and 'savants' — and their impact on the town's industrial and commercial growth and its intellectual development.[34]

Lombe's silk mill was 'the first great landmark of the industrial age,' 'the wonder of Derby and all the land', and was built, ironically, on the site of Cochett's failed mill on an island in the River Derwent, close to the urban core.[35] The main building had five storeys and was 110 by 39 feet. In 1730, a huge atmospheric engine was installed, probably built by Sorocold's friend Thomas Savery, the 'pioneer of the steam pump', to circulate warm air around the factory to ensure that the silk filaments did not snap.[36] Production was by power-driven machinery; a bell called people to work at fixed hours; the timing of production was by machine, not by the workers, and mass output produced 73,726 yards of silk at the turn of the water wheel.[37] During the decades before 1750, 'the Lombe brothers' silk throwing mills employed hundreds of workers.'[38] Glover was a little more specific, stating that in 1730 the mill employed 'more than three hundred persons.'[39] This iconic silk mill of atmospheric pumps, factory-style discipline and mass production, was an emblem of a new entrepreneurial and innovative spirit.

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[32] J. Uglow, *The Lunar Men*: *The Friends who made the Future* (2002), p.9; F. Williamson, 'George Sorocold of Derby: A Pioneer of Water Supply', *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society,* 57 (1936), pp.50-1.
[33] Beckett, *The East Midlands,* p.159.
[34] J. Mokyr, *The Gifts of Athena: Historical Origins of the Knowledge Economy* (Princeton, 2002); *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1850* (2011).
[35] Uglow, *The Lunar Men,* p.9; Richardson, *Citizen's Derby*, p.128; DLSL, Anon, *A walk through Derby, containing a concise account of the Public Amenities* (Derby, 1827).
[36] F. Nixon, *Industrial Archaeology of Derbyshire* (Newton Abbot 1969*),* p.96.
[37] Richardson, *Citizen's Derby,* p.129; Glover, *Glover's Derby,* p.77.
[38] Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy,* p.339; W.H. Chaloner, 'Sir Thomas Lombe and the British Silk Industry', *History Today,* 3 (1953), pp.778-89.
[39] Glover, *Glover's Derby*, p.76.

The textile industry was given a significant boost by Jedediah Strutt's invention in 1758 of the so-called Derby Ribbed Frame.[40] By 1760, he had opened two silk mills in the town and a special factory to weave calico, the first all-cotton cloth made in England. This cotton mill, built on the site of the old county gaol in Tennant Street, was noted for its fireproof construction, with floors of hollow brick, the idea for which came from the Palais Royale in Paris.[41] It was William, Jedediah's son, who had designed what was the first fireproof mill, which was completed in 1793.[42] Hacker suggests that the Strutt innovations of fireproof buildings supported by iron columns 'is one of the early links in the chain of engineering experience which ultimately produced the skyscraper.'[43] By 1789, twelve hundred workers were employed in twelve spinning mills situated along the banks of the Derwent and Markeaton Brook. During the next sixty years, the silk industry became the most important manufacturing trade in the town.[44] By 1845, all seventeen mills were steam-powered and employed some 5,400 people.[45] Initially reliant on water power from the River Derwent or Markeaton Brook, steam power resulted in the location of silk mills to the south of the town centre towards the railway station. According to *Glover's Directory*, there were more than forty large mills 'all erected within the last half century, fitted up with the most improved machines with accommodation for about 12,000 hands.'[46] Working in tandem with the silk factories, a highly successful trade of domestic framework-knitting developed, so much so that by the mid-eighteenth century, the town had become the centre of the framework-knitting industry.[47] There was, however, a steady decline in the late eighteenth century and in the early part of the nineteenth century, which was noted by Davison:

[40] R. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, 2009), p.251.
[41] Fitton and Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights,* p.201.
[42] C.L. Hacker, 'William Strutt of Derby 1756-1830', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 80 (1960), p.52.
[43] Ibid., p.55.
[44] Beckett, *The East Midlands,* p.286.
[45] A. Calladine, 'Lombe's Mill: An Exercise in Reconstruction', *Industrial Archaeology Review* (1993), pp.82-99.
[46] Glover, *Glover's Derby*, p.74.
[47] Beckett, *The East Midlands*, p.284; C.W. Higgens, 'The Framework-Knitters of Derbyshire', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 71 (1951), pp.106-14.

> As early as 1777…the stockingers were complaining over their hard lot, which grew worse as the power loom superseded hand labour, until, about 1830, men were working at the hand frames seventeen hours a day for the miserable sum of 5s a week.[48]

Such distress and hardship explain the 1824 framework-knitters' strike and are harbingers of the Derby Lock-Out of 1833-1834, both events symptomatic of the changing nature of employer-employee relationships and the struggle for power in the workplace.[49]

The other main plank of Derby's industrial growth and wealth creation was iron-working. The key industrialist here was Thomas Evans, who established iron rolling and slitting mills near the Holmes in 1734.[50] These were followed in 1773 by an iron-splitting mill, built nearby on the island in the River Derwent to supply the nail makers of Belper, and a copper smelting plant producing copper sheets for sheathing the hulls of wooden ships.[51] Thomas Evans also established a factory community, one mile north of the town centre on the River Derwent, at Darley Abbey, an industrial complex comprising paper, red lead, corn and cotton mills.[52]

An offshoot of this iron-making industry was the engineering works of James Fox, located in Little Chester, reputed to be the first specialist precision tool-making factory in England. Fox developed one of the first planing lathes, a screw-cutting machine and a self-acting lathe. These were exported to Europe, including Germany and Poland. The Strutts and the Arkwrights also gave the firm 'considerable employment'. Steam engines were also made, under licence to Boulton and Watt, a 2hp engine being sold to William Strutt for installation in his residence at St Helen's House.[53] The firm was taken over in 1868 by

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[48] Davison, *Rise and Progress,* p.282.
[49] See below, pp.174, 180-92.
[50] Nixon, *Industrial Archaeology,* p.52.
[51] Glover, *Glover's Derby*, p.80.
[52] J. Lindsey, 'An Early Industrial Community: The Evans' Cotton Mills at Darley Abbey, Derbyshire, 1783-1810', *Business History Review*, 34 (1960), pp.277-301; D. Peters, *Darley Abbey from Monastery to Industrial Community* (Hartington, 1974).
[53] S. Smiles, *Industrial Biography: Iron Workers and Tool Makers* [1863] (1967), pp.258-60.

Alfred Seale Haslem and became one of the town's major industrial enterprises, having produced the first refrigeration equipment for ocean-going vessels, which opened the way for large-scale importing of meat from the Antipodes and the Americas.[54] Haslem's international reputation was recognised in 1891, when he was knighted by Queen Victoria on Derby Railway station.[55]

The town's reputation for iron-casting was enhanced by Andrew Handyside, who took over the firm of Weatherhead and Glover in 1848, and became the pre-eminent iron-caster, promoting 'Derby Castings' nationwide.[56] At trials in Woolwich in 1854, the quality of Handyside's iron was judged best out of fifty samples tested, being 2.6 times stronger than the worst.[57] The firm produced a large range and variety of sizes and shapes of industrial iron window frames at the Britannia Foundry in Duke Street. Other products of the company were post office pillar-boxes, water cranes for the railway, cast-iron vases for gardens and a 40-foot iron conservatory for Henry Bessemer's home near London.[58] Two bridges were built in 1876 for the Great Northern Railway, one of which was at Friar Gate station, and 450 bridges were erected on the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway.[59]

Although the town's economy was still dominated by the textile industry, accounting for 24 per cent of the employed population in 1851, the 1840s were a watershed in the town's history, a decade that has been credited by Beckett and Heath as the start of the industrial revolution.[60] An account of the meeting of the shareholders of the Midland Railway Company in 1846, reflected the transformational effect and excitement of the times — twenty-six new projects were sanctioned at an estimated cost of three to four million

[54] Craven, *Derbeians,* pp.110-11.
[55] *DM*, 21 May 1891.
[56] Nixon, *Industrial Archaeology,* p.65.
[57] R. Christian, 'The Handyside Story', *Derbyshire Advertiser*, 7 April 1961.
[58] Nixon, *Industrial Archaeology,* p.64.
[59] Christian, 'The Handyside Story'.
[60] DLSL, 1851 census; J.V. Beckett and J.E. Heath, 'When was the Industrial Revolution in the East Midlands?' *Midland History*, 13, (1988), p.87.

pounds.[61] 'No stronger or more decisive proof', commented Glover, 'could be adduced of the energy and enterprise of the country, and the confidence of capitalists of its continued advancement, than the station and works.'[62]

The Midland Railway, building on Derby's legacy of iron-making and precision engineering, gave a tremendous boost to the town's economy. Matthew Kirtley, the company's first locomotive superintendent, spearheaded its growth and, by 1851, the Derby works began to build its own locomotives. Eventually, the workshops and company offices covered some 128 acres. The erection of the carriage and wagon works in 1876, measuring 120,000 square feet, and the factory complex for the manufacture of signalling equipment, may well have pioneered the use of large single buildings.[63] By 1891, the railway workshops employed over 7,500, the largest proportion of Midland Railway workers in the town; clerical workers amounted to 2,000, whilst the number of workers involved in the direct operation of the railway was no more than 500 to 600. About 20 per cent of the company's total workforce was employed in Derby. This included about 85 per cent of workshop staff and 40 per cent salaried, clerical and supervisory staff. The railway suburb of Litchurch was, therefore, home to a wide and diverse social spectrum within a dynamic and developing industrial environment.[64]

A thriving consumer economy

In addition to the town's factories and heavy-based industries, there was a flourishing consumer-led, highly skilled economy. As the county town and commercial centre, Derby had traditionally produced a variety and range of consumer goods, including wheat bread for the town dwellers and the Peak District. There was a flourishing hat-making trade and the town had long been

[61] DRO, BA/TNA/RAIL 491 (copy), minutes of Shareholders' meeting, 6 May 1846.
[62] Glover, *Glover's Derby,* p.87.
[63] F.S. Williams, *The Midland Railway: its Rise and Progress* (1877), p.75; Nixon, *Industrial Archaeology,* p.167.
[64] G. Revill, 'Railway Derby', pp.378-404.

associated with the production of malt and beer.[65] It was in Derby during the seventeenth century that coke was first used commercially to warm the sprouting barley in malt mills, a clear indication of the town's potential for technological innovation.[66] John Whitehurst, the clockmaker, scientist and member of the Lunar Society, was attracted to Derby by the timing mechanisms and clocking-on procedures of the silk mill. He gained a national reputation by making the clock and chimes for All Saints' church and the clock for the town hall. Glover observed that 'Mr Whitehurst has made clocks for many of the halls belonging to the nobility and gentry of this and other counties, which are remarkable for their accuracy.'[67] He also designed special timepieces for his friend, Josiah Wedgwood, for use in the Etruria works.[68]

By the mid-eighteenth century, the specialist consumer market was expanded by the introduction of Abijiah Mellor's jewellery-making and porcelain manufacture by William Duesbury and John Heath. This partnership of Duesbury, the craftsman, and Heath, the financier, set the template for commercial partnerships for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exemplifying a combination of artistic flair and business acumen. From 1756, Derby gained an international reputation for the manufacture of fine china, which was 'pre-eminent in its originality of design', its 'remarkable blue colour' and its 'fine gilding'.[69] This high-quality porcelain attracted the patronage of the local gentry and the Duke of Devonshire, who made frequent visits to the factory in Derby. Premises in Covent Garden were leased in 1773 as a warehouse and showroom and this resulted in the patronage of George III and for the company's use of the crown in the factory mark two years later. After the death of his father in 1786, William Duesbury took over the management of the factory and ensured continuing success by gathering

[65] M. Smith, *Industrial Derbyshire* (Derby, 2008), p.138.
[66] Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution,* p.223.
[67] Glover, *Glover's Derby,* p.81.
[68] E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism' in *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (1993), pp.352-403.
[69] Davison, *Rise and Progress*, p.269; Nixon, *Industrial Archaeology*, pp.91-2.

together 'perhaps the finest group of artists, gilders and modellers ever known in an English porcelain factory.'[70]

This fine artistic and cultural tradition, enhanced by the paintings of Joseph Wright, music concerts of national renown, and theatrical productions starring nationally famous actors, created a golden age of enlightened ideas, technological ingenuity, and an 'urban renaissance' of civic philanthropy. The town's prosperity and wealth, based on a thriving knowledge economy, combined economic growth and the inventiveness of a 'vital few', linked to a vibrant associative culture.[71] Indeed, Derby was distinctive in the number and quality of its inventors and innovators. Allen has paid tribute to John and Thomas Lombe, Jedediah and William Strutt, and Richard Arkwright in his list of seventy-nine great inventors of the industrial revolution.[72] The list could also, quite easily, be extended to include fabricants and savants, such as George Sorocold, John Whitehurst, Washington Shirley, Peter Perez Burdett and Erasmus Darwin from the eighteenth century; James Fox, Andrew Handyside, Matthew Kirtley and Alfred Seale Haslem from the nineteenth century.

The synergy of the town's knowledge economy and an enlightened urban culture was aptly highlighted by two local artistic artefacts. Joseph Wright's famous painting of 1776, *A Philosopher lecturing on the Orrery,* made use of light as a metaphor for the diffusion of knowledge, rational thought, and scientific discovery.

[70] Smith, *Industrial Derbyshire* (Derby, 2008), p.115.
[71] See below, pp.96-107, 129-46, 149-51.
[72] Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution*, pp.269-71.



Plate 1 *A Philosopher giving that Lecture on the Orrery, in which a lamp is put in place of the Sun*
(Source: J. Egerton, *Wright of Derby* (1990), Plate 18, p. 55)

The orrery itself illuminated the faces of the audience as they emerged from the darkness of the room, indicating the illumination of their minds by the light of science. The figures were literally subject to a process of enlightenment in the physical, as well as the intellectual sense. Wright's paintings of iron forges and mills in Derby and the Derwent valley also depict, in very vivid terms, his interest in industry and technology.[73] The second artefact is an illustration on a porcelain dish, produced around 1790 at the Duesbury china factory. The centre of the dish is painted with a view of Arkwright's cotton mill at Cromford and not with a view of a picturesque rural landscape, or stately home, as was so often the case with porcelain tableware. This dish clearly emphasised the celebration of industrialisation, material progress, and artistic excellence.[74]

[73] See F.D. Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (New York, 1970), pp.43-64.
[74] See the Royal Crown Derby Company Ltd, *The Story of Derby China* (Derby, 1910); D.G. Rice, *Derby Porcelain, 1750-1770* (Newton Abbot, 1983); D. Piper, (ed.), *The Genius of British Painting* (1975), pp.180-1; Uglow, *The Lunar Men*, pp.122-5, 334-5.

These works of art vividly illustrated a growing recognition of socio-economic and cultural change due to commerce and industry.

Transport and communication networks

Whilst thriving industries and consumerism were changing the perceptions and experiences of how the town's residents viewed their lives, significant improvements in river, road, canal and railway communications revealed a broader regional and national perspective. Ease of travel broke the insularity of the 'little State'. Derby began to change markedly as commercial, intellectual, artistic, and political associations developed. The frequent visits of itinerant lecturers brought new ideas and knowledge to the town.[75]

Initially, the demand for improvements in transport were triggered by the need for raw materials and the movement of heavy goods. Coal was especially important for sustaining the town's industries.[76] The deepening and widening of the River Derwent had made it navigable as far as the River Trent, with the first boat arriving in the town in January 1721, prompting the *Derby Postman* to report the anticipation and excitement of local people that:

> Yesterday arrived here a boat laden with Dale-boards, Tobacco, Fish and other merchandise, which was received with Ringing of bells and other demonstrations of Joy.[77]

Even so, Derby's eighteenth-century industrialists and tradesmen expressed concern regarding transport difficulties and the cost implications:

[75] See below, pp.108-11.
[76] See E. Griffin, *A Short History of the British Industrial Revolution* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp.105-25.
[77] *Derby Postman*, 17 January 1721.

> Our heavy goods must go through two or three different channels by water — the Trent, the Soar, the Leicester Navigation, so that they cost nearly £1 a ton average from Derby to Leicester.[78]

Improvements in road transport began with investment in turnpike trusts in the 1730s. The first meeting to consider setting up a trust met in Derby in 1738 and led to the first turnpike road running through the town from Sawley to Brassington. Following a meeting of investors at the *King's Head*, a more important route through Shardlow, Derby, Ashbourne and on to Manchester was established in 1739.[79] The Derby to Burton turnpike opened in 1754 following the route of the old Roman Rykneld Street.[80] The Chesterfield turnpike was opened in 1756 and the London turnpike two years later. The latter made use of the route from Derby to Shardlow and crossed the River Trent by the newly built Cavendish Bridge, funded by the Duke of Devonshire.[81] Turnpike trusts had brought some improvements, but the transportation of heavy, bulky or fragile goods was still slow, unreliable and expensive. The journey from the *Wheatsheaf* in Derby to the *Bell* in Wood Street, London, for instance, took three and a half days for wagons. In 1735, the first passenger stagecoach still took three days. With the invention of steel springs in 1754, the time for passengers by stagecoach to London was much reduced, prompting Richardson to exclaim, 'London in ten hours: it was a phenomenon!'[82]

It was the advent of canals, however, that went some way to satisfying those industrialists who were complaining about the transportation costs of moving their heavy goods through the Derwent, Trent and Soar river network. The passing of the Derby Canal Act in 1793 was a major fillip, resulting in the construction of a canal linking Derby to the River Trent and on to the Grand

[78] Williams, *Midland Railway*, pp.19-20.
[79] Richardson, *Citizen's Derby*, p.146; *DM,* 26 June 1838.
[80] Craven, *Illustrated History*, p.100.
[81] Nixon, *Industrial Archaeology,* p.142.
[82] Richardson, *Citizen's Derby*, p.147.

Trunk Canal.[83] Work began under the direction of the Alfreton engineer Benjamin Outram, who was responsible for what is probably the first cast-iron canal aqueduct, carrying the Derby Canal over the old cut of the Derwent, under Cattle Market Road in Derby. It predated Thomas Telford's much longer aqueduct on the Shrewsbury Canal at Longdon-on-Tern.[84]

By 1796, Derby was linked by a 14-mile canal to the Trent and Mersey at Shardlow and to the Erewash Canal at Sandiacre with ongoing links to Hull and Liverpool, providing the town with international markets to the east and west respectively. Barges bringing lime from the Erewash valley and coal from outlying areas did so more cheaply and easily than wagons and packhorses.[85] A branch canal to Little Eaton made another coal-producing area accessible, resulting in a 50 per cent lowering of the costs of transporting heavy castings from the iron foundries and Cornish clay for use in the china factories.[86] In the heyday of 'canal mania', Derby was an important inland port, 'bigger in extent than Shardlow.'[87]

The coming of the railway to the town ushered in a period of rapid economic growth, a sharp rise in population and significant changes to the physical layout of the town. As one resident put it, 'the Midland Railway Company is Derby, and it would be difficult to imagine the town as other than a colossal railway system.'[88] Derby's geographical position was advantageous for railway development. Its location at the southern edge of the Pennines provided an east-to-west crossing point, a northerly route through the Derwent Valley and southwards expansion by the Midland Plain. In planning for the Midland Counties Railway, the land survey had confirmed that construction would be

[83] DLSL, BA/4643, material relating to Derby Canal.
[84] M. Smith, *The Derby Canal* (Ilkeston, 1980); R.B. Schofield, *Benjamin Outram 1764-1805: An Engineering Biography* (Cardiff, 2003).
[85] Hutton, *History and Antiquities,* pp.225; S. Glover, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Derby,* vol. II (1829), p.235.
[86] Davison, *Rise and Progress*, p.278.
[87] Nixon, *Industrial Archaeology*, p.149.
[88] E. Bradbury and R. Keene, *All about Derby* (Derby, 1884), p.112.

relatively cheap and that the use of mechanical power in all directions would be comparatively small.[89]

The Borough councillors, who recognised from the outset the enormous benefits that the railway would bring to the town, shared this enthusiastic view. In August 1833, plans were drawn up to link Derby with the London and Birmingham railway and a few months later there were committee meetings to link these towns by laying a line to London. Plans to make Derby a terminus began in 1834 and in October 1835 there was a proposal to build a railway from Birmingham to Derby, which would be extended by the proposed North Midland line to Leeds, prompting the *Derby Mercury* to comment that these developments would make the town 'a centre of communication, and must, we imagine, increase the trade and importance of the town.'[90]

Derbyshire coal owners certainly saw a significant advantage in this 'great undertaking'. The opening of the Leicester and Swannington railway in 1832 had resulted in a loss of trade for them and the opening of the Midland Counties line proved to be an economic boost. As Lewin points out, Derbyshire coal was selling at 10s per ton in Leicester in the 1830s and was subject to a surcharge for tonnage and freight. The new railway would reduce Derbyshire coal owners' prices considerably to 3s per ton.[91] These economic benefits were complemented by a regular passenger service between Derby and Nottingham, with four trains running daily each way, attracting hundreds of passengers.[92] Social divisions were reflected in the cost of travel. Return fares were priced at 4s for 1st class and 2s 6d, 2nd class.[93]

[89] *DM,* 1 January 1834.
[90] J.S. Downham, *The Communication of Ideas: A Community Study of Contemporary Urban Life in Greater Derby* (1954); *DM,* 8 May 1835.
[91] H.G. Lewin, *Early British Railways: A Short History of their Origin and Development, 1801-44* (1925), p.43.
[92] Davison, *Rise and Progress*, p.288.
[93] *DM,* 5 June 1839.

The Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway opened in August 1839, making the travelling time to London just under seven hours.[94] The opening ceremony was a civic occasion, with the mayor extolling the advantages of ease of communication between the town and Birmingham and London, 'both in pecuniary and in an intellectual sense'.[95] With the opening of the first part of the North Midland line in May 1840 and the extension of the Birmingham line to Gloucester, Derby's rail network was enhanced by 'an outlet to the west, and converted it into a most important railway junction, as well as offering a through connection between London and Birmingham and the Yorkshire towns.'[96]

Derby station, built by the North Midland Company, was officially opened on 30 June 1840 and was used by all three companies, with North Midland charging 6 per cent on the proportion of the cost for their accommodation. The station covered 26 acres and comprised offices, waiting and refreshment rooms, and apartments for the directors, clerks and other workers, as well as warehouses and 'a shed of great extent and lightness' to separate engine houses and workshops.[97] The overall significance of improved communications was a growth in local trade due to a strengthening of intra-regional links and an expansion of inter-regional contacts, both economic and social, especially with the advent of the railway.[98] The Midland Railway Company's industrial infrastructure transformed the physical layout of Derby. From the 1840s, the town comprised two distinct communities — the traditional urban core centred around the market place, with its five ancient parishes, and the district of Litchurch, known as 'Railway Derby', located to the south-east.[99] As Kellett has

[94] Ibid.
[95] *DM*, 7 August 1839.
[96] C.E.R. Sherrington, *The Economics of Rail Transport in Great Britain*, vol. 1 (1928), p.95.
[97] S. Bagshaw, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Derbyshire with the Town of Burton upon Trent* (Sheffield, 1846), p.83.
[98] Beckett, *The East Midlands*, p.260.
[99] C.H. Jones, 'The Midland Railway Works at Derby' *English Illustrated Magazine* (1892), pp.673-82; E.C. Vollans, 'Derby: A Railway Town and Regional Centre', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (1949), pp.91-112.

argued, the railway was a truly significant force for change – spatially, economically and socially.[100]

The urban environment

In the late 1760s, Sylas Neville described the town as:

> a strange, stragling place in a medow. Some of the streets not paved at all, others but badly paved with small pebbles, and all of them narrow, except for a few, indifferent.[101]

Stephen Glover's description of 1843 offers a contrasting assessment:

> The town of Derby is rapidly becoming distinguished among the provincial capitals of the kingdom for improvements, which blend the two characteristics of perfection — elegance and utility. The streets, particularly the main thoroughfares, are gradually being divested of obstructions, and with the approaches to the borough in every direction, have undergone the process, which gives smoothness and safety to the carriage-ways. In public buildings, Derby probably surpasses every county town of similar extent.[102]

During the seventy-year period between these contrasting views, Derby went through an economic boom. Growing industrial and commercial wealth and the development of provincial culture resulted in a transformation of the urban landscape. The elite of town and county built elegant town houses around the market place and in the adjoining streets. Jedediah, William and Joseph Strutt, Erasmus Darwin, Joseph Wright, Joseph Pickford and John Whitehurst, along with medical practitioners, solicitors and architects, tended to live in Friar Gate,

[100] J.R. Kellett, *The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities* (1969).
[101] B. Cozens-Hardy (ed.), *The Diary of Sylas Neville, 1767-1788* (Oxford, 1950), p.277.
[102] S. Glover, *Glover's Derby: History and Directory of the Borough of Derby*, (1843), p.467.

Iron Gate and St Mary's Gate, the Wardwick and St Peter's Street.[103] Writing in the early nineteenth century, Sir Richard Phillips noted that:

> One broad street, called Friar Gate, above half a mile long, is filled with tasteful mansions, and similar structures, in the architectural style of the early years of George the Third. Some of them are occupied…by persons of fortune who find in Derby, the agreeableness of town and country.[104]

Derby became increasingly a social centre for the local gentry and the county's aristocracy. The growth in the building sector in Derby coincided with a spate of new urban amenities from the mid-eighteenth century. Improvements to the physical fabric of the town, an important element of the 'urban renaissance', also encompassed domestic buildings, as 'stone Palladian fronts and classical elegance replaced vernacular wood and brick.' Fine examples of domestic architecture include Thorntree House in St Peter's Street, where Joseph Stutt kept his art collection. Joseph Pickford's renovation of John Whitehurst's house in Queen Street in 1764 included a new façade of a Palladian parapet and Diocletian windows. In 1766-1767 Pickford also built St Helen's House for the Whig grandee John Gisborne of Yoxall Lodge, located just over the Staffordshire county border. St Helen's House 'survives as probably the finest Palladian town house in the English provinces.'[105] The outstanding house of eighteenth-century Derby, however, was Exeter House, which was re-fronted by the Earl of Exeter prior to becoming Bonnie Prince Charlie's headquarters in 1745. Jedediah Strutt lived there briefly shortly before his death in 1797.

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[103]Craven, *Illustrated History,* pp.84,105,111-2; E. Saunders, *Joseph Pickford of Derby: A Georgian Architect* (Stroud, 1993), p.24.
[104] Sir R. Phillips, *A Personal Tour through the United Kingdom*, vol. 2, *Derby and Nottinghamshire* (1828), quoted in Saunders, *Joseph Pickford*, p.110; see also E. Saunders, 'The Villas and Town Houses of Joseph Pickford of Derby (1763-82)', *Architectural History* (1984), pp.308-19.
[105] Craven, *Illustrated History*, p.112.

Fig 2.4 DLSL, Map of eighteenth-century key locations



Key to map

1. Queen Street, home and workshop of J. Whitehurst 1764-1793. Home to Joseph Wright 1793-1797
2. All Saints' Church
3. Silk-mill (1718-1722)
4. St Michael's Church
5. Iron Gate, John Whitehurst's house and workshops 1736-1764
6. Full Street, Erasmus Darwin's house 1782-1801
7. Iron Gate, Joseph Wright's birthplace 1734 and boyhood home
8. Full Street, Peter Perez Burdett's house, built in 1765
9. Assembly Rooms, Market Place, built 1763
10. Friar Gate, Joseph Pickford's house, c.1770-1782
11. Derby Porcelain Factory, Nottingham Road
12. Old St Helen's House, King Street; Joseph Wright's house c.1772-1793; Richard Brown's Spar Works from 1793
13. St Helen's House, King Street, built 1767 for John Gisborne; William Strutt's house 1803-1830
14. Derbyshire General Infirmary, London Road, built 1810
15. St Peter's Street, original Strutt family home, 1760s-1844
16. Albert Street, Strutt's fireproof cotton mill, built in 1793
17. Mechanics' Institute, 1825, Wardwick
18. Cornmarket, Duke of Devonshire's town house

Peter Burdett's map of Derby shown above, modified by Moneypenny in 1791, locates some of the grand houses and important buildings as part of the town's 'urban renaissance'. These elegant houses and streets reflected the wealth and prosperity of Derby's elite. Conversely, they presented a stark contrast to the poor living conditions and environmental degradation of the inhabitants of the urban core. Local councillors and improvement commissioners were experiencing huge difficulties in managing urban deprivation brought on by sustained industrial development, population growth, and urbanisation. There was an urgent need for basic urban improvements, such as paving, lighting, drainage and sewerage. General maintenance requirements were essential to sustain an ever-expanding population. The poor living conditions of the workers, especially in the parishes of St Michael's and St Wergurgh's, which were located close to the River Derwent and Markeaton Brook respectively, contrasted sharply with the fine town houses of the gentry and the wealthy industrialists. This became increasingly a social and cultural wedge between the workers and the urban elite.[106]

Of major concern to the urban planners was the danger of flooding, particularly of the Markeaton Brook. Minor floods were not uncommon, but occasionally the brook would overflow its banks and cause significant damage to people and property. In January 1774, for instance, there was a flood on market day, which created havoc to the traders and forced those who lived along the Markeaton valley to travel home by boat. A few days later, the brook flooded again and washed down the wall of St Werburgh's church, carried away the wooden bridge over Bold Lane and flooded parts of the Cornmarket.[107] This damage was compounded by the lack of appropriate sanitary conditions. Much of the town's effluence drained into the brook, making it an open sewer, and in times of flood, filthy water would seep into the houses of the mill workers.[108]

[106] See Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.284-308.
[107] Davison, *Rise and Progress*, p.124.
[108] Ibid., p.154.

Glover recalls the 'most remarkable floods on record' throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but notes that the 'most disastrous flood that ever occurred' was the so called 'Great Flood' of 1842, which had a devastating impact on the poorer parts of the town, located near the Derwent and the Markeaton Brook.[109] A local newspaper reported 'daily evacuations of more than probably twenty thousand people'.[110] Inhabitants of Willow Row witnessed the 'roaring waters' with waves 'compared to nought but those of the sea.'[111] The *Derby Mercury* reported that the house fronts in the courts of Sadler Gate, Three Tun's Yard, St. James' Lane and Thorntree Lane had been washed away, and that a Mr Bainbridge had witnessed naked children, as many as five and six to a house, in dire straits.[112]

It was not only the working classes that suffered from this natural disaster. The house of Joseph Strutt in St Peter's Street, for example, suffered damage to furnishing and the library, with estimated damage at nearly £1,000. Many of the town centre traders suffered loss to stock, with probably the worst damage in the Cornmarket. The mayor, Stephen Gamble, issued a notice on 4 April 1842, inviting local townspeople to a public meeting to discuss what could be done to help the poor. Members of the Strutt family and other local worthies, such as the Jessop family of the Wardwick, met to discuss the distribution of relief to those most affected. In all, 110 people were admitted to the union workhouse after officers of the guardians visited all parts of the town.[113] The paternalistic and charitable efforts of the mayor instigated the distribution of 70 tons of coal, although he confirmed that the corporation had no money to give. The Committee of the Fund for the Relief of the Poor, formed the previous winter, had money in hand, amounting to £300, plus a further £50 in the savings bank, which was to be made available immediately.[114] Mr Cox asked for consideration to be given to the small traders,

[109] Glover, *History and Gazetteer*, p.85.
[110] *DM*, 3 March 1842.
[111] *The Reporter*, 7 April 1842.
[112] *DM*, 6 April 1842.
[113] *The Reporter*, 7 April 1842.
[114] *DM*, 6 April 1842.

who had lost everything, but it was the poor who received most consideration. Mr Jessops hoped that the committee would impress upon the poor the need for cleanliness and to sweep away the filth left by the flood to prevent disease.[115]

By mid-century, Edward Cresy was painting a lurid picture of the living conditions in the early industrial sector of the town as population growth gave rise to severe problems of health and sanitation amongst the workers. In the parishes of All Saints' and St Michael's, particularly in the Walker Lane and Nun's Green areas, the Markeaton Brook was 'so charged with sulphuretted hydrogen at Mr Lowe's, the drapers, all the white paint and letters in the space of a short time were changed black.'[116] Derby's slaughterhouses were sited around the brook and were 'productive of much evil'. The principal streets and the 352 courts, which led from them, were not covered by the Local Act, which contained no provision for the drainage, sewerage, water supply, paving or cleaning of this overcrowded area. The courts were consequently 'saturated with all that is offensive and cannot be otherwise than injurious to health, and in the moral point of view destructive to character.'[117] Disease in the poorer districts was rife. Dr Baker reported to the Poor Law Commissioners that:

> the usual haunts of disease amongst the working classes of this town were those localities which were the worst by nature and the most neglected by Art; that in such situations three quarters of the fevers, dysenteries and diarrhoea exist.[118]

From 1840 to 1842, the average mortality rate in the town was 2.6 per cent compared to the national figure of 2.2 per cent. In 1840, 250 inhabitants died from epidemic diseases, most of which were likely to have affected the families

[115] *The Reporter*, 7 April 1842, p.3; G.E. Conway, 'The Great Flood of Derby, 1st April 1842' (MA thesis, University of Nottingham, 1991) provides an evocative study of this event.
[116] Cresy, *Report to the General Board*, p.11.
[117] Ibid., p.12.
[118] Baker, 'Report on the sanitary condition of the town of Derby', p.161.

of the workers. Cresy went so far as to describe the Walker Lane district as 'the St Giles of Derby…the houses of which are of most inferior description, the inhabitants of a piece with their house.'[119]

The building boom to cater for the increased population resulted in houses that were quickly erected and poorly built. A memorandum drawn up by three local doctors confirmed the lack of preparation and foresight on the part of the administrators, emphasising the piecemeal, panic measures of inexperienced town planners grappling with novel circumstances. Even the doctors appear to have been wise in hindsight:

> We also beg to call attention to the fact that the population of Derby has increased nearly 10,000 in the last seven years and that 8/10 of this increase is among the labouring classes, who chiefly inhabit newly built houses where the drainage has been defective and where there has been no main sewer.[120]

The industrial watershed of the 1840s witnessed a shift in social consciousness and a growing awareness by Derby's elite that deprivation, injustice, socio-economic and cultural inequalities led to unrest, social fragmentation, and division. The 'little State' mentality of the town was changing. The benevolent oligarchy, led by the Strutt family, was coming to an end; paternalism was giving way to the corporate culture of the Midland Railway; state intervention was replacing laissez-faire. Chartism was at its height in the town and, in the previous decade, the Reform Bill riots and the Derby Lock-Out had challenged the status quo.[121] The Board of Health reports highlighted the wide socio-economic differences between the urban elite and the workers. These divisions were not novel. Indeed, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were peppered with a rebellious popular culture, which resulted in collective action and the evolution of an incipient plebeian identity.

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[119] Cresy, *Report to the General Board*, p.13.
[120] Ibid., pp.17, 18.
[121] See below, pp.175-214.

A rebellious culture

Eighteenth-century food riots epitomised this rebellious culture. Interestingly, the objects of protest and attack were capitalists and middlemen, who were seen to be disrupting the social order in the interests of profits. Landowners and the governing elite, who exercised their power and pursued their interests from a greater social or geographical distance, were less the objects of criticism. Indeed, they were the authority to whom rioters, in the first instance, appealed for help in maintaining traditional paternalistic values. What set the eighteenth-century protest apart from the oppositional politics of the nineteenth century was the way in which the power of the aristocracy and the gentry and their paternal role was not challenged but endorsed by the rioters. Thompson has emphasised that 'we can read eighteenth-century social history as a succession of confrontations between an innovative market economy and the customary moral economy of the plebs'. This was certainly the case in Derby.[122]

The rebellious culture of the eighteenth century was partly fuelled by the defence of customary rights. It was only when petitions to King and Parliament to activate regulatory legislation had failed that the crowd turned to direct action. So long as the gentry continued to support the commitment to regulation and performed their traditional roles, then the continuation of reciprocity and *noblesse oblige* was assured. If significant political instability was to be avoided, then a stable working relationship had to be maintained between the gentry and workers. The growth of Derby, however, with its early industries and factory system, expanded that sector of the economy, which was independent of a direct relationship with the gentry. There was, therefore, a gradual decline in gentry control over socio-economic behaviour. Capitalism replaced the traditional 'moral economy' by a factory system which, in many

[122]E.P. Thompson, 'Eighteenth Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class', *Social History* 3 (1978), p.151; see also 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, 50 (1971), pp.76-136.

cases, became a toxic work environment. Two contrasting societies emerged in eighteenth-century Derby. On the one hand, reasonable relationships existed between the gentry, the urban elite and the workers, based on paternalism and what Asa Briggs has referred to as a 'bond of attachment', which was associated with both duty and dependence.[123] On the other hand, there was a society in which there was considerable strife and unrest. Food riots illustrate the point. As a county town and an important centre for the regional corn market, Derby attracted militant crowds of strangers, who joined with local workers to uphold what they saw as the moral economy.[124]

In 1740, for example, two wagons 'loaded with 24 bags of fine flour', on their way to Leek, were stopped on the outskirts of Derby by a crowd, and forced to return to the market place.[125] Having stopped the wagons, they 'took possession of what they considered to be contraband property, and endeavoured to distribute it amongst themselves'.[126] It was apparent that the crowd's action was informed by the popular belief that the dealers who took part in illegitimate practices forfeited any right to the corn they owned. Similar justifications were put forward in 1756, when the local press reported that the mills in Derby and its environs had been attacked by 'a large number of miners, and other persons out of the Peak'. This crowd action was in response to local millers who used 'French stones' in the grinding of corn. These were believed to be 'destructive' to the poor, because they facilitated the making of exorbitant profits on the part of the miller: 'the owners of them engross great quantities of Grain into their hands and advance the Price'.[127]

The newly-arrived French millstone ground the flour finer than was customary and made possible the adulteration of the grain: 'there are several things ground and mixed with the flour, that is very prejudicial to the health of the

[123] See A. Briggs, 'The Language of Class in Early Nineteenth Century England', in A. Briggs and J. Savile *Essays in Labour History: in memory of G.D.H. Cole* (1960), pp. 43-73.
[124] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 14 September 1756.
[125] R.F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (1957), p.22.
[126] Davison, *Rise and Progress*, p.73.
[127] *DM*, 10 September 1756.

people, and that they don't know what they buy'.[128] Millers were accused of grinding peas and beans, and even lime and plaster, in with the flour. It was commonly known that 'Mr Evans, miller of Darley (Abbey), boasted that he could grind ten pounds of corn into twenty pounds worth of flour'.[129] The mayor of Derby admitted that 'these things greatly inflame the Publick and distress the Poor'.[130] Indeed, those mills known to house the new stones became the target of attacks by the crowd, and several stones were destroyed, including those in the mills of the mayor and the Evans family.

The crowd action of 1756 appears to have been disciplined and well organised and not the spontaneous action of separate mobs. The riots were preceded by:

> An incendiary letter…found dropp'd in the Market Place of this Borough, directed to the Burgesses thereof, tending to incite Persons to rise in a tumultuous and riotous Manner.[131]

The actual 'manner' of the rising was not 'tumultuous and riotous', but rather planned and directed. The rioters had forewarned that they intended to 'destroy the French Stones at all the Corn Mills in this Town and Neighbourhood', and their route appears to have been carefully worked out. Rioters only visited those mills which used the new stones, beginning with those at Darley Abbey, before marching to the town centre. They were also discriminating in their use of violence; they not only left untouched those mills which did not use the French stones, but also on at least one occasion, at Mr Snape's mill, 'left the Mill, without doing any mischief' on finding that the stones had been taken away. The crowd also demonstrated great determination and some grasp of strategy when faced with opposition from the authorities. Having arrived at Mr Holmes' mill during the afternoon and

[128] *DM*, 3 September 1756.
[129] Davison, *Rise and Progress*, p.103.
[130] *DM*, 3 September 1756.
[131] *DM*, 27 August and 10 September 1756.

finding it defended by the owner, the mayor and a contingent of soldiers, the crowd withdrew and waited until nightfall to throw stones at the defenders. Once the soldiers had retreated, the crowd broke into the mill and destroyed the French stones.[132]

The nature of this crowd action aptly demonstrated that 'rioters' were concerned with imposing on farmers, millers and dealers the morals of the traditional corn economy of the poor. Moral imperatives included the regulation of prices according to the means of the less well-off; those seeking to profit from the misfortunes of the poor might be legitimately compelled to comply with popular notions of fair marketing practices and a 'just price'. The crowd action of the eighteenth century was not the spontaneous, blind response of starving people, but rather 'a highly complex form of direct popular action, disciplined and with clear objectives'.[133] The actions of the authorities support the view that the 'rioters' were acting to a large extent within the legitimising notions of a traditional view of the 'rights of the poor', and within the consensus of the community. During the bad harvests of 1756, 1766, 1795 and 1800, the local magistrates reprinted and advertised the laws relating to 'Forestalling, Engrossing and Regrating', and the sale of underweight or 'false mixtures'.[134] They were also prepared to order farmers to bring their corn to market, and to set up 'subscriptions' among the wealthy to directly help the poor or subsidise the price of corn. So in 1766, for instance, the mayor of Derby issued a proclamation, stating that:

> Whereas the poor of this town...have suffered greatly by the darkness of all kinds of provisions; and not withstanding a plentiful and good harvest, the markets are but thinly supplied with corn: this is therefore to desire the farmers to bring their corn to market.[135]

[132] Ibid.
[133] Thompson, 'The Moral Economy', p.78.
[134] *DM*, 10 October 1756.
[135] *DM*, 3 October 1766.

Interestingly, what is significant is not the authorities' power to prevent rioting, but the extent to which they were prisoners of the people regarding the nature of the action they were able to take in times of emergency. This ambivalent relationship between crowd and authority not only indicated the strength of the attachment to paternalistic principles on both sides, but also of the effectiveness of crowd action. It became increasingly evident that association was the key to empowerment.

Despite this residue of respect for the paternalistic model, there were limits to what the authorities could and could not condone. There was a decisive break between the urban elite and the rights of the poor as soon as the crowd action ceased to be a threat and became a reality. For example, in 1756 the crowd took on a troop of soldiers over the use of French stones in the corn mills. Workers were further incensed when six rioters were arrested and marched to the county gaol. They followed the troops escorting the prisoners, throwing stones and abuse at them, until finally the soldiers were so enraged that 'they fired singly or two or three times, but by which last fire in the market place, one Frith, a youth of about 16, was dangerously wounded in the knee'.[136] The troops faced similar hostility in 1766, again on the arrest of several rioters and were attacked on their way to the gaol. On reaching the market place, the troops were ordered to draw up in ranks, while the mayor read the Riot Act. The crowd, however, refused to disperse, remaining steadfast until the soldiers were ordered to 'drive them out…with their drawn swords'.[137] In 1800, William Foreman, a member of the local Volunteer Cavalry, was called out twice to riots at Ashby and Derby. He wrote in his diary that, at Ashby 'their was nothink to be dun, the troops slept in Calke Park', but at Derby the situation was more serious:

> This morning early, oure troop whas called to Derby and two more troops of oures besides the Derby Infantry all up all night garding the

[136] *DM*, 10 September 1756. Frith recovered 'tho' it is feared he will always be lame.'
[137] *DM*, 10 October 1766.

> Gale for their whas a man brought to the Gale over-night and the mob sade they would pull down the Gale to let him out.[138]

Crowd action not only frightened the urban elite into repressive measures, but also justified their growing fears of the potential threat to the status quo from the expanding numbers of manufacturing workers.[139] Thomas Brown pointed out that the 'seeds of discontent meet with the richest soil in the increased population consequent on manufactures'. He concluded that any such seeds sown amongst a class notorious for its insubordinate and riotous behaviour would encourage its participants to 'flatter themselves that general confusion is the road which will lead them to power. This is readily accepted by the profligate, who supposes he may seize in a scramble that which he has not virtue or patience to acquire by industry'.[140] This view articulated not only the fears of an individual, but of a latent class consciousness, and it thereby characterised the divisions within paternalistic society. Whilst the urban elite sought to defend certain popular interests, and occasionally accede to popular demands, crowd action did, indeed, pose a threat to the existing order of society and could not be ignored. When the workers rioted, the response of the urban elite was clearly defined — they closed ranks to preserve their cultural hegemony. As Thompson so aptly remarked, 'different plays might be permitted: the audience might even hiss or pelt the actors, but the theatre itself must not be pulled down'.[141]

Such sentiments were vividly illustrated by the so-called Pentrich Rebellion of 1817, which is reputed to be the first 'proletarian insurrection' in England to be attempted without the support of the middle class. It was a transitional moment between the Luddites and the populist radicalism of 1830-1832.[142]

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[138] DLSL, BA/1071, *Diary of William Foreman*, 16 August 1800.
[139] See J. Farey, *General View of the Agriculture of Derbyshire* (1813), p.499; J. Pilkington, *A View of the Present State of Derbyshire*, II, (Derby, 1789), p.56; J. Byng, *The Torrington Diaries* [1790] (1935), pp.81-2.
[140] T. Brown, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Derby* (1794), pp.39-40.
[141] E.P. Thompson, 'Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture', *Journal of Social History*, 7 (1974), p.392.
[142] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1991 edition), p.733; see also, J. Neal, *The Pentrich Revolution* (Pentrich, 1966); J. Stevens, *England's Last Revolution: Pentrich 1817*

Although the 'revolutionaries' marched on Nottingham, they came from Derbyshire and their trials were held in Derby. There was a general belief that a government spy, Oliver, was involved in the conspiracy. The men from Pentrich were victims of a plot by the government and the county gentry to send a strong message to all workers in the area that agitation and dissent would not be tolerated. At the treason trials, held in Derby, following the failure of the 'rebellion', Joseph Strutt made great pleas for leniency on behalf of the accused. His son, Joseph Douglas, one of the thousands who witnessed the executions of Brandreth, Ludlam and Turner before the county gaol, echoed the sentiments of the whole family when he wrote to Edward Strutt:

> People are flocking to Derby to witness this dreadful sight — the horse guards are parading our streets; I am glad you are spared the feeling which these things could excite in your bosom. The time for the execution is drawing near & I am going to be a witness of it tho' my heart is ready to burst at the very idea. Good God are these things to be suffered much longer in our once free and happy land.[143]

The 'free and happy land', a clear reference to the mythology of bygone days of traditional values, emphasised the strong strand of conservatism at the core of Derby's elite. Cobbett picked up the theme in his defence of the rebels by referring to 1688: 'What did Brandreth do more than was done by the Whigs at the Revolution?'[144] Indeed, this transitional moment, and the long-term influence of those who marched on Nottingham, strengthened the constitutionalist, rather than the revolutionary, wing of the reform movement. 'Peaceably if we may' took precedence over 'forcibly if we must'. From 1817 until Chartist times, the central tradition of the workers was that which

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(Hartington, 1977); M. Parkin, *A Recipe for Revolution: Reflections on the Pentrich Rising of June 1817* (Chesterfield, 2014); J. Young, *The Pentrich Revolution: A Brief History* (Bolsover, 2016); P. Darrington, *Pentrich - England's Last Uprising* (2017); R.A. Gaunt, 'On the Trail of the Pentrich Rebellion', *The Historian*, 135 (Autumn, 2017), pp.44-6; Gaunt 'The Pentrich Revolution: A Nottingham Affair?', *Midland History* (forthcoming article).

[143] For the full text see W. Page (ed.), *Victoria County History, Derby*, II (1907), pp.153-4; an account of the proceedings at the Trials is given in the *Derby Mercury*, 2 October to 13 November 1817.

[144] *Political Register*, 26 December 1818.

exploited every means of agitation and protest short of active insurrectionary preparation.[145] Such an ideology was reflected in the framework-knitters' strike of 1824. This 'transitional moment' foreshadowed the turbulent times of the Reform Bill riots and the Derby Lock-Out when agitation and dissent fractured socio-economic relationships and was a precursor to Chartist activity in the town.[146]

Conclusion

This chapter has emphasised Derby's progress as an important industrial and commercial centre and as a thriving county town, which both attracted and nurtured a coterie of artists, entrepreneurs, inventors, and intellectuals. These 'vital few' provided the impetus and human capital to propel the 'little State' of Derby from a small and insular urban space to a vigorous and populous creative community. Unlike many county centres, Derby did not reduce its dependence on the staple industries of silk, the manufacture of fine china and iron-making. Indeed, these industries were sustained throughout the nineteenth century and were boosted by the significant impact of the Midland Railway. The development of a more diverse, service-orientated economy ran parallel to these traditional industries. Professional services and high-status crafts and trades flourished, which helped drive the consumption of luxury goods, with accompanying improvements to the physical fabric, transport networks and social amenities of the town.[147]

Derby's status as a distinctive county town enhanced its importance as an urban space. Population growth expanded greatly with the advent of the Midland Railway and the town's industrial revolution of the 1840s. From a purely quantitative perspective, this population increase placed Derby in the upper echelons of the middle range of the traditional urban hierarchy. There were no urban centres in Derbyshire to rival Derby's growth or influence.

[145] See Thompson, *English Working Class*, pp.711-34.
[146] See below, pp.175-92.
[147] See P. Borsay, *Urban Renaissance,* pp.3-37; Borsay, *Eighteenth-Century Town* (1990), pp.3-13.

Indeed, the town easily met Borsay's 'matrix of urban economic functions', which included industry, commerce, services and administration.[148] These had been nurtured by the early factory system of the famous silk mill of the 1720s, which had ushered in a period of creativity and dynamism much earlier than most English towns.[149] Derby's influence over its immediate hinterland of the county, east Staffordshire and north-west Leicestershire was secured, therefore, by the mid-eighteenth century, but it was the combined quantitative and qualitative factors which gave it the status of a regional centre of national importance from the 1750s onwards. A synthesis of industry, urbanisation, and a wide-ranging associative culture nurtured a sophisticated and ambitious urban elite and an aspirational and, on occasion, radical workforce. These quantitative and qualitative factors changed the ways in which the town's inhabitants viewed their life experiences which, in turn, changed their perceptions of urban living.[150]

This chapter has provided the socio-economic and cultural background of industrialising Derby. In doing so, it has set the scene for an examination of the town's wealth creation, its power structures, and the empowerment of both the urban elite and the workers. The focus now turns in the following two chapters to the evolution of a bourgeois identity by analysing the relationships between the aristocracy, the gentry and the town's oligarchy. It examines how specific clubs and societies were moulded by industrialisation, useful knowledge, and politics; and how these associations reacted to change and continuity, to new ways of thinking; indeed, how the 'little State' of Derby was transformed into an enlightened metropolis of a civil and urbane culture.

[148] P. Borsay (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Town,* pp.9-15; for the nineteenth century, see R.J. Morris and R. Rodger (eds.), *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History 1820-1914* (1993), pp.1-12.
[149] E.A. Wrigley, 'Urban growth and agricultural change: England and the Continent in the early modern period', *Journal of interdisciplinary History*, 15 (1985), pp.705-12; J. De Vries, *European Urbanization 1500-1800* (1984), pp.255-65.
[150] See Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.4-37; A. Dyer, 'England: Midlands', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History*, pp.93-110.

Chapter 3: Patronage, politics and the knowledge economy, c.1700-1802

Introduction

As was noted in Chapter 1, the historiography points to a strong interplay between the growth of an associative culture, the economy, and social identity. Dense ties of association, based on a combination of close relationships, business connections, intellectual and political societies, forged networks of 'fabricants' and 'savants'. These individuals, the 'vital few', embodied the spirit of the age by applying and diffusing 'useful knowledge'.[1] They were a minority group, sharing Masonic and philosophical, as well as commercial and industrial interests, and they played a leading role in the town's associational world and enlightened circles.[2] Clubs and societies offered safe and relatively harmonious spaces for the functions of urban society to be determined, such as the choice of marriage partners, the negotiation of business deals, and solutions to local disputes.[3] Within these neutral and controlled spaces, ideas and values could be refined and shaped; attitudes and modes of behaviour could be defined; and solutions to the detrimental impact of industrialisation and urbanisation might be resolved.

Associations nurtured and promoted 'good taste', which became the adhesive from which emerged a 'cultural solidarity and social cohesion'.[4] There is little doubt that this social refinement of both the public and private spheres of life was founded on economic success and wealth creation.[5] 'Polite society' was

[1] J. Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700*-1850 (2011), pp.3-15.
[2] M.C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in 18th Century Europe* (Oxford, 1991), p.65; P.A. Elliott and S. Daniels, 'The School of True, Useful and Universal Science: Freemasonry, Natural Philosophy and Scientific Culture in Eighteenth-Century England', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 39 (2006), pp.207-30.
[3] J. Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton, 2017), pp.17, 20.
[4] A. Thackray, 'Natural Knowledge in a Cultural Context: The Manchester Model', *American Historical Review*, 79, (1974), p.693.
[5] D. Hume, 'Of refinement in the arts', *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* [1752] (1825), II, pp.265, 268, 274-5.

very firmly based on the hard graft and rigour of the 'knowledge economy'.[6] Roy Porter has aptly emphasised the point that *Sapere aude* came to mean *facere aude* — not just to know but to act as well.[7]

Such a mantra was exemplified by Jedediah Strutt. Although 'money-getting' was of prime importance, it had to be tempered by 'a life of diligence, honesty, sobriety, and virtue'; and education and knowledge were essential attributes of this set of values.[8] It was certainly the case that Derby's urban elite looked for social and economic returns for their membership dues.[9] Money did, as Porter has argued, offer 'an *entrée* into a modern commercial dream world which led all to entertain hopes and allowed quite a few to realize them'.[10] This aspiration was shared by William Strutt, who accepted his father's views on the importance of 'money getting' and saw it almost as a pre-condition for the acquisition of knowledge. Writing to his son, Edward, in 1818, he stressed the importance of both:

> You are now just at that age when it is easy to learn anything, & you have nothing to do but to learn. When I was the same age I had nothing to do but to Work — the two objects Wealth & knowledge.[11]

The purpose of this chapter is to address three closely interrelated questions concerning the nature of Derby's elite associative culture during the eighteenth century. First, to what extent did Derby's associational world shape and define a nascent middle class identity?[12] Secondly, how much credence can be attributed to John Beckett's suggestion that 'the middle class took shape…in

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[6] See Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy,* pp.9-10.
[7] R. Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (2000), p.47.
[8] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Letter from Jedediah Strutt to his wife, 12 June 1765.
[9] J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People* (1994), esp. chapters 5 and 7.
[10] R. Porter, *Enlightenment*, p.20.
[11] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Letter from William Strutt to his son Edward, 22 October 1818.
[12] See R.J. Morris, 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850: Analysis', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), pp.95-118; Morris, 'Clubs, societies and Associations', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1990), pp.395-443; J. Barry, 'Bourgeois collectivism? Urban association and the middling sort', in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort*, pp.84-112.

union with the aristocracy, not in opposition to it'?[13] Finally, how compelling is Paul Langford's conclusion that the intellectual elite provided a distinct circle of wealth, power, and prestige between county society and the municipal oligarchy of merchants, bankers, and tradesmen?[14]

In responding to these questions, the chapter covers the period from c.1700 and ends in 1802 with the death of Erasmus Darwin. It is divided into three parts. The first part explores wealth creation in relation to the development of commercial associations, based on patronage, private legislation and parliamentary sponsorship, urban business associations, and freemasonry. The second part considers the diffusion of knowledge in bringing together 'savants' and 'fabricants' with shared interests in innovation, invention, and technology. Dissenting academies, the 'vital few', itinerant lecturers, and the influential part played by members of the Derby Philosophical Society, emphasise the importance of Derby as a vibrant intellectual space. The third part examines the close political ties forged by the patronage borough and the Cavendish family. This is followed by reference to the Derby Society for Political Information, one of the earliest corresponding societies in England.[15]

Wealth creation

Patronage

Several examples highlight the patron-client relationship, which supported the diffusion of knowledge and fostered self-worth and 'bourgeois dignity' in the community and beyond.[16] This relationship created social bridges between the 'middling sort' and the aristocracy. The Derby engineer, George Sorocold, aptly illustrates the point. He attracted the patronage of Sir Godfrey Copley, a member of the Royal Society and instigator of the Copley Medal for

[13] J.V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986), p.12.
[14] P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*: *England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p.73.
[15] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1991 edition), p.22.
[16] See D.N. McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World* (Chicago, 2010).

outstanding achievement in scientific research. Sir Godfrey was a country squire of Sprotbrough, near Doncaster, and a keen promoter of hydraulic engineering and canals. Due in no small part to Copley, Sorocold was appointed as consulting engineer for the first Liverpool docks in 1708 and for the first wet docks at Rotherhithe. He also designed for the Earl of Mar a waterwheel with a crank and beam to drain his Clackmannanshire Colliery.[17] Patronage also assured the success of William Duesbury's porcelain works. The Duke and Duchess of Devonshire were frequent visitors to his factory in Derby, prompting George III to grant permission for the company to use the crown in its factory mark.[18] Later in the century, the unfailing personal and financial support of the Rev. Thomas Gisborne resulted in the Little Chester factory of James Fox gaining wide acclaim. Gisborne not only 'had so genuine an admiration of his skill', but also recognised 'his excellent qualities of character'.[19] Fox went on to become an internationally renowned engineer and inventor, attributes which were reflected in the patronage of Baron de Bode who purchased, for export to Russia, a 10hp condensing machine with a boiler and a large boring, turning and screw-cutting lathe; a machine for cutting and dividing wheels; and a slide lathe for cutting screws: 'All, I have no doubt, very good machines, particularly the large lathe, and very cheap…an excellent choice and a good bargain'.[20]

Patronage, of course, did not necessarily guarantee economic success, as Sir Thomas Lombe found out in 1735, when he attempted to introduce American silk from Georgia under the patronage of the founder of the State, General Oglethorpe. The silk, although of a poor colour, was of good quality, which tempted Queen Caroline to order a 'gown and petticoat' to be made for her.

[17] See F. Williamson, 'George Sorocold of Derby', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal,* 57 (1936), pp.43-93; W.H.G. Armytage, *A Social History of Engineering* (1961), pp.79-80 and W.H.G. Armytage, 'George Sorocold and Sir Godfrey Copley', *Thoresby Society*, LXXI (1953), pp.105-7.
[18] *DM*, 15 March 1775
[19] S. Smiles, *Industrial Biography: Iron-Workers and Tool-Makers* [1863] (1967), p.257.
[20] H.W. Dickinson, 'The Diary of John Bodmer, 1816-17', *Transactions of the Newcomen Society*, X, (1929), p.108.

Even with Royal support, however, the initiative proved unsuccessful and silk from Georgia was abandoned for cotton.[21]

The aristocracy and gentry also offered support to natural philosophers. Two who benefitted were Benjamin Parker and John Whitehurst. In the early part of the eighteenth century, Parker was grappling with the new discoveries in science and their relationship with religion. As a natural philosopher and Anglican clergyman, science provided for him a vast fund of evidence of God's detailed handiwork and, therefore, by extension, of God's existence. He strove to apply 'Newtonian' methods and ideas to natural theology in support of Anglicanism during the 1730s and early 1740s.[22] His attempts to reconcile the Bible and his faith with scientific explanations for natural phenomena, such as fireballs and the position of the planets, provided 'evidence' of God's design and purpose in the natural world.

His published works included a theory on calculating longitude and in his *Survey of the Creation*, he presented a justification for life on all the planets of the solar system. The sun, he concluded, communicated light and heat and therefore life to distant planets, which were 'proportioned by infinite wisdom, as their bulks and powers have rendered them capable of being serviceable'. He accepted that the moon comprised the same elements as the earth and was covered with hills, mountains and rivers; that 'the light, eclipses, monthly revolutions, progressions' all possessed 'several admirable uses and services to us', while the earth 'mutually returns her services to the inhabitants'.[23]

Four more books were published in Derby on natural theology and philosophy and a treatise on personal education. In 1739 Parker moved to London where he delivered lectures and published further works on natural philosophy. His work obtained patronage from an eclectic mix of university professors and both Whig and Tory gentry and aristocracy, including the Whig Earl of

[21] W.H. Chaloner, 'Sir Thomas Lombe and the British Silk Industry', *History Today*, 3 (1953), p.778.
[22] B. Parker, *Philosophical Meditations with Divine Inferences* (Birmingham, 1738), p.26.
[23] B. Parker, *Survey of the Six Days Work of Creation* (Birmingham, 1745), pp.81-4, 117-20.

Chesterfield, and the Duke of Devonshire and the Tory Sir Nathaniel Curzon of Kedleston Hall.[24]

John Whitehurst, however, was perhaps the greatest local beneficiary of 'vertical friendship'. Having installed heating and ventilation systems and kitchen ranges for the Duke of Newcastle at his house in Clumber Park, Whitehurst was recommended by the Duke for a prestigious post in London. Under the terms of an Act of Parliament of 1773, Whitehurst was appointed to 'regulate and ascertain the weights to be made use of in weighing the gold and silver coins of this Kingdom'.[25] He also attracted a diverse range of subscribers when he published *An Inquiry into the Original State and Formation of the Earth* in 1778. Derby's intellectual elite, the county set, and the municipal oligarchy, as well as members of the Lunar Society and their associates, were all keen to support this local celebrity. Subscriptions from the urban elite included John Chatterton, Daniel Parker Coke (MP for Derby), Charles Denby, Robert Holden of Darley Hall, the Rev. Charles Hope and Stephen Wright. Sir Robert Burdett Bt. of Foremark Hall, Robert Bage of Elford, Charles Bage of Shrewsbury, Lord George Cavendish, Hon. Henry Cavendish, William Emes, Earl Ferrers, Philip Gell of Wirksworth, Lord and Lady Scarsdale and Anthony Tissington FRS, were regional subscribers.[26]

Private legislation and parliamentary sponsorship

Whilst individual and piecemeal patronage provided a starting point for socio-economic links between the aristocracy, technocrats, natural philosophers and the bourgeoisie, a much broader canvas was needed to create industrial and social transformation. Private legislation and parliamentary sponsorship offered such an opportunity. More regular meetings of parliament, following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, resulted in MPs and local manufacturers becoming increasingly aware of the significance of private legislation in

[24] See B. Parker, *Parker's Projection of the Longitude at Sea* (Nottingham, 1731); *A Journey Thro' the World: A View of the Several Stages of Human Life*, (1738), preface, pp.viii-xi.
[25] C. Hutton, *The Works of John Whitehurst* (1792), p.9.
[26] *DM*, 12 December 1778. Also see W.D. White, 'Derbyshire Clockmakers before 1850. The Whitehurst Family', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 3 (1958), pp.6-17.

shaping the economy. Beckett observes that 'merchants and manufacturers saw parliament as the forum in which solutions could be developed to commercial issues'. Economic interest groups looked to their MPs as sponsors for legislation and to work on their behalf in securing concessions or to alter bills before they became law. MPs became increasingly aware that the promotion of local commercial interests helped to sustain their own influence and power. Entrepreneurs, agents, solicitors and politicians were brought together, therefore, by economic and political self-interest, which created powerful associations of lobbyists and venture capitalists.[27] These associations met the needs of particular local communities. As Langford emphasises, however, their potential impact could harm the needs of other areas; improvements in one district were advantageous at the expense of others, even though they might be of general public benefit.[28] This blossoming relationship of aristocrat, industrialist, and technocrat, promoted by private legislation and parliamentary sponsorship, is illustrated by three examples — the Derwent Navigation Scheme, the Strutt-Arkwright business partnership, and the planning and design of the Cromford Canal.

George Sorocold's involvement in the Derwent Navigation Scheme provides an early example of the influence of economic and political networks in achieving economic success. After two abortive attempts to pass a bill through Parliament by John Bagnold, MP for Derby, in 1696, and by Lord Henry Cavendish and George Vernon, also MPs for the town, in 1698, Mr Harpur, Mr Stanhope and Sir Thomas Davall were authorised by the mayor and burgesses to prepare and present a further bill to Parliament that included the building of a dock and wharves at Derby. The bill also included Sorocold's plan to dig three canals to avoid large meanders in the river and the weir at Wilne, near Draycott, five miles east of Derby. The mayor and burgesses presented a final petition to Parliament in 1717, when they enlisted the assistance of Baron

[27] See J.V. Beckett, 'The Glorious Revolution, Parliament, and the Making of the First Industrial Nation' in *Parliament, Politics and Policy in Britain and Ireland, c.1680-1832: Essays in Honour of D.W. Hayton,* (eds.), C. Jones and J. Kelly (Oxford, 2014), pp.36-53.
[28] P. Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798* (1991), p.180.

Parker, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and later to become Chancellor and Earl of Macclesfield.[29] Sorocold, referred to in the documents sent to Parliament, as the 'ingenious mathematician', was commissioned to prepare an engraved map showing how the Derwent Navigation Scheme would benefit the industries of the town and county.[30] Favourable support for the scheme came from Lord Ferrers, Lord Chesterfield, the Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, Lord Newport, Sir Robert Corbett and subscribers from the town's urban elite, including the mayor, Thomas Rivett, Francis Cokayne, John Holmes, Thomas Gery, Thomas Gisborne and Benjamin Blundel. Even with this influential support, it was not until 1720 that the Bill passed the Commons and was agreed to by the Lords and received the Royal assent. The commissioners included those members of the urban elite shown above with additional members including William Woolley, Abraham Crompton, John Chambers, Robert Wagstaffe, Samuel Fox, and Samuel Shepperdson.[31] Tolls were collected by the 'undertakers' of the Act, which were not to exceed one shilling per ton for transport from Derby to the Trent. A dock and wharves were constructed at the Morledge, close to the town centre, which greatly enhanced the facilities of this important industrial hub by supporting the commercial enterprises of industrialists such as the Lombe brothers, Thomas Evans, William Duesbury and the Strutt family.[32]

Indeed, Jedediah Strutt and Richard Arkwright were not slow in petitioning Parliament to gain commercial advantage and they were willing to spend considerable sums of money to reduce the proposed tax on their newly developed printed calicoes; they also wished to create a 'made in Britain' badge for their product. The partners presented a petition to the Commons in 1774, contending that duty on calicoes be charged at 3d a yard rather than 6d, arguing that the higher charge would prejudice 'this new and promising *British* manufacture'. Lord Howe, the admiral and MP for Dartmouth, who had close

[29] Thomas Parker had been MP for Derby from 1705-10 and Recorder of the town 1698-1710.
[30] DLSL, BA/386.4, Sorocold's map for the Derwent Navigation Scheme.
[31] DLSL, BA/386.4, copy of the Derby Navigation Act, 1720
[32] See A.W. Skempton, 'The Engineers of the English River Navigations, 1620-1760', *Newcomen Society Transactions*, XXIX (1953-5), pp.25-54.

political connections with John Plumptree, a Nottingham MP, and Frederick Montagu, MP for Higham Ferrers and a Nottinghamshire landowner, were the named members of the House committee considering the petition.[33] Strutt told committee members that:

> The Petitioners had expended upwards of £13,000 in the said Manaufacture; that if charged with the said Duty of Sixpence per Yard, it would totally hinder the Growth, and obstruct the Sale of this promising Manufacture, which, in all Probability, will become a flourishing Trade, if encouraged, and be a means of employing many Thousands of poor People.

Strutt's persuasive argument was accepted and permission was granted for the named members to bring in a bill. A second reading was held on 17 May and a third on 1 June. The Lords passed the Bill without amendment and Royal assent was received on 14 June 1774. [34]

In recognition and appreciation of Lord Howe's contribution to the passing of the Bill, Jedediah Strutt and Samuel Need, also a partner of Jedediah, gave Lady Howe a piece of the new cloth as a gift. A draft of the accompanying letter to the Howes states:

> Mr N and Mr S Compl[iment]s to Ld Howe begs his Lordships of this piece of British Calico for Lady Howe as a small acknowledgement for the great trouble we gave you Ldship last summer in obtaining the Act for the printing and wearing of them in England.[35]

In his reply, Lord Howe deemed the gift 'as evidence of their obliging prejudice in his favour, tho' conscious at the same time that the success of their

[33] L.B. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, vol. I (1929), pp.115, 117-18.
[34] See R.S. Fitton and A.P. Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights 1758-1830: A Study of the Early Factory System* (Manchester, 1958), p.71.
[35] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, written on the back of a letter from his daughter, Elizabeth, 2 July 1775.

application to Parliament was solely ascribable to the reasonableness and justice of their pretensions'.[36]

The proposed construction of the Cromford Canal led to some friction between Derby's industrialists, the gentry and aristocracy. An important purpose of the canal was to provide Cromford with coal and iron from south Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Its proposed link with the Erewash Canal would give it access to the national network and ensure a future for exports beyond the Derwent and Trent valleys.[37] A notice in the local press advertised a meeting to be held on 31 July 1788 at the *Old Bath*, Matlock Bath, to consider 'the expediency of making the River Derwent navigable from Derby to Cromford Bridge; and also the River Amber to the Collieries when the Noblemen, Gentlemen, and the others interested, are desired to attend'.[38] The *Derby Mercury* reported the next meeting on 18 August 1788 that 'Those Friends to this Measure, who have any Plan to propose…are desired to send the same to Sir RICHARD ARKWRIGHT, at the Rock House, Cromford'.[39]

The seventy-eight people who petitioned Parliament for a Bill were mainly Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire gentry, together with a sprinkling of professional men. At a reading of the proposed Bill at a public meeting in Nottingham during February 1789, the Dukes of Devonshire and Newcastle were present, along with representatives from the canal companies of Erewash and Loughborough and the proposed Leicester Canal Company, and industrialists with premises on the River Derwent. Leading this cohort was Philip Gell of Hopton Hall. The London connection for parliamentary negotiations was Philip's brother, Captain (later Admiral) John Gell of Crich, Derbyshire.[40]

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[36] F. Strutt, 'Jedediah Strutt' in J.C. Cox (ed.), *Memorials of Old Derbyshire* (Derby, 1907), p.380.
[37] For a comprehensive report on the Cromford Canal see R.B. Schofield, *The Promotion of the Cromford Canal Act of 1789: A Study in Canal Engineering* (Manchester, 1981); also R.B. Schofield, *Benjamin Outram 1764-1805: An Engineering Biography* (Cardiff, 2000); H. Potter, *Cromford Canal* (Stroud, 2003).
[38] *DM*, 17-24 July 1788.
[39] *DM*, 21 August 1788.
[40] *DM*, 27 August 1788.

Opponents of the Bill, who became known as the Derby Party, included the Earl of Harrington, Jedediah Strutt, Thomas Evans, the mayor, Samuel Crompton, and Burgesses of Derby, and members of the the Erewash Canal Company. They all objected to a new canal sharing the limited water resources of the Rivers Derwent and Erewash.[41] Joseph Strutt wrote to his brother, William, explaining the views of their father that, if the Bill was passed, a clause should be added that would give the owners of the weirs the right to raise them 'at particular seasons, making compensation for the injury that may be done and that this compensation the proprietors of the canal should defray'. Joseph Strutt wrote to his brother William on 28 July 1789:

> I thought it necessary to go to my father to talk with him about Belper Weir. He thinks if the Bill is likely to pass, such a clause should be introduced as will impower all the owners of weirs to raise them at particular seasons, making compensation for the injury that may be done and that this compensation the proprietors of the canal should defray.[42]

Joseph also confirmed that their father was 'quite angry at the stupidity of Lord Stanhope' regarding his scheme to use 'horizontal windmills' in the building of the canal. Jedediah was concerned that 'the experiment should be made and approved before any reasoning can be made of it'.[43] Despite their protestations, the Derby Party was unsuccessful in their House of Commons petition against the passing of the Cromford Canal Bill.[44]

This decision suited many of the local gentry and aristocracy. In those areas rich in minerals, landowners played a vital role in the extraction of resources and laying the foundations for industrial development. The construction of the Cromford Canal provided a conduit to a national network of waterways, which

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[41] Schofield, *Cromford Canal Act,* pp.8-9.
[42] Cox, *Memorials*, pp.20-1.
[43] DLSL, BA/133, H. Strutt, *A Memoir of William Strutt* (1890); See also J. Farey, *General View of the Agriculture of Derbyshire* (1813), p.398.
[44] Cox, *Memorials,* pp.20-3.

reached the Humber and the Mersey, providing trade links to Europe and the United States. By the early nineteenth century, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Middleton, Earl Manvers, Edward Miller Mundy and William Drury Lowe were the main players in mineral extraction in Derbyshire and neighbouring counties.[45]

Kinship, friends and business partners

Patronage, private legislation and parliamentary sponsorship, then, were levers to economic development, which nurtured close ties between diverse social groups. Derby's industrial success also rested, however, on robust entrepreneurial business partnerships, forged by a web of gentlemen's agreements and the securing of patent rights, which were supported by family and religious networks. Mathias' contention that 'kinship must be regarded as one of the most fundamental considerations in the study of entrepreneurship in industry in the eighteenth century' was epitomised by the Evans and Strutt families and their circle of acquaintances.[46]

Thomas Evans, for example, the driving force behind the cotton and corn mills of Darley Abbey and the iron and copper-smelting works in Derby, counted among his friends and business contacts some of the most well-known and successful families in the town and county. These included the Gisbornes, the Strutts, the Cromptons, the Nightingales, the Arkwrights and the Carrs. Likewise, the close business and friendship ties between the Arkwrights and the Strutts were brought into sharp focus when the will of Sir Richard Arkwright left £10,000 to his son and William Strutt, with instructions to invest in government securities in trust for his daughter, Susanna Hurt. Arkwright's estate was left to his son, who was named as executor along with William Strutt.[47] The Evans and Strutts were also connected by marriage. In 1785 William Evans, the son of Thomas Evans, married Elizabeth Strutt, the daughter of Jedediah Strutt, cementing business connections even more

[45] Beckett, *Aristocracy,* p.213.
[46] P. Mathias, *The Brewing Industry in England, 1700-1830* (Cambridge, 1959), p.271.
[47] R.S. Fitton, *The Arkwrights: Spinners of Fortune* (Manchester, 1989), p.219.

strongly.[48] After William's death in 1796, Elizabeth remained a widow for only one year and in 1797 she married William's half-brother, Walter Evans. The youngest child of William and Elizabeth's marriage, Ellen, married the Rev. John Carr of Parwich, who was the curate of St Matthew's Church, Darley Abbey. The marriage of Barbara Evans, daughter of Thomas, to William Strutt, son of Jedediah, in 1793, further strengthened the kinship network of the Evans and the Strutt families, creating a commercial and industrial dynasty in Derby, which lasted for over a century.[49]

The family partnership of Jedediah Strutt, his wife Elizabeth, and his brother-in-law, William Woollatt, was based on the successful patent application for Strutt's invention of the Derby Ribbed Frame, which was supported by nonconformist connections in Derby and London. Elizabeth, his wife, secured the necessary finance for her husband to patent his invention, having contacted Dr Benson, a wealthy nonconformist, for whom she had been a housekeeper, when he was joint pastor of a Presbyterian congregation in London in 1749.[50] She 'acquainted him with our scheam which, as far as he understand it thinks it may do very well & he will do all he can for us, & would willingly supply us with ye money'. Not only did she visit London often to canvass relatives and friends on behalf of the Strutt firm, but she also 'checked out possible sources of supply' and 'was active and well informed as to the business', such as the 'details of the ins and outs of ribbed stockings' and the 'relative values of different kinds of thread'.[51] She used her networking skills to recruit many of their nonconformist acquaintances as financial investors. It is evident from the letters between husband and wife that Elizabeth provided the social and negotiating skills that contrasted with her husband's introspective and self-centred nature. She was a striking example of the

[48] *DM*, 4 November 1785.
[49] *DM*, 21 January 1793; R.S. Fitton and A.P. Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights*, pp.325-7.
[50] H. McLachlan, *The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England* (1934), p.155.
[51] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence: Letters from Elizabeth Strutt to her husband, 27 April 1757, 3 May 1757, 10 May 1757.

'hidden investment' in a family enterprise, a wife who provided business skills and contacts and emotional support to her husband.[52]

Having secured the patent, the Strutts entered into partnership with John Bloodworth and Thomas Stamford, who were 'substantial hosiers' of Derby, and trustees of the town's Unitarian chapel in Friar Gate of which Ebenezer Latham, of Findern Academy, had been co-minister.[53] The chapel was built in 1694 and transferred to the Unitarians, financed by Jedediah Strutt, in about 1770.[54] These early nonconformist connections were established when Jedediah Strutt was apprenticed to Ralph Massey, a wheelwright in Findern, at the age of fourteen. Whilst he took lodgings with the Woollatt family in Findern, Thomas Bentley was, at the same time, a student at the Academy during Strutt's apprenticeship. He boarded with Mrs Massey, who thirty years later became Wedgwood's housekeeper.[55] The commercial links with Bloodworth and Stamford lasted until 1762 when all parties agreed to dissolve the partnership. On the payment of £374 14s 10d to Stamford and £195 4s 4d to Bloodworth, the patent for the Derby Ribbed Frame became the sole property of Strutt, ensuring the family's wealth and its influence in the town for over a century.[56]

Samuel Need, a wealthy Nottingham hosier and also a Dissenter, was another influential partner of Strutt and Woollatt, an association that was to last for twenty years. The strength of the partnership was confirmed in the local press after the hosiers of Derby and Nottingham had failed in their challenge over the patent rights of the ribbed frame.[57] Strutt won the case and the local newspaper reported the 'general joy' of the 'stocking trade' that the patent

[52] R. Scase and R. Goffee, *The Real World of the Small Business Owner* (1980), p.94.
[53] Bloodworth, 'an eminent hosier', died in April 1771; Stamford was elected alderman of Derby in 1768 and mayor in 1769, *DM*, 5 April 1771; 13 May 1768; 6 October 1769. There is a full account of Latham in H. McLachlan's 'Ebenezer Latham and the Academy at Findern' in his *Essays and Addresses* (1950), pp.147-66.
[54] M. Craven, *John Whitehurst of Derby: Clockmaker and Scientist 1713-88* (Ashbourne, 1996), p.148.
[55] K.E. Farrer (ed.), *Letters of Josiah Wedgwood* (Manchester, 1903), p.2.
[56] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Strutt to his wife, 4 February 1758.
[57] *DM*, 9 and 23 August 1765.

rights had been secured for the town for a further seven years, which 'would otherwise have been spread all over the Kingdom'.[58] Need's influence and wealth, his nonconformist connections, and his status as a 'burgess born' freeman of Nottingham since 1739, were instrumental in Strutt gaining the freedom of Nottingham 'gratis' in 1762.[59]

Although a falling out over patent rights had created some bad feeling amongst the local hosiers, it did not prevent them from joining forces in 1778, when an association of hosiery manufacturers was established to prosecute offenders who stole silk from them. This type of association was important in bringing together groups of employers with a shared vested interest. Just as significant were the differences that were highlighted between employer and employee, a factor that was a harbinger of social division and fragmentation. In 1779, for example, Samuel Need led the hosiers' successful resistance to the stockingers' attempt to get Parliament to fix wages by statute. An angry crowd broke the windows of Arkwright's mill at Nottingham and attacked and damaged Need's house at Arnold.[60] The solidarity of the hosiers was further exemplified by their decision to pay a subscription fee of £1 5s for 'prosecuting Silk Stealers' and, in 1788, a three guineas subscription was paid to the Chamber of Commerce at Nottingham for 'procuring an Act of Parliament to prevent the destruction of frames' during a period of machine breaking.[61]

Having secured strong local business partnerships and the patent rights to his invention, Strutt sought to widen his networking opportunities and his reputation by entering a competition organised by the Royal Society of Arts. In a letter to his wife in 1765, Jedediah wrote with regret that his entry for the greatest improvement in the stocking frame had been unsuccessful. It is evident from the letters that his pride had suffered rather than the fact that

[58] *DM*, 4 July 1766.
[59] *Derby and Nottingham Journal,* 8 March 1762.
[60] *DM*, 18 June and 30 July 1779.
[61] *Derby and Nottingham Journal*, 21 May 1778.

he had not won the £100 prize money.[62] Consequently, it was not until 1782 that he decided to join the Society, after Arkwright proposed him. He remained a member until his death in 1797.[63] His annual subscription of two guineas was paid by his London agent, Joseph Mallett, as was his subscription of £30 for membership of the Chamber of Commerce.[64]

Membership of these national associations was important from a social as well as an economic standpoint. Whilst Jedediah's rather introspective personality made him a reluctant member, his eldest son, William, a far more sociable personality than his father, recognised more acutely the commercial as well as the social benefits of association. He became a member of the Chamber of Manufacturers in 1789, an organisation founded and for some time presided over by Josiah Wedgwood. Most members of this trade movement were Dissenters, mainly Unitarians and Quakers, and it was probably through this channel, or possibly through Erasmus Darwin, that Strutt met Wedgwood, a source from which many of the family's connections arose. It was Darwin who introduced William to the eccentric and celebrated R.L. Edgeworth, a member of the Lunar Society, which numbered amongst its members Matthew Boulton, James Watt, Joseph Wedgwood, Joseph Priestley, Samuel Galeton, and John Whitehurst of Derby. Another connection was with Robert Owen, who noted that William and Joseph Strutt were two men whose 'many talents and benevolent personalities had seldom been equalled'.[65]

Close personal and working relationships were also established between industrialists and bankers, based in great part on the profits of the burgeoning industry in the town. In 1771, Thomas Evans went into partnership with Samuel Crompton and opened the Crompton and Evans Bank, situated at Thomas Evans' home in St Mary's Gate. Crompton was a well-known public figure, having been mayor of Derby in 1767 and Sheriff of the County of

[62] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Jedediah Strutt to Elizabeth Strutt, his wife, 15 February 1765.
[63] H.T. Wood, *A History of the Royal Society of Arts* (1913), p.263.
[64] Fitton and Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights,* p.50.
[65] R. Owen, *The Life of Robert Owen Written by Himself* (1857), p.211.

Derbyshire in 1768.[66] Jedediah Strutt and Richard Arkwright became customers of the bank, as did William Woollat and Samuel Oldknow. Indeed, for a short time, Strutt and Evans were Arkwright's financial backers.[67] Thomas Evans' banking business flourished, profiting from strong economic growth and the support of the urban and county elites. William and Elizabeth Strutt, for instance, were both partners.[68] The reciprocal arrangements of the business are exemplified in a letter to Samuel Oldknow in December 1786, when the bankers confirmed how they could supply him 'with £500 every fortnight' and that Oldknow would have no cause for complaint as 'Messrs Arkwrights have had cash from us for some years' and never had 'a guinea returned'. Oldknow was given further assistance during the 'spring panic' of 1793, when he was under-capitalised and having difficulty in raising money from accounts owing.[69]

Whilst bankers and industrialists entered into formal financial arrangements, it was the highly personal loan deals negotiated between the younger Richard Arkwright and the county set, which perhaps epitomised the changing relationship of industrialist and the landed gentry. The most striking loan was that of £5,000 at 5 per cent interest to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, to pay for her gambling debts, which had accrued without the knowledge of her husband.[70] In 1809, Arkwright loaned £3,000 to Mrs Helen Morewood of Alfreton Hall, Derbyshire, and joint owner, with her husband the Rev. Henry Case Morewood, of the Hermitage Colliery. In 1814, the Butterley Company, a coal and iron concern founded in 1792, borrowed £13,000.[71] Derbyshire landowners who borrowed against mortgages included Sir Thomas Hunloke, Bart, of Wingerworth Hall near Chesterfield, and Francis Noel Clarke Mundy of Markeaton Hall, Derby, High Sheriff of Derbyshire in 1772 and author of

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[66] J. Pilkington, *A View of the Present State of Derbyshire; with an account of its most remarkable antiquities,* II (Derby, 1789), p.180.
[67] DLSL, BA/162-1-70, Evans Family Letter Book, 1769.
[68] *London Gazette*, 9-13 January 1810, p.67.
[69] G. Unwin, *Samuel Oldknow and the Arkwrights* (Manchester, 1924), pp.177-8.
[70] See Earl of Bessborough (ed.), *Georgiana: Extracts from the Correspondence of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (1955), p.163.
[71] See J. Lindsey, 'The Butterley Coal and Iron Works, 1792-1896', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 85 (1965), pp.24-43.

Needwood Forest, a volume of poems published anonymously in 1776. He took out a loan of £6,000 in 1813.[72] Further loans of £43,000 were made to Sir Thomas Constable, Bart, of Tixall House, Staffordshire, and £14,000 to William Drury Lowe of Locko Park near Derby[73]. Arkwright's largest loan during this period was one to the sixth Earl of Chesterfield for £80,000 at 4 per cent.[74] This was dwarfed in 1839 when Arkwright negotiated a mortgage of £125,000 to the fourth Duke of Newcastle, who a year earlier had strained his resources by the purchase of the Duke of Norfolk's Worksop Estate for £375,000.[75] These financial transactions between the *nouveau riche* and the landed gentry highlighted the changing nature of the relationship. The deference and dependence, which patronage and private legislation demanded, were giving way to the commercial independence and growing social status of the urban elite. Increasingly, reciprocity and mutual respect shaped and defined the inter-relationships between urban industrialists and the landed elite.

Freemasonry

Freemasonry offered safe havens and 'polite' social spaces for these economic and financial relationships to develop. Masonic lodges acted as focal points for union and as a nexus of contact and solidarity. Strangers and outsiders were welcomed into the town's business community and lodge members were offered opportunities for social advancement through social mixing. Regular and amicable contact with members of higher and more fashionable groups resulted in an increase in status, as well as the possibilities of economic dividends, such as business commissions. Lodges were very much part of the local consumer market in generating demand for a variety of products, including drink, dress, artefacts, portraits, and publications. In advertising their

[72] For Hunloake see *Gentleman's Magazine* (1816), p.186. For Mundy see *Gentleman's Magazine*, (1849), p.96.
[73] See *Gentleman's Magazine* (1823), p.470.
[74] See J. Burke, *Peerage and Baronetage* (1859), p.74.
[75] See *The Times*, 11 and 16 April 1838; R.A. Gaunt (ed.), *Unhappy Reactionary: The Diaries of the Fourth Duke of Newcastle-Under-Lyne 1822-50* (Nottingham, 2003), p.xxvi.

wares, tradesmen made clear their Masonic affiliations to attract the custom of brethren.[76]

Members also came together with shared interests in natural philosophy. Local examples illustrate the national and international importance of Derby's masonic lodges. Washington Shirley, the 5th Earl Ferrers, was Grand Master of Freemasons from 1762-1764. John Whitehurst was a member of the local Virgin's Inn Lodge (no. 104), which had been founded in 1732.[77] By 1770 he had become a member of the Lodge of Emulation no. 21 in London. The 'Club of Thirteen', generally recognised as a Masonic lodge, met at Old Slaughter's coffee house and provided him with access to an important network of social and intellectual circles. The membership of the 'Club of Thirteen' maintained close connections with the Lunar Society and included Thomas Day, Josiah Wedgwood, Thomas Bentley and Benjamin Franklin.[78] Franklin was a leading freemason, having been initiated in February 1731 and was appointed Provincial Grand Master of Pennsylvania in 1734.[79] In 1756 he became a Fellow of the Royal Society and from 1757 until 1762, and again during 1764-1775, he spent a great deal of time in England.[80] When the War of Independence broke out in 1776, Franklin moved to France where he served as ambassador in Paris, remaining there until 1785. He became Master of the French Freemasonic Lodge in 1779 and in the same year visited Whitehurst in Derby.[81]

The Derby Tyrian Lodge was founded in 1785 and held its first meeting at the *Bunch of Grapes*, later moving to the *Tiger Inn*. In the inaugural year, the members dined at the *George* before proceeding to All Saints' for a service.[82] Several members of the Derby Philosophical Society were enrolled, notably Pigott, Pickering and William Duesbury; Archhdale, aged twenty-seven, became the first master of the lodge. Other masons who were not members

[76] Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment*, p.133.
[77] O. Manton, *Early Freemasonry in Derbyshire* (Manchester, 1913), pp.6-10.
[78] A.E. Musson and E. Robinson, *Science and Technology in the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 1969), p.127.
[79] H.T.C. de La Fontaine, 'Benjamin Franklin', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, XLI (1929), p.31.
[80] *Concise Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1964), pp.310-13.
[81] *DM*, 30 July 1779.
[82] *DM*, 5 May 1785.

of the Tyrian Lodge, but closely associated with it, were Jedediah Strutt and Charles Stead Hope, later Vicar of All Saints', Charles Denby the organist, and John Whitehurst, the nephew of the noted scientist. Those initiated at the first two meetings included clergy and gentry, and also a butcher, a 'victualler', a silk-thrower and an upholsterer. By the end of the decade the proportion of gentry increased, eventually making up over one third of the 120 members. A striking feature of the membership list was the absence of physicians other than Pigott himself. Membership of the Derby Tyrian Lodge from 1785 to 1789 comprised a third gentry, a quarter trade, about a tenth medical, lawyers, clergy respectively, and a small proportion of farmers, manufacturers, bankers and unknown.[83] This membership illustrated the importance of commercial associations in bringing together a diverse group of 'savants' and 'fabricants', aristocrats and industrialists, which reflected the powerful synergy of commerce and industry in wealth creation and the growing influence and social standing of the bourgeoisie.

The diffusion of knowledge

This part of the chapter examines the importance of association in the attraction to and the acquisition of the sharing of knowledge. This attraction was vividly illustrated by members of the Strutt family. Writing to her brother, Joseph, regarding Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* of 1793, Elizabeth Strutt implored him to 'read attentively, meditate, discuss, disseminate these precious opinions, these divine truths, with all the zeal which their importance demands'. She goes on:

> They have penetrated my heart, may they raise yours above prejudice, enable you to despise riches, & finally dispose you to use all your efforts

[83] DLSL, *The Centenary Celebrations of the Tyrian Lodge, No. 253, of the Freemasons held at the Masonic Hall, Derby, April 9th, 1885* (1885), pp.40-5.

> to ameliorate the condition of Mankind. The grand desideratum in Politics is the diffusion of knowledge and morals amongst the poor.[84]

Such sentiments were shared by William Strutt. His letters to his son, Edward, were often instructive and tended to emphasise the importance of learning and knowledge. In 1818, for example, he wrote to Edward congratulating him on passing an examination:

> The pleasure which this must give you must be worth a good deal, independently of the proper legitimate object: real knowledge — You are now I hope so well grounded in most of those requirements which appear dry and crabbed to young people, that you have nothing before you but pleasure which must result from a successful pursuit of it.[85]

The acquisition of knowledge and the moral imperative became the mainstays of the curriculum in the dissenting academies. The vital few and itinerant lecturers were the advocates and role models of the dissenting academies and commercial schools, and Derby's philosophical societies became the cradle of intellectual discourse.

Dissenting academies

The Dissenting Academy for training ministers in Derby, from 1745 to 1754, was an important forerunner of the academy system and commercial schools. This institution had previously been located at Findern, some three miles south of the town.[86] Ebenezer Latham (1688-1754), a leading light in the academy, was a colleague of Josiah Rogerson (1680-1763) at the Friar Gate Chapel from 1745, who had edited John Platts' *Rational Account of the Principles of*

[84] DLSL, MS/BA/D215, Strutt Correspondence. Elizabeth Evans (nee Strutt) to her brother Joseph, 24 October 1793.
[85] Ibid., letter from William Strutt to his son, Edward, 18 April 1818.
[86] H. McLachlan, *English Education under the Test Acts* (Manchester, 1931), pp.131-4.

Christianity of 1737.[87] Latham's obituary referred to his 'uncommon learning and fine taste' and his 'eminent abilities both as a Divine, a Tutor, and a Physician'. His 'humanity and sweetness of Temper' had endeared him to friends and gained him a 'great reputation' and the esteem of 'general Persons of all Denominations'.[88] Latham's *Exercitatis Physiologia*, a manuscript book, contained notes and exercises in Latin on natural philosophy, geometry and mathematics.[89] John Gregory, the author of the *Manual of Modern Geography* in 1739, which ran to four editions by 1760, continued the school after Latham's death. Gregory's students included William Strutt who attended at Findern before becoming a student at Wilkinson's school in Nottingham.[90] Dissenting congregations were important elements in the civic life of industrial towns, and Derby was no exception.[91] For prosperous entrepreneurs and rising professional men, as well as for a wider social range of the 'respectable', they provided points of cultural identity.

The Findern and Derby academies had close links with the Unitarian Friar Gate Chapel, Strutts' business empire, and the diffusion of commercial, vocational and intellectual ideas. These created an important learning network during the mid-eighteenth century, which was reflected in the main subjects in the four-year courses. These included medicine, divinity, classics, logic, mathematics, shorthand, natural philosophy, anatomy, chronology and Hebrew antiquities. Gregory's *Manual* sheds further light on the academy's curriculum, in which his teaching notes illustrate how studies in natural history were regarded as having patriotic as well as religious and economic value for the Dissenters. His notes emphasised a combination of pleasure with utility and theological purpose, recognising the importance of polite education and conversational skills.[92] Between 1770 and 1789 there were at least eight commercial schools

[87] For Friar Gate Chapel see Rev. J. Burke, *Memorials of Friar Gate Chapel* (Derby, late 1890s). John Platts (1693-1735), minister at Ilkeston, Derbyshire 1708 to 1735.
[88] *DM*, 18 January 1754.
[89] DLSL, BA/3368, E. Latham, 'Exercitatis Physiologia', manuscript book, undated.
[90] *DM*, 12 January 1831.
[91] J. Seed, 'Theologies of Power: Unitarianism and the Social Relations of Religious Discourse, 1800-1850' in R.J. Morris (ed.), *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth Century Towns* (Leicester, 1986), pp.108-56.
[92] J. Gregory, *A Manual of Modern Geography* (1748), preface.

founded or in existence in the town based on these principles.[93] 'Useful knowledge' had, indeed, found 'its clerisy' in Derby's academies.[94]

Savants and fabricants: the 'vital few'

The significance of the knowledge economy in sustaining Derby's industrial growth cannot be over-estimated. Technological innovations were applied to the manufacture of luxury consumer goods, which attracted wealthy consumers from the county set and surrounding areas.[95] A new urban elite of the 'middling sort' was nurtured by the prosperity created by industrial success and a burgeoning consumer market. By the 1730s, Derby's 'consumer revolution' was taking hold, fuelled by the growing demand for luxury goods from an increasingly sophisticated urban population.[96] Specialist retailers advertised on a regular basis in the local press. Robert Grayson, for example, advertised his linen drapery and Manchester goods, while William Boden had 'all Sorts of Chairs, after the best and newest Fashion' as well as fashionable looking glasses.[97] Complementing this consumerism was a growing need for professional services, such as attorneys, doctors, surgeons and apothecaries. The 'little State' of Derby was on the cusp of a 'cultural evolution', which was to change visions of society, forge novel ideas, and lead to a re-evaluation of beliefs, values and preferences. It was little short of a 'revolution in consciousness', which was to lead, paradoxically, to social unity and division, to solidarity and fragmentation, in the contested space of urban living.[98]

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[93] R.P. Sturges, 'The Membership of the Derby Philosophical Society 1783-1802', *Midland History,* 4 (1977-8), p.221.
[94] W.H.G. Armytage, *The Rise of the Technocrats: A Social History* (1965), p.37.
[95] See The Royal Crown Derby Company Ltd, *The Story of Derby China* (Derby, 1910); D.G. Rice, *Derby Porcelain, 1750-1770* (Newton Abbot, 1983); P.A. Elliott, 'The Derby Philosophers: Urban Scientific Culture and Society in Provincial England c. 1750-1850' (PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 2000), p.66.
[96] N. McKendrick, 'The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England', in N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*: *The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England* (1982), pp.9-33.
[97] *DM*, 9 January and 26 June 1735.
[98] Mokyr, *Culture of Growth,* pp.xiii-xiv; D. McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce* (Chicago, 2006). See also McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity,* and *Bourgeois Equality: How Ideas, not Capital or Institutions, Enriched the World* (Chicago, 2016).

As advocates of these enlightened views, the town's 'vital few' were key participants in the knowledge economy and the town's industrial hubs developed into repositories of learning, expertise and experimentation. These 'vital nurseries of skill' and 'fertile seedbeds of discovery' were the eighteenth-century's equivalent of today's Research and Development departments.[99] The 'vital few' lived close together, developing 'dense' ties of association.[100] This close-knit community, led by a small group of pioneering entrepreneurs, intellectuals and technocrats, was located within an intimate commercial and industrial core of roughly one square mile. What is remarkable is that, in a relatively small town, Allen has identified five local inventors, from a national list of seventy-nine, as having a significant impact on the shaping of the Industrial Revolution.[101] This eclectic mix of fabricants and savants encouraged and sustained 'polite' commercial and intellectual interaction from which a nascent bourgeois identity emerged.[102]

These 'vital few' spawned a 'creative community', in which the diffusion of knowledge was essentially at a local level, with ideas and learning fostered by key personalities and visiting itinerant lecturers. These 'savants' recognised the importance of mathematics as the basis of the new scientific method in calculating not only the movement of heavenly bodies, as in the case of Benjamin Parker, but also in practical arts such as navigation, cartography, mining and surveying. Such endeavours gave rise to the craft of instrument making — the manufacture of telescopes, microscopes, clocks, barometers and dividing and gear-cutting engines. John Arden, a contemporary of Parker,

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[99] A. Everitt, 'Country, county and town: patterns of regional evolution in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 29 (1979), pp.100, 103.
[100] See I. Inkster, 'Potentially Global: A Story of Useful and Reliable Knowledge and Material Progress in Europe circa 1474-1912', *The International History Review*, xxviii, (2006), pp.237-472; M.D. Granovetter, 'The Impact of Social Structures on Economic Development', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19 (2005), pp.33-50.
[101] See above, pp.44-8, 51.
[102] See R.J. Morris, 'Voluntary societies', pp.95-118; R.J. Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1759-1950,* vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1990), pp.395-443; J. Barry, 'Bourgeois collectivism? Urban association and the middling sort', in Barry and Brooks (eds.), *Middling Sort,* pp.84-112.

lived in Derby from 1739 to 1752 and taught mathematics from a schoolroom in Irongate. An advert in the local press stated that his classes would be:

> reading, writing, in all its usual hands, arithmetic in all its parts, viz. vulgar, decimal, logarithmetrical, instrumental and algebraical, geometry, speculative, and practical, together with the use of globes, and other mathematical instruments.[103]

His teaching also included the projection of the sphere, geography, practical and theoretical, the 'calculation of the celestial motions, particularly of the eclipses of the sun, moon, and satellites of Jupiter'.[104] Several submissions to the *Mercury* included articles on mathematical questions and problems.[105]

Arden also gave scientific lectures in the town until 1751. His 1749 lectures indicated the breadth of his knowledge by offering courses in natural and experimental philosophy 'so long as there were forty or more subscribers'. A great variety of experiments were shown, many of which were advertised as 'entirely new' and would clarify the nature of 'natural philosophy in general, or the properties, affectations, and phenomena of natural bodies hitherto discovered, and the laws by which they act'.[106] Catalogues of the experiments were offered free of charge from his schoolroom, although his courses in 1749 and 1751 were charged at half a guinea. Adverts stressed that 'the greatest care will be taken to make experiments as plain and intelligible as possible'.[107] Soon after this course of lectures, Arden left Derby for a position at the Heath Academy near Wakefield, which was run by its founder, Joseph Randall. His Derby business was sold as a going concern to George Leighlar, along with the schoolroom and the instruments.[108]

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[103] *DM,* 14 June 1739.
[104] *DM*, 28 June 1739.
[105] *DM*, 12 July 1739 and 28 February 1740.
[106] *DM*, 29 June 1749.
[107] *DM*, 29 June 1749 and 3 January 1752.
[108] A.E. Musson and E. Robinson, *Science and Technology*, p.156.

Having returned to Derby in 1762, Arden offered a course on experimental philosophy, which comprised twenty lectures on astronomy, mechanics, geography, hydrostatics and pneumatics.[109] Also included were 'the surprising properties of the air…pressure and elasticity…rarefaction, condensation, etc.', which were demonstrated by means of an air pump. The equipment was 'very extensive, neat, and elegantly finished, according to the latest improvements'. It was once again emphasised that the experiments were to be 'as plain and intelligible as possible even to those who have not apply'd anytime or study this way'.[110]

John Whitehurst followed in Arden's footsteps. He was a member of the Lunar Society and was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1779. He moved to Derby in 1736 when he was twenty-three and was already becoming known for his work on wind-vanes, barometers, pyrometers and especially for his clocks. Clocks had glamour. Britain was transfixed by the competition to find an accurate method of estimating longitude, which Parker's earlier work of 1731 exemplified. Both Arden and Whitehurst provided a philosophical bridge between Sorocold and Parker and the high tide of philosophical endeavour in the town from the 1760s to the death of Erasmus Darwin in 1802. Whitehurst also provided an essential link between local natural philosophers, the parallel group of Derby artists and craftsmen, such as Joseph Wright and Joseph Pickford, a well-connected local architect, and wider contacts with members of the Lunar Society and Masonic lodges.[111]

Wright was probably Whitehurst's closest friend in Derby; both shared an interest in topography and geology. Writing to his brother, Richard, from Rome in 1774, Wright commented:

[109] *DM*, 9 and 14 April 1762.
[110] *DM*, 15 April 1762.
[111] E. Saunders, *Joseph Pickford of Derby: A Georgian Architect* (Stroud, 1993), pp.11, 27-8; see below, pp.135-7 for Wright and pp.141-2, 145 for Pickford.

> Remember me with respect to all my friends; when you see Whitehurst, tell him I wished for his company when on Mount Vesuvius, his thoughts would have centred in the bowels of the Mountain, mine skimmed over the surface only; there was a very considerable eruption at the time, of which I am going to make a picture. Tis the most wonderful sight in Nature.[112]

Wright did indeed paint *Vesuvius in Eruption* in 1774. He had painted a portrait of Whitehurst in the previous year, shown sitting at his desk working on a section of strata at Matlock High Tor, with a backdrop of a landscape dominated by a smoking volcano.[113]

Whitehurst offered Wedgwood advice about minerals, slip kilns, timing and other machines for the Etruria works, and produced a clock for the stables and various domestic timepieces. In 1778 Whitehurst was with Wedgwood, Darwin and Watt at Etruria, when Darwin's horizontal windmill was finally installed, and to the end of his life Whitehurst and Wedgwood exchanged letters and visits.[114] This close working relationship with his fellow members of the Lunar Society also led to plans with Small, Boulton, Kier, and Watt for the mass-production of clocks, and his expertise in clocks and the instrument-making trade assisted Boulton and Watt in their development of engineering techniques.[115] As a member of the Lunar Society, Whitehurst's circle moved beyond Derby, as the subscribers' list for *An Inquiry into the Original State and Formation of the Earth* shows. The eclectic mix of patrons, supporters and fellow natural philosophers included local worthies such as Sir Robert Burdett, Bt. (of Foremark Hall), Joseph Wright, Joseph Pickford, William Emes, members of the Cavendish family, the Rev. Charles Hope, and Lord and Lady

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[112] J. Wright to R. Wright, 11 November 1774, quoted in W. Bemrose, *The Life and Works of Joseph Wright, ARA, commonly called Wright of Derby* (1885), p.345.
[113] See D. Fraser, 'The Scientific and Industrial Scenes of Joseph Wright', in D. Cosgrave and S. Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge, 1988), p.121; B. Nicolson, *Joseph Wright of Derby, Painter of Light*, vol. I (1968), pp.224-5.
[114] D. King-Hele, *Doctor of Revolution: The Life and Genius of Erasmus Darwin* (1977), p.128.
[115] E. Robinson, 'The Lunar Society and the Improvement of Scientific Instruments', *Annals of Science*, XIII (1957), pp.1-2.

Scarsdale. The subscription list also included Fellows of the Royal Society — Matthew Boulton, the Hon. Henry Cavendish, Erasmus Darwin, Earl Ferrers, James Ferguson, James Kier, Joseph Priestley and Anthony Tissington. The upper echelons of the aristocracy were represented by the Duke of Newcastle. In the full list there are thirty-three sitters of Joseph Wright and ten clients of Joseph Pickford, including Josiah Wedgwood.[116]

Whitehurst's most celebrated international contact was Benjamin Franklin, a fellow Mason, politician and natural philosopher. A letter from Whitehurst to Franklin in 1763 concluded with a postscript: 'With this I (send) you a short sketch of a General Theory of the Earth for your approbation'. The 'short sketch' was a synopsis of Whitehurst's *Inquiry,* first published in 1778 and which had run to three editions. His long-standing interest in geology dated back to mid-century, when he had sought the advice of Franklin in 1763 regarding his early theories on the origins of the Earth. Franklin commented:

> Your new theory of the Earth is very sensible and, in most particulars, quite satisfactory. I cannot now give you my sentiments upon it, this ship is just sailing; but shall write to you at large from Boston, where I expect to be some time.[117]

It is highly likely that Franklin had visited Whitehurst four years earlier en route to Scotland.[118]

White Watson, the Bakewell spar-turner, carver and natural historian, used Whitehurst's work on the geology of Derbyshire for continuing investigations on rock formations. One of Watson's innovations was to make, in the authentic stone, cross-sections of the Derbyshire strata after the diagrams in the *Inquiry*. These were usually framed or adapted as the friezes of polished limestone

[116] J. Whitehurst, *An Inquiry into the Original State and Formation of the Earth* (1778).
[117] D. King-Hele, (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Erasmus Darwin* (Cambridge, 2006), p.77: Franklin to Whitehurst from New York, 27 June 1763.
[118] *Dictionary of American Biography*, pp.310-13.

fireplaces. This connection was widened when Wedgwood bought fossils from Watson and visited him in Bakewell, accompanied by Erasmus Darwin, F.N.C. Mundy of Markeaton Hall, and William Strutt, on one of their geological expeditions to the Peak District.[119] In 1811, Watson published his *magnum opus, A Delineation of the Strata of Derbyshire.* Subscribers included the Duke of Devonshire, Erasmus Darwin's son, Sir Francis Sacheverell Darwin, Charles Hurt of Wirksworth Hall, William Strutt, Charles Sylvester and James Watt.[120]

Indeed, Whitehurst's theories about the formation of certain types of rock revolutionised geological thinking. The previously accepted theory put forward by the German geologist, Abraham Werner, had attributed to them an aqueous origin, but Johann Jacob Ferber, a Swedish student of Carl Linnaeus, and the French geologist Faujas de Saint Fond, supported Whitehurst's ideas. The latter, in London in 1784, had sought Whitehurst's advice concerning the best geological sites in Scotland.[121] Whitehurst's theory that the various creatures he had encountered as fossils must have mutated over aeons was developed in Erasmus Darwin's proto-evolutionist theories and his grandson Charles' *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection (1859).*[122]

Another close acquaintance of Whitehurst was Washington Shirley, the 5th Earl Ferrers, who was a keen astronomer and inventor. His main claim to fame was his work on his observations of the 1761 transit of Venus. Letters from Washington Shirley to Philip Carteret Webb, a leading figure in the antiquarian movement, dated 10 September and 24 November 1761, throw light on his observations of the transit. The Journal Book of the Royal Society contained an account of the letters and notes that were presented to the Society by Earl Ferrers, including his invention of an orrery, or transitarium, to 'facilitate the conception of future transits'. The letters indicate that the transit observations

[119] King-Hele, *Letters,* p.85.
[120] See W. Watson, *Delineation of the Section of the Strata of Derbyshire* (Sheffield, 1811).
[121] B. Faujas de St Fond, *A journey to England, Scotland and the Hebrides in 1784* (English translation, 1799), p.16.
[122] See E. Darwin, *Zoonomia or the Laws of Organic Life,* vol.1 [1794] (2009), ch.39.

were made 'in a convenient house situated on a high hill at Staunton in Leicestershire' and that a room in the house was converted into a *camera obscura* by use of a specially constructed window shutter. The Journal Book also records that:

> Mr. Davis attended on behalf of Earl Ferrers and explained the structure and use of the instrument or Transitarium, presented to the society. And thanks were ordered to his Lordship, and to Mr. Webb, for the said very curious present and communication.

Following Davis's account of the Transitarium, Washington Shirley was proposed by the President, George Parker, 2nd Earl of Macclesfield, and elected Fellow of the Society.[123]

Shirley was acquainted with many of the prominent natural philosophers in Derby, such as Peter Perez Burdett, surveyor, cartographer and keen astronomer, who was a frequent guest at Staunton Harold, Shirley's home. His friendship with Whitehurst and Burdett brought him into contact with Joseph Wright and he became one of Wright's early patrons by purchasing *A Philosopher Giving a Lecture on the Orrery*, which he had commissioned as early as 1763.[124] This iconic painting has great significance for its depiction of enlightenment science, with the orrery highlighted by the use of concentrated light. Peter Perez Burdett is seen taking notes in the painting and one of the children is the Earl's nephew, Laurence Shirley.[125] The close ties and mutual trust established between Washington, Burdett and Wright were further illustrated by the Earl making a disguised loan to Burdett of 200 guineas in 1763, which was the bond to pay Wright for the *Orrery*. Burdett's main claim to fame, however, was his one-inch to one-mile map of Derbyshire published in 1767, the first properly surveyed English county map. It showed roads, towns, woods, and landed estates with positions calculated by triangulation.

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[123] Journal Book of the Royal Society, vol. xxv, 1760-63, cited in M. Beech, 'The Transitarium of Washington Shirley, the 5th Earl Ferrers, F.R.S.', *Bulletin of the Scientific Instrument Society*, 16 (2013), pp.8-13.
[124] B. Nicolson, *Joseph Wright*, pp.39-42.
[125] J. Egerton, *Wright of Derby* (1990), p.54; see above, p.52.

Turnpike roads, for instance, were classified with distances measured from All Saints' Church, Derby.[126] John Whitehurst acted as retail agent for the launch of the map.[127]

When Whitehurst moved to London in 1773 to take up his post as 'regulator' of the nation's silver and gold coins, William Strutt was seventeen years of age. His formative years, therefore, were fashioned by his father's industrial acumen and Derby's vibrant scientific culture and natural philosophers of national repute. With Jedediah Strutt's death in 1797, his business was carried on by his three sons under the title of W.G., and J. Strutt, with William mainly concerned with the technical side, Joseph with commercial aspects and George in charge of the mills in Belper and Milford. William had always been Jedediah's innovative and inventive son and had a very clear idea of what the process of natural philosophy and invention entailed:

> We must reason from what we know, and inventing is only looking at all sides of a thing and putting it in different points of view and by long habit and a great store of ideas this becomes almost mechanical.[128]

With the success of his father's business, William had the time and the aptitude to demonstrate his engineering skills.[129] His most important achievement, probably, was his construction of fire-resistant buildings. His son wrote of him in 1831, a year after his death:

> He was the first person who attempted the construction of fireproof buildings on a large scale in this country, and with the most perfect success. The great improvements of late years in the formation of

[126] *DM*, 27 August 1762.
[127] *DM*, 20 June 1766.
[128] Armitage, *Engineering*, p.103.
[129] See H.R. Johnson and A.W. Skempton, 'William Strutt's cotton mills 1793-1812'*, Trans. Newcomen Society,* 30 (1955), pp.179-205; M.C. Egerton, 'William Strutt and the application of convection to the heating of buildings', *Annals of Science*, 24 (1968), pp.76-8; A. Menuge, 'The Cotton Mills of the Derbyshire Derwent and its Tributaries', *Industrial Archaeology Review*, 16 (1993), pp.38-61.

> Castings in iron, have given great facilities to this mode of construction, which is now very extensively in use.[130]

The protection of textile factories was particularly important for the Strutts and the Arkwrights. The *Derby Mercury* had reported numerous instances of fires destroying mills, including the Strutt and Arkwright mill in Nottingham in 1781.[131] Perhaps the burning of the Albion Mills in London in 1791 provided the final impetus for innovative and safer construction, for it was a year later that William began building the first fireproof mill in Derby.[132] It was completed in 1793, six storeys high, with cast-iron cruciform columns and massive timber beams, which were protected by plaster on their undersides and supported by brick arch floors. The topographers, Britton and Brayley, commented in 1802 that it was:

> Remarkable for its floors being constructed on brick arches, and paved with brick, by which means it is rendered absolutely indestructible by fire. This building is six storeys high, 115 feet long and 30 feet wide; it was erected in the year 1793, and it was the first *fireproof* mill that was ever built.[133]

The West Mill at Belper and a four-storey warehouse in Milford, built between 1793 and 1795, were of similar construction. This innovative design was of huge importance to mill owners and engineers, but it was also the precursor to Charles Bage's multi-storey building in which wooden beams were completely replaced by iron framing. This was erected in Shrewsbury in 1796 as a flax mill for Thomas and Benjamin Benyon and John Marshall. There is little doubt that Bage, 'a pragmatic nuts-and-bolts kind of engineer', whose father was Robert Bage, a friend of Erasmus Darwin and one time owner of a paper mill in Darley Abbey, was corresponding with William Strutt at the time,

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[130] *DM*, 12 January 1831.
[131] *DM*, 15 November 1781.
[132] *DM*, 10 March 1791.
[133] E.W. Brayley and J. Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, Vol. 3 (1802), p.364.

and was inspired by the latter's inventive spirit.[134] The North Mill at Belper of 1803, the East Wing added to the Milford Warehouse in 1805-06, the Reeling Mill and the South Mill at Belper (1807-08 and 1811-12 respectively), saw the development of a much lighter iron beam than those installed in Bage's mill.[135]

William Strutt was to develop his technological skills in the building of the Derbyshire General Infirmary, which opened in 1810.[136] His system of 'domestic economy' at the hospital was engineered by his friend Charles Sylvester. It included the latest innovations in fireproof building techniques, using technology developed in his textiles factories.[137] Features of the building also included an iron and glass dome over the centre of the infirmary, with iron-framed windows and a fireproof hollow pot-vaulted ceiling over the baths; a heating and ventilation system originally used in textile technology and his own home; and in the kitchen, a more efficient roaster designed by Strutt himself.[138]

William's son, Edward, maintained that his father invented a self-acting mule forty years before Richard Roberts took out his patent in 1830, 'but we believe', he wrote, 'that the inferior workmanship of that day prevented the success of an invention which all the skill and improvement in the construction of machinery in the present day has barely accomplished.'[139] William had been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1817, 'an unusual honour for a manufacturer'.[140] In 1831, a year after William's death, the president of the society referred to him as:

> the author of those great improvements in the construction of stoves, and in the economical generation and distribution of heat, which have of late

[134] Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p.85; C.L. Hacker, 'William Strutt of Derby (1756-1830)', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 80 (1960), p.55.
[135] T. Bannister, 'The First Iron-Framed Buildings', *Architectural Review*, 107 (1950), p.237.
[136] See below, pp.149-51.
[137] C. Sylvester, *Philosophy of Domestic Economy* (1819), pp.4-7.
[138] P.A. Elliott, *The Derby Philosophers: Science and Culture in British Urban Society, 1700-1850* (Manchester, 2009), pp.163-89.
[139] *DM,* 2 January 1831; see also DLSL, BA/133, H. Strutt, *Memoir of William Strutt* (1890), p.16.
[140] Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p.85.

years been so extensively and so usefully introduced in the warming and ventilation of hospitals and public buildings.[141]

A succinct picture of Strutt's enquiring and inventive mind is, perhaps, best derived from his obituary memoir. This mentioned his invention of 'a self-acting mule for the spinning of cotton', the development, in conjunction with Darwin, of a watch-clock, and his 'improvements in the formation of Castings in iron'. Strutt's mathematical ability was further demonstrated by 'the connexion of the circumference of a circle with the centre by suspension radii', which was applied to water wheels and is 'now coming rapidly into use in the wheels of carriages'. The extract goes on to describe his 'invention of a machine somewhat similar in external appearance to the sun and planet wheels, which were formally used in steam engines, and its application to clocks and machines, for indicating and registering the revolutions of rotary machinery'. The extract concludes by referring to Strutt's major contribution to the scientific world, observing that his wide knowledge was evidence of his 'powerful genius and comprehensive mind'.[142]

Through his religion, his scientific endeavours and his politics, Strutt was acquainted with some of the most intellectual and knowledgeable minds of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His circle of friends included Erasmus Darwin, Charles Sylvester the engineer, Samuel Bentham and his brother Jeremy, Robert Owen and Charles Bage. It is evident that they shared lively discussions about engineering and inventions. Charles Bage corresponded on a variety of scientific subjects, including experiments on the strength of iron beams, and Darwin wrote to him in 1801 regarding arranging a visit to see 'the grand effects of your electrical apparatus' and to 'learn if positive electricity exists *in* glass or on it'.[143] In 1805, Samuel Bentham was writing to him about the process of drying wood artificially.[144]

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[141] Strutt, *William Strutt*, p.17.
[142] *DM*, 12 January 1831; Strutt, *William Strutt.*
[143] Hacker, 'William Strutt of Derby', p.63; Strutt, *Memoir*, quoting a letter from Erasmus Darwin to William Strutt, 6 August 1801, p.19.
[144] See Fitton and Wadsworth, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights,* p.181.

Itinerant scientists

This long tradition of natural philosophy and industrial technology attracted numerous visiting lecturers to the town. These itinerant scientists enhanced the diffusion of knowledge by providing intellectual and practical support to the vital few. As outsiders, they brought with them scientific news and fresh ideas that added to the store of local expertise. They were attracted to the town by its early industrial development, the iconic silk mill of the Lombe brothers and by Derby's convenient central location. Interestingly, the lecturers were not merely passing through, because most of them came more than once, indicating that there was a regular public for their scientific programmes. Indeed, the files of the *Derby Mercury* show that there was a regular flow of visits from these lecturers throughout the eighteenth century. Whitehurst, for example, welcomed James Ferguson to the town, whose course of lectures in 1764 was advertised as being on 'mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics and astronomy'. The advertisement urged interested parties to book through 'Mr. J. Whitehurst or Mr. Geo. Goodwin, junior'. The first lecture was at the County Hall on Monday 9 July 1764 at six o'clock.[145] A wide range of topics was covered. Experiments were demonstrated on 'philosophic apparatus' of the kind shown in Joseph Wright's paintings 'The Orrery' and the 'Experiment with the Air-Pump', both painted in the period 1764-1768.[146] Such scientific lectures were, however, exclusive. The cost of the subscriptions for a series of ten to fifteen lectures in 1770 was 10s 6d and had risen to £1 1s by 1800, an expense which the workers could not afford.[147]

Early visiting itinerant lecturers included John Grundy, who Desaguliers regarded as a leading engineer.[148] An advert in the *Derby Postman* in 1728 offered his services as a cartographer and surveyor of gentlemen's estates, using a 'method entirely new, which never fails to justly represent, both in

[145] *DM*, 13 April 1764.
[146] *DM,* 10 May 1765, 15 August 1767.
[147] *DM*, 16 September 1770; 5 May 1800.
[148] Musson and Robinson, *Science and Technology*, p.45.

shape, position, and similar proportion every furlong and single land'. He guaranteed that, by using the theodolite, Beighton's plain table and Gunter's chain, his work would be precise and accurate. To further supplement his income, Grundy offered to teach subjects including accounts, algebra, geometry, 'both plane and solid, the doctrine of triangles, both plane and spherical, and either orthographic or stereographic, optics, and drawing'.[149]

Thomas Simpson, like Benjamin Parker, came from a relatively humble background. He was originally a handloom weaver from Market Bosworth who became an astronomer and mathematician, as well as editing the *Ladies' Diary*. He taught mathematics in Derby between 1733 and 1735 and curried favour with the Cavendish family by writing and publishing an election poem in their praise in 1733. Simpson's *New Treatise of the Fluxions* was compiled in Derby and in 1735 he took it to London. The *Treatise* showed demonstrations of practical examples of the application of calculus to a series of astronomical and mathematical problems. He was appointed Professor of Mathematics at the Woolwich Military Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Society. [150]

William Griffis was well known in Derby. He provided private tuition at gentlemen's houses and courses in philosophy in the town and elsewhere in the Midlands, such as Lichfield, Burton, Birmingham and Wolverhampton. In 1743, courses in experimental philosophy were advertised and lectures were offered if twenty or more of either sex would subscribe. The local newspaper reported in 1748 that his scientific equipment included a 'vast array of instruments' such as a pump that worked without a water wheel, a 'curious airgun, a planetarium, a cometarium, a Ptolemaic sphere, and an improved orrery, telescopes and microscopes of all sorts'. In 1766 Griffis's equipment was sold to the scientific lecturer Adam Walker.[151]

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[149] *Derby Postman*, 14 November 1728.
[150] DLSL, BA/8359, news-cutting file: information about Simpson contained within an unidentified nineteenth-century Derby newspaper.
[151] See the *Salisbury Journal*, 12 April 1757, in Musson and Robinson, *Science and Technology*, p.164; *DM*, 22 September 1748; P.A. Elliott, 'The Birth of Public Science in English Provinces: Natural Philosophers in Derby, c.1690-1760', *Annals of Science*, 57 (2000), pp.61-100.

From the 1770s some of the most outstanding lecturers of the day visited the town, including John Warltire, who gave courses in 1771, 1781 and 1798. He was an experimental scientist as well as a teacher, working with Joseph Priestley in experiments with water in 1774 and 1777, and with Erasmus Darwin between 1774-1776 on air pump experiments.[152] Other lecturers who advertised courses during the latter part of the eighteenth century included John Banks in 1780 and 1795, Mr Pitt in 1773, 1778 and 1785, Mr Long in 1785, Mr Lloyd in 1790 and 1794, J. Booth in 1783 and 1789, and Mr Burton in 1790.[153] There can be no doubt that Derby's late eighteenth-century appeal was down to William Strutt and Erasmus Darwin — leading savants of the knowledge economy and key players in Derby's Philosophical Society.

Darwin had moved to Radbourne Hall, four miles west of Derby, in 1781, having married Elizabeth Pole. During the following year, he bought a house in Full Street in the town centre and moved there with his family in 1783. As a fellow member of the Lunar Society, John Whitehurst was a close acquaintance of Darwin, as was Joseph Wright, who had become one of Darwin's patients around 1766 when he was treated 'for years for the lethargy and depression that alternated with his spells of creativity'.[154] Derby savants, therefore, came within the orbit of possibly the greatest polymath of his day. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the poet, visited him at his home in Full Street in 1796 and commented:

> Derby is full of curiosities, the cotton, the silk mills, Wright the painter and Dr. Darwin, the everything except the Christian. Dr. Darwin possesses perhaps a greater range of knowledge than any other person in Europe and is the most inventive of philosophical men.[155]

[152] D. McKie, 'Mr. Warltire, a good chymist', *Endeavour*, X (1954), p.4.
[153] *DM*, 16 June 1780, 3 December 1795, 25 December 1778, 13 January 1785, 15 September 1785, 2 September 1790, 18 September 1794, 31 July 1783, 9 July 1789, 18 November 1790.
[154] J. Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends who made the Future* (2002), p.122.
[155] King-Hele, *Doctor of Revolution*, p.260.

Darwin was a physician, poet, philosopher and inventor and his profession and exceptional intellectual gifts ensured that he became a leading figure in several overlapping social circles. His desire to emulate the Lunar Society, of which he had been a member from its inception in the 1760s, was the motivation behind the formation of the Derby Philosophical Society.[156] William Strutt was the co-founder of this important association, which represented the culmination of the town's intellectual enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

Philosophical societies

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, there is a distinct possibility that there were two societies in Derby during the eighteenth century. The anniversary dinner of the Philosophical Society of Derby in July 1779 at the *New Inn* suggests that a society pre-dates that founded by Darwin and Strutt. Indeed, in 1779 both local newspapers referred to an earlier society's anniversary by reporting that 'on Saturday last, the Philosophical Society of Derby dined at the *New Inn* to celebrate the anniversary of its institution'.[157] If so, the Derby Society would rank second after the Birmingham Lunar Society as the oldest of its kind. In his *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs*, Joseph Cradock refers to a weekly club meeting close to All Saints' church 'consisting of Philosophers then principally engaged on the subject of electricity.' He confirms that 'three of the friendly members should be the Rev. Mr. Winter originally a dissenter, Mr. Pickering at least a Tory and a Mr. Whitehurst supposed to be an Infidel.' Cradock suggests that, from this 'humble society', Erasmus Darwin 'derived no small advantage'.[158] The Rev. W. Pickering was Cradock's tutor from 1758 until he went to Cambridge in 1760 and Cradock visited him during the next three years. The club referred to was at a later date — Cradock was in contact by

[156] For Darwin, see A. Seward, *Memoirs of the Life of Dr Darwin* (1804); E. Krause, *Erasmus Darwin, with a Preliminary Notice by Charles Darwin* (1879); R. Porter, 'Erasmus Darwin: Doctor of Evolution' in J. Moore (ed.), *History, Humanity and Evolution, Essays for John C. Greene* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.39-69; D. King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement* (1999); King-Hele, *Letters.*
[157] *DM*, 30 July 1779; *Derby and Nottingham Journal*, 29 July 1779.
[158] J. Cradock, *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs* (1828), p.32.

letters and visits with friends in Derby, notably F.N.C. Mundy and the Wilmot family of Chaddesden Hall. The suggestion that this society was established before that of Darwin's is given weight by the fact that Winter died in 1774, and Whitehurst left Derby for London in 1775.[159]

Fellow founding members of the Philosophical Society, along with Darwin and Strutt, included William Strutt's uncle and his brother Joseph, the son of local banker, Peter Crompton, and the Rev. Charles Stead Hope. Wedgwood, Priestley and Boulton were associate members.[160] The Rev. Pickering provided some continuity between the two societies, as a member of both.[161] On the death of Darwin in 1802, William Strutt took over as president and remained in post until his death in 1830. Darwin thought of the newly formed society as an offshoot of the Lunar Society. In a letter to Matthew Boulton in 1783, he announced:

> We have establish'd an infant Philosophical Society at Derby, but do not presume to compare it to your well-grown gigantic philosophers at Birmingham…I beg to be remember'd to all the insane at your next meeting.[162]

In a subsequent letter, he wrote, 'Perhaps like the freemason societies, we may sometime make your society a visit, our number at present amounts to seven'.[163] At the inception of the town's society, a local commentator declared, 'May Derby's sons exalt the liberal arts, employ their genius, cultivate parts' and Darwin did not disappoint.[164] Having been the first Englishman to fly a large hydrogen balloon (from Derby, on 26 December 1783), he also instigated one of the first attempts at 'balloon post' in January 1784, telling Boulton that his Derby Philosophical Society had tried to send a balloon to members of the

[159] DLSL, BA/103, J. Tilley, *Short Biographies of Seventy Derby Clergymen* (1892*)*; Craven, *John Whitehurst,* p.102.
[160] King-Hele, *Doctor of Revolution*, pp.153, 159-61.
[161] DLSL, BA/106/9230, loan register and charging ledger of Derby Philosophical Society, 1785-9.
[162] Letter from Darwin to Bolton, 4 March 1783, quoted in King-Hele, *Letters*, p.128.
[163] E. Darwin, letter to Matthew Boulton, 4 March 1783 in King-Hele *Letters*, p.215.
[164] DLSL, BA/22893, papers relating to the Derby Philosophical Society.

Lunar Society, which was calculated to fall in the garden at Soho, but 'the wicked wind' carried it to the garden of Sir Edward Littleton, MP for Stafford.[165]

Derby's philosophical societies provided opportunities for bourgeois bonding. Natural philosophy was a source of rational entertainment and, for some, theological instruction, as well as a means of social legitimisation. Membership identified the manufacturer or professional as a potential member of the local elite, 'demarcating him from his more uncouth fellows'.[166] The society's main function was social; it was a vehicle by which aspiring men could gain legitimisation through what was a fashionable form of culture.[167]

In contrast to the membership of the Tyrian Lodge of Freemasons, the list of members indicates the importance of medical men.[168] Darwin, John Beridge and John Hollis Pigott were of the medical profession and a high percentage of the regularly enrolled resident members were physicians or surgeons, so much so that, by the late 1780s, some 50 per cent of the resident membership was medical. Of the remaining members, French, Pole and Archdale were gentry; Hope and Pickering were Anglican clergy; Strutt and Duesbury were industrialists; and Erasmus Darwin junior and John Leaper were attorneys. Of the non-resident members, there was also a large medical contingent — at least 50 per cent. Boothby, Bradshaw, Trowell, Wilmot, Hurt, Evans, Walker and Clarke represented the gentry. Three clergymen are also included in the non-resident membership, as are the manufacturers John and Ralph Wedgwood, Bage and Jedediah Strutt. The pattern for both resident and non-resident members is strikingly similar. Medicine predominates, providing about half of the membership. The gentry come next with just under a quarter of

[165] *DM*, 28 December 1783. See letter from Darwin to Bolton, 17 January 1784, quoted in King-Hele, *Letters* p.134; Uglow, *The Lunar Men,* p.371.
[166] S.A. Shapin and A. Thackray, 'Prosopography as a research tool in history of science: the British Scientific Community 1700-1900', *History of Science*, XII (1974), p.9.
[167] See S.A. Shapin, 'The Audience for Science in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh', *History of Science* XII (1974), pp.95-121; A. Thackray, 'Natural Knowledge in a cultural context', pp.672-709.
[168] Membership of Derby Philosophical Society is based on the following: S. Glover, *Glover's Derby: History and Directory of the Borough of Derby* (1843), p.430; P. Sturges, 'The Membership of the Derby Philosophical Society, 1783-1802'; DLSL, BA/7625, list of members, 1788; BA/106/9230, Derby Philosophical Society cash ledger, catalogue and loan register; A. Seward, *Memoirs*; Hacker, 'William Strutt', pp.49-70; Elliott, *The Derby Philosophers*, pp.269-70.

the membership, whilst industrialists and clergy make up the rest of the numbers. A few lawyers complete the membership roll. It is difficult to see the membership list of the gentry equating with the aristocracy of the county and, although some of the 'gentlemen' members had considerable wealth and lands, only the baronets Sir Brooke Boothby and Sir Robert Wilmot could claim social standing much greater than Darwin's own. The number of manufacturers, whilst small, was an influential group, including Charles Hurt and Thomas Evans, who were industrialists as well as gentry.[169]

There was a strong link between local nonconformist congregations, the town's philosophical societies, and useful knowledge. As was noted above, Derby's Dissenting Academy and its commercial schools provided a wide-ranging curriculum of vocational and arts topics.[170] Ebenezer Latham was qualified in both medicine and the arts, and taught students of both divinity and secular subjects. His progressive texts and his academy were well respected for the quality of education and the undogmatic approach to learning.[171] Whilst in Derby, Latham was assistant minister at the Friar Gate Chapel, and after his death his son-in-law, Thomas White, took over as assistant, later becoming minister.[172] Latham's ideas and principles, therefore, were likely to be perpetuated in this small but influential community. Industrial and commercial families, such as the Strutts, Duesburys and Cromptons, were all members of the congregation, as well as providing members for the Philosophical Society. Interestingly, James Pilkington, who succeeded White as minister of the Friar Gate Chapel, was never a member. This is surprising as he was not only close to Darwin in his political views, but also in his love of knowledge. In 1789, he published a *View of the Present State of Derbyshire*, which dealt with the topography, climate, minerals, waterways, soils and agriculture, botany and birds of the county. In the second volume, the topics included government,

[169] See above, pp.85-6.
[170] See above, pp.94-6.
[171] McLachlan, *Essays and Addresses* includes an essay giving a detailed account of the Derby Academy, pp. 22-35.
[172] See Rev. J. Birke, *Memorials of Friar Gate Chapel, Derby* (Derby, 1824), Chapter II.

religion, population, trade and customs.[173] Pilkington's non-membership and the number of Anglican clergy who were members casts some doubt on the idea that there was a special relationship between local nonconformist congregations and philosophical societies.[174]

Derby's Philosophical Society provided an intellectual space for group cohesion and solidarity of the urban and county elites. Those on the fringes of elite society, such as the doctors, lawyers and the clergy, saw membership as a means of furthering their social standing. However, these 'marginal men' never provided, as Paul Langford suggests, 'a distinct circle of wealth, power, and prestige, between the outer ring of landowners who constituted county society and the inner core of merchants, bankers, and tradesmen who ruled municipal society'.[175] Indeed, generally, relationships tended to be amicable, although Peter Crompton, a member of the respected family of Derby bankers, was 'much given to controversy, a radical in politics and a Unitarian in religion' and held more extreme political views than most of the other leading members of the society.[176]

Thorny political issues did, indeed, create friction. The Priestley Riots in Birmingham in July 1791, and the destruction of Priestley's laboratory, put at risk amicable relationships. A message of sympathy was issued by the society, and Priestley replied thanking members for their encouragement.[177] The Rev. Charles Stead Hope, however, criticised the action of his fellow members in the local press, stating that the dddress had been 'agreed to and fabricated by only five members of the Society out of 37'.[178] He also pointed out that the general annual meeting in October had decided that two weeks' notice had to be given of any 'Act of Publicity'. The *Mercury* reported that Rev. Hope had been asked to resign due to 'an advertisement, misrepresenting a transaction

[173] Pilkington, *Present State of Derbyshire*.
[174] See Musson and Robinson, *Science and Technology*, Chapter III.
[175] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, p.73.
[176] DLSL, BA/242, materials relating to Derbyshire freemasons.
[177] DLSL, BA/106/9231, *An Address to Dr Priestley Agreed Upon at a meeting of the Philosophical Society at Derby*, 3 September 1791, broadside (Derby, 1791). For a detailed account see E. Robinson, 'The Derby Philosophical Society', *Annals of Science*, IX (1953), pp.359-67.
[178] *DM*, 6 October 1791

of the Philosophical Society at Derby'. Richard Roe, the Society's secretary, was at pains to explain the reasons behind Hope's resignation:

> That of the thirty-seven members, thirteen only are resident in the Town, and that the address to Dr. Priestley was voted unanimously at a regular monthly meeting, at which was present the usual number of attending members, and that it contain'd no reference to the Doctor's *political* opinions…it was conceived that no man of a liberal mind would object to congratulating him on his escape from the violence of an enraged mob.[179]

Political alliances

The patronage borough

These political undertones form the basis for the third part of the chapter, which highlights the long tradition and political stability of Derby's association with the Cavendish family, whilst recognising the potential for conflict in the Derby Society for Political Information. As a patronage borough, the Whigs formed the dominant political party, and were almost unchallenged throughout the eighteenth and for much of the nineteenth centuries. Before 1832 there were few contested elections, with the Duke of Devonshire and his agents exerting powerful political influence. The Duke controlled one county member, whilst either a member of the Cavendish family, or their nominee, served as one of the two borough members. By tradition, the other borough member was a Corporation (Whig) nominee until 1832.[180] The only time that the Whig monopoly was broken was in 1776 when Parliament reversed the result of an election in which the Whigs were accused of securing the member for Derby on the grounds of bribery. One hundred witnesses attended an investigating

[179] *DM*, 10 October 1791.
[180] See C.E Hogarth, 'The Derbyshire Parliamentary Elections of 1832', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 89 (1969), pp.68-85.

committee at the House of Commons, which eventually found in favour of the Tory, Daniel Parker Coke.[181]

Elections were practically a family affair — Henry Cavendish and Samuel Crompton were elected unopposed in 1826 for the Derby seat and in 1830 and 1831; Henry Cavendish and Edward Strutt had a similarly easy ride. For the Derbyshire seat, Lord George Cavendish and Francis Mundy were elected unopposed in 1826 and 1830. In the following year, George Vernon joined Lord Cavendish and William Cavendish as unopposed MPs. Whenever the Whigs looked like being outnumbered, for example, by 124 in 1806 and 132 in 1839, they created honorary freemen (who thus received the vote) from amongst their supporters. When there was some uncertainty as to which way the vote would go in 1832, Sir Charles Robert Colville complained bitterly that the House of Cavendish found it necessary to make 257 of their tenants 'bastard burgesses' to swamp the chartered and independent burgesses of the borough.[182] Such political hegemony fostered powerful connections in the town, especially between the emerging wealthy bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. Significant financial support from the Strutt family to the Cavendish interest guaranteed a reciprocal agreement from the Dukes of Devonshire to promote local trade, allocate local offices to constituents, patronise municipal amenities, and provide welfare and charity. This political patronage made an important contribution to Derby's associative culture. It fostered a social nexus of vertical connections of inter-dependency, which tended to unite the various interest groups of land, industry and the professions within the social pyramid.[183]

[181] A.W. Davison, *Derby: its Rise and Progress* (Wakefield, 1970), pp.115-6.
[182] J. Wigley, 'Derby and Derbyshire during the Great Reform Bill Crisis, 1830-1832', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 101 (1981), pp.139-49.
[183] See H.J. Perkin, 'The Social Causes of the British Industrial Revolution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 18 (1968), pp.123-43.

The Derby Society for Political Information

Nevertheless, the political strains over the Philosophical Society's support for Dr Priestley threatened to drive a political wedge between members of the Derby Society for Political Information. An offshoot of the Philosophical Society, and one of the oldest provincial corresponding societies, it comprised industrialists and professionals, including journalists, nonconformist ministers and doctors.[184] Established in 1791, the chairman of the society was Samuel Fox who had married into the Strutt family.[185] Peter Crompton was a leading light and, as noted above, was regarded as a political radical.[186] Generally, the Derby Society for Political Information comprised young local radicals from the urban elite who hoped to raise enough interest to petition the House of Commons for a wide range of social and political reform.

They hoped to encourage working class participation by having a low subscription rate and by following the divisional model pioneered by the Sheffield Society. Members were split into groups of ten: they were to elect one delegate each to a committee, which ran the society. Whereas the great majority of political societies introduced a political test and a high subscription rate to encourage the moderate and to exclude the more extreme reformer, Derby's Political Society declined to do this. The aim was to ensure an efficient organisation for what was intended to be a rapidly expanding association, recruiting a large working class membership. New divisions could be added as membership grew. More conservative societies such as the Manchester Constitutional Society charged a subscription of half a guinea, paid annually; the membership subscription of the Derby Society was only two shillings per year, to be paid quarterly. Even though the Society had a veneer of radicalism and a desire to encourage working class support, its aims emphasised the

[184] Thompson, *English Working Class,* p.22.
[185] A. Wallis, 'A History of the Printing Press in Derbyshire', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 3 (1881), p.150.
[186] See above, p.115.

peaceful pursuit of reform; members were against conspiracies and rioting. Universal suffrage was the overall goal.[187]

Publicity was through the publication of their meetings in the press, or by corresponding with other societies to exert a national influence.[188] Able public speakers such as William Ward, a Methodist preacher, who in the 1780s became apprentice to the proprietor of the *Derby Mercury* and eventually its editor, was a noted orator. His biographer thought his speeches were:

> Animated and striking. There are still some living, who heard him in his younger days and well remember the impression that was produced, scarcely, indeed, inferior to the excitement effected by the most popular preacher of the day.[189]

As with leading members of the society, such as Joseph and William Strutt, Ward was generally moderate and consistent in his political views.[190] He used his position on the local newspaper to further reform ideas, including support for the French Revolution in its early stages. The *Mercury*, however, also expressed distaste for the Priestley riots in Birmingham in 1791. It is evident from the newspaper articles that Ward was careful not to incite rebellion, but rather to smooth the way locally towards reform ideas.[191] This view was reflected in a eulogy in the local press, when referring to William Strutt's sympathy with the Americans and the French in their aspirations to establish a constitutional government, and his belief that the best security for order was an enlightened and informed public.[192]

Charles Sambroke Ordoyne, in contrast, was a radical, who had become a printer and bookseller in the town in July 1791 and started a newspaper, the

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[187] DLSL, BA/22896, Derby Society for Political Information, *Address to the Friends of Free Enquiry and in General Good*, and *Rules of the Derby Society for Political Information*,16 June 1792.
[188] See E. Fearn, 'The Derbyshire Reform Societies, 1791-93', *Derbyshire Archaeology Journal,* 87 (1968), pp.47-59.
[189] S. Stennett, *Memoirs of the Life of Rev. William Ward* (1825), p.237.
[190] See also W. Page (ed.), *Victoria History of the Counties of England: Derbyshire*, II (1907), pp.6-12.
[191] *DM*, 7, 14, 28 January, 7 October 1790 and 28 July 1791.
[192] *DM*, 12 January 1831.

Derby Herald, to compete with the Tory *Mercury*. Ordoyne's membership was short-lived as his paper failed after only eight issues, prompting the comment that its proprietor 'loved ale more than republicanism'.[193]

The most radical member of the society was Henry Yorke, a member of the London Corresponding Society, as well as the societies of Sheffield and Derby, who made far-ranging tours to link the work of the societies.[194] In 1792 he went from Derby to Paris, where he stayed for some weeks, a journey which prompted the rector of Morley, a village near Derby, to comment that:

> In no part of the kingdom have they more disaffected persons than in the town and neighbourhood of Derby, from whence they have actually sent two persons to the national convention of France to invite the French over to this country.[195]

In 1792 the society produced a broadsheet at a meeting at the *Talbot Inn* criticising the tax system, the frequency of wars, the lack of adequate representation for the majority, the game laws and the neglect of the poor. Members called upon 'the friends of freedom' throughout Great Britain to form similar societies.[196] A year later, a general meeting of the society compiled an address to Charles James Fox thanking him for his stance against the war with France. The chairman of this meeting was the physician John Pigott, one of the founder members of the Derby Philosophical Society and, as noted above, a freemason.[197] In May 1793, members sent a petition to Parliament expressing their concerns over the war, which was rejected without comment. A year later, after the trial of Thomas Hardy, the secretary of the London Corresponding Society, Joseph Strutt emphasised that the society at Derby

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[193] A. Wallis, 'Printing Press', p.150.
[194] See E. Fearn, 'Henry Redhead Yorke: Radical Traitor', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 42, (1968), pp.187-92.
[195] Page, *Victoria County History,* pp.150-1. See also 'Obituary of Henry Yorke', *Gentleman's Magazine,* I (1813), p.283.
[196] DLSL, BA/22896, *To the Friends of Free Enquiry.*
[197] *DM*, 5 March 1793; see above, pp.92-3.

had never considered the use of force and had never met after the society's petition had been rejected.[198]

This moderate response reflected the increasing concern of the Strutt family and the urban elite at the excesses of the French Revolution and the possibility of riots in the town. In May 1794, Richard Arkwright was joined by William and Joseph Strutt at a general meeting at the County Hall, Derby. The *Mercury* reported that the gathering was 'one of the most respectable' meetings attended by a 'number of gentlemen of weight and property…for the consideration of the Security of the County, and the Plans recommended by government for that purpose.' Among the resolutions passed at the meeting was one that:

> The Gentlemen and Yeomen of the County…do pledge themselves to be in immediate readiness in SUPPORT OF THE CIVIL POWER, at the call of the Lord Lieutenant, the Sheriff, or the acting Magistrates; for the Suppression of Riots and Tumults of all description, and in any case of Real Danger with the County.[199]

The *Mercury* reported that Arkwright contributed £200 to a subscription raised at the meeting, a sum equalled by Lord John Cavendish and Lord Vernon. The Duke of Devonshire's contribution was the largest at £500, followed by that of Sir Henry Harpur, Bart.[200] It was unanimously agreed that:

> Every endeavour should be made to call forth that zeal and energy — that firm and manly courage, which, ever has, in trying conflicts, distinguished Britons, and which at the present moment of danger, when we are menaced with destruction by a formidable and haughty

[198] *DM*, 13 November 1794.
[199] *DM*, 29 May 1794.
[200] *DM*, 15 May 1794.

enemy, is so essential to the protection of the many blessings we enjoy, and of the honour and Independence of our Country.[201]

The outcome of the meeting was the raising of the Volunteer Corps of Infantry in Derbyshire. By the end of 1798, infantry corps had been established at Derby, Ashbourne and Wirksworth through voluntary contributions.[202] Patriotism and conservatism sustained political unity and solidarity at a time when friction and fragmentation might have split the cohesive relationship between the urban elite and the aristocracy. This echoed the reaction of the political elite when food riots threatened the social equilibrium of the 'little State' of Derby.[203]

Conclusion

As early as 1703, Defoe was suggesting that 'wealth, however got, in England makes Lords of mechanics, gentlemen of rakes; Antiquity and birth are needless here; Tis impudence and money makes a peer'.[204] Whilst Defoe's remarks may have been rather whimsical they, nevertheless, had a grain of truth, especially the remark relating to money. This chapter has certainly highlighted the significance of 'money-getting' in the quest for social status. The creation of wealth alone was, of course, only one factor in the evolutionary process of bourgeois bonding and the emergence of a middle class identity. Compelling evidence has confirmed the symbiotic relationship in Derby between industry, commerce and the diffusion of knowledge, linked to the enlightened belief that this would unite disparate individuals and groups and forge a collective identity of shared elite values and aspirations.

A rich and vibrant associational world was at the heart of these inter-connected relationships. Derby's associative culture was diverse — formal and informal,

[201] *DM*, 3 May 1798.
[202] *DM*, 8 December 1798.
[203] See above, pp.65-70.
[204] D. Defoe, *A Collection of the Writings of the Author of the True-born English-man* (1703), p.10.

individual and collective, transitory and stable. Its core attributes were mutual trust, shared values and high aspirations, creating collaborative working relationships between entrepreneur, intellectual, and technocrat, based on vested interest.[205] Clubs and societies fostered a 'cultural solidarity and social cohesion' which, in turn, empowered the urban elite.[206] Burgeoning relationships were manifested in clubs and societies, and through business transactions, patronage, politics, and the diffusion of knowledge. These wide-ranging and diverse associations were at the heart of Derby's cultural evolution. Its clubs and societies nurtured a virtuous circle of knowledge creation, social emulation and social standing. Derby's status as a county town was enhanced by its flourishing cultural milieu. The rural elite were attracted to the town, which confirmed traditional links, whilst freemason lodges also attracted new and high-status visitors, such as Benjamin Franklin.[207] Intellectuals, natural scientists and itinerant lecturers were drawn to this creative community, where inventive acumen resulted in the improvement of industrial processes and helped generate wealth and a 'polite society'.[208]

The family connections and commercial partnerships of the Strutts, the Evans of Darley Abbey and the Arkwrights epitomised the town's creative community. The fact that the Strutts were influential nonconformists, and the latter two families were Anglicans, has demonstrated that religious denomination was not a stumbling block in sustaining good commercial relationships. This cohesion was mirrored in the town's politics. The Whig-Liberal tradition of the patronage borough did not preclude Tory or Anglican membership of clubs and societies. In fact, their membership showed a remarkably diverse spread of social, political and religious persuasion.

[205] See Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, pp.368-91.
[206] A. Thackray, 'Natural Knowledge in a Cultural Context', p.693.
[207] See above, p.92.
[208] Perkin, 'Social Causes', pp.123-43; see also R.C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, 2009), pp.8-12, 239-42; Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, pp.48-54, 375-7, 388-91.

Such collaboration was also reflected in the relations between the aristocracy and the aspiring members of the urban elite. Beckett's suggestion that a middle class identity was shaped 'in union' with the aristocracy and not 'in opposition' to it has been strongly reflected in this chapter.[209] Relationships between the urban elite, the gentry and the aristocracy were amicable, supportive and business-like. This was well illustrated by Lord Howe's support for Strutt and Arkwright's petition to parliament objecting to the tax of 6d on their newly developed printed calicoes.[210] As the chapter demonstrates, aristocrats and the gentry were also generous patrons to engineers, such as George Sorocold, and to natural philosophers like Benjamin Parker and John Whitehurst. As Porter has pointed out, 'the appeal of manufacturing to enlightened minds was many-sided'. Useful knowledge was at the 'cutting edge of novelty'.[211] Its appeal and attraction were shared equally by the urban elite and the aristocracy.

Indeed, it was in the interests of entrepreneurs, natural philosophers, gentry and aristocrats to ensure the success of an implicit social compact. For all, the formation of a distinct middle class would act as a social buffer against the lower classes. This was highly beneficial, of course, for the town's elite. Association with the upper echelons of society enhanced their social status and standing within the urban and county communities. Social emulation, therefore, was a powerful driver in the evolution of class identity. Nothing unified the town's elite so much as their passion for aping the manners and morals of their 'betters', as the Strutt family demonstrated so aptly.[212]

Clubs and societies offered secure spaces for Derby's elite to meet with the gentry and the aristocracy to cement this reciprocal social compact. John Whitehurst, the natural philosopher, and William Duesbury, the porcelain manufacturer, for example, were able to meet with Washington Shirley, the

[209] Beckett, *Aristocracy*, p.12.
[210] See above, pp.81-3.
[211] Porter, *Enlightenment*, p.431.
[212] See below, pp.138-40.

5th Earl Ferrers, in one of Derby's early masonic lodges. The nature of this social compact, however, only went so far. Whilst there was a unity of purpose between the aristocracy and the urban elite, the extent of collaboration was limited mainly to two practical aspects — industrial enterprise, such as the Derwent Navigation Scheme and the development of the Cromford Canal, and aristocratic patronage in support of writers like John Whitehurst.[213] This economic and cultural relationship, though, was based firmly on 'conjunction rather than confrontation'.[214]

The evidence thus far suggests that the shaping of a middle class identity ran relatively smoothly, although Langford's argument that the 'intellectual elite' drove a wedge between county society and the 'municipal oligarchy' would suggest otherwise. How divisive, however, was Derby's *intelligentsia* in claiming a superiority by reason of their education? The associational life was crucially important to a newly emerging professional class of doctors and lawyers. Clubs and societies, such as the Derby Philosophical Society and the Derby Society for Political Information, provided intellectual spaces where their social standing could be legitimised, and demarcation lines could be established between themselves and the social groups below them. To mix with such outstanding urban figures as Erasmus Darwin and William Strutt greatly minimised the fears of the professional classes of becoming marginalised. Langford's suggestion that a 'distinct circle of wealth, power and prestige', forged by intellectuals, created social divisions between county society and the urban elite was not the case in Derby. Indeed, as the chapter has shown, relationships between the county set and the town's aspiring middle class were, generally, amicable and of mutual benefit.

There was certainly friction, even some division, within the town. Social rifts tended to be political and created by a small minority of intellectuals within the philosophical and corresponding societies during the 1790s. Two examples

[213] See above, pp.80-1, 83-5, 79 respectively.
[214] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, p.67.

illustrate the point and emphasise divisions amongst the *intelligentsia*, rather than divisions between the urban elite, gentry and aristocracy. The first was the overwhelming support from members of the Philosophical Society given to Joseph Priestley during the Priestley Riots in Birmingham, which led to the resignation of the Rev. Charles Stead Hope.[215] The second example of the rifts in the Political Society was more profound. The visit of Henry Yorke to the national convention in Paris in 1792 and the petition to Parliament from the society advocating a reform agenda and criticising the frequency of war a year later, highlighted political divisions in the membership. The Strutts and the Arkwrights, the gentry and the aristocracy, were quick to disassociate themselves from any potential radical activity. The security of the county, support for the civil power and patriotism, became over-riding concerns. By 1798, infantry corps had been established in Derby and around the county.[216]

By 1802, a nascent middle class identity was emerging, nurtured by 'money getting', an aristocratic embrace, a thriving knowledge economy and a cohesive and unified associational world. These four factors were complemented by a conservative and moderate reformism over the course of the succeeding decades, which further enhanced a collective identity, demonstrated social responsibility, and created a sense of 'bourgeois dignity'.[217] The next chapter examines the ways in which the urban elite confirmed their social worth and status by initiating and embracing the town's cultural awakening of art and literature and improvements to the physical environment. Such artistic 'rationality' ran in parallel with an orchestrated effort to offset the perceived moral dangers of plebeian leisure pursuits by a programme of rational recreation. Both aspects exacerbated cultural differentiation, the contest for urban space and the commensurate struggle for power.[218]

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[215] See above, pp.115-6.
[216] See above, pp.121-2.
[217] McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity.*
[218] E. Griffin, 'The Urban Renaissance and the Mob: Rethinking Civic Improvement over the Long Eighteenth-Century', in D. Feldman and J. Lawrence (eds.), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011), pp.54-73.

Chapter 4: A polite and rational bourgeois society, c.1760-c.1845

Introduction

Chapter 3 highlighted the growing socio-economic importance of the 'middling sort', fostered by wealth creation, useful knowledge, and a good working relationship with the gentry and the aristocracy. A growing bourgeois collective confidence marked the years from 1760 to the 1840s, epitomised by a rich and vibrant cultural awakening. This chapter examines Derby's 'urban renaissance' and its impact on defining and shaping a middle class consciousness.[1]

The chapter is in three main parts. The first part examines the town's cultural awakening through a vibrant print economy, and the associational world of music, theatre, art, and 'genteel' literature. The second part explores improvements to the civic landscape by focusing on architecture and the assembly rooms, the development of Nun's Green, the opening of the Derbyshire General Infirmary, and an extensive religious building programme to meet the needs of a burgeoning population. The third part provides insights into the conflicting demands of rational recreation and popular culture, exemplified by the Temperance Movement, the opening of the Mechanics' Institute, Joseph Strutt's Arboretum, and the suppression of the traditional, plebeian street football.[2] As was noted in the previous chapter, there was compelling evidence to support the reciprocal commercial benefits of close working relationships between urban and county elites. This relationship was matched only by the enthusiasm of the aristocracy and gentry to participate in the cultural milieu of urban living. They wished to mix with men of talent and intelligence and move 'among books and works of art, and apart from

[1] P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), p.319.
[2] See E. Griffin, 'The Urban Renaissance and the Mob: Rethinking Civic Improvement over the Long Eighteenth-Century', in D. Feldman and J. Lawrence (eds.), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011), pp.54-73.

buying such items they also became patrons of their makers'.[3] Conversely, the urban elite wished to emulate the manners and social graces of the gentry and aristocracy. This cultural conjunction forged a rich associative culture, which offered the urban elite opportunities to gain social status and recognition.[4]

The town's associational spaces provided arenas for both personal and public display and a chance to participate in an 'ethic of politeness.'[5] Within this associative world, the vital few performed a dual function — they were entrepreneurs and natural philosophers, as well as taking on the role of 'cultural carriers' in transmitting aspects of London's 'genteel society' to Derby.[6] A significant aspect of the local renaissance, therefore, included the development of cultural amenities and civic facilities, which gave Derby the status of what Schwarz has referred to as a 'leisure town'.[7] A collective bourgeois identity was created by a fashionable life-style, promoted by social aspiration, emulation, and competition.[8]

The combination of a thriving economy and wide-ranging associations placed the town at the cutting edge of change, from which emerged a vibrant 'polite society', which was aptly described by Sir Richard Phillips in 1828:

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[3] J.V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986), p.363.

[4]Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p.317; A. Everitt, 'Country, county and town: patterns of regional evolution in England', in P. Borsay (ed.), *The Eighteenth- Century Town, 1688-1820* (1990), pp.83-115; P. Clark, *Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000), p.448.

[5] See Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.581-603; 'Culture, Status, and the English Urban Landscape', *History*, 67 (1982), pp.1-12; 'The Rise of the Promenade: The Social and Cultural Use of Space in the English Provincial Town c.1660-1800', *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 9, (1986), pp.125-40; P. Borsay and L. Proudfoot (eds.), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland: Change, Convergence and Divergence* (Oxford, 2002).

[6] P. Borsay, 'The London connection: cultural diffusion and the eighteenth-century provincial town', *London Journal*, 19 (1994), pp.21-35.

[7]P. Borsay, 'The English Urban Renaissance: the development of provincial urban culture c.1680-1760', *Social History*, 5 (1977), pp.581-603; 'The Rise of the Promenade', pp.125-40. See also L. Schwarz, 'Residential Leisure Towns in England towards the end of the Eighteenth-Century', *Urban History*, 27 (2000), pp.54-60.

[8] P.J. Corfield, 'Small towns, large implications: social and cultural roles of small towns in Eighteenth-Century England and Wales', *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 10 (1987), pp.125-38; R.J. Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites, 1780-1850: An Analysis', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), pp.95-118 and 'Civil society and the nature of urbanism: Britain, 1750-1850', *Urban History*, 25 (1998), pp.289-301.

> No one can think about Derby without associating the names of Darwin in poetry and philosophy; of Wright in painting; and of the Strutts as the patrons of the useful and elegant arts'.[9]

What follows is an attempt to identify and analyse the impact of these 'useful and elegant arts' in promoting bourgeois bonding and efforts by the urban elite to control the raucous leisure pursuits of the workers by offering opportunities for rational recreation.

A cultural awakening

The print economy

A flourishing print economy of newspapers, booksellers, book societies and lending libraries was an important feature of Derby's cultural awakening.[10] Newspapers, especially, served three important functions — to broaden geographical and political horizons, to entertain and, through advertisements, to encourage the sale of luxury goods, such as books and musical scores. The printers of these newspapers were often booksellers.[11] In Derby, the first paper to be published was *The British Spy* or *Derby Postman*, which was quickly succeeded by the *Derby Mercury*, first published in March 1732 by Samuel Drewry, who was also a bookseller. The Drewrys also produced chap-books and occasionally substantial works, including Pilkington's history of the county.[12] A thriving local press, in fact, emphasised the town's growing cultural and regional status.[13] The *Mercury* survived for almost two hundred years, remaining in the family for half this time and, until the Whig *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* was founded in 1823, had no successful rival.[14]

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[9] R. Phillips, *A Personal Tour through the United Kingdom*, *Derby and Nottinghamshire*, vol. 2 (1828), p.109.
[10] For a general overview see H. Barker, 'Catering for provincial tastes: newspapers, readership and profit in late eighteenth-century England', *Historical Research,* 32 (1996), pp.44-61.
[11] Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.129-31.
[12] J. Pilkington, *A View of the Present State of Derbyshire* (Derby, 1789).
[13] J.D. Andrew, 'The Derbyshire Newspaper Press 1720-1855' (MA thesis, University of Reading, 1954), p.126.
[14] N. Taylor, 'Derbyshire Printers and Printing before 1800', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 70 (1950), pp.38-69.

Another family of booksellers, the Trimers, published a family bible as well as poll-books and volumes of verse. The well-established bookseller since 1757, John Sanders, was the first to open a lending library in the town.[15] By 1800, Derby had at least five circulating libraries.[16] Adverts in the local press indicate that the Sanders family had a catalogue of over 500 volumes in their lending library in 1764, while in 1776 the catalogue included fifty books published that year, the stock having increased to a thousand volumes. These adverts mentioned Sanders' branches in Burton and Uttoxeter and Loughborough and Wirksworth. [17]

Evidence for Drewry's Book Society rests on a book slip, which shows that there were forty members, twenty-three of whom were resident in the town, including two women, and seventeen from the county. Membership was exclusive, as new members had to be elected at the annual meeting. The Friar Gate Chapel congregation provided several members, including James Pilkington the minister, and several of the Strutt family. The Rev. Davies of Makeney, who emulated Pilkington by writing a county history, was another Unitarian member.[18] The Church of England was also well represented with eight clergymen from Derby and district and there were various gentry and local industrialists.[19]

In the 1790s, William Hutton suggested that there were 'many book societies who keep pace with the press'.[20] In 1795, for example, John Marriot set out proposals for a circulating library, the scope of the stock, subscriptions and facilities.[21] Three months later, he proposed, in addition, that there should be a reading room.[22] Adverts in the *Mercury* confirm, for example, that Thomas

[15] See J. Cradock, *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs* (1828), pp.124-7; W. Gardiner, *Memories and Friends* (Derby, 1838), pp.35-7.
[16] *DM*, 25 November 1797.
[17] *DM*, 15 March 1764 and 18 November 1766.
[18] D.P. Davies, *A New Historical and Descriptive View of Derbyshire: From the Remotest Period to the Present Time* (Belper, 1811).
[19] DLSL, BA/8672, Drewry's Book Slip, undated.
[20] W. Hutton, *History and Antiquities of the Borough of Derby down to 1791* (Derby, 1791), p.216.
[21] *DM*, 8 January 1795.
[22] *DM*, 30 April 1795.

Stenson was offering books for sale at his circulating library.[23] A further advert mentions 2,000 volumes, which suggests that he had begun lending books well before the turn of the century.[24]

The useful and elegant arts

Derby's print economy was complemented by a thriving musical, theatrical and artistic scene, which provided cultural and social spaces for the urban elite to engage in polite conversation, genteel manners and the exchange of ideas.[25]

The town's musical life was of national standing, with its Handelian music festivals of 1788 and 1793 being amongst the largest events of the English provincial music season, involving performers of both national and international fame, such as the tenors Samuel Webbe, Wilhelm Cramer, Maria Parke and Gertrude Mara.[26] The musical festival of September 1788 attracted 1,000 people, and had become a triennial event by the 1820s, at which time the town also boasted a well-attended choral society.[27]

The Society of Musicians, Vocal and Instrumental was established in 1764, its aim being to promote 'harmony and good company'.[28] It appears to have been a well-organised and closely regulated society that established penalties for offences such as drunkenness, swearing, lying or fighting, which members might commit during the meetings. Three masters were appointed to ensure that penalties were imposed, and fines levied 'in the interests of Harmony and good Company'. Meetings were held every third Monday at the *Tiger Inn*. The society possessed its own instruments and musical scores, which were kept securely in a triple locked chest. The membership fee of 9d for each meeting was split two ways — 6d donation for the purchase of the instruments and 3d

[23] *DM*, 16 April 1801.
[24] *DM*, 15 May 1802.
[25] See R.P. Sturges, 'Cultural Life in Derby in the late Eighteenth-Century, c.1770-1800' (MA thesis, University of Loughborough, 1968) for a comprehensive overview.
[26] Ibid., pp.60-2.
[27] J.V. Beckett, *The East Midlands from AD 1000* (1988), p.229.
[28] See R.P. Sturges, 'Harmony and good company: the emergence of musical performance in eighteenth-century Derby', *Music Review*, 39 (1978), pp.178-95.

towards the purchase of food and drink. Regulations stated that members had to be aged between 18 and 35. Footmen and labourers were excluded, which ensured the elitist nature of the society.[29]

Private gatherings in the 1760s were exemplified by weekly musical meetings at the house of William Denby, the organist of All Saints' church. Fellow members included Charles Denby, William's son, and the Rev. Anthony Blackwell, the curate of St Peter's parish, who played first and second violin; Peter Perez Burdett, close friend of Washington Shirley, the 5th Earl Ferrers, played violoncello, the Rev. Charles Hope, vicar of All Saints', played harpsichord and Joseph Wright performed on the flute.[30] This pleasure in making music continued, for Wright sent regards to the younger Denby, Charles, via his brother Richard, in a letter from Italy in 1774.[31]

Charles Denby was a well-regarded composer and several of his works were published during the late eighteenth century. In 1775, for example, he published by subscription *Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord with an Accompaniment for a Violin*, which he dedicated to Mrs Mundy of Shipley, a member of the local gentry family of Markeaton Hall. In 1778 he published a second set of six sonatas for harpsichord; this time he dedicated the piece to the Duchess of Devonshire.[32] In 1792 he was requesting subscriptions for a *Concerto for Pianoforte*.[33] His widow took subscriptions for *Three Duetts for the Pianoforte and German Flute*, which were published in 1794, and dedicated to the Hon. Juliana Curzon of Kedleston Hall. There were ninety-five on the subscription list, with about forty-five from Derby and the locality. Subscribers represented both the nobility and the urban elite.[34] George Fritche succeeded Charles Denby as the All Saints' organist in 1793 and he continued his predecessor's tradition of dedicating musical works to members of the local

[29] DLSL, BA/6, articles relating to the Derby Society of Musicians, Vocal and Instrumental, 1764.
[30] DLSL, BA/2, Derby Society of Musicians miscellaneous notes, undated, p.7. See also W. Bemrose, *Life and Works of Joseph Wright, ARA. Commonly called Wright of Derby* (Derby, 1885), p.9.
[31] DLSL, BA/12332, Joseph Wright, letter from Rome, 12 February 1774.
[32] *DM*, 29 May 1778.
[33] *DM*, 18 October 1792.
[34] *DM* advertisements, 3 July 1793 to 6 August 1794.

gentry, including Mrs Pole of Radbourne Hall. Fritche also became a dancing master of some repute. In 1799, he married Jane Hope, Mrs Pole's niece. Other dancing masters included John Harpur, who taught the minuet for 5s entrance fee and 15s per quarter.[35]

The earliest public concerts were usually arranged for the benefit of an individual. In 1772 Francis Roome, for example, a local supplier of musical instruments, arranged a minor music festival for his own benefit, with performances of three Handel oratorios at St Werburgh's in the mornings and an evening performance of *Acis and Galatea* followed by a ball at the assembly rooms.[36] This was followed by subscription concerts, the first series of which began in October 1780 at the *Bell Inn* in Sadler Gate.[37] The Music Festival of 1788 boasted an orchestra of one hundred and twenty performers and was conducted by Charles Denby. Programmes for the four performances cost one guinea and were issued by the booksellers Drewry and Roome. Non-subscribers were admitted at 7s 6d for each performance. The programme notes show that the directors of the festival included local worthies, such as the Earl of Harrington, Lord Vernon, Sir Robert Burdett, Bart., F.N.C. Mundy Esq., Major Trowell, Rev. Charles Hope and Joseph Bainbrigge. Ladies were requested to attend without hats and feathers.[38]

As well as providing public spaces for social and cultural gatherings of the urban elite, these concerts and festivals had a positive impact on Derby's economy. Indeed, they were an important element of the consumer market. The *Derby Mercury* reported that the festival of 1788 was a great success and 'brilliant beyond anything previously seen in Derby'; it was 'numerously as well as respectably attended', which resulted in an influx of visitors. The editor of the *Mercur*y was delighted to report that residents who had not 'lett' lodgings before were now being asked to do so and put 'General Entertainment above

[35] *DM*, 26 March 1779.
[36] *DM*, 5 June 1772.
[37] *DM*, 27 October 1780.
[38] S. Taylor, 'Musical Life in Derby in the 18th and 19th Centuries', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal,* 67 (1947), pp.2-3.

every Private Consideration'.[39] Even with their great wealth, the Strutts rented out rooms during race week, which tended to coincide with popular concerts. In a letter of 1774, for example, Martha Strutt was writing to her father, 'Our races are in about 3 weeks & if you are not come home by then please to send us word whether you would have us let the Lodgeings'.[40]

The County Hall provided the venue for the town's main theatre until the early 1760s. During the winter months of 1771-1772, Mrs Miller's Company put on a production, which emphasised the musical aspect of the performance with the play itself and the supporting farce either side of the music. The performance was directed by Walter Clagget, the Irish composer and conductor at various London theatres.[41] In 1772, Mr Carlton's company entertained the urban elite at the County Hall by introducing new plays and farces with new costumes and decorations. Following the production's success, the company returned in November for a season. [42]

So successful were the theatrical performances that the town's first purpose-built theatre was established in Bold Lane in 1773 by James Whitley and 'almost certainly designed by the ubiquitous Joseph Pickford.'[43] It opened on 13 September during what the *Mercury* described as a very successful races week, with *She Stoops to Conquer*. A continuing problem for the theatre was its dampness, as acknowledged by the local press: 'the Walls are as dry now as they ever will be, every Precaution being taken for that purpose.'[44] Indeed, on several occasions, patrons had to be assured that fires had been lit days before opening performances. The theatre was located on the edge of the town and, as Hutton commented, its external façade was 'more striking than the street in which it stands.'[45] The first full season for Whitley's company was during races week of 1774 and the opening night audience included the

[39] *DM*, 3 September 1788.
[40] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Martha Strutt to her father, 17 August 1774.
[41] *DM*, 29 November 1771.
[42] *DM*, 21 August 1772.
[43] M. Craven, *An Illustrated History of Derby* (2007), p.126.
[44] *DM*, 10 September 1773.
[45] Hutton, *History and Antiquities,* p.86.

younger members of the Strutt family accompanied by Richard Arkwright, Jun.[46] The opening night's performance was evidently highly successful, with the *Mercury* commenting that:

> On Monday night our elegant theatre was opened with the excellent comedy of 'The School for Wives', and a comic sketch, called 'A Trip to Portsmouth'. The audience was a very genteel one, and expressed their satisfaction, both of the theatre and Performers, in the warmest Terms.[47]

The success of the theatre continued into the nineteenth century and even attracted members of the local gentry to perform on stage. In 1809, for example, Francis Mundy of Markeaton Hall, the author of *Needwood Forest*, a volume of poems published in 1776, played the part of Richard III to a packed and 'fashionable' audience. The performance proved so popular that the theatre-goers were advised to use a one-way system whereby 'carriages must all approach down St Mary's Gate and leave by Sadler Gate.'[48]

The popularity of music and the theatre created public fora for the urban elite to show off their gentility, their knowledge and their wealth, as well as providing opportunities to mix with the local gentry and aristocracy. Emulation — keeping up with the Joneses — became an important element in social aspiration. The private space of the artist's studio provided the wealthy industrialist and the local gentry with opportunities to enhance their social standing by commissioning portraits by Joseph Wright.[49]

Wright was born in the town and apprenticed in London before returning to Derby in 1758, at the age of eighteen. He also spent some time in Italy and

[46] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Elizabeth Strutt to her father, 14 September 1774.
[47] *DM*, 9 September 1774.
[48] *DM*, 15 November 1809.
[49] See H.J. Perkin, 'The Social Causes of the British Industrial Revolution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 18 (1968), pp.123-43.

Bath in the 1770s, but could never be persuaded to move to London because of his attachment to his native town and his family and friends there.[50]

He was fortunate that the municipal and county elite, due to his father's influence as town clerk from 1758 to 1765, were his patrons. His paintings, for example, included six portraits of the Markeaton Hunt for F.N.C. Mundy in 1762 and two portraits of the children of Sir Nathaniel Curzon (later 1st Lord Scarsdale). Other commissioned portraits included those of Jedediah Strutt, Richard Arkwright, Earl Ferrers and Joseph Pickford, the noted local architect and freemason. The double portrait of Peter Perez Burdett and his wife Hannah shows Burdett holding his surveying telescope and, to boost his social status, is painted against the ruined walls of the secondary Burdett estate at Knowle Hill near Ticknall, Derbyshire.[51]

Wright's artistic interest moved beyond portraiture. His work epitomised a passion for both knowledge and the wonders of the newly emerging industrial landscape. His brother Richard tells of his frequent visits to the Derby workshop of a neighbour to ensure mechanical authenticity:

> As a youth, he shewed great propensity to knowledge in several mechanical branches and, being of an active mind, would frequently spend his vacant time from school in going to different shops, to see the men at work, and when he returned home, would imitate their works and compleat them in a masterly manner, such as joiners' goods, chest of drawers, clocks, spinning wheels, guns, etc.[52]

His frequent visits to London to exhibit also brought him into contact with members of the so-called Howdalian Society, a weekly coffee club of young artists, which led eventually to him becoming a freemason in London, joining Lodge 37A. As a freemason, he enjoyed a unique ability to mix on even terms

[50] Hutton, *History and Antiquities,* pp.243-6.
[51] See J. Egerton, *Wright of Derby* (1990), Nos. 20 and 42.
[52] *DM,* 18 September 1797; DLSL, BA/12332, Joseph Wright, letter from Rome, undated.

with people of all walks of life in the movement, enabling useful contacts to be established.[53]

Wright's paintings became hugely popular when they were engraved as prints and, although he demonstrated no new knowledge, he created evocative depictions of industrial settings, geological formations and the theoretical and experimental aspects of science, such as Newton's orderly mechanics and volatile experiments with air.[54] Uglow suggests that Wright's paintings indicate 'the absorption, the frisson of danger, and the shared, profound pleasure of the experimental life'.[55] Wright, therefore, became an important link between the creative communities of expressive arts and natural philosophy in the town.[56]

A prime example of this connection is Wright's 'A Philosopher lecturing on the Orrery' purchased by Washington Shirley, which represents Enlightenment ideas by using 'light' as a metaphor for knowledge, reason and scientific discovery.[57] It is suggested that the orrery belonged to Earl Ferrers (Washington Shirley) whose observations of the transit of Venus had played a significant part in his election as FRS in 1761. A convincing case can be made for identifying two of the figures in the painting as Earl Ferrers' nephew, Laurence Shirley, and his friend Peter Perez Burdett.[58]

Members of the Strutt family were also keen to extend their social and cultural networks, although Jedediah viewed the trappings of a polite and fashionable

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[53] B. Nicolson, *Joseph Wright of Derby, Painter of Light*, vol. I (1968), pp.39-42.
[54] Derby Museum and Art Gallery, 'A Philosopher giving that lecture on the Orrery, in which a lamp is put in place of the Sun', 1766; National Gallery, London, 'An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump', 1768. See Egerton, *Wright*, The Tate Gallery exhibition catalogue (1990), pp.54-61 and S. Daniels, *Joseph Wright* (1999), pp.32-42; see above, Plate 1, p.52.
[55] J. Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends who made the Future* (2002), p.124.
[56] See W. Bemrose, *The Life and Works*; D. Fraser, 'Fields of Radiance: the scientific and industrial scenes of Joseph Wright', in D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge, 1988); Egerton, *Wright*; Daniels, *Joseph Wright*; DLSL, BA/11172, A. Wright, *Life of Joseph Wright*, undated.
[57]See D. Fraser's introduction, 'Joseph Wright of Derby and the Lunar Society' in Egerton, *Wright*, p.19.
[58] Egerton, *Wright,* p.54.

lifestyle with scepticism and some disdain. In a letter of 1786, written to his son William, he wrote:

> Having but little pride and no ostentation of my own, not being fond of finery and dress, not thrusting myself into what is call'd Genteel Company, not frequenting Assemblies, Balls, concerts, plays and shows, not going every summer at no little expence to see and be seen as the fashion is to some or other of the polite watering places.[59]

Elizabeth Strutt, his daughter, on the other hand, expressed pleasure that the family's social status had improved so much since mid-century, when the wealth from the invention of the Derby Ribbed Frame had resulted in acceptance into the town's and county's polite society. Having returned from a visit to the village of Findern, where her father had served his apprenticeship, there was no doubting her delight at their current social status:

> Findern is a strange desolate place now — I used to think it very fine & have spent many a happy day there, but I think I am happier now — everybody is surprised when they consider what we are, & what we have been.[60]

Jedediah was disdainful of 'genteel company', but he was very keen for his sons to avail themselves of the social advantages that polite society might offer. In a letter to William in 1774, he demonstrated the sycophantic and deferential attitude of the first generation *nouveau riche* to the aristocracy by recommending the reading of the letters of Lord Chesterfield, 'a nobleman of the first Rank', who had all the advantages of a 'learned and polite Education', having spent a life 'in the most polishd & refind company'. Whilst emphasising the social advantages of 'genteel behaviour' and 'polite manners', Jedediah's social reticence and modesty led him to believe that his son was 'not to be a

[59] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Jedediah Strutt to his son William, 23 March 1786.
[60] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Elizabeth Strutt to her father, 24 July 1775.

Nobleman nor prime minister, but…may possibly be a Tradesman of some eminence'.[61] William replied 'I am now perfectly convinced of the Utility of Learning and practising a Polite, easy, graceful Manner & Behaviour.' He continued:

> Lord Chesterfield's letters will I am sure be a very great help towards giving me in some degree all those little arts of address and behaviour which makes a Man at first sight (without many other Qualifications) so much admired and esteemed, and which I am conscious I stand in very great need of. [62]

William was in no doubt that he needed to combine his technological and inventive talents with 'genteel manners' and cultural attributes, if he were to impress his social 'betters'. To this end, he cultivated the friendship of noted literary and intellectual figures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A firm friendship developed, for example, between the Strutt family and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, an Anglo-Irish politician, writer and inventor. He visited the Strutts when he was in England in 1799 and again, with his daughter Maria, in 1813. He also introduced his sons to William Strutt during their journeys to England. A return visit was made to Edgeworthstown in Ireland in 1816.[63] It is evident that Maria Edgeworth consulted William about technical details in her books. A letter dated 1823 requested advice regarding Arkwright's inventions and cotton spinning, so that she might finish the sequel to her novel, *Harry and Lucy*.[64]

Connections with other literary figures included Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Moore. Coleridge was a frequent visitor to Derby, where he stayed with Jedediah's daughter, Elizabeth, the widow of William Evans of Darley

[61] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, letter from Jedediah Strutt to William Strutt, 17 August 1774.
[62] Ibid., William Strutt to his father, Jedediah, 14 September 1774.
[63] DLSL, BA/133, Strutt, *Memoir*, p.25.
[64] M. Edgeworth, *Harry and Lucy*, 3 volumes (1825); DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, letter from Maria Edgeworth, 15 May 1823.

Abbey. In a letter to John Thelwall, he gave his views about his Derby friends; about Darwin, he wrote that he thought him to be 'the first *literary* character in Europe, and the most original-minded Man'. He saw William Strutt as 'a man of stern aspect, but strong, very strong abilities', and Joseph Strutt as 'every way amiable'. His most fulsome praise, however, was for Elizabeth Evans (née Strutt), whose 'seat is at Darley, about a mile from Derby. Blessings descend on her! Emotions crowd on me at the sight of her name — We spent five weeks at her house — a sunny spot in our Life!'[65]

Thomas Moore, a poet and man of letters, moved to Mayfield Cottage, near Ashbourne, in July 1813. He was a close friend of Joseph Strutt, William's brother, and spent some time with William and his family. Moore's first letter about the Strutts provides a brief and rather impersonal description, mentioning their wealth and fondness of 'literature, music, and all those elegancies which their riches enable them so amply to indulge themselves with'.[66] A year later, Moore's correspondence indicated that he liked the Strutts 'exceedingly' and was impressed by the literary qualities of the 'nest of young poets'. He commented, 'I do not think I wrote half so well when I was their age'.[67] There is an account in his diary of a dinner he attended in Derby, after which he entertained the Strutts by singing songs of his own composition. After the meal, he was invited to a party at William Strutt's house where he found 'duets on the harp and pianoforte going on' and in spite of his 'dozen and one speeches, was obliged to muster up voice enough for the same number of songs'.[68]

Shared interests in the arts and architecture created close ties among the town's elite. The provision of new services and leisure facilities, such as the assembly rooms, was a marker of wealth and prosperity, as well as an indicator

[65] E.L. Griggs (ed.), *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. I (Oxford, 1956), pp.305-6, letter to John Thelwall, 27 January 1797.
[66] Lord John Russell (ed.), *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, vol. I (1853), p.365, letter from Thomas Moore to Mr Power, 23 October 1813.
[67] Ibid., *Memoirs*, p.31, letter from Thomas Moore to Miss Mary Dalby, 15 June 1814.
[68] Ibid., *Memoirs*, p.256, diary for 31 January 1828.

of local autonomy and local pride. The connection between association and civic pride introduces the second part of the chapter by examining the establishment of urban improvement commissions, which brought together local politicians, industrialists and natural philosophers in efforts to improve the urban environment.

The civic landscape

Architecture and a fashionable lifestyle

Architectural regeneration was a significant element of Derby's artistic renaissance. The mid-eighteenth century saw the building of elegant town houses close to the market square. Jedediah, William and Joseph Strutt, Erasmus Darwin, Joseph Wright, and John Whitehurst, along with medical practitioners, solicitors and architects, tended to live in Friar Gate, Iron Gate and St Mary's Gate, the Wardwick and St Peter's Street.[69] These fashionable locations provided a social nexus for the local gentry and the county's aristocracy, especially during the winter months when the Derbyshire estates suffered from poor weather conditions.[70] The Duke of Devonshire's fine town house in the Cornmarket was testimony to this preference.

The architect to the aristocracy and gentry was Joseph Pickford, who played a leading role in the residential development of Friar Gate, following the Nun's Green Improvement Act of 1768. Like his friends, Wright and Whitehurst, he took full advantage of his Masonic membership of the Three Compasses freemasons' lodge in Silver Street, Golden Square, London.[71] He found that freemasonry allowed easy access across social barriers and to a local network of wealthy clients, such as William Duesbury, who founded the porcelain factory around 1750, and Thomas Rivett and William Butts, who had established the Cockpit Hill pot works of roughly the same date.[72] Local

[69] Craven, *Illustrated History,* pp.84, 105, 111-2; E. Saunders, *Joseph Pickford of Derby: a Georgian Architect* (Stroud, 1993), p.24. See Figure 2.4, p.60.
[70] D. Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain,* ed. P. Rogers (1971), p.523.
[71] Saunders, *Joseph Pickford,* pp.32-3.
[72] Craven, *Illustrated History,* pp.86-7.

bankers, the Heath brothers — John, Christopher and Isaac — backed these two entrepreneurs and were also closely associated with Pickford's financial dealings. Two of the brothers had portraits painted by Joseph Wright who also painted William Duesbury the younger's daughter Sally, in the early 1790s.[73] This web of self-interest extended to Richard Brown, who had an arrangement with William Duesbury II from the 1780s, to share space in his London showrooms so that he could compete for metropolitan clients with his rival in Blue John wares, Matthew Boulton.[74]

Pickford was also closely connected, through his friendship with John Whitehurst, with members of the Lunar Society, which led to several commissions. He built Wedgwood an elegant villa in a park landscaped by William Emes (who also landscaped the gardens of Kedleston Hall); he designed a house for Thomas Bentley; completed commissions at the Etruria works, and Wedgwood's London showroom, and built a boathouse on the new Trent and Mersey Canal (which divided the park from the works which it served, and fed Emes' lake) and three streets of workers' houses.[75] Writing in 1768 to his Derbyshire-based partner, Thomas Bentley, Wedgwood confirmed that he would meet:

> Mr. Pickford at Lichfield and must spend some time there in examining a model of a windmill of Dr. Darwin's projection, which he writes to me will take 68,000 bricks, 4,000ft of inch deal boards, and a shaft 30ft long and a foot diameter, having two sails.[76]

Pickford was also involved in the building of the new assembly rooms, begun in 1762. These reflected the aristocratic desire to be leading players in Derby's cultural renaissance and to contribute to the town's associative culture. The new assembly rooms replaced the two assemblies that had existed since the early eighteenth century, one for the gentry and the other for the commercial

[73] Nicolson, *Painter of Light*, p.71.
[74] J. Anderson, *William Duesbury, father and son: Men of Industry* (1987), p.19.
[75] Saunders, *Joseph Pickford,* p.94.
[76] Keele University Library, Wedgwood Papers 1819-25, Wedgwood to Bentley, 3 March 1768, in M. Craven, *John Whitehurst of Derby: Clockmaker and Scientist 1713-88* (Ashbourne, 1996), p.65.

and professional elite. When Mrs Barnes, known as 'Blowzabella', resigned as the leading local figure, a note in the assembly rooms' account book summed up her attitude: 'Trade never mix'd with Us Ladies'.[77] Indeed, a list of rules for the Ladies' Assembly contained various conditions to ensure exclusivity, such as 'No Attorney's Clerk shall be admitted. No Shopkeeper, or any of his or her family shall be admitted, except Mr. Franceys.'[78] These exclusive social distinctions, however, were not accepted by everyone. Lady Jane Coke, for example, argued for a broader mix of clientele. She commented, 'Tis hard out of two assemblies you have at Derby people can't agree to make one good one.'[79]

The Duke of Devonshire took the initiative by establishing a building committee and a subscription list was opened.[80] Washington Shirley, 5th Earl Ferrers, was chosen as the architectural adviser and Joseph Pickford was appointed to supervise the construction and organise the labour force.[81] In 1763 'the workmen began to pull down the *Blackamoor's Head* and the adjoining house in the market place in order to build the Grand Assembly Room.'[82] Two years later, the local newspaper reported that, 'On Tuesday night the new Assembly Room was opened for the first time, when there was a brilliant assembly of ladies and gentlemen…we are assured the additional subscription made towards completing the said building amounted to £750.'[83] The main hall for dancing was on the first floor with an adjoining retiring room. Beyond that in a separate building were the supper rooms. The room for card playing was situated on the ground floor. It was to be a further nine years before the interior was finally completed by Robert Adam.[84]

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[77] S. Glover, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Derby*, vol. II (1829), p.427.
[78] DRO, D239/M098, Derby Assembly Rooms and Account Book. Mr. Franceys was the apothecary to the gentry.
[79] M. Girouard, *Country Life*, 2 October 1986.
[80] DRO, D239/M098, Derby Assembly Rooms.
[81] DRO, D239/M098, Derby Assembly Rooms' account book.
[82] *DM*, 18 February 1763.
[83] *DM*, 6 September 1765.
[84] *DM*, 30 July 1774.

An advertisement in the *Derby Mercury* in 1770 requested expressions of interest regarding plans for the completion of the 'County Assembly Rooms' by 'the next races'.[85] A month earlier, however, the commissioners had requested Lord Scarsdale to write to Robert Adam to see whether he would be willing to finish the interior and especially the music gallery. His reply to Lord Scarsdale explains why the commissioners were reticent to act upon their advert for plans to complete the assembly rooms. Having explained that he would need more time for planning, Robert Adam was allowed a dispensation and duly completed his designs by July 1771.[86]

The grand opening of the assembly rooms coincided with race week in September 1774. The *Derby Mercury* reported that:

> The company on Tuesday night at the new assembly rooms was very numerous and more brilliant than we scarce ever remember, amongst the nobility present were their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, the Countess Spencer with her son and daughter, Lord Althorpe and Harriet Spencer, Lord Vernon etc. etc. The minuets were opened by the Hon. Mr Greville and her Grace the Duchess of Devonshire.[87]

The new assembly rooms illustrated Derby's intention to become an important social and cultural capital, drawing in people from the surrounding county and beyond and giving it a competitive edge over neighbouring towns.[88] The popularity of Derby's rebuilt assembly rooms amongst local gentry is evident from the initial subscription list (1762-1763). Almost all of the 39 subscribers lived in Derbyshire and Derby itself and included two dukes (the Duke of

[85] *DM*, 30 November 1770.
[86] *DM*, 30 July 1771.
[87] *DM*, 15 September 1774.
[88] See J.M. Ellis, 'For the honour of the town: comparison, competition and civic identity in eighteenth-century England', *Urban History*, 30 (2003), pp.325-37.

Devonshire heading the list with the subscription of £400), five baronets, one earl, two lords, and 27 esquires.[89]

Certainly, Derby attracted both visitors and, crucially, wealth, which fuelled economic and demographic growth, as people moved into town for employment in the expanding service and leisure industries. The new assembly rooms brought together the gentry and the aristocracy — the Duke of Devonshire, Earl Ferrers and Lord Scarsdale, for example — and the urban elite, such as Burdett, Whitehurst and Wright. Fellow subscribers accepted Earl Ferrers as the architect, but his social commitments prevented him from continuing the commission and Joseph Pickford was chosen to complete it.[90] Pickford had just completed an impressive new stable block, mill and inn, as well as renovating Longford Hall for Wenman Coke, a nephew of the Earl of Leicester, when he was appointed to the assembly rooms. His friendship with Wright and, through Earl Ferrers, Peter Perez Burdett, resulted in a commission for him to build houses for Burdett and Whitehurst in Derby, both in 1764. In the summer of that year Whitehurst had moved to Queen Street, when his old residence in Iron Gate came up for sale.[91] It comes as no surprise that Joseph Pickford's house in Friar Gate, built about 1770, had a frieze of masonic symbols above the main door and Whitehurst engraved a square and compasses on at least two of his clocks.[92]

It was in the old urban core that industrial wealth and civic philanthropy underpinned the move towards urban regeneration and the development of a cultural renaissance. Until the latter part of the eighteenth century, the built environment was restricted by the Derwent flood plain and a tight ring of parkland estates owned by private landowners. The Curzon family and Evans' estates were located to the north and north-west of the urban core, the Strutts to the north-east, the Wilmots to the east, and another branch of the family,

[89] DRO, D239/M098, an account of the Gentlemen subscribers to the Assembly Rooms in Derby, 1762-3.
[90] See Saunders, *Joseph Pickford,* pp.57-67.
[91] *DM*, 15 June 1764.
[92] Craven, *John Whitehurst*, pp. 69, 154.

the Pochins, on the south-east and south; the Mundy's estate was situated to the north-west and the Borough family to the south-west.[93] The only open space was to the west of the town, being the common land of Nun's Green.[94]

Nun's Green and private enterprise

This 48-acre site was the key to urban development. Traditionally, Nun's Green was used for a variety of purposes, such as cockfighting, fairs and militia practice. It also provided commercial and industrial opportunities, for example the digging of gravel and a corn mill powered by the Markeaton Brook. Essentially, this stretch of land was regarded as a space for use by all the town's inhabitants and, as such, not to be exploited by private enterprise. The town's entrepreneurs recognised, however, that Nun's Green provided the only opportunity of breaking through the girdle of estate land that surrounded the town, which seriously restricted development opportunities.[95]

The first major sale of common land was by the 1768 Act, which released plots of land along Friar Gate for residential development. Elegant town houses were built, including that of Joseph Pickford. This ribbon development skirted Nun's Green, with most of the common land left untouched. In fact, improvements were made to the Green, guaranteeing that there was little opposition to the building of houses along Friar Gate. Crucially, the trustees of the 1768 Act represented a cross-section of the urban elite, both politically and religiously.[96]

The more significant 1792 Act proved to be far more contentious. Members of a committee comprising the gentry, manufacturers, professionals and traders was established in 1789, to review the state of the urban environment. They found that 'the town is ill-paved, ill-lighted and dirty, and amendment is

[93] R. Christian, *Derby in the Making: The Development of a City* (Coventry, 1990), p.18.
[94] Craven, *Illustrated History,* p.113.
[95] DLSL, parcel 202, Nun's Green, William Strutt, 'Report of the Committee to Prepare a Plan for More Effectually Paving and Lighting the Streets', 23 November 1789.
[96] DLSL, BA/26, information relating to the Act for Selling part of a Green Called Nun's Green, in the Borough of Derby (1768).

necessary'.[97] A proposal was made to sell Nun's Green by parliamentary act to pay for improvements by raising a levy based on a tax on houses valued at £5 or above per annum. In addition, committee members and the Duke of Devonshire offered to provide extra capital to offset expenditure, so long as the act was unopposed.[98] Initially, there was vociferous opposition, largely from those inhabitants who felt that the enclosure of Nun's Green was a violation of traditional liberties and popular leisure activities. The proponents of the act saw enclosure as an opportunity for urban improvements, which were part of their progressive and enlightened ideas, as well as attracting business and visitors to the town. Erasmus Darwin was keen to point out the commercial advantages of urban improvement. He recognised the inherent competition with other urban centres, as well as looking to other towns as a source of emulation. A culture of comparison and competition between towns was apparent in his 1792 address to Derby's residents:

> The increased convenience and elegance of a town not only contribute to the pleasure of the inhabitants, and to the despatch of business; (both of which are weights of considerable preponderance in the scale of public good) but are found by experience to induce many people from the country to pass a part of their winter in it, who do not chuse the hurry and expence of London. And, thus, an improved town becomes a kind of Metropolis to that and the neighbouring counties, as York, Shrewsbury, Lincoln, etc., a conflux of wealthy and fashionable visitors is felt by all trades and professions; whether they are induced to come only occasionally or to reside in the town.[99]

He had influential allies in his support of enclosure. These included William Strutt, Joseph Pickford's widow Mary, Joseph Wright, the clockmaker John Whitehurst (II), the chemist Henry Browne, the natural philosopher Thomas

[97] DLSL, parcel 202, Nun's Green; *DM*, 26 November 1789 and 24 October 1792.
[98] DLSL, parcel 202, Nun's Green; *DM*, 24 February 1791.
[99] DLSL, BA/27, Nun's Green Dispute, 'To the author of an address to the inhabitants of Derby, who signs himself an observing Inhabitant', January 1792.

Swanwick, the mineralogist Henry Browne junior, and the instrument maker John Stenson. Opponents were led by local resident Daniel Parker Coke, the Tory MP for Nottingham, and the Tory attorney John Harrison, so that alliances tended initially to centre on political allegiance.[100] Many of the urban elite, however, remained neutral or took a pragmatic view. The regular members of the early committees included the Anglican clergyman the Rev. Charles Hope, his son the Rev. Charles Stead Hope, the Anglican brewer Thomas Lowe, the Tory alderman John Hope, the Presbyterians Peter Crompton, William Strutt, Lamech Swift, and Darwin.[101] Opponents, or those who wished to remain neutral, included political reformers such as Charles Ordoyne, James Pilkington, the Unitarian minister, and John Hollis Pigot. Significantly, this cross-section of the urban elite, whether they were supporters, opponents or ambivalent over the enclosure of Nun's Green, shared membership of various clubs and societies. For example, Ordoyne, Strutt and Darwin were members of the Derby Society for Political Information; Parker Coke and many of the local savants were members of Drewry's Book Society; Parker Coke, along with Darwin and Strutt, shared membership of the Derby Canal Committee.[102]

Fundamentally, there was a consensus amongst Derby's elite regarding the improvement of the town's environment. The *esprit de corps* generated by shared membership of clubs and societies, commercial interests and the desire for social order, resulted in pragmatic alliances. In 1792, Parker Coke accepted the improvement commission 'as a good friend to good order and government' and offered his assistance to the supporters of the act in 'enforcing obedience to it'. By 1796, he and other early opponents were joining the Strutts, the Cromptons and their supporters at improvement commission meetings.[103] The Second Improvement Act of 1792 led to the further development of the 'West

[100] DLSL, parcel 202, Nun's Green, petition against the bill, asking that the act of 1792 be altered and amended, 'To the inhabitants in general of the town of Derby', handbill 6 April 1791; 'To the honourable Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled', petition against the sale, signed by Edward Chamberlain, 5 April 1791; 'An inhabitant of Derby and a Nottingham freeholder': 'To Daniel Parker Coke, Esq.', 5 January 1792.
[101] DLSL, BA/625/8-16048, Minute Book of the Paving and Lighting Commissioners.
[102] *DM*, 2 November 1791.
[103] *DM*, 21 June 1792; DLSL, BA/625/8-16048, Minute Book, 11 June 1796.

End' by the building of more factories along the Markeaton Brook and substantial residential infilling taking up the remainder of the old Nun's Green with an increase of over one thousand houses during the years 1788 to 1811 — from 1,637 to 2,644.[104]

Civic philanthropy and the Derbyshire General Infirmary

The building of the Derbyshire General Infirmary proved far less acrimonious than the residential development of Nun's Green.[105] Members of the building committee worked well together, regardless of political affiliation or religion. The hospital was an outstanding example of scientific and technological developments meeting social needs. It also demonstrated how a powerful and cohesive elite could control the urban environment.[106]

Erasmus Darwin and William Strutt were key players in the vision and planning for the building of the infirmary, along with the Rev. Thomas Gisborne. Darwin had established a dispensary in the town in 1781 and hoped that it would be the 'foundation stone of a future infirmary' and Strutt was chair of the Derby Improvement Commission.[107] The project had first been mooted by the Rev. Thomas Gisborne in 1802. He was one of the trustees for Isaac Hawkins, who had left £5,000 to be used for charitable purposes.[108] Members of the local elite met at various times and eventually the money was accepted for the proposed infirmary.[109] This was followed by significant subscriptions, with any person donating more than £50 becoming a member of the Subscribers' Committee.[110] Having donated £300 each, both William and his brother, Joseph, were leading members of the committee. In response to an advert,

[104] Beckett, *East Midlands,* p.227.
[105] See V.M. Leveaux, *The History of the Derbyshire General Infirmary, 1810-1894* (Cromford, 1999).
[106] See P.A. Elliott, 'The Derbyshire General Infirmary and the Derby Philosophers: The application of industrial architecture and technology to medical institutions in early nineteenth-century England', *Medical History*, 46 (2000). See especially pp.65-6, 75, 78, 80, 86.
[107] E. Krause, *Erasmus Darwin, with a preliminary notice by Charles Darwin* (1879), p.55.
[108] J.H.H. Grant, *A Brief History of the Derbyshire Infirmary* (Derby, 1924), p.6.
[109] *DM*, 7 April 1803.
[110] *DM*, 6 October 1803.

initial plans for the infirmary were submitted in 1804, but were rejected and a design proposed by the sub-committee.[111] The design was made into a set of working drawings by Samuel Brown, an architect who worked extensively for the Harpur family of Calke Abbey and executed by the engineer Charles Sylvester. The local press advertised for 'a person willing to Contract for the execution of Brickwork and Masonry…including the getting out foundations, making drains etc'.[112]

After Darwin died in 1802, the principal medical inspiration came from the wealthy physician Richard Forester, who joined the design committee appointed in 1804 by wealthy subscribers, such as William's brother, George Benson Strutt, and Thomas Saxelby, a Derby chemist, mine owner and lead-smelter. In May 1805, Thomas Cox, a Tory lead merchant, Nathaniel Edwards, a Derby attorney, and Dewhurst Bilsborrow, a Cambridge-educated physician, were added to the committee.[113] The annual reports of the infirmary indicate that less than 60 percent of subscribers lived in the county, and included several of the local aristocracy and gentry, such as the Earl and Countess of Chesterfield and Sir Henry Crewe of Calke Abbey. Gentlemen were appointed as receivers of subscriptions in Alfreton, Smalley, Wilne Mills, Bakewell and Ashbourne, which indicates the extent of the area from which subscribers were expected to be drawn.[114]

Contemporary tributes to William Strutt for his major contribution to the building of the infirmary included Stephen Glover, who commented on his fine reputation and the esteem in which he was held by Derby's inhabitants, so much so that 'his townsmen…have subscribed for his portrait and placed it in

[111] *DM*, 9 August 1804.
[112] *DM*, 28 March 1805.
[113] DRO, D1190/1/1-14, meeting of General Committee of £50 subscribers, 9 May 1804; DRO, D1190/1/1-14, papers on the Establishment of the Derbyshire Infirmary: report of sub-committee to consider plans, 4 August 1804; DRO, D1190/1/49/2, meeting of the General Committee, 2 May 1805.
[114] DRO, D1190/49/1, alphabetical list of Subscribers to the Derbyshire General Infirmary in Annual Reports of Derbyshire General Infirmary, 1809-69.

the Infirmary as a token of their respect for his valuable services to the Institution'.[115] Maria Edgeworth was more gushing in her praise:

> He built it, a noble building; hot air from below conveyed by a cockle all over the house. The whole institution a most noble and touching sight; such a GREAT thing, planned and carried into successful execution in so few years by one man![116]

As well as local acclaim, the infirmary had a national and international reputation. It was visited in 1816 by the Grand Duke Nicholas, later Nicholas I, Tsar of Russia. He was escorted 'through the whole building' by his friend the Duke of Devonshire and Sir William Congreve, the natural philosopher, engineer and a leading light at the Woolwich Laboratory. The Grand Duke, reportedly, 'highly admired the many ingenious and useful plans adopted in every department of the Institution' and was 'much gratified by the evident attention which had been paid to the convenience and comfort of the patients'.[117] This was followed in 1819 by a visit from Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, later King Leopold of Belgium. He was shown around the infirmary by Richard Forester. Accompanying them were the Duke of Devonshire, Sir William Gardiner, Prince Karl August von Hardenburg, the Prussian Chancellor, and Christian Friedrich, Baron Stockmar, the German diplomat and physician, who was later to become a close friend of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.[118]

Church and chapel

Whilst the individual project of the infirmary was in the national and international spotlight, a major building programme was quietly underway to meet the demands of an increasing population and religious diversity. Essentially, it was the expansion of 'Railway Derby', which changed the dynamics of religion. Whilst the Anglican Church took a relatively benign stance

[115] Glover, *History and Gazetteer,* p.574.
[116] C.L. Hacker, 'William Strutt of Derby (1756-1830)', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 80 (1960), p. 56, letter from Maria Edgeworth to Honora Edgeworth, 25 April 1813.
[117] *DM*, 12 December 1816.
[118] *DM*, 14 October 1816; Elliott, 'The Derbyshire General Infirmary', p.85.

in civic and social affairs up to the mid-nineteenth century, the Unitarians were at the forefront of improvement and progress. This changed as newcomers came to the town in search of work on the railway. Most settled in Litchurch, the location of a major housing programme. There were, however, no places of worship to meet the religious affiliations of the incoming Anglicans, Catholics and nonconformists.[119] A period of 'polite' rivalry between church and chapel emerged in their efforts to cater for population growth and the religious and recreational needs of the burgeoning workforce. Between 1826 and 1887, twelve churches were built, six of these being constructed between 1871 and 1887, as part of the Church of England's 'outreach programme' to serve expanding suburban communities.[120] The building programme followed the trends in the population growth of the town. For example, St John's, consecrated in 1828, was built in the West End, the location of the eighteenth-century textile mills and iron foundries, on land donated by the Hurt family, who lived in Friar Gate.[121] Holy Trinity was built in 1836 in London Road and Christ Church in Normanton Road. They were both built to serve 'Railway Derby', the latter church's architect being Matthew Habershon, a Strutt family protégé.[122] St Paul's, built in 1850, catered for the factory workers of Chester Green. Alfred Haslem, the iron foundry employer, added to the building later in the century.[123]

The fast-growing population of Litchurch provided the catalyst for the launch of the building committee for the proposed new church of St Andrew's in 1862. Josiah Lewis, a director of the Midland Railway Company, became its chairman and committee members included Sir Joseph Paxton MP, and local landowners such as Sir Henry Wilmot of Chaddesden, William Mundy of Markeaton, and Thomas Evans of Allestree. With the financial support of the Midland Railway's

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[119] For an overview of church and chapel attendance for 1851, see M. Tranter (ed.), *The Derbyshire Returns to the 1851 Religious Census* (Matlock, 1995), pp.69-77.
[120] R.L. Farmer, *A Short History of Derby and its Churches*, in W.H. Green, *The Derby Churchman's Handbook* (Derby, 1928), p.19.
[121] Craven, *Illustrated History,* p.158.
[122] Ibid., pp.136, 171.
[123] H. Butterton, *Victorian Derby*: *A Portrait of Life in a Nineteenth-Century Manufacturing Town* (Derby, 2006), p.81.

largest shareholder, Michael Thomas Bass MP, and his fellow shareholders, St Andrew's was eventually completed and consecrated in 1866. St Luke's, in Parliament Street, was consecrated in 1870, and built on land released by the sale of the Firs Estate off Burton Road. A further church, St Anne's, was built between Kedleston and Ashbourne Roads on what had been the common land of Nun's Green, to serve the needs of the westward expansion of the population.[124] Land bequeathed by the Beaumanor family of Barrow on Trent, who were related to the Curzons of Kedleston Hall, provided the Roman Catholics with an opportunity to match the consecration in 1828 of St John's. The completion of St Mary's in Bridge Gate, by the architect Pugin in 1839, prompted the *Derby Mercury's* editor to comment:

> We say, that no man can shut his eyes to the fact, that the Roman Catholic party are now industriously bent, and are applying every energy, to get the dominion they once had.[125]

The Church of England's response to this challenge came in 1846 with the building of St Alkmund's, designed by local architect Henry Isaac Stephens, which resulted in some controversy in the Catholic community. The 216 feet spire of St Alkmund's was erected directly in the line of sight of St Mary's Church and for many years the Anglican Church carried the unflattering nickname of the 'Church of the Holy Spite.'[126]

The Unitarian chapel in Friar Gate, with a 300-year lease from 1697, was supported by leading nonconformist families, including the Strutts. It was the nexus of a thriving dissenting community in the old urban core, with a Sunday School, founded at the turn of the century by Joseph Strutt.[127] The Congregational Chapel on London Road, built in the 1830s, with H.J. Stevens

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[124] S. Glover, *Glover's Derby: History and Directory of the Borough of Derby* (1843), pp.16-28.
[125] *DM*, 15 November 1839.
[126] Butterton, *Victorian Derby*, p.82.
[127] DLSL, Rev. J. Birke, *Memorials of Friar Gate Chapel* (Derby, 1824), p.21; Glover, *Glover's Derby,* p.30.

of Derby as its architect, was erected on land released by the Borough family's Castlefield estate. Glover reported that 'the schoolroom under is of the same length and width as the chapel.'[128] The increase in the number of Congregationalists necessitated the re-building of their main chapel in Victoria Street in 1860 and, by 1877, they had two branch chapels and two mission halls.[129]

The General Baptist Chapel was established in Brook Street in 1802 and enlarged in 1814 and in 1819. The Baptist Chapel in St Mary's Gate was housed in 'a large and handsome brick and stone mansion', which had been the principal residence of Thomas Evans, 'banker and merchant'. William Evans MP, his grandson, of Allestree Hall, inherited the property in 1841 and subsequently sold it to the Chapel's trustees for £4,000. The New Baptist Chapel was built in Sacheverel Street in 1830.[130]

The large Wesleyan Methodist Chapel situated in King Street was rebuilt in 1841 and included a schoolroom, underneath the chapel, that accommodated 'upwards of 500 children'. Several local families, including the Harpur family, gave generously to the overall cost of £5,000 for the re-building, which included gas lighting and was 'heated with hot water'. The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on Greenhill, erected in 1816, contained a large schoolhouse at the back of the chapel on two storeys, which was built in 1824. Both chapels were 'attended by a numerous and respectable congregation.'[131]

[128] Glover, *Glover's Derby*, p.30.
[129] T. Rook, *Victoria Street Congregational Church, Derby 1778-1928,* (Derby, 1928), pp.22-3.
[130] DLSL, BA/1894, *Notes on the General Baptists*, p.11; DLSL, BA/286, Records of the First General Baptist Church in Derby, 1830, p.7.
[131] Glover, *Glover's Derby*, p.33; B.A. Alger, *King Street Wesleyan Chapel, Derby 1805-1905* (Derby, 1905), pp.30-1.

Conflicting cultures

The final part of the chapter contrasts this 'respectable' and 'polite' bourgeois society with the 'unruly' pastimes of the workers. A contest for urban space, the conflict between rational recreation and popular culture, and the struggles for self-determination and social and political empowerment, are exemplified by the Temperance Movement, the Mechanics' Institute and the Arboretum, and the suppression of the annual Shrovetide football.

Temperance and 'respectable society'

Rational recreation signalled an attempt by the urban elite to convince the workers to share in the 'bourgeois ethic' by participating in 'respectable' associations and leisure pursuits. The rational recreationalists hoped that their sponsored alternatives would act as class bridges and facilitate social *rapprochement*. For Evangelicals, rational recreation excluded all secular pleasures. The 'rationality' of institutions and associations was established by religious criteria, and recreations without an explicit religious content or context, by their definition, were irrational. Derby's Temperance Society sought to exercise a controlling influence over the main occasions and locations of popular recreation in the town. Pubs, in particular, because of their important role in the organisation of workers' social lives, were seen to be associated with poverty, crime, promiscuity, and public disorder.[132] They were identified as the cultural antithesis and rival of their evangelical mission — 'the pothouse is their church, gin their sacrament'. Pubs were labelled 'chapels of hell' serving 'distilled damnation'.[133] In the society's annual report of 1847, popular pastimes were deemed to be both anti-social and self-destructive. The pub was associated with:

[132] DLSL, BA/524.6, Derby Temperance Society, Annual Report, 1834; R.D. Storch, 'The Problem of Working Class Leisure. Some Roots of Middle Class Moral Reform in the Industrial North, 1825-1850' in A.P. Donajgrodski (ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (1977), pp.138-62.
[133] W. Barron, *The Crystal Palace: Why Should it not be Open on the Afternoon of Sundays for the Recreation and Instruction of the Working classes? God or Baal?* (Derby, 1855), p.33.

> Smoking, drinking and low company…and given the number of drinking places, it will excite no wonder that the number of idle, well-dressed, profligate loungers is continually increasing, and that female depravity exists to a fearful extent.[134]

For the workers, however, the pub offered a place of refreshment and entertainment, a club, a shop, a library and newsroom. The requirements for entry were low and negotiable and pub-centred recreations were open and flexible.[135]

Members of the Temperance Society were well placed to exercise a strong, coercive influence on popular pastimes, as their successful efforts to prevent Sunday trading, Sunday library openings, and Sunday railway excursions demonstrated.[136] Their strength derived from a wide denominational and social base, consisting mainly of nonconformists, together with the powerful evangelical wing of the Church of England. The clergy could muster strong support from wealthy and influential members of the urban elite, and numerical strength came from a rank and file drawn predominantly from railway employees, skilled artisans in the pottery and print works, whilst notably, most of the pledges came from factory and manual workers.[137] Generally, however, workers were sceptical of the bourgeois embrace of rational recreation, whether it be manifested in institutions, associations, or leisure activities. It was evident to many that the aim of this social embrace was not to make all men 'middle class', but to create a subordinate 'working class' in its own image.[138] The Mechanics' Institute was a vivid illustration of this ideal.

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[134] DLSL, BA/524.6, Derby Temperance Society, Annual Report, 1847.
[135] B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872* (Keele, 1994), chapter 2; DLSL, BA/567.3, Temperance Society Minute Book account suggests that there were forty-two clubs (nature unspecified) attached to pubs, August 1849; see P. Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp.30-1.
[136] *DM*, 6 April 1836 and 2 September 1840.
[137] DLSL, BA/567.3, Minute Books and Membership Registers from 1836.
[138] See E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital* (1975), p.218; P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (1978), p.52.

Changing 'the habits of the masses': education and socialisation

The initial idea for establishing the Derby Mechanics' Institute came from an approach to William Strutt by Leonard Horner, the prime mover in establishing the Edinburgh School of Arts. He wrote to Strutt in July 1821 to ask advice concerning the Edinburgh school, and enclosed the scheme of instruction that had been proposed.[139] The first hint of the founding of the institution, however, was three years later, when Joseph Strutt made enquiries of James Shuttleworth, his agent in Manchester, about the rules of the institute there and of those in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The Strutts were supported by Dr Douglas Fox, the Rev. Edward Higginson, Dr Richard French Forester and members of the Evans and Fox families. This coterie of philanthropists was united by marriage, trade, politics and natural philosophy. From 1835 to the death of Lord Belper (Edward Strutt, son of William) in 1880, members of the Strutt family served the institution as presidents, apart from a brief period when the sixth Duke of Devonshire held the office.[140]

One aim of the Mechanics' Institute was 'for the cheap instruction of persons engaged in the operative departments of arts and manufactures', so that workers of limited education could broaden their knowledge.[141] To this end, it contained a library and reading rooms and sponsored numerous lectures. Membership in the first year was 274 and this increased to over 800 by 1842 with a library of 6,000 books.[142] Edward Higginson was concerned, like many other supporters of mechanics' institutes, with the social and moral improvements, which would result from better educated workers. Unlike many of the urban elite, Joseph Strutt hoped that these same workers would, through greater educational benefits, gain independence, with prospects of

[139] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, letter from Leonard Horner to William Strutt 29 July 1821.
[140] A.F. Chadwick, 'The Derby Mechanics' Institute 1825-1880', *The Vocational Aspect of Education,* 27 (1975), pp.103-5.
[141] *DM,* 14 May 1884.
[142] Craven, *Illustrated History*, p.172.

their own, the vote, and thus a stake in the country's future. He had a genuine concern for the lot of the workers and became the leading figure in the early years of the organisation. He donated, for example, 20 guineas to the institute when it opened, an annual subscription of two guineas and 500 books 'in almost every branch of science, history, travels and amusement' carefully selected from amongst the volumes in his own library.[143]

A further aim of the Derby Mechanics' Institute, in common with the movement as a whole, was the diffusion of useful knowledge amongst the workers, with particular emphasis on their mental and moral condition.[144] The inaugural address delivered by the first secretary, the Rev. Edward Higginson, on the opening of the Institute on 22 August 1825, stressed that, by improving the workers' lot, 'their usefulness, comfort and happiness will be thus greatly increased; and that as a direct consequence, the whole frame and body of Society will exhibit a fairer aspect, a brighter appearance of order, peace and enjoyment than the world has hitherto presented'. The proposals for the provision of a library and 'mutual instruction' by members were then mentioned, together with the hiring of lecturers and the organisation of lecture programmes.[145]

The Derby Institute followed the national pattern — established for mechanics and not by them. While it was intimated that control would eventually be devolved to the workers, in practice the leadership and management remained with the urban elite. This control was highlighted in letters to the local press before the institute was opened. One correspondent wrote 'it is from such an Institute that we may hope to see the delightful picture of the Industrious Workmen reading for recreation, to his wife and family, by his own fireside, books of useful information'. The writer urged the local gentry to support the

[143] *DM*, 23 and 30 March 1825.
[144] See I. Inkster, 'The social context of an educational movement: a revisionist approach to the English Mechanics' Institutes 1820-1850', *Oxford Review of Education*, 2 (1976), pp.277-307; S. Shapin and B. Barnes (eds.), 'Science, nature and control: interpreting mechanics' institutes', *Social Studies of Science*, 7 (1977), pp.31-74.
[145] DLSL, BA/3791, Rev. E. Higginson, *Address to all classes of the community, on the establishment of Mechanics' Institutions delivered on the opening of the Derby Mechanics' Institute*, 4 March 1825, pp.5-6.

scheme and noted that 'no books of political or religious controversy will be admissible, which is alright'.[146] The second correspondent stated that 'it is believed in this town and neighbourhood, the industrious Mechanic wants opportunities only to gain knowledge' and the 'selection of the library will be proper, and of such works as will improve and not disturb his mind, the result must be advantageous to him, and beneficial to the society in which he lives'. By attending the Mechanics' Institute, he will 'be able to learn the true value of liberty, to distinguish it from licentiousness, to love the religion of his country, to be just, loyal and content'.[147] By the 1830s, despite the control of bourgeois patronage, these attempts to elevate the social standing of the workers brought prolonged hostility. For many years its meetings were denounced as 'nurseries of disaffection'.[148]

The newly elected committee held its first meeting on 18 April 1825, from which a successful application was made to the trustees of the Lancastrian School for temporary use of their new school room. Higginson noted that the 'exceptional goodness' of mechanics' institutes had united individuals of all sects and parties, churchmen and dissenters, Whigs and Tories'.[149] The smooth introduction of Derby Mechanics' Institute was not, of course, due solely to the 'exceptional goodness' of the community. The Strutts' able management of the scheme was a deciding factor in ensuring that all interested groups were kept on side. Joseph and William Strutt were experienced political campaigners, and this is evident in the content of their letters and broadsheets, which were conciliatory, subtle and planned to alleviate any opposition from the Tories and Anglicans. The consensus was illustrated by the firm support of the Anglican Evans family, with Elizabeth

[146] *DM*, 23 June 1824.
[147] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 24 June 1824.
[148] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 18 October 1832, 4 August 1836; *DM*, 25 October 1837, 8 May 1839.
[149] DLSL, BA/3791, Higginson, *Address*, p.5.

Evans (née Strutt) being a strong advocate of educational advancement for the workers.[150]

At a time when the role of the institute as a purveyor of useful knowledge to the workers was increasingly being questioned, the Mechanics' Institute Exhibition of 1839 overshadowed much of what had gone on before. The *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, for instance, had commented in 1831 on the fortunes of the institute and noted that, 'the novelty has passed away and with it many of its former members are gone; but a sufficient number remain… to make it an object of great interest and an exercise of beneficial influence on the working class'.[151] The opening of the new hall in 1837 indicated that the urban elite's commitment to the venture remained strong, with the *Mercury* reporting the opening of a 'splendid new hall', which was 'beautifully decorated' and 'excellently lighted up with gas.'[152] In his report on the opening of the lecture hall in 1837, Joseph Strutt hoped for an increase in membership as a result of the latest addition to the institute's facilities. Indeed, since the purchase of the premises, membership had risen from 131, its lowest number overall, in 1830, to 480 in 1837.[153]

The aim of the exhibition was twofold: to augment the funds and 'excite and gratify the public taste'.[154] The public opening day was 13 May, and admission was fixed at 6d; this was later reduced to 3d.[155] Season tickets were 2s 6d and visitors were treated to an exhibition of paintings, sculpture, porcelain, models, specimens and curiosities and rather bizarre exhibits, such as the dissected arm of Hannah Bocking who had been executed at Derby.[156] Various kinds of machinery operated by workers, were demonstrated to the general public.[157]

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[150] See C.M. Turner, 'Political, religious, and occupational support in the early Mechanics' Institutes', *The Vocational Aspects of Education'*, XX, 45 (1968), pp. 65-100.
[151] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 1 December 1831.
[152] *DM*, 8 October 1837.
[153] DLSL, BA/625, Derby Mechanics' Institute Minute Book, March 1837.
[154] DLSL, BA/631, catalogue of articles of Exhibition of Derby Mechanics' Institute, including Report of the Exhibition Committee, 7 October 1839, p.5.
[155] *DM*, 16 October 1839.
[156] DLSL, BA/631, report of the Exhibition Committee, p.7.
[157] DLSL, BA/631, catalogue of articles.

It was reported that thousands of workers had visited the exhibition from the town and neighbourhood and it was evident how beneficial the experience had been compared to the workers' 'common popular amusements'. The verdict of the managing committee was that exhibitions of this kind were a 'power for good' and changed the 'habits of the masses'.[158]

Most of the town's clubs and societies reflected the paradox that, although ostensibly public institutions, they were invariably privatised. Typically, they lacked the flexibility to meet the needs of the town's workers. Participation tended to be at set times with entry thresholds, advance subscriptions, overly complex membership procedures and highly specific rules and regulations, including dress codes. These checks, in many cases, created a distinct bourgeois identity due to the exclusivity of the associations.[159] Initially, however, the Derby Mechanics' Institute's aim catered for 'all workmen who derive their support from the exertion of their own skill and labour'.[160] However, the cost of membership was high at 2s 6d per quarter, class fees were considerable, and the need to be suitably clothed far too expensive. The subscription, paid in advance, represented a risky transaction for workers where job opportunities were precarious. Membership procedures included nomination by two existing members, followed by a final decision by committee. As one former member commented, 'I suppose the present system is to keep it select, it is certainly a barrier, and is likely to stand in the way of not a few.'[161] The institute's activities were also rather 'dry'; lectures, for example, were 'too scientific for general usefulness'.[162]

By the 1840s, the institute lacked members and was short of cash. The management committee recognised that if the institute were to survive, the

[158] *DM*, 16 December 1839.
[159] See L. Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society Etiquette and the Season* (1986), p.22; R.Q. Gray, 'Styles of Life, the Labour Aristocracy and Class Relations in the later Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh', *International Review of Social History*, xvii (1973), pp.428-52; Bailey, *Leisure and Class,* pp.131-6, 173-4.
[160] DLSL, BA/3791, Higginson, *Address*, p.10.
[161] DLSL, BA/729, report of the Sub-Committee Committee of Enquiry into causes of the fall in Membership, September 1860.
[162] DLSL, BA/639, Report into the State, Finances and Prospects of the Institute, June 1844.

thresholds of entry would have to be reduced and, ironically, its activities would need to imitate the multifunctional nature of the pub. A sub-committee of 1844 recommended that subscriptions should be reduced and payable weekly or monthly. Elementary instruction should be provided, and the library stock expanded with fiction, travel and biographical works. The courses of lectures on scientific themes were to be replaced by single lectures on 'popular' topics, and by dances, soirees and railway excursions. A pub atmosphere was to be recreated by introducing quoits, skittles, draughts and chess, and a room for casual conversations and the sale of unfermented liquor, 'as an opposing inducement to the dram shop and the beer house'.[163] These efforts proved unsuccessful. Pub-centred recreations were largely indigenous to the workers; they were provided or chosen by them. The Mechanics' Institute provided activities for them. This was very much a top-down diffusion, and this kind of controlled patronage deterred the very people for whom such facilities were intended.[164] The patrons comprised members of the urban elite, who controlled the cash-flow and expected deference as the price of their sponsorship. They miscalculated, however, the extent of the workers' self-determination. This is clearly reflected in the comments of one worker who had left the institute:

> I found the books were saved for other people who were a little better off. I know you gentlemen on the committee cannot imagine the slights of a man in a dirty working coat has to put up with. I have seen when some of you gentlemen come in the library how different it is, you are waited on out of turn.[165]

The institute's activities assumed a deferential acceptance by the leading members of the superior judgement of 'betters'. This was illustrated at the opening of the institute when Edward Strutt stated that the 'mechanics' would 'learn that their interests were not, as has often been erroneously imagined,

[163] Ibid.
[164] Bailey, *Leisure and Class,* p.172.
[165] DLSL, BA/729, report relating to fall in membership.

opposed to those of their employers but that they are, in fact, the same'.[166] Consequently, the library was censored. Books such as works by Voltaire were locked away, while Chartism, socialism, secularism and other 'unorthodox' political and religious viewpoints were usually not for discussion.[167] This high-handed, condescending and hierarchical situation led the Rev. W. Linwood to remark that 'there is too much of that unmistakable condescension which is to an independent spirit of all things the most repulsive'.[168] By 1853 seventy per cent of working men were estimated to spend their evenings in pubs.[169] In the words of one member: 'You are so divided into classes that a working man in his working dress does not look at home in your reading room among those who appear to place themselves so much above him'.[170] The Mechanics' Institute's response to this criticism was the provision of a second-class reading room.[171]

'An emerald oasis'

By the 1840s, holiday festivals in Derby were diminishing. The magistrates had suppressed the Derby wakes, and the Evangelicals had stopped horse racing in 1835.[172] The absence of common public facilities such as parks, museums and libraries was a significant indication of the strength of social divisions. Joseph Strutt's gift to the town in 1840 of the Arboretum, therefore, excited widespread comment because it represented a departure from the prevailing conventional wisdom. Open free to the public on two days a week, it contested the assumption that the destructive rituals seen during football, wakes and fairs were inevitable when there was no cost and no accountability. Strutt referred to these concerns at the opening of the park:

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[166] Ibid; *DM,* 30 March 1825, speech by Edward Strutt.
[167] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 4 August 1836; *DM*, 5 July 1843.
[168] *DM*, 3 September 1847.
[169] *DM,* 23 February 1853.
[170] DLSL, BA/729, report relating to fall in membership, letter from H. Allcock, shopkeeper of Leonard Street, undated. See also DLSL, BA/711, Catalogue of books and list of paintings, engravings and philosophical apparatus belonging to the Institution, 1851 and 1856.
[171] DLSL, BA/729, report relating to fall in membership.
[172] *DM*, 10 March 1835.

> It has often been made a reproach to our country that in England collections of works of art and exhibitions for instruction and amusement cannot, without danger of injury, be thrown open to the public. [173]

The loss of common land such as Nun's Green, and open spaces such as the Siddals, used in 1839 and 1840 for the new complex of station and railway works, prompted Glover to state that 'there are now no public walks…afforded the inhabitants…and the bowling greens, the constant evening amusement of respectable tradesmen during the greater portion of the last century, are now but little encouraged.'[174] The change of use of public land for industrial or residential use resulted in the forfeit of popular recreational spaces, which exacerbated the grievances of the town's workers. The contest for urban space became a recurring theme as railway and commercial expansion took hold from the mid-nineteenth century.[175]

The donation of Joseph Strutt's eleven-acre 'garden' to the town was, therefore, welcomed initially by both workers and the urban elite. The former saw it as compensation for the loss of common land and open leisure spaces, the latter as a positive contribution to rational recreation. The Arboretum was, arguably, the first public park in England and there was free entry on Sundays and Wednesdays.[176] The *Derbyshire Advertiser* described it as 'an emerald oasis in a red-brown Sahara of bricks and mortar'.[177] It opened with a great procession of 6,000 visitors to the park, followed by dancing to a band in an adjacent field, then a ball at the Mechanics' Institute and a children's day on 17 September. Joseph Strutt's speech at the official opening on 16 September

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[173] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 24 September 1840.
[174] Glover, *History and Gazetteer,* p.406.
[175] See E. Griffin, *England's Revelry: A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2005), pp.1-25.
[176] Beckett, *Aristocracy*, pp.397-8; P.A. Elliott, 'The Derby Arboretum (1840); the first specially designed municipal park', *Midland History*, 26 (2001), pp.144-76; *The Derby Philosophers: Science and Culture in British Urban Society* (2009), pp.249-52; 'The Derbyshire General Infirmary', pp.65-92; S. Ford, 'Designing for Rational Recreation: The Creation of Derby Arboretum', *East Midland Geographer*, 12 (1989), pp.26-33.
[177] *Derbyshire Advertiser*, 20 September,1840.

stressed his favoured life and his wish to thank those who had contributed to his wealth:

> As the sun has shone brightly on me through life, it would be ungrateful in me not to employ a portion of the fortune I possess, in promoting the welfare of those among whom I live, and by whose industry I have been aided in its acquisition.[178]

In its early years, the Arboretum became the favoured destination of some of the first railway excursions from Nottingham, Leicester, Sheffield and Birmingham. In 1846, for example, the *Mercury* reported that 'we believe that we are not exaggerating when we state that upwards of five thousand people came in special trains alone'. Total attendance was a record 15,000, with takings of £200.[179] The annual Arboretum Festival was also popular with the workers because of the half-day holiday. The regulated entertainments, however, such as bands, country dancing and balloon ascents, as well as the ban on alcohol, proved far less popular. These were 'rational' reminders of the need to be 'respectable'.[180] This was highlighted in the local press, when there was criticism of the arrangements for the anniversary celebrations of 1846. A letter to the *Mercury*, signed 'One of the Uncomfortable Ladies', complained about the lack of a special enclosure 'where the most respectable portion of the visitors used to congregate to witness the filling of the balloon' and which provided 'a retreat from the annoyance of the universal cigar smoking'.[181]

The contested streets

Rationality and respectability played little part in the 'feverish excitement' and fear of 'violent and reckless subversion of ancient systems' when the borough councillors attempted to suppress the annual street football match. Reports in

[178] *DM*, 18 September 1840.
[179] *DM*, 18 July 1846.
[180] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 24 September 1840, 23 June 1842, 17 July 1846.
[181] *DM*, 6 June 1846.

the local press emphasised the connection between the game, collective violence and political unrest. The *Mercury* warned that 'if they (the players) are allowed to take possession of all the streets, no-one will be safe.[182] There were, of course, members of the urban elite who still remembered the social unrest of the eighteenth-century food riots, the Pentrich Rebellion, and the 1824 framework-knitters' strike, and many of them were convinced that there was a need for greater inclusivity of the workers, both socially and politically.[183] Rational recreation appeared to offer a solution to the long-standing acceptance of street violence at festivals and in the popular pastime of football. Popular culture, of course, was generally inconvenient to a rapidly industrialising economy. Football, for example, resulted in a suspension of work, mid-week, for two days. Banks and shops were forced to close and were boarded up. Henry Mousley, Mayor of Derby commented that the town's 'trade and commerce (have) become of too much importance to be interrupted two days every year'.[184] The threat of damage to property, violence and assaults on the 'respectable' citizen could no longer be tolerated.

Street football was played annually on Shrove Tuesday by men and on Ash Wednesday by boys.[185] Although, traditionally, it was a contest between the two parishes of All Saints' and St Peter's, in practice there appears to have been no restriction on participation. Hundreds, sometimes thousands, would join in from its starting point in the market place, through the streets, across the Derwent, with the aim of scoring a goal at opposite ends of the town. By the end of the six hours of play, many players were injured, there was heavy drinking, petty vandalism and some serious assaults. Several attempts had been made to prohibit this popular festival, for example, in 1731, 1746 and 1797, but had failed. Opposition from the urban elite was renewed from the

[182] *DM*, 28 February 1844.
[183] J. Keys, *Reminiscences of Old Derby* (Derby, 1850), p.36; see above pp.65-70 for the food riots; see above, pp.70-2 for the Pentrich Rebellion and below, p.174 for the framework-knitters' strike.
[184] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 13 March 1846.
[185] Details of the Derby game appear in the *Penny Magazine*, 6 April 1839; Glover, *History and Gazetteer*, pp.310-11; *DM*, 28 February 1827; A. Delves, 'Popular Recreation and Social Conflict in Derby, 1800-1850' in E. and S. Yeo (eds.), *Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590-1914* (Brighton, 1981), pp.89-127.

1830s.[186] In 1845, the *Mercury* reported that the mayor had pronounced the game illegal and that, in future, alternative competitive athletic sports, with money prizes, would replace football. The following year, the mayor promised to 'use his influence with the manufacturers and others' to give a day's recreation to their workers, and proposed a free railway excursion, to be paid for by public subscription, instead of football.[187] Unfortunately, the rational recreationalists made no provision for alternative sports and employers were requested not to release their workers for the two days of games. As a precautionary measure, special constables were sworn in and the mayor and the magistrates called in a troop of cavalry. Nevertheless, crowds poured into the market place with a ball and attacked the 'specials'. The mayor decided to read the Riot Act and send in the troops. Fifteen of the ringleaders were subsequently charged with playing the game, or with obstruction, or enticing others to play, and five were prosecuted. To the mayor's dismay, they were merely bound over to keep the peace.[188]

Those who played street football did so on the understanding that this annual festival was underpinned by the rights of the common man. Any attempt to suppress the game went against custom and tradition. Football was the guardian of the two-day holiday; it provided some respite from the workplace and an occasion for family get-togethers. There was a carnival atmosphere with large crowds of holiday-makers visiting the town from surrounding areas. The alternative 'rational' games — jumping matches, 'swarming a pole', grinning through a collar — proved no substitute for the excitement of football. These activities were also provided by the urban elite, which smacked of dependency, obligation and paternalism, qualities inherent in top-down diffusion.

The protracted resistance of the footballers was also a protest about their relative powerlessness. The rational recreationalists were determined to

[186] Hutton, *History and Antiquities*, p.39; *DM*, 23 February 1797.
[187] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 13 March 1846.
[188] *DM*, 18, 25 February, 4 March 1846.

provide more 'civilised' activities as alternatives to the rowdiness, the heavy drinking and physical and verbal abuse of the football festivities. They also wanted to take back control of the market place and the surrounding streets, areas where there had been significant investment in public amenities and elegant town houses for the wealthy. As Griffin has emphasised, the rationale behind the 'urban renaissance' was twofold: civic improvement and social control.[189]

Attempts to prohibit football and festivals epitomised the contest for possession and protection of urban spaces. Attempts at suppression highlighted the hierarchical struggle for power. An early action of the newly-incorporated Derby Town Council in 1835, for instance, was to set up a police force 'clad in uniforms after the London pattern', who were instructed that 'persons standing or loitering on the footway without sufficient cause to prevent the free passage of such a footway…may be apprehended and taken before a magistrate'. This 'move-on' system inflicted a serious attack on free movement and was a clumsy attempt at social control. It drove a wedge between Derby's workers and the authorities.[190]

Conclusion

Derby's cultural awakening helped weld together the urban elite, the local gentry and the county set through the civility and sociability of an associative culture. This was reflected, to a large extent, in the town's 'urban renaissance', which nurtured 'enlightenment values of rational politeness'; it encouraged rational ideas, which led to technological innovation and invention; it resulted in well-planned private and public buildings and rational improvements to the

[189] See E. Griffin, 'Popular Culture in Industrialising England', *Historical Journal*, 45 (2002), pp.619-35; *England's Revelry*, pp.84-113, 167-89; 'Urban Renaissance and the Mob', in Feldman and Lawrence. *Structures and Transformations*, pp.54-73.
[190] R.D. Storch, 'The Policeman as Domestic Missionary: Urban Discipline and Popular Culture in Northern England, 1850-1880', *Journal of Social History*, 9 (1976), pp.481-502.

urban landscape.[191] Elegant town houses and the fine architecture of the assembly rooms contrasted with the social utility of the Derbyshire General Infirmary and the development of Nun's Green. 'Rationality' and 'respectability' underpinned the bourgeois ideal of improvement and progress. Civic facilities presented physical symbols of Derby's 'polite society', which was epitomised by a respectable lifestyle, a love of learning, promotion of the creative arts, and a pursuit of rational recreation. They also reflected, however, the darker side of the town's cultural awakening by representing the authority and status of the municipal oligarchy. The fine houses and grand civic amenities became allegories of an emerging power structure, which was amply demonstrated by the struggle for control of the market place and surrounding streets during the Shrove Tuesday football match.[192]

This bourgeois life-style contrasted sharply with the life experiences of the town's workers. They compared their own living standards with those of the urban elite; they could not afford to attend the theatre or music concert; educational opportunities were restricted to the paternalism of the Mechanics' Institute; even the traditional culture of the Shrove Tide street football match had been suppressed. Such contrasts amplified and exacerbated disparity and division and resulted in social polarisation and cultural differentiation, potential harbingers of distinct class identities.[193]

Indeed, Borsay has suggested that a 'true class society' emerged during the late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century.[194] The evidence from Derby suggests that a nascent middle class was forged during these years, but it was not a fully-fledged consciousness of class. During the 1830s and 1840s, a working class identity began to take shape through strike action and Chartism. These years witnessed a growing independence and self-

[191] R. Porter, 'Science, provincial culture and public opinion in Enlightenment England' in Borsay (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Town,* p.260.
[192] See Griffin, 'Popular Culture', pp. 619-35; 'Urban Renaissance and the Mob', pp.54-73.
[193] Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp.315-19.
[194] Ibid., p.318.

determination of the workforce. Workers were less inclined to accept the largesse of the urban elite. For many, the 'urban renaissance' was perceived as an exclusive ideal, which was promoted by an elite associative culture. It did not, as Borsay suggests, symbolize 'a common civic identity'.[195] Indeed, Derby's cultural awakening highlighted elements of social fragmentation and division, and a struggle for economic and political power. This struggle is the focus of the next chapter.

[195] Borsay, *History of Leisure*, p.148.

Chapter 5: Plebeian agitation and struggle, 1824-c.1850

Introduction

Having examined the associational world of bourgeois bonding, the focus of this chapter turns to the plebeian response to the possibility of bourgeois hegemony. The 1830s and 1840s were turbulent years marked by a battle for social control and plebeian empowerment. Attempts by the rational recreationalists to curb the perceived excesses of the town's workers were only partially successful. Paternalistic efforts, reflected in the Mechanics' Institute and the Arboretum, failed generally to offer successful alternatives to popular pastimes. The religious fervour of the Temperance Society and the evangelical wing of the Church of England, proved to be formidable agents in the fight to suppress popular recreations, such as street football.

The delights of the county town, such as the assemblies, the theatre, music concerts, and social gatherings, were financially well beyond the reach of the workers. Elegant town houses and grand civic and religious buildings symbolised bourgeois power; rational recreationalists dismissed popular culture as demeaning and immoral. This 'middle class' power, based as it was on industrial wealth, close working relationships with the gentry and aristocracy, and fashionable associations, drove 'a cultural wedge between the upper and middling ranks on the one hand, and the populace on the other'. Economic and cultural divisions led to social inequalities and sowed 'the seeds of social polarization'.[1]

These decades were, essentially, a period of intersection between a buoyant bourgeoisie and an aspiring workforce. Increasingly, a political dimension took centre stage. The 1832 Reform Act at least doubled the electorate in size, with 1,684 of Derby's 3,516 houses valued at over £10 per year.[2] The new town

[1] P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (1989), pp.318-9.
[2] W. Page (ed.), *Victoria County History, Derbyshire*, II (1907), p.156.

council continued to be dominated by the Liberals, who also monopolised the parliamentary representation for most of the century.[3] Indeed, the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, whilst being the progenitor of greater control by central government, gave an initial boost to the urban elite through local Acts of Parliament.[4] Evans has argued that there was 'little significant change in the social status of the urban governors'.[5] The enfranchisement of the 'middle class' left the workers feeling aggrieved, used and betrayed by the propertied classes. This disappointment at a lack of any political gain was a continuing thread of conflict through the mid-Victorian years.

This chapter offers a counterpoint to the previous two chapters by examining the beginnings of a sustained plebeian agitation for social justice and political recognition. It was a movement inspired by poor living conditions, heavy-handed employers, and political frustration, factors which Thompson summed up so eloquently as 'frictions of interest', from which emerged a sense of class identity.[6] The formation of strong plebeian associations willing to take direct action to meet socio-economic and political injustices prompted harsh reaction from the municipal authorities. Whilst their action was eventually successful in maintaining law and order and protecting property, it also exacerbated what Mokyr refers to as 'a dividing membrane between polite society and the unwashed poor'.[7]

Two types of association emerged, which resulted in a sustained period of urban conflict. Informal association was spontaneous and tended to be violent; it resonated with eighteenth-century crowd action and the moral economy by forging a collective identity through traditional, ephemeral factors of ritual,

[3] *DM*, 12, 19 December,1832; C.E. Hogarth, 'Derby and Derbyshire elections, 1837-47', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 95 (1975), pp.48-58.
[4] J.V. Beckett, *The East Midlands from AD 1000* (1988), pp.243, 245.
[5] E.J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain, 1783-1870* (1983), p.293; see above pp.116-7.
[6] See E.P. Thompson, 'The Peculiarities of the English', *Socialist Register* (1965), pp.311-62; *The Making of the English Working Class* (1991 edition), p.12; P.J. Corfield, 'Class by name and number in eighteenth-century Britain', in Corfield (ed.), *Language, History and Class* (Oxford, 1991), p.113.
[7] J. Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1850* (2011), p.364.

symbol, and myth. Indeed, nineteenth-century dissent had its ancestry in the previous century.[8] Formal association, exemplified by trade unions and co-operative societies, relied on organisation, structure and rules, reminiscent of bourgeois freemasonry and philosophical societies. Plebeian associations of the 1830s and 1840s were epitomised by a blend of tradition and spontaneity with organisation and structure. The evolutionary line from crowd action to trade union and co-operative society, during the years from 1831 to the late 1880s, was marked by a trend of dissent and upheaval, which merged into a period of amelioration and relative social harmony — the 'age of equipoise'.[9]

It is the task of this chapter to chart the impact of four 'frictions of interest' along this evolutionary line: the framework-knitters' strike of 1824, the Reform Bill riots of 1831, the Derby Lock-Out of 1833 to 1834, and the Chartist years from 1839 to 1848. A growing sense of empowerment and of working class identity is examined through an increasingly sophisticated plebeian associative culture. An important question is addressed — does the traditional view of class identity stand up in the case of Derby's industrial and political development during these years, or are more recent interpretations regarding language and culture more relevant in explaining a consciousness of class?[10] The first of these four 'frictions of interest' sets the scene for an 'age of unease'.[11]

[8] See above for food riots, pp.65-70; for the Pentrich Revolution, pp.70-71; see J.T. Ward (ed.), *Popular Movements c.1830-c.1850* (1970), p.11.
[9] W.L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise. A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (1964).
[10] See A. Briggs, 'The Language of Class in early nineteenth-century England', in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds.), *Essays in Labour History* (1960), pp.43-73; A. Briggs, *Chartism* (Stroud, 1998); H. Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society* (1969), esp. chapters 6 and 7; R.J. Morris, *Class and Class Consciousness in the Industrial Revolution* (1979), and 'The Industrial Revolution: Class and Common Interest', *History Today*, 33 (1983), pp.31-5; G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983); D. Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (Aldershot, 1984); Corfield, *Language, History and Class*; P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class c.1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991); J. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual and Symbol in England 1790-1850* (New York, 1994).
[11] See M.J. Turner, *The Age of Unease: Government and Reform in Britain, 1782-1832* (Stroud, 2000).

The framework-knitters' strike

During strike of seven months in 1824, the framework-knitters demonstrated an entrepreneurial and self-help spirit. They managed to collect, for example, over £300 as part of a provident scheme to give benefit to unemployed workers. They used propaganda to good effect in producing a handbill, addressed to the 'Inhabitants of the town and county of Derby, and every kind of humanity', in which they explained that they had so far tolerated being 'out of employ' for seven months in a 'peaceable manner'.[12] The employers countered this by producing information about the knitters' wages, suggesting that they were being treated fairly, to which the knitters replied to set the record straight.[13] The *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* attempted to act as moderator of public opinion by publishing detailed figures of wages over a period of seven years for a twelve-hour day compared to the price of wheat.

The apparent even-handedness of the newspaper did not prevail when an article expressed concern over the 'processions of a numerous body of the workers in the silk hose branch.' There were further reports regarding the over-reliance of the knitters on applications for parish relief during the strike, believing that the strikers should rely on their own funds and not appeal for public assistance. The newspaper added that 'although laws against combinations are still in force, yet there is a very general impression in the public mind that all such enactments are, if not useless, at least unequal in their operation'. Nevertheless, the knitters' campaign was successful; the hosiers agreed to return to the 1817 price list for wheat and the knitters returned to work on 3 May 1824.[14] Such success was short-lived. The framework-knitters' dispute foreshadowed the years 1831 to 1848, a period which was dominated by the plebeian struggle for empowerment.

[12] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 15 April 1824.
[13] Ibid., 22 April 1824.
[14] Ibid., 6 May 1824.

The Reform Bill riots

The general election of 1831 led to the widespread defeat of anti-reform candidates and the Whigs were returned to power with a commanding majority. On 24 June the Whig cabinet reintroduced the Reform Bill in the Commons and on 7 July it passed its second reading by 367 to 231 votes and it was generally assumed that this would guarantee its eventual success.[15] There was the high state of political anticipation in Derby and the county when the Lords prepared to close their debate on the second reading of the Reform Bill on 7 October 1831. A crowd gathered in the market place to await the arrival of the mail coach from London to Manchester.[16] The news that the Bill had been defeated by 199 to 158 resulted in the parish churches tolling slow muffled peals, as if in mourning. A large crowd in the market place wrecked the house and shop of William Bemrose, a Tory anti-reformer, who owned and edited the *Derbyshire Courier*. The crowd then stoned the mayor's house and the property of Thomas Mozley, a Tory solicitor. The windows of several more shops and houses were broken before the crowd marched out of the town to attack the homes of the Tory gentry — the Mundy family at Markeaton Hall and the Wilmots at Chaddesden.[17]

The following day the crowd invaded a Reform Bill meeting held in the town hall at 9.00am and demanded the release of three men arrested and imprisoned during the night. When the mayor refused to do this, the crowd marched to the town gaol, broke down the door with a cast-iron lamp-post, released 23 prisoners and then moved on to the county gaol. Order was only restored when the governor of the prison ordered the wardens to fire a volley

[15] See Thompson, *English Working Class,* pp.888-915; Turner*, The Age of Unease,* pp.218-55; D. Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 2000), pp.73-9; D. Cannadine, *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom*, 1800-1906 (2017), pp.154-66.
[16] See R.A. Gaunt (ed.), *Politics, Law and Society in Nottinghamshire: The Diaries of Godfrey Tallents of Newark, 1829-1839* (Nottingham, 2010), p.26. Tallents was in Derby throughout this period.
[17] *DM*, 12 October 1831; see also W.A. Richardson, *Citizen's Derby* (1949), p.170 and A.W. Davison, *Derby, its Rise and Progress* (Wakefield 1970), pp.137-8.

from the walls.[18] Undeterred, a crowd of some 1,500 people later assembled in the market place, smashed the gas-lights and stoned houses in the northern residential district until a troop of the Fifteenth Hussars arrived from Nottingham and cleared the streets. On Monday morning the mayor's office distributed handbills announcing that a petition to the King was ready for signature on stalls in the market place, petitioning for the monarch to force the Bill through the Lords. A large crowd, including visitors from the surrounding countryside who were attending the annual cattle fair, quickly formed and some of the crowd started to destroy the stalls. The mayor then read the Riot Act, the Hussars moved into action, and the streets were cleared again. During the day several local troops of yeomanry rode into the town, enabling the Corporation to declare a curfew. The High Sheriff ordered a guard of his Javelin Men outside the county gaol; when the Lord Lieutenant arrived at the County Hall on Wednesday morning, Derby was quiet.[19]

The disorder shocked and unnerved the urban elite. The *Derby Mercury* ran a headline 'Violent Outrages in Derby and Neighbourhood.' Samuel Rowbottom, at nearby Breadsall, confided in his diary that the Tory squire, Robert Wilmot, had fled south of the Trent to stay with the Crewe family at Calke Abbey when rumours of a visit from the rioters reached him.[20] The cost of the disorder was high. Over thirty households claimed a total compensation of over £300 from the Corporation, whilst both William Bemrose and Francis Mundy sued the municipal authorities through the courts.[21]

It was evident that the Corporation was incapable of preserving law and order. The town gaoler released two men before the gaol was attacked and neither the police nor the watch appeared. Only J.B. Crompton, who rode to Nottingham to fetch the Hussars, and B.T. Balguy, the town clerk, seemed

[18] R.A. Gaunt (ed.), *Unhappy Reactionary: The Diaries of the Fourth Duke of Newcastle-Under-Lyne, 1822-1850* (Nottingham, 2003), p.87.
[19] *DM*, 12 October 1831; Gaunt, *Politics, Law and Society*, p.27.
[20] DLSL, BA/8736, Samuel Rowbottom's Diary, 9 and 11 October 1831.
[21] *DM*, 12 and 19 October 1831; T. Richardson, *Derby Riots* (Derby, 1832), pp.5-14.

capable of taking decisive action. Balguy had sent an urgent letter to Major Buckley of the Fifteenth Hussars in Nottingham, asking him to hold his men in readiness, and had written to Lord Melbourne, the Home Secretary, informing him that 'the tumultuous assemblage of persons, if they have not increased, have certainly not diminished since the arrival of the military.' He wrote again to Melbourne confirming that 'the tumult in this town has continued throughout the night…one of the rioters has been killed and others badly wounded…I am desired by the mayor and magistrates to request in the most urgent manner that your Lordship will give immediate orders for military assistance to be forwarded to them, the Civil Power being wholly inadequate to repress the riots.'[22] By then the Hussars, who had made their name at the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester in 1819, had been in Derby for two days. The diarist Samuel Rowbottom described how, over the weekend, they had 'succeeded in securing the streets after hurting many with the backs of their swords.' He recorded that the crowd was 'a very formidable body in the market place and collected together in knots' and refused to disperse even when the Hussars were ordered to form a square. 'The orders were then "Charge" when such a scene of scrambling and running ensued that was never before witnessed in Derby.' Rowbottom goes on to describe a confrontation between a man leaving the *Greyhound* pub and a soldier who ordered him away. The man was 'exceedingly insolent and not for moving, when the soldier fired and felled him to the ground. This appeared rather to check their ardour.'[23]

It was widely believed by the rioters that 'the soldiers were all drunk and behaved in a very brutal manner.' Consequently, Balguy, who was coroner as well as town clerk, managed the subsequent inquests with great care. The Rev. Gawthorn testified to the Hussars' 'great propriety', enabling him to report to Lord Melbourne, 'I hope and believe the verdicts will give complete

[22] DLSL, BA/328.42, Letters on Riots, B.T. Balguy to Major Buckley and Lord Melbourne, 9, 10, 11 October 1831.
[23] DLSL, BA/8736, Samuel Rowbottom's Diary, 9 and 10 October 1831.

satisfaction.'[24] He advised the mayor not to allow the 'respectable householders' to form their own 'Association for Keeping the Peace', because he feared that all organisations which chose their own officers and were independent of civil power would further inflame the situation. Balguy sent muskets to the town gaol, but early in November 1831 observed that 'the working classes…continue in a state of great anxiety', so made desperate efforts to raise a force of special constables. The value of this civil force was diminished by the partisan character ascribed to it by the workers — they were dubbed 'Conservative Police'. The mayor arranged on 19 November 1831 for the Royal Marines 'to be in readiness at the moment's notice' and Balguy, in negotiation with Sir Charles Paget, the Master General of the Board of Ordnance, established a barracks of 120 troops in the town. When the Hussars began to leave Derby at the end of November, the propertied classes moved to defend themselves by subscribing to the Derby and Chaddesden Troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, supported by the Cromptons, William Evans, Edward Strutt, two members of the Corporation and several anti-reformers.[25]

Robert Wilmot, the Tory squire, reported to Lord Melbourne that in Derby's environs the villagers 'had entered into a resolution not to be sworn (as special constables) from a feeling that they were likely to be ordered from home into adjoining Counties', but Lord Vernon had pressed him to take strong measures in order to 'produce a salutary feeling of awe.' Mundy, of Markeaton Hall, sought advice on how to train and arm a group of special police, and was advised that 'every effort should be made to combine and unite the loyal and well-disposed inhabitants…in such a manner as may enable them to secure their own property and suppress the lawless and evil-minded'. He agreed the issue of two dozen hand-grenades.[26] During the winter, the gentry, professional men, farmers and others, formed a troop of cavalry in Wirksworth,

[24] C. Harrison, 'Extracts from William Bamford's Diary', *Derbyshire Miscellany*, III, 9 (1966), pp.694-9; DLSL, BA/328.42, Letters, Balguy to Lord Melbourne, 20 October 1831.
[25] DLSL, BA/328.42, Balguy to Sir Charles Paget, 12, 18, 19, 23 November 1831.
[26] DLSL, BA/TNA/HO52/12, Counties Correspondence, letters from R. Wilmot to Lord Melbourne, 31 November 1831 and from Lord Vernon to Lord Melbourne, 21 October 1831, 8 and 23 November 1831, 2 and 3 January 1832.

whilst the gentry and aristocrats attempted to ease tensions by traditional patronage: 'A capital fat beast and a proportionate quantity of bread was distributed…to the inhabitants of Markeaton and Mackworth…the gift of Francis Mundy.' Lady Vernon distributed eighty tons of coal and the Duke of Rutland invited his tenants to Belvoir to celebrate his fifty-third birthday.[27]

On 13 March 1832, the sixty-strong troop of Derby Cavalry paraded from the county gaol to the market place, and two days later the Lent Assizes were opened for the trial of sixteen rioters. However, only two of them were sentenced to imprisonment, and that was for larceny. The cases of the others were either abandoned by the prosecution or collapsed due to lack of positive identification. The defending lawyers, who were provided by public subscription, implied that the principal witness for the prosecution was a hired man. The judge, however, commented that the shortage of respectable witnesses for the prosecution, despite many having observed the disorder, indicated that they either had a 'criminal sympathy with those actively engaged or that they were afraid to appear against them.' [28]

The new Reform Bill passed its third reading in the Commons on 22 March 1832 and entered the Lords four days later. Edward Strutt, the town's Liberal-Whig MP, kept his wife informed of its progress and assumed that its success was assured when it passed the third reading on 14 April. Strutt's letters confirm his great disappointment with the Whig government's defeat on 7 May on a motion to postpone the dis-enfranchising clauses and the King's refusal to create enough peers to reverse the defeat.[29] John Strutt, his nephew, wrote telling him that 'most of the respectable' citizens of Derby threatened 'the most dreadful consequences' if the Bill was not passed.[30] On 15 May, Wellington

[27] *DM*, 11 January 1831.
[28] *DM*, 14 and 23 March 1832; Richardson, *Derby Riots*, pp.5, 23.
[29] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, Edward Strutt to his wife, 14 and 15 March, 3, 12 and 14 April 1832, 13 May 1832.
[30] DLSL, MS/BA/D125, Strutt Correspondence, John to Edward Strutt, 13 May 1832.

advised the King to recall Grey, who returned to office with full authority to nominate peers, so the Bill was given a third reading on 4 June.

The mayor and magistrates of the town responded by begging householders not to stir up popular feeling by illuminating their windows in celebration, but during the succeeding weeks the borough and county were given over to a series of public feasts in which post-Reform celebrations coincided with preparations for the impending general election. Derby's employers granted the trade societies a day's holiday to parade through the streets, and Edward Strutt assured the 1,600 who sat down to a free meal that 'the result of this momentous struggle would afford a proof to the men in the possession of power, that however great, it became as nothing when opposed to the will of the people.'[31] Derby's workers were not to be deceived by such rhetoric. They recognised, belatedly, that their crowd action had been used as a bargaining chip by the urban elite — 'the people' had failed to achieve the franchise. Their feelings of betrayal and bitterness played a significant part in the ensuing lock-out strike and the formation of the short-lived General National Consolidated Trades' Union.

The Derby Lock-Out

The first combined trades' union in the town was established in October 1833, a month before the beginning of the five-month dispute of the Lock-Out. The inaugural lodge meeting was held at the *Pheasant* pub in Bridge Street and within seven weeks John Hall, the District Secretary, claimed that there were 1,500 members 'combined for the protection of their only property — their labour'.[32] The *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* indicated a more conservative figure of over 800 employees having joined the trades' union by the end of November 1833. Significantly, they had 'entered into engagements with each

[31] *DM*, 6, 13 and 20 June, 8 August 1832.
[32] *The Pioneer*, 28 December 1833; John Hall, letter to the public meeting of the Birmingham Trades' Union.

other, under the sanction of an oath', the terms of which were secret.[33] This arrangement was, according to the report, a direct copy of 'the forms and ceremonies of the Freemasons and Oddfellows' and concluded that, if the swearing of a secret oath could be used by the urban elite, then there was no reason why it should not be used by the workers. At its height, the Derby Lock-Out involved between 1,800 and 2,400 workers in industrial action, including silk-workers, bricklayers, masons, labourers, carpenters and tailors.[34] The dispute started when 'a smallish number of silk-weavers' refused to work after an employee had been sacked for poor workmanship and had refused to pay a fine to his employers at the silk factory of Frost, Gascoyne and Cooper.[35] When trades' unionists supported the sacked worker, twenty factory owners in the town refused to employ members of the trades' union, or 'any other Union having similar objects'.[36]

Three essential factors shaped and defined a unity of interest and a coming together of the town's workers. Firstly, there emerged a strong sense of alienation and division between the employers and employees and between the enfranchised and those who had failed to gain the vote in 1832. Indeed, the bold and unequivocal nature of the town's employers' resolutions led the *Pioneer* to conclude that the alienation and divisiveness had 'in great measure been instrumental in forming the General National Consolidated Trades' Union (GNCTU); for the naked intolerance of your declaration aroused thousands from their apathy, and awoke a general desire to amalgamate our interests and resources.'[37] Secondly, a powerful corporate spirit, based on a common purpose and mutual support, was developed over the five month period of the Lock-Out. A strong sense of solidarity, organisational discipline and a unity of interest were sustained. In fact, 'not a single worker in the whole of the

[33] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 21 November 1833.
[34] Figures taken from *The Pioneer*, 28 December 1834 and 13 March 1834.
[35] W.H. Oliver, 'The Consolidated Trades' Union of 1834', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 17 (1964), p.79. See also *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* 21 November 1833.
[36] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 'Resolutions of the Masters of Derby', 28 November 1833; *Pioneer*, 14 December 1833.
[37] *The Pioneer*, 26 April 1834.

borough deserted the union'.[38] Thirdly, a battle for hearts and minds was waged in the local and national press, much of which took on a language of class.

There was significant antagonism between the employers and the workforce from the outset and both parties were unwavering in the pursuit of victory. The employers adopted the resolution that:

> a prompt, vigorous, and persevering resistance to the Trades' Union is absolutely necessary to protect the just rights of the masters, to preserve the commerce of the country, and to secure the true interests of the workmen themselves.

An article in the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* described the argument in class terms, by referring to the 'two interests of labour' — wealth and capital compared to the toil of the workers — as 'fairly pitted against each other'.[39]

Undoubtedly, the outcome of the Reform Bill resulted in feelings of betrayal and frustration. A sense of grievance prevailed and this sustained a strong sense of social alienation. Glover, the Derby chronicler, pointed out the inequality and injustice of a system that gave the vote to only 1,500 inhabitants out of a total population of 23,000. His conclusion matched that of the workers — there was a 'profound sense of betrayal in the town'.[40] The workers felt that they had been manipulated by those who had gained the vote. The *Pioneer* (or *Trades' Union Magazine*), was edited by James Morrison, a staunch supporter of Derby's 'locked-outs'. He reported that in 1833 a Derby delegate, at a public meeting of the Birmingham Union, accused Derby's elite of having 'called in the men to their aid' and 'induced them to expend their money in the purchase of flags and banners, to make a formidable procession', and to

[38] DLSL, BA/303, papers entitled *Derby Locked-Out*, unpublished account by Mr. Walthall of Mickleover (a nearby village).
[39] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 28 November 1833.
[40] S. Glover, *Glover's Derby: History and Directory of the Borough of Derby* (1843), p.83.

'obtain their just, political rights'. The delegate was adamant that, whilst seeking their support, the town's urban elite had ignored the political aspirations of the manual workers.[41]

The extent of this frustration and alienation was highlighted, again in class terms, in the trade union's *Address to the People of Derby,* which was widely reported in the local press:

> Keep what you have got. We will be satisfied with the legitimate fruits of our own industry. We have hitherto worked for YOU, and more fools WE. We shall henceforth work for OURSELVES. Our object, therefore, is not to rob you, IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW — but to prevent you from further robbing us, ACCORDING TO THE LAW.[42]

The *Mercury* noted that the dispute was 'not a question of wages at all, merely one of dictation or no dictation — whether the masters are to have the choice of whom they employ'; the employers should decide the means of production, the 'hours of labour', and the number of apprentices permitted; these should not be 'determined by committee of the workmen'.[43]

The framework-knitters' strike of 1824 provided a template for the 'locked-outs' in how to gain publicity for their cause. Derby delegates, for example, attended meetings in London and Birmingham to seek support.[44] National interest in the dispute brought Robert Owen to the town to meet separately with both sides during January 1834. Owen, along with union delegates from Leeds, addressed a meeting of the workers in the Lancastrian School. He thought it ill of the employers as 'enlightened men and advocates of liberty …to grind others to the dust'. The following day, in an attempt to resolve

[41] *The Pioneer*, 28 December 1833.
[42] DLSL, *The Poor Man's Guardian,* Issue 135, 4 January 1834.
[43] *DM*, 26 February 1834.
[44] T.M. Parssinen and I.J. Prothero, 'The London Tailors' Strike of 1834', *International Review of Socialist History*, XXII (1977), p.86.

differences, he met with the employers at the *King's Head* in the Cornmarket. His pleas for an amicable agreement between both parties fell on deaf ears.[45]

The dispute became a national *cause celebre* for general unionism. Reports from Sheffield, for instance, stated that 'there are six lodges of us at present, who are well aware that if Derby falls, Sheffield and all other towns will share the same fate.'[46] The trades' union movement recognised the importance of sustaining support for the 'locked-outs'. This motivated the London tailors to suggest establishing a general union at a special meeting of trades' union delegates in London.[47] Indeed, the Derby Lock-Out was the catalyst for the formation of the highly politicised General National Consolidated Trades' Union.[48] In its rules and regulations, the GNCTU had as its 'great and ultimate object…the bringing about [of] a different order of things'.[49] It has been suggested that it was 'the first great example of what we now call syndicalism, the belief that trade union action alone can overthrow capitalism.'[50] The emphatic purpose of the GNCTU, as stated in its rules and regulations, was to create an inclusive national association, rather than a trade-based combination. Its overall aim was to change the social order by a national general strike.[51]

The factory owners were surprised at the determination and solidarity of the trades' unionists, because press reports suggested that 'the conflict cannot last long'.[52] The urban elite underestimated the strength of support engendered by the strike. Indeed, the second significant feature of the Lock-Out was the capacity of the local trades' union leaders not only to sustain support for their

[45] See K. Taylor, *The Political Ideas of the Utopian Socialists* (1982), p.72; *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 9 January 1834.
[46] *The Pioneer*, 28 December 1833.
[47] Oliver, 'Consolidated Trades' Union', p.79.
[48] See J. Rule, *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England* (1986), p.300.
[49] See the 'Rules and Regulations of the GNCTU of Great Britain and Ireland, instituted for the purpose of the more effectually enabling the working classes to secure, protect, and establish the rights of industry' in S. and B. Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (1920), pp.732-3.
[50] A. Hutt, *British Trade Unionism: A Short History* (1962), p.20.
[51] Ibid., p. 20; Oliver, 'Consolidated Trades' Union', p.83.
[52] *DM*, 3 December 1833; *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 7 December 1833.

action, but also to develop a collective identity through common principles and collaborative entrepreneurship, manifested in the setting up of co-operative workshops. A press report described moves to set up a 'Derby Union Manufactory' and urged readers to support the initiative by purchasing its products rather than similar goods made elsewhere. The *Pioneer* advertised 'Union Goods — Men's and women's gloves, in great variety, may now be had at the *Pioneer* Office: Derby silk, twist, etc. will be ready in a day or two'. A shop in Birmingham, indeed, was to be opened to sell the Derby goods.[53]

A growing sense of empathy for the strikers was illustrated in Robert Owen's *Crisis*, which reprinted an undated letter from James Morrison, editor of the *Pioneer*, writing of the determination of the Derby 'locked-outs' to hold firm. He described the support of the town's barbers in providing free shaves for the trades' unionists. Morrison also reported that a Mr Robinson, a master miller, had offered to purchase flour and other provisions and lease his premises, which had 'an engine of twelve horse-power' at a 'trifling cost', so that those out of work could set up shops. The letter went on to provide information relating to money coming in to support the strike, as well as those families whose employers had given them notice 'to quit their houses which they rent under them'.[54] Donations included £94 from the Derbyshire district branch and £28 from Nottingham. A report from Loughborough, signed *A Determined Enemy to Tyrants*, indicated that £54 had been sent to support the strike action.[55] Local financial support was still offered as late as February 1834. The *Pioneer* reported that, at a special meeting of the members of the Christian Friendly Society, held at the schoolrooms near Brook Street Chapel, it was decided to donate £5 5s for the relief of the Derby 'turned-outs'.[56]

Female trade unionists played a significant part in collective action by refusing to sign the employers' *Document*, which insisted that employees should not

[53] *Pioneer*, 8 March 1834.
[54] *Crisis*, 28 December 1833.
[55] *Pioneer*, 18 December 1833.
[56] *Pioneer*, 12 February 1834.

be a member of the union. The *Mercury* reported that 'latterly a considerable number of females have ceased from their usual employment, in consequence of refusing to sign the declaration required of them by the Manufacturers'.[57] They also confronted 'black sheep', workers brought in from Nuneaton and London by the employers to replace the 'locked-out'.[58] One such event was recorded by the *Pioneer*, when 'black sheep' were taunted by the burning of an effigy of a sheep. Female trade unionists continued with bleating 'baa' before 'the whole of the black sheep absconded with their shepherd to the neighbourhood of Thorn Tree Lane, accompanied by a band of music formed by various culinary utensils'.[59] The 'Ladies of Bradshaw Street' enhanced this corporate spirit by renting two rooms, paid for by weekly subscriptions, for the general education of children. A banner, inscribed with 'Union is Strength', was flown outside the classrooms.[60] Earlier in the strike, an 'Association of Women' was formed 'to render assistance to the female sufferers in Derby'. A letter published in the *Pioneer* from Worcester reported that evening meetings at three inns in the town were planned for the collection of subscriptions in support of 'their oppressed countrywomen of Derby'.[61]

As with the framework-knitters' strike of 1824, a strategy of non-violence was adopted, which was in sharp contrast to the rioting in Derby during the 1831 political campaign. Nevertheless, a report in the *Mercury* confirmed that the mayor, Douglas Fox, and the magistrates had sworn in special constables and a troop of the 2nd Dragoon Guards was stationed in the town 'to preserve the public peace, which however as yet has not in the slightest degree been interrupted'.[62] A later report in the newspaper confirmed that, given the large numbers out of work, 'the town is remarkably quiet, not the slightest attempt having been made to disturb the public peace'.[63] Indeed, in a display of union

[57] *DM*, 12 February 1834.
[58] See *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 4 January 1834.
[59] *Pioneer*, 13 March 1834.
[60] *Pioneer*, 25 January 1834.
[61] *Pioneer*, 28 December 1833.
[62] *DM*, 27 November 1833. The Fox family was related to the Strutts by marriage.
[63] *DM*, 4 December 1833.

strength and moral imperative, local leaders denounced both the highly popular annual tradition of Shrovetide football and its bourgeois critics.[64] The *Pioneer* referred to their resolution to boycott the game and organise an alternative demonstration as:

> That glorious shout of moral revolution!
> It spoke a heart full of the kindest things.
> It made our souls five Sabbaths better.
> Let others go who list, to be imbruted,
> But not a Union man — not one.[65]

In a demonstration of strong leadership, solidarity and organisation, the unionists replaced the ancient custom with two days of marching to outlying villages, such as Duffield and Spondon. Six hundred women and 1,300 men marched from the Infirmary in London Road with the women at the head of the procession, followed by 'lace makers, joiners and carpenters, shoemakers, plasterers, wood sawyers, tailors, broad-silk weavers, bricklayers, framework-knitters, small-ware weavers, twisters, broad silk-weavers and stonemasons'. The demonstration included the lighting of bonfires, the use of marquees, bands playing and the singing of hymns.[66] A huge rally of unionists from the region was held at Duffield with an estimated crowd of 'eight or nine thousand'. A report in the *Pioneer* encapsulated unionist hopes — 'the surrounding hills were thronged with people to gaze at this prospect, that augured of better times to come'. For unionists, the conflict over street football became a vehicle for political advantage. The processions were as much for union and empowerment, as against the game — 'many remarks of good feeling were expressed by respectable people as the procession moved along, such as…what sort of man can that be, who has the heart to starve such females as these?'[67]

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[64] See above, pp.165-8.
[65] *Pioneer*, 1 February 1834.
[66] *Pioneer*, 1 and 14 February 1834.
[67] *Pioneer*, 22 February 1834.

This battle for hearts and minds in the local press was the third important factor, which fostered a sense of collective identity during the months of the Lock-Out. Press reports exacerbated social division and warned of impending revolution. The Tory view, defensive and alarmist, was covered by the *Derby Mercury.* The *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* agonised over the hardships caused by the Lock-Out, but shrank from wholehearted support of the trades' unionists. The Whigs cavilled through the pages of the *Reporter* and the Owenite reformers sought compromise through the pages of the *Crisis*, whilst the *Pioneer* and its editor, James Morrison, offered total support to the 'locked-outs'.[68]

Indeed, a collective social reality was created by the content and the way language was used at meetings and in the press. An article in Robert Owen's *Crisis*, for instance, emphasised the employers' concern over the influence in Derby of the *Pioneer;* they were 'exceedingly alarmed at the increasing circulation…which they dread as much as they do the Unions themselves'. The article stated that one silk manufacturer had told his employees that they could return to work provided they gave 'no more encouragement to the *Pioneer'.* This request was ignored — 'the publisher has received an order to send DOUBLE the former quantity of the *Pioneer* to Derby'.[69] The newspaper's use of political rhetoric and emotional hyperbole appealed to the unionists and was an impending threat to the employers. Interestingly, much of the language used to justify the dispute resonated with language of the past. An article entitled 'The Derby Movement' provided an example, which might well have been from the eighteenth century:

> The cry runs through the land — shall the men of Derby perish? Shall base-born churls pour out their wrath on helpless, harmless women? Brothers and countrymen, let every eye look full on Derby; the men and

[68] *DM,* 15 February 1834; *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 17 February 1834; *Crisis*, 20 February 1834.
[69] *Crisis*, 14 December 1833.

> women too are idle; the battle of might and right is raging; 'comply or perish'; these hateful terms are what the tyrants offer. Brothers! do neither…Ye men of Derby, hold up one short week, and thousands will come forward to your succour…AWAKE! ARISE! OR BE FOR EVER FALLEN! WORKING MEN OF ENGLAND.

The report concluded by referring to the 'crusade' of employers against the workers, the inevitable victory of the latter and the 'planting in triumph of the Standard of Union'.[70]

Two articles in the local press offered a counterpoint to the rhetoric of the *Pioneer*. An anti-union campaign by *Civis*, a subscriber to the *Mercury*, urged the 'operatives under the union spell' to realise the consequences of affiliation and recognise that they were being misled by the union leaders who have 'an obvious interest in propagating the delusion of unionism, out of financial interest'. The Christmas day edition of the *Mercury* followed up this attack on the unions by referring to the 'eventual tendency' of the 'coalitions of workmen now organising in England, France and Germany…to violent revolution'. The author of the article issued a dire warning:

> Of this I am sure, that the present state of society is untenable, and that, if you will teach little boys and girls to read and write, they will not consent, as men and women, to the perpetuity of the present system.[71]

In response, the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* warned the 'locked-outs' of Derby that they would lose public sympathy if their leaders supported revolution and threats to property:

> No oath, we are persuaded, however solemn, will bind the consciences of a large majority of the artisans of this town to cooperate with men

[70] *Pioneer*, 14 December 1833.
[71] *DM*, 18 and 25 December 1833.

> who contemplate an act of dishonesty…the working classes of this day have too much intelligence not to see, that if property be rendered insecure, the most injurious consequences to themselves must ensue forthwith.[72]

The local unionist reaction was rational, refined and measured. In their address to the 'People of Derby', in response to the attacks by *Civis,* the unionists refrained from using 'harsh epithets' and emphasised that they would not 'injure the dignity and justice of our cause by descending to abuse…we have too much reason, and argument, and justice on our side to require it'. The address referred to the benefits which had accrued to the employers through the hard work of their employees — 'we have toiled for them long and assiduously, and we are now poorer than when we began'.

There was a powerful reference to the cultural and economic gulf between them through an emphasis on the employers' affluence, their 'splendid mansions' and their 'princely fortunes'. The unionists challenged the employers to 'name an instance' when they had been disobeyed, 'except the matter now at issue between us'. The address, also, took on a distinctly constitutionalist idiom by focusing on the unions' aim of fighting for 'common justice, as accorded to them by the British Constitution'.[73]

In early February 1834, the Anglican church became embroiled in the pros and cons of the dispute. The *Mercury* featured a letter from a member of an old Derbyshire family, taking up one-and-a-half pages, addressed to 'The Members of the Derby Union of Operatives'. It was written by Thomas Gisbourne, Prebendary of Durham Cathedral, and dated 3 February from Yoxall Lodge, on the Derbyshire and Staffordshire border. The letter commended the unionists for their restraint, but warned them that any resort to violence would

[72] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 29 December 1833.
[73] Reported in the *DM* and the *Pioneer*, 26 December 1833; see O. Smith, *The Politics of Language 1791-1819* (Oxford, 1984), chapters 1 and 2; Epstein, *Radical Expression*, pp.3-28; J, Belchem, *Popular Radicalism in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (1996), p.1.

initiate armed Government intervention. He advised them to 'abandon the Union, and never embark in another…Return to your masters; return to them in a right spirit, and without delay.' The major part of the letter, however, addressed the thorny question of the union oath, which the 'locked-outs' were 'bound by duty of God not to fulfil'. The oath was contrary to the law of God because the aim of the union was 'to bring your employers into complete subjection to yourselves; it is to establish yourselves as masters of your masters'.[74]

An emotional riposte came from the *Pioneer* three days later with an article headed 'A WOLF! A WOLF!' and an accusation that Gisbourne had recommended perjury on the part of the unionists in 'abjuring their oath to the union'.[75] A more thoughtful counter-attack was published in the *Pioneer* the following month entitled 'BY THE DERBY OPERATIVES', which criticised the Rev. Thomas Gisbourne for accepting his:

> thousand or two thousand, some say four thousand, a year from the Church, and doing what you do, neither more nor less, for it? What good in return do you do those operatives who almost sweat blood, and whose wives and children fare perhaps like other operatives, to raise your thousands?[76]

Throughout the dispute, the union's strategy was to reject violence in support of their grievances and to adopt a carefully worded and measured approach in the local press. This contrasted markedly with the activists in the GNCTU, whose polemic and rhetoric filled the pages of the *Pioneer*.

By April 1834, the unionists were forced to return to work. Co-operative production had proved unsuccessful and national funding in support of the strike had reduced significantly. J.E. Smith's co-operative journal *The Crisis*

[74] *DM*, 19 February 1834.
[75] *Pioneer*, 22 February 1834.
[76] *Pioneer*, 29 March 1834.

reported in April that 'for three weeks, they have had no more than 1s 6d per week; and, in their present circumstances, seem to have no hope of continuance on that paltry sum'.[77] Ironically, this can be explained by the shilling levy to the GNCTU, which replaced the individually acknowledged branch subscriptions.[78] Many female trade unionists were still in employment until mid-February 1834 and were able to supplement family income, whilst also contributing to the Derby Union Fund. Once they were prevented from working, the family income of the 'locked-outs' was significantly diminished. Nationally, the GNCTU had taken over the Derby Fund from March and there were allegations that an executive officer, James Hall, had misappropriated funds, with the *Crisis* accusing him of embarking 'for Sidney, New South Wales, [with] God knows how much of the money of the poor operatives'.[79]

The sentencing of the Tolpuddle Martyrs to penal transportation to Australia was, perhaps, the single event that had the most detrimental impact on the demise of the workers' cause. The fact that the six Dorset agricultural labourers were arrested for and convicted of swearing a secret oath as members of a trade union was a strong deterrent to the Derby unionists, who had also sworn a secret oath. As well as diverting funds and attention away from Derby, a legal precedent had been set, which could be exploited by the employers.[80] The collapse of the General National Consolidated Trades' Union caused despair and defeatism amongst many of the 'locked-outs'. There was a growing realisation, however, that the root cause of the failure of 1834 was the absence of political power. The lessons of the reform movement underlined the need to carry the political struggle to new levels.

[77] *Crisis*, 26 April 1834.
[78] See G.D.H. Cole, *Attempts at General Union* (1953), p.207.
[79] *Crisis,* 31 May 1834.
[80] See J. Marlow, *The Tolpuddle Martyrs* (1971), p.93.

Chartism

The political struggle was to culminate in Chartism, 'the greatest movement of popular protest in British history'.[81] As noted above, the Reform Act of 1832 was viewed as a betrayal of popular support, which had helped to secure the Bill's passage. Subsequent measures and events created the impression that the Whig government was systematically oppressing the working people. The passing of the Poor Law Act in 1834, for example, reduced the levels of public relief granted to the unemployed and poor.[82] The Act abolished outdoor relief (i.e. public benefits which did not require institutional residence) and introduced entry into the unpleasant and undignified workhouses, thus changing the practices that had prevailed since Elizabethan days. The large-scale manufacturers had a vested interest in such a move, for able-bodied domestic workers were now deprived of their last chance of working at their own looms, subsidised by outdoor relief. Thus, they were driven into the new factories that were hungry for labour. The abolition of the parish workhouses and the introduction of the union workhouses was greeted with much concern amongst the poor. The requirement to live within the workhouses, which separated children from their parents and husbands from their wives, caused a massive petition of over 4,000 signatures in Derby.[83] The *Poor Man's Guardian* referred to the bill as a 'wicked, tyrannous, dishonest and diabolical measure'.[84]

The campaign to reduce the stamp duty on newspapers provided a further indicator of what was perceived as government oppression towards working people — restricting the access of working people to the press. The *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, for example, cost seven pence, four pence of which was due to the stamp duty. It had been established by Walter Pike in 1823 to serve

[81] Briggs, *Chartism*, p.1.
[82] M.E. Rose *English Poor Law, 1780-1930* (Newton Abbot, 1971); D. Englander, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform: from Chadwick to Booth, 1834-1914* (1998); A. Brundage *The English Poor Laws 1700-1930* (Basingstoke, 2001).
[83] *DM*, 4 May 1833.
[84] *Poor Man's Guardian*, 11 April 1832.

the cause of reform in Derbyshire and, by 1839, its circulation figures were competing with the *Mercury* (established in 1732) — 1,086 compared to 1,296. The *Derby Mercury* represented and supported the views of the Tory gentry and aristocracy; the *Reporter*, the views of the Whig manufacturers. The latter, however, aimed to channel the activities of the reform movement into a safe direction. Newspapers that challenged the 'stamp' laws by offering their papers as unstamped followed a more radical approach. The *Poor Man's Guardian,* which was supported by the independent working class reform body, the National Union of the Working Classes (NUWC), sold well in Derby.[85]

The struggle to repeal the stamp duty saw many casualties. Sellers and printers alike were imprisoned for selling unstamped journals.[86] One of these, Henry Robinson, was fined £20 in Derby, and was subsequently imprisoned for six months, because he could not afford to pay the fine. In a more celebrated case, one of the national leaders of Chartism, George Julian Harney, speaking at Derby in 1839, complained that three years earlier he had been 'dragged from my home without the least notice and consigned to a dungeon by the magistrates of Derby, because I had committed the heinous offence of selling an unstamped newspaper'. He was imprisoned for six months because he dared to give 'the working classes that untaxed knowledge which they have the right to enjoy'.[87] Only as the unstamped radical newspapers began to outsell the legally stamped liberal papers, did the Government cut the duty in recognition of the need to boost the more moderate journals. By 1836, the stamp duty was reduced from four pence to one pence. This move was of great benefit to the propaganda machine of Chartist literature. Its effective use of the cheap press promoted the six principles of the 'People's Charter'. It is to Chartism, the fourth 'friction of interest', that the chapter now turns.

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[85] See J.D. Andrew, 'The Derby Newspaper Press, 1720-1855' (M.A. thesis, Reading University, 1954). *Poor Man's Guardian,* 4 January 1834: 'A Weekly Paper for the People. Published in defiance of the law to try the power of right against might', an address by the Derby Trades' Unionists to the People of Derby.

[86] See J. Wiener, *'The War of the Unstamped: the Movement to Repeal the British Newspaper tax, 1830-1836* (New York, 1969); P. Hollis, *The Pauper Press: A Study of Working Class Radicalism of the 1830s* (Oxford, 1970).

[87] D. Thompson (ed.), *The Early Chartists* (1971), p.184.

Given the frequently used paradigm of Chartism as falling into three distinct phases, Derby's role in the movement is analysed during the periods 1836 to 1839, 1840 to 1842, and 1843 to 1848. The end date of each phase coincides with the year of national petitions to Parliament. The campaign to repeal the Corn Laws transcends all three phases; however, in this chapter, it is dealt with in the final phase from 1843 to 1848.

In 1836, a group of London workers founded the Workingmen's Association; its goal being an independent working class political pressure group. It had a six-point programme, or charter, that included universal manhood suffrage from 21 years of age, annual parliaments, secret ballots, equal electoral districts, salaries for MPs and the abolition of the property qualification for MPs. The Charter represented the first clear, independent political expression of mass working class opinion. Activists from the trades' union movement in Derby during the period of the Lock-Out were intimately involved in the burgeoning Chartist movement. Thomas Matthews, the Derby Smiths' secretary and a veteran of the National Association for the Protection of Labour and the General National Consolidated Trades' Union, was one of the provisional committee of thirty that was set up nationally to launch the newspaper, *The Charter*, in September 1838. [88]

The first Chartist Convention, in effect the national conference of the movement, was called for February 1839 to discuss a national petition to Parliament in relation to the six points of the Charter. The idea of the Convention was rooted in American and French revolutionary experience and was composed of delegates from all over the country. On 28 January 1839, workers marched in procession through Derby to Chester Green, where about 1,500 people agreed 'to the national petition and *People's Charter*, and to elect delegates to the national convention.' The meeting was led by George Julian Harney, an advocate of 'physical force'. If the aims of the Charter could not be

[88] A. Tuckett, *The Blacksmiths' History: what smithy workers gave to trades' unionism* (1974), p.40.

won peaceably, then revolution or insurrection would be inevitable; 'peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must' was the mantra. Waving his red cap of liberty, he declared: 'Believe me there is no argument like the sword — and a musket is unanswerable'.[89] He represented three provincial towns at the Convention, mainly on the grounds of expense, the costs being pooled. One was Norwich, a prominent centre for radical activity, and the second was Derby, where the 'Chartist left-wing was in the ascendant'.[90] The other town was Newcastle. Harney's speeches on Chester Green were certainly along class lines:

> I have today seen the Shopocracy of Derby standing at their windows and their doorways, affecting to sneer at our procession — to sneer because we are poor — we the oppressed — I tell these big-bellied, purse-proud, ignorant Shopocrats, to look to their tills — to stick to their counters — to fawn and crawl, and to creep to their aristocratic patrons, but not to sneer at us, who have too long borne with their sneers.[91]

He compared the aristocracy and bourgeoisie to bed bugs:

> If bugs molest me as in bed I lie,
> Shall I desert my bed for them? Not I,
> I will arise, and every bug destroy,
> Now make my bed and all its sweets enjoy.[92]

The authorities, aware of Harney's reputation, had enrolled thirty-nine extra special constables for the occasion, but there were no disturbances.[93]

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[89] *The Operative*, 10 February 1839, quoted in D.G. Wright, *Popular Radicalism: The Working Class Experience 1780-1880* (1988), p.120.
[90] *Northern Star,* 9 February 1839.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Thompson, *Early Chartists* (1971), p.71, quoting *The Operative*, 10 February 1839. See A.R. Schoyen, *The Chartist Challenge: A Portrait of George Julian Harney* (1958).
[93] *DM,* 13 February 1839.

The other delegate was John Skevington, a Primitive Methodist preacher, who was also elected as Derby's representative at the Convention. He had led the creation of the Loughborough Co-operative Society as early as January 1829, which had 54 members three years later and £400 capital to its name. The society operated a retail store and co-operatively manufactured lace and hosiery products. Skevington was a key figure in the East Midlands' movement. He had, for instance, represented the area at the week-long London Co-operative Congress of 1832.[94]

The *Mercury* belittled the Chester Green meeting, stating that most of the demonstrators came from Belper, and that Derby's workers 'took no sort of interest in the matter'.[95] The *Northern Star*, however, was in no doubt that this meeting founded an active Chartist group in Derby based at a house in Devonshire Street, where members 'met as a club' and 'ale was available'. The club was called the *Northern Star*, after Feargus O'Connor's journal, with the aim 'not to destroy property and life, but to preserve our own lives, and to protect our own property, namely our labour.' Members met every Sunday and Monday evenings and, after open-air lectures on Sunday mornings, there was an invitation to the crowd to listen to the 'true principles of Chartism' at Devonshire Street. Admission to the Chartist branch was two pence, inclusive of a membership card, and one penny per week thereafter.[96]

The civil unrest of 1839 came to a climax in an unsuccessful armed rising in Newport, South Wales. On the 3 November, thousands of miners from the Monmouth valleys marched to seize Newport as part of a plan for a concerted uprising, centred principally on Bradford, Birmingham and South Wales. The threat of insurrection was evident in Derby and the local villages. The local textile manufacturer John Strutt, for instance, fortified his mills with cannon and had an armed troop of horsemen at the ready throughout the period.[97]

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[94] P.A. Smith, 'Chartists in Loughborough', *Leicestershire Historian*, 2 (1975), pp.27-31.
[95] *DM*, 30 January 1839.
[96] *Northern Star*, 15 February 1839.
[97] M. Hovell, *The Chartist Movement* (Manchester, 1925), p.151.

The uprising by the Newport Chartists resulted in fourteen people killed and fifty wounded before the attempt was abandoned. During the next few days, one hundred and twenty-five people were arrested and the initiative and co-ordination with other areas was lost. John Frost, Zephaniah Williams and William Jones were charged with high treason and sentenced to transportation as leaders of the Newport rising.[98] An on-going campaign for clemency developed and, as part of this, a meeting was held in Derby under the auspices of the mayor to make an appeal to the Queen.[99]

Chartism entered a second phase after Newport. In January 1840 there was much economic distress among the stockingers and silk-weavers in the town. Public subscriptions were organised to relieve the problems of the unemployed and destitute poor in Derby. The wealthy and philanthropic were not the only ones who contributed. Workers' organisations, such as the Brushmakers' Association made donations. When the fund closed on 6 May, over £1,500 had been raised and relief provided to 2,710 men, 2,589 women and 5,793 children.[100]

The experience of Newport and economic distress were important factors behind a change in strategy over the next few years. Many Chartists thought that, whilst there had been a willingness to act, the movement lacked a national leadership able and willing to direct and organise the rank and file. This had been a decisive factor in the defeat of the first phase of Chartism. A more centralised organisation was thus necessary and the National Charter Association (NCA) was set up at a delegate conference in Manchester in July 1840. Within two years, the NCA had 40,000 members and many were trades' unionists. A survey of the occupations of the prominent Chartists (based on an analysis of nominations to the General Council listed in the *Northern Star*) showed that the candidates were overwhelmingly manual workers and that

[98] See D.J.V. Jones, *The Last Rising: The Newport Insurrection of 1839* (Oxford, 1985); M. Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester, 2007), pp.109-16.
[99] *DM*, 14 December 1841.
[100] *DM*, 25 March 1840, 6 May 1840.

those in the textile industry were predominant: weavers 130; shoe-makers 97; tailors 58; frame knitters 33; others 535 (included a very wide variety in ones, twos and threes).[101]

Formal membership of the National Charter Association began to grow quite rapidly in Derby. Some 370 NCA cards were taken out in the town between March 1841 and October 1842 and Derby and Nottingham had established 25 'localities' between them.[102] Derby also had a thriving Radical Association and a Working Men's Association. Nearly a quarter of the population, 8,000 inhabitants, had signed the first Chartist petition.[103]

The first clear sign of the activities of the National Charter Association in Derby was the holding of public meetings in early 1841. In March, for example, a 'Requisition from the Chartists for the use of the Town Hall' was sent to the Mayor, Francis Jessop. It was, essentially, a petition to ask 'her majesty the Queen to grant a free pardon to Feargus O'Connor Esq., and all other political prisoners'. O'Connor, editor of the *Northern Star*, had been sentenced to eighteen months of imprisonment at York Castle for seditious libel in the aftermath of the Newport Rising. His release was seen by some as crucial to providing the NCA with backbone. Fifty-four local people, including many prominent Liberals, signed the Derby petition to the mayor. A town council meeting was convened on 11 March 1841 at noon to discuss the whole affair, 'at which the Chartists attended in great numbers and carried an adjournment to seven-o-clock'. This was to ensure an even bigger turnout of working people, as most would have finished work. However, as soon as the meeting finished, Mayor Jessop sent a message with his son to the military in Nottingham: 'it is possible that a row may be the consequence' of the

[101] D.J.V. Jones, *Chartism and the Chartists* (1975), pp.30-2.
[102] D. Read, 'Chartism in Manchester', in A. Briggs (ed.), *Chartist Studies* (1959), p.52.
[103] Thompson, *Early Chartists*, Appendix: Location and Timing of Chartist Activity, Derby, p.348; *Northern Star*, 15 June 1839; J. Epstein, *The Lion of Freedom, Feargus O'Connor and the Chartist Movement 1832-42* (1986), p.231.

developing Chartist agitation, and he requested the officer in command to send troops to Derby.[104]

Ten days later, on 20 March 1841, the town's magistrates held a secret meeting to consider the impact of a handbill, then circulating in the town, announcing that a 'sermon' would be preached in the market place on the Sunday, at 10.30am, 'by Mr. Bairstow relating to the death of Mr. Clayton'. John Clayton was a Chartist leader who had died of ill-health in the harsh conditions of Nottingham goal while serving a sentence for offences arising out of his membership of the movement.[105] Jonathan Bairstow was 'one of the most popular speakers in the Chartist movement in the 1840s and a member of the National Executive of the NCA.'[106]

The Derby magistrates decided 'to determine upon the measures to be adopted in consequence thereof for the preservation of peace'. Sensing the mood of the people, they agreed that it would be 'imprudent' to prevent the meeting taking place. However, 'every provision within the power of the magistrates as regards the civil power should be made to suppress outrage and preserve the peace'. Thompson, the superintendent of police, was asked to have all the permanent police force of the town ready, and 'such a number of the special constables as he may deem necessary'. The mayor went to see Captains Dixon and Campbell of the Nottingham military for the assistance of forces under their respective commands. He also paid a visit to Captain Storey of the Derby and Chaddesden troop of cavalry.[107]

About four hundred men and women assembled in the market place the next morning. Bairstow made a long and religious sermon with a powerful political message. He prayed for 'the assistance of the Almighty in bringing about the

[104] *DM*, 14 March 1841.
[105] See Chase, *Chartism*, pp.155-6.
[106] See Thompson, *Early Chartists,* p.246.
[107] DLSL, BA/908/16185, handwritten report and notes of the Town Clerk relating to Chartist activity, 1841-42.

adoption of the principles of Chartism and the removal of all tyrants and persecutors of Chartists'. God was called upon to 'bear witness to the sufferings and deprivations of the poor'. Making a lengthy reference to Christ's role as an opponent of the money-changers in the temple, Bairstow described Him as 'a great reformer in religion and that, in consequence of his being so, he met with great persecution'. The priests of Christ's day had become so 'corrupt and so debased that they lost sight of all the best practices of their religion, looking only to profit, persecuting the poor'. The parallel with Chartist principles was evident when Bairstow pointed out that Christ was 'himself poor...and advocated equality in all things'. In an allegorical reference to a new Chartist hymn, which began 'The lion of freedom comes from his den', Bairstow declared, 'the lion of popular opinion already gnashed its teeth and whisked its tail, and unless these concessions were made in time, its rage could not much longer be enchained'. After Bairstow's address, a collection for the widow of the Chartist martyr Clayton raised £1 15s 8d. A further farthing was contributed by a widow, 'it being all she had', reported John Sheppard, one of the government spies at the meeting. Another informer, Joseph Wright, emphasised the bloodthirsty nature of the sermon in a report to the town clerk, which began, 'We arrived at an awful crisis', and went on to state that Bairstow had emphasised that 'the day and hour is at hand when there must be a mortally Bloody Revolution.'[108]

Throughout 1841, Jonathan Bairstow was the main speaker at the Chartist meetings in the market place, which were chaired by a Mr Farnsworth and regularly attracted a crowd of over 500. At a meeting on 18 July, a deep split with the Liberal elite of the town was revealed, when Bairstow made a vitriolic attack on the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, which he dubbed the 'Derby Rag'. The paper had criticised Bairstow for standing for election at Nottingham and, it was claimed, letting the Tory win in consequence. Bairstow defended himself by reasoning that the Liberals were 'treacherous', for they promised

[108] Ibid.; DLSL, BA/909/16186, Item 17, J. Bairstow, quoted in police reports, 18 July 1841 and 17 June 1842.

one thing and did another — 'at least you knew where you were with a Tory'. They were 'highwaymen', whose motto was 'your money or your life'. The Whig-Liberals were 'snakes in the grass', with 'liberty and freedom on their lips but treachery in their hearts'. Bairstow commented that he was 'very sorry to find Derby people in such a distressed state'; he found that the stockingers and glovers 'on average cannot earn more than from 10 to 11 shillings per week by working 14 or 15 hours per day'. Such starvation wages were paid, he stated, while the Duke of Devonshire, a prominent local Liberal, got £300,000 a year.[109]

Further reports were filed with the town clerk in June 1842 concerning the seditious language used by a William Martin, an itinerant Chartist preacher.[110] Martin summed up the political mood by stating 'both Partys are Rogues…take a Tory by the heels and nock down a wigg (sic) with him and destroy both factions.' Speaking of the Tories and the Liberals, he revealed himself 'no more friendly to the one than the other, both parties are rogues'. Poor Law commissioners were receiving £70,000 a year 'for their trouble' and the proposal to reduce the cost to £50,000 had been opposed by the 'Liberal Whiggs'. Martin told the crowd that the reduction would have been 'not one farthing too much'. At the same time Parliament had voted '£100,000 a year for the wife of William IV, for Prince Albert £50,000 a year, while an extra £16,000 had been allocated for the education of Victoria'. These were the 'acts of the bloody, tyrannical, imbecile, scoundrels — the Wigges'. Referring to the Corn Laws, Martin believed that a 'fixed duty on corn would not give cheap bread'. He identified the root cause of the problems of the poor as being the fact that manufacturers say, `huge profits for low wages'. It was for comments such as these, which might be determined as seditious, that the civic authorities decided to keep full reports of the 'language used by Chartists', recorded by their agents and kept by the superintendent of police.[111]

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[109] *DM*, 21 July 1841.
[110] See Thompson, *Early Chartists*, pp.272-3; Chase, *Chartism*, pp.154-5.
[111] DLSL, BA/908/16185, Town Clerk and Chartist activity; DLSL, BA/909/16186, Item 18, W. Martin, quoted in police report, 21 June 1842.

Jonathan Bairstow was the Chartist who most concerned the authorities. He railed at the editor of the *Mercury* for the 'most infamous falsehoods ever published'. Bairstow kept up a barrage of abuse against the local press at his meetings. His tone and intent, as recorded by government spies, became increasingly contentious. On 14 June 1842, he talked of 'dungeons and death: ...while I can breathe the sweet air...I am the unflinching advocate of the people'. He called the police 'Blue Bottles' — in an extremely derogatory tone — and declared that the workers had 'no occasion for a standing army'. Government interest in Bairstow can be assumed to have been strong, since he had long been a roving agitator. Moreover, he had been elected to the five-man executive of the NCA in June 1842.[112]

During this period, Derby's inhabitants experienced several meetings which raised the spectre of socialism. In late May 1841, for example, John Brindley began to lecture on what the local press saw as the 'enormities of socialism...to large audiences and with great success'. Two weeks later, a debate between Brindley and Patrick Lloyd Jones, the 'Owenite and Co-operative lecturer', took place at the local theatre on the merits and demerits of socialism.[113] The *Mercury* vented its fury that the town had been 'visited during the past week with that worst of moral pestilences mis-named SOCIALISM', going on virulently to abuse Robert Owen, the Utopian socialist.[114] The paper had been unable to contain itself throughout the visit: 'Our town has been most shamefully disgraced by the blasphemous bills that are still going on its walls, proclaiming the socialist defiance of all that is virtuous and holy'.[115]

[112] DLSL, BA908/16185, Town Clerk and Chartist activity; DLSL, BA/909/16186, Item 17, J. Bairstow, quoted in police report, 18 July 1841 and 17 June 1842.
[113] See Thompson, *Early Chartists*, p.163.
[114] *DM*, 26 May 1841; *DM,* 9 June 1841.
[115] *DM,* 2 June 1841.

In September 1842, Peter Murray McDouall, a national leader and editor of *The Chartist and Republican Journal*, gave a lecture in Derby's Mechanics' Hall. McDouall was militant in political strategy and was the strongest advocate of linking Chartism with trades' unionism. His visit to Derby was the start of a series of lectures over three days. McDouall called upon the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy to set an example to the lower classes by moderating their life styles. He suggested, for example, that the Queen might give up half a million pounds of her 'salary' annually, to relieve the poor. At the close of his speech, a local activist, Mr Knightley said that, as a socialist, he:

> was not got up to find fault with the lecturer, Mr McDouall, only that he did not go far enough for his part. He could see that the time was fast approaching when we should dispense with both Kings and Queens, for there would soon be none. The rich have gone on in their luxuries and extravagances until it cannot be borne, while the poor are starving to death.[116]

Knightley challenged McDouall to debate the advantages and disadvantages of Socialism versus Chartism. Shortly after this exchange, at a public meeting called by Francis Jessop, the mayor, and Edward Strutt, the local MP, 'a female in the body of the hall' spoke in the name of socialism and caused the *Mercury* to describe her speech as containing 'the usual sophistries and misrepresentations deepened by a touch or two of Chartism which would have become the most revolutionary demagogue'.[117] In 1843, a series of evening debates was announced in Derby between Thomas Cooper, who was an advocate of socialism, regional activist and also an agent for the *Northern Star*, and a local opponent, W.A. Pallister. Vincent Heaford of Ockbrook acted as Chairman for the Socialists. Cooper identified the new balance of forces in the

[116] *DM,* 19 September 1842; see Thompson, *Early Chartists,* p.43.
[117] *DM*, 29 September 1842.

movement, remarking 'on the progress which Socialism has been making in the town of Derby'.[118]

During this second phase of Chartism, Derby's activists became increasingly bold. For example, in January 1842, a public meeting held to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Wales, was attended by the 'principal gentry of the county'. It was disrupted by some two hundred Chartists who aimed to propose a resolution at the gathering in support of the Charter. In fact, there was no resolution, but an appeal to the Queen along class lines:

> We…most respectfully acquaint your Majesty that there are thousands of virtuous women, Your Majesty's subjects, enjoying the same natural extremity upon beds of straw, without even a pillow whereon to lay their heads, or sustenance to support them; that we attribute that state of things to class legislation…and we, therefore, pray your Majesty to advise your Ministers to pass a law for a total repeal of all laws that have a tendency to rob the millions for the benefit of the few.[119]

The Chartists failed in their attempt to present a resolution regarding the Charter, but the county gentry were forced to leave the meeting and hold it elsewhere so that they could pass their resolution in its original form.[120] The following month, Feargus O'Connor visited the town. 'A carriage drawn by four greys, preceded by a band of music and green flags [the `party' colour of the Chartists] and a procession, amounting to near 1,000 persons, met him at the railway station at half past three'. O'Connor spoke at a meeting at the theatre in the evening and again at packed meetings in May and June.[121]

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[118] *DM*, 8 November 1843; for Thomas Cooper, see Thompson, *Early Chartists*, pp.43-4, 300-1; Chase, *Chartism,* pp.201, 209, 227-8.
[119] *Northern Star*, 29 January 1842.
[120] *DM*, 26 January 1842.
[121] *DM*, 22 February, 19 May, 16 June 1842.

By the early spring of 1842, a subscriber to the *Mercury* declared that Derby was 'one of the most riotous, revolutionary, disunited towns in all England…noted for bitterness, and strife, and party violence'.[122] The situation was so dire in the town and the county that the Home Secretary made a personal plea to the Duke of Devonshire to forego the pleasures of the grouse season on his Yorkshire estate and return urgently to Derbyshire.[123] The urban elite, however, attempted to gloss over the growth and popularity of Chartism. The mayor wrote to the Home Secretary, in May 1842, that 'the number of Chartists here is not great, not exceeding perhaps 100 in the whole'. Nonetheless, the local magistrates were sufficiently concerned that they requested the mayor to ask the Home Secretary for 'advice and instruction' regarding Chartist activity. The government responded one month later, with reference to the 'Sunday morning discourses of J.B.H Bairstow'. The Home Secretary's advice was that 'as yet it would not be proper...to interfere with the holding of these meetings'. The point, however, was that, although the time was not yet ripe for outright repression, the government aimed to be in a position to act when necessary. The mayor was instructed to 'keep a watch' on the situation and to 'obtain evidence against individuals of seditious language'.[124]

1842 culminated in the rejection of the second national petition, the main aim of which was for manhood suffrage. In protest, a series of strikes swept the north of England and the East Midlands. In Derbyshire, strike action was prevalent in the mining districts in the north-east of the county and in the textile areas of the lower Derwent valley, including Derby. In a demonstration of support, factory workers from Manchester visited Derby on Monday 15 August 1842. The next day, John West, the Chartist lecturer, and 'perhaps the most noted orator in the movement, apart from O'Connor himself', spoke at a meeting in the town centre.[125] Four hundred men marched

[122] *DM*, 2 March 1842.
[123] Chase, *Chartism,* p.216.
[124] DLSL, BA/909/16186, Item 17, J. Bairstow.
[125] For John West, see Thompson, *Early Chartists*, pp.115, 227-8; Chase, *Chartism*, p.221.

into Derby from Duffield, calling unemployed framework-knitters to join them in support as they passed. By August 1842, Derby was 'awash with rumour and anxiety', when striking mill workers and framework-knitters from across the region gathered in the town.[126] One onlooker recalled: 'The appearance in Friar Gate of long processions of ill-dressed, half-starved people, headed by men carrying upon poles loaves of bread dipped in blood obtained from the slaughter houses, struck me with horror'.[127]

Some 2,000 workers assembled to listen to speeches in the market place. As a precautionary measure, the 2nd Dragoon Guards were drafted in from Nottingham. After a speech by John West, a resolution was passed that 'all the Chartist operatives of the town should leave off work and combine in a general strike', to take effect from the following Saturday evening. A meeting was arranged at the start of the strike, early on Monday morning at Holbrook Moor on the outskirts of Derby. The Radbourne Yeomanry Cavalry, the Derby Hussars, the 2nd Dragoon Guards and the Derbyshire Militia turned out in an impressive display of military power to prevent the assembly. As the striking workers arrived on Holbrook Moor, most were turned away, forced home by the military. However, by mid-day, there was still a sizeable body of some 600, mostly colliers, which managed to come together into one group. The troops charged, dispersed the crowd and arrested several strikers. Such a display of force and a lack of leadership and organisation ensured the collapse of the strike in Derby. The use of troops in the town ensured that there were few demonstrations and a speedy return to work with meetings and lectures postponed. By the following day, having made their protest, the miners left Derby and the town's workforce returned to work.[128] The *Northern Star* maintained that the Chartists' moderation had gained them support and approval in the town, whilst reports in the conservative local press indicated that Chartist support had waned once more and that it would continue to lose

[126] Chase, *Chartism,* p.221.
[127] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 25 August 1842 and *Northern Star*, 27 August 1842; DLSL, BA/900/WAL (14117), scrapbook, A. Wallis, *Some Reminiscences of Old Derby,* (1842).
[128] *DM*, reports from 15 to 23 August 1842.

support by damning the government as 'a violent, crafty, selfish, base, and bloody aristocracy'.[129]

In 1839, the local press blamed the widespread economic distress on the Corn Laws.[130] This view was shared by the local Liberal politicians, manufacturers and the workforce. During the first three months of 1840, press reports suggested that between 600 and 1,200 people were relieved weekly by a public subscription fund and bread and soup were distributed to the unemployed.[131] A series of meetings followed, which emphasised that free trade 'would produce employment, and this would ensure adequate wages, which could not be lowered as they were constantly now'. As an example of the economic depression, the price of calico in 1814 was compared to the price in 1840 — 24s 7d against 5s 8d. The promoters of free trade suggested that 'it was a confirmed truth that when corn was dear, wages were low; and this was a natural result. If the artisan was compelled to spend more money than usual on corn, he had less for clothing and other necessaries'. It was also stated that agriculture would not be ruined and there would be plentiful supplies of cheap food.[132] At a further meeting in 1841, an alliance between Chartists and the Anti-Corn Law Association resulted in a petition to Parliament to reduce import duties. An overwhelming majority also decided to pass a resolution pledging support for 'The People's Charter'. The petition from the town council to Parliament was adopted by a majority of 24 to three.[133] It was suggested that there would be no 'efficient remedy for the laws under which the industrious classes suffer, until the Charter is carried into practical operation'.[134]

The *Northern Star* hailed this action as 'a triumphant defeat of the Whig faction and a glorious victory of the Chartists of Derby'. The report proclaimed that

[129] *Northern Star*, 27 August 1842; *DM*, 14 September 1842.
[130] *DM*, 25 December 1839.
[131] *DM*, 4 and 25 January 1840 and 11 March 1840.
[132] *DM*, 15 March 1840.
[133] *DM*, 17 March 1841.
[134] *Northern Star*, 19 March 1841.

'Chartism is now lord of the ascendant here; long may it shine and illuminate every inhabitant of this citadel of Whiggery'.[135] Over the next few months, the Anti-Corn Law supporters began to collect names for the petition.[136] Their support grew as the town's trade suffered further depression later in the year with the closure of two silk mills.[137] Within three days of these closures, 3,360 quarts of soup and 3,360 loaves were sold at reduced prices to the destitute.[138] The ambivalent attitude of the manufacturing elite towards the misery of unemployed workers, however, was described in *The Times* in December 1841:

> The mill-owners, or, as they have been not ineptly designated, the millocrats, of the Midland counties assembled on Thursday last at Derby, in what is called by them a 'Great Conference', for the purpose of clubbing their information respecting the influencing of the Corn Laws upon their manufactures, and after a morning consumed in detailing the suffering of the unemployed artisans these gentlemen proceeded to celebrate the public distress which had brought them together in an excellent dinner, provided by the landlord of the Royal Hotel.[139]

A month later, at a meeting in January 1842, members of the urban elite pushed through a resolution which petitioned Parliament for the repeal of the Corn Laws:

> Let them (the workers) get a repeal of the Corn Laws and other benefits would follow. If, however, parliament denied this, then the argument for the Charter would be greatly strengthened.[140]

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[135] *Northern Star*, 20 March 1841.
[136] *DM*, 19 May 1841.
[137] *DM*, 15 December 1841.
[138] *DM*, 29 December 1841.
[139] DLSL, BA/532, *The Times,* 14 December 1841, article referenced *Chartism and the Anti-Corn Law League.*
[140] *DM*, 26 January 1842.

Members of the town council were sympathetic to the workers' plight whilst, at the same time, being fully aware of their self-interest in advocating repeal. They had already petitioned Parliament twice, in 1839 and 1841, arguing that 'the imposition of any tax for the benefit of particular parties was an interference with free trade'. Local politicians expressed their 'deepest sorrow' at the 'unprecedented distress' caused by 'impolitic and unjust laws', which prevented the 'exchange of the manufactures of these kingdoms for the produce of other nations, thus…raising the value of food to famine prices, and sapping the foundations of our national power'.[141] The local executive of the League distributed house to house leaflets praising 'the determination of the people' and advising 'you have a moral right to subsistence…you receive misgovernment instead.'[142] Peel's speech on the issue in 1842 resulted in a protest march through the streets of Derby to the market place, where nearly 6,000 workers watched a mock trial of Peel, after which his 'effigy was fired amidst the shouts and acclamations of the multitude'.[143]

National figures, such as John Bright and Richard Cobden, visited Derby in 1842, 1844 and 1845 to support the local activists. Cobden emphasised that England would be the workshop of the world if manufactured goods could be exchanged freely for corn; the Corn Laws must be abolished at all costs for they were 'the keystone of the arch of monopoly; the League would force a battering-ram against that, and never cease their operations until the whole column of corruption had fallen'.[144] By 1843 the Derby Anti-Corn Law Association was 2,440 strong with Joseph Strutt as its president. The presence of many councillors and aldermen at the public meetings clearly demonstrated where their sympathy lay.[145] A measure of the virulence which traditional Tories meted out to those in favour of repeal is revealed by a poster produced in Derby and signed by 'A Protestant' in opposition to free trade. It proclaimed

[141] *DM*, 9 February 1842.
[142] Chase, *Chartism*, p.223.
[143] *DM*, 16 February 1842.
[144] *DM*, 14 December 1842, 3 January 1844, 10 December 1845.
[145] *DM*, 22 February 1843.

them all to be part of the 'extreme Radical Party' and desiring the daily import of 'FOREIGN CORN, FOREIGN CATTLE, FOREIGN MANUFACTURES'. 'A Protestant' ascribed the radical views to the adherence of Jews, Catholics, Mohammedans and Infidels to the principle of free trade.[146]

The pragmatic alliance between the Chartists and the Anti-Corn Law League began to wane from early 1843. The radical and, especially, socialist direction the movement appeared to be taking, alarmed both the liberal and conservative members of the town's elite, which began to focus primarily on the economic benefits that might accrue from the repeal of the Corn Laws, rather than continuing support for the Charter. Chartism became a 'purely working-man's cause' after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.[147] This was reflected in May 1847, when 'chiefly members of the operative class' attended a meeting in support of the Charter held at the Lecture Hall in the Wardwick, Derby. The absence of a restraining influence from the urban elite was clear to see, for there was a strongly radical flavour to the local campaign. Responding to the latest imperial intrigues in Ireland, the Derby Chartists organised a petition 'against any coercive measures for Ireland'. Over 800 signed it in one day and it was sent off the same evening to Feargus O'Connor for presentation to the House of Commons.[148]

In the same month, Philip McGrath was nominated as the Chartist candidate for the coming election in July 1847. In all, nineteen Chartist candidates put themselves forward and the successful candidate was chosen by a central election committee. McGrath's election address clearly demonstrated Chartist aspirations. He demanded the improvement of the condition of Ireland, the reform of the Poor Law and of the Penal Code, the introduction of the Ballot, of annual parliaments and of universal suffrage, and the abolition of the

[146] DLSL, BA/117, poster dated 12 January 1846.
[147] F. Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England* [1887] ed. V.G. Kiernan (Harmondsworth, 1987), pp.229-30.
[148] *Northern Star*, 25 May 1847.

property qualification and of state support of the Church.[149] The restricted electorate of 1847 left little chance of McGrath being elected, but he did manage to pick up about ten per cent of the vote in a four-cornered fight in which there were two liberal candidates, Edward Strutt and Frederick Leverson Gower. The result was Strutt and Gower polled 880 and 852 respectively, the Tory candidate polled 300 and McGrath 216. In a 'victory' celebration, over three hundred people attended a Chartist tea and ball in his honour, which was also attended by Ernest Jones. Jones was a major national figure in the later stages of Chartism and was moving towards a strongly socialist and internationalist position, being a friend of Marx and Engels.[150]

Philip McGrath, in fact, chaired the meeting of the London Convention in April 1848, which had been called to promote the monster petition to be presented to Parliament. G.W.M. Reynolds, the republican journalist and Derby's Convention delegate, observed that:

> An admirable spirit animated the people of Derby. They were tired of petitioning and had said that this should be the last time they would have recourse to that mode of expressing their demands and claiming their rights...recourse must be had to physical force. There were not more than 5,000 troops in London and the multitude that would meet on Monday to present the petition would be more than enough to produce a change in the Government before eight-o'clock on that evening [151]

The procession, however, was banned by the Government, although the meeting went ahead on Kennington Common. The crowd was estimated at 150,000. Even so, the Chartist leaders realised that conflict would lead to great

[149] *DM*, 4, 19, 26 May and 9 June 1847.
[150] See Briggs, *Chartism*, pp.17-18; S. Roberts (ed.), *The Dignity of Chartism: Essays by Dorothy Thompson* (2015), pp.139-40.
[151] *DM*, 5 April 1848. See Thompson, *Early Chartists*, pp.45, 324; for Kennington Common, see Roberts, *The Dignity of Chartism*, p.164. For Reynolds, see M. Chase, *The Chartists: Perspectives and Legacies* (2015), pp.24-5.

bloodshed (8,000 troops had been drafted into London to support the thousands of special constables) and O'Connor asked his supporters not to confront the authorities, and to disperse peacefully. The petition was carried to Parliament in three cabs, and the threat of revolution was over.[152]

From here onwards the story of Chartism was one of unbroken decline, but only slowly so. In June 1848, a Chartist demonstration in the town was publicised by a man going around with a bell, announcing a rally at 10.30am. At the allotted time, however, the three local organisers, William Chandler, William Short and Henry Gorse, were prevented from starting the meeting and taken to the magistrates, who had received clear instructions from the government to prevent such meetings within the borough. By the time the Chartists decided to hold the meeting outside what was then the borough's boundaries at Chester Green, it proved difficult to obtain a large turnout. The main speaker was John Shaw, one of the temporary commissioners who had aided the NCA executive of five, elected at the last great convention, the National Assembly, earlier in the year.[153] He pleaded for his supporters locally to be 'more united, and to be more in public than they had been'.[154] Two factors appear to have reduced crowd numbers. It began to rain and only about 100 people remained to hear the speech, which damned the government's policy in Ireland, and resolved that the Chartists would 'never rest satisfied until the Charter becomes the law of the land'.[155] Additionally, the *Mercury* suggested that the Whit Monday 'foot-race' proved to be a greater attraction in the town.[156]

In response to Shaw's criticism, a group of six Chartists — John Skevington, Henry Gorse, Thomas Briggs, Joseph Briggs, Peter Ward, and Thomas Thorpe — signed and posted a handbill around the town advocating the adoption of

[152] See Briggs, *Chartism*, pp.13-14; R. Brown, *Chartism* (Cambridge, 1998), pp.107-9; Chase, *Chartism,* pp.300-3.
[153] See Chase, *Chartism*, pp.316, 354.
[154] *DM*, 14 June 1848.
[155] *Northern Star*, 17 June 1848.
[156] *DM*, 14 June 1848.

the Charter. The *Mercury* stated that Derby was 'the greatest and most orderly of the manufacturing towns', and that the Chartists were prepared to change all this by violent revolution. Such a view was probably a calculated political ploy by the Tory press relating to the forthcoming by-election to be held on 2 September 1848. While the anti-Tories were effectively Liberals, the *Mercury* viewed them with sufficient reserve to dub the Liberal candidates, Michael Thomas Bass, a 'Whig Radical', and Lawrence Heyworth a 'Chartist'.[157]

A poster was circulated around the town by the Tories advocating support for James Freshfield and John Lord in the forthcoming election, as they would 'not truckle to the paltry revolutionary spirit of the age'. On the other hand, Bass and Heyworth were 'for uprooting the very foundation of society'. The poster continued 'Pause thee, ere by voting for Radical Revolutionist, you plunge our country into the same state as our neighbour France.' But if the electors wanted the 'ancient walls of your borough not to be stamped with the black mark of Chartism', then the answer was clear — vote for Freshfield and Lord. The vote, however, was anti-Tory with Bass and Heyworth polling respectively 956 and 912, Freshfield with 778 votes and Lord 760.[158] Even though the Tory electoral platform emphasised the threat of revolution and the 'black mark of Chartism', Chartist activity in the town was, in fact, over. The small gathering of activists on Chester Green two months before the election sounded the death-knell of Chartist agitation in the town. In despair, George Julian Harney wrote in 1849 of 'the terrible fact' that:

> after so many years of Reform and Chartist agitation, multitudes of men whose very interest would benefit by the triumph of Chartism are as yet ignorant of or indifferent to the Charter. [159]

[157] *DM*, 30 August 1848.
[158] *DM*, 4 and 11 September 1848.
[159] Quoted in Briggs, *Chartism*, p.106.

Conclusion

To what extent did these four 'frictions of interest', this popular dissent, create a class society in Derby? Certainly, for a time, the town was deeply divided by perceptions of class and there is no doubt that the Lock-Out and Chartist activity were driven, at times, by class feeling. Thompson has suggested that 'Chartism was a movement with class at its heart', but political overtones were also a constant motivation for the Derby Chartists.[160] Increasingly, the town's workers realised that real power rested in political representation and the process of empowerment came through strong and united associations. Whilst the 1824 strike proved successful, the Reform Bill riots, the Lock-Out and Chartism proved unsuccessful in themselves, but they were significant events along the continuum of reform. Crowd action, strikes and the People's Charter challenged the relative social stability of the 'little State' of Derby; they upset the status quo and changed people's visions of the social order, and what was possible. Collective action, trade unions and reform movements demonstrated that association was a powerful tool in meeting plebeian aspirations.

Does a class analysis, however, require the acceptance of teleological Marxism, a seemingly logical succession on the road to social revolution? In the Marxist sense, if the working class only expresses its true consciousness and purposes with the expropriation of capital and the overthrow of the bourgeois state, then there is little evidence of such consciousness to be found in Derby between 1824 and 1850, although revolutionary rhetoric and nascent socialism were evident. The making of collective identity, therefore, cannot be explained solely by one historical interpretation, but rather by focusing on the inter-connected nature and complex interactions of the material, the cultural and the political. Class had the power to unify, as well as divide. There were certainly social and economic divisions, which were created by the relationships to the means of production. At various times, there was a profound sense of workers' solidarity, which over-rode regional and

[160] Roberts, *The Dignity of Chartism*, p.xxv.

occupational divisions. Publicity and propaganda peppered the local and national press. The evocative and emotive use of language was used to good effect by both sides in the clamour for support. There was little evidence of Marxism. Dorothy Thompson, in fact, has concluded that a rigid adherence to Marxist theory only leads to a misunderstanding of what the Chartists achieved.[161] The rhetoric and polemic in the local press, the political aims of the General National Consolidated Trades' Union and Chartist mass meetings gave the impression of impending revolution, but this was more to do with propaganda than political intent. What did emerge, however, was a strong consciousness of class and a sense of collective identity, which were defined and shaped by economics, politics and the development of an associative culture. Class conflict was evident, but this was an expression of an immature, rather than of a mature class system.[162]

Language became an increasingly important element of this evolving class system. As the rhetoric in the local press and at mass meetings demonstrated, language could be a unifying, as well as a dividing, force. It was both a reflection of social reality, as well as actively constructing reality and experience.[163] Gareth Stedman Jones has argued that the language of Chartism was not a class language and did not reflect workers' experience of social and economic change. It was a political language. It appealed to, and was used by, the politically excluded, and political identity mattered far more than class consciousness.[164] Indeed, much of the political debate and activity of the years in question were shaped by what James Epstein has referred to as the 'constitutional idiom'.[165] The employers and employees, the enfranchised and those without the vote, also used the language and the imagery of popular, literate culture, which reinforced the class nature of the

[161] Ibid., p.187, remarks made by Dorothy Thompson at the launch of John Saville's *Memoirs from the Left* (2003).
[162] See Perkin, *Origins*, especially chapters 6 and 7.
[163] Thompson, *English Working Class*, pp.913-15.
[164] Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp.90-178.
[165] Epstein, *Radical Expression,* pp.3-28.

'locked-outs' and the Chartists rather than undermining it.[166] Even George Julian Harney resorted to a distinctly English frame of reference when seeking election to the first Convention in 1839 at Derby as an avowed 'physical force Chartist':

> Time was when every Englishman had a musket in his cottage, and along with it hung a flitch of bacon. Now there is no flitch of bacon for there is no musket; let the musket be restored and the flitch of bacon will soon follow.[167]

The evidence from Derby tends to suggest that a common language developed for both the 'locked-out' workers and the local Chartists, but it was not solely a political language, but a language rooted in economic distress, political ambition and a vision of the future based on association. The unspoken language of Chartist meetings, demonstrations and symbols strongly expresses a sense of class.[168] At the core of this common language was the word 'struggle'; it was employed in individual lives and applied to class relationships. The word 'class', however, was seldom used in the Marxist sense by the Derby workforce, but it did gain a greater significance in political discourse than ever before.[169] This mix of linguistic ingredients gave Derby's workers a strong sense of collective identity.

The years 1824 to 1850 also reflected the traditional rituals and symbols of pre-industrial associations. The crowd action of the Reform Bill riots and the marching which followed the rejection of the annual Shrovetide street football match by the 'locked-outs', were reminiscent of the eighteenth-century food riots. Further examples of popular traditional culture include the Friar Gate Chartist procession of 1842, when loaves of bread, dipped in blood, were

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[166] Thompson, *English Working Class*, p.8.
[167] Quoted in Briggs, *Chartism*, p.54.
[168] P.A. Pickering, 'Class without words: symbolic communication in the Chartist movement', *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), pp.144-62.
[169] Briggs, *Chartism*, p.29.

carried aloft on poles. Aspects of the moral economy were exemplified by the paternalistic attitude of Derby's employers in 1841, at the height of the town's economic depression following the closure of two silk mills.[170]

The closure of these two mills reflected the changing economy of Derby and heralded a period of relative social harmony. From the 1850s onwards, the town went through an economic transformation in moving from a traditional artisan culture, epitomised by the cotton and silk mills owned by the Strutt and Evans families, to the new skills and technologies of railway engineering. 'Railway Derby' created what might be termed an industrial revolution, and was also a major influence on the changing nature of paternalism. A new plebeian self-help pragmatism emerged from the ashes of the 1833-1834 dispute and Chartism. This was linked to a new paternalism based on the corporate culture of the Midland Railway, a religious revival and a partial reconciliation of popular and elite recreation. It is to these developments that the thesis now turns.

[170] For the moral economy, see E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth-Century', *Past and Present*, 50 (1971), pp.76-136; see above, pp.65-70, 209.

Chapter 6: Self-determination and an independent spirit, c.1850-c.1890

Introduction

Direct confrontation with authority, by political riot, strike action and Chartist activity, had failed to give Derby's workforce the franchise. There followed four decades of relative social harmony, in which the workers attempted to gain concessions within the system, rather than seeking to destroy the system itself.[1] A strong reformist and associate culture emerged, which sought to make sense of the transformational impact of the Midland Railway and the challenges of Derby's industrial revolution.[2] Whilst these decades were certainly an 'age of equipoise', they also reflected a period of angst, a time when 'social arrangements were highly localised and fragmented'.[3] This complex and paradoxical social context was shaped by a synthesis of new-style paternalism, railway industrialisation, a growing influence of church and chapel and the competition between rational recreation and a strong popular culture. There emerged from this synthesis a time of fresh opportunities, a growing self-confidence and a sense of workers' empowerment.[4]

Jose Harris has suggested that this new-found confidence and empowerment were forged by a mid-Victorian bargain between labour and capital.[5] This social compromise was typified by new associations, which contrasted sharply with those of the previous two decades. The town's associative culture, post-1850, reflected the reforming zeal of both the urban elite and the workers, the revivalist intentions of the Church of England, and the increasing importance

[1] Useful background material is provided by G.M. Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (Oxford, 1936); W.L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise* (1964); G. Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-70* (1971); F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain 1830-1900* (1988); A.J. Reid, *Social Classes and Social Relations in Britain, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1995).
[2] J. Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (1993); J.V. Beckett and J.E Heath, 'When was the industrial revolution in the East Midlands?', *Midland History*, 13 (1988), pp.77-93.
[3] Burn, *Equipoise*; D. Cannadine, *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom, 1800-1906* (2017), pp.288-335; the quotation is in Harris, *Private Lives*, p.3.
[4] See E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (2014), p.19.
[5] Harris, *Private Lives*, p.141.

of the Wesleyan congregations of 'Railway Derby'. An amalgam of reform, religion and the vertical departmental organisation of the Midland Railway was to change social relationships and usher in a new era for Derby's associational world. It was a time of social harmony, epitomised by respectability and mutuality, but also a period of sharply contrasting social fragmentation and division. It is this paradox, reflected in the town's associations, which frames the chapter and sets the context for an examination of the mid-Victorian bargain between capital and labour, between elite and popular cultures and their impact in shaping a working class consciousness.[6] The contest for urban authority and social control lies at the heart of the chapter. Essentially, an attempt is made to determine the nature of working class identity by integrating 'popular cultural experiences with the power structures that variously encouraged, permitted, and suppressed them'.[7]

This chapter is in three parts, each focusing on an important aspect of Derby's associational world. The first part explores the impact of the new-style paternalism on the formation of the Railway Literary Institute, the Midland Recreation Club and the Derbyshire Rifle Volunteers. The second part explores the roles of nonconformity and the Anglican church in providing educational and recreational activities for the town's workforce. Special mention here is made of the Working Men's Association and the Temperance Movement. The third part focuses on the growing independence, self-reliance and self-determination of the workers by charting the progress of the Derby Co-operative Society, strike action on the Midland Railway and the internecine strife within railway unionism. This final part concludes with an exploration of plebeian leisure pursuits. Highlighted throughout is the dual nature of an associative culture in creating co-operation and social bonding and a cohesive society, whilst retaining the potential for social conflict, strife and fragmentation.[8]

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[6] See Harris, *Private Lives*, pp.150-79.
[7] E. Griffin, 'Popular Culture in Industrialising England', *Historical Journal*, 45, (2002), p.267.
[8] See Griffin, 'Popular Culture' pp.619-35; P. Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience since 1500* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp.75-106.

This social paradox raises fundamental questions. What was the nature and impact of the mid-Victorian bargain between capital and labour? In what ways did the formation of new-style associations influence relationships between the urban elite and the workers? Did a different kind of working class consciousness evolve from this 'age of equipoise'? Indeed, was a homogeneous working class identity fully-formed in Derby by the end of the nineteenth century?

New-style paternalism

The Railway Literary Institute

A letter in the *Mercury*, in 1849, emphasised that although there were approximately 600 employees of the Midland Railway, 'not one single farthing has yet been appropriated towards the intellectual culture, or moral training of the men and boys in their employ.'[9] It was not until lobbying by the railway workers that the management made belated provision in 1851 for a library and educational facilities. The institute began as a self-organised periodical and reading society formed by six workers from the Locomotive Department, following meetings in the *Brunswick Inn* on Railway Terrace in December 1850. It was financed by subscription amongst the members and, after a petition of 423 signatures in 1851, the company provided the use of a house in Leeds Place and donated £25. Of the 423 names on the petition, only 183 became members, representing 36 per cent of the Midland Railway workforce in the town. The management of the Literary Institute was closely supervised by the company, and the president was always the chair and the vice-presidents were departmental heads.[10]

[9] *DM,* 8 July 1849.
[10] DRO (copy), BA/TNA/RAIL 491, Minute Book, 7 January 1851.

The location of the original institute was next to the company offices and there were times when institute rooms were requisitioned as overspill offices, highlighting the organisation's dependence on the largesse of the company. The institute combined a library and reading room and provided a programme of lectures and concerts. Like the Mechanics' Institute, educational provision experienced mixed success. Initially, classes included basic subjects and were attended by around 40 people.[11] Company rules required basic literacy and numeracy skills and company managers taught extension classes in algebra, arithmetic, phonetics, technical drawing and shorthand. A minimum class size of between 15 and 20 was imposed and an attendance fee was charged. Consequently, many of the classes failed to attract railwaymen.

Complementing the educational provision was a choral class and a series of concerts performed by the company's brass band in the lecture theatre. The admission charges for the concerts were 1d for members and 2d for non-members and, with audiences of up to 150, it appears that the recreation of 'polite' sections of the workforce was far more popular than the educational provision.[12] Indeed, the local press had captured the spirit of musical performances in class terms in its commendation of the singing movement of the 1840s and 1850s:

> The child and the adult, the rich and the poor, are all engaged side by side in the cultivation of the most delightful of arts which cannot fail to promote the happiness of mankind, and mutual sympathy and goodwill amongst all classes.[13]

On such occasions as the singing movement classes, the apparent social inclusivity and the apparent engendering of social harmony merely underlined the apparent dominant-subordinate relationship of the participants. Requests

[11] For the Mechanics' Institute, see above, pp.157-63.
[12] DRO, BA/TNA/RAIL 491 (copy), Minute from Council Report, British Railway Staff Association, Branch 105, 31 March 1874.
[13] *DM*, 8 February 1849.

to open the institute for entertainment-based leisure activities were turned down by the company. For example, in 1857, dancing and amusement classes, signed up for by 52 and 186 members respectively, were rejected.[14] The Railway Institute failed to offer sporting, or other, recreational activities. As late as 1883, for instance, a request to use a meeting room for the Athletics Association Football Committee was refused. Mental improvement classes and the chess club were typical of its more successful events, in line with the Institute's philosophy of rational recreation.[15]

The Midland Recreation Club

The Midland Recreation Club was associated with the institute from the mid-1870s and gave musical and theatrical performances in the shareholders' room and rooms in the institute.[16] Several years later, under the name of the Midland Railway Musical Association, the group gave an annual series of promenade concerts and soirees to audiences of up to 700 people.[17] Choral societies may have resulted in the mixing of different social strata and certainly involved people of differing social status spending their leisure time together, but the subtleties of dress and manner tended to heighten rather than reduce the experience of class.[18] Indeed, the leading members of this group were clerical and administrative grades, who provided many 'pleasant evenings' for those sufficiently groomed to brave society in the shareholders' room.[19]

Intra-company sporting activities developed important associational ties, which were centred on the Midland Railway Cricket Club, founded in 1851. A leading figure in this organisation was W.H. Hodges, a chief assistant in the accounts department, who negotiated with the board for the rental of land near the station for use as a cricket ground. This was located behind the

[14] *DM*, 3 September 1857.
[15] DLSL, BA/352, Midland Railway box-file of miscellaneous notes.
[16] *DM*, 24 February 1875.
[17] *DM*, 23 January 1884.
[18] D. Russell, *Popular Music in England 1840-1914: A Social History* (Manchester, 1987), p.55.
[19] G.J. Pratt, *Midland Railway Memories*, Vol.1 (Derby, 1924), p.53.

locomotive works near the Holmes, a traditional site for informal recreation in the town.[20] Sporting activities became increasingly popular. The Derbyshire County Cricket Club, for example, was founded in 1870, with the Earl of Chesterfield as its first president, and G.H. Strutt as vice-president.[21] By 1884, the local press reported a varied and thriving range of outdoor sport, including football, cricket, bowls, tennis and quoits, with total annual receipts of £265 8s 4d.[22] During the 1880s, significant improvements were made, including new pavilions, fencing, new bowls and tennis pitches. Unusually, the directors of the company were especially generous in these endeavours by donating a sum of £3,000. This may partly be explained by the powerful allies that the cricket club fostered in those senior managers with influence in the boardroom. Apart from Hodges, these included S.W. Johnson, the Loco Superintendent, and Mr Whales, the Assistant General Manager.[23] By the beginning of the 1880s, both the cricket and football teams were participating in local and regional competitions. The company cricket team, for example, had fixtures in 1883 that included regional matches against the Derbyshire County side, Nottingham Forest, Crewe, Leicester, Loughborough, Chesterfield, Kings Heath (Birmingham), and Hull.[24] The football team was a founder member of the Derbyshire Football Association in September 1883.[25] Indeed, the founding father of Derby County Football Club was William Morley, a bank clerk on the Midland Railway.[26]

The Derbyshire Rifle Volunteers

Contemporary commentators claimed that clubs and institutions such as Derbyshire County Cricket and the Derbyshire Rifle Volunteers encouraged an

[20] See Pratt, *Midland Railway*, p.9; M. Betteridge, 'Derby Railway Institute 1851-1901' (Diploma in Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1973), p.30.
[21] DLSL, BA/336, Midland Railway Box File of clubs and recreational facilities; see D. Birley, *A Social History of English Cricket* (1999).
[22] *DM*, 1 October 1884.
[23] Pratt, *Midland Railway*, p.15.
[24] *DM*, 2 May 1883.
[25] *Centenary Brochure of the Derbyshire Football Association* (Derby, 1983), p.7.
[26] See P. Matthews, *Derby County Miscellany: Rams Trivia, History, Facts and Stats* (Derby, 2011); A. Rippon, *Derby County: The Story of a Football Club* (Derby, 2013).

'increasing sympathy between our various classes of society' and enhanced social harmony.[27] The Derbyshire branch of the Rifle Volunteers did, indeed, link industrial Litchurch with county society through its associations with county cricket and its commander, Sir Robert Wilmot of Osmaston Hall, who was a keen cricketer as well as a part-time soldier. Several of the Midland Railway's senior managers supported the organisation. One of the battalions of the Derby Force was made up exclusively of railway workers, whilst the Volunteer Force band consisted almost entirely of bandsmen from the railway company. Activities by the Derbyshire Rifle Volunteers took place in various venues, reflecting the cross-cultural and social nature of the organisation. For example, training and parades took place at Derby racecourse, which was also the home of the County Cricket Club, situated in the Osmaston Hall estate. County-wide inspections were held at the Duke of Devonshire's estate at Chatsworth. The Derby Drill Hall, built to provide undercover facilities for the Volunteers, maintained the connection with the Midland Railway as the venue for the Railway Ball, Railway Temperance rallies, Railway Friendly Society gatherings, union and political meetings.[28]

These three associations emphasised the influence of paternalism and the horizontal stratification of the Midland Railway workers within what was essentially the vertical integrations of a corporate community. They also emphasised the highly influential impact of railway departmental heads, local gentry and the county set. This top-down diffusion illustrated the impact of rational recreation.

Church and chapel: educational and recreational pursuits

Several associations, however, based on religion, provided opportunities for a more inclusive participation away from the confines of the workplace and

[27] H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution c.1780-c.1880* (1980), p.123. See also P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (1978), p.76.
[28] See Pratt, *Midland Railway,* p.94.

beyond the control and paternalistic eye of the railway managers. Religious groups and moral leaders were keen to provide respectable alternatives to counter the increasing attraction of commercially provided leisure for the 'unbelieving' masses.[29] It was also a pragmatic endeavour by the churches and chapels to maintain their congregations.[30] Chapel and church members enjoyed the freedom to mix with people of 'predictable and acceptable habits' through the social filter of religion. Formal group activities introduced family to family and individual to individual. Such opportunities gave the newly arrived railway residents meeting places and social activities, which promoted the extension of social networks and shared 'respectable' values in both Litchurch and the old town.[31] Derby's long tradition of nonconformity, particularly Unitarianism, was carried through to mid-century by the Strutts and, with the coming of the railway, by the evangelical Wesleyans. Religious paternalism gave the immigrant railway workforce a sense of belonging and stability in the rapidly expanding Litchurch.

Mental and spiritual exaltation

The emergence, by mid-century, of the Church of England as a more potent force in the lives of manual workers coincided with a greater desire for education amongst the poorer residents of Derby living in St Michael's parish, close to All Saints' church.[32] A small group of Christian Socialists, led by the Rev. Erskine Clarke of St Michael's, saw an opportunity to combine religion with self-improvement within a Working Men's Association. This association was founded on 26 November 1849 'in the belief that there existed a greater desire for education among working men than they were commonly given the credit of possessing, and that if an institution were specifically devoted to their

[29] D.A. Reid, 'Playing and Prayer', in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. 3, *1840-1950*, (Cambridge, 2000), pp.745-807.
[30] S. Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (1976), chapter 7.
[31] *DM*, 31 May 1873; DLSL, BA/336, clubs and facilities.
[32] For data on religious attendance, see M. Tranter (ed.), *The Derbyshire Returns to the 1851 Religious Census* (Matlock, 1995), pp.69-77.

intellectual culture they would avail themselves of it'.[33] In a pamphlet published in 1849 to advertise the association, it was noted that 'it is often said that working men are indifferent to education — this experiment is the belief that such is not the case, and that they are now prepared to unite to aid each other in the great work of mental and spiritual exaltation'.[34]

The prime objective of the association was 'to promote the intellectual culture of working men and aid the union of manual labour and spiritual life'.[35] The link, therefore, between secular and religious life was clearly emphasised, and the Church saw the association not only as a vehicle for self-help, but also as a means by which the 'problem of pleasure' might be addressed. The manual workers might be tempted away from the pub and the excessive consumption of alcohol. Writing of the poor in 1859, Rev. Erskine Clarke recognised that alternative rational leisure pursuits needed to be provided to counter the attraction of the public house:

> Recreation they will have, they must have, they ought to have. For what is Recreation? It is the re-creation — the creation anew — of fresh strength for tomorrow's work. And the harder men work, the more need they have of recreation — real, not imaginary. Man is the machine of machines; the machine when compared with which all the contrivances of the Watts and the Arkwrights are worthless. [36]

The type of recreation Clarke envisaged was of a moral and elevating character which would 'supply healthy recreation and the means of instruction to its members.'[37] His idealism, tinged with pragmatism, was recognition of the poor quality of life experienced by the residents of St Michael's parish and their

[33] DLSL, BA/374.2, Working Men's Association, Miscellaneous data, education and religion, 3 May 1851.
[34] Ibid., 15 December 1849.
[35] DLSL, BA/36, Working Men's Association Booklet, 21 January 1851.
[36] J.E. Clarke, 'Social Economy or Recreations for the People'. A pamphlet reviewed in *The Era*, 27 November 1859.
[37] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 22 January 1858.

reluctance to join the Mechanics' Institute. Erskine Clarke summed up the situation:

> It has sometimes been asserted that there is no need for our association. The answer to this lies in the simple fact that we have 120 members, very few, if any, of whom would have joined the Mechanics' Institute and I think the reason of them not joining is plain. I conceive it to be no unwillingness on the part of the Mechanics' Institute to welcome the class of working men who form an association, but I believe the reason lies rather in the kind of labour by which they gain their bread. Our members for the most part are engaged in those works in which it is impossible to keep clear of dirt and soil. It costs them an irksome half hour to get up to the point of cleanliness and dress with which a clerk or shop-man leaves his day's work. And you can hardly expect a man, wearied with ten hours' labour, to go through this process night after night for the sake of reading the newspapers for an hour. Such a man wants a place where he can feel at home after a rough wash and a change of coat…This shows the use of our room. The majority of our members work in trades which are incompatible with broad cloth — that soils the hands and blackens the face — and therefore any man who goes to our rooms feels at home even though he may not have achieved a very elaborate toilet.[38]

At the end of four years, the association possessed a library of 508 books; in 1859, there was a total of 2,695 loans. Classes in English Literature, Drawing, Writing and Instrumental Music were offered. The report of the Annual General Meeting of 1854 noted that the association had close links with the Society of Arts and that numbers had increased. Lectures had been given by the Rev. W.F. Wilkinson, Vicar of St Werburgh's, on 'Self Education in the Working Classes; its necessity, difficulties, helps, processes and results'. The report

[38] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 22 January 1858, report of the speech at the Derby Working Men's Association concert tea party.

emphasised the 'high position' of the association in 'raising itself gradually through opposing jealousies…it had been the pioneer to other societies of somewhat similar basis in their first formation and after progress.' It had pioneered the establishment of cheap lectures of 'high character' by introducing Penny Lectures. The report concluded by stating that the association held 'a proud and pre-eminent position amongst its fellow societies and for the intelligent and liberal spirit in which it is conducted, and on which its regulations are formed'.[39] The importance of classes was stressed by committee members in 'stimulating the desire for knowledge' and providing the discipline necessary of a class before the workers can make 'any appreciable progress'.[40] A timetable of the various classes indicated a focus on the basics, with a smattering of subjects of a more elevated nature. For example, a Shakespeare class was included on a Saturday from 6.00pm to 8.00pm and a French class on Thursdays from 9.00pm to 10.00pm. Nevertheless, overall, the curriculum was more practical and useful than that offered by the Mechanics' Institute. The attendance overall 'varied according to the subject and the season of the year' but was generally 'satisfactory'. No exact attendance figures were published, but some classes 'comprised half, some one third of the members, and some less'.[41]

[39] DLSL, BA/4459, Report of the Annual General Meeting, 15 June 1854.
[40] DLSL, BA/374.2, article relating to education, 3 May 1851.
[41] *DM*, 4 March 1856.

Fig 6.1 Nineteenth-century key locations



1 & 2: London Road Wesleyan Chapel and St Andrew's Church
3: Central Store, Albert Street, Derby Co-operative Society
4: Osmaston Park Hall
5: The Morledge

Religion and rational recreation

The success of the Working Men's Association provided a stimulus for both nonconformists and Anglicans in religious provision for Litchurch, which on the opening of the railway station and workshops had no churches or chapels.[42] The first to open was the Wesleyan Chapel on London Road in 1861. Matthew Kirtley, the first Locomotive Superintendent, was an elder and Wesleyan Methodism was represented strongly amongst the railway workers. Among the chapel's many important and influential members, the leading light was C.H. Turner who lived in a large villa in Osmaston Road. He became the main

[42] For the building programme of church and chapel, see above, pp.151-4; see Tranter, *Derbyshire Returns,* pp.69-77.

subscriber to the new chapel, donating £100 to the building fund and was in close contact with senior managers on the Midland Railway, including Sir James Alport, the General Manager.[43] Amongst the patrons and benefactors was Abraham Woodiwiss, Mayor of Derby, and an important railway contractor and builder. One of the most active Wesleyans was T.G. Clayton, the Coach and Wagon Superintendent, who was involved in the construction of the sister chapel to London Road at Rose Hill in 1882.[44] The chapel could accommodate some 900 people and frequently reported congregations of between 500 and 600. The Sunday School membership was 1,400 children, a figure which remained stable for most of the century. London Road was the principal nonconformist chapel associated with the Midland Railway and anyone seeking employment 'did well to become a Wesleyan'. This was especially so for the casual hiring of the piecework gangs.[45]

The wide range of clubs and societies made it possible to conduct a full social life within the confines of chapel membership. Associated with the Wesleyan chapel of Litchurch were evening Bible classes, choral unions, operatic and debating societies and weekly football and cricket. In addition, at major festivals in the church calendar, such as Easter and Christmas and the Sunday School anniversaries, the chapels were brought together for musical and drama events. Towards the end of the century, several local chapels including, for example, Normanton Road Congregational and Rose Hill Wesleyan, formalised long established practices of association by pooling their funds to purchase fields on the edge of the town. Activities such as Whitsuntide festivities, children's sports and adult recreation, including cricket, bowls and tennis and facilities for refreshments, demonstrated a clear break with the trappings of paternalism and an increasing desire for recreational independence.[46]

[43] DLSL, BA/296, notes relating to building fund, March 1861.
[44] B.A. Alger, *Derby and District Free Churches* (Derby, 1901), p.95.
[45] *DM*, 18 May 1864 and 22 May 1872.
[46] *DM*, 28 May 1888.

The Church of England came later to the Litchurch district, the nearest church being St Peter's in the old core of the town. From 1856, services were held in an iron church located near the station.[47] Rapid urban expansion in Litchurch, however, made it clear that a new Anglican church was needed. Some 6,000 to 7,000 people lived in the railway district in the late 1850s without proper facilities for worship in the Anglian church, a common experience for urban areas prior to the mid-Victorian boom in church building.[48] A church building committee was established and the need for funds to finance the new church was brought before the half-yearly meeting of the Midland Railway shareholders in February 1862. Consistent with their role as mediators, the board stated that, while it was not able to provide any money from company funds, it wholeheartedly supported the building of a church and that it would refer the matter to the generosity of the shareholders.[49] The eleven-strong building committee was formed from a mixture of county gentry, political and business leaders in Derby and three directors of the Midland Railway, none of whom was locally based. During the period leading to its completion, the building committee published a list of local subscribers to generate more funds. Led by the Duke of Devonshire, and including pledges to the value of £967, the list included local and regional subscribers. Prominent amongst these were Litchurch industrialists, including T. Swingler and G. Fletcher.[50]

The foundation stone was laid on 29 March 1864 by the 7th Duke of Devonshire, at a ceremony that was primarily a town and county gathering rather than a railway-based occasion. It included major county landowners, members of the urban elite, many clergy and 'in the general company several county and borough magistrates, members of the corporation, and the leading tradesmen of the district'. Although some Midland Railway directors attended the ceremony, including those members of the building committee, there was

[47] J.B. Radford, 'Nottingham and Derby Railway Companion, 1839', Occasional Paper, 3 (Derbyshire Record Society, 1979).
[48] A.D. Gilbert and B.I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century. A Social Geography* (1979), pp.130-1.
[49] DLSL, BA/TNA/RAIL 491 (copy), Board of Directors' Minutes of 10 February 1862.
[50] *DM*, 6 December 1865.

no official railway representatives. During the celebratory lunch at the *Midland Hotel*, the chair of proceedings, W. Mundy of Markeaton Hall, explained the complex relationship between the Midland Railway, its directors, shareholders and workers on the matter of social and welfare provision:

> For reasons which I fully admit the force, it was impossible for the Midland Railway Company, in its corporate capacity, could assist this effort, but a large number of shareholders have not been unmindful of their duty and have come forward to aid in this good work.[51]

The church of St Andrew's was consecrated in 1866 by the Rt. Rev. John Lonsdale, the Bishop of Lichfield, and became known in Derby as 'the railwaymen's church'.[52] Influential company officials were members, including S.W. Johnson, the Locomotive Superintendent, W.H. Hodges, the Chief Accountant, and W. Towle, the manager of the *Midland Hotel*.[53]

A range of social and activity-based groups was associated with the church, which in the late 1860s and early 1870s included football and cricket clubs, which played against a variety of town and county teams, ranging from neighbouring churches to Sheffield Wednesday.[54] W.H. Hodges was the driving force behind the sporting activities and participants included Midland Railway employees and workers from the textile mills and iron foundries. The teams played their matches in the grounds of Osmaston Hall, the home of Sir Robert Wilmot Bart., President of the cricket club, whose family were subscribers to the church. The patronage of the Wilmot family gave the congregation of St Andrew's aristocratic connections, which were unusual for a new church in an industrial suburb.

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[51] *DM*, 30 March 1864.
[52] *DM*, 10 May 1866.
[53] *DM*, 2 March 1881. See above, Fig 6.1, p.230 for the location of St Andrew's Church.
[54] *St Andrew's Parish Magazine*, November 1876; *DM*, 1 November 1871, 17 January 1872, 31 May 1873.

Amongst the organisations associated with the church was the debating society. Its annual season of entertainments attracted concert audiences of between 150 and 200 and, at the concerts given on behalf of the cricket club, leading players in the drama and music clubs included Midland Railway workers.[55] The church appears to have had a good relationship with the Derbyshire Rifle Volunteers, due in no small measure to Wilmot's involvement with this organisation and his patronage, which ensured large crowds at the Whitsuntide Festivities. This illustrated the differences between St Andrew's and the London Road Wesleyans. Whilst the latter took their children and members to the Arboretum (Joseph Strutt's gift to the town for rational recreation), St Andrew's took their children to Osmaston Hall where, joined by the workhouse children, there were sporting activities, including athletics and cricket.[56]

The Temperance Movement

As was noted earlier, the Evangelicals believed that the 'rationality' of leisure excluded secular pleasures.[57] For them, rational organisations and associations were, therefore, based on religious dogma — without this, recreations and institutions were 'irrational'. One of the most persistent campaigns against popular recreation was the Temperance Movement, which sought not only to exercise a controlling influence over the occasions and locations of popular recreation but to transform the cultural aspects of workers' leisure time. This evangelical movement was closely linked to the philosophy of 'muscular Christianity', which promoted the spiritual values of sport, especially team games, and the virtues of masculinity.[58] Most nonconformists in Derby, together with the powerful evangelical wing of the Church of England, were

[55] *DM*, 5 June 1872, 7 October 1877.
[56] *DM*, 8 May 1871. For the Arboretum, see above pp.163-5.
[57] See above, pp.155-6; B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872* (Keele, 1994).
[58] See D.E. Hall, (ed.), *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, 1994); N.J. Watson, S. Weir and S. Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond', *Journal of Religion and Society*, 7 (2005), pp.1-21.

prepared to join in public controversies regarding secular recreation. Some of the most active campaigners in the Derby Temperance Society seem to have been railway workers.[59]

The drive for temperance on the railways originated in the catalogue of accidents which cast a shadow over railway travel. It was not until the 1880s that informal groups of teetotallers banded together in a railway temperance society. The Midland Railway Temperance Union was started as a branch of the United Kingdom Railway Temperance Union in 1883 by a junior clerk in the Locomotive Department. The inaugural meeting took place in the locomotive works and John Noble, the Midland Railway secretary, agreed to act as president.[60] Noble stressed the sobriety of the Derby railway workforce in relation to other workers in the town. He emphasised the communal solidarity of the men as a reason for the prospective success of the union. The *Mercury* reported him saying that:

> There was an *esprit de corps* amongst railwaymen which made them stick very closely together when engaged in any common enterprise and he thought he might venture on to say without passing reflection on any other railway company, that the Midland Company and its employees had always been conspicuous for that. He thought he might say we work together as one man and that is the secret of our success.[61]

The membership of the union rose from 3,065 in 1884 to over 4,000 in 1887.[62] Noble indicated that membership equalled about eight per cent of the workforce. The figures for attendance at the annual meetings were over 500 in 1887. His speech at the 1886 Annual General Meeting indicated the strength

[59] See DLSL, BA/567.3, Derby Temperance Society, Committee Minute Books and Membership Registers from 1836.
[60] *DM*, 21 February 1883.
[61] Ibid.
[62] *DM*, 21 December 1887.

of the movement amongst artisans in the workforce to the exclusion of those both above and below in the railway hierarchy, paralleling the strength of the Wesleyan movement amongst this section of workers. Attempts had been made, Noble emphasised, to bring within the scope of the society's influence several of the 'salary receiving class of the company's servants'. He also mentioned 'another class which was not fairly represented in their ranks' — that of the men 'employed on the permanent way'.[63]

The vigour of nonconformist groups in Derby's temperance movement was epitomised by Abel 'Coffee' Boden, a long-serving and well known loco driver for the Midland Railway, who led an initiative to set up tea and coffee rooms for railwaymen on Derby station during the early 1880s. Despite the fine words from senior officers of the company when addressing gatherings of the town's Temperance Movement, Boden was only granted the go-ahead for his non-alcohol room if he could make it self-financing. He managed to do this by imitating the organisation of the company, devising the venture along the lines of a joint stock company offering shares to the men at 5s each. At roughly the same time as Boden's efforts, a coffee house was opened in June 1881 on London Road near the station. This enterprise was organised under the auspices of several local religious, political and business leaders with the express aim of catering for railwaymen, although the railway company was not connected with the venture.[64] The Midland Railway Temperance Union became closely associated with the coffee house, where meetings were held. Both organisations illustrated the paternal influence of members of the urban elite without the practical support of the railway company. Significantly, the organisations emphasised the independent character and the 'respectable' conduct of senior artisans within the railway workforce, a strong feature of social life in the Litchurch district.[65]

[63] *DM*, 17 February 1886.
[64] *DM*, I June 1881.
[65] See Pratt, *Midland Railway,* p.67.

Co-operation and an independent outlook

The desire for respectability was matched by the workers' need for a measure of independence and self-determination. These aspirations were reflected in three important aspects of Derby's plebeian associative culture — co-operation, unionism, and popular recreation. Each is represented, respectively, by the Derby Co-operative Society, strike and union action on the Midland Railway, and the loose, yet important, affiliations of the pub, fairs and markets, and popular gatherings. An examination of this associational world reveals an entrepreneurial spirit, a resilience and a self-confidence in Derby's workforce. It demonstrates a deliberate and sustained move away from the strictures of paternalism and the overbearing demands of rational recreation.

Entrepreneurship: The Derby Co-operative Society

The Co-operative store was established in 1850 in George Yard, a back street located off Sadler Gate.[66] The early meetings of the society were held at the home of Mr Brown in Abbey Street and were restricted to members of the Carpenters' and Joiners' Union. Jonathan Henderson became the first president and secretary. This exclusiveness of trade in the initial stages of the enterprise was probably an advantage, given that it was only after the passing of the Industrial and Provident Act in 1852 that co-operative societies were allowed unlimited expansion.[67]

The first seven years of the Co-operative Society proved challenging. For example, once the committee had been elected, members reviewed the

[66] The Derby Co-operative Society was one of the earliest stores. The Leicester Society was established in 1860; the Kettering store in 1866; the Birmingham Industrial Co-operative Society was formed in 1881 by Midland Railway workers; see N. Robertson, *The Co-operative Movement and Communities in Britain, 1914-1960: Minding their own Business* (2016), p.15; P. Gurney has noted that 'individual societies were deeply rooted within their local environments' and there could be significant differences between societies: *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England, 1870-1930* (Manchester, 1996), p.24.

[67] D.J. Thompson, *Weavers of Dreams: The Origins of the Modern Co-operative Movement* (1994); B. Potter, (Mrs. Sidney Webb), *The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain* [1891] (2009 edition).

financial situation. Collections amounted to £2, a relatively small sum, even in 1850, to start a retail business. Second-hand scales and weights were purchased, a local miller provided flour and a parcel of groceries. Mr Brown, the son of a grocer, was appointed the first shopkeeper and buyer, and provided some experience and expertise of the retail trade. It is difficult to ascertain how well the society fared in the first three years, as no records were kept, but by 1853 a statement of sales indicated the amount of £173 with dividend and interest at £5 0s 10d. In 1855, sales were £200 and in 1857 £10 per week.[68]

In 1855, the society was near to collapse. The minute books throw little light on what appears to have been a paradoxical situation, for towards the end of 1854 there was a resolution urging a removal of business to new quarters — two rooms in Victoria Street were suggested, which would indicate that business was increasing. In 1855, the decision to move was confirmed, but in 1856 a resolution was proposed by Jonathan Henderson, and passed by committee members, for the break-up of the society.[69] The day of the proposed break-up, 4 December 1855, came and passed. It can only be assumed that the optimistic diehards decided to carry on. [70]

Falling sales, however, prompted Henderson to renew his bid to dissolve the business but, once again, he was defeated, and at the same meeting it was resolved 'to try another quarter and see what progress could be made'.[71] This proved to be the turning point in the survival of the society, as well as the decision in 1858 to open the membership to other workers in the town. In that year, the business premises were located in Briggs' Yard in Victoria Street. It appears that Mr Brown continued as the shop manager and he was probably the most influential supporter for continuing the business. It is also likely that

[68] DLSL, BA/694, Records of the Derby Co-operative Society Statement of Sales for the Second Quarter 1853, the Second Quarter of 1855 and 1857.
[69] Ibid., 21 September 1856.
[70] DLSL, BA/694, Minute Book of the Derby Co-operative Society, 14 December 1856.
[71] Ibid., 16 July 1857.

members of the Working Men's Association were keen to join the Society, especially when a further move in 1860 to Full Street, opposite the Assembly Rooms, brought the store closer to St Michael's parish, the location of the Association.[72]

With the more inclusive policy and the commensurate increase in membership, there was a recognition that more open associations were good for business. A new-found confidence and optimism were reflected in the increasing use of the minute book. By mid-1860, there were 40 members and news of the store was circulating around the poorer districts of the town and in the Litchurch area of 'Railway Derby'. By the end of 1860, membership had trebled and many of the new members were railway workers. With this influx of members business improved, and it became necessary to open the store every night of the week with shop hours from 7pm to 9.30pm; on Saturdays, opening hours were 2pm to 10pm.[73]

The expanding trade resulted in a greater need for enhanced business acumen and for the first time, in 1860, there was a quarterly meeting and the creation of a reserve fund. Propaganda and advertising were also employed to demonstrate the confident outlook of the pioneer members. For example, the Full Street store displayed a large sign, 'The Co-operative Store', above its door and a local printer was contracted to print and distribute 4,000 handbills around the town. Business was so good that, in 1862, membership had risen to 1,385 and sales were £22,000.[74] The success story was sustained. By 1873, the Derby Society was in such a strong financial position, with an annual turnover of £18,000, that it could afford to build its central premises in Albert Street.[75] This success promoted a sense of pride and dignity, as well as a growing business awareness.[76] The minute books indicate the purchase of

[72] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 15 March 1860.
[73] DLSL, BA/694, Minute Books, 14 June and 8 December 1860.
[74] Ibid.,10 March 1862.
[75] Ibid., 12 September 1873.
[76] See N. Robertson, *The Co-operative Movement*, p.30.

stationery and equipment for the developing promotional and administrative sides of the operation and the printing of 1,000 copies of the society's rules, indicating an efficiency and forward planning for an expanding and successful enterprise.[77] This commercial sophistication contrasted, occasionally, with the way in which some day-to-day business was conducted. For instance, the February 1861 minute book recorded that 'Mr. Sherwin was directed to call and look at the pig in Brook Street and purchase it if suitable.'[78]

Expansion also resulted in a need to support the secretarial side of the business by offering financial remuneration. To meet this need, committee members agreed to pay a secretary £5 per quarter, an assistant secretary £2 a quarter and the treasurer £3 per quarter. A general secretary, George Smith, was appointed in 1861 on a weekly wage of 33s. Another room was rented, which served as a secretarial office and, when necessary, as a committee room. In the same year, it was decided to open a branch store, the Labour Hall in Park Street, which was the first freehold property owned by the members.[79] It was a ready-money purchase; the treasurer received instructions to place the cash in the bank in readiness for the transaction. He banked £450, but the cost is given as £520. The acquisition of the Labour Hall had its entrance on Park Street, a main thoroughfare and not some alley or yard. This was indicative of the enhanced fortunes and status of the society. Access to the top floor was difficult, but on the ground floor was a large room, which had been used for dances. The premises were in poor condition and members voluntarily carried out improvements in the evening on finishing work. The branch store was opened for business on 18 July 1861 and, from the start, retained regular paid staff and had the same shop hours as others in the town. Although the minute book records indicate misgivings from some members regarding the expansion into branch stores, these concerns proved unwarranted. By the end of 1861,

[77] DLSL, BA/694, Minute Book, 16 April 1861.
[78] Ibid., 20 February 1861.
[79] *DM*, 5 August 1861; W.L. Unsworth, *Seventy-five Years' Co-operation: A Historical Outline of the Birth, Growth and Development of the Derby Co-operative Provident Society, 1850-1925* (Manchester, 1927), pp.15-18.

the Park Street branch's membership rose to 706 and sales for the first quarter were £2,560. Members expressed great satisfaction that, having paid the customary 5 per cent on shares and 2.5 per cent depreciation allowance, a dividend of 1s 6d in the pound was paid.[80]

The success of the Park Street store encouraged the management committee to press ahead with further developments and the next venture illustrated the ambition and prosperity of the Derby Society. The next branch store's initial outlay was more than double that of the purchase of the Labour Hall; in the summer of 1862, the committee paid £1,200 for the *Dove Inn* in Nun Street.[81] Additional branches were established in Bridge Gate in 1866 and Abbey Street in 1868. Further improvements were made to the branch in Full Street when the Rev. Erskine Clarke, representing the Working Men's Association, agreed to demolish some old buildings adjoining the store, and allow the building of a room on the ground floor to be used as a grocery department. The rent was fixed at £26 per annum and the society took a lease for seven years. This expansion in floor space enabled the introduction of drapery and boot sections and fresh meat was sold for the first time in another room. This diversification made sound commercial sense and during the period 1862-1866, the society blossomed. The success of the business also rested upon the passing of the second Industrial and Provident Act of 1862, which gave co-operative societies, generally, exemption from income tax, the concession of limited liability, and provided a legal basis for authorised federal action. The right to engage in federal action paved the way for the formation of the Co-operative Wholesale Society in 1863.[82]

The entrepreneurial spirit of the Co-operative Society during the 1860s was manifested in its vision of the purchase of a central store, although some

[80] DLSL, BA/694, Minute Books, 25 June and 5 December 1861.
[81] Ibid., 18 June 1862.
[82] For the historiography of the Co-operative Movement, see C. Wrigley, 'The Co-operative Movement', *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts fur soziale Bewegungen*, 27 (2002), pp.103-16; L. Black and N. Robertson (eds.), *Consumerism and the Co-operative Movement in Modern British History: Taking Stock* (Manchester, 2009).

members expressed concern that they were only a working men's organisation and to buy land for such an undertaking was 'unthinkable'. At a final meeting to consider the proposal, the business possibilities of such a venture outweighed the reservations of some members and the committee was instructed to go ahead. The purchase of the Albert Street property in 1869 was only the initial move in a series of deals, which gave the society possession of a prime location in the town.[83] Extensions carried the central premises into Exchange Street, across Thorntree Lane and into East Street. The purchase of land was facilitated by Edward Strutt, Lord Belper, who owned land in this area of the town and was sympathetic to the aims of the Co-operative movement.[84] The prime location of the central store in Albert Street gave the society the status and recognition which previous locations in back yards and alleys failed to do; it illustrated the affluence and confidence of the society and the sale of land by Lord Belper gave it a seal of approval.[85]

By 1876, the *Record*, the society's newspaper, was describing extensions to the central premises with confidence:

> Next taking the ground-floor, the first shop in the new wing, adjoining the pork butchery, will be the new butcher's shop; and adjoining that will be the new drapery department, having a good frontage to Albert Street and Princes Street, with an entrance at the corner. In this shop will be an iron spiral staircase leading to rooms over the three shops just named, and will be devoted to millinery, mantle, and fancy departments which have been much needed in our Society for some time and could not be engaged in for want of space.[86]

[83] See Fig 6.1, p.230 for the location of the central store in Albert Street.
[84] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 10 April 1869. Members of the Strutt family had a long tradition of paternalism in Derby, which included factory paternalism and major contributions to the Derbyshire General Infirmary, the Mechanics' Institute, and the Arboretum. See above pp.149-51, 157-63, 163-5 respectively.
[85] DLSL BA/694, Minute Books, 7 February and 15 November 1868; 16 March 1869.
[86] *Record*, 12 May 1876.

In the same year, Robert Hilliard, the manager of the central store, exuded the same confident style when he explained to an audience of members that the society would not be following the tradition of the town's retail trade to give candles as Christmas presents to customers:

> The Derby Co-operative Society has given its members no candles, but during the year has given them £7,196, which would enable them to buy more than enough candles all the year round.[87]

The success and ambition of the society was reflected in its Annual Report of 1876 which referred to the creation of a building department. Fourteen houses had already been built and allotted to members and six acres of land had been purchased to build another 200. The allocation of houses was made by the drawing of lots. Mortgages were arranged by the society and paid off by a weekly rent. For a short period in 1876, the society adopted the practice of building houses and then auctioning them to members. The report refers to houses in Normanton Road and Harriet Street being disposed of in this way.[88]

Land was frequently sold to members at prices which ranged from 5s 3d to 7s 6d per yard and the houses, built through private contractors, were relatively cheap. Twenty-four houses built in New Normanton, for example, cost £167 each, a sum that did not appear to deter prospective buyers. Where loan advances for building houses were made, the society adopted a fixed plan. On completion of the first floor, the committee authorised payment of 25 per cent of the loan; a further 25 per cent was handed over when the roof was on; another 25 per cent when the plastering and ceilings were finished and 20 per cent when the house was completed. The odd five per cent was retained for three months and then paid. In 1877, the society adopted a plan of allocation

[87] *Record*, 8 April 1876. Neville Kirk has suggested that a preoccupation with the dividend was detrimental to the wider ideals of the co-operative movement; see N. Kirk, *The Growth of Working class Reformism in Mid-Victorian England* (1985), pp.156-7.
[88] DLSL, BA/33, Annual Report of the Derby Co-operative Society, 12 December 1876.

of houses in relation to capital and length of membership, which established a rota with loan amounts and repayment times decided later.[89]

Strike action and railway unionism

The retailing initiative, independence of action and strong self-help philosophy of the Derby Co-operative members (many of whom lived in Litchurch and were employed by the Midland Railway), were a powerful example of what could be achieved by collaboration and an independent spirit. No formally constituted railway union, however, existed before the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in 1871. The apparent harmony of labour relations up to the 1870s has been attributed to economic factors, security of employment and an expanding industry, which resulted in early promotion.[90] It can also be explained by the watchful eye and intimidating stance of the Railway Employers' Association, formed in 1858, later to be reconstituted as the United Railway Companies' Committee.[91] This committee, generally comprising director MPs, had the task of monitoring parliamentary legislation. Such national co-operation between railway companies at board level had the effect of co-ordinating labour policy, regulating wages and blacklisting 'known troublemakers'. Employers also used the structural importance of railways to the national economy and social integration as a powerful argument against union organisation. This was crystallised in the concept of railwaymen as a service class with a responsibility to the public in their care.[92]

Successful collective action was also hindered due to the varied and diverse types and grades of employment and many different trades. There was the added difficulty that railway companies were extended industrial organisations that formed integrated networks between regions, which required a

[89] Ibid., 8 December 1877; D. Boydell, *The Centenary Story: 100 Years of Co-operation in Derby* (Manchester, 1950), pp.5-16.
[90] P.W. Kingsford, 'Labour Relations on the Railway, 1835-1875', *Journal of Transport History*, I, (1959), p.69.
[91] G. Alderman, *The Railway Interest* (Leicester, 1973), pp.19-21.
[92] P. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen* (1963), p.96.

sophisticated level of collective action if strikes were to be effective. These difficulties were reflected in the low figures for union membership. Although there were officially no railway unions until the inception of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in 1871, attempts were made to establish them on a craft basis through friendly societies.[93] By 1880, fewer than one in twenty railwaymen were in a union.[94]

This lack of successful collective action on the Midland Railway up to the 1870s may also be explained by the industry itself, where there was no single way of demarcating skill levels. In other industries, successful trade union action was based on craft organisation. This relied on the ability of trades to resist changes in the creation of skill levels, particularly through the control of entry qualifications.[95] The ability to monitor and restrict the numbers in any one trade helped control the labour supply, sustain wage rates and provide the unions with some bargaining power. The railway industry, on the other hand, involved new occupations with little or no precedent in previous industries. There was no established craft guild tradition with formal rules of apprenticeship, which could help delimit different grades.[96] Indeed, the Midland Railway, as did other railway companies, managed its many and diverse employees with army-like organisation, with a strong focus on discipline and a hierarchical structure, which fragmented the workforce.[97]

A notable exception to this dearth of collaboration was the leading role of workshop staff in the Nine Hours' Movement of the late 1860s and early 1870s. Derby workshop staff were supported by other trades in the town, as well as railway workers in other companies, which became part of a national collective action. Strike action began on the North-Eastern Railway in 1867, when men gave a month's notice in pursuit of a nine-hour day.[98] The strike was held

[93] Kingsford, 'Labour Relations', p.79.
[94] E.H. Hunt, *British Labour History, 1815-1914* (1981), p.297.
[95] C. More, *Skill and the English Working Class* (1980), p.18.
[96] H. Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain* (1968), p.51.
[97] Thompson, *Rise of Respectable Society*, p.47.
[98] DLSL, BA/336, Midland Railway Box File, 25 March 1867.

under the auspices of the Engine Drivers' and Firemen's United Friendly Society. A delegate meeting in Derby was attended by over 1,000 men and came out in favour of calling a general strike. The meeting also pledged support for the lock-out in the Sheffield file trade, including one from George Potter, the editor of the radical *Beehive*.[99]

Potter was also a keynote speaker at a meeting in the Temperance Hall in Derby in July 1871, in support of the agitation by north-east engineers and shipwrights regarding the nine-hour day.[100] A further meeting was held by Midland Railway workers in October and a petition was signed by 'hundreds of men' and delivered to the directors in favour of a nine-hour working day. The *Mercury* reported that the directors refused to receive the petition, because the meeting was held outside the company's premises. The deputation was informed 'if any questions arose between them and their workforce, they must be discussed and settled on the company's own ground'.[101] Such a reaction was indicative of the directors' continued attempts to contain labour relations under their direct control, beyond the influence of any external combination. The whole protest movement was planned and organised by the Derby workmen outside formal control of union supervision, which constituted a form of 'grass-roots' protest.[102] Immediately after the directors' decision, a meeting of workmen was convened in front of the mess room, the location for party political meetings, 'and the same petition previously adopted was carried by the 2,000 men assembled.' Faced with such a mass protest, involving 2,000 out of 2,200 workers in the railway shops, the directors acceded to the demand.[103]

[99] DLSL, BA/352, Midland Railway Box File, 27 March 1867; H. Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (Harmondsworth, 1963) p.49.
[100] *DM*, 5 July 1871; G.D.H. Cole and R. Postgate, *The Common People 1746-1946* (1961), pp.399-400.
[101] *DM*, 8 October 1871.
[102] R. Price, 'The Labour Process and Labour History', *Social History*, 8 (1983), p.57.
[103] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 10 December 1871.

Following this success, a 'grand demonstration' was organised some days later to 'signalise the promised concession of their employers'. Two thousand men from the workshops gathered on the Morledge and marched to the market place, accompanied by five bands and two large clocks, one with its hands pointing to six and the other to five o'clock. An array of banners displayed a range of motifs, including: 'Success to the Nine Hours' Movement', 'United We Stand, Divided We Fall', 'Unity is Strength', 'Eight Hours to Women' and 'Honour to Labour', 'Success to the Trades of Derby' and the rather deferential banner denoting 'Capital and Labour United'. The procession moved through the centre of Litchurch to the house of Matthew Kirtley, a senior figure of the Midland Railway, where the committee read him an address:

> Sir — We the employees of the Midland Railway Company, desire to express our deep gratitude to you for the greatest and unvarying kindness and consideration which you have ever displayed in all various grades of men serving under you; kindness manifest not in isolated and remote instances, but uniformly and without intermission.[104]

The precedent set by the Midland Railway shops resulted in most of the iron foundries in the town adopting the nine-hours' working day, and it precipitated similar petitions and subsequent adoption of the nine hours at the railway workshops in Crewe and Doncaster.[105] Interestingly, this momentum for collective action was not dispelled by the apparent show of deference to Matthew Kirtley and the directors, who insisted that the men should finish work at 5.30pm instead of 5 o'clock, as the men had requested in their petition. Consequently, nearly 2,000 workshop men walked out on strike in December 1871.[106] The strike lasted into early January 1872, but failed to alter the working hours set by the employers. The men returned to work on a piecemeal

[104] *DM*, 8 November 1871. For information on Matthew Kirtley, see Rev. Canon B. Arman, 'The Midland Railway and Matthew Kirtley's Legacy', *Railway Archive*, 4 (2012), pp.29-37; see above, Fig 6.1, p.230 for the location of the Morledge.
[105] *DM*, 12 December 1871.
[106] *DM*, 20 December 1871.

basis and the strike leaders were not reinstated.[107] At a meeting of 1,500 workshop staff in the Temperance Hall, the question of the sacked men was raised, but further strike action was ruled out; 'organisation' was called for and a fund was launched to support the dismissed men. Significantly, the meeting was chaired by Mr Wheldon, the Liberal mayor, who was also chair of the Derby Railway Orphanage Committee. The meeting ended with a suggestion that the shared interests of railway workshop staff and other Derby trades should be recognised, a firm pointer to the support of the town's Trades' Council established in 1865. This organisation was later to be dominated by railway workshop groups and played an influential role in politics at both local and national level.[108]

Following the failure of 1871-1872, four hundred Midland Railway workers wrote to Michael Thomas Bass, complaining of 'excessive hours and low wages'. As a result, Bass, the consummate politician and patriarch, instigated a series of open letters which were published in the local and national press. He endeavoured to show that 'the management of the Midland Railway is oppressive and illiberal towards their workmen, inconsistent with public safety, and injurious to the permanent interests of the shareholders'.[109] Bass was in a privileged position to intervene on behalf of the men. He was a major shareholder and probably the most important single customer of the company, which was responsible for the transportation of some 500,000 barrels of Bass's beer at an annual cost of £135,000. Bass's correspondence with the press and the directors encouraged workers to write to him with details of the extent of overwork. One such correspondent was Charles Bassett Vincent, a clerk at the Railway Clearing House, who was employed by Bass to collect information, organise meetings and publish propaganda.[110] After well-attended meetings in favour of the Nine Hours' Movement, Vincent addressed gatherings of railway

[107] *DM*, 10 January 1872.
[108] *DM*, 17 January 1872.
[109] *DM*, 4 January 1872.
[110] See Bagwell, *Railwaymen*, p.50.

workers at Manchester and Leeds with the promise of £100 from Bass towards the initial costs of starting a railwaymen's union.[111]

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS) was registered in 1872 as an all-grades union. Vincent was a driving force behind the setting up of provincial branches and John Graham of Derby, another of Bass's early correspondents, was prominent within the early organisation.[112] Bass was offered the position of president of the society, which he declined, although he continued to act as benefactor. It has been estimated that Bass contributed over £1,000 during the early years of the Society.[113] At the conference of the ASRS, all the delegates signed a testimonial of gratitude to him for his support and his sympathy for the 'sufferings endured by the class to which we belong'.[114]

Unlike other amalgamated societies, this new model union was open to all grades within the railway industry and incorporated a strong element of institutionalised philanthropy. Under the guidance of Bass and Vincent, the ASRS began a campaign to create an institution to care for the orphaned children of railwaymen killed at work.[115] Vincent visited Plimsoll's Sailors' Orphanage in Hull in 1876 to explore ideas for the planning stages of the Railway Orphanage.[116] The formal organisation of the Railway Servants' Orphanage in Derby had its origins in 1874 when a meeting of the ASRS districts and local politicians met in the town to confirm the location of the orphanage dedicated to Bass.[117] Funding was shared between the ASRS, private subscription and public donations. In April 1874, an appeal to the union branches resulted in two hundred of them contributing £3,000 for the purchase of an orphanage and the support of orphaned children.[118] No major railway

[111] *Derbyshire Advertiser*, 5 July 1872.
[112] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*, 4 April 1873.
[113] DLSL, BA/336, Midland Railway Box File.
[114] *DM*, 13 November 1873.
[115] G.W. Alcock, *Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism* (1922), p.187.
[116] *DM*, 9 February 1876.
[117] *DM*, 13 August 1874.
[118] DLSL, BA/352, Midland Railway Box File.

companies contributed on their own behalf, although several senior Midland Railway staff and directors did contribute as individuals.[119]

Temporary premises were taken in the centre of Litchurch at the corner of Bradshaw Street and London Road.[120] Even though the committee comprised 30 per cent A.S.R.S. members, the most prominent members were key figures in Derby's political elite — the Mayor J. Turner, Aldermen Longdon and Renals, Councillors Hobson, Woodiwiss and Bemrose. There was a growing influence of local politicians and, to some extent, vested interest, in the running of the orphanage.[121] Bemrose and Woodiwiss had business connections with the Midland Railway as contractors, and they were both residents of the Litchurch district.[122] In 1877, a site was sought close to the station to build a permanent orphanage. This endeavour proved unsuccessful and eventually land was purchased from Woodiwiss, the Derby builder and one-time treasurer of the orphanage. The site was located well away from the station to the south of the town and plans included accommodation for 250 children, at a cost of £5,000. This indicated the growing influence of local politicians and, to some extent, vested interest in control of the running of the orphanage.

Tensions between the nascent ASRS. and the rest of the Orphanage Committee came to a head in 1876, when members of the Metropolitan Committee of the union argued against the construction of an orphanage in Derby.[123] They favoured the maintenance of orphans in the family home rather than removed to a distant institution, justifying this on both humane and economic grounds. Their discontent was exacerbated by the escalating costs of the Derby orphanage, which increased by 30 per cent during 1877.[124] In 1879, the Metropolitan Committee sent a circular to all its branches, suggesting

[119] DLSL, BA/TNA/RAIL 491 (copy), Board of Directors Minutes, 8 June 1876.
[120] *DM*, 7 March 1877.
[121] *DM,* 7 March and 16 May 1877.
[122] Bagwell, *Railway Men* (1963), p.122.
[123] *DM*, 5 January 1876.
[124] *DM*, 7 March 1877.

that an orphan fund should be set up under the total control of the union, resulting in a complete break with the Derby Orphanage Committee.[125]

The breakaway of the Railway Servants' Orphanage from the ASRS highlighted the turbulent internal struggle within the union during its early years. Principally, this fragmentation was between the London-based executive committee and the semi-autonomous federation of regional branches. It is evident that Bassett Vincent was engaged in a power struggle with the Metropolitan Committee. The form of welfare preferred by the London committee was that typically associated with the new craft unions and favoured centralised control. In opposing the Derby orphanage, the London committee argued against the patronage of Michael Thomas Bass and its full-time travelling representative, Bassett Vincent. The argument was clearly that between self-help and charity.[126]

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw an upsurge in collective action on the railways. On the Midland Railway, for example, there was an increase in the frequency of petitions and deputations and this period saw several major strikes, especially involving traffic grades. Successful protest, however, was difficult — it required coordination of striking groups at various locations, which revealed the tensions between the local, regional and national organisations within railway unionism. In 1876, for example, Midland Railway guards were the butt of the company's economy drive and 800 men took strike action, but failed to gain the support of the ASRS. Consequently, the strike was unsuccessful.[127] In 1879, the union decided to be more proactive in defence of the guards because the company had refused to refer the matter to arbitration and decided not to acknowledge the existence of the ASRS.[128] The strike ended in disarray after seventeen days through a lack of support from

[125] Alcock, *Fifty Years*, p.162.
[126] Ibid., chapter V. Alcock portrays the official union line, whilst Bassett Vincent's view is represented in C. Bassett Vincent, *An Authentic History of Railway Trade Unions* (1902) and 'Reminiscences of Railway Work and Life', *Alfreton and Belper Journal*, 11 April and 10 May 1895.
[127] *DM*, 12 July 1876.
[128] DLSL, BA/TNA/RAIL 491 (copy), Board of Directors' Minutes, 14 January 1879.

other grades of workers. One consequence, however, was the setting up of a strike protection fund.[129]

This presented its own problems, however. Raising and controlling funds was a central issue for trade unionists. The new craft-based unions were noted for their resistance to industrial action, mainly for financial reasons. For branches used to managing their own funds and exercising 'respectable' sound stewardship, the prospect of nationally-based strike funds and the lack of accountability for the use of locally collected donations were anathema. The power struggle in the early years of the ASRS was very much about the control of union funds. The caution over the Derby orphanage was partly due to the fear that it would be a drain on resources. In 1872, the union comprised 17,247 members; by 1882, this figure had decreased to 6,000, although this was the low point of membership.[130]

Localism proved to be a potent constraint on the organisation of railway unions. The inability of individual grades within the industry to act together was also a major factor in dissipating the effectiveness of industrial action. The frustration of ASRS members to confront the concerted action of railway companies successfully resulted in an upsurge of sectional interest and led to the breakaway from the union of the senior traffic grade, the locomotive drivers and firemen. The protectionist policies of craft organisations appeared to be the only way of achieving successful action and, in 1879, the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) was formed because the ASRS was 'not defensive enough'.[131]

If the guards' strike of 1879 emphasised the inadequacies of district organisation, then the strike of footplate crews on the Midland Railway in 1887 revealed the continued dominance of local labour practices over national union organisation. It illustrated the difficulty of maintaining a strike even within an

[129] *DM*, 8, 15 January 1879.
[130] Bagwell, *Railwaymen*, p.70.
[131] Alcock, *Fifty Years,* pp.171-2.

elite labour group. Nearly 3,000 drivers and firemen came out on strike on the Midland Railway in August 1887 over the company's refusal to guarantee payment for a six-day working week. Employers, instead, decided that 'men will not be entitled to a full week's pay unless it is actually earned'. This emotive issue was seen by the workers as 'a slur upon themselves'.[132]

The footplate workers' strike involved about 240 men in Derby alone, the majority of whom would not have been in a union, although the union did endorse the action. The drivers' strike involved some 600 members of the ASRS throughout the entire Midland Railway network and was an unofficial action taken independent of union coordination. It remained under the control of a Central Committee of workers based in Derby and involved, for example, workers in Bolton, Nottingham and Sheffield. The strike was short-lived and ended on 16 August, due in part to a lack of support from higher status passenger train crews. The guards had also been unable to gain the support of this higher status group in their strike of 1879. The company decided to bring in 558 drivers from other areas. The shortfall between the 3,000 on strike and the men brought in from other companies was made good by the early promotion of cleaners and firemen, supplemented by the recruitment of unskilled junior employees. Given this, the strike became untenable and a large number of workers were not taken back by the Midland Railway. The *Mercury* reported that as many as 723, including 183 members of the ASRS, were sacked. Although short-lived, the strike had a significant impact on the town. Street protests incited confrontation, intimidation and violence against non-strikers. This tense atmosphere was epitomised by a large crowd gathering at night in Midland Road, close to the station, with 'many officials' barring access to the platform.[133]

Even after the strike's failure, the cause of the footplate workers continued to generate an emotional collective response, which led to further mass meetings

[132] *DM*, 10 August 1887.
[133] *DM*, 10 and 17 August 1887.

in the town centre, close to the Market Hall. Three thousand strikers and sympathizers were present at the gathering, which was presided over by the manager of the Derby Co-operative Society, Robert Hilliard, one of the foremen involved in gaining victory for the workshop staff in the nine-hours' agitation of 1871-1872.[134]

Popular culture

Strike action, street protest and mass meetings, post-1850, continued to concern the urban elite and especially the rational recreationalists and evangelicals. The advent of the railway had created a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it brought prosperity and its departmental managers participated in the 'polite' and 'respectable' gatherings of chapel or church in 'Railway Derby'; they helped organise 'rational' games of cricket, and the drills on parade grounds. Conversely, the new industry greatly expanded the population and created two communities, making the contest for urban control and 'rationality' more challenging. Workers' self-determination resonated, paradoxically, with the business acumen and stability of the Co-operative Society and the turbulent times of strike action and 'irrational' leisure pursuits, such as the pub, street football, markets and fairs.[135] These public and popular meeting places gave the workers opportunities to socialise without the watchful eye of the patriarch, the employer, the clergy or a member of the Temperance Society. Indeed, they gave the worker a sense of freedom, of independence, and self-reliance.

The market square in the medieval core of the town had provided the venue for public entertainments during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The new places of mass entertainment, opened from the 1850s, were located on the Morledge and the Holmes on the southern edge of the old

[134] *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*; J. Hinton, 'The Rise of the Mass Labour Movement: Growth and Limits', in C. Wrigley (ed.), *A History of British Industrial Relations, 1875-1914* (Brighton, 1982), p.20.
[135] For a historiographical review, see Griffin, 'Popular Culture', pp.619-35.

town, adjacent to the railway district.[136] The *Star Theatre* Music Hall and the *Canvas Theatre* on the Morledge, which specialised in melodrama, were the two most important venues for mass entertainment and were sited conveniently to attract audiences from both the old and new industrial areas.[137] The Morledge, an open space which linked the town centre with the Siddals Road into Litchurch, provided an 'informal' zone for traders, hawkers and street entertainers, who were an important constituent of commercial popular entertainment. The Morledge was regarded as an open space of 'rude recreation'; the *Mercury*, for example, published a letter which described a late night disturbance on Ashbourne Road as 'like the Morledge at fair time'.[138] Indeed, the Morledge appeared to have a distinct place within the non-work routines of Derby's residents. For the very poor, it was vital to the family economy for the purchase of cheap food and household goods, as well as providing commercial entertainment. It also attracted the 'polite' and 'respectable' urban elite — 'it was like a day's holiday to be taken to the Morledge, you could see all sorts there'. The market provided weekend shopping trips where, on a dark winter night, there was 'a cacophony of competing traders promoting their wares 'through the flickering brilliance of naphtha flares'.[139]

The market and fair, located either on the Holmes or on the Morledge, provided a space for social and leisure activities, where the town's workers could escape the constraints of acceptable conduct, away from the gaze of managers of the Midland Railway and the employers of the textile factory and the iron foundry. Certainly, during the debate over the incorporation of Litchurch in the late 1860s, local councillors commented on the lack of facilities for recreation in Litchurch and the fact that large numbers of people came into

[136] See Fig 6.1, p.230 for the location of the Holmes and the Morledge.
[137] E. Lord, *Derby Past* (Chichester, 1996), pp.76-88; A.W. Davison, *Derby, its Rise and Progress* (Wakefield, 1970), pp.77, 81, 105, 133, 230; B. Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working class Men in Britain, 1850-1945* (2004) for general information on the Music Hall.
[138] *DM*, 21 June 1884.
[139] DLSL, R.S. Bowman, *Derby in the Eighteen-Nineties: Some Memories* (Derby, 1960), pp.5-7; see E. Griffin, *England's Revelry: A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2005), pp.19-25.

Derby from this suburb at the weekend for their entertainment. The Siddals and London Road, for example, which were the direct routes to the town, were frequently the scene of late night disturbances.[140] Ironically, the Arboretum, a park for genteel leisure activities, donated to the town by Joseph Strutt in 1840, was nearby. Its location represented old-style paternalism and polite society; the open spaces of the Holmes and the Moreledge, and the private spaces of the local pubs, catered for mass entertainment and popular recreation.[141]

Railway workers were especially associated with public houses in the Litchurch district, particularly the *Brunswick* and the *Railway* on Railway Terrace and the *Midland* on Nelson Street. These pubs were, like the London Road chapel, important for the hiring of piecework gangs, as well as providing meeting places for friendly societies and union branches. To frequent a public house was not necessarily in conflict with a lifestyle of thrift and self-help. The Midland Railway Literary Institute, for example, was started after an informal meeting in the *Brunswick Inn*. Within the railway workforce, the pub was potentially a venue for 'respectable' social practices. However, not all pubs were regarded in this vein. Pratt contrasts the 'common singing room' found amongst the warren of streets between the Siddals Road and London Road with the *Midland Tap*, 'where drivers of the old school would congregate to declaim their accumulated wisdom for the benefit of deferential juniors'.[142] The pubs of Canal Street, adjacent to the station, were of dubious status, recognised as the location for petty dealers and traders in goods of uncertain origin, particularly poached game.[143] The pub provided a communal space where workers could meet without the discipline of the workplace, but still retain their workplace identities as a means of socialisation. In this informal setting, it was possible to participate in the exchange of ideas and information,

[140] *DM,* 9 October 1867.
[141] For the Arboretum, see above, pp.163-5.
[142] Pratt, *Midland Railway*, p.36.
[143] *DM*, 5 October 1873.

which made the pub a significant place for social intercourse, the sharing of ideas, and the development of a collective sense of identity.[144]

It was, indeed, a multi-functional institution, being a place of refreshment and entertainment, a club, a shop, a library and a newsroom. It was relatively open and flexible in patterns of participation and it was this openness, together with its multi-functionalism, which gave the pub its strength and attraction.[145] This pub culture accommodated those workers whose income was irregular and, therefore, inhibited those forms of leisure which required regular and planned involvement. The pub provided a place for leisure time that was more flexible, less formal, and with a minimum of fixed obligations. Most of the pub-centred recreations combined this flexibility in participation with standards of dress, membership and conduct which were minimal. This contrasted starkly with many other 'polite' leisure facilities, where thresholds of entry were much higher, and participation prescribed to a much greater extent.[146] The pub was the centre of social life. The efforts of the urban elite to impose rational alternatives merely served to 'confirm and more clearly define the pub culture, not to erode it'.[147]

Conclusion

Derby's experience of the 'age of equipoise' is, perhaps, best summarised by Jose Harris, when she described mid-Victorian society as 'ramshackle and amorphous', epitomised by 'a myriad of contradictory trends and opinions, and capable of evolving contingently in many different ways'.[148] Certainly, these years of so-called social harmony created a kaleidoscope of associations and social relationships in the town which, in many ways, were more complex and

[144] See P. Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (1983), pp.41-4.
[145] B. Harrison, 'Pubs', in H.J. Dyos and M. Wolff (eds*.), The Victorian City: Images and Realities* (1973), vol.1, pp.169-70; P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford,1989*)*, pp.144-5, 175-7; *History of Leisure,* p.31; R.D. Storch (ed.), *Popular Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (1982), pp.127, 135.
[146] Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, Chapter 2. See above for the Mechanics' Institute, pp.157-63.
[147] Thompson, *Rise of Respectable Society*, pp.328, 322.
[148] Harris, *Private Lives*, p.3.

nuanced than the more sharply defined and dichotomous nature of the Derby Lock-Out and Chartist activity. Several factors created this more complex and subtle social milieu, which shaped relationships and social structures, post 1850. The evidence from this chapter points strongly to a period of contrasting images, reflected in those aspects of social harmony, such as community cohesion, collaboration, unity of purpose, and shared visions, and those of social diversity and division, such as strike action, street demonstrations, recreational competition, and localism.

Derby's relative social harmony was nurtured by a collaborative working partnership of the urban elite and the county set, which supported a range and variety of clubs, institutions and sports teams. These associations were influenced by a mix of old-style paternalism, religious revivalism, and the new-style corporate culture of the Midland Railway — a cultural cocktail of rational recreation and top-down diffusion, which provided opportunities for workers to mix with 'polite society' and emulate their 'betters'.[149] Social emulation proved to be one of the key factors in forging a civil society and urban cohesion.[150]

Political and religious networks gave a powerful steer to communal endeavours. Politically, the nonconformist Whig-Liberals sustained good working relationships with the Tories and the local and county gentry.[151] The leading members of both the Wesleyan Chapel and St Andrew's Church reflected this cordiality. Elders of the chapel included Sir James Alport and Matthew Kirtley, General Manager of the Midland Railway Company and senior supervisor respectively, and Abraham Woodiwiss, Mayor of Derby. St Andrew's patrons included the Duke of Devonshire, the Mundy family of Markeaton Hall, and the Wilmot family of Osmaston Hall. The collegiate social networks of the

[149] Bailey, *Leisure and Class,* pp.154-5; J.M. Golby and A.W. Purdue, *The Civilization of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England, 1750-1900* (Stroud, 1999), p.106.
[150] H. Perkin, *Origins of Modern English Society* (1969*)*, p.93; see also 'The Social Causes of the Industrial Revolution', in Perkin, *The Structured Crowd: Essays in Social History* (Brighton, 1981).
[151] E. Griffin stresses the place of politics and power in popular culture in 'Popular Culture', p.627.

urban and county elites were reflected strongly in the attendance at the laying of the foundation stone for St Andrew's, and the celebratory lunch afterwards.[152]

The benefits of this cultural collegiality were not lost on the town's workforce. Strong and long-lasting 'rituals of mutuality' were exemplified by the Carpenters' and Joiners' Union, the founding members of the Derby Co-operative Society, who recognised that a more open and inclusive membership policy would guarantee business success.[153] The society encouraged greater cohesion and unity between the residents of the old town and 'Railway Derby' by allowing membership for railway workers and developing close ties with the Working Men's Association over site rentals. The all-grades union of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, many of whom were Co-operative Society members, was an important departure from the exclusivity of the craft unions and was instrumental in bringing workers together with a unity of purpose.[154]

Workers' unity and solidarity were enhanced by national issues, such as the Nine Hours' Movement in the late 1860s and 1870s.[155] The national delegate meeting held in Derby in 1871 promoted collective action in support of workers from the north-east. It also helped to emphasise the civic and national importance of the town, as well as highlighting the traditional symbols of popular protest and unity of action. Indeed, the 'grand demonstrations' in the market place of some 2,000 workers, with accompanying bands and banners, resonated with the town's Chartist agitation of the 1840s. These public gatherings were significant occasions for collective action and common bonding, which demonstrated the shared aspirations and values of workers. As Malcolm Chase has suggested, such 'rituals of assembly' helped to affirm

[152] See above, pp.232-3.
[153] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1991 edition), pp.456-69.
[154] Cole and Postgate, *The Common People,* pp.367-83, 394-402.
[155] Pelling, *British Trade Unionism*, pp.72, 86.

social identity.[156] A consciousness of class, albeit intermittent and fragmented, and by no means homogeneous, began to emerge during the 1870s and 1880s. Whilst the urban and county elites promoted rational recreation through religion and their patronage of workers' clubs and institutions, strike action on the railway promoted a sense of class antagonism through banners emblazoned with the language of class.[157]

Social division and fragmentation were exacerbated by the initial rivalry between the disparate communities of 'Railway Derby' and the old town, especially during the bitter campaign over the incorporation of Litchurch into the borough of Derby in 1868.[158] The intermittent sectional strike action of the craft unions, and the fragmentation of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants over the Railway Orphanage, encouraged internecine strife and competition. Even the town's clubs and institutions, which fostered co-operation and unity, had the potential to fracture any sense of social cohesion, as the rivalry over membership between the Mechanics' Institute and the Working Men's Association exemplified. Religious differences were also emphasised during Whitsuntide festivities when the Wesleyan Chapel insisted on rational recreational activities in the Arboretum and the St Andrew's congregation enjoyed games and sport at Osmaston Hall. The potential for inter-community rivalry was exacerbated with the influx of migrant railway workers. Inter-departmental tensions on the railway and the traditional rivalry of the annual football match between the parishes of St Peter's and All Saints' epitomised a competitive community.[159]

The cultural and social capital of Derby's associational world, therefore, embraced both social harmony and social division. Plebeian values of respectability, self-help, independence and self-improvement, which typified many of the workers' associations, were also shared by those of the

[156] M. Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester, 2007), p.4.
[157] S. Roberts (ed.), *The Dignity of Chartism: Essays by Dorothy Thompson* (2015), p.xxv.
[158] *DM*, 17 March 1868.
[159] See above, pp.165-8.

bourgeoisie.[160] These proved all-embracing and, as Towner has suggested, these shared values straddled 'tidy social demarcations', creating a cultural diffusion which was in a state of constant interaction and inter-change.[161] Peter Burke has even argued that this constituted a shared culture, which created a common bond between social groups.[162] Care needs to be taken, however, in over-emphasising the moderating impact of a shared culture on social divisions.[163] Whilst social and leisure activities might have been shared, they were invariably shared in different ways, which reflected inequalities in wealth, power and status.[164]

Whilst patronage, top-down diffusion and social emulation were important factors in forging Derby's associations and influencing social structures, it was also evident that the workers tended to retain those elements of socio-cultural activities and relationships, which suited their purpose and reject those elements that proved inappropriate and unproductive. This fluid cultural osmosis, referred to by Roger Chartier as 'appropriation', helped shape the workers' aspirations and independence.[165] As Bailey has argued, cultural forms were not rooted to specific socio-structural formations.[166] As the evidence has shown, many workers continued to frequent places of 'ill-repute', like the pubs, markets and fairs, whilst still enjoying various rational recreational pursuits; members of the Railway Literary Institute, the Midland Club, and the Derbyshire Rifle Volunteers, enjoyed the soirees and promenades of 'polite society'; members of the Derby Co-operative Society represented a beacon of independence, self-help and self-improvement.[167] Railway employees were

[160] M. Savage, *Social Class in the 21st Century* (2015), p.35.
[161] See J. Towner, *A Historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World, 1540-1940* (Chichester, 1996), pp.267-9 for a critique of top-down cultural diffusion.
[162] P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1979), pp.23-9, 58, 270-81.
[163] T. Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Brighton, 1980), pp.223-42.
[164] T. Mason (ed.), *Sport in Britain: A Social History* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.15-16.
[165] See Griffin. 'Popular Culture', p.630.
[166] P. Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge, 1998), pp.10-11.
[167] See N. Robertson, *The Co-operative Movement*, pp.1-10; B. Potter (Mrs. Sidney Webb), *The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain* [1891] (2009 edition), pp.32-58.

willing to take strike action whilst applauding, in deferential and paternalistic terms, the work of Matthew Kirtley.[168]

This complex and contrasting associational world certainly created social identities which were blurred at the edges. If social harmony were based on a pragmatic *rapprochement* of the workers and the urban elite, it was, as Cannadine so aptly concluded, a social bargain forged by 'what culture does to inequality and social structure'. During an age of equipoise and angst, class was multi-dimensional and time-related, manifesting itself in three inter-related ways. Sometimes, as a hierarchy represented by a social ladder, or 'seamless web', with no major barriers between the various strata; as 'triadic…with upper, middle and lower collective groups'; or as 'dichotomous', with a fundamental division between 'us' and 'them'.[169] At different times, through their recreation and work, and through their associations, Derby's workers chose to climb the social ladder through emulation, experience the controlling paternalism of the urban elite, or struggle for empowerment through strike action. By doing so, however, collective identity became fragmented within a multi-layered social milieu.[170] During the years 1850 to 1890, the evidence from Derby highlights a period of compromise, contrast, and pragmatism, a time of civic cohesion and fragmentation, an era in which a multiplicity of overlapping social groups evolved from the town's associational world. It was, essentially, a time of 'fruitful tension, and accommodation, between social continuity and conservatism, and economic innovation and discontinuity'.[171]

[168] See above, p.247.
[169] D. Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 2000), quotation on p.188; see also pp.19-20, 170.
[170] Thompson, *Rise of Respectable Society,* pp.359-61; see also Cannadine, *Class*, p.165.
[171] Thompson, *Rise of Respectable Society*, p.30.

Conclusion

This thesis has been concerned with the various ways in which the people of the 'little State' of Derby envisaged and understood their social world. The study has, for the first time, provided a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the social and cultural progress of the town over a period of two centuries. It has explored Derby's journey from a cultural backwater to a thriving county town with a national reputation for enlightened ideas, civic philanthropy and a reformist, sometimes radical, platform. At its core has been the growth of clubs and societies, which initiated and resonated with the symbiotic connections of industry, culture and social identity. The thesis has confirmed Derby as an important and distinctive urban space, which deserves wider recognition. Whilst local historians have described the town's progress in a rather piecemeal and disjointed way, this study has presented an analysis, which adds to urban knowledge, labour history, the evolution of an associative culture and the historiography of class. It is the first time that such a detailed research overview has been undertaken for Derby and, hopefully, the study will make a major contribution to the revival of interest in the city, alongside other developments, including the Derwent Valley UNESCO World Heritage Site Information Centre and the newly refurbished Derby Silk Mill Museum.

The study has been, primarily, an urban biography with an emphasis on social history, which has highlighted the synergy of industry, consumerism, leisure and class through the prism of the town's associational world. The pivotal focus has been the relentless pursuit by the urban elite and the workers for recognition, status and self-worth. This process of empowerment has been analysed through the contrasting urban images of wealth and poverty, rationality and rebelliousness, polite and popular cultures, elegant civic buildings and squalid living conditions. These contrasts created an ever-widening cultural wedge between the bourgeoisie and the workers. They also

helped shape their social relationships and social identity. Such cultural differentiation has been reflected in contrasting associations.

David Cannadine has quite rightly emphasised that 'there is a constant need to do full justice to the local, the particular, the individual and the idiosyncratic'.[1] This case study of Derby has attempted to do just that. It has also, however, gone beyond the local and the parochial by placing the town in the vanguard of an enlightened and industrial age. An examination of the growth of associations has revealed the town to be an important urban space, which deserves a much higher profile in the national historiography of the industrial enlightenment. Several examples have proved the point. The iconic silk mill of circa 1720 was the first factory to be built in England and the town's philosophical and corresponding societies were amongst the earliest; William Strutt's fireproof mills were ground-breaking; the Mechanics' Institute provided an early example of rational recreation, as did the Arboretum, the first public park in the country; the Derby Lock-Out instigated the first general trades' union and the town's Chartists were closely connected to the national leadership and were in the forefront of radical action; the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants was the first general union in the railway industry.[2]

The importance of associations and networks has a particular resonance with work by Niall Ferguson, who suggests that 'historians…have until very recently tended to ignore, or at least to downplay, the role of networks'. He goes on to suggest that 'often the biggest changes in history are the achievements of thinly documented, informally organized groups of people'.[3] Whilst his research covers a global perspective of associations and hierarchies in the quest for power, the research on Derby, nevertheless, contributes to the

[1] D. Cannadine, (ed.), *Patricians, Power and Politics in Nineteenth Century Towns* (1982), p.7.
[2] For the silk mill, see above p.45; Derby Philosophical Society, pp.111-16; for the Corresponding Society, pp.118-122; for fireproof mills, pp.46, 104-6; for the Mechanics' Institute, pp.157-63; for the Arboretum, pp.163-5; for the Derby Lock-Out, pp.180-92; for Chartism, pp.193-214; for the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, pp.248-51.
[3] N. Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower: Networks, Hierarchies and the Struggle for Global Power* (2017), p.xix.

historiography of industrialisation, urbanisation and the impact of power structures. The thesis also substantiates many of Joel Mokyr's ideas regarding the 'industrial enlightenment' and the impact on the associative world of the 'vital few' — the 'fabricants' and the 'savants'.[4] An emphasis on Chartist activity in Derby, the growth of the Derby Co-operative Society, the move to general unionism during the Lock-Out and strikes on the Midland Railway, adds significant new evidence to labour history and the important contribution of the workers in shaping the contest for urban space and social identity.[5]

The early chapters have demonstrated the importance of an influential industrial elite. The town's sustained economic prosperity was based upon the wealth created by these industrialists. They were supported by the local aristocracy and gentry, who wished to share in the fruits of the knowledge economy and the town's fashionable society. This joint endeavour was reflected in commercial enterprise, an interest in natural philosophy and the arts, and a zealous regard for 'money getting'. This new-found and inclusive relationship was epitomised by the building of the new assembly rooms during the 1760s. For the first time, members of the urban elite were invited to the balls and soirees of the county set. Moreover, industrialists, men of letters, and a newly emerging professional class, mixed with the gentry in masonic lodges and philosophical societies. Ideas were shared, values were debated, and the challenges of an industrialising society were discussed. These associations led to enhanced social status and the beginnings of a sense of bourgeois bonding.[6]

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[4] J. Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution, 1700-1850* (2011); see above for Derby's 'vital few', pp.47-53, 76-9, 81-3, 94-111, 142.

[5] See M. Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester, 2007) and *The Chartists: Perspectives and Legacies* (2015); N. Robertson, *The Co-operative Movement and Communities in Britain, 1914-1960: Minding their own Business* (2016); E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (2014); K. Laybourn and J. Shepherd (eds.), *Labour and Working Class Lives: Essays to celebrate the Life of Chris Wrigley* (Manchester, 2017); see above for Chartism, pp.193-214; for the Derby Co-operative Society, pp.237-44; for the Derby Lock-Out, pp.180-92; for strike and union action, pp.244-54.

[6] See above for sustained economic prosperity, pp.42-53, 75-91; for the knowledge economy, pp.93-111; for the arts, pp.131-41; for the assembly rooms, pp.143-6; for freemasonry, pp.91-3, philosophical societies, pp.111-16; for street football, pp.165-8.

Later chapters have provided a counterpoint to bourgeois bonding by examining plebeian challenges to the status quo. These challenges have been reflected in the years of struggle from 1824 to 1850, when the framework-knitters' strike, Reform Bill riots, the Derby Lock-Out and Chartism rocked the foundations of Derby's polite society. These years plainly showed a popular political momentum and a collective desire for change, which led inexorably to an extension of the franchise, primarily to urban areas. The final chapter has probed the extent to which the mid-Victorian era of social harmony was evident in the town. The conflicting demands of the corporate culture and the new-style paternalism of the Midland Railway, the emerging leisure activities of church and chapel, and the self-determined efforts of the Co-operative Society and railway unionism, have challenged the historiographical orthodoxy of the 'age of equipoise' by presenting a local picture of the competition for social status and the struggle for empowerment.[7]

The paradox of an associative culture has been evident throughout the thesis. Values, ideas and ideologies, and new ways of looking at society, nurtured solidarity, collaboration and urban cohesion. Conversely, associations were, also, agents of agitation and dissent, born out of social inequality and injustice, which led to social antagonism. Two kinds of association have been identified — the formal, typified by sustainable and rational organisations, with structure and rules; and the informal, epitomised by loose affiliations of a more transitory and visceral nature. The former has been exemplified by the Philosophical Society, urban commissions, the Mechanics' Institute, the Derby Co-operative Society, and trade unionism; the latter by commercial networks, literary friendships, crowd action and popular leisure pursuits. Whatever form

[7] See above for the framework-knitters' strike, p.174; Reform Bill riots, pp.175-80; for the Derby Lock-Out, pp.180-92; for Chartism, pp.193-214; for new-style paternalism, pp.221-6; the leisure activities of church and chapel, pp.225-34; the Derby Co-operative Society pp.237-44; railway unionism, pp.244-54.

associations took, however, they resonated with popular and elite cultures and were powerful agents of bourgeois and plebeian collective action.[8]

Five key findings have emerged from this study of Derby's associational world. Firstly, traditional interpretations of the industrial revolution and economic growth have been challenged by the complex synergy of economic, cultural and social capital. This resonates with recent work by Emma Griffin, who stresses that social and cultural changes were at the core of the industrial revolution.[9] In fact, there is little evidence of an industrial revolution in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Derby. Whilst the town's silk mill of circa 1720 has rightly been credited as the progenitor of the factory system in England, sustained economic development was the result of piecemeal, evolutionary processes, rather than the cataclysmic impact described by commentators, such as Toynbee and Marx.[10] The town's industrialisation, population growth and urbanisation were shaped and defined up to the 1840s by a socio-cultural evolution, rather than an industrial revolution. Certainly, the economy was driven by the industrious Arkwright, Evans and Strutt families' capacity to create wealth, which provided an impetus for an emerging polite and fashionable society.[11] Technological innovation also played a major part in stimulating economic growth, as did the local natural resources of water and coal.[12] Even so, ideas and values, the diffusion of knowledge, social emulation, and high aspirations, set in train the evolutionary processes. The seedbeds for socio-economic transition and emerging social identities were the accumulation of human capital and the knowledge economy, both of which were nurtured in diverse and vibrant associations.[13]

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[8] See above for examples of formal associations: Freemasonry, pp.91-3; Derby Philosophical and Political Societies, pp.111-16, 118-22; urban commissions, pp.146-9; for the Mechanics' Institute, pp.157-63; for the Derby Co-operative Society, pp.237-44; trade unionism, pp.244-54. For informal associations, see commercial networks, pp.76-91, 142; literary friendships, pp.139-40; crowd action, pp.65-72, 165-8; popular leisure pursuits, pp.156, 254-7.

[9] E. Griffin, 'Diets, Hunger and Living Standards during the British Industrial Revolution', *Past and Present*, 239 (2018), p.111.

[10] See above, pp.5-7.

[11] See above for wealth creation, pp.76-91; for polite society, pp.131-46.

[12] See above for technological innovation, pp.44-53; for water, pp.45-6; for coal, pp.55-6, 83-5.

[13] See above for the knowledge economy, pp.93-116.

Socio-economic discontinuity came to Derby with the advent of the railway in the 1840s, which proved to be a watershed in the town's development. This much later date runs counter to the traditional timing of the industrial revolution by historians such as Mantoux, Rostow, Hobsbawm and Borsay.[14] Whilst railway workers built on the evolutionary tradition of Derby's iron-working and precision engineering, a revolution in industrial technology, urban infrastructure, and ways of working, dominated Derby's mid-Victorian years. Two contiguous areas — the Litchurch district of 'Railway Derby' and the ancient five parishes located around the market place — competed for urban space and cultural hegemony. The speed of industrial change, and the transformative impact of the railway, challenged economic and cultural traditions and forged new visions of what was possible in the 'little State' of Derby. There is no doubt that an industrial revolution, a severe discontinuity, occurred from the 1840s onwards, which drastically changed the urban landscape, prompted a religious revival, and ushered in a period of political reform. The town's industrial revolution, based on the Midland Railway, was a watershed moment, which changed irrevocably the nature of the town's associative culture and created the catalyst for the contrasting images of the post-1850 years.[15]

This leads to the second key finding — the paradox of the mid-Victorian years. Historical interpretations suggest that this was an 'age of equipoise', one of social harmony and of social compromise. This was only partially true of Derby. The bitter unrest and civil strife of the Lock-Out and Chartism, followed by the railway-inspired industrial revolution, and Edward Cresy's reports of appalling living conditions in the urban core, combined to create a lengthy period of uncertainty.[16] It was a time of unease, when the old order was changing and both the town's elite and its workers were searching for answers to cope with

[14] See above for Mantoux, Rostow and Hobsbawm, pp.6-7; for Borsay, p.22.
[15] See above for the crucial role of the Midland Railway in socio-economic discontinuity, pp.48-9, 55-8, 244-54.
[16] See above for the Derby Lock-Out, pp.180-92; Chartism, pp.193-214; Cresy's reports, pp.63-4.

industrial transformation and a rapidly expanding population.[17] The nature of Derby's associations changed to address the industrial, commercial and social impact of the Midland Railway, the evangelicalism of church and chapel, and a more self-assured and confident workforce.

A sense of social harmony and collective identity was forged by the unity and solidarity created by the corporate culture of the railway, but other factors resulted in social fragmentation. The hierarchical structure of the Midland Railway resulted in the departmentalised segmentation of leisure activities. The provision of rational recreational pursuits encouraged congregational competition between chapel and church. Railway unionism and strike action challenged the apparent years of social harmony. National initiatives like the Nine Hours' Movement brought the workers together, whilst localism and arguments over financial management drove a wedge between the London and Derby committees of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. The town's workforce experienced a socio-cultural, as well as an economic, revolution during the complex and untidy mid-Victorian years.[18]

The sustained high quality of leadership throughout the period of the study is the third key finding. The cohesive relationships of the urban and county elites contrasted markedly with the conventional picture of county towns being divided along political, religious and economic lines.[19] Collaboration and collegiality engendered powerful bourgeois socio-economic and political associations, which were based on patronage, the knowledge economy and political expediency, epitomised by Erasmus Darwin and William and Joseph

[17] See above for census returns, Fig. 2.2, p.40.
[18] See above for factors supporting social harmony: the Midland Railway, pp.221-5; educational and recreational facilities, pp.231, 233-4; the Nine Hours' Movement, pp.245-8; the Working Men's Association, pp.226-9; the Derby Co-operative Society, pp.237-44. For factors creating social fragmentation: Midland Railway strike action, pp.244-54; localism and financial management, pp.192, 252; the Temperance Movement, pp.234-6; popular culture, pp.254-7.
[19] See R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: the Making of the British Middle Class in Leeds, 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990).

Strutt, as well as Michael Thomas Bass, MP for Derby and a major shareholder in the Midland Railway Company.[20]

The work of bourgeois urban commissioners and members of building committees resulted in elegant town houses, new assembly rooms, the Derbyshire General Infirmary and the Arboretum. Such allegories of power, whilst highlighting cultural and social differentiation, also provided a leadership model and a social template for the town's workers.[21] Social emulation was not only the preserve of the urban elite. There emerged over the period of the study a recognition that, if workers were to share in the fruits of the cultural evolution and help shape the town's industrial revolution, they would need to unite and organise. Associations provided the social spaces for collective empowerment and the seedbeds for plebeian leadership. This was not lost on influential local leaders, such as John Hall, the District Secretary of the first combined trades' union during the 1833-1834 Lock-Out, the Chartists John Clayton, Jonathan Bairstow and John Skevington, and Robert Hilliard, Manager of the Derby Co-operative Society.[22]

Throughout the town's long period of socio-cultural evolution, followed by its fast-paced industrial revolution, a wide social mix of well-informed, knowledgeable, and politically astute plebeian leaders broadened the concept of Mokyr's 'vital few', the 'fabricants' and the 'savants'. Whilst recognising that the 'enlightened economy' and the industrial revolution remained a 'minority affair' of the bourgeoisie, the evidence from Derby has confirmed that the 'vital few' represented a much wider social spectrum, over a longer time-frame, than Mokyr suggests.[23]

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[20] See above for patronage, pp.76-9, 100-1; the knowledge economy, pp.93-111; political expediency, pp.116-7; for Darwin, pp.51, 89, 110, 147, 149; for William Strutt, pp.51, 75, 85-6, 104-7, 149-51, 157; for Joseph Strutt, pp.62, 71, 84, 120-1, 157, 163-5, 210; for Bass, pp.153, 214, 248-51.
[21] See above for urban commissions, pp.146-9; building committees for churches and chapels, pp.151-4, 230-3; assembly rooms, pp.143-5; the Derbyshire General Infirmary, pp.149-51; the Arboretum, pp.163-5.
[22] See above for John Hall, p.180; local Chartist leaders, pp.196-206, 212; Robert Hilliard, p.254.
[23] See above for Derby's 'vital few', pp.94-111.

This long tradition of diverse and strong leadership provided associations with continuity and a measure of stability. Paternalism played an important part in the promotion and support of clubs, institutions, and sporting activities.[24] Derby's long tradition of philanthropy and civic benevolence, established by the wealthy and powerful Strutt family, was continued into the mid-Victorian period by the prosperous and influential Michael Thomas Bass. Not only was he a supporter of railway unionism, but also the civic benefactor of the public swimming baths and surrounding park, the town's art gallery, museum and library, and the Bass Recreation Ground.[25] Such generosity complemented the strong support from members of the urban elite for 'polite' cultural institutions and plebeian participation in rational recreation. Paternalism helped to shape a symbolic civic identity, which was influential in developing a sense of community and place amongst the town's urban elite. It was an important element in providing the social glue that helped bind communities together. The old-style factory paternalism of the Strutts, and the political paternalism of Bass, smoothed the way for the new corporate culture of the Midland Railway Company, in which middle and senior railway managers provided surrogate patriarchs in support of workers' associations.[26]

Paternalism, in whatever form, served as a social bridge between the old town and 'Railway Derby', and between the bourgeoisie and the workers. It helped create a unity of purpose and sociability between the two communities and forged positive social relationships. Indeed, the iconic importance of the railway cannot be overstated. At various points in the civic calendar, such as the Arboretum Festival, a Royal visit, or the Royal Agricultural Show, visiting dignitaries arrived by train; all processions and parades began at the station and worked their way through Litchurch to the town centre, thus promoting a

[24] P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (1978), pp.65-72; *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge, 1998), pp.13-29. See above for clubs, pp.221-5; the Working Men's Association, pp.226-9; rational recreation, pp.231, 233-4.
[25] M. Craven, *Derbeians of Distinction* (Derby, 1998), p.28.
[26] See above for examples of paternalism, pp.62-3, 208, 221-5, 248-51.

sense of civic pride and symbolic geographical ties between the two communities.[27]

The fourth key finding has been the fluctuating and sometimes contradictory sense of class consciousness, which emerged from the town's intricate associational and industrial world and created 'a far more complex, and unequal, society than that which it replaced'.[28] The study has resisted overly-simplistic categorisations of class, because of the complexity and fluidity of the interactions between cultural and social capital. Associations and relationships were crystallised in Derby's clubs and societies. Different social groupings and identities evolved that were shaped by a variety of ideologies. These cut across each other and merged, challenging the notion of a clear-cut class perspective. The Derby Lock-Out and Chartism best illustrate this conundrum with a mix of Marxist ideology, traditional myths and rituals, and the use of an essentially political language.[29]

During Derby's cultural evolution and, subsequently, its industrial revolution, it is evident that the workers were not solely meek recipients of bourgeois largesse or paternalism. They did, in fact, demonstrate a spirit of enterprise, a boldness in upholding traditional values, and a growing political awareness. Crucially, the workers' growing independence and self-belief gave them the confidence to counter social control and choose to retain or reject the rational recreation and polite lifestyle of the urban elite. Whilst top-down cultural diffusion remained an important aspect of social identity, increasingly a cultural osmosis was influencing the nature of class relations, which were becoming transitory and fluid. Appropriation and social emulation by the workers and the urban elite blurred the edges of the social pyramid.[30] There is scant evidence

[27] *DM*, 18 December 1872, 6 June 1881, 27 June 1887.
[28] Griffin, 'Diet, Hunger and Living Standards', p.110.
[29] See above for the Derby Lock-Out, pp.182-5, 187-90; for Chartism, pp.195-6, 201-7, 208-14. For further examples relating to crowd action and the moral economy, see pp.65-72.
[30] See above for examples of appropriation and self-determination: the Working Men's Association, pp.226-9, the Derby Co-operative Society, pp.237-44, for social opportunities provided by church and chapel, pp.231-4; examples of social emulation by the urban elite through freemasonry, pp.91-3, the Philosophical Society, pp.113-5, the arts, pp.135-9.

of a permanent homogeneous middle class or working class in Derby during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, the study supports David Cannadine's national perspective:

> British society has never been a single, unitary, integrated hierarchy; it has never been divided into three hermetically sealed and homogeneous collectivities…it has never been so deeply divided that the masses were likely to rise-up and overthrow their betters.[31]

The fifth key finding concerns the importance of Derby as an urban space. An economic transformation and a flourishing consumer market, forged a sophisticated social, intellectual and cultural 'polite society'. The influence of Derby's natural philosophers, many of whom were also affluent industrialists, the quality of its urban leaders and its creative community of savants and fabricants, created a modern, pluralistic urban space well served by a sophisticated network of canals and railways and a flourishing knowledge economy. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Derby's economic, cultural and political sphere of influence went far beyond its surrounding countryside, so much so that its status within the urban hierarchy was raised to that of a provincial capital.[32] Strong links with the Lunar Society and the Leicestershire-based 5th Earl Ferrers, masonic connections with Benjamin Franklin, links with the French Revolutionary Convention, and the powerful economic connections of the Midland Railway, confirmed the important combination of industrial and cultural functions.[33]

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[31] D. Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 2000), p.165.
[32] P.J. Corfield, 'Urban development in England and Wales in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in D.C. Coleman and A.H. John (eds.), *Trade, Government, and Economy in Pre-Industrial England* (1976), pp.221-3; P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), p.4.
[33] See above for Derby's growing regional and national importance exemplified by links to the Lunar Society, pp.41, 50, 79, 89, 100, 142; Washington Shirley, pp. 92, 102-3, 143; Benjamin Franklin and masonic connections, pp.92, 101.

The factors above led to the town's exceptionally rapid and sustained growth. A potent mix of commercial activities and a polite culture proved to be a springboard for urban success. As Sweet has suggested, however, polite society would not flourish in a place where money was quickly gained and lavishly spent.[34] Derby's success as an urban space was assured by a judicious balance in meeting the challenges of industrialisation and the creation of an urbane, philanthropic and polite society. Major innovations in industrial technology were, for example, first applied to the manufacture of luxury consumer goods, such as Duesbury's china and the silk and cotton manufactured by the Strutt family; William Strutt's fireproof buildings and heating and ventilation systems were an important element of civic and social improvement in the design of the Derbyshire General Infirmary.[35] This powerful synergy of the quantitative and qualitative elements of urban living was the driving force behind the town's industrial and cultural awakening and led to the enhanced national standing of the 'little State' of Derby during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, David Hume's vision of society epitomises the town's urban renaissance and industrial enlightenment and provides a fitting end to the study:

> the spirit of the age affects all the arts; and the minds of men, being roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides and carry improvements into every art and science.[36]

[34] R. Sweet, 'Topographies of politeness', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Series, 12 (2002), p.365.
[35] See above for an overview of links between technology and the consumer economy, pp.49-53; more specifically, Duesbury china, pp.50-1, silk and cotton, pp.45-6, fireproof buildings and heating and ventilation, pp.46, 105-6, 151.
[36] D. Hume, 'Of Refinement in the Arts' (1741-2), in S. Copley and A. Edgar (eds.), *Selected Essays* (Oxford, 1993), p.168.

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