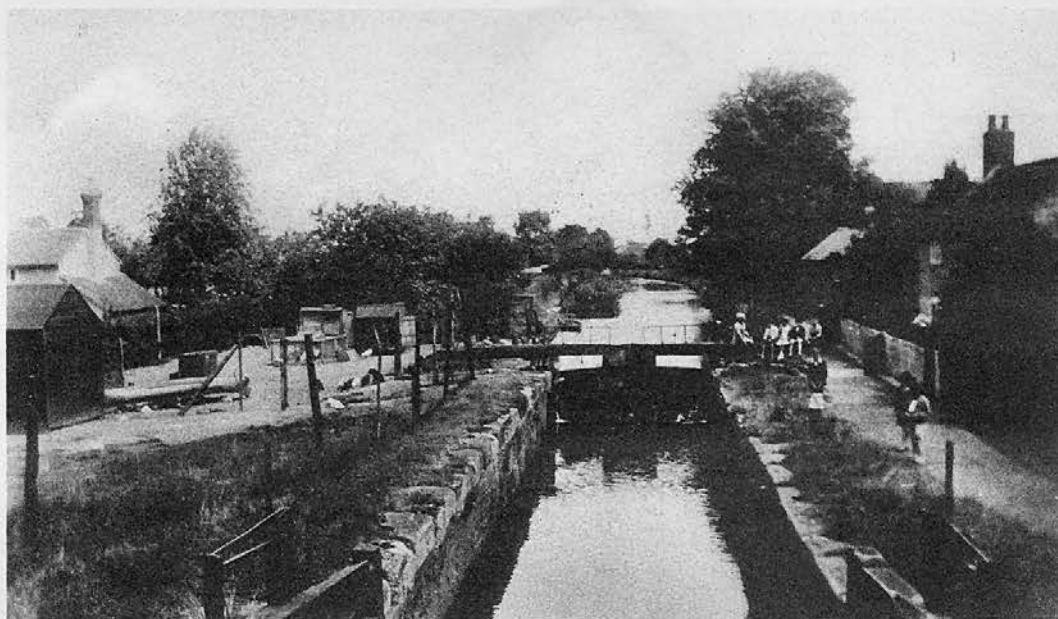


Vol 16

# DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY



**Shelton Lock on the Derby Canal**

**The Local History Bulletin  
of the  
Derbyshire Archaeological Society**

Volume 16

# DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY

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# AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT IN DERBY: 1839 - 1842

(by Rosemary Key,

## Introduction

Chartism was the culmination of at least fifty years of radical political and industrial activity in Britain and was the first major struggle of working-class people to obtain political representation. The ending of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 exacerbated fluctuations in trade, leading to a series of deep depressions. There was growing awareness that only with a wider franchise would conditions for working people improve. When the Reform Bill of 1831 was rejected by Parliament there was profound disappointment, leading to rioting in many towns, including Derby; and when a much more limited Bill was passed in 1832, working people felt betrayed. For a while they concentrated on practical objectives, but the inability of the Trade Unions to defend wage levels, together with growing protests against the new Poor Law, caused a return to political agitation, in particular for universal male suffrage and parliamentary reform, culminating in the publication of the six-point People's Charter in May 1838.

The publication of the Charter heralded a period of great activity; signatures were collected for petitioning Parliament for the Charter; an alternative parliament, [Convention] was set up; and there were public meetings and demonstrations all over the country. This activity was particularly intense in the early years, 1838 to 1842, with a further peak in 1848. There were periods, particularly in 1839 and 1842, when Britain seemed to come close to revolution; and the importance of the Movement, and the threat it posed to the existing social order, was underlined by the determination of the authorities in suppressing it.<sup>1</sup> Reform of Parliament was seen as a necessary means to economic change and the demand for universal suffrage was one which all working people could unite around. But it was more than this; deprivation may have been the spur to action but there was also a strong belief in freedom and justice. *"The Charter, its proponents believed, was a means through which a just society could be established..."*<sup>2</sup>

Derby, in the early nineteenth century, was a rapidly developing industrial town. The population of the borough rose from 13,154 persons in 1801 to 27,190 in 1831, and 37,431 in 1841.<sup>3</sup> Its industry was diverse, but included textile mills - mainly silk hosiery. In addition there were framework knitters employed in domestic workshops. The coming of the railways in the late 1830s increased the diversity of industry and contributed to the prosperity of the town. An event which immediately preceded Chartism was the Derby Silk Mill Lock-out of 1833-4. This dispute, which became a show of strength between the employers and the Trades Unions, was extensive, and lasted for five months before its collapse in April 1834. It was the failure of the Derby Lock-out and other trade disputes, which led working people to see that their only hope lay in *"real, not utterly partial, political reform"*.<sup>4</sup>

## 1839 - "The Charter - peaceably if we can forcibly if we must"

In Derby the Chartist Movement began slowly. In November 1838 a well-attended public meeting was held to form a Working Men's Association, and was soon followed by a mass meeting on 28 January 1839 on Chester Green, an area of common land just outside the Borough. This meeting was reported in depth in the two local newspapers, the *Derby Mercury* (DM) and the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* (DCR)(Reporter) and in the most widely-read Chartist newspaper, the *Northern Star* (NS)<sup>5</sup>: *"...The members of the Association... walked in procession... through the principal streets of the town, accompanied by a very tolerable band of music and a large number of flags, banners ..."*. They were joined by Chartists from Belper, and they *"...assembled in the Market Place and from thence went in procession to Chester Green... there was... probably between four and five thousand persons... The day was bitterly cold"*. The main speaker was George Julian Harney, a recognised revolutionary Chartist leader. His speech at Derby has been frequently quoted by writers on Chartism as an example of "physical force" Chartism:

*"Time was when every Englishman had a musket in his cottage, and along with it hung a fitch of bacon; now there was no fitch of bacon for there was no musket; let the musket be restored and the fitch of bacon would soon follow."*

Such sentiments roused loud cheers from the crowd at Derby. G.D.H. Cole cites this and Harney's election as Convention delegate for Derby as evidence that Derby was one of the towns where *"the Chartist left-wing was in*

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# THE WORKING MEN'S Association.

OF THE BOROUGH OF DERBY,

Beg leave to announce that

## A Public Meeting

WILL BE HELD IN THE

**MARKET PLACE,**  
**On Saturday Evening next,**

For the purpose of passing a  
vote of confidence in the General Convention now sitting in London.

**MR. J. R. RICHARDSON,**

Delegate from Manchester to the Convention,

WILL ADDRESS THE MEETING.

---

***Peace, Law, and Order, is our motto.***

---

And it is requested, that the Members of the Association will cause to be taken into custody, any disorderly persons who may commit a breach of the peace, or otherwise disturb the said meeting.

***The Chair will be taken  
at half-past Six o'clock in the evening.***

By order of the Committee.

Derby, April 26th, 1839.

W. HORSLEY, PRINTER, DERBY.

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the ascendant".<sup>6</sup> However other evidence, notably Derby's reliance on Chartists from Belper does not substantiate this conclusion. Indeed, violent rhetoric has since been seen as part of a style of speech. It seems that Chartist leaders used such revolutionary speech, particularly in the early years, appearing to advocate arming, but in fact the crowds and the authorities recognised this to be "a form of bluff".<sup>7</sup> Harney's speech at Derby reflects the optimism and confidence of many Chartists at this time: "*We demand Universal Suffrage because it is our fight... We are for Peace, Law and order, ...but we must have justice - we must have our rights speedily, peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must...*"

The Chester Green meeting was the highest point of the year for demonstration of popular support in Derby. Never again in 1839, and not until 1842, did a public meeting generate attendances in the thousands. The meeting was entirely peaceful by every account, and in this was in line with similar meetings all over the country. As a guide to the strength of the movement, the timing of the Chester Green meeting indicates that Chartism was slow to get off the ground in Derby. Most Lancashire and West Yorkshire towns had held mass meetings in autumn 1838, many with attendances of over 100,000. However, the national pattern of meetings was patchy; in some towns meetings were prevented by the authorities, and in some, meetings were poorly attended.<sup>8</sup> In this respect Derby's attendance must have been pleasing considering the "bitterly cold" day. The Convention opened in February 1839; there was great optimism, but even in the first few months there was evidence of lack of support in some districts. This led to differences of opinion on how to proceed. Outside the Convention, talk from the more militant areas was increasingly of arming. In Derby the *Reporter*, however, describing "alarm and threats of violence" in various towns said "*we have heard nothing in this neighbourhood to lead us to suppose that the Chartists are arming*".<sup>9</sup> In Derby there is no evidence in the local newspapers of any meetings between January and April. Reports from the *Northern Star* however, indicate that a local organisation was developing, with a delegate structure based on the "Midland Counties" of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby.<sup>10</sup> Working Men's Associations were, along with other radical associations, transformed into local Chartist centres around this period,<sup>11</sup> and it seems likely that Derby followed this pattern.

A public meeting in Derby on 27 April was called by the Working Men's Association "*for the purpose of passing a vote of confidence in the General Convention...*". The meeting was widely advertised by handbill (illus. i) and was addressed by J.R. Richardson, a delegate from Manchester. The Petition was ready in May but was not presented to Parliament till July. The delay led to further disunity in the Convention as it debated the way forward if the Petition were to be rejected. The delegates prepared a revised list of "*ulterior measures*" including strike action (the 'Sacred Month'), to be put to a series of mass meetings. The Derby meeting took place on Tuesday 21 May, and gave it's support to the recommendations. The local papers indicate an attendance of 400-500, and both appear hostile, contending "*it is evident in Derby that there is no confidence in the leaders*". It is likely that both newspapers were attempting to play down the Chartist influence at this time. Hence their reporting of similar Whitsun meetings in other towns, for example, "*the most ridiculous exhibition*" (Liverpool), and "*total failure of the so loudly trumpeted meeting*" (Nottingham). It seems likely that the alarm raised by the reports of arming and drilling may have led towns to expect insurrection to follow these meetings and possibly the newspaper reports were reflecting relief that this did not happen. Widespread popular enthusiasm was probably on the decline because of the confusion and disunity amongst the leaders. It seems from accounts of the two public meetings in April and May in Derby that the working people of the town were being presented with confused messages. The rhetoric was still highly militant, but there is little evidence of militancy in Derby at this time. The local organisation was based on a Working Mens Association. These were concerned to denounce any revolutionary intent; they "*regularly appealed for moderation*".<sup>13</sup> Handbills advertising Derby meetings called for "*Peace, Law and Order*", and on 21 May the Chair of the Derby meeting, Mr. Farnsworth, exhorted the meeting to "*keep the peace, and eject or call in the constables to remove any parties attempting to disturb public order*". The *Reporter* claims that whilst the Chartists were speaking a troop of dragoons passed by. It is likely that local Chartists, as in other towns, were fearful of the reaction of the authorities should there be an outbreak of violence. In Spring 1839 the Home Office was deluged with reports from magistrates of revolutionary plots, drilling and arming. The authorities in Derby, despite the outward appearance of calm were part of this deluge. A letter from the Mayor, Douglas Fox, to the Home Secretary in April expresses concern at the possible removal of the military from Derby to Mansfield.<sup>14</sup> There is also evidence that local employers were very concerned. "*At Derby Strutt... fortified his mills with cannon and had a troop of horses in readiness*."<sup>15</sup>

During the spring, General Sir Charles Napier was appointed to the command of the Northern District. There is evidence that he anticipated trouble at Derby. In a letter to Colonel Wemyss, at Manchester, on 22 April, he says "*I have told Lord John (Russell) that if an outbreak takes place it is to be feared it will show itself by a well-planned night*

Item 1

"Requisition from the Chartists for the use of the Town Hall" "March 1841"

"To his Worshipful the Mayor.

We the undersigned inhabitants of the town of Derby beg leave to solicit the use of the Town Hall for the purpose of memorilising her Majesty the Queen to grant a free pardon to Feargus O'Connor Esq<sup>re</sup> and all other political prisoners"

(54 signatures, as follows:)

|                   |                             |                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Joseph Stenson    | Thomas Byrne                | Thomas Tunnicliffe      |
| George Bateman    | Henry Stevenson             | Joseph Turner           |
| George Rowbotham  | J. Mills                    | Rob <sup>t</sup> Porter |
| Joseph Collard    | William Chandler            | Fr. Hunt                |
| William Bullock   | William Mather              | H. Hawgood (?)          |
| Thomas Briggs     | Joseph Hampton              | Jas. May                |
| John Skevenington | Tho <sup>s</sup> Allexander | Thos --ter(?)           |
| John Wewell (?)   | Thomas Chesser              | Edward Simpson          |
| Samuel Goode      | John Gregory                | William Pegg            |
| Thomas Marriott   | Nathaniel Neal              | James Elliott           |
| William Collard   | John Twiss                  | John Johnson            |
| James Farnsworth  | John Jackson                | Vincent Perrey          |
| Thomas Holmes     | George Hobson               | William Freeman         |
| John Pegg         | William Towlson             | Edmund Grocock          |
| Richard Gibson    | William Pemberton           | James Mosely            |
| James Brassington | William Arther              | Thomas Jackson          |
| Marmaduke Parkes  | John Woodward (?)           | Samuel Smith            |
| John Evans        | Ritchard Pemberton          |                         |
| Charles Bannister |                             |                         |

attack on Derby, ..." In May a Royal Proclamation was issued forbidding arming and drilling and advising suppression of "unlawful meetings". The formation of "armed associations" was encouraged, and one was formed in Derby at the end of May. The evident fear in Derby that violence would ensue from the April and May mass meetings is particularly understandable because of the recent experience of the Reform Bill riots. At the public meeting called to form the Armed Association, a speaker alleged "*had they been properly prepared no riots would have occurred in th<sup>e</sup> Borough in 1831*".<sup>16</sup> By May, Napier's information led him to believe that any violent outbreak would be confined to the Manchester area, and it appears that he managed to convince the majority of Chartist leaders in the north of the futility of insurrection.<sup>17</sup> When the Convention re-assembled in Birmingham on 1 July, it was further depleted by resignations. Very soon, provocative action taken by Birmingham magistrates to suppress a meeting in the Bull Ring on 4 July turned the meeting into a riot, with the subsequent arrest of more Chartist leaders. Anger stemming from this stimulated some renewal of militancy, and indeed at a Chartist meeting in Derby on 15 July, the delegates, referring to the Birmingham riots, resolved "*it is the indispensable duty of every man to procure arms*", and reported that the "*machine silk hose branch society of Derby*" had resolved "*to provide themselves with arms ... in defence of their constitutional rights and liberties...*".<sup>18</sup>

The Petition was rejected by Parliament on 12 July, causing further disunity in the Convention. J.R. Richardson and others pointed out that strikes would be disastrous in the current conditions, and John Skevington, Derby's delegate, was one of those who "*declared that they had not hope of their district carrying out the recommendation*".<sup>19</sup> Support for the proposed strike dwindled in the Convention, many of the leaders fearing it would provoke armed confrontation for which the population as a whole was unprepared. On 6 August Convention compromised, cancelling the proposed "Sacred Month", but proposing a three-day strike to begin on 12 August. This met with a varied response in different parts of the country. The Derby papers report disturbances and strikes in other localities, including Nottingham and Sheffield, around this time,<sup>20</sup> but nothing for Derby itself. Indeed they do not report any further Chartist activity in Derby during 1839. The Convention dissolved itself on 6 September; by autumn many Chartist leaders were in prison, and the Newport rising of November 1839, the most violent episode in the whole Chartist period, was swiftly suppressed.

It is likely that the preparations made by the Borough magistrates, together with the conflicting messages coming from the Chartist leaders, led to the avoidance of violent protest in Derby during 1839. Chartist activity, particularly from Whitsun onwards, seems lower than in many other manufacturing towns. This may be attributed in part to the slowness in getting the movement off the ground, and the apparent lack of strong local leadership. The appeal for "*Peace, Law and Order*", made by the Derby Chartists to their supporters in April and May, reflects their early optimism that the Charter would be obtained peaceably. The rejection of the Petition, and subsequent disunity in the Movement nationally, dealt a severe blow to this optimism.

#### 1840-41 -- Re-organisation and Revival

In January 1840 sentences of death were passed on Frost, Williams and Jones, the leaders of the Newport Rising. The commutation of the sentences to transportation for life "*almost certainly prevented further outbreaks of violence, and gave strength to 'moderate' Chartists who advocated petitioning rather than fighting*".<sup>21</sup> By Spring 1840 Chartists had turned to the task of building an effective national organisation. The National Charter Association [NCA] was established in July 1840 and urged obtaining the Charter by constitutional means. It gave a structure and organisation to the movement, which had previously been lacking.

In Derby there is no specific record of any Chartist activity in the local press until Spring 1841. It seems that in Derby at this time, as in other towns, mass Chartist meetings were no longer taking place. The evidence from the local press suggests that the majority of working people had fallen back on relying on charity and on middle-class solutions to their problems. In March 1840, for instance, working people attended an Anti-Corn Law meeting in large numbers.<sup>22</sup> By mid-1840 however, the Chartists in Derby were holding weekly meetings and organised at least one public meeting during the summer of 1840 - "*...we, the Chartists of Derby, have been for a length of time deprived of a place to meet by a band of ruffians who go under the cognomen of gentlemen; but... we have at last gained our object and taken a large room at the Ship Inn...*".<sup>23</sup> The reference to their difficulties in obtaining a room indicates that, contrary to the view expressed by some writers on Chartism,<sup>24</sup> - Chartists in the localities were not "*asleep*" but suffering active opposition to their activities. By spring 1841 it appears that the Movement in Derby was growing - "*The Chartists have almost all joined the National Charter Association; they have engaged Mr. Bairstow for the ensuing month as missionary...*".<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Bairstow, a former handloom weaver from Yorkshire, became one of the most popular lecturers in the area. In March 1841 Derby Chartists succeeded in gaining the attention of the local press for the first time since May 1839. The occasion was an Anti-Corn Law meeting in the Town Hall,

which was 'interrupted' and eventually taken over by Derby Chartists. The invasion of public meetings to pass resolutions in support of the Charter was a tactic urged on branches by the NCA, and had been adopted in many localities. At the Derby meeting, the Chartists succeeded in obtaining a promise from the Mayor to consider a request for the use of the Town Hall for Chartist meetings. It seems that Derby Chartists had applied for use of the Town Hall on previous occasions, and "*hitherto they had been refused because they were Chartists*", [further evidence that they had suffered active opposition during 1840]. Bairstow congratulated the Derby Chartists on gaining "*the greatest victory that the town had ever witnessed of argument and reason over influence and rank*".<sup>26</sup>

The bound volume in Derby Local Studies Library, "*The Chartist Movement in Derby, 1841*" Ba 909 Mss [16186], contains original manuscripts - some letters and some accounts of Chartist lectures (or sermons) given in Derby during March to September 1841. The material was kept probably as a compilation of evidence to present to the Government to justify the local Authority's request for military and financial support. The reason for the accounts ending in September 1841 is unknown. Possibly Chartist activity went '*indoors*' with the onset of winter, and maybe the Authority's alarm decreased. The reason may have been connected with the fire at the Town Hall in October 1841. The first manuscript seems to have resulted from the Anti-Corn Law meeting in March. It is a requisition for use of the Town Hall, signed by fifty-four Derby Chartists [illus. ii]. The second, from the Mayor of Derby to the military command at Nottingham, shows that the authorities were fearful of the possibility of a riot following this meeting. The request was to have "*a few men in readiness in case they should be wanted here this evening*". It appears that the Mayor may have had little intention of complying with the Chartists' request for use of the Town Hall. A letter headed "*The Mayor to Mr. Turner*" gives a variety of reasons for the unavailability of the Hall.<sup>27</sup> Whilst not an outright refusal, it cannot be interpreted as being very encouraging. Indeed, no record was found in the course of this study of Derby Chartists ever using the Town Hall for their meetings. In contrast, Nottingham's Mayors "*often granted Chartists the use of the Town Hall*".<sup>28</sup>

March 1841 saw the start of a series of public meetings held in Derby Market Place, usually on Sundays and often with Jonathan Bairstow as speaker. The accounts of the 'sermons' in the Derby manuscript volume were written by one of two men, James Wright or Thomas Sheppard. Both may be regarded as police informers or spies - (James Wright titled himself as "*Supernummary*"). The use of such informers was common and they were sometimes used as "*agent provocateurs*".<sup>29</sup> Whether or not this happened in Derby is unclear, but active interference or involvement did take place. Thomas Sheppard reports, in a covering note to the Mayor "*the meeting separated without any noisy demonstrations, at my intercession...*", and James Wright went to a meeting of Derby Chartists at the Northern Star public house. The first public meeting, on Sunday 21 March, advertised by printed handbill, was a funeral sermon for John Clayton, a Sheffield Chartist who had died whilst imprisoned in Northallerton gaol.<sup>30</sup> Attendance was said to be between 300 and 400 including "*not a few women*", and a collection was taken for the widow. Bairstow himself, in a letter to the *Reporter* suggests that around 2,000 persons attended.<sup>31</sup> This Derby funeral sermon has been cited as an example of the way Chartism successfully adapted religious structures for its own purposes. There were similar funeral orations in several localities. It is clear that the authorities in Derby were alarmed at the possibility of violence ensuing. They agreed "*it would be imprudent to prevent the meeting taking place*" but made preparations to have a military force in readiness.<sup>32</sup> A similar indication of alarm is the report of a petition from the Mayor and magistrates to ask that "*the cavalry be removed to Derby*", because of the "*increasing size of the town, its central situation, and large amount of valuable Railway stock...*".<sup>33</sup> The renewal of alarm due to the revival of Chartist activity in the town is confirmed by a collection of documents sent to the Home Office in May 1841 seeking advice. The authorities in Derby suggest that "*it is probable that Derby has been selected as a highly eligible Chartist position*". The reply from the Home Office advises magistrates against interfering with the meetings; they should only "*keep a watch ... to see that they do not disturb the public peace, ...*".<sup>34</sup> During the summer of 1841 there were regular Chartist 'sermons' in the Market Place, most often with Bairstow as lecturer, but occasionally using other "missionaries" such as Dean Taylor. It was reported in June that "*the cause is flourishing in this District*".<sup>35</sup> However, from mid-May, neither of the two local newspapers reports these meetings, apart from a reference to "*Bairstow's public harangues on Sunday evenings*",<sup>36</sup> and knowledge of them comes solely from the Derby Manuscript Volume. This is further evidence of the unreliability of local press reports as a measure of activity. Dorothy Thompson has said that "*the absence of reports of local Chartist activities... does not mean the absence of activities in the locality... hostility to Chartism could show itself by the non-reporting of events as well as by hostile reports*".<sup>37</sup>

Appendix 1. is a full listing of the Derby Manuscripts. Analysis of the oratory in terms of subjects employed by the speakers in their "sermons" shows that religious themes occur strongly. A recent writer, Owen Ashton, has claimed that "*the particular theme of redistributive social justice grounded in Biblical language*" was a favourite one.<sup>38</sup>



The speakers in Derby emphasized a political interpretation of Biblical texts [Item 8, Appendix 2.], giving a Christian rationale to their message of equality and justice - "*God created all men alike, not for a set of men to have their thousands and millions, and the poor starving to death*" [Bairstow Item 17]. The hostility of many Chartists to organised religion led in some localities to the "*occupation*" of churches and the development of independent Chartist religious structures - chapels and Sunday schools, but there is no evidence of these in Derby. Ashton has commented that "*Chartist rhetoric over the use of force calmed considerably after 1839*", and this is borne out by analysis of the Derby Manuscripts. In only two out of twelve 'sermons' did the lecturers speak of the necessity for violent revolution, most reflecting the "*dominant strategy adopted by the NCA lecturers*" of "*disciplined... robust constitutionalism*".<sup>40</sup> Some writers have claimed that Chartism was "*an intensely class - conscious movement*".<sup>41</sup> In the Derby Manuscripts, class-consciousness is all-pervasive, along with the dominant themes of equality and justice [Item 18, Appendix 3]. The lectures often concluded with an appeal to the crowd. Hence, Bairstow:- "*Men of Derby come forward and enrol yourselves as Chartists. For nothing but the Charter can relieve the working man. Come to our rooms in Devonshire Street every Sunday and Monday evening. We have increased of late, exceeding our expectations*". [Bairstow Item 18.]

The growing confidence of Derby Chartists during 1841 is apparent. Increasing membership made two NCA branches in the town desirable. One was at "*Mr. Cotton's in Devonshire Street*", and the other at the "*Northern Star, top of Bridge Street...*". It was agreed to establish a reading room, to be open to "*All persons ... whether they belong to the Chartist Society or not...*".<sup>42</sup> The open-ness of Chartist meeting places has been seen as important in providing a "front" which would deter charges of illegality,<sup>43</sup> in addition to widening the base of support. Epstein quotes the establishment of reading rooms as an example of one of the 'informal' social activities which took place at this time. In Nottingham, NCA branches commonly met in taverns or beerhouses, and this is reflected in Derby, where the Bridge Street Association met at the Northern Star. It is likely that it was named after the popular Chartist newspaper. It was not uncommon to name inns after Chartist themes; Epstein lists the Feargus O'Connor as a meeting place of an NCA branch in Nottingham.<sup>44</sup> Derby Chartists sometimes used formal venues for their lectures and, in September 1841, Dr. McDouall, gave two lectures in the Mechanics Institute Hall. There was inconsistency over letting the Mechanics Institute to Derby Chartists. They had been refused in February 1841, and were refused again, by a narrow majority, in May 1842.<sup>45</sup> The cultural activities of the NCA branches in Nottingham were diverse, and it seems that the branches in Derby reflected some, but not all, of these. There were close connections with Chartists in Nottingham and Leicester. In 1840 Chartists of the three counties formed the "*Chartist Association for the Midland Counties*", as part of the NCA, holding regular delegate meetings.<sup>46</sup>

There is some evidence of disunity amongst Derby Chartists. Electoral tactics were a topic of intense debate in 1841 and, in June 1841, "*Messrs. Turner, Skevington, Hall and Twiss*" were "*expelled*" for acting as canvassing agents for Whig candidates. This was contrary to a decision taken previously to support a Tory candidate in preference to a Whig. Derby Chartists, as was typical of NCA branches, were strong supporters of Feargus O'Connor. In April 1841 they debated the "New Movement" idea put forward by Lovett and Collins, and voted unanimously against it, feeling "*convinced it is a Whig scheme for the purpose of sewing strife and discord amongst the Chartists*". They then passed a vote of confidence in O'Connor. Later, in October, the Derby Chartists pledged their full support to the Executive Committee of the NCA, and requested that "*Mr. O'Connor be requested to honour the Derby Chartists with a visit... We long to hear him*".<sup>47</sup> The long-awaited visit took place in February 1842 but, before then, the winter of 1841-2 brought a deepening of the trade depression causing increasing distress, particularly in the textile industry.

#### 1842: Crisis

During the hard winter of 1841-2 signatures were collected for a new Petition, whilst at meetings all over England arguments went on between Chartists and free-traders over the relative merits of the campaigns for suffrage and repeal of the Corn Laws. In January 1842 an anti-Corn Law meeting was interrupted by Derby Chartists. Accounts of this meeting, attended "*almost exclusively by the working classes*", show a division of opinion amongst the audience, but the argument was won by those like William Parkinson, a stockinger, who advocated Corn Law repeal as the first priority. At another public meeting in January Derby Chartists were more successful. This meeting, in County Hall Derby, was convened by the High Sheriff to congratulate the Queen on the birth of a prince. Derby Chartists proposed an addition to the loyal address, including a demand for universal suffrage, drawing Her Majesty's attention to the condition of working women enduring childbirth "*upon beds of straw without even a pillow whereon to lay their heads, or sustenance to support them...*". Consternation ensued and "*the High Sheriff accompanied by the gentry... left the gallery, the people below cheering triumphantly*". In February the Tory Government announced a phased reduction in the duty on corn, which led to demonstrations

by hungry working people. In Derby there was a torchlit procession of 8 to 10,000 people through the principal streets to the Market Place, where, as in other towns, an effigy of Sir Robert Peel was burnt. At a meeting of *"the working classes"* two days later an anti-Corn Law petition received 6,336 signatures.<sup>48</sup> There is no indication of Chartist involvement in these protests but it is clear that they were supported by the working people of the town in great numbers. The Anti-Corn Law League's influence over working people in Derby appears strong in 1842. But the situation was complex, and in other areas there are reports of co-operation between working people in both types of protest. North Staffordshire Chartists, despite regularly disrupting Anti-Corn Law League meetings, *"collaborated with the Leaguers in ... the burning of Sir Robert Peel in effigy ..."*<sup>49</sup> It is possible that Derby Chartists, too, were involved in the protests of February 1842.

The long-awaited first visit of Feargus O'Connor to Derby took place on 22 February 1842. The Holbrook Band *"volunteered its services"* and *"the members of the Association, with the band, and an open landau with four greys and postboys wearing rosettes"*, proceeded to the station to meet O'Connor, who was greeted *"with the most deafening cheers"*. The procession moved to the Royal Hotel, where O'Connor addressed *"not less than two thousand people"*, an impromptu happening *"wholly unlooked for"*. This event, the first massive demonstration of popular Chartist support in Derby since January 1839, must have been highly gratifying to the Derby Chartists, who reported *"All is anxiety to hear Mr O'Connor again, another visit by him would crush all the other 'isms' in this town"*.<sup>50</sup> Chartism had more popular support than ever and was better organised, but when the second Petition was presented to Parliament in early May, bearing over three million signatures, it was again rejected, causing bitterness and frustration. O'Connor's second visit to Derby, on 19 May, took place in this atmosphere, and a deepening of the economic recession. The Reporter states that the Theatre was *"not so crowded as last time"*.<sup>51</sup> Again, as in 1839, it is reasonable to suppose that the lower level of popular enthusiasm for Chartism was connected with the failure of constitutional methods. However, on a visit by O'Connor to Nottingham in July 1842, he was greeted by *"tens of thousands"* in that town's Market Place.<sup>52</sup> Even allowing for the difference in population size and an increase in Chartist militancy in June because of the death in prison of Sheffield Chartist Samuel Holberry, it does seem that Chartist support was greater in Nottingham than in Derby. Indeed, there are no further reports of Chartist activity in Derby until early August.

The summer of 1842 was a time of almost universal distress. Industrial unrest began in the Staffordshire coalfield and spread to Lancashire in July. Processions of striking workers marched on neighbouring towns to turn out the factories. In Derby the crisis came in the week beginning 15 August. In early August, although hardship had not been as great as in some towns, there were reports of *"crowds of unemployed artisans congregating in the streets"*. Relief funds were inadequate to meet the numbers of people and alarm was growing.<sup>53</sup> On 13 August the Mayor sent the first of a series of almost daily letters to the Home Office requesting advice and assistance. On 14 August he received information that a large body of *'turn outs'* from Lancashire had entered Congleton *"compelling the people... to leave their work ..."* and were *"intending to visit Leek and afterwards Derby for a similar purpose"*. On 15 August he sent to Nottingham for troops. However, after assembling in large numbers in Leek the turn outs decided against moving onto Derby.<sup>54</sup> This was, however, only the beginning. In common with other employers in the textile factories of the North and Midlands, Brettles of Belper gave notice of their intention to reduce the wages of their hands, and on 16 August, a body of men entered Derby, having turned out workshops in Belper. *"A number of framework knitters ceased working at their request"*, but *"no attempt was made... to stop the mills and other works"*. It was reported that *"bread, cheese and ale was plentifully supplied to the men in the Market Place"*, and in the afternoon they held a meeting on Chester Green.<sup>55</sup> The outbreak of strikes has been seen as a spontaneous response to local grievances, but local studies have shown a close inter-relation between the Chartist Movement and the workers. Nationally Chartist leaders were caught unawares and the leadership was divided over how to respond, but in the localities there was widespread adoption of the Charter as a main aim of the strikes, particularly after 15 August when delegates to a Trades Conference in Manchester voted overwhelmingly to strike for the Charter. Chartist participation varied from place to place. In Lancashire there was *"no doubt about Chartist involvement"*, and in the West Riding of Yorkshire Chartists *"organised the turnouts and welcomed the strikers from Lancashire"*.<sup>56</sup>

In Derby it seems that Chartists were not involved directly until 16 August. The Chartist leader, Dr. McDouall, had visited Derby in early August but his address centred around a defence of Chartist tactics at the recent election in Nottingham. No leadership was given as to how to respond to the rapidly escalating strikes and disturbances. However, a meeting in Derby Market Place on 16 August was addressed by *"Mr West, one of the Chartist leaders"*. During the day a notice had gone out to workers at various mills and factories from the Secretary of the NCA:

*"TO THE VARIOUS TRADES OF DERBY.*

*Working Men- You must be aware that our fellow workmen in various parts of the country have commenced a National strike; we wish you therefore to take such steps as you may deem expedient in the present crisis,..."*

Reports of this large meeting, chaired by Derby Chartist John Moss, show that the Derby Chartists were again urging "Peace, Law and order". Moss advocated joining the strike as "a safe, peaceable and practical mode of obtaining the Peoples' Charter". The ambiguity of the Chartist leaders towards the strikes is shown by the report that West "attributed the turnout in a great measure to the Anti-Corn Law League". It seems that in Derby the Chartists began to use the situation to press their cause amongst working people, but failed to fully grasp the opportunities presented by the crisis. Derby magistrates showed their alarm by issuing a proclamation on 17 August banning all such meetings within the Borough. Consequently on Thursday 18 August the Chartists met on Chester Green, outside the Borough, and again addressed a crowd of thousands. West urged the people to "stand firm" to "Peace, Law and order" and "reprobated any attempt to obtain the Charter by physical means". A decision was taken that the operatives of the town should cease work the following Saturday evening.<sup>57</sup> This meeting was observed by a magistrate, Henry Wilmot. His report confirms the advice given to keep the peace; he says the crowd were advised "not to interfere with any parties who were desirous of working".<sup>58</sup>

The situation in the days that followed is confused, but it is clear that Borough and County magistrates collaborated to prevent further large meetings taking place. A letter from T. Bainbrigge, postmaster and magistrate of Derby, makes clear that to prevent any turn out of the factories in Derby "most of the Mills were visited by the Magistrates accompanied by the Masters, when the men were assembled and reasoned with ... many of the most confidential men were sworn in as Special Constables...". According to Bainbrigge, "one and all declared their determination of returning and resuming work on Monday morning ...".<sup>59</sup> On Friday, "the town was remarkably quiet" and some, but "not many", framework knitters resumed work. On Saturday information was received that a large meeting of "Chartists and others" would be held on Holbrook Moor at 8 o'clock on Monday to "stop the different manufactories of the town". The events of Monday 22 August are recounted in several sources. There is agreement that the people attempted to assemble on Holbrook Moor from all quarters, and that they were frustrated by the "very active and decisive measures" taken by the authorities. It seems troops and yeomanry stationed themselves "so as to bring the Mob between the two troops". Around one o'clock rumours reached Derby that "a large mob, several thousand strong", was approaching the town. "The utmost consternation and excitement prevailed. The drums beat to arms ... Some of the principal streets were instantly crowded with people ... shops were closed".<sup>60</sup> What followed is described by the *Northern Star*: "the magistrates had made great precautions ... the soldiers galloping up and down the streets... meantime the people kept steadily advancing ... On entering the town they commenced singing 'We'll Rally Round him'. [This was the refrain from the Chartist hymn 'The Lion of Freedom', and is strong evidence of Chartist influence in this crisis]. 'Each entrance into the town was strictly guarded and ... (a magistrate) ... commanded the people to retire... they, however, kept steadily advancing'. One man, John Dean from Belper, cried out 'We mean to have our rights, but at the same time be peaceable and quiet'. He was immediately arrested. A troop of cavalry came galloping among them at full speed 'brandishing their naked swords, but still the people stood firm for some time ... and then retreated in good order'.<sup>61</sup> On Tuesday, Bainbrigge reports ... "all is quiet, the mills are all at work... I consider yesterday's proceedings quite broke up and (the Chartist plans) ... completely frustrated". Strikes and disturbances, however, continued in some towns of the North and Midlands for another few weeks. It seems that violence in Derby was avoided by two factors. One was the prompt and thorough measures taken by the authorities to forestall and prevent it, the other was the insistence of the Chartist leaders on "Peace, Law and Order" and the disciplined response of the people themselves. Some workshops were "turned out", at least for a few days, but it is not clear whether the call to strike was successful at any of the factories. Most evidence indicates that there was no attempt to turn out the factories until 18 August. However, an extract of a letter to the Home Office from Derby [author unknown] dated 16 August, [Appendix 4.] suggests that the men from the Belper area who entered the town on 16 August "stopped the Mills and work of all kinds".<sup>62</sup> This letter may have been the result of over-reaction and panic; however it is also likely that there may have been some limited strikes.

Robert Sykes argues that the trade depression of 1842 increased the relevance of Chartist arguments to working people.<sup>63</sup> However, in Derby it has been shown that the mass of working people were swayed at some times by the more immediate appeal of the Corn Law repealers. A lecture in Derby in July by Henry Vincent, erstwhile Chartist leader turned champion of the 'Complete Suffrage' movement, was "crowded with middle and working classes", and there was no mention of Chartism at a meeting of "unemployed operatives of Derby" in July. Indeed, they "disclaimed all political bias... what they wanted was bread for their starving families".<sup>64</sup> Some writers have shown

a close connection between the "bread protests" of mid-summer 1842, Chartism and the strikes. In June when colliers in the Potteries came out on strike, they "paraded the Potteries with flags and banners and loaves of bread on poles".<sup>65</sup> In Derby, Alfred Wallis recalls, from memory or hearsay, "the appearance in Friargate of long processions of ill-dressed, half-starved people, headed by men carrying upon poles loaves of bread dipped in blood ...".<sup>66</sup> He attributes this to "Chartist agitation". Some writers have quoted the "loaf stuck on a Chartist pole "as evidence of radicalism",<sup>67</sup> but it is concluded from this study that the bulk of the working people in Derby were not strongly committed to one movement, rather they gave their support to whatever was most immediate or strongest at the time. For a week in August 1842 it was Chartism which captured the imagination of the people and inspired their disciplined and peaceful response.

A few months later the Movement seems to have died down and again gone underground. There are no further public Chartist meetings recorded in Derby newspapers for 1842 and from this it seems that middle-class solutions were uppermost again. It appears, from reports in the *Northern Star*, that the crisis of 1842 caused some division amongst the local Chartists. At a meeting in Derby in October, "five persons were chosen as Council men in place of the five that had resigned". It was hoped that the Association "would for the future be carried on in the best feelings of love and union".<sup>68</sup>

### Who were the Derby Chartists?

This study indicates that, between the years of 1839-1842, no local leaders of national stature emerged. The principal speakers at public meetings were nearly always from outside Derby:- J R Richardson (from Manchester) in 1839, and visiting "missionaries" such as Jonathon Bairstow in 1841. "Mr West - one of the Chartist leaders", referred to in reports of the public meetings in August 1842, seems to have been John West, prominent Macclesfield Chartist.

Derby Chartists usually chaired the public meetings, and a few names reoccur regularly in the local newspaper reports and in the *Northern Star*. Sometimes their occupations are given. Five Derby Chartists named in local reports of public meetings in Derby in March 1841 were all textile workers: "silk framework knitter", "fancy weaver" and "dyer". Many studies have shown the prominent part played by textile workers, particularly framework knitters, in the Chartist Movement. Nominations from Derby to the NCA General Council confirm a high proportion of textile workers (3 out of 7) in the local organisation.<sup>69</sup> These workers with their trades society networks, particularly the framework knitters of the "Midland Counties" of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, would have provided much of the strength of the Chartist organisation in Derby, as in other towns. The same individuals were often involved in both organisations. There had been a meeting at the Pheasant, Bridge Street, of the "silk hose trade" in January 1842, where James Farnsworth and John Twiss, both Derby Chartists, were present.<sup>70</sup> James Farnsworth, silk framework knitter, was one of the most loyal and dedicated of Derby Chartists; his commitment spanning the whole period of this study.

Other occupations found in the nominations from Derby to the NCA General Council were: shoemaker, fitter, forger and millwright. The prominence in local Chartist leadership of shoemakers in particular, and, to a lesser extent, other craftsmen and artisans is well documented.<sup>71</sup> Evidence was found in this study of several shoemakers amongst leading Derby Chartists. Nathaniel Neal was a nominee to the NCA General Council; delegate meetings were held in October 1841 at the house of Thomas Jackson; and the address of shoemaker John Moss of Darley Lane, was given for communications to the *Northern Star*.<sup>72</sup> John Moss was the Derby Chartist who chaired the public meetings in August 1842.

It is clear that the leaders of the Chartist movement in Derby were all working men. Craftsmen had a greater control over their working lives than unskilled workers, and this may be why they were more prominent in local Chartist leadership. It is not clear whether the textile workers were out-workers or employed in the mills. Indications, particularly from the events of August 1842, are that they were domestic out-workers. Factory workers would have been more likely to suffer victimisation for their Chartist activities, and memories of the Silk Mill Lock-out less than a decade before would have still been strong in Derby.

### Conclusion

Derby historians either make no reference to Chartism, or dismiss it in a few sentences. Davison, for instance, refers to the January 1839 rally and to a visit by Feargus O'Connor, although the date given for the latter [June 26 1842] appears from this study to be incorrect. His comment that on 17 August "The Mayor... prohibited the holding

of meetings and nothing further occurred of a serious nature"<sup>73</sup> does not do justice to the events of 18-22 August 1842.

Much of the evidence of public activity in this study comes from newspaper sources. These reflect political bias and editorial selection and the absence of reports did not necessarily mean the absence of activities. However where public meetings are reported both in newspapers and by informers there is good correlation between the two. Home Office documents show that the authorities in Derby were seriously concerned at the possibility of insurrection particularly in spring 1839 and summer 1842, and comparisons indicate that the local press concealed this alarm.

The pattern of events in Derby closely followed that in many other localities. Chartism in Derby started slowly. It does not appear to have generated sustained popular support in 1839 and there is very little evidence of arming or intention to riot. The re-organisation in 1840-41, with the delegate structure built on links established through the trades societies, enabled Chartism to become more firmly rooted in Derby. The growing confidence of Derby Chartists is evident from the increased level of activity in 1841-42.

However, the activity was modest compared with many other manufacturing towns. Figures for NCA membership in 1842 tend to confirm this conclusion.<sup>74</sup> Distress was not as great as in many areas. Derby's diversity of industry, including its position at the centre of the expanding rail network, is likely to have been an important reason for this. It is likely that the defeat of the Silk Mill workers had a damaging effect on militancy. It is known that many activists left Derby, unable to regain employment, their places taken by non-union workers,<sup>75</sup> effectively dispersing men who might have become leaders in the Chartist Movement.

The attitude of the Authorities in Derby was important. This study shows that the Mayor and Magistrates were reluctant to intervene or take provocative action; but they had been criticised for being ill-prepared in 1831 and, believing Derby to be a likely target of Chartist insurrection, they made prompt and thorough preparations this time to deter any violent confrontation.

Derby Chartists urged restraint. They met with opposition from the establishment and were concerned throughout to maintain "peace, law and order". It is clear that they feared the consequences of provoking violent repression, and were optimistic that the Charter would be obtained by peaceful, constitutional means.

They were prepared to strike for the Charter in 1842, but not if this resulted in confrontation. Working people in Derby received ambiguous messages, particularly at times of crisis. The influence of the middle-class Corn Law repealers was strong in Derby, particularly in 1842, and although the people were at times inspired by Chartism, it did not receive continuous popular support.

In October 1842 Derby Chartists pledged themselves "never to cease agitating... till the Charter becomes the law of the land".<sup>76</sup> There is evidence that the Chartist movement in Derby did not die in 1842. In 1847 Derby was one of a small number of towns chosen to put up a Chartist candidate at the polls in the parliamentary election. Philip McGrath, London tailor and prominent national Chartist leader, stood in Derby and, despite the lack of working class suffrage, polled 216 votes out of a total of 2748.<sup>77</sup> It is known that there had been agreement "to concentrate money and energy in those areas where radical candidates stood the best chance of success".<sup>78</sup> It therefore seems likely that Chartist organisation and enthusiasm continued to flourish in Derby after 1842.

This study highlights the discipline and dignity shown by Derby's small group of dedicated Chartists. Their pursuit of equality and justice through the campaign for the Charter is deserving of a much greater interest than has been shown by Derby historians to date.

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### Acknowledgments

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"The Chartist Movement in Derby, 1841" D.L.S.L. Ms. Ba 909

Bound volume of ms. papers, formerly in the possession of the Town Clerk of Derby

| Item No.      | Date                            | From                                    | To   | Contents  |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
| (1)           | <u>March</u>                    | Derby Chartists                         | Mayor of Derby                                       | Requisition for use of Town Hall re. Petitioning the Queen to obtain release of political prisoners |
| (2)           | 11 <sup>th</sup>                | Mayor                                   | Mil't'y Officer at Nottingham                        | Asking for support in case of riot.   |
| (3)           | 20 <sup>th</sup>                | Mayor                                   | ?  | Resolutions of the Magistrates as to precautions needed on occasion of Chartist funeral sermon      |
| (3B)          | 21 <sup>st</sup>                | Ja <sup>s</sup> Wright                  | ?  | Report of Bairstow's 'Sermon' – on 21 March   |
| (4)<br>(4A)   | 22 <sup>nd</sup>                | Thomas Sheppard                         | Mayor  | Note (4 ) enclosing report (4A) of Bairstow's 'Sermon' on 21 March.                                 |
| (5)           | 30 <sup>th</sup>                | B.T.Balguy.<br>Town Clerk               | Mayor  | Re. Borough Sessions.   |
| (6)           | 30 <sup>th</sup>                | Mayor                                   | Mr. Turner   | Re. Use of Town Hall  |
| (7)           | <u>May</u><br>14 <sup>th</sup>  | Mayor                                   | Home Secretary,<br>Whitehall.                        | Reporting proceedings of Chartists in Derby and requesting advice.                                  |
| (8)           | 16 <sup>th</sup>                | Ja <sup>s</sup> . Wright                | Mr. Thompson,<br>Superintendent of<br>Police, Derby. | Report of Bairstow's lecture on 16 May  |
| (9)           | <u>June</u><br>3 <sup>rd</sup>  | ? James Wright                          | 'as above'   | Report of Martin's lecture on 3 June.   |
| (10)          | 14 <sup>th</sup>                | ?James Wright                           | 'as above'   | Report of Bairstow's lecture on ? 14 June.  |
| (11)<br>(11A) | 14 <sup>th</sup>                | Thos.<br>Sheppard                       | F. Jessopp,<br>(Mayor)                               | Note(11), enclosing report (11A) of Bairstow's lecture on 14 June.                                  |
| (12)          | 19 <sup>th</sup>                | S.M.Phillips.<br>for Home<br>Secretary. | Mayor  | Reply to (7), urging restraint.   |
| (13)          | 'June'                          | Wright                                  | Superintendent of<br>Police;Derby                    | Report of a Chartist meeting at the Northern Star Public House, Derby.                              |
| (14)          | <u>July</u><br>4 <sup>th</sup>  | ?James Wright                           | 'as above'   | Report of Chartist Lecture, 4 July .<br>(lecturer was "Taylor, from Birmingham")                    |
| (15)          | ?                               | ?J.Wright                               | Superintendent of<br>Police                          | {Report of Bairstow's lecture   |
| (16)          | ?                               | ? Thomas Sheppard                       | ?  | { Seems to be the same lecture referred to<br>{ in H.O. 45/45 i.e. <u>10 May</u>                    |
| (17)          | 18 <sup>th</sup>                | Wright                                  | Superintendent of<br>Police                          | Report of Bairstow's lecture. 18 July .   |
| (18)          | 20 <sup>th</sup>                | Ja <sup>s</sup> . Wright                | 'as above'   | Report of Bairstow's lecture. 20 July.  |
| (19)          | 20 <sup>th</sup>                | Sheppard                                | ?  | Report of Bairstow's lecture. 20 July.  |
| (20)          | <u>Aug</u><br>9 <sup>th</sup>   | J.Wright                                | Superintendent of<br>Police                          | Report of Bairstow's lecture. 9 August  |
| (21)          | 29 <sup>th</sup>                | Ja <sup>s</sup> .Wright                 | 'as above'   | Report of Dean Taylor's lecture.<br>29 August   |
| (22)          | <u>Sept</u><br>16 <sup>th</sup> | ? Wright                                | ?  | Report of Dr. P.M. McDouall's lecture at Mechanics Institute. 16 Sept.                              |
| (23)          | 17 <sup>th</sup>                | ? Wright                                | ?  | Report of Dr. .P.M. McDouall's lecture at Mechanics Institute. 17 Sept.                             |

Notes. ? = recipient unknown.  
? Wright = author not stated, but in James Wright's handwriting.  
? Sheppard = 'as above', but in Thomas Sheppard's handwriting.

Items 3B,4A, 11A, 12 are not labelled/numbered in the Bound Volume, and have been given numbers in this study, according to their position in the Volume.



Item 8

"16 May 1841      Bairstowes Lecture"

*Addressed to*

"Mr Thompson

Sup<sup>r</sup>it<sup>l</sup> of Police"

('Jas Wright Sunday 1841' *pencilled at top*).

"And Paul said Let there be Equal Justice to all men.

I shall Indivour to show to you the Influence Paul had over the multitude in those days. There was but few men of talent and ability in that age. He preached Equal Justice to all men not for one lot of men to have their downy pillow their splendid palaces and all the Georgious magnific<sup>ce</sup> it is possible to possess and others with their poor miserable hovils and beds of straw and can scarcely exist. There was none of this in those days, all have plenty. Therefore you may see the Influence men of talent had either to do good or Evil & since that period they have enactid Laws to keep up their own splendour and make you miserable and still you must not progress, we have done all we can for you. Is this concistant with the Apostle Paul and Christ? In the sacred writings there is not one Law for the Rich and another for the poor. God wished all to be happy alike. Look at our own countrymen for instance Shakesp<sup>ere</sup> Locke Milton and Lord Byron and others I could mention. The Extraordinary powers of mind they possessed then. Look at the injury or the goode those men could have done whatever way their Inclinations might Leade,(?) Look at the Reform Bill, thay say that shall be a final measure you must not go one step farther. Now I will Indeavour to show you that Christianity and Chartism are one thing. Our principels are Christian, Like wishing well to our fellow creatures and Equality to all, not like some Noblemen such as the Duke of Devonshire that as 5 or 6 hundred thousand a year and others starving to death. Is this Equil Justice to all? Mark the Divine Vengeance is coming, upon the Rulers of this Country for their cruelty tyraney and oppression. Therefore Christianity and Chartism are one. We wish to do as Christ and feed the hungray and clothe the naked to Relieve your wants. ..."

*Interference with the text, i.e. use of capitals and full stops has been kept to the minimum needed for intelligibility.*

Appendix 2. Extract of transcript of item (8). *Chartist Movement in Derby, 1841*  
DLSL Ba 909 Mss [16186]

Item 18

"July 20 1841

Mr Bairstows Oration"

Addressed to "Mr Thompson  
Sup<sup>rint</sup> of Police, Derby"

Headed: "Ja<sup>s</sup> Wright (Bairstowe)"

"Derby July 20<sup>th</sup> 1841"

"Townsmen and Ladies, I shall address you this Evening principally on the condition and circumstances of the working Classes, the deprised state they have sank into, the Evils they endure, and the Remedy of these Evils. I have visitid a great many plases all over England and as had an opertuny of seeing and converssing with the workmen on the price they used to have and the price they now have. I was very sorry to find Derby people in such a depresd state. The stockingmaker and glover I find on an average cannot earn more than from 10 to 11 Shillings per week by working 14 or 15 hours per day. He went on to a great length about Derby Leicester, Loughborough and other plases, the Calico weavers working from Sun Rise intil dusk at night for not more than 5 or 6 shillings per week, their wives and children nearly naked and almost starved to death, their hagard looking facises more like a living Skilinton than a human being. Those that toil not and fairs sumpuously every day knows nothing of this, and the producers of all this wealth is poor miserable groveling worms that can scarcely crawl and Refused the crumbs from their table. Therefore nothing but the suffrage and the peoples Charter can Remedy these Evils. Again, look at the Duke of Devonshire with is three hundred thousand a year and several other Dukes with similar sums, What a many poor familys it would keep. It is the suffrage and no qualification that we want, and then we could send men to parliment that would do their Duty, act impartialy without money and without script. The Lords, if thay pass a bill, it is so mutilated and cut up that it is of no use to the nation. There is the Long nose Bloody Waterloo hero and that Bloody old Duke of Cumberland at the head. Now we may say that the Elections is nearly over and the Torys are in powr with Sir Robert Peel at their head. What are the measures he will bring forward? ..."

*\*Interference with the text, i.e. use of capitals and full stops has been kept to the minimum needed for intelligibility.*

Appendix 3. Extract of transcript of item (18). *Chartist Movement in Derby 1841*  
DLSL Ba 909 Mss. [16186]

Extract of a letter from  
Derby dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 1842.

"The Disturbances which have  
"been going on in Lancashire and  
"Yorkshire for the last week, have  
"I regret to say extended to Derby,  
"a Mob of the disaffected entered the  
"Town this morning from Belper,  
"and have stopped the Mills and  
"work of all kinds. How much  
"further they will proceed in their  
"villanous work God knows, we  
"have no Military only a Troop of  
"Gymnazy which is under arms in  
"front of the Gaol just opposite  
"my house. These are fearful  
times.

"Yours"

## DERBY BUILDINGS RECORD

(by Barbara Hutton,

The Derby Buildings Record has been operating for nearly 14 years and has recorded 250 buildings. This seems a good time to make an attempt to assess the findings as a whole.

The chief drawback of such an analysis is that the buildings have not been selected in any systematic or objective way. Normally we have only recorded a building when asked to do so, by the owner or occasionally by an architect or planning officer. The other chief source of buildings has been the recommendation of a member of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society. Buildings were therefore already believed to be specially interesting. For our part, we have never found any building of whatever age and structure to be uninteresting, so if asked to record we would say yes. This does not make for a balanced sample.

We have visited at least 65 southern Derbyshire parishes and a handful (6%) of others - in the north, in Leicestershire and in Staffordshire - but our coverage of each village varies from many with only one example to Melbourne with nearly 30 and Weston on Trent with 20. These numbers are explained by the enthusiasm of DAS members living there.

Most of the buildings recorded are houses. We have also recorded mills, chapels, a warehouse, a pothouse, cellars and a number of groups of farm buildings or domestic outbuildings. These, however, are a small minority of the whole and have usually been disregarded in what follows.

I will begin with building materials. In any one building there may be walling of several kinds; in indexing the wall materials we have listed the principal one and other materials if present in a substantial quantity. For instance, a stone house might have an added brick wing, so both materials would be indexed, but if the amount of brickwork was negligible it would be disregarded. More problematic is dating, which is necessarily more subjective than observable criteria such as size. Ten of our buildings are securely dated by dendrochronology, that is, their earliest or principal build is so dated. Twenty-one others have inscribed or documentary dates; one of these - Key House at Castle Donington has no fewer than five dates on its outer walls: 1595, 1636, 1899, 1953 and 1981. This example illustrates that work of many different dates may be expected in an old building. My own house, built in 1973, has already received three alterations during the last quarter century. So not only are dates often if not usually guesswork, but they refer to the most important building phases, usually the first and perhaps also one significant later phase. In most very early buildings, however, the amount of surviving original work may be small; it would be wrong to disregard it for that reason as one might disregard a small recent addition. A building may thus have more than one building material and more than one date.

The proportion of building materials found is as follows:

|                |       |             |           |
|----------------|-------|-------------|-----------|
| Brick walling  | 53.5% | (185 cases) |           |
| Stone walling  | 18.0% | (65 cases)  |           |
| Timber walling | 28.5% | (100 cases) | Total 350 |

Brick walled buildings are over half of those recorded; they may be divided by date and size. Size is the only way we have of identifying social position, though it is a very poor one. We group houses according to the number of ground floor rooms - A=1, B=2, C=3, D=more than 3 and E is used for houses that are more than one room deep, known as double pile plans. We find the most significant distinction is between houses with two rooms or fewer and those with three rooms or more.

# Building Materials

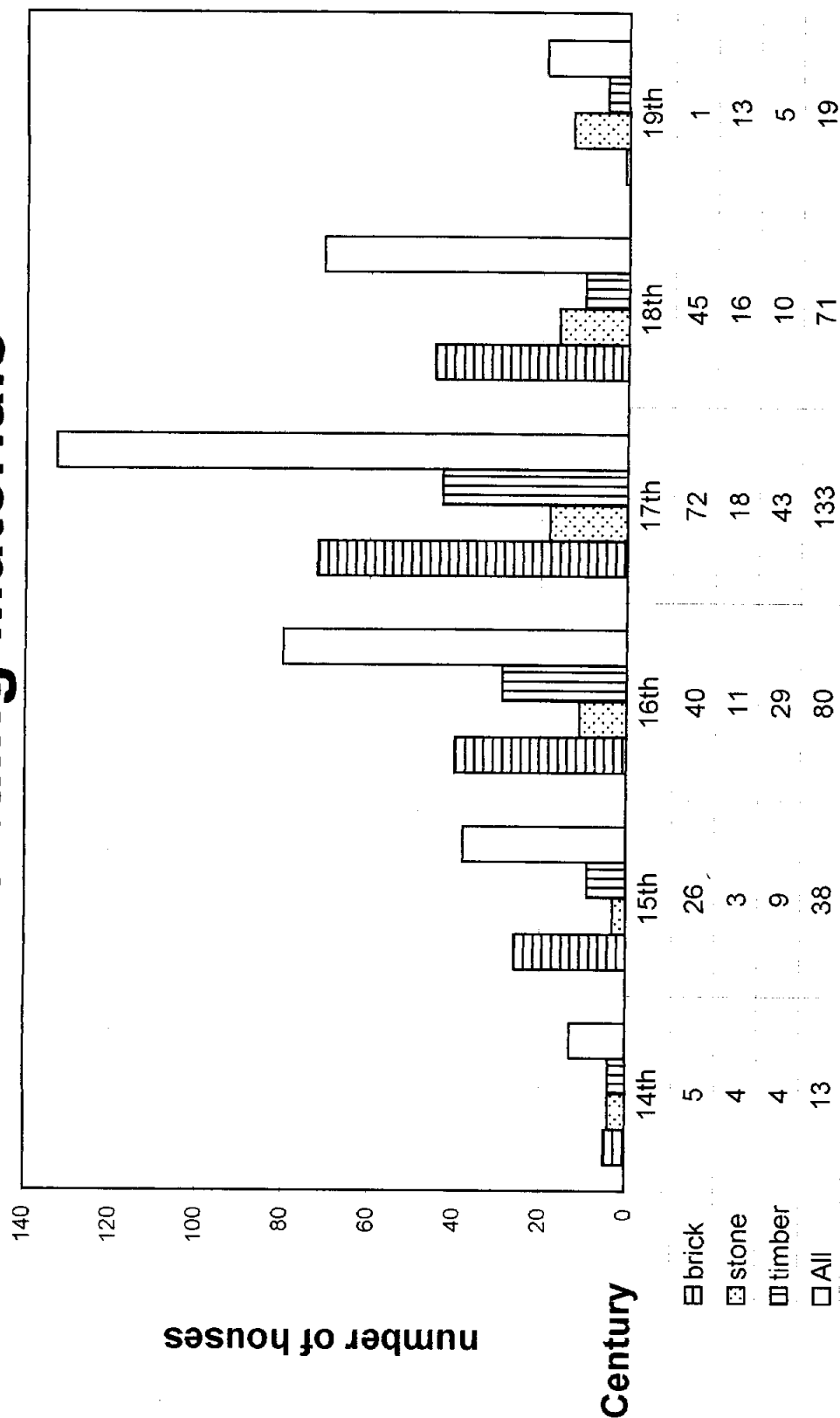


Fig 1 Building materials by date

| Brick walled buildings |     |       |       |     |      |            |
|------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|------|------------|
| Date                   | No. |       | Size  | No. |      | Total      |
| 15 century             | 5   | 2.5%  | A     | 8   | 5%   | } 86 = 50% |
| 16 century             | 26  | 14.0% | B     | 78  | 45 % |            |
| 17 century             | 40  | 21.0% | C     | 42  | 24%  | } 86 = 50% |
| 18 century             | 72  | 38.0% | D     | 26  | 15%  |            |
| 19 century             | 45  | 24.0% | E     | 18  | 11 % |            |
| 20 century             | 1   | 0.5%  |       |     |      |            |
| Total                  | 189 |       | Total | 172 |      |            |

NB: whereas a building can only have one ground plan, it may have more than one walling material, so there are more examples in the date column than in the size column.

As for date, before 1600 there are fewer houses with brick walls than with timber, but of the 31 with brick walls, 20 have timber as well - this may be brick infill but often brick replacing timber, leaving enough timber to be sure that the house originally had a full timber frame. After 1800, 89.5% of houses are built of brick. In the middle period, 1600 to 1800, 57% of buildings have brick walls, a quarter timber and 18% stone; however, this masks the fact that the actual number of brick walled buildings peaks in the 18th century with 72. This is because the number of buildings recorded is highest for that date and drops markedly thereafter.

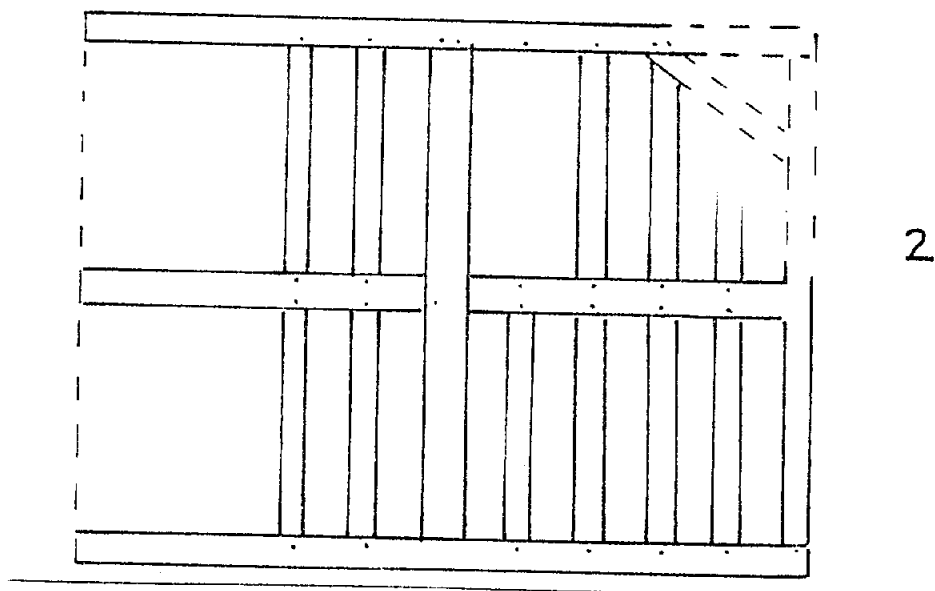
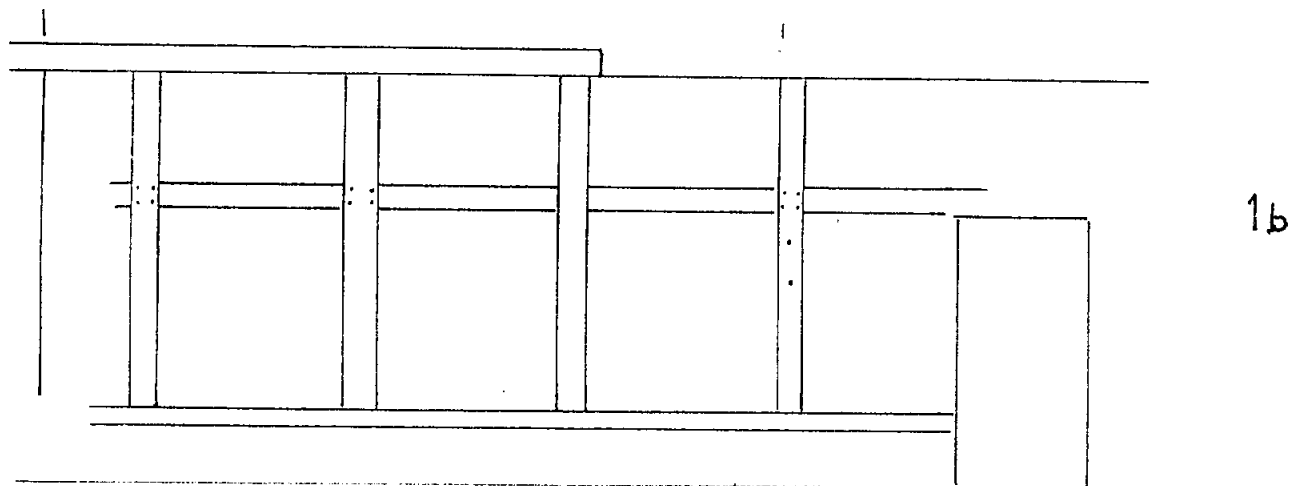
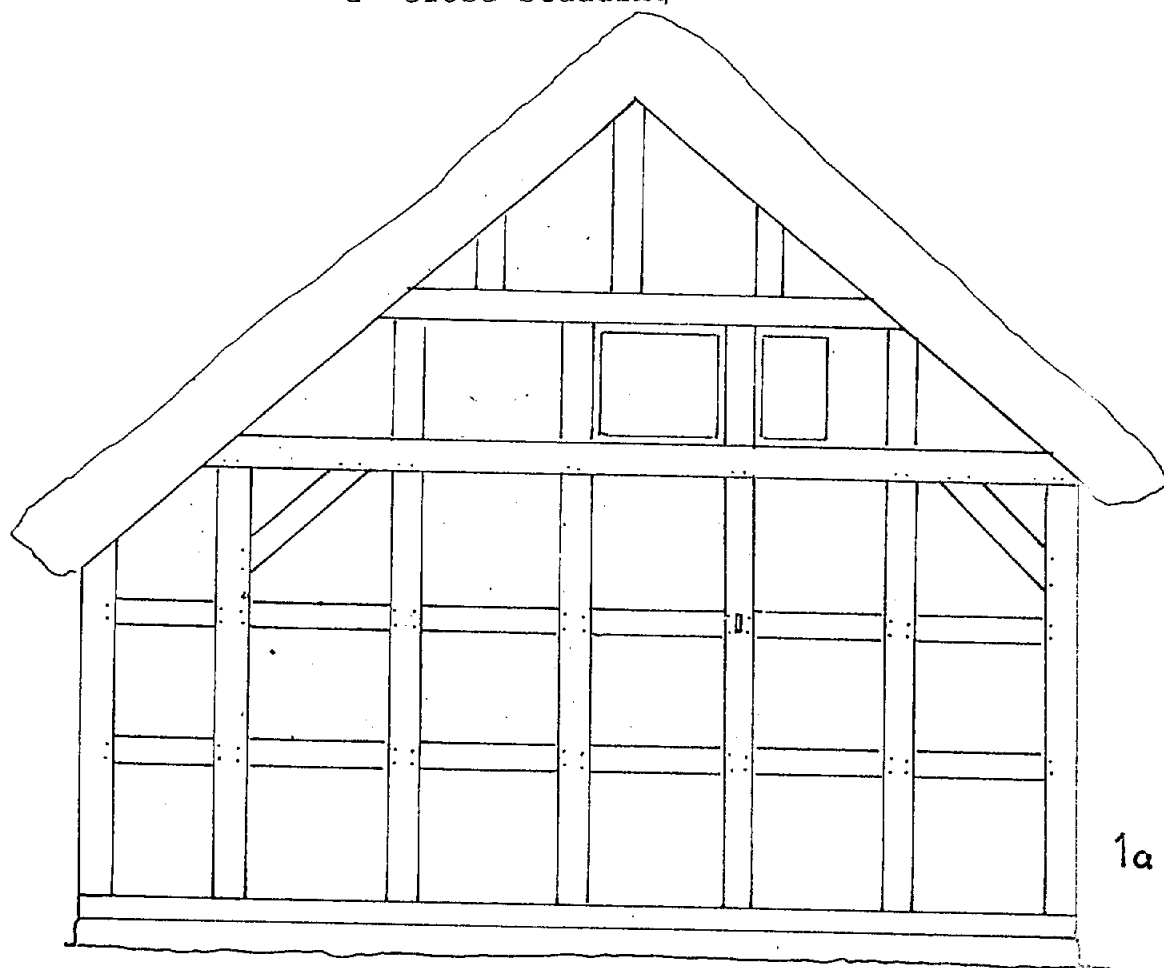
Stone was not very common as a walling material in southern Derbyshire, though it was quarried there, for example at Stanton by Bridge.

| Stone walled buildings |    |     |       |    |     |            |
|------------------------|----|-----|-------|----|-----|------------|
| Date                   |    |     | Size  |    |     |            |
| 14 century             | 4  | 6 % | A     | 3  | 5%  | } 28 = 50% |
| 15 century             | 3  | 5%  | B     | 25 | 45% |            |
| 16 century             | 11 | 17% | C     | 14 | 25% | } 28 = 50% |
| 17 century             | 18 | 28% | D     | 11 | 20% |            |
| 18 century             | 16 | 25% | E     | 3  | 5%  |            |
| 19 century             | 13 | 20% |       |    |     |            |
| Total                  | 65 |     | Total | 56 |     |            |

The distribution of stone walls according to size is almost identical to that of brick walls, though the number of stone walls is much lower. The date peak for stone walls is the 17th century but this peak is not so pronounced as the 18th century brick peak (see graph, Fig 1).

Timber walling is a rather different matter. In the first place a lot of houses with timber walls also have brick and/or stone walls. The timber frame may be infilled with brick - originally or by later replacement - and it is common to find brick or stone chimneys in timber walled houses. Further, when timber walling went out of fashion it was sometimes replaced with brick on the front where it showed, leaving the back as it was. Again, houses with outer walls of brick or stone sometimes were built with timber internal walls.

Fig 2 TIMBER WALLS 1a and 1b square panel framing  
2 close studding



| Timber walled buildings |    |     |       |     |      |            |
|-------------------------|----|-----|-------|-----|------|------------|
| Date                    |    |     | Size  |     |      |            |
| 14 century              | 4  | 4%  | A     | nil | 0%   | } 30 = 41% |
| 15 century              | 9  | 9%  | B     | 30  | 41%% |            |
| 16 century              | 29 | 29% | C     | 28  | 38%  | } 43 = 59% |
| 17 century              | 43 | 43% | D     | 13  | 18%  |            |
| 18 century              | 10 | 10% | E     | 2   | 3%   |            |
| 19 century              | 5  | 5%  | Total | 73  |      |            |

It will be noticed that more large buildings have timber walling in them; also that the number dated before 1600, 42, is larger than for brick houses (29) or stone (18). Similarly, after 1800 timber walls are fewer, five against 45 brick and 7 stone.

Timber walling falls broadly into two groups: close studding and square panels (Fig 2). Some houses have both, either one in the outer walls and the other in cross walls, or some earlier and some later, or in some cases the front of the house may carry close studding and the back square panels. It seemed possible that this might be resolved by the two styles being differently dated:

| Close Studding | Date | Square Panels |
|----------------|------|---------------|
| 3              | 14c  | 1             |
| 7              | 15c  | 4             |
| 11             | 16c  | 20            |
| 11             | 17c  | 30            |
| 0              | 18c  | 4             |
| 0              | 19c  | 1             |
| Total 32       |      | 60            |

This breakdown suggests only that square panel framing became popular later, but the numbers are small. Perhaps framing style would be related to house size?

| Close studding | Size | Square panels |
|----------------|------|---------------|
| 10             | B    | 24            |
| 10             | C    | 23            |
| 6              | D    | 7             |
| 1              | E    | 1             |
| Total 27       |      | 55            |

NB. there are more dates than house sizes

Not all timber walls are braced, and to select those of the sample that are, reduces the numbers still further. However, there might be a relation between straight or curved braces and date.



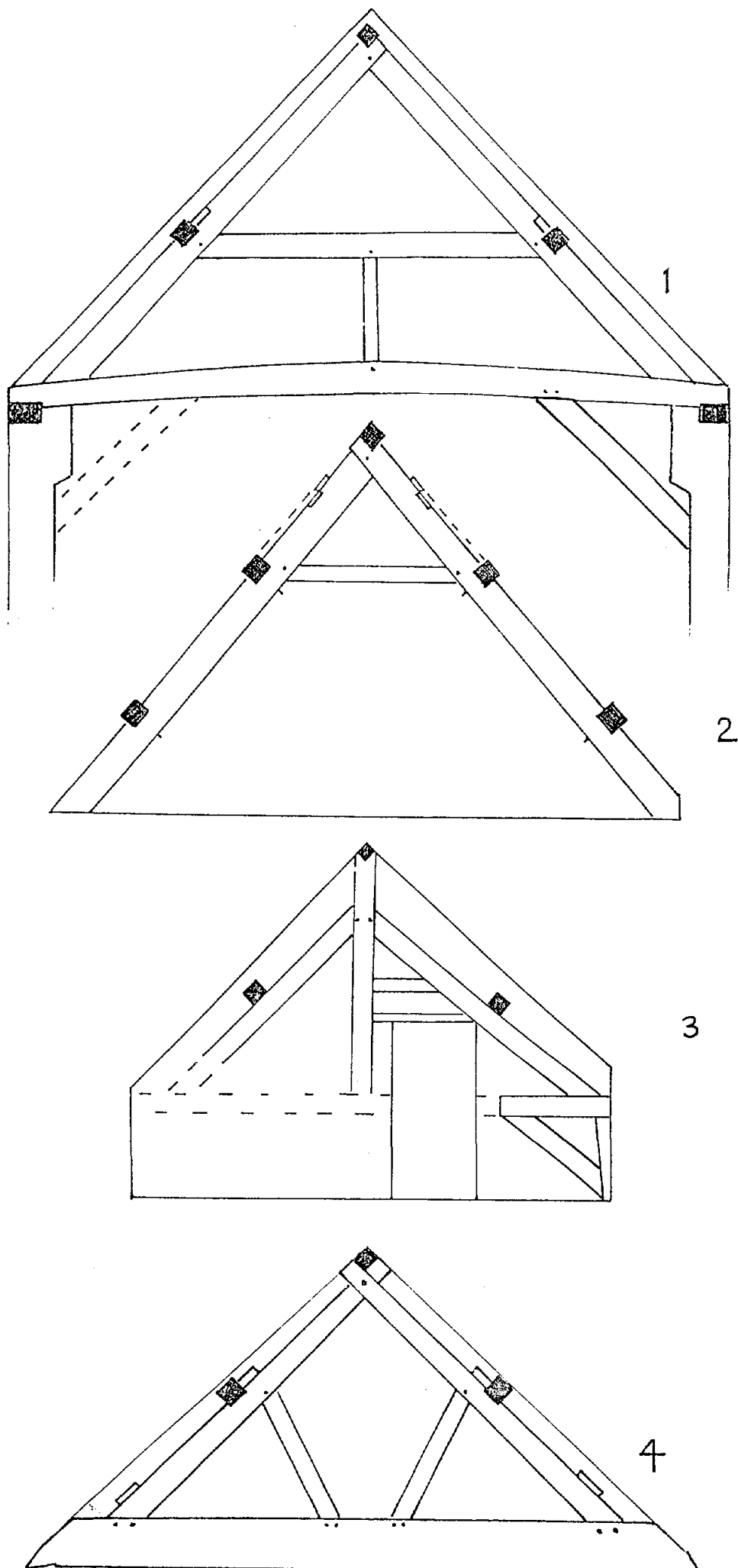


Fig 3 ROOF FORMS 1 tiebeam truss 2 collarbeam truss  
3 kingpost truss 4 tiebeam truss with crossed apex

| Curved        |      |               | Straight      |      |               |
|---------------|------|---------------|---------------|------|---------------|
| Close Studded | Date | Square panels | Close Studded | Date | Square panels |
| 1             | 15 c | 0             | 2             | 15 c | 1             |
| 1             | 16 c | 2             | 0             | 16 c | 6             |
| 1             | 17 c | 4             | 3             | 17 c | 21            |
|               |      |               | 0             | 18 c | 4             |
| Total 9       |      |               | Total 37      |      |               |

There seems to be a clear preference for straight bracing in 17th century square panel frames. For what it is worth, half of these are size B - 2-cell plans.

Every house must have a roof but we have recorded very few, either because they were inaccessible or because they were built of machine sawn softwood and so 'late', i.e. 19th or 20th century - often replacing an earlier roof.

Of the roofs we have recorded only seven were rafter roofs, three of them post-medieval built of rafter couples resting on wall-to-wall purlins, the other four medieval crown posts. This was a surprise for me, coming from Yorkshire where the Vale of York is awash with every possible variant of rafter roofs. The rest of the DBR roofs have principal trusses of one sort or another (Fig 3), with purlins either butted up against the principals (16) or trenced into their backs (37) or laid onto the backs of the principals (14), perhaps pegged through, perhaps held in position by chocks.

| Roof Forms (buildings) |        |            |         |        |           |             |       |
|------------------------|--------|------------|---------|--------|-----------|-------------|-------|
| Date                   | Rafter | Crown post | Tiebeam | Collar | King post | Upper Cruck | Cruck |
| 14 c                   | 0      | 4          | 2       | 0      | 0         | 0           | 0     |
| 15 c                   | 0      | 0          | 4       | 1      | 0         | 0           | 3     |
| 16 c                   | 0      | 0          | 10      | 3      | 0         | 0           | 14    |
| 17 c                   | 2      | 0          | 21      | 4      | 2         | 4           | 11    |
| 18 c                   | 1      | 0          | 5       | 1      | 9         | 3           | 2     |
| 19 c                   | 0      | 0          | 2       | 0      | 0         | 0           | 0     |
| Total                  | 3      | 4          | 44      | 9      | 11        | 7           | 30    |

Two features of some of these roofs may be remarked on. One is the use of wind braces, the other is crossed apexes in roofs other than crucks. We shall consider cruck apexes later.

| Crossed Apex/ Date/ Windbreaks |       |         |           |       |            |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------|-----------|-------|------------|
| X apex                         | Date  | Tiebeam | King post | Cruck | Total W/bs |
| 0                              | 15c   | 2       | 0         | 1     | 3          |
| 4                              | 16c   | 5       | 0         | 5     | 10         |
| 11                             | 17c   | 12      | 1         | 3     | 16         |
| 3                              | 18c   | 3       | 1         | 0     | 4          |
| 20                             | Total | 22      | 2         | 9     | 33         |

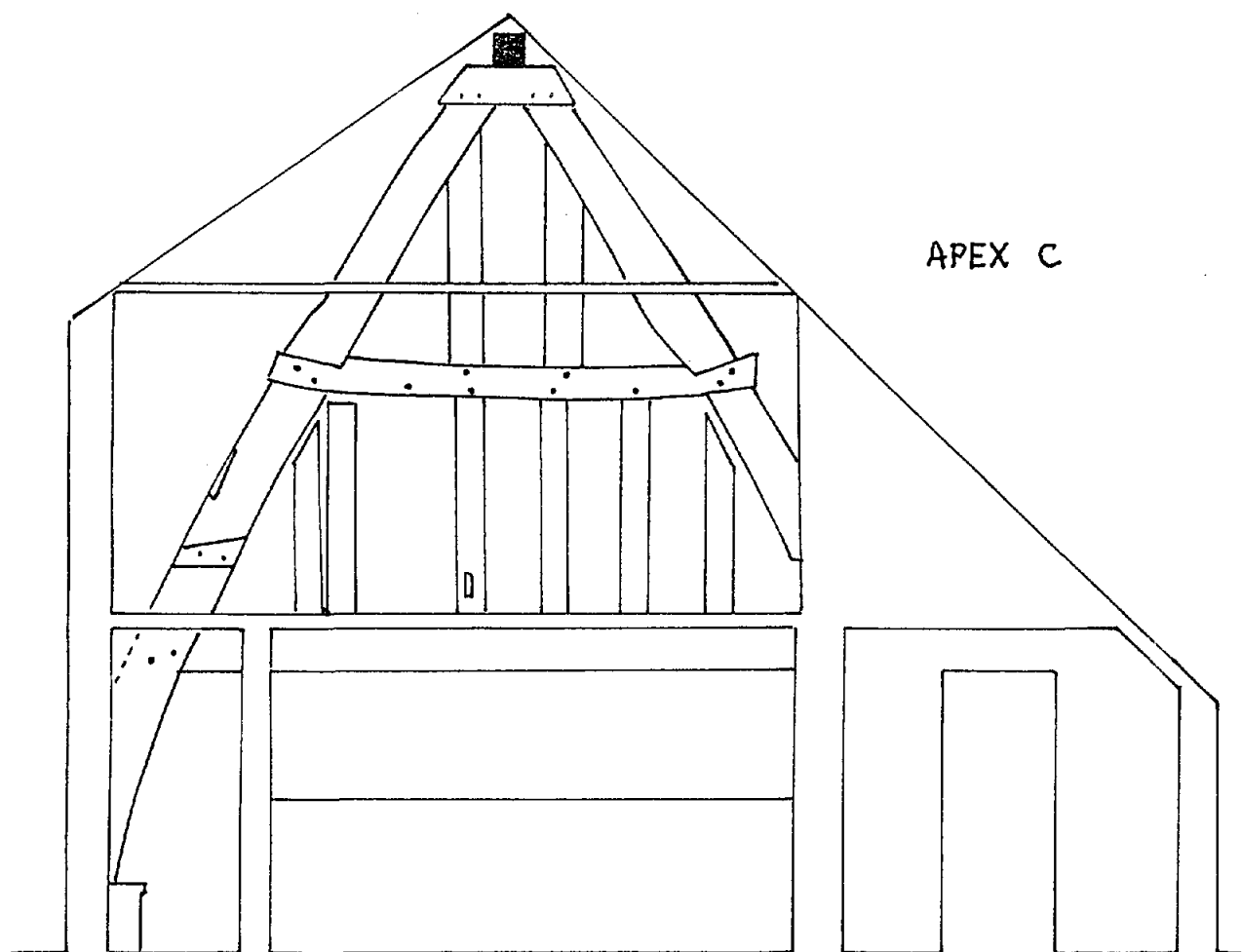
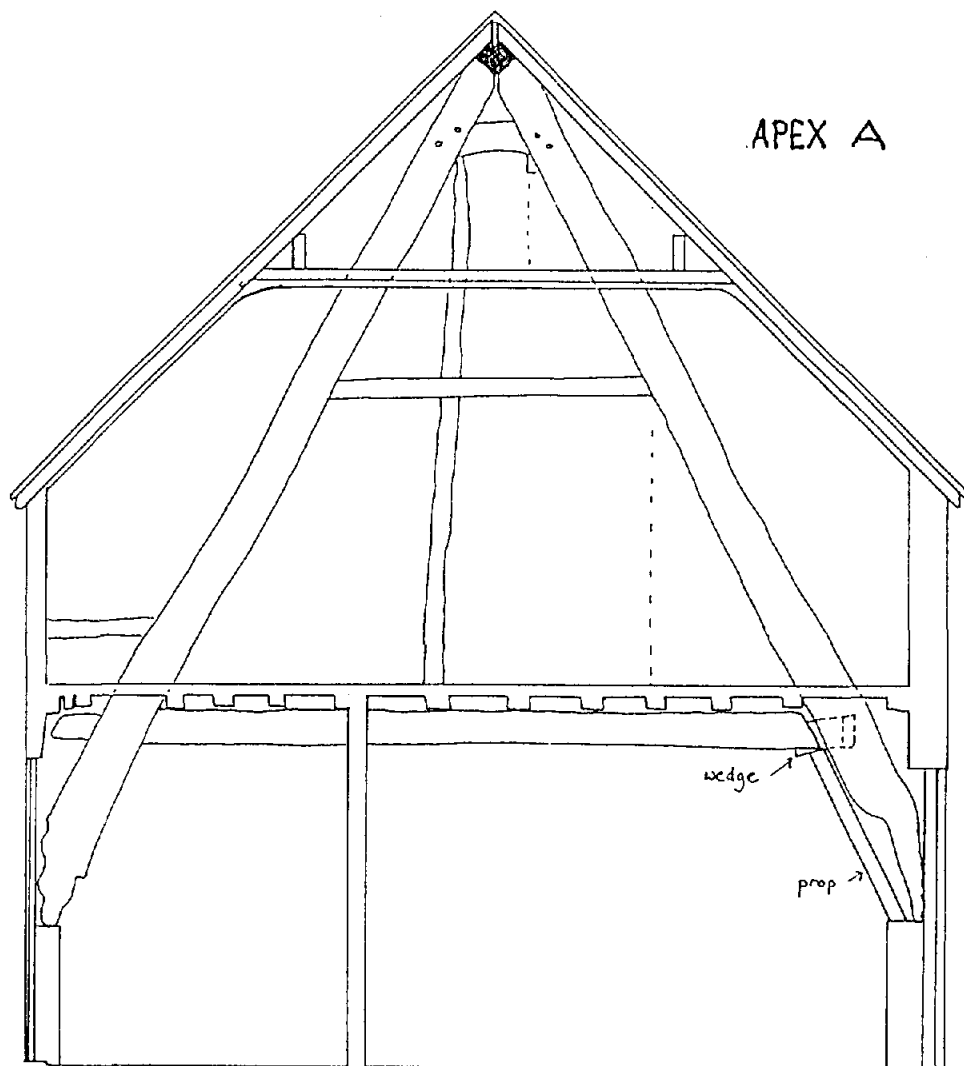


Fig 4 Cruck apices A and C

The cruck apices are very interesting because they are quite diverse. In eleven houses the cruck apices are concealed or destroyed, but there are five different types among the others, in one case three different types in one building. Eleven have apex C, six have F1 which is C with a short king post on top and one has F3 which is F1 with a pair of rafters as well.. There are four A's in which the blades are linked and four D's, the crossed apex which we have also found in non-cruck roofs in this area. There is one further apex not so far classified.

| Apex Types |   |    |   |    |    |         |       |
|------------|---|----|---|----|----|---------|-------|
| Date       | A | C  | D | F1 | F3 | unknown | total |
| 15c        | 0 | 1  | 0 | 3  | 0  | 2       | 6     |
| 16c        | 1 | 8  | 3 | 3  | 1  | 7       | 23    |
| 17c        | 3 | 2  | 1 | 0  | 0  | 7       | 13    |
| Total      | 4 | 11 | 4 | 6  | 1  | 16      | 42    |

Dating cruck buildings is particularly problematic; we have dendro dates for the crucks in five of the 29 buildings: 1442, 1446, 1477, 1531 and 1553. There is therefore a tendency to ascribe a 16th century date to any cruck building. The plain answer is that we do not know the date of those crucks whose rings have not been sampled.

Twelve per cent of the buildings we have recorded have crucks in them, and of those 48% have or had timber framed walls.

Very few of our buildings can be dated back to the middle ages and those that can have not retained their medieval plans. We can therefore only discuss post-medieval plan types. Categorising plans is by no means easy; 16% of the houses we have recorded do not fall into any of the recognised categories, often being too big or too small. Another 8% are not dwelling houses. The easiest way to explain how we classify the remaining 75% is by means of diagrams. These are all post-medieval plans.

Plan types are recognised by the relation between the position of the main entrance in relation to the principal fireplace. The hearth~passage plan is entered by a passage behind the hearth, and it will be noticed on looking at the table that this plan is found most often in the 16th and 17th centuries, The same arrangement of passage and hearth is found in the longhouse, but there the low end on the unheated side of the passage is not part of the human dwelling but used for cattle. Several of our hearth-passage houses may be converted longhouses, and in one case we know that the low end was a cowshed up to 1952.

| Post Medieval Plan Types |                |              |              |           |            |             |             |             |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Date                     | Hearth passage | Centre lobby | Centre lobby | End lobby | End direct | End hallway | End service | Double pile |
| 15c                      | 2              | 0            | 0;           | 3         | 3          | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| 16c                      | 9              | 6            | 2            | 0         | 7          | 3           | 0           | 0           |
| 17c                      | 9              | 25           | 8            | 4         | 11         | 5           | 1           | 3           |
| 18c                      | 1              | 11           | 4            | 3         | 17         | 20          | 2           | 11          |
| 19c                      | 0              | 2            | 3            | 1         | 8          | 13          | 1           | 11          |
| Total                    | 21             | 44           | 17           | 8         | 46         | 41          | 4           | 25          |

Houses with a central chimney stack may be entered by a lobby between the stack and the front wall; often the stair is on the other side of the stack against the back wall. There are also 17 houses with the same sort of central

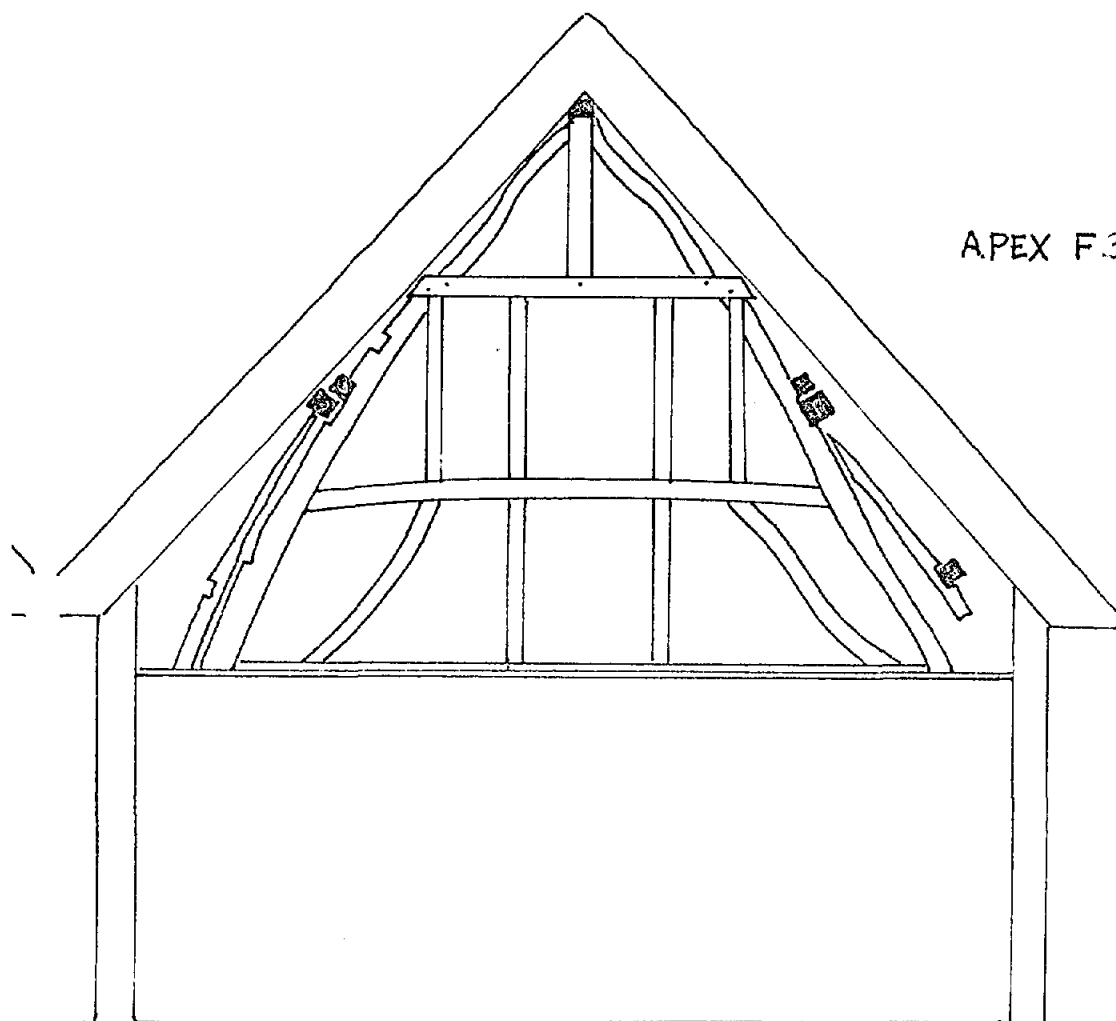
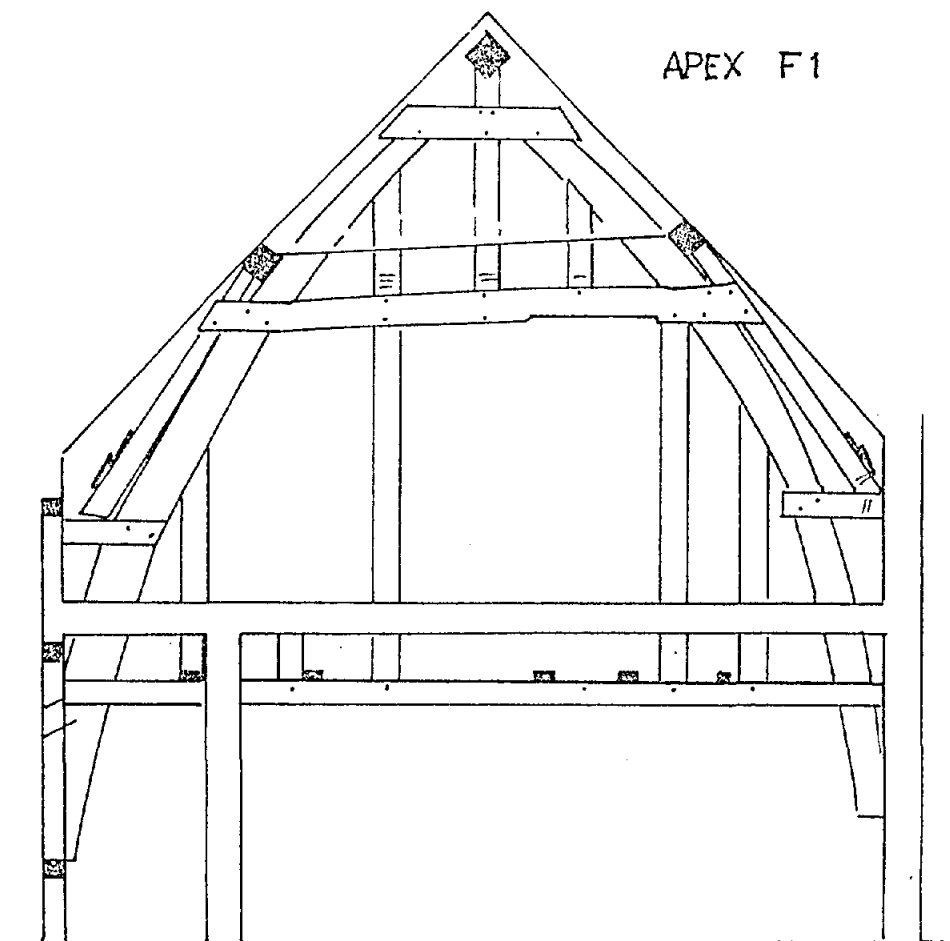


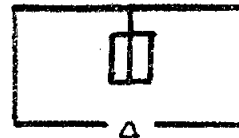
Fig 5 Cruck apaxes F1 and F3



hearth-passage 21



central lobby 23



+21



end lobby 8



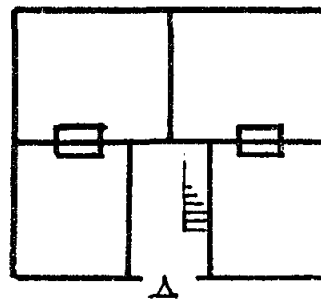
end direct 46



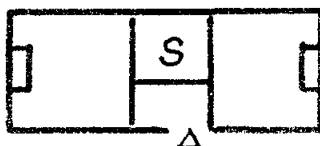
central direct 17



end hallway 41



double pile 25



end central service 4

(this example is central stacks,  
hallway)

Fig 6 POST MEDIEVAL PLAN TYPES

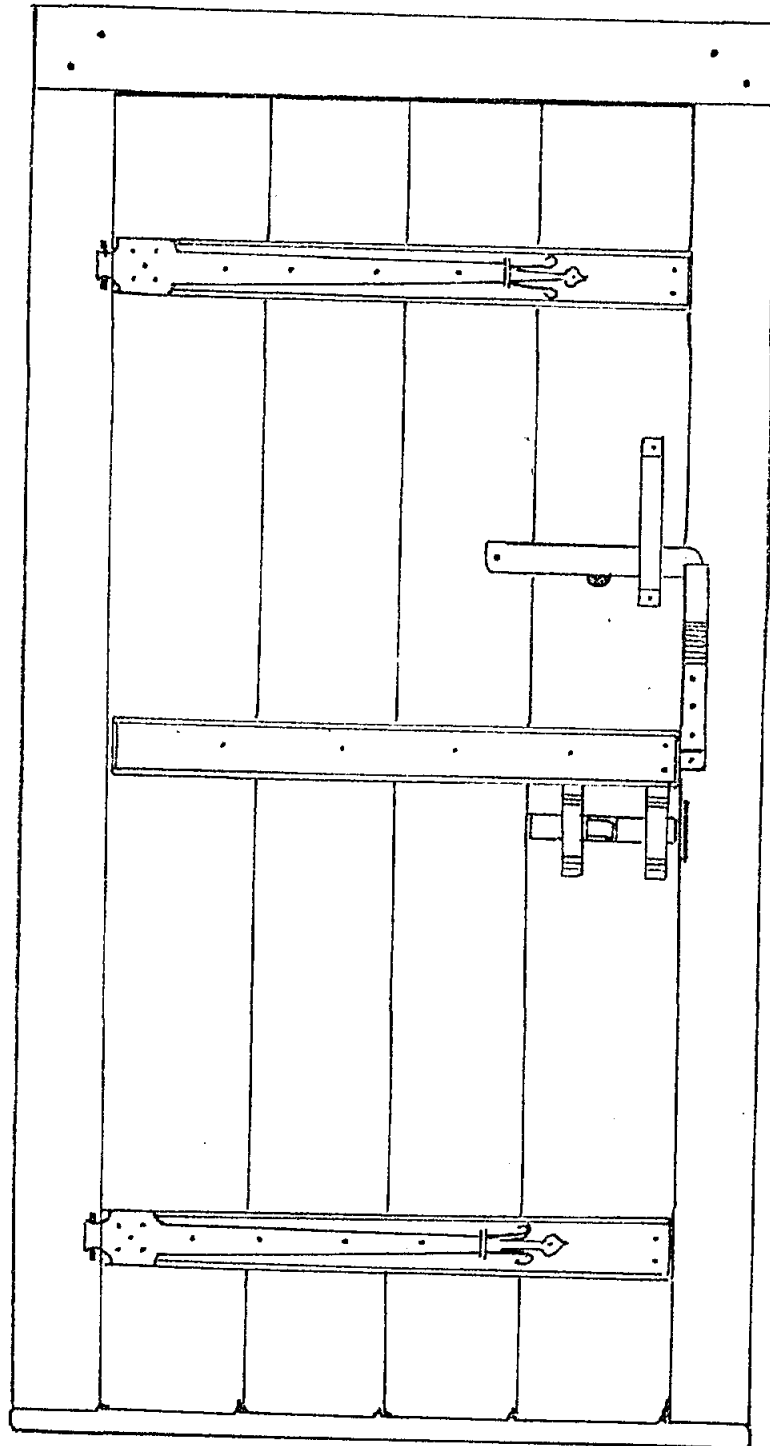


Fig 7 Detail of a plank door circa 1720 with original furniture

chimney but no lobby; instead, the entrance is directly into the living room. These have roughly the same date range as central lobby plans.

There is a group of house plans with chimneys at each end of the house; some are entered directly into the living room, some into a central hallway, usually incorporating the stairs, some from the end wall by a lobby beside the stack, and a small category entered in the middle of the front wall opposite the dairy or other service room. The end stack and direct entry plan is frequently modified by screening a passage from the living room, so it effectively turns into a hallway entrance. The latter is one of the latest plan types, except for the double pile house which is not found before the 17th century. Mickleover Old Hall is an interesting early (1648) double pile house, built by an army officer who had the opportunity to see innovative buildings on his travels.

The remaining aspect to be considered in assessing a house is decorative detail, which here is taken to include quite simple features as well. The fact is that decorative elements are not common in southern Derbyshire, even in houses of a fairly high social level. Recording of such features is inclined to be subjective and I cannot claim that every significant feature has been logged.

Although we have recorded quite a lot of 17th century houses (100), only 22 examples of mullioned windows have been recorded, most of them stone. Windows are, of course, one of the first things to be changed when a house is modernised, and those of our houses that have timber or brick walls have almost without exception lost their timber mullioned windows. Even Church Gresley Hall, which originally had all its windows stone framed in brick walls, has had every mullion cut out. There are also no heavy studded plank outer doors, though some nice internal plank doors remain - one is illustrated from the 18 examples noted. Inside the houses only four instances of plasterwork have been noted, all of them simple mouldings with none of the emblems - vine scrolls, trees of life, shields of arms, figures of animals or people - that are occasionally found in Yorkshire.

The fireplace is most often a wide opening under a timber bressumer (88 cases), usually forming an inglenook in which one could sit beside the hearth, with a very few cases (10) of a window to light the fireside. Some of these inglenooks are very late, probably well into the 19th century though by then the hearth is sophisticated enough to have a fixed grate in a brick or stone fireplace inside the inglenook from the start. There are 21 cases of stone or brick arches for the principal hearth. Six houses retain a substantial amount of an original timber and plaster firehood, heavily encrusted with tarry soot on the inside; there must have been a lot of these once, but they take up too much room in the floor above the living room, and so are usually removed in favour of a narrow brick chimney shaft.

Fifteen houses have staircases worth recording, few, because in most cases the stairs run up between walls or at best have 19th century square-section balusters under a narrow oak or pin handrail. Oak is used in southern Derbyshire well into the 19th century in spite of being served by a major transport artery, the River Trent. The reason must be a superabundance of good local timber. We have recorded 16 cases of oak panelled walls but very few elaborate chamfer stops on ceiling beams, let alone moulded ceilings (4 recorded). There is just one example of a stud and plank wall, remarkable for its rarity.

Knowing that our region was once noted for cheese, we were delighted to record four instances where the word 'cheese room' was painted on a door to claim exemption from window tax. We found a number of farmhouses with the heavy weights of their cheese presses, usually in the garden; but there was one house where the equipment - cheese vat, cutters and moulds, even the cloths used to wrap the cheeses, remained in an attic while a double cheese press was found in the scullery.

The individual reports on all these buildings, with the measured drawings, are filed in Derby City Museum's Department of Antiquities. It was Maxwell Craven, then directing that department, who first encouraged our work and still does. The individuals concerned in the recording work are too numerous to acknowledge individually, though I must mention Alwyn and Joan Davies who have helped with more buildings than anyone else, and Philip Heath whose local knowledge and opportunities for observing houses have contributed so much to our discussions. Above all, we are grateful to the householders who allowed us access to their buildings and in many instances took an active part in the work.



## J. CHARLES COX - A NOTE ON HIS COAL MINING INTERESTS

(by David G. Edwards,

The query in Bernard Nurse's note on J.C. Cox in the Autumn 2000 issue of *Derbyshire Miscellany* about Cox's colliery ownership can be answered, at least partly, from a number of sources. One of these is a collection of Hunloke estate records at Derbyshire Record Office relating to coal and ironstone mining and ironworks,<sup>1</sup> which includes a counterpart lease dated 31 December 1883 of coal and ironstone seams under Williamthorpe and adjoining areas. The parties to this lease were (1) Hon. Adelaide A.W. Hunloke and (2) John Ward of Ankerbold and John Charles Cox of Lichfield, clerk in holy orders, co-partners as coal owners, trading as the Wingerworth Coal Company. The document refers inter alia to a previous lease dated 9 August 1876 to Ward and Cox, the terms of which were now to be altered.

Wingerworth Coal Company appears to have originated in the late 1830s. It sank Old Avenue Colliery (later Clay Cross Company's No. 11 Pit) in Wingerworth in 1857, and among other activities, opened its Holmewood Colliery in 1868. At the celebration of the latter event, held at the company's schoolroom in North Wingfield, the chair was taken by Edward Chambers and the vice-chairs by John Ward and J.C. Cox.<sup>2</sup> Cox had earlier presided over a 'Penny Reading' given by the company in North Wingfield on 10 February 1866, and apparently also took part in the entertainment by performing two songs himself.<sup>3</sup> The Holmewood Colliery was subsequently operated by a closely linked firm, Hardwick Colliery Company, into which the Wingerworth firm's residual interests were eventually absorbed.

Further details of Cox's involvement in Wingerworth Coal Company are revealed by a collection of papers in private hands, which I was invited to see and abstract in 1985. Similar information may well be contained in the Hardwick Colliery Company documents forming part of the NCB deposit at Derbyshire Record Office.<sup>4</sup> Among these were two companion documents dated 8 August 1843, setting out articles of partnership in Wingerworth Coal Company. One of the parties concerned was Henry Cox, merchant of Parkfield near Derby, and article 3 included a provision for one of his two shares (out of a total of twelve) to be disposed of to an unnamed nephew. Henry was in fact Charles's uncle. A later release dated 20 December 1865, concerning certain 1/36 shares in the company held by Henry Cox, recited inter alia that by indentures of the same date, John Charles Cox late of Luccombe and now of Chesterfield was admitted as a partner in the business and that his share was valued at £4,547 4s. 6d., for which he was due to pay £3,000 to Henry Cox. A party to this release was Charles's father, the Rev Edward Cox of Luccombe, as one of the trustees under the will of a former shareholder, James Blythe Simpson of Derby.

J. Charles Cox remained a partner in Wingerworth Coal Company until 1885, as revealed by a letter dated 15 August that year in the private collection, addressed jointly to the company and Hardwick Colliery Company from their accountants and mentioning among other things the Rev. Dr Cox's retirement from the partnership and his acceptance of £7,000 as his share of the capital, of which £4,000 had already been paid. However, the company's balance sheets, also in the collection, showed a book value of £16,210 for Cox's share in the preceding four years, out of a total capital of £88,481.

### References

1. Derbyshire Record Office, D2690
2. *Derbyshire Times*, 25 January 1868 (cited in J.E. Williams, *The Derbyshire miners*, 1962, p.50)
3. *Derbyshire Times*, 17 February 1866 (cited, with programme details, in Williams, *op. cit.*, p.81)
4. Derbyshire Record Office, N36/8