

NORTH EAST POPULAR POLITICS PROJECT

Newsletter 7

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Contents: NEPP Events; How to proceed?; Notes from Project Members; Reading; The Visual Representation of NE Working Class Life 1802-1860; Property and Power in Early Victorian Gateshead; Rev Charles Weston; Daniel Liddell; Association of Cotton Weavers 1810-1820.

NEPPP AT NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS' PICNIC



Several Popular Politics Project volunteers collected a large number of personal memories of the Co-op at the Northumberland Miners' Picnic at the Woodhorn Museum near Ashington on Saturday 9th June. The project had a prominent display, with images of Co-op stores in former pit villages and information about the history of the Co-operative Women's Guild. People from as far afield as Australia were delighted to give us their memories going back over many decades. Everyone could recall their mother's Divvy number. The BBC were at the event as part of their celebration of *The Great British Story* and we had a celebrity contributor, Paul Mooney of BBC's *Look North*, who recalled going to the Co-op in Clydebank near Glasgow when he was growing up. Liz O'Donnell's Oral History training paid-off well on the day. There was a lot of interest in the project, with people talking to us about our work and taking project flyers away with them.

Editorial. This newsletter concentrates on short fascinating articles written by Project members based on their researches which are work in progress: on the visual representation of working class life in the North East, property and power in Gateshead, Daniel Liddell, and the Association of Cotton Workers.

NEPPP EVENTS

Thursday 14 June. 7pm. `Politics in the Piggery': Chartism in the Ouseburn, 1838-1848.

NELH/NEPP talk by Mike Greatbach. Lit & Phil. The Ouseburn Chartists organised an independent association for political reform against a backdrop of local business expansion and transport developments that made this decade one of Ouseburn's most prosperous. So, who were these working men that succeeded in establishing an independent Chartist association during such changing times, and what factors influenced their actions? Mike Greatbach has championed the heritage of the Ouseburn since 1998 and is now a volunteer in the North East Popular Politics Project.

Saturday 16 June. 10am-4pm. People's History of Berwick and the Borders Day School. Berwick Youth Hostel, Dewars Lane Granary. NEPPP day school will be a practical introduction to ordinary people's stories in Berwick and the Border areas. You will hear of work already being done and the day will include sessions on the use of libraries and archives, the internet and training in oral history. Everyone is welcome but booking is essential. Contact ppp@nelh.org or 07761818384. There will be a collection on the day to cover room hire. Food will be available on the premises.

HOW TO PROCEED? - NOTE FROM JOHN CHARLTON

I have now seen 180 prospective volunteers since December 2010. Some do not proceed beyond that first meeting or shortly afterwards. This is not the moment for a full analysis of the reasons but one possibility stands out. Commitment is open-ended and for most people this postpones satisfaction indefinitely. Parcels of specific tasks with an end in sight may be a better way to proceed. So, when new people join the project they are now offered an initial four week task. For example at NCL a recent person has been allocated a Gateshead 1830s political scrapbook for a suggested four week period at the end of which they should have made a valuable specific contribution. This may precede (alone or with others) developing a longer term topic based project or simply starting a new 'four week' task. I would welcome comments on this strategy. johncharlton@blueyonder.co.uk.

NOTES FROM PROJECT MEMBERS

Eddie Milne, MP. Andrew White has been researching the Labour Party and the split with Eddie Milne, MP in the 1970s. He recalls that the BBC drama series *Our Friends In The North*, back in the 90s had a character called John Edwards who was very closely based on John Poulson, the shady architect whose corruption case proved that, to some extent, Eddie Milne's accusations of back handers within the Labour Party were not totally incorrect. It was Poulson's conviction for corruption in 1974 that spelled the end for Labour's Andrew Cunningham and T. Dan Smith.

Recommended Reading. Peter Skevington recommends that Project members read:
Cole and Postgate *The Common People 1746-1946*
Edward Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class*

Women's Co-operative Guild. Elizabeth Burn has been working on a play on the start of the Women's Co-operative Guild, and has held rehearsals.

READING

Manors and Maps in Rural England, from the Tenth Century to the Seventeenth. P.D.A. Harvey (Durham University). Variorum Collected Studies Series. contents include: *Boldon Book and the wards between Tyne and Tees.* Hbk 978-1-4094-0241-1 £85. www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409402411.

Books on North East from Boydell & Brewer

Letters of John Buddle to Lord Londonderry 1820-1843 edited by Anne Orde.

North-East England, 1569-1625: Governance, Culture and Identity. Diana Newton

Northern Landscapes. Representations and Realities of North-East England. Edited by Thomas Faulkner, Helen Berry & Jeremy Gregory.

The Keelmen of Tyneside. Labour Organisation and Conflict in the North-East Coal Industry, 1600-1830. Joseph M. Fewster.

The Letters of Henry Liddell to William Cotesworth [1708-17]. Edited by J.M. Ellis

Physician to the Fleet. The Life and Times of Thomas Trotter, 1760-1832. Brian Vale and Griffith Edwards. (Among other things Trotter was an anti-slavery supporter.

The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield, 1810-1926. Clergymen, Capitalists and Colliers. Robert Lee

North East England, 1850-1914. The Dynamics of a Maritime-Industrial Region. Graeme J. Milne

The Townscape of Darlington. Gillian Cookson, Christine M. Newman, Graham R. Potts

Further details on www.boydellandbrewer.com/special_offers.asp.

As they are expensive you might want to order them through your Library, including if necessary the inter-Library loan scheme.

If you do read a book that is relevant do please consider reviewing it for future issues of the newsletter.

THE VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF NORTH EAST WORKING CLASS LIFE 1802-1860

Terry Welsh writes:

To see life on the Tyne when the Industrial Revolution was underway, visit the Laing and get absorbed in William Daniell's huge landscape. Painted in 1802, it was bought for the gallery in 2005 with help from the National Art Collections Fund.

www.artfund.org/artwork/9559/view-of-newcastle-upon-tyne-taken-from-a-windmill-to-the-eastward-of-st-anns

To see the swagger and confidence on the river in 1860, visit Wallington and get absorbed in William Bell Scott's *Iron and Coal*.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:William_Bell_Scott_-_Iron_and_Coal.jpg

In those intervening 58 years life and landscape changed beyond recognition. The young boy in Daniell's painting, looking at the old bridge and the sailing boats, could have been an old man in 1860, looking at a photograph of a steam locomotive crossing the High Level Bridge.

Inspired by Daniell's I am looking for paintings, illustrations, engravings and photographs

documenting working class life in the period bookended by these two great works. I am also looking for documents about the social and political environment in which art was delivered.

The Ruling Classes

The new ruling classes generally wanted to buy pictures of unspoilt countryside, of their ships or of their animals, not of their workers. The catalogues of exhibitions of the time suggest that is what they were offered. But it is the few exceptions, work demonstrating an interest in industrial sites and the life of working people that have intriguing stories to search out. As an example, J. W. Carmichael is well known as a great marine painter but he painted the most sensational mining landscape that I have found so far.

www.googleartproject.com/collection/yale-center-for-british-art/artwork/a-view-of-murton-colliery-near-seaham-county-durham-john-wilson-carmichael/2362746

As another example, Henry Perlee Parker achieved social and commercial success in Newcastle, but he was interested in painting working class life and produced the first pictures of miners to be exhibited at the Royal Academy.

Radical and Social Aspects

There are a few works produced for radical political purposes, and potential research in the story of their production and political use. An example are engravings of the 1832 colliery evictions at Friars Goose.

www.britishmuseum.org/collectionimages/ANO0073/ANO0073181_001_l.jpg

Illustrations, in books, newspapers and magazines, such as those of Thomas Hair are informative and sometimes had social impact. In 1842 the *Royal Commission on Mining* report was published with illustrations of conditions in the mines and these influenced reform.

Other potential research subjects include:

- organisation's banners, especially miners' banners;
- working class representation in the first photographs of the North East in the 1850s
- specific paintings with a political though not a reformist or radical connection eg Mark Thompson's 1850 opening of Sunderland South Dock, said to be the first painting commissioned by a town council;
- the theories of Marxist art historians like T. J. Clark and Clement Greenberg applied to the North East. context;

NORTH EAST ARTISTS

George Boag. Born c. 1856. A descendent says that he was a "Locomotive foreman and a painter. Well known as an animal painter. Member of Berwick Club"... He had two brothers and a sister. Alfred (born 1851) was a coachbuilder (St Mary's Place) John (born 1859) was a "Master painter at Falconer Street until 1910 & at 2 Picton Place at 1879-1887", and Margaret who lived in Percy Street in 1922. The family has '8 or 9 paintings by

John Boag - mostly animals (dogs, horses in stables & sheep), a highland stag and one painting of people gathering sea coal with a

- the popular market for engravings and prints;
- North Eastern interest in radical foreign artists

Post 1860

NEPPP volunteers may be interested in visual representation in the years after 1860. Examples of artists are the Cullercoats Colony, Byron Dawson, Ralph Hedley, and the photographer Keith Pattison.

In addition to images that will be found in Museums and Art Galleries, libraries and archives, Deborah Moffat, Museum Collection Assistant at Woodhorn Museum and Northumberland Archives, draws attention to the following in *The London Illustrated News*:- April 27th 1844 Print of The Northumberland Pitman (included in the Teaching Unit folder *The Northumberland Pitman* in the Study Centre.

August 3rd 1844 Two pictures from the Seghill Strike.

January - February 1862 Images of miners and people involved in the Hartley Colliery Disaster. Thomas H. Hair 1844 - Views of the Collieries of Northumberland and Durham have 'incidental' images of workmen (miners and Keelmen) *Colliers Playing Marbles* by Henry Perlee Parker - might be stretching a point.

And to written accounts:

The Collier's wedding by Edward Chicken
The Pitman's Pay by Thomas Wilson.

TWA has a great image bank at:

www.imagine.org.uk/index.php?p=popups.

cart. John Boag always signed his paintings Boag plus the date - the "B" of Boag was in the shape of a clover leaf - e.g. Boag 1901.' (www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/forum/topic4534.html).

Samuel Tuke Richardson. Born in Sunderland in 1846 Samuel Tuke Richardson worked at Backhouses Bank in Darlington as a book-keeper, and later lived in Piercebridge. He was also an artist, especially of horses, hunting and carriage driving. A collection of his sketches and handwritten accounts of his adventures were auctioned in 2008 by Tennants of

Leyburn in N. Yorkshire.
(www.tennants.co.uk/About-Us/News/News-Articles/Darlington%E2%80%99s-History---Books-To-Sell-At-Auction.aspx). See Jean Kirkland & Ray Roberts *A Week on Wheels - Extracts from the Diaries of Samuel Tuke Richardson*. The collection appears to have been purchased by Friends of Beamish Museum which then donated it to the Museum.
(www.culture24.org.uk/history%20%26%20heritage/time/georgian%20and%20victorian/art61309). Its collection includes an ink and watercolour illustration of ['The Whitby and Stockton Road - tooling the Stockton coach'](#)

from Richardson's *Family Annals by road and rail by flood and field*). Richardson died in 1904.

George A. Fothergill. Born in 1868 at Leamington, George Fothergill moved to Darlington to practice as a doctor. He became involved in the area's architecture and sporting life. He wrote and illustrated several books including the *Old Raby Hunt Club Album and Twenty Sporting Designs*. (www.tennants.co.uk/About-Us/News/News-Articles/Darlington%E2%80%99s-History---Books-To-Sell-At-Auction.aspx).

PROPERTY AND POWER IN EARLY VICTORIAN GATESHEAD

On 5 June Peter Nicklin talked at the North East Labour History meeting about property and power in early Victorian Gateshead. These are his notes. Peter hopes to write an article.

1. Gateshead Scene

Modernisation Local and National Government

Politics and People

- Strongly Whig - less radical than Newcastle
- Strong "modernising", pragmatic and reformist thrust
- Many of the Whig political players of the 1830 and 40s were industrialists
 - W. H. Brockett - 1804-67. Initially a radical, left the Northern Political Union in 1832, Strong views on Local and central govt. reform, church reform
 - Charles Attwood - Chartist (Charles Attwood related to Thomas Attwood) NOTE Tow Law Deerness and District History Society - long bio of Charles Attwood, no mention of politics.
 - Cuthbert Rippon M.P. for G'head in 1832
 - Thomas Wilson - more anon
- Not G'head but Radical Jack Lambton - close associate of Brockett
- John Collinson - Rector of Gateshead, hangover of the previous period, but a bit of a closet moderniser (tried to be seen as a neutral)
- Next chief officer was William Kell, town clerk

Local

- Select Vestry of St Mary's church aka the four and twenty
- Gateshead Council - 1835
- Borough Holders and Windmill Hill 1840s
- Ecclesiastical graft - multiple livings (Cuthbert Rippon - Dr Philpotts, Rector of Stanhope (£4,000pa) and Exeter

National

- Church reform: Bishops in Parliament, again Rippon
- Reform - The nature and motives for reform:
 - Ensure the representation of interests rather than the representation of people (e.g. the Shipping Interest in Tynemouth).
 - Removal of rotten boroughs
 - Regularisation of franchise - £10 threshold, the creation of new urban boroughs, representation according to population of voters etc. Schedule D. Tynemouth, Gateshead and South Shields

2. Thomas Wilson 1773 - 1858

- Started work in the pits at age 8, stayed 11 years, educated enough to become a teacher at 19.
- By age 32 he was a partner in Losh, Wilson and Bell Ironworks in Walker.
- Prolific writer of dialect verse
- Philanthropist
- Whig radical
- Almost obsessive collector of pamphlets, newspaper articles, posters, etc. - Wilson collection around 10 large volumes, collated by his daughter

3. The Windmill Hills campaign

What Happened?

- 1818 Enclosure Act handed the Windmill Hills common land to the Gateshead Borough Holders
- What were the Borough Holders?
 - Hangover from the past
 - Dependent upon the assertion that Gateshead was not a real Borough - i.e. not a corporation (sounds paradoxical)
 - A tale of skulduggery and strong passions
- Some rumblings in the mid-1830s
- 1833 The Municipal Corporations Inquiry Commission appointed two commissioners to establish the corporate status of Gateshead (Manders, History of Gateshead, p. 44)
 - Borough-holders maintained that their “property” was private.
 - After a long struggle, the Borough-holders allowed a chest containing borough records was opened. All docs before 1696 were missing, but there were references to the corporate existence of Gateshead.
 - Commission finding was inconclusive.
 - Borough holders retained their property
 - Commission led to granting of a **municipal corporation in 1835**
- First strong sign of organised push to reform:
 - May 1841:
 - Debate involving Cuthbert Ellison, Borough Holders and Brockett: *the building upon the borough property perceived by W.H. Brockett as illegal, on the Windmill Hills area.*
 - October 1841
 - *Printed letter from Newcastle Chartists (National Charter Association) William Deas and James Sinclair to W. H. Brockett and James Hymers concerning the abuse of Borough property at Windmill Hills by Borough holders of Gateshead. Writers exclude Brockett and Hymers, as Borough holders, from this criticism, although some of the offending Borough holders had previously been known to condemn the abuse of Borough property and support the radical cause.*
 - Brockett’s reply: Assures the writers that he will use the power has, including as a Borough holder himself, to oppose the appropriation and spoiling of Windmill Hills. Goes on to say that he too supports the call for Universal Suffrage, although he differs from the Chartists as to how this is to be achieved. He feels the Chartist approach too direct and risky. His approach is to “overthrow ...my adversary, rather,...by the quiet process of capitulation, than by the more impetuous, but, not infrequently, more dangerous expedient of a storm”. James Hymers adds a short reply endorsing Brockett’s views.
 - Two things emerge from this. First the local Chartist and Whig points of contact and disagreement are clearly established between the two letters. Second, it shows the relative gradualism and, perhaps stealthy, approach of the Whig burghers of Gateshead, in contrast to the more dynamic and confrontational atmosphere in nearby Newcastle. Attempts to stir radical and Chartist activity in Gateshead tend to be initiated in Newcastle, although there are some Gateshead Radicals such as Charles Attwood and William Hutt. (see also SANT/BEQ/26/1/4/48)

- Initial campaign was short and sharp.
 - Gateshead Council declared the enclosure of Windmill Hills illegal - April 1844
 - By May 30th Brockett had led a group of townspeople to tear down the walls enclosing Windmill Hills
 - Much consternation!! July 1844: Letter from borough holders to Sir James Graham, Home Secretary. Letter forwarded by Home Sec to William Kenmir, G'head Mayor, with a request for a report to the Home Office. Borough holders accuse Brockett on 30th may 1844 with "*pitmen and other idle persons*" of tearing down the walls.
- Windmill Hills eventually became a public park in 1861

Why Windmill Hills? Why Borough Holders?

- In 1840s Windmill Hills was still largely open land, unlike other borough land that had been acquired and built upon. It could still be disputed.
- Can be seen in the context of Brockett and others' desire to:
 - Modernise: 1832 Reform Act, universal suffrage, regularise local government (Town Hall 1868)
 - Dislike of rotten institutions and practices:
 - rotten boroughs, pocket boroughs,
 - feudal land rights,
 - untransparent local government - select vestry and the four and twenty.
 - Make Gateshead a better place:
 - Was the public park a device to hit the Borough Holders with, or was it, at least in part, a real desire to create pleasant places for "recreation and moral improvement"
 - Dispensary in 1833 (response to cholera)
 - Awareness of the sharpening class divide.
 - See above "pitmen" with Brockett tearing down the walls on Windmill Hills
 - Collinson's letter 1845 (after retiring as Rector of St Mary's): "I would also have had a place set apart for cricket and manly games, and should have rejoiced to have seen my sons and grandsons playing with the "coaly" children of the labourers. We have got too much into separate classes, and the labouring class can only see the richer as masters and magistrates, to receive orders, and reprimands, and punishments. Who can wonder that repulsion and dislike grow up on both sides?"
- Manders thinks that Brockett went over the top on this topic
- Is there a relationship between Borough Holders and Borough Mongers? Cobbett thought there was
- Why was Brockett so passionate about this?

Editorial Note:

Burgage is a medieval land term for town (borough) rental property owned by a king or lord. The property usually consisted of a house on a long and narrow plot of land, with the narrow end facing the street. Rental payment was usually in the form of money. Burgage plots" could be split into smaller additional units. Burgage plots or burgage tenements could also be enclosed fields outside the town. Burgesses had to be freemen: those who were entitled to practise a trade within the town

and to participate in electing members of the town's ruling council. Burgage was used as the basis of the franchise in many boroughs sending MPs to Parliament before 1832. Since these could be freely bought and sold, it was possible to purchase the majority of the burgages and thereby the absolute power to nominate the members of Parliament. Most of the burgage boroughs became pocket boroughs. This was abolished by the 1832 Reform Act. - Editorial summary from Wikipedia entry.

Peter Livsey adds:

I am fairly sure that "boroughholders" is a Bishopic term for what elsewhere would have

been "burgageholders" or even "feeholders," that is those owning certain plots of land within

a mediaeval borough which gave them rights in fields and commons and (limited) rights in advising the bailiff, sitting in court etc.

I think "boroughmongers" were the owners of rotten boroughs who sold the seats to prospective MPs for one or more Parliaments and this is a red herring (Cobbett was only briefly in the North).

Gateshead was a borough created by the Bishop and then terminated in the 17th Century, hence the clashing claims - if there was no longer a corporate entity then individuals owned everything.

Thomas Wilson's poems, particularly *Pitman's Pay*, are in City Library and Lit and Phil. There is also a 12 volume Wilson Collection of Newcastle material in City Library.

Cuthbert Rippon's bete noire, Rev. Phillpotts, had briefly been Rector of Gateshead before moving to the more lucrative rectory of

Stanhope, where Rippon was the squire (in a fake castle built by his lawyer father.) when the Tory government made Phillpotts Bishop of Exeter (for political services rendered) he would actually have lost income and so tried to hang on to Stanhope. Rippon and others led a campaign to prevent this (he became a Canon of Durham Cathedral instead). Rippon seems to have been an obsessive, a womaniser and eventually went bankrupt.

William Henry Brockett, businessman, powerbroker, Mayor and antiquarian was the younger brother of John Trotter Brockett, antiquarian and numismatist (whose picture is next to the gents at the Lit and Phil.). According to John Fenwick, who edited his glossary of Northern words, John Trotter Brockett published a Letter to the Rev. Phillpotts, who had publicly defended the magistrates' actions at Peterloo. This must be the Letter from a Freeholder which Phillpotts deemed so offensive that he refused to reply to it.

REV CHARLES WESTON - WIDENING OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE ROLE OF THE CANONS OF DURHAM CATHEDRAL

Rev Charles Weston has cropped up several times. It was therefore thought it would be useful to know more about him. So the Librarian at Durham Cathedral was asked. Here is her reply:

'We do not have a file on Canon Weston, but I have been able to put together a summary of his professional career, and I attach an article written by one of our Durham academics, Mr Pat Mussett, which describes the life of a Durham Canon of the time in question. If you use any of the material from Mr Mussett's article you must acknowledge the source in a footnote or reference. I also attach a page from our baptisms records reference book which records the baptism of his eldest son and some background information.'

Canon Charles Weston. Born 25th October 1731 in Charles Street, Westminster. Christ Church Oxford B.A. 23 June 1752, M.A. 18 April 1755. Rector of Therfield, Herts, 1762. Archdeacon of Wiltshire 1763. From 1763 till his death in 1801 he was a Prebendary of St Paul's London. Canon of Durham Cathedral from 1764 until his death. Canon of the 9th Stall 1764-1768 - 1 August 1768. 1 August 1768 resigned the 9th Stall and was installed in the 6th Stall 2nd August 1768. He held the 6th Stall until 1792. Canon of

the 11th stall from 10th Sept 1791 until his death on 31st October 1801.

'A Prebend is actually the income from a portion of the religious establishment's property and a "stall" was the not just the seat appointed for the Canon to sit in in the cathedral it also identified the Prebend or income that went with that appointment. At Durham there were 12 Stalls one for each of the Canons/Prebendarys who could be appointed to the cathedral, each had a number 1st to 12th, and each carried a separate benefice /income. So by moving stalls a canon could dramatically increase his income. The 11th stall was one of the wealthiest.

The title Prebendary was used for most Cathedral Canons until the middle of the 19th century and when the term Canon superseded it as the incomes of clergy in the Anglican churches gradually came under national control by the forerunners of the present day Church Commissioners.

You asked about how they could hold positions in several parishes at once. This was quite common until about the middle of the 19th century, when the payments for Anglican clergy began to be rationalised. Basically the living would be assigned to a clergyman (usually well educated &/or of influential family), he would take the money and pay a less successful/experienced clergyman to do the work in the parish out of that money. He may have to visit the parish on set occasions, but otherwise he could pursue other interests, and hold other appointments.

The Canons were not required to be in residence at the cathedral all the year round; as long as there were always 3 or 4 of them there to keep the services and the other functions/ duties going. The life of the Durham Canons when they were in residence is well described in Pat Mussett's article, it was mostly drawn from the diary of a canon who was contemporaneous with Charles Weston.

Editorial Note. The article is available from Sean.

DANIEL LIDDELL

Judith McSwaine writes:

I came across Daniel Liddell in two of the tracts we were looking at in Newcastle City Library Archives. He caught my attention because he was writing about the need for education - university and college education for the City and education for miners and their children. He signed himself "Teacher" of Carliol Street. I thought it would be interesting to find out more about him, his background, where his interest in education came from. I think he caught my attention because his ideas were in contrast to some of the other tracts I had read focussing on religious education and the merits of Sunday school - all about teaching right from wrong and keeping the children of working people occupied.

Teaching

Daniel was actually a Scot (1851 Census) and lived with a housekeeper and her children at Carliol Street. He first appears in Wards directory in 1833 running an academy from his home. In 1836 he was addressing the Mechanics institute on the topic of education for miners, and education of the working classes. In the same year he wrote a pamphlet on higher education and wrote to the Mayor on the same topic. He was clear that education had benefits beyond the individual - it would be an important part of the economic well being of the area, which, he felt, suffered from poorly educated working people in mines, on ships and in factories.

The duties of the Bishop and the Canons had only a partial overlap. The finances of the Diocese and the Cathedral were quite separate. The Bishop was/is head of the clergy in the parishes, the Canons at the cathedral had duties (see article) to keep the life and worship of the cathedral running smoothly. If they also held the livings of parishes in the diocese, then, with regard to their activities in those parishes, they were responsible to the Bishop. In their duties in the cathedral they were responsible to the Dean. The Canons effectively would wear two hats, depending where they were.

The Dean and the Bishop were expected to work closely together - but personalities could be big factor. Officially I think the Bishop is superior, but within the confines of the Cathedral, the Dean has the last say, and a Dean of a place like Durham with a long and influential history, has considerable authority in his own right.'

In 1837, through his role as secretary of the North East England Newcastle upon Tyne, Durham and Northumberland Educational Society he drew attention to the education and training needs of the "deaf and dumb", this time in a letter to the *Newcastle Courant*. In the same issue of the *Courant* I found a paragraph on the suicide of an unnamed "deaf mute" of Shields Road. He also referred to the education of the blind in this letter and compared the provision in Newcastle with that in Edinburgh, which had an academy, London, which had an institute and Ireland, where funding for education and training was collected through a "thankful tax". Daniel was aware that Newcastle needed to do more than provide asylum for this group and by 1850 there is evidence of success as Wards directory of that year registers a Deaf and Dumb Institution

at Charlotte Square. The Master is William Neil, another Scot who eventually became Head of the specialist school, which later became the Northern Counties School for the Deaf.

His own teaching career took him to Friar's Goose in Gateshead (1838 and 1839) and later in 1844 he was running a Classical and Commercial Academy from Carlol Street. However, there is evidence that Daniel was an active in other ways. In the late 1842 he is involved in organising public lectures in Gateshead and the same year contributes to a *Commission (under the Great Seal) for inquiring into the Employment and condition of children in mines manufactories*. As in his letters and pamphlet Daniel backs up his argument with facts, figures and comparisons from home and abroad. The children interviewed for this report had little to say about their lot, it seems. Hardly surprising, I thought, given the gulf between those collecting the evidence and those being studied. Language, dialect and the strangeness of the inquirers probably struck the lads and lasses dumb!

Political Activity

After this period Daniel turns his hand to work of a more overtly political nature. He becomes Agent for the Anti-Corn Law League and organises trains from Newcastle and Durham to League Bazaars in London and Manchester in 1884. In the Liverpool Mercury he is mentioned picking up the prize in the Free Trade Bazaar Lottery on behalf of the lucky winner (the prize was a portrait of the Queen!). He, as Agent, is mentioned at a meeting in Gateshead Town Hall on 5th December 1884 calling for the repeal of the corn laws. In response to Robert Peel being forced from office, he places adverts in the Newcastle Courant urging people to become property owners before 31 Jan so that they can vote, offers to help (*40 shilling freehold can be bought for under £30 with Liddell's help on behalf of the League*) and calls interested parties to the Wednesday meetings at Carlol Street. As agent he organises a public meeting for Cobden and Bright on 5th January 1845 at the Guildhall, as well as trains from Sunderland and back to North Shields for those attending. In August it is Liddell who places testimonials in the newspapers to Cobden and Bright. His work for the League continues in 1847 organising a

meeting at the Victoria Rooms, Grey Street on 8th June and attending a meeting of subscribers to the League fund that year. By 1850 he is Secretary to the Registration Association a role he keeps until 1852 (Wards directory).

He had other political concerns and this time, too. He crops up in a petition to the Mayor (Stephen Lowery) calling for a public meeting against any increase in military spending in 1848 and the following year places a notice for a meeting on National Expenditure and Parliamentary Reform which is held on 26 October and addressed by Sir J. Walmsey and George Thompson M.Ps at the Lecture Room in Nelson Street (2d and 6d reserved seats).

Local Issues

In July 1849 he is looking for interested subscribers to the Elswick Villa Association - whose object is to by land to build 30 villas on the north side of Scotswood Road.

On Jan 17 1851, by now well-established in the circles of "influential gentlemen of the town" he is present at the celebration of the train starting from the Central Station.

In Jun 1852 he is named in a petition to the High Sherriff of Northumberland to convene a meeting of electors to select new candidates to be MP. Later, in September he called for a Poor Law Auditors report at the end of a lengthy meeting of the rate payers of All Saints. A meeting at which the Guardians were taken to task over the rise in expenditure. This newspaper article gives a lot of detail of what must have been a difficult meeting for the Guardians who appear to have increased their rewards while reducing the amount spent on the poor. One of the reasons they give for this is the "influx of the Irish". But Daniel is clearly not happy with this and calls for the audit and once again his eye for detail and his interest in facts and figures comes to the fore and his intervention in the meeting was thoughtful and practical.

Although his home and office are advertised for sale in Oct 1852 his does appear once more in the Newcastle Courant. This time passing on a donation to the Juvenile Crime Reform Association from The Right Hon Lady Noel Byron.

After this my trail goes cold - he doesn't appear again in the Census, I haven't been able to find any trace of a marriage, children or death. Did he return to Scotland? Did he simply run out of energy - he certainly did a lot between 1833 aged 28 and 1852 aged 45.

I found investigating the life and times of Daniel Liddell very satisfying. I've been hugely impressed in his range of interests. He seems a practical person, who can organise, communicate and make important links between economic well being of the nation and education for all, including people with disabilities. I could also see what an important tool the local newspaper was to involve people in the struggles of the day.

There are still some leads I can follow -

North East England, Newcastle upon Tyne, Durham and Northumberland Educational Society
Deaf & Dumb Institution Newcastle
Elswick Villa Association
Friar's Goose, Gateshead
Literary Institute, Gateshead
William Niel
Lady Noel Byron
Juvenile Crime Reform Association.

Thanks to Sean, Peter Livsey and John Charlton for their help with sources - *Newcastle Courant* (available on-line, at home for Newcastle Central Library members - a very good diversion for anyone who can't get to sleep at night); and Wards Directories.

Editorial Comment. The above article is work in progress and is supported by a spread sheet of dates associated with Liddell. Peter Livsey adds: At the 1852 General Election Daniel did not vote in the Newcastle election. He voted in the South Northumberland election (which included Newcastle property owners) because he owned a house in Jesmond, although he lived at Carloliol Street. He was probably the agent for the second (more radical) Liberal candidate, George Ridley, and supported him at meetings. He split his 2 votes between him and the other Liberal. The Tory and the moderate Liberal won.

ASSOCIATION OF COTTON WEAVERS 1810-1820

Sheila Rooney writes:

In July 2011 while reviewing documents in the Hanby Holmes (Solicitors) Business and Industrial Records at Durham Records Office, I came across an unassuming brown file containing one large handwritten document and two smaller printed bills. The handwritten document was a copy, prepared by Thomas Wheldon a son-in-law of Barnard Castle solicitor Mr Joseph Hanby, outlining an enquiry by the Bishop Auckland Association of Cotton Weavers and the resulting legal opinion given by James Scarlett at Temple, London on 22nd February 1810.

The Cotton Weavers queried the "legality of the Association for limiting the number of apprentices taken into the trade by their masters". At the time I reported the file for the Popular Politics Project and moved on to the next file but recently I came across an item in the online New Statesman which reawakened my interest (yourdemocracy.newstatesman.com/.../cotton-weavers/HAN64515).

The article reported a Parliamentary motion by John Maxwell MP for Renfrewshire on the 24th

March 1820 in support of cotton weavers and intrigued I went back to the original file to have a closer look.

Various histories of Bishop Auckland speak of it as a rural market town, with an absence of industry making it a 'healthy place' to live. However I also found reports that its "principle industry" in the 19th Century was spinning and hand loom weaving. In the 1700s imported cotton began to be mixed with both wool and lined to produce blended fabrics. But when, later in the century the UK government

prohibited the import of Indian cotton goods, pure cotton cloth began to be produced. As both producers and investors were in a position to make money, there was an increased demand for artisan weavers (in their homes or 'master owned' weaving sheds).

Mechanisation

Readers will be aware of the link between the industrial revolution and the mechanisation of fabric production. By the closing decades of the 18th century technology had made it practical for cotton manufacturing processes to be brought together in one place. Nevertheless industrialisation required investment and infrastructure development which took time. So although the power loom was invented in the 1780s, Edward Baines in his *History of the Cotton Manufacture* (1835) suggests that it was not till the 1810s that weaving was totally mechanised. The legal opinion commissioned by Bishop Auckland's Cotton Weavers therefore gives us a window into the last days of demand for weavers outstripping supply.

The Cotton Weavers document reports that they had previously attempted lobbying Parliament to get the weaving trade 'legal protection' in the form of defined periods of apprenticeship. Unfortunately the disappointing response was that any interference in the industry would "restrict freedom of trade". The cotton weavers appear to be aware of this terminology and its effect on the wool trade when in 1809 it opened to free market forces. This may be why when they outline their case they compare themselves not with woollen weavers but with other "mechanical vocations" such as hatters. In the document they complain that pay and conditions are "not keeping pace with their contemporaries in the north of England", but they are not referring to factory workers they are comparing themselves to men with a legally protected skill.

Outworkers

The social situation within which weaving took place altered during the second half of the 18th century, so that a dual production model with a dual pay structure emerged. The family based outworker earned less than the weaver working in his masters weaving sheds. Importantly this dual model was seen prior to power loom introduction but it did not remedy production

shortfalls. In several e-books I have reviewed it is suggested that supply problems made it unlikely that this system would ever have met demand. Outworkers particularly suffered from delays in cotton yarn supply and had to travel to obtain their own supplies of cotton from spinners.

Nevertheless weavers found themselves blamed as a 'block' to better output and marginalised by their masters. While the lack of legal protection for the occupation enabled increasing numbers of 'apprentice' weavers to be employed in sheds, where cotton yarn supply could be centralised. This may have appeared to be a solution for masters, but outwork weavers had reduced opportunities for work and if employed in a shed they could no longer do additional work to supplement their income i.e. work on a small holding. The Bishop Auckland Weavers complaint that even "women" were becoming apprentices was perhaps a sign of thing to come as the factory system developed!

Declining Incomes

I was keen to see if I could find any evidence to support the suggested drop in weaver's income and found a significant amount of information: in 1805 cotton handloom weavers earned 23 shillings a week, by 1810 it was 14 shillings and 3 pence (*Social Change in the Industrial Revolution*, Neil Smelser. 2006). The loss of 8 shillings a week was bad enough but other factors combined to worsen the situation. Although regional differences were much more marked in the early 1800s, Britain was generally in an economic decline during this period. Agriculture made up approx. 50% of the GDP but a series of poor harvests and the French wars compounded the hardship (*The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England 1750-1850*. John Rule. 1986). Food prices rose in line with the demand of an increasing population and as the majority of a working man's wage was spent on food this was a crippling blow. Add to this difficulty finding work and working in bad conditions and the weavers comment that they were "scarcely able to procure the common necessities" seems justified.

The Bishop Auckland Association of Weavers wanted to achieve specific aims but were keen to make sure that the aims were legal and could not be seen as seditious. I find it very

interesting that men under financial distress not only collectively found the money to instruct a local solicitor but took their case to a higher level of legal interpretation. They were aware that they needed to know not only what the law said but also how their actions could be interpreted by the law. This suggests that they were aware of the national situation with regard to industrialisation, the growing factory system and national politics.

James Scarlett's Advice

James Scarlett who they instructed to interpret the law for them was born in Jamaica and sent to England in 1785 to complete his education. He was called to the bar in 1791 and would go on to have a sparkling career becoming Attorney-General, serving in the government and ending his life as Baron Abinger. However when he prepared the opinion for the Association of Weavers he was still building his career.

He was instructed to answer the following points: Can an Association of Weavers

- restrict the masters to no more than two apprentices' and ensure a 7 years apprenticeship
- ensure that those employed as weavers are members of the Association
- advertise the rates paid by specific masters act to support its members and set up a fund for the relief of members in distress ?

Scarlett outlines his legal opinion on the questions in very clear detail and concludes that it was "perfectly clear" that an association that seeks to "prevent by any means the employ of those who are not their members is illegal". However he states that membership of an association for the protection of those in need and to advertise the pay that master's offer, is "not illegal" and would not be subject to legal censure. There is no indication in the file to suggest the immediate reaction of the Weavers when they received this information in February 1810.

National Meeting

However, a printed handbill in the file informs readers of the outcome of a meeting of representatives of the National Associated of Cotton Weavers four months later on 25th June 1810.

Held in Carlisle, Cumberland, the handbill records that, delegates from all over the UK including Ireland attended the meeting. They considered the present state of the Association of Weavers across the country, outlined how the regions were organised, called for greater general uniformity and agreed a number of resolutions which clearly reflect the legal advice given to the Bishop Auckland Weavers by James Scarlett; it also gave committee member's names. So it seems that the weavers in Bishop Auckland were not isolated but part of a national movement as early as 1810, sophisticated enough to seek and use the best available legal advice. The second printed handbill in the file is a Poster addressed to the "Brethren" (operative weavers) of Barnard Castle and dated 19th July 1810. It advertises the outcome of the meeting of the National Association of Cotton Weavers at Carlisle and stresses the "healthy state" of the association, its financial support and its "present state and future prospects" as well as the "Regulations to be observed" by the Operative Weavers.

Local Organisation

The documents in the file are clear evidence of an early workers organisation that was active across the north of England and if the handbills are accurate throughout Great Britain. I was therefore keen to find any further information about the Weavers Association especially in Bishop Auckland but sadly after the July 1810 handbill I couldn't find anything specific to Bishop Auckland.

As we have seen there was sufficient industrial unrest in 1810 to provoke the weavers to organise themselves into an Association. There is evidence however, that other weavers were even more radical. I have found several references to the Glasgow cotton weavers who were organising themselves at that time and in one online site there is a connection to Carlisle. Apparently by 1811 wages for weavers in Glasgow were around 8s, a fall from 18s for a 6-day week. In addition weavers in Glasgow like their Carlisle and Bishop Auckland brethren were suffering from unemployment. Glasgow weavers formed "a union during the first decade of the century and by 1810 workers in the West of Scotland were locked out by bosses". In November 1812 there was a strike which "quickly spread across Scotland as far as Aberdeen and Carlisle"! However the strike was broken when "14 leaders were arrested and

five jailed for up to 18 months”.
(www.scottishrepublicansocialistmovement.org
)

Luddites

Disruption built throughout the 1810s with riots in Sheffield and ‘Luddite’ disruption across the midlands. Unsurprisingly there was little official sympathy for hard pressed workers and Parliament while “lamenting” the distress of people working in the cotton industry considered that there should be “no interference of the legislature with the freedom of trade”. [Parliamentary Debates, 1st Series, Vol. 20, (1811) Col.609].

In March 1812 seven Nottingham Luddites were sentenced to transportation for life. (Parliamentary Debates, 1st Series, Vol. 23, Col.1000, 1812), a Parliamentary Committee received petitions from Glasgow and Lancaster pleading for import tax reduction on raw cotton and restriction on import of cotton goods. Still Parliament was unmoved and when in April 1812 Wilberforce petitioned on behalf of Sheffield Manufacturers, (not workers) Lord Castlereagh responded that he “by comparing the trade and manufactures of the country with their state in former periods, ... shewn that the evil was not so great as it was represented.”

Weaving Mill

By 1816 the cotton industry in Carlisle had approx. 1,200 looms but they were no longer in family units or individual weaving sheds, “there being a small mill for weaving calicoes” (‘The city of Carlisle’, Magna Britannia: volume 4: Cumberland 1816, pp. 56-81), the dual model of production in Carlisle was replaced by one “small mill” in just six years. But the change to a factory system did not end their difficulties. In 1818 and 1819 Carlisle found it necessary to provide some additional local relief for those in distress, “a subscription was set on foot for the relief of the poor, who by this means were employed in completing and forming various walks near the town;” (Google books online *The Gentleman’s Magazine*. 12th May 1819. Vol. 89), which suggests a significant increase in unemployment.

In May 1819 the weavers in Carlisle began an action to promote their cause which has all the hallmarks of a thoroughly planned campaign. On the last day of May “deputations from the

towns of Wigton, Brampton, Longtown, Penrith, and all the intermediate villages, to the amount of about 1,700 in number;” held a meeting “upon the Sands”. This was followed with a “procession through the city, in regular files, their mournful silence, and the laurel boughs that many of them carried in token of their peaceable intentions... gave a melancholy interest to the scene, that could not be resisted by hearts participating in the feelings of our common nature.” A report published in the *Carlisle Patriot* On 1st June 1819 gave further information:

“Yesterday, the weavers of the adjacent towns arrived here and joined their brethren, and about four o'clock, the whole assembled upon the sands, to the amount of nearly 2,200, where they passed some resolutions; the greater part afterwards marched into the market place without the least noise or disturbance” “the Committee issued another hand-bill, pledging themselves that everything would be conducted with a scrupulous regard to the public tranquillity, and they also made a communication to the Mayor, explaining their wishes and their object”. Ominously the article concludes that “the detachment of the 18th Hussars for some time past quartered here, under the orders of Major KENNEDY, was to have marched on Thursday morning on its route to Ireland, but at the requisition of the Mayor and other Magistrates, its departure is very properly delayed”. Note: public meetings were increasingly common across the country but it is worth noting that this meeting was held just two months before the Peterloo Massacre.

Appeal to Mayor

The story of the 1st June continues “since writing the above, we have been favoured with a copy of the communication made by the weavers to the Mayor: it is as follows: - As justice is the grand object we wish to obtain, it is necessary to draw up a correct scale of prices... We, therefore, most earnestly request, that you would use your magisterial interference in our behalf, in calling together the principal master-manufacturers, and requesting them to accede to our most just and humble claims. To promote this object, the Mayor will call a public meeting, to be held at the Town-hall on Monday next.” The content of the article suggests a planned course of action by the Weavers Association. First they

obtained a petition which seems to have captured almost all of the local weavers. The "APPEAL TO PUBLIC FEELING" was also published in the *Carlisle Patriot* on 1st June 1819.

John Curwin, MP

"The Journeymen Weavers of Carlisle and neighbourhood beg to call the attention of the public to the following simple truths: - We are now arrived at a pitch of wretchedness and misery, such, we sincerely believe, as never existed in any country in time of profound peace, except visited by a natural famine." They lay out their complaint in vivid language: "labouring in a place peculiarly unwholesome from its closeness and damp, where the air is impregnated with noxious matter, so that what we inhale is little better than a fetid gas; all this for the reward of 1s. a day, and fed chiefly on potatoes, the proper food only for hogs; - "we have only one gleam of hope left us, which is, that the Legislature will take our distresses into consideration - we having petitioned our Prince and the Parliament to have us conveyed to Canada, or some of the Northern colonies"

This address was presented not by Carlisle MP Sir James Graham (who would later become Secretary of State), but the second member John Christian Curwin. He was from an eminent Cumberland family, a barrister at law, former High Sherriff of Cumberland and MP from 1786 to 1813 and again from 1815 to 1828. Curwin commented that "The duty I am called on to discharge is one of the most painful I had ever imposed on me" (HC Deb 24 May 1819 vol. 40 cc.671-2). The petition was signed by "upwards of 1,200 persons who reported that working from 14 to 17 hours a day and that for six days in the week, their earnings do not amount to more than from five to seven shillings, and that many of them can obtain no work whatever." This would amount to half what they were earning in 1810 when they claimed not to be able to "obtain the necessities for life", if accurate this was a truly shocking decline in their livelihood. He goes on "families be destitute of necessary food and clothing, and a prey to misery and disease" and that the "future presents no rational hope of amendment." Further Curwin states "they blame not their employers,—the depreciated state of the Cotton manufacture is the true cause of their sufferings" "they ask you to

expatriate them—to convey them to your colonies. Painful and grating as this application must prove to the House, I fear, ere long, it will become but too familiar. The House cannot, I am satisfied, separate without taking into their serious consideration the present situation of the manufacturing population."

I have also seen short references in various online sources that the weavers went on strike with men going around the district taking unfinished cloth from the looms and returning it unfinished to the masters. I have not been able to find any further information on the strike other than it was unsuccessful.

Lack of Support

Despite the weavers actions they got little response; "We regret to inform the public that the Carlisle cotton-weavers still continue in a perturbed state. These persons recount their grievances to their late employers in an address, to which a reply is printed with a fictitious signature. It is evident, that whatever is said in the former production must be laid to the account of the scribe, the poor workmen being entirely at his mercy:" (*The Times*. Wednesday June 9, 1819; pg. 3; Issue 10695; col B)

Other than this cruel hoax the master remained silent and by 1820 the battle had become not against an influx of apprentices but of machines. On the 9th April 1820 "provoked by a seditious notice" from Glasgow, posted in the town the previous day, 200 armed radicals marched outside the town although they dispersed without violence or arrests. (*The Times*. 18 April 1820 and *Carlisle Patriot*, 15 Apr. 1820] reported that "In consequence of a manufacturer of Carlisle having lowered the price of weaving Gingham to 2s per cut a considerable number of weavers assembled in a tumultuous manner this afternoon broke some of his windows and exhibited other tokens of their displeasure". It also appears that the weavers continued their publicity campaign as "Several hand-bills have been distributed by the poor distressed and industrious, though harshly calumniated creatures".

John Maxwell. MP

I have found one voice which spoke out for cotton weavers, on the 29th June 1820 John Maxwell, MP for Renfrewshire, who proposed a

Parliamentary motion. The motion proposed means of relieving distressed cotton weavers i.e. the taxing of ‘a machine called “a power-loom”’ which competed with the simple loom of the individual weaver (‘the capital of the poor man, which consisted in the labour of his two hands, must bear the burden of taxation, since those articles, without which he could not exist, were taxed; while the large capital of the wealthy manufacturer, which he invested in a machine, was suffered to escape any contribution to the revenue’); and the application of public money to provide lands for those who could obtain no employment at their looms. However the motion was successfully opposed by Fredrick J. Robinson MP for Ripon a staunch supporter of free trade. Indeed the majority of politicians remained unmoved and David Ricardo MP seemed to speak for a generation of MP’s when he

commented that “the duty of government (is) to give the greatest possible development to industry. This they could do only by removing the obstacles which had been created.”

His complaint he said was that there were too many restrictions on trade and “other obstacles of that description”. He believed that the recommendations “were inconsistent with the contrast between one class and another” and Maxwell’s motion would “violate the sacredness of property, which constituted the great security of society”. A pretty way of saying, keep them in their place and make sure they know it! (www.libertyfund.org David Ricardo. *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo*. Vol. 5 Speeches and Evidence).

Here I will leave the story of the Bishop Auckland and Carlisle weavers, their situation did not improve and in 1825 the latter again petitioned Parliament to send them to the colonies, without success.

Nevertheless I feel the story of the Association of Cotton Weavers is one to be recorded. The collaboration of men from Bishop Auckland and Carlisle at such an early date is noteworthy. The men involved in the Weavers Association clearly had sharp minds and were aware of the changing world. The intelligence and farsightedness of their committee in seeking not only legal advice but also legal opinion must I feel be unusual at that time. The Bishop Auckland association sought to gain recognition for their skill by comparing it to a trade that already had legal protection. They also recognised the importance of organising and the necessity of sufficient finance.

Most of all I found the planning of the 1819 dispute in Carlisle very illuminating, the use of publicity, peaceful protest, lobbying the Mayor to act as an intermediary and taking their case to Crown and State (as a petition to Parliament) sit comfortably with ‘modern’ industrial actions . It is disappointing that I have not been able to follow up the Bishop Auckland association after 1810 but this may come to light in the future.

Additional Source:

An Economic History of Modern Europe: 1700-1870 (2007). Stephen Broadberry