

## Economy and Society 1800-1914

Sunderland's prosperity had been founded upon commerce. After 1800 there came an era of industrial diversity, of manufacture and mechanization. The quantity of coal shipped remained, for some time longer, a barometer of overall economic success on Wearside. In fact the coal trade continued to grow, peaking only in the 1920s. Much of the trade's activity, though, grew less visible as coal transport relied increasingly on mechanical power, and was largely removed from the harbour. Coal was exported via new docks fed by railways, or loaded direct to colliers by staiths and drops at Galley's Gill and Wearmouth pithead. The fleet of keel boats which had crowded the river for two centuries disappeared entirely between 1830 and 1850. This was more than a physical upheaval, for with the demise of transshipment from keel to collier came a restructuring in the way coal-shipping was organized. Its status as an autonomous trade was lost, for coal-owners now managed their own transport and commercial exchanges. Sunderland's coal-fitters and other coal-trade middlemen quickly went the way of the keelmen.

Technological advances were reshaping all major industries, most notably the construction of ships, where radical advances in design brought upheaval unprecedented in Sunderland's history. After 1850, shipbuilding modernized to produce vessels which were iron-built – and from the 1880s, made of steel – steam-powered, and of ever-growing size.<sup>1</sup> Needing larger yards on central deep-water frontages, the industry, already of great importance, raised its profile and rose to dominate the overall economy. Its rapid rise was such that shipbuilding's fluctuating fortunes became the gauge by which the town's prosperity was judged.

Change affected all other manufacturing activity. Older industries mechanized and expanded their production. Entirely new trades came into being, significantly factories and workshops producing marine engines and specialist shipbuilding components. The market for consumer goods, many locally produced, matched the rapidly growing population. Keelmen and coal-fitters became extinct during this century, but the commercial and transport sectors went from strength to strength, and mining at Wearmouth doubtless absorbed some of the labour displaced from the river-borne coal traffic. Other industries threatened by change – notably the long-standing timber trade, which might have faced collapse when wooden ships became obsolete – found new purpose, and endured.

The trade of Sunderland, it was said in 1803, had been 'long in a state of progressive increase - its augmentation during the latter part of last century has been very rapid'. The manufacture of bottles, glass and earthenware, copperas works, stone and lime quarries, and the new patent ropery, were the main employers outside the coal trade, while most of the labouring men of Monkwearmouth worked in shipbuilding.<sup>2</sup> Another group of Monkwearmouth men came to prominence in the nineteenth-century economy. The commercial élite on the north side of the river differed from that on the south. The Monkwearmouth group had been less directly involved in the coal trade, and more rooted to the harbour area by the nature of their businesses, so

that many continued to live in Monkwearmouth village. They tended to be involved in shipbuilding and related manufacturing trades, and to have interests in timber importing and shipping. John Thompson (b. c. 1814) recalled those he knew in his youth: George Hudson (b. 1800), a 'front rank ship-owner of the north side' who owned a fleet of vessels, carrying coal but also in timber and other foreign trade, and who established the ropery along Fulwell Road; William Byers, block and mast maker, owner of the ropery at the top of Church Street, and a shipowner; John Cropton (1785-1872), a shipowner engaged in the timber trade with Montreal and Quebec; and John Storey, rope- and sail-maker and shipbuilder at Sand Point, and shipowner, who fell on hard times although the shipyard of three sons of his former apprentice, Joseph L. Thompson, occupied the entire North Sands in c. 1890. Thomas Walker, who had worked at North Quay brewery, became a spirit merchant and shipowner; Thomas Orwin was a shipowner and Canadian timber trader; George Wilkin a shipowner in the coal trade; and Peter Austin a shipbuilder at North Sands and Southwick, and from c. 1846 at Panns slipway.<sup>3</sup>

Many of this new generation of businessmen with wide industrial and commercial interests involved themselves also in social and political life, in banking and in promoting utility companies. The White family was in many ways typical. John White (1764-1833), a cooper born at Monkwearmouth diversified his business activities into shipowning during boom conditions in the French wars. By 1814 he had a fleet of 1,300 tons, worth £2,300. In the post-war downturn, he diversified into a range of activities, and developed his mining and fitting interests, becoming a leading local merchant and shipowner. Two of his sons, Andrew White (1792-1856) and Richard White (b. c. 1804), succeeded to the business, and continued the family's religious, philanthropic and political work. The Whites were active in company promotion during the joint-stock boom of the mid-1830s, across a range of local industries including railways, banking, soap manufacture, and insurance, while upgrading their fleet and continuing to invest in minerals prospecting. They over-reached themselves, and following the collapse of their firm in 1846, were bankrupted. When the Sunderland Joint Stock Bank failed in 1851, the brothers and their associates were accused of having used it for personal loans without security.<sup>4</sup>

A range of institutions flowered across the town, new churches and chapels, schools and theatres, inns and hotels, a subscription library, museum, Mechanics' Institute and other intellectual societies, by the 1820s.<sup>5</sup> By the mid-1830s, with passenger coaches available on some new railway lines (the mail coach was discontinued in 1835), specifically local weekly newspapers launched, streets improved and flagged, and central areas lighted by gas – Sunderland from 1824, Monkwearmouth Shore from 1833 – the social life of the town offered new comforts and possibilities.<sup>6</sup>

### **Coal Trade:**

From 1820, the Wear trade was physically transformed. This re-modelling was made possible as new technologies to move and handle coal developed, initiated by coal-owners frustrated in dealing with port authorities and keelmen. At the peak of the river-borne trade, c. 1820, the dominant local owners, Lambton and Vane Tempest (from 1819 Londonderry) between them accounted for more than half of coal exports

from Sunderland.<sup>7</sup> The Wear collieries, 18 in 1829, of which six were north and 12 south of the river, were 'in the hands of very few individuals'.<sup>8</sup> Lord Londonderry, who took on his new wife's coal interests, objected particularly to dues levied by the River Wear Commission on every chaldron of coal sent out of the port. This royalty, used to repair and maintain the harbour and river, had risen from 2d a chaldron in 1746, to 4d in 1785, and then in 1809 to 6d, of which coal owners paid 4½d and fitters 1½d.<sup>9</sup>

Londonderry and Lambton likewise sought to circumvent troublesome keelmen and castors, who by the 1820s were losing the battle against spouts and drops.<sup>10</sup> Lambton's plans to deliver coal by rail to the brink of the harbour were widely viewed as confrontational. A poster circulating in the town proclaimed that his coal would soon ship by tubs, 'without troubling his agents to procure or employ any casters', and within a year 'his rail road will be prepared for shipping coals without the aid of either coal fitters or keelmen', reducing 'to beggary and want a numerous body of labourers' and to be followed by all other Wear coal-owners.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1790s there had averaged 452 keels on the Wear, more than on the Tyne. There were claimed to be 631 keels working in 1800, and 570 in 1809, the latter employing 640 men, besides 100 trimmers (in the ships' holds) and 400 castors or coal-heavers, plus perhaps 57 foremen.<sup>12</sup> An estimate in 1810 had 750 keelmen working on the Wear alongside 507 castors and trimmers.<sup>13</sup> The Wear had only about 200 keels in 1828, yet even then nine out of 17 Wear collieries delivered to keels, and another five used both keels and spouts.<sup>14</sup> John Buddle described to a parliamentary inquiry an increase in Wear collieries over the decade to 1829, though in size rather than number. He calculated that 9,000 were employed below and above ground in Wear coal-mines, and that the Tyne and Wear trade together had 15,000 seamen and 2,000 working on keels.<sup>15</sup>

The tubs developed by John Buddle jun. lowered costs by as much as 2s. per chaldron.<sup>16</sup> Tub was simply waggons without wheels, each stamped as holding one chaldron. By reducing handling this system prevented breakage, while also eliminating much of the work of castors: eight tubs were placed in a keel, then lifted mechanically above the collier's hold, where a trapdoor was released.<sup>17</sup> Buddle and other colliery viewers were considerable innovators whose calculations were based on shrewd economic and political calculation. The Hetton colliery projectors, for instance, commissioned a close analysis of costs and possibilities. Sinking two pits, with pumping and winding engines, would require £11,400 and yield more than 1.8 million chaldrons of coal. It would also need seven miles of railway, various engines, staitths and machinery, and 100 workers' houses, in all £57,100 of capital outlay. The costs per chaldron on board ship in Sunderland would be £1 0s 6d, plus 1s 6d fittage, making a profit of 8s a chaldron, or £24,000 a year for the anticipated 60,000 chaldrons produced, and £720,000 over the 30 years of the lease.<sup>18</sup>

The Wear trade acted in concert where it saw mutual advantage, and lobbied jointly with other coal districts, including the Tyne, though the historic cartel had collapsed. The Wear interests campaigned in the post-war years to reduce duties on coal

carried by sea for home sale. This wartime tax was not been lifted after the return of peace, so that the coastal trade suffered disadvantage against inland markets.<sup>19</sup> The tax, it was argued in 1826, 'bears heavily on the numerous labouring poor', but it was also impacting upon ship-owners.<sup>20</sup> Of about 1,400 ships engaged in the east coast trade in 1824, 538 were registered to the Wear, and 800 the Tyne. In total, 588 ships were said to be registered in 1828 in Sunderland (in Newcastle, 862); or, according to a witness to the 1829 enquiry, customs house records showed in 1827 that 606 colliers of a tonnage of 102,454 belonged to the port, with 7,518 ships clearing with coals that year. The number of collier ships was said to have doubled in half a century.<sup>21</sup> By this time, the Wear harbour was so improved, in safety and in ease of access, that instead of being one that masters avoided, it was said to be preferred to the Tyne ports.<sup>22</sup> In 1826 the Wear trade made a new agreement, separate from the Tyne, to regulate their own activities, measure shipments, and ensure fair payment for ship-owners, the new system overseen by a panel of independent men where adjudication was needed.<sup>23</sup>

Loading coals by spout, the most common method by the end of the 1820s, avoided payment of keel dues.<sup>24</sup> The system introduced by the Hetton Coal Co. also did away with fitters. One of the partners, Hon. Capt. Archibald Cochrane RN, described in 1829 how the company saved 3s. 3d fittage on a sale price of 15s. 'We have no fitter; we entirely dispose of our coals ourselves'. Coal was loaded into wagons and taken to port by rail, where the wagons went immediately over the ship's deck. 'They require no assistance; they are regularly dispersed over the hold by a class of men called trimmers.' Sales were arranged direct with the buyer. 'We dispose of all our coals by having an office, and persons come and take them; and when we cannot sell them in that way, we freight a ship on the best terms we can.'<sup>25</sup> The river trade fragmented further after 1830, with Londonderry taking all his coal by rail to Seaham harbour, thus saving both keel and fittage costs. Meanwhile the Wearmouth pithead, standing above the river, dispensed even with a need for rail links, as coal could load directly into ships.<sup>26</sup>

Through public railways in the 1830s, collieries found further cost-saving possibilities, though the mining boom – in 1844 there were 31 pits on the Wear, employing more than 13,000 people – followed by recession 'created a sudden competition' which drove down prices, by 50% by one account.<sup>27</sup> The early 1840s brought hard times to the town, a reflection of the national economy and harsh winters affecting the river. Ship-owners and the trade in general continued their fight against, as they saw them, unfair taxes on the coastal trade.<sup>28</sup> But at this time, commentators began to consider the state of the ship-building industry as the benchmark on which the economic health of Sunderland was measured.<sup>29</sup>

The Wear coal trade in fact continued to surpass itself throughout the nineteenth century, as new docks and rail-links served ever-larger vessels. The million tons of coal shipped in the years around 1820 grew, after the opening of the North Dock, to 1.4 million in 1845; to 1.7 million with the South Dock in 1850, increasing to 2.6 million tons after the South Outlet was created, and with further dock facilities, 3.9 million tons in 1886. In the years 1909-13, around 1.5 million tons of coal was sold to

home markets, and 2.5 to 3 million tons abroad.<sup>30</sup> In the late 1870s there were rather vague claims in the local press that the Wear was 'a threatened coal port'. It was true that the river coal trade was finished, the last keel having gone by 1862, but a concerted programme of river improvements, including deepening and dredging, from 1852 and into the 1880s, ensured that larger vessels could reach, and could be made by, ship-builders and other industries located upstream of the harbour.<sup>31</sup> In 1863, 1,000 vessels, with an aggregate tonnage of 232,000, were registered to the port, almost double the number at the opening of the century.<sup>32</sup>

### **Imports and Exports:**

The Sunderland fleet and vessels registered elsewhere carried away lime, glass and bottles, grind-stones and copperas, besides coal; and they brought in a range of goods from British and foreign ports, for consumption or for use by Wearside industries: corn, flour, wines, spirituous liquors, timber, tar, deals, flax, and iron, were listed as the main imports in 1803.<sup>33</sup> Between 500 and 600 vessels were registered to the port in the two decades after 1800, amounting to 80,000 to 85,000 tons in the years before 1820, a time when shipping directly employed almost 4,000 men and boys.<sup>34</sup> As trade picked up after the war, around 6,500 to 7,300 voyages a year left the port for British destinations, and in the region of 300 to 400 went abroad.<sup>35</sup>

Garbutt suggested that the town's merchants suffered from a 'want of spirit' in buying from neighbouring ports 'at second hand rate'. Local demand for foodstuffs was booming, but rather than buy direct from overseas, the merchants went to the Newcastle market for corn previously imported via Sunderland, and brought it immediately back by land.<sup>36</sup> In 1818, wheat, oats and barley came into Wearside from Germany, the Low Countries and Denmark. The Netherlands supplied onions, hay, butter, linseed cakes, and, along with Jersey, apples and pears. Duty was paid on 701 gallons of wine from Portugal, with a further 7,279 gallons waiting in warehouses, alongside 918 gallons from Spain, 2,056 gallons of Dutch gin, and 10,860 of Jamaican rum. The bulk of foreign goods imported, though, were materials for shipbuilding. Fir and oak timber, masts, oars, boards, and other wood and bark, came in vast quantity from Russia (including 100 loads of fir and masts), Norway (812 of fir, 56 of oak), Prussia (1,063 fir, 82 oak), and also Denmark, Germany and Holland. The British colonies of North America supplied even more: fir (1,601 loads), oak (102), elm (15) and birch (86) timber, maple and other wood, and masts, spars, deals and potash. Hemp for ropes was imported from Holland, and more, about 270 tons, from Russia, along with Hessian canvas, tar and bristles.<sup>37</sup>

While coal remained the dominant export from the Wear, local products, along with commodities from elsewhere in the region, were shipped out in significant volume. Tens of thousands of pieces of earthenware went to northern Europe, particularly Prussia and Norway, and also in some quantity to the Channel Islands. The main recipient was Canada, which in 1818 also took 'flint glass, crown glass, mustard, grindstones, woollen cloth, beaver hats nine dozen, copperas, painters' colours, lead shot, woollen hose, leather caps, hardware, wrought copper, copper bolts, iron bolts, shoes, tobacco pipes, hair brushes, leather, stationary', and a boat and various textile goods. The United States bought similar goods, along with a patent windlass

and clocks. Grind- and whet-stones, glass of various types, and copperas were exported widely, along with products which were not local, including cotton goods and salt.<sup>38</sup>

Customs revenues had suffered during the years of war, but markedly increased from 1814.<sup>39</sup> Local reports in 1809 indicate a busy coastal trade, whatever the difficulties of trading abroad in wartime. Oak timber came in from Kent, Sussex and Hampshire, rigging from Dover, nails from London and Plymouth, barley and sail cloth from Scotland, grain and flour from King's Lynn.<sup>40</sup> A 'stagnation of trade' reported in 1811 resulted not from the hostilities, but because ships from the south were detained by contrary winds.<sup>41</sup>

The customs moved in 1813 to Edward Browne's old house at Fitters' Row.<sup>42</sup> About 300 merchants and other inhabitants petitioned the Board of Customs in 1830 to move the custom house away from this 'obscure, remote and inconvenient situation... at a great distance from... where the mercantile business is transacted'. They argued that Sunderland 'in the number and gross amount of the tonnage of its ships exceeds every port in the United Kingdom except London, Newcastle and Liverpool, having 625 ships, whose aggregate registered burden is 107,880 tons'. Sunderland's trade had 'long been increasing in magnitude and importance, 9,180 ships having been cleared foreign and coastwise' during the previous year. The town had offered a site near the Exchange for the purpose, but it took several years to convince the Customs. Their view was that the old house was close to the main bonding warehouses and vaults, and overlooked the sea and harbour entrance, while the new site was expensive at £100 a year, rather than 50 guineas at Fitters' Row, with interrupted views and further from the quays.<sup>43</sup>

The Chamber of Commerce and Shipowners' Society joined in another petition in 1835, contesting that the fulcrum of trading activity had for some years been moving from Sunderland to Bishopwearmouth, where were situated 'the very great majority of coal establishments and shipping staiths' besides 'all three banks, excise office and almost all merchants and brokers' offices'. The Board this time acted, considering eight possible sites, and settling for Low Street, central and close to the Legal Quay at Wylam Wharf, the building to be erected by the 'committee of merchants' who owned the land, and would receive annual rent of £150 for a 21-year lease. Building commenced in 1836, and the new custom house opened late the following year.<sup>44</sup>

### **Industrial development:**

Of the older manufacturing industries founded on cheap supplies of coal, lime and glass responded with some success to new markets, while pottery flourished briefly before waning after 1850. Local glass manufacturers secured a future through new products, and were at the forefront of technological advance. Williamson was early to recognise the potential of hydrated lime, and imported hydrating plant from Chicago, the first in Europe, which was installed at Fulwell in 1908. As the Fulwell quarries became exhausted, the company leased 'a vast area of pure mountain limestone'

near Kirkby Stephen (Westmorland) in 1925, and operations gradually centred there.<sup>45</sup>

Large numbers of high-quality grindstones were exported throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup> Various chemicals were produced in the town. Copperas or green vitriol, used in inks and dyes and various other industrial applications, was made at Hylton Ferry by the surgeon William Scurfield, before 1750, and at Deptford from about 1722, this works later run by Bernard Ogden. Another pigment, Prussian Blue, was made in small quantities at various locations, including at a factory next to the Newcastle turnpike near Monkwearmouth, where in 1811 there were advertised a 'steam engine, boilers, vats and sundry other utensils'. The town also produced charcoal, lamp black and vitriol.<sup>47</sup> A cement industry, at Hylton, Deptford and Wellington Lane, made use of local clay and lime, and in the era of sail ships imported chalk as ballast.<sup>48</sup>

Old rope and canvas from the port was recycled into raw material for paper-making elsewhere in Co. Durham, until, from the 1820s, a paper manufacturing industry grew in Sunderland itself. Experiments during the 1860s at Ford Mill led to the adoption of esparto grass from Spain and north Africa, first for newsprint, then to make high-quality white paper.<sup>49</sup> Sunderland had three paper factories. Wearmouth, or Deptford, Mill at Ayres Quay, converted from a saw mill in 1826, worked into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>50</sup> Ford Mill operated from 1836 until 1971, when it employed more than 400.<sup>51</sup> Hendon paper works, at one time the largest in the north of England, started as a riverside business, moving to Hendon Grange in about 1872 where it continued until closure in 1980. A year later the printer Edward Thompson reopened the factory to make low grade paper for tickets. It shut down finally in 2006.<sup>52</sup>

The most significant of the new industries was marine engineering.<sup>53</sup> William Doxford, who started as a builder of wooden sailing ships, became renowned as a marine engineer, opening a specialist engine works in 1878.<sup>54</sup> Others operated independently: George Clark (Sunderland) Ltd., marine engineer at Southwick;<sup>55</sup> Maccoll & Pollock, who made engines and boilers at Wreath Quay;<sup>56</sup> the North Eastern Marine Engineering Co. Ltd. of Wallsend and Sunderland; William Allen and Co. of Scotia Engine Works, later amalgamated into Richardsons, Westgarth Co, marine, electrical engineers and boiler makers, of Hartlepool.<sup>57</sup> The Sunderland Forge & Engineering Co. Ltd. of Pallion produced marine forgings and dynamos from 1887 exclusively for Thompson's of North Sands.<sup>58</sup> Other businesses supplied materials or specialist equipment: the Monkwearmouth Iron & Steel Works, founded in 1857 by Samuel Tyzack; J.J. Wilson & Son, Opticians and Nautical Instrument Makers, established in the 1860s; Cook & Nicholson of the Wear File Works; the machine-tool warehouse of Harrison & Co., and the iron, steel, bolt and nut merchant George W. Robson.<sup>59</sup> Other, more tangential, enterprises were doubtless drawn to Sunderland by the growing local expertise and skilled engineering labour force: the Rectory Engineering Co. made steam-powered wagons.<sup>60</sup>

As for those trades which could have faced extinction with the passing of wooden sailing ships, a number found new purpose. W. Davison, Hoseason & Co. continued

to make sails but also diversified into tents, finding valuable markets supplying the armed forces in the twentieth century.<sup>61</sup> Webster was the first rope-maker to mechanise, and built the town's first factory of any description, in the 1790s. While hemp ropes would always be in demand, Webster and other rope-makers developed manufacturing capacity in iron wire ropes, establishing a local industry which would remain important into the 1960s.<sup>62</sup>

Timber, or raff, yards were much in evidence on the waterfront when John Rain drew his Eye Plan in the 1780s. The timber trade was undertaken by several coal-fitters, an effective combination which saw timber providing ballast in colliers returning from delivering to the Baltic and Low Countries.<sup>63</sup> The joiner John Bonner, architect of the Phoenix Lodge, had one of several raff yards on the north side of the harbour, in the area still known as Bonner's Field, and site of one of the town's largest saw mills, that of J. & W. Wilson & Sons, at the close of the nineteenth century. Other leading timber importers of that time – Armstrong, Addison & Co., and at the South Dock, Thomas Elliot & Son Ltd and W. & G. Robson – had found new markets beyond the shipbuilding industry, for railway sleepers, pit props, building timbers and telegraph poles.<sup>64</sup>

Commercial brewing and baking were well-established by 1800, serving seafarers as well as local consumers. The 1795-6 directory recorded a dozen or more breweries, including Elstob near the bottle works at the Panns, Chapman and Brown in Low Street, and Cooper Abbs and Co. of Monkwearmouth. Low Street, with its clear wells, had five breweries in the following decade. The Abbs brewery at Bonner's Field later became Deuchar's, and then part of Newcastle Breweries.<sup>65</sup> Cuthbert Vaux established a brewery in the 1830s, relocating to a large site in Castle Street, near Galley's Gill, in 1875, where the family-run business continued until 1999.<sup>66</sup> North-Eastern Breweries Ltd, formed in 1896, was a merger of several smaller companies, including the Wear and Moor Street breweries.<sup>67</sup> Foodstuffs manufacturers also took to factory production late in the nineteenth century: Tuson & Co., biscuit and cake makers; William Chapman at the Millfield Cake and Bread Factory; and E.C. Robson, whose flour mill behind Green Terrace dwarfed Bishopwearmouth church.<sup>68</sup>

### **Commerce and retail:**

The Sunderland Exchange opened in 1814 as a centre for commercial activity and information. There were already insurance offices, specializing in cover for ships, houses, and merchandise. The earliest public bank, that of Messrs. Russell, Allan, and Wade,<sup>69</sup> later Russell, Allan & Maling, and sometimes called the Sunderland Bank, it had been founded before 1787 and was out of business by 1803.<sup>70</sup> Other early banks proved similarly unstable: Cooke, Robinson & Co., known as the Shields & Sunderland Bank, in being before 1803, failed in 1816.<sup>71</sup> The Wear Bank, or Goodchild, Jackson & Co. survived a panic in 1803, only to crash in 1815.<sup>72</sup> A savings bank was founded in 1817,<sup>73</sup> and the Monkwearmouth Provident Institution for Savings in 1824.<sup>74</sup>

A directory of 1837<sup>75</sup> notes five banks then operating in the town, though by then they were four, after Sir William Chaytor & Co., established in 1829,<sup>76</sup> was taken over by the Newcastle, Shields and Sunderland Union Bank, formerly Chapman & Co., which had converted to joint stock in 1836. This conglomerate was suspended in 1847, and eventually absorbed by the private bank Woods & Co.<sup>77</sup> R. J. Lambton & Co. was a branch of a Newcastle bank, formerly Davison-Bland & Co., founded in 1788.<sup>78</sup> The Sunderland Joint Stock Bank commenced business in 1836, suspending payment in 1851, its failure bound up with that of the Wear Ironworks. It was not helped by the 'dubious activities' of the bank's directors, including the brothers Thomas and Robert Brown whose account was overdrawn by over £30,000.<sup>79</sup> Jonathan Backhouse & Co. of Darlington had opened a Sunderland branch in 1816 in response to 'distress and inconvenience' resulting from the failure of Cooke. Backhouse had longstanding clients in the town, fellow Quakers like the furrier Bernard Ogden and grocer Solomon Chapman.<sup>80</sup> Edward Backhouse moved to Sunderland to manage the new bank, and made his home at Ashburne, where he died in 1860.<sup>81</sup>

Quakers were prominent in the growing commercial sector. William Henry Hills (1831-1918) founded a firm of booksellers & printers which survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>82</sup> Caleb Wilson started as a grocer and tallow chandler in High Street in 1761, specializing in tea imports, tobacco and clay pipe manufacture. The business, called Joshua Wilson and Brothers after the death of the founder's son in 1843, used its own fleet of barques to import goods for their grocery business. From 1870, it was entirely wholesale, and adapted the old East End market building as its warehouse in 1954.<sup>83</sup> The draper George Binns (1781-1836), born in Lancashire, took over a woollen drapery and linen shop in High Street, Bishopwearmouth, in 1811, drawing on his textile contacts in Manchester for stock. His son Henry (1810-80) took over the business after George's death. Another son was the prominent Chartist George Binns (1815-47). Henry, like many Quakers active in the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, advertised that he would not sell 'any goods manufactured from cotton not warranted to be free labour grown'. The business prospered, moving across High Street to larger premises in 1844. Henry's second son, Joseph John Binns (1839-1922), further expanded the business, the turnover in 1878 reaching £17,500, and profits £3,500. In 1884 the shop opened as a department store with three floors, in the town centre. When in 1897 it became a limited liability company, control passed from the family, though Joseph Binns was chairman until his death. By this time Binns offered services as diverse as funerals and motor showrooms from premises around the town, and had its own factory at Holmeside.<sup>84</sup>

Fenwick's, the flourishing Newcastle department store, opened a branch in Sunderland in 1888, but it was not a success and closed within a year.<sup>85</sup> There was already considerable competition from other large drapers and general stores: as well as Binns, along High Street were Blckett & Son Ltd, at Union Street; J.T. Calvert, in Lambton Street; Havelock House, at Fawcett Street; W. C. Thompson & Co. Ltd, at Nile Street; J. A. Kennedy Ltd; and the drapery, clothing and furnishing warehouse of Hedley, Swan & Co., known as Jopling's. The Havelock House fire in 1898 destroyed or severely damaged 48 businesses in the surrounding retail district.

The Arcade, leading between High Street West and St Thomas Street, opened in 1874. Additionally Co-op stores had a considerable presence, the Sunderland Equitable Industrial Society Ltd in Green Street, and societies such as the Ryhope and Silksworth around the villages.<sup>86</sup>

Markets were governed by Sunderland borough from the Middle Ages, until their transfer to the Improvement Commissioners in 1820, and then to the new corporation in 1851.<sup>87</sup> In the 1790s, it was noted, the two Wearmouths' 'near thirty thousand inhabitants... [were] supplied with all kinds of provisions from a very plentiful market', which came to extend the length of High Street, eastwards from the Exchange. The main fish market stood apart, near the coble landing or on Ettrick's Quay. Bi-annual fairs, selling mainly toys and 'of little consequence', were abolished by Act of Parliament in 1868.<sup>88</sup>

The Improvement Commissioners moved market day to Saturday in 1820, and trialled a cattle market in Barrack Street from 1826, and servants' hirings at the Exchange, but these proved unsuccessful.<sup>89</sup> A covered market proposed in the first Improvement Act was built only in 1830, after the passage of the second Act.<sup>90</sup> This eased congestion and nuisance in the High Street. After considering a site near the Exchange, the commissioners erected the market hall, which measured 657 feet by 95 feet, between High Street and Coronation Street, adjacent to Church Street.<sup>91</sup>

The market hall, in good repair and with a new glass roof in 1888, offered meat, vegetables, dairy produce, general provisions, old clothes, books, clogs, hardware, confectionary and other items. The Borough of Sunderland Act 1851 continued to restrict markets to the area of the medieval borough, but this was lifted in 1877 to allow a corn market to trade on the Garrison Fields in Bishopwearmouth. A private market then opened in Bishopwearmouth, impacting considerably on the old borough market, which had also been hit by a falling east end population. As the market hall declined, it was eventually used only on Saturdays by most traders, though butchers remained, as did many street hawkers in High Street. By the 1880s the focus of retailing was in Bishopwearmouth, and a parliamentary enquiry cited Sunderland as an example of 'the town growing away from the markets'.<sup>92</sup>

### **Social life**

The livelihood of the poor was precarious, especially during downturns in trade. In wartime, early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dozens of 'the lower class of inhabitants', mostly women, ran back and forth up to their waists in the sea as the tide rose, using small hand-baskets to catch small coals which the waves floated in. These coals provided fuel, or were sold on.<sup>93</sup> Poverty increased during a long post-war recession. Returning sailors and prisoners from France arrived in 1814, 'many very distressed', and for them a local subscription of £745 was raised.<sup>94</sup> In 1816, an appeal collected £2,487 'for the purpose of employing the labouring poor'.<sup>95</sup>

Local magistrates were in frequent contact during 1815-16 with the Home Secretary, Viscount Sidmouth, amidst concern that hardship would further inflame the disorder

and insurrection already evident among keelmen and sailors protesting about new waggonways. Rector Gray wrote to Sidmouth in October 1816 that 'the want of employment' had brought great distress, and with the town already highly excited, 'there is no reflecting person who does not look forward with some apprehension to the winter'. Gray's view was that the government should institute major schemes of public works, and that the local poor law authorities 'requir[e] as far as possible labour from those relieved', though adding 'the funds of the public bodies in Sunderland in particular are in so low a state that it will be difficult to procure the adoption of any plan upon a[n adequate] scale.' The parish of Sunderland, said Gray, 'labours under an excessive population, the effects of which appear in idleness, disorder and profligacy, and in... a jealousy of competition and improvement'. This last remark was his reflection on local resistance to any kind of innovation.<sup>96</sup> At the end of the year, unemployment and food shortages were still growing, although philanthropic efforts had built a fund to employ 300 in Bishopwearmouth and Sunderland, and it was planned to put the poor to work on road schemes.<sup>97</sup> Robert Gray was prime mover in launching a savings bank in September 1817, to encourage 'the mechanic, the labourer, and the sailor', instead of 'thoughtlessly squandering the whole, to husband a part of their wages' against hard times.<sup>98</sup> These times continued to recur, as Edward Bell wrote to his son in 1830: 'I am now getting up into years that I that I am not able to work at hard labour and the times are so bad in Sunderland that there is not work for a young and able man much more the aged and infirm...'<sup>99</sup>

The presence of soldiers may have reassured, but it also brought its own problems, more so once the garrison became permanent. Three soldiers almost killed a policeman who tried to arrest one of them for drunkenness in 1846, beating, kicking and biting him senseless. Before disappearing into the safety of their barracks, they sparked a riot along High Street which was stopped only with the help of the commanding officer and a detachment with fixed bayonets.<sup>100</sup> In 1848, after two privates were fined for drunkenness and resisting arrest, a large contingent left the barracks in search of revenge, attacking the outnumbered constables before retreating to their base. A visit by the mayor and police in pursuit of the culprits resulted in more violence, the mayor and his attendants having to be escorted to the gates by an officer with drawn sword, though they 'escaped uninjured'. The colonel of the regiment was expected to 'hand over the ringleaders for justice' but the *Times* reported that 'considerable fear has been occasioned by the affair'.<sup>101</sup> Following a period of bad feeling against the police in 1856, soldiers of the Royal Tyrone Fusiliers militia set off a full-scale battle which terrified inhabitants in the lower part of town. This again started with a drunken clash, after which the militia tried to rescue five 'notorious characters' being escorted to the main police station. The police called reinforcements but were at first no match for the larger number of soldiers. After the militia men attacked the police station, the police used batons to regain the ascendancy, and managed to arrest half the soldiers. The commanding officer at this point had to secure his barracks and double the guard to prevent more soldiers going out to rescue their comrades from police custody.<sup>102</sup> Magistrates later handed back the offending soldiers to face military justice.<sup>103</sup>

Nineteenth-century Sunderland, especially the port areas crowded with a transient population, continued to have a wild, perhaps threatening, edge. But within a short walk of the harbour, north and south of the Wear, were respectable streets of cottages, a high proportion owner-occupied by a labour aristocracy which in prosperous times enjoyed a relatively good standard of living. These areas, mirroring the middle-class suburbs, had schools, shops, churches and chapels, workers' institutes and clubs, sporting facilities, and access to open ground and parks.<sup>104</sup> By the turn of the century the town had impressive public buildings and attractions, including libraries and museum, new public halls and theatres, the developing beach resort at Roker and Seaburn, and sporting facilities at Ashbrooke, as well as a stadium accommodating 40,000 spectators for the Sunderland Football Club at Roker Park.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W G Armstrong, J Taylor, I L Bell & Richardson, *The Industrial Resources of the Tyne, Wear & Tees* (1864), 48, 277-87; **cross ref shipbuilding**.

<sup>2</sup> E.W. Brayley and J. Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, v (1803), 143-4, 146-7, 149-50.

<sup>3</sup> J. Thompson, *Recollections of Old Monkwearmouth: Men of Mark in Olden Times* (Sunderland, c. 1890) [among pamphlets in Sund Lib.], 4-19.

<sup>4</sup> S. Ville, DNB; W. Stokes, 'Andrew White, 1792-1856, Methodist, politician and entrepreneur' in *Durham Biog*, ii, 122-5

<sup>5</sup> Wood 1826; **cross ref pt 2 libraries etc**

<sup>6</sup> Garbutt 1819 annotated; **cross ref newspapers**.

<sup>7</sup> Garbutt 1819, 397

<sup>8</sup> J. Sykes, *State of the Coal Trade* (1829), 37, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Garbutt 1819, 401. **Cross ref coal trade**

<sup>10</sup> M. W. Flinn, *The History of the British Coal Industry: vol. ii, 1700-1830, the Industrial Revolution* (1984), p. 269

<sup>11</sup> Sunderland Antiq. Soc., Mining Box 1, printed notice 'Lambton Forever', 1820.

<sup>12</sup> Flinn p. 168; Surtees i, 266.

<sup>13</sup> Garbutt, 399.

<sup>14</sup> Flinn pp. 168, 170-1.

<sup>15</sup> Sykes, 29-30.

<sup>16</sup> Flinn 1984 p. 170.

<sup>17</sup> Sykes, 75-6.

<sup>18</sup> NEIMME, 3410/Wat/3/45/5; also /23; **cross ref coal trade**

<sup>19</sup> NEIMME, 3410/Wat/1/7/9; /10; East Sussex RO, WIN/2143; BL, Add. 38293 f. 152; Sunderland Antiq. Soc., Mining Box 1, Coal Trade Improvement Bill, petition from merchants etc of Sunderland, 1824

<sup>20</sup> NEIMME, 3410/Wat/1/5/76.

<sup>21</sup> Flinn 1984 p. 177-8; J. Sykes, *State of the Coal Trade* (1829), 70; M. Dunn, *View of the Coal Trade of the North of England* (1844), 33-4.

<sup>22</sup> Flinn 1984 p. 176.

<sup>23</sup> NEIMME, 3410/Wat/1/5/75.

<sup>24</sup> Sykes, 11-12.

<sup>25</sup> Sykes, 70, 74.

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<sup>26</sup> **Cross ref coal mining**

<sup>27</sup> NEIMME, 3410/Wat/1/5/105; BL, Tab.597.2 (43); M. Dunn, *View of the Coal Trade of the North of England* (1844), 227.

<sup>28</sup> Northumbs RO, SANT/BEQ/26/1/04/145; 1/9/223; BL, Add. 40539 f.264 b.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor Potts, 102-11.

<sup>30</sup> *Newcastle and Gateshead Incorporated Chamber of Commerce Yearbook* (1914), 59, 56. **Cross ref Docks**

<sup>31</sup> T&WAS, 3768/5; *Sund Daily Post*, 15 Nov. 1879; W G Armstrong, J Taylor, I L Bell & Richardson, *The Industrial Resources of the Tyne, Wear & Tees* (1864), 343-4; 347; **cross ref docks**.

<sup>32</sup> W G Armstrong, J Taylor, I L Bell & Richardson, *The Industrial Resources of the Tyne, Wear & Tees* (1864), 347.

<sup>33</sup> Brayley and Britton 1803, 144.

<sup>34</sup> Garbutt 1819, 406-7.

<sup>35</sup> Garbutt 1819, 401-2.

<sup>36</sup> Garbutt 1819, 418-19.

<sup>37</sup> Garbutt 1819, 414-19.

<sup>38</sup> Garbutt 1819, 411-14.

<sup>39</sup> Garbutt 1819, 421-2.

<sup>40</sup> *Tyne Mercury*, 10, 17, 24, 31 Jan. 1809.

<sup>41</sup> *Tyne Mercury*, 9 July 1811.

<sup>42</sup> **Cross ref. Growth 1600**

<sup>43</sup> TNA, T 1/4266.

<sup>44</sup> TNA, T 1/4266; Garbutt, annotated, 420 and added notes.

<sup>45</sup> British Bull. of Commerce, 'County Borough of Sunderland , 1954: histories of famous firms', 18-19 (Sunderland Lib); *Industrial Wearside* 1931; *Newc & Gates Ch of Com Journal*, Supp. (1929), 103; **cross ref. industries**.

<sup>46</sup> Garbutt 406; T Potts, 167.

<sup>47</sup> Garbutt 408-9; G. Heslop, 'The Copperas Works at Deptford', *Antiq. of Sund.*, iii (1902), 125; RTP, 28; T Potts, 167-9; *Tyne Mercury*, 17 Sept. 1811.

<sup>48</sup> *Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District* (1898), 65; RTP, 24.

<sup>49</sup> J.V. Stirk, *The Lost Mills: a History of Papermaking in Co. Durham* (Univ. of Sunderland Press, 2006), 14, 19, 23, 89, 94; RTP, 28-9.

<sup>50</sup> Stirk, *Lost Mills*, 132-8; C.F. Maidwell, *A Short History of Papermaking in the North East* (1959), 18-19; *Illustrated Guide to Sund. & District* (1898), 69; R. M.

Richardson, 'The Hutton Family (Papermakers)', *Antiq. Sund.*, ix (1908), 169-79.

<sup>51</sup> Stirk, *Lost Mills*, 142-57; J. P. Cornett, 'Local Paper Mills', *Antiq. Sund.*, ix (1908), 162-7; C B Walker, 'Ford paper mill, 1836-1971', *Antiq. Sund.* ii (xxix OS) (1984) 47-73; *Industrial Wearside* (Sund. Echo, 1931).

<sup>52</sup> Stirk, *Lost Mills*, 172-9; Maidwell, *Short History of Papermaking*, 21-2; *Sund. Echo*, 31 Dec. 2009; RTP, 29.

<sup>53</sup> RTP, 40-2; **cross ref shipbuilding**

<sup>54</sup> RTP 41.

<sup>55</sup> G. Hollingworth, *England's Vast Industries & Mercantile Marine* (1908), 130; Smith & Holden, 150-1.

<sup>56</sup> *Illustrated Guide to Sund. & District* (1898), 63.

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- <sup>57</sup> Tyneside Industries (1889), 98-9; Sund. Lib., catalogue 1919; Smith & Holden, 151-2; Newc. And Gateshead Ch of Commerce 1914.
- <sup>58</sup> Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District (1898), 62; North East Coast Commercially Considered (1901), 82-5.
- <sup>59</sup> Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District (1898), 61, 49, 64; Newc. And Gateshead Ch of Commerce 1914.
- <sup>60</sup> R.H. Clark, *The Development of the English Steam Wagon* (1963), 56-7.
- <sup>61</sup> Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District (1898), 76; Northumbs RO, 08703/19.
- <sup>62</sup> **Cross ref ropes**
- <sup>63</sup> Rain; Barfoot & Wilkes
- <sup>64</sup> Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District (1898), 39, 42-5; RTP, 28; Industrial Wearside 1931.
- <sup>65</sup> RTP, 30-1; Rain; Barfoot & Wilkes
- <sup>66</sup> Northumbs RO, 1115; DRO, D/Va 1-192; RTP, 31; Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District (1898), 80-1.
- <sup>67</sup> RTP, 30-1.
- <sup>68</sup> Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District (1898), 66, 68; )S 1890s; Industrial Wearside 1931.
- <sup>69</sup> Barfoot & Wilkes p. 512
- <sup>70</sup> Phillips 362-4; G.W. Bain, 'Early days of banking in S', *Antiq of S*, vi (1905), 76-93.
- <sup>71</sup> G.W. Bain, 'Early Days of Banking in Sunderland', *Antiq. Of Sund.*, vi (1905), 76-93; Phillips, 230-2.
- <sup>72</sup> Phillips, 274-9; Bain in *Antiq of Sunderland* 6 (1905), 76-93.
- <sup>73</sup> Devon RO, 152M/C1817/OH104-5; **cross ref poverty above**.
- <sup>74</sup> Sund. Lib., Rules of the Monkwearmouth Provident Institution for Savings, 1824.
- <sup>75</sup> Pigot 1837, 168.
- <sup>76</sup> M. Phillips, *A History of Banks, Bankers and Banking in Northumberland, Durham and North Yorkshire from 1755 to 1894* (1894), 225-7, 273-4; Taylor Potts, 101-2.
- <sup>77</sup> Phillips, 224-5, 320-6, 406.
- <sup>78</sup> Phillips, 239-62
- <sup>79</sup> Phillips, 383-4; Garbutt 1819, annotated; W. Stokes, 'Andrew White, 1792-1856, Methodist, politician and entrepreneur' in *Durham Biog*, ii, 122-5.
- <sup>80</sup> Phillips, 136-7, 140-1; see VCH iv, 142-4; Milligan, 101.
- <sup>81</sup> Milligan, 23.
- <sup>82</sup> Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District (1898), 114; North East Industrialist, Sept. 1954; Milligan, 238; P. Curtis, *Sunderland's Shopping Heritage* (Sund., 2004), 68-73..
- <sup>83</sup> British Bull. of Commerce, 'County Borough of Sunderland , 1954: histories of famous firms', 16-17 (Sunderland Lib).
- <sup>84</sup> Michael S. Moss, DNB; Milligan, 50; *Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District* (1898), 127; Curtis, *Sunderland's Shopping Heritage*, 48-55; J. Stobart list of Sunderland department stores, University of Coventry; DRO, D/X 1207/1/60-1; RTP, 209; **cross ref growth 1800**
- <sup>85</sup> Anne Pimlott Baker, 'Fenwick family (per. 1882-1979)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004

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<sup>86</sup> Curtis, *Sunderland's Shopping Heritage*, 7-27; 96-8; P. Curtis, *Sunderland: a Century of Shopping* (Seaham, 1999), 32-4; J. Stobart list of Sunderland department stores, University of Coventry; *Illustrated Guide to Sunderland & District* (1898), 88-91, 96, 123; Sund. Lib., Sunderland Equitable Industrial Soc. Ltd. handbooks (1894 and 1910).

<sup>87</sup> 14 & 15 Vict. c. 67; G. Cookson, 'Sunderland Markets and the Myth of the South Shields Donkey', *Sund. Hist.* (forthcoming).

<sup>88</sup> Barfoot and Wilkes, *Universal British Dir.*, iv (1795-6), 510; Mitchell, 56; Durham Record Office, Q/D/B/5, Quarter Sessions Enrolment book, enrolled 1824, pp. 547-53; Summers, 365 fn., 368-9 fn; Sunderland Central Lib., Corder Mss 36, pp. 47-50; Potts, 29-32; 30 & 31 Vict. c. 117

<sup>89</sup> Potts, 31-2; Sunderland Central Lib., Corder Mss 36, p. 48; Summers, 369 fn.

<sup>90</sup> Local and Personal Act, 50 George III, c. xxvii; Local and Personal Act, 7 George IV, c. cxx; 1888 [C.5550-III] RC on Market Rights and Tolls, IV, 393.

<sup>91</sup> Summers, 365-6 fn.; 1888 [C.5550-III] RC on Market Rights and Tolls IV, 393; TNA, T 1/4266; **cross ref growth 1800.**

<sup>92</sup> PP 1888 [C.5550-III] RC on Market Rights and Tolls, IV, 393-6; 400; 497; Curtis, *Century of Shopping*, 28-9.

<sup>93</sup> Brayley and Britton, 146-7

<sup>94</sup> Garbutt, app., 67

<sup>95</sup> Garbutt 1819, app., 68

<sup>96</sup> Devon RO, 152M/C1816/OH40; /OH89; Garbutt 1819, app., 67-8; **cross ref.**

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<sup>97</sup> Devon RO, 152M/C1816/OH89.

<sup>98</sup> Devon RO, 152M/C1817/OH104-5

<sup>99</sup> Bucks. RO, D-X991/4/1

<sup>100</sup> *The Times*, 7 Aug. 1846

<sup>101</sup> *The Times*, 29 Sept. 1848

<sup>102</sup> *Durham Advertiser*, 15 Feb. 1856

<sup>103</sup> *Durham Advertiser*, 22 Feb. 1856

<sup>104</sup> 1895 OS; **cross ref sports parks etc plus Sund Cottages**

<sup>105</sup> An Illustrated Guide to Sund & District (1898)