WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION AND ILLITERACY IN LEICESTER,
1780 - 1870

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By

Elaine Brown MA (Leicester)
Department of English Local History
University of Leicester

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ABSTRACT
Elaine Brown

'Working-class education and illiteracy in Leicester, 1780-1870'.

This thesis concentrates on elementary and adult working-class education and illiteracy in Leicester between 1780 and 1870. The need for a literate workforce for the town's economic viability is also examined.

The introductory chapters argue that economic and social change had an adverse effect on education. Moreover an educated working class was perceived to be a threat to the existing social order, although the necessity for working-class education became increasingly apparent. Contemporaneously, members of the working class - particularly among the artisans - sought self-improvement, and appreciated the value of education in their desire for political and social reform.

A variety of sources were used to trace the development of schools and Sunday schools in Leicester - the majority of which were founded in response to middle-class philanthropy and/or denominational rivalry - but with few exceptions voluntary provision failed to reach the poorest children. The need for more schools, sectarian conflict, and the quality of education were among issues that the Leicester School Board had to resolve. Indeed the effect of education upon illiteracy - measured by the ability to sign the Anglican marriage registers some 15 years later - had become most noticeable by 1890.

Evidence for working-class interest in adult education can be seen in an attempt to establish a Mechanics' Institute in Leicester. However this was eventually inaugurated by the middle class to provide scientific and technical education for the working class. Numerous other institutions were founded by philanthropic middle-class reformers, but - with the exception of the Working Men's College, and science schools - these tended to concentrate on 'rational recreation'.

The study concludes that although Leicester's economy expanded in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was not until about 1881 that the need for a technically-educated literate workforce came to be considered as crucial if Leicester was to compete in foreign markets.
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INTRODUCTION

The intention of this thesis is to examine the provision of working-class elementary and adult education and the progress of illiteracy in Leicester between 1780 and 1870. Indeed from the late eighteenth century working-class education became a cause of increasing concern both locally and nationally, but it was not until 1870 that the Elementary Education Act sought to provide a national system of elementary education. Central to this theme is an examination of the effects of sectarian, class, and political conflict on educational provision. Leicester has been chosen for study as three main factors contributed to its interesting development during this period: rapid population growth, change from heavy dependency on frame-work knitting during the first half of the nineteenth century, to its multi-industrial profile by the end, together with a reputation for political and sectarian radicalism. Thus, in common with other industrialising towns, Leicester had to contend with major socio-economic and political change, the desire of the middle class to 'elevate' the working class via the medium of education, and working-class demands for self-improvement.

Throughout this thesis the terms upper, middle, and working class will be used, even though they were not always consistent with contemporary usage. It has been alleged that during the eighteenth century the word 'class' was interchangeable with other words used to specify rank and order, and that 'the concept of social "class" ... was a product of the large-scale economic and social changes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'. Indeed 'by 1824 ... the word "class" had already established itself as a social label following the economic and social

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transformation'.\(^2\) Nevertheless there are problems inherent in its definition:

> 'First, England was a country where there was a marked degree of social mobility. Second, the dividing lines between classes were extremely difficult to draw. Third, there were significant divisions inside what were conventionally regarded as classes'.\(^3\)

With this in mind, my use of the term upper class denotes the aristocracy and gentry. The label middle class encompasses industrialists, manufacturers and professionals. There was also a sub-group within this class that could be regarded as lower middle-class. This included shopkeepers, tradesmen, clerks and teachers, who often took advantage of educational facilities provided for (but often disregarded by) members of the working class. The term working class embraces skilled artisans, labourers, and the pauper 'residuum' - the 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor'. Moreover some artisans have been seen to represent a working-class 'intellectual elite' or 'labour aristocracy', especially in the context of educational interest and attainment.\(^4\)

The attitudes of all classes concerning the desire and need for working-class literacy and education between 1780 and 1870 are here discussed in their nationwide political, economic, social, and religious environment, so that the situation in Leicester may be more meaningfully studied and analysed in its national context. Indeed the nineteenth century was a time of considerable political, economic and social change which was caused to a large extent by continuing technological developments in the means of production, and a rapid rise and redistribution of population. All of these issues contributed to national concern regarding educational provision for the growing, semi-literate, working population, encompassing opinions

\(^2\) Corfield, 'Class by name and number', pp. 103, 128-9; Crossick, 'From gentlemen to the residuum', pp. 159-60; Briggs, 'The language of "class"', pp. 22-4.
\(^3\) Briggs, 'The language of "class"', pp. 22-4.
\(^4\) E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963, Harmondsworth 1991 edn), p. 787 suggests that there was 'an intellectual elite' involved in political activity; G. Crossick, 'The labour aristocracy and its values: a study of Victorian Kentish London', *Victorian Studies*, 19 (1976), argues that the 'labour aristocracy' espoused middle-class social values but thereby aspired to improve the conditions of the working class; H. Pelling, 'The concept of the labour aristocracy' in his *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain* (1968), pp. 37-61, discusses this concept in relation to different trades and Chartism; Briggs, 'The language of "class"', pp. 13-16 contends that the Anti-Corn Law League formed in 1839 'was a uniquely powerful instrument in the forging of middle-class consciousness' and that Chartism was 'the first large-scale self-consciously "working-class movement".'
both for and against a literate working class.⁵

During this period financial and political advantages formerly maintained by rural landowning families tended to be challenged by urban-based manufacturers and merchants who sought political and social reform.⁶ However, the meaning of reform was interpreted differently by the three major power groups. The views of the establishment in church and politics were generally represented by the Tories who desired the continuance of tradition and maintenance of the social order. Whig party membership tended to be representative of middle-class industrialists, philanthropists and Nonconformists - nonconformity implied criticism of the established church and traditional order.⁷ The Whigs desired a wider suffrage and parliamentary representation for the growing urban areas, and hoped to achieve power through harnessing working-class political activity. Radical working-class leaders hoped to achieve political suffrage and improved social conditions, and were aware that education could aid the attainment of these objectives. Failure to gain either in the 1832 Reform Act led to disenchantment with the middle class, and a growth in working-class consciousness, which gave rise to movements such as Chartism in the eighteen-thirties and eighteen-forties. As there was political and sectarian conflict in Leicester during the early years of the century one aim of this thesis is to investigate any effects this may have had on the extent of illiteracy and the development of education in the town.

Industrial expansion affected not only the economic and political balance of power, but also social relationships and living and working conditions. New methods of production tended to rely on an industrial workforce concentrated in urban environments, often living in overcrowded and insanitary accommodation, and having to cope with a fluctuating economy. Thus in addition

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to learning new mechanical skills, an alien way of life had to be contended with. This in turn exacerbates the disruption in the tradition of dependency and patronage between landowners, clergy and workers - more evident in closed villages - which rising population, rural distress and migration to urban areas had already undermined. However, F.M.L. Thompson contended that:

"it was in the really large towns that a new kind of urban society was taking shape; it was there that the sheer scale of concentration of numbers produced something like a quantity-quality change and threw up those features of segregation, social distancing, over-crowding, pollution, public order, and health hazards most commonly associated with nineteenth century urban living."

Although Leicester was not a large industrial town it suffered from a rapidly rising population and heavy dependency on frame-work knitting - which brought its own particular problems.

Many members of the middle class feared that the rapidly increasing urban working class would endanger the existing social order. Indeed political agitation, immorality and drunkenness - together with the breakdown of family life and traditional forms of influence - were all perceived as potential threats to stability and law and order. Once away from work all control was lost, thus working-class leisure became a particular cause of concern, and education - together with temperance and rational recreation - was seen by some reformers as a means of giving direction. According to Morris:

'Although the Sunday Schools and Mechanics' Institutes could not reproduce the relationship of the landed estate, the factory village, or the traditional workshop, they did aim to create a new institutionalised form of paternalism.'

In an attempt to combat the 'threat' of working-class leisure, moral reformers tried to instill middle-class values of 'thrift, self-help, temperance, sexual continence and the cult of the home'

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through a variety of societies and educational institutions - especially the Mechanics' Institutes, 'the conventicles of respectability.' Although some members of the working class accepted these middle-class aims and values, they tended to join burial clubs and friendly societies run by their own leaders as such societies offered a replacement to kin and work networks disrupted by change, and 'provided not only weekly companionship but assurance against ... a lonely death'. Habits of self-discipline, thrift and providence were emphasised, and their rules and regulations became the watchword of the self-respecting artisan. In addition they provided a cultural unifying influence in the development of growing working-class consciousness. Indeed these societies were not, 'alien imports imposed on an unimaginative or reluctant working class', but provided inherent respectability - even though they usually met in public houses. Nevertheless they were not welcomed by all members of the working class for:

'As the friendly societies stressed the virtuous behaviour of their members, they naturally tended to point up the contrast to working men who remained outside the fold. This very natural tendency, in turn, tended to undermine their moral position as spokesmen for the working classes as a whole.'

Neither were they universally favoured by all members of the middle class, for although they were perceived to be a means of reducing the poor rate, it was feared that they could become centres of political agitation.

There is a dichotomy of opinion among historians concerning the extent to which the middle

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14 Thompson, Making, pp. 457-69.
class actively sought to control the working class through religion and education, and indeed whether the working class passively allowed itself to be dominated. Gramsci's theory of hegemony, the assimilation of the cultural values of one class by another, is the source of Donajgrodzki's subsequent ideas regarding the imposition of middle-class values of respectability on the working class. Nevertheless Tholfsen contends that 'in the light of recent scholarship ... the mid-Victorian working man no longer appears as the passive victim'. Similarly although F.M.L. Thompson accepts that there were problems inherent in industrialising and urbanising Britain, he suggests that:

'It in many ways this is a curious view, ... portraying them (the working classes) as so much putty in the hands of a masterful and scheming bourgeoisie ... It allows little for the possibility that the working classes themselves generated their own values and attitudes to the requirements of life in an industrialised society and imposed their own forms on middle-class institutions.'

It appears therefore that the working class sought solutions to the problems of urbanisation and industrialisation not only through political agitation but also through self-help and respectability, via temperance, secular and religious organisations, and education, with the approval and aid of the middle class. The importance of literacy in particular, and education in its wider sense, will now be considered in the context of this socialising process. In chapter one national educational issues are discussed, followed in chapter two by an exploration of the topographical, political, economic, social and religious background to illiteracy and education in Leicester from 1780-1870. Chapter three first reviews the literature relating to illiteracy, and secondly examines illiteracy in Leicester using data extracted from parish marriage registers. Chapters four and six investigate educational opportunities for working-class children and adults...
respectively in Leicester, while the importance of Sunday schools in Leicester will be considered in chapter five. Class, sectarian, and political discord in Leicester and any resulting effects on educational provision will be analysed as will possible links between education and economic progress.

20 Thompson, 'Social control', pp. 189-208.
CHAPTER ONE

THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

'However specious in theory the project might be of giving education to the labouring classes of the poor, it would in effect be found to be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their own lot in life ... it would render them factious and refractory, ... it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets; .. it would render them insolent to their superiors'.

While the purpose of this study is to examine education, literacy and society in Leicester between 1780 and 1870, a deeper appreciation of the issues involved can be gained by considering them in a wider context. It is apparent that attitudes to education changed during this period from suspicion to a perception of the importance of education, and that often social, political or economic objectives underlay the desire to improve literacy. The importance of education in the formulation of an industrious, sober, responsible work force and electorate became increasingly apparent and it was desired alike by middle-class reformers and working-class radicals.

Some reformers regarded education as a solution to a number of problems which had intensified during the early years of the nineteenth century, the most pressing being an increasing working-class population with little chance of acquiring even basic literacy for themselves or their children. Migration into the towns strained existing urban educational provision, and the sheer weight of numbers, long working hours and anonymity deprived many working-class children from acquiring even rudimentary literary skills. Crime, immorality, the disruption of family life, drink, and working-class leisure were all perceived to be problematic by many reformers, and it was thus considered that education would aid self-improvement, respectability,

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1 D.A. Reeder (ed.), Urban Education in the Nineteenth Century (1977), suggests that there is a need for 'the more integrative approach of local history' in studying the history of education. It is the intention of this thesis to establish 'links between educational institutions and the world they served' with respect to Leicester.

2 Hansard, 9 (1807) p. 798.
and moral reform. Allied to this was a desire by some reformers to bridge class barriers via educational provision. Indeed, members of religious denominations, industrialists, and both middle and working-class political activists all had different reasons for promoting working-class education. Nevertheless such provision did not have universal approval, and the nature and extent deemed appropriate varied considerably. There were fears that the egalitarian doctrines of the French Revolution would be disseminated, resulting in anarchy, lack of deference and dissatisfaction. Neither was the working class universally in favour of education, for while some members desired it as a means of improvement for themselves and their children, others perceived it as a threat to their children's earnings and/or as a manifestation of patronage and interference.

EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

Indeed philosophical, political, economic and religious ideas all influenced attitudes towards education. Educational theories were expounded by materialistic philosophers, including Locke - who postulated that the mind at birth was a tabula rasa and that education and the environment could therefore succeed as agents of social reform. The ideas of Hobbes, Descartes, Rousseau and Helvetius, were also espoused by many political radicals, who in turn influenced wider contemporary attitudes to educational provision. Malthus' Essay on Population (1798), advocating education on sexual restraint, Tom Paine's, Rights of Man (1791-2), upholding the need for freedom of thought and Ricardo's views on the importance of education for the poor, all had an influence on educational theories and political movements. Adam Smith, who is now

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4 B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians (1971, Keele, 1994 edn); J. Kay, The Social Condition and Education of the People in England and Europe (2 vols, 1850), 1, pp. 379-93. He alleged that there was 'connection ... between the ignorance of labourers and their criminality'; R. Johnson, 'Education policy & social control in early Victorian England', Past and Present, 49 (1970), pp. 96-8, 119. Johnson portrays the education of the poor as a 'Victorian obsession', 'best understood as a concern about authority, about power, about assertion (or the re-assertion?) of control'.
5 F.D. Maurice, Learning and Working (1855, 1968 edn, W.E. Styler (ed.). Christian Socialists in particular expressed concerns regarding this issue.
regarded as the first classical economist, advocated state intervention to remove ignorance, and thereby ensure the political security of the state. He considered that the division of labour resulted in deadening routine tasks, and caused man to lose the ability to 'exert his understanding' and therefore became 'stupid and ignorant'.

These theories led to three main currents of thought, the first being the revolutionary political creed of equality and justice upheld by the Corresponding Societies, radical press, and working-class movements. Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Leicester was well-known for its radical tradition. The second encompassed the Utilitarian belief in the importance of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, advocated by Bentham and his followers, including Place, Mill, Hume, Roebuck and Brougham - the latter supported Mechanics' Institutes and founded the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. They usually espoused the doctrine of laissez-faire and the importance of the individual, but saw the necessity of state intervention on educational issues. The third comprised the philosophy and educational theories of Robert Owen, who shared some similarities with Jeremy Bentham - both were atheist materialists - but Owen believed in the importance of co-operation rather than that of the individual.

The spirit of religious evangelism, prevalent in sections of the Anglican and nonconformist churches, also influenced attitudes towards education. This embraced not only a humanitarian concern for the welfare of the working class but also a desire to improve literacy to make the Bible available to all. Moreover the education of working-class children was perceived to be a

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means of stemming apathy and alienation towards the church, and of ensuring the preservation of the denominations concerned. Indeed Chartist demands for a national system of non-sectarian popular education compounded fears that a rise in Chartism could lead not only to class conflict but to a total rejection of the church. The propagation of Owenite socialist theories gave similar cause for concern:

'Chartism and socialism were essentially secularized forms of Methodist dissent. The modern labouring poor, like their eighteenth century predecessors, found little comfort in the national Church, and had broken away.'

I - EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR WORKING-CLASS CHILDREN

Even when the desirability of educating working-class children was recognised, provision, control, and religious content proved to be problematic, as did the dilemma of how to ensure regular, long-term attendance in order that both literacy and morality might be improved. Moreover feminist historians suggest that access to schooling, length and pattern of attendance, and type of curriculum offered tended to be detrimental to girls. Prior to 1833 the majority of schools were either charity, private or founded by voluntary denominational societies, but they were largely free from state involvement, for 'there was little sentiment in the country for a

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15 J. Purvis, *Hard Lessons: the Lives and Education of Working-Class Women in Nineteenth-century England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 70-98. She contends that education for working-class girls' in dame, Sunday, charity and voluntary schools was designed to emphasise sexual divisions, and to reinforce their role as wives and mothers, and/or to prepare them for domestic service.
national system of education'. However, in response to social pressure - in particular the
demands of philanthropic reformers - the state gradually became involved in education,
commencing with schools catering for criminal, pauper, and working children.

CHARITY SCHOOLS

Many endowed charity schools were in decline by the beginning of the nineteenth century,
and others had become schools of industry, to train 'poor children for a particular status in
society and for specific occupations', rather than to provide a broad education. However both
Anglican and nonconformist churches had begun to establish charity schools which were
financed by subscriptions and annual sermons. The earliest school of this type in Leicester was
founded by the Nonconformist Great Meeting in 1748, followed by the first Anglican schools at
St Mary de Castro founded in 1780, and St Martin in 1789. Alderman Newton bequeathed
money for a charity school for the boys of indigent Anglican parents which finally opened in
1785 after years of wrangling over his estate. In 1800 a Female Asylum was established in the
Newarke, where 16 poor orphan girls aged 12-16 years were trained in domestic duties, and then
put into service, and when 'Great attention is paid to their moral and religious instruction'.
Girls' education in charity schools was specifically centred around the acquisition of domestic
skills to enable them to be good wives and mothers, or to fit them for service.

16 Soloway, Prelates and People, p. 391; M. Sturt, The Education of the People: A History of Primary
Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century (1967). State involvement in education is
here analysed.
17 Sanderson, Education, Economic Change and Society, pp. 17, 21.
18 J. Lawson & H. Silver, A Social History of Education in England (1973, 1976 edn), pp. 238-9; Wardle,
edn), pp. 192-5; S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boulbwood, An Introductory History of English Education
Since 1800 (1960, 1966, edn) pp. 2-5; Jones, Charity School Movement.
PRIVATE WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

The desire to educate their children obviously depended on the interest of the parents, but the poorest members of the working class - considered to be in particular need of reform - tended either to be hostile or apathetic towards education, or were too poor to afford adequate clothing and fees, and relied on their children's wages.21 This confounded the efforts of evangelical reformers who hoped to achieve the 'moral rehabilitation' of adults through the 'moral rescue' of their children, and hence to increase church attendance as well as help to solve problems of crime and pauperism.22 Moreover while some skilled workers regarded education 'as a passport to respectability and a necessary ticket for entry to many trades', a section of 'the educated and self-respecting working classes ... was highly critical of the particular kind of schooling on offer because its contents were not sufficiently practical, [and] because of the all-pervading religious-moral tone', and in addition 'showed little regard for the socialisation function of the school'.23 Nevertheless Tholfsen conjectures that middle-class reformers and ambitious working-class parents shared similar values, and that payment of fees allowed the separation of 'one's children from inferior status groups', but that this tended to emphasise 'the stigma of pauperism'.24

Although dame, private venture and common day schools attracted contemporary criticism many parents chose them as they were perceived to be part of the working-class community, and

21 Thompson, *Rise of Respectable Society*, pp. 136-7; W.B. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society, 1830-70: The Geography of Diversity in Provincial England* (Manchester, 1987), pp. 92-3, 130-31; Stephens indicates that many members of the working class were apathetic towards education either because of poverty, or because they objected to the promotion of 'middle-class values of thrift, temperance, respectability and religiosity'. Gardner, Lost Elementary Schools. Gardner questions the view that working-class parents were apathetic and ignorant and suggests that this was a negative reaction to the positive preference of such parents for schools which were part of a familiar culture.


thus free from charitable condescension or social discipline, and lacked strict regulations on dress
and conduct. Educational historians have argued that disapproval was often based 'upon social
suspicion as upon narrower educational deficiencies', for while such schools 'might give children
a certain competence in elementary subjects [they] did not teach them their "duties"'. Indeed
Gardner and Laqueur agree that educational historians should not overlook working-class
responses to provided education:

'working-class culture itself needs to be probed for evidence of a distinctive,
independently generated educative element which can claim to have offered a
genuine alternative to the species of education officially prescribed'.

While Gardner concedes that private schools are difficult to classify and enumerate accurately
using official nomenclature because of their diversity and informality, he argues against the
charge that they were ephemeral. He suggests that the reason for their eventual decline was the
result of the Act of 1876 which stated that only 'certified efficient schools' (private schools had
been indirectly regulated against since 1870) could grant the necessary attendance certificate
without which children between the ages of 10-13 could not be employed, thus ensuring that
most parents sent their children to board schools.

PAUPER AND CRIMINAL CHILDREN

The belief in education as a means to solve the problems of crime and pauperism led to the
inclusion of compulsory education for criminal children in The Prisons' Act of 1823. Industrial
and reform schools were encouraged to provide basic education for vagrant and criminal

25 Sanderson, Education Economic Change and Society, pp. 19-20; Curtis, History of Education, pp. 195-7,
232-4, 251-2, 273-5; G. Sutherland, 'Education', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), The Cambridge Social
26 Johnson, 'Educational policy and social control', pp. 13-14; J.H. Higginson, 'Dame schools', British Journal
27 Gardner, Lost Elementary Schools, p. 2. Gardner concentrates his research on the city of Bristol and
defines private schools as those lacking any external aid other than parents' fees; T.W. Laqueur,
'Working-class demand and the growth of English elementary education, 1750-1850', in L. Stone (ed.)
Schooling and Society (Baltimore, 1976), pp. 192-205.
28 Gardner, Lost Elementary Schools.
children, and training in crafts and domestic skills. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 legislated for compulsory education for working-class pauper children to ensure daily instruction. Many workhouses, including the one in Leicester, provided educational facilities but these were often considered to be unsatisfactory as workhouse conditions were not conducive to learning, and many of the teachers were incompetent. Although in 1845 it was recommended that schools be established to accommodate children from different parishes, by 1859 only six such schools had been founded, for many Poor-Law guardians resented the education of pauper children. While Denison’s Act of 1855 made provision for the education of outdoor pauper children this was not made compulsory, and as it involved extra expenditure was frequently ignored. It was also considered that free education could 'pauperise and degrade the very class who most require to be elevated'. Nevertheless the Bishop of Chichester considered that it was necessary to educate the poor to enable them 'to live on their own mental and physical resources'.

WORKING CHILDREN

The movement for education was also linked with that for industrial reform, and a series of Factory Acts legislated for the education of children employed in mines and factories. Thus in 1802 the Act for the Preservation of the Health and Morals of Apprentices initiated the instruction of apprentices in reading, writing and arithmetic. The Factory Act of 1833 provided for the appointment of inspectors who were to establish and report on schools for factory

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30 4 & 5 Wm. IV c. 76, The Poor Law Amendment Act (1834).
33 Soloway, Prelates & People, pp. 397-8.
35 42 Geo. III c. 73. The Health and Morals of Apprentices Act (1802).
children, but no financial provision was made for such schools. Some philanthropic employers
did provide facilities in their factories and/or ensured that the children worked part-time to
enable the educational requirements to be met, but many tended to evade the regulations and
others dismissed children affected by the Act. Nevertheless children were often too fatigued to
take advantage of any education on offer.

VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES

Many of the charity schools eventually became under the auspices of the Nonconformist
British and Foreign School Society, established in 1812 (formerly the non-sectarian Lancastrian
Society inaugurated by Joseph Lancaster in 1808), and the Anglican National Society for
Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, which was
founded by Andrew Bell in 1811. Both Societies were instrumental in the inauguration of
numerous schools which offered basic education together with moral training and religious
instruction, and by using the monitorial system could cheaply - if not adequately - educate large
numbers. While the schools were intended for boys and girls - often in separate schools, or
classes - provision for the latter was sometimes neglected, and stress was placed on teaching
domestic skills to equip the girls for their future roles. Antagonism grew between the two
Societies, accelerated by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1829. The established

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36 3 & 4 Will. IV c. 103. An Act to Regulate the Labour of Children & Young Persons in Mills and Factories (1833).
37 Rich, Education Act 1870, pp. 20-1; Curtis, History of Education, pp. 226-9; Robson, Education of
Children Engaged in Industry, pp. 23-50, 71-3; M. Sanderson, 'Education and the factory in industrial
38 C.K. Brown, the Church's Part in Education 1833-1941: With Special Reference to the Work of the
National Society (1942). In Leicester a National school was founded in 1814, and a British school in
1832.
39 A.E. Dobbs, Education and Social Movements 1700-1850 (1919), pp. 150-4; Curtis, History of Education,
pp. 206-9; Curtis & Boulton, History of English Education, pp. 7-12; Lawson & Silver, Social
48-9; Purvis, Women's Education, pp. 20-2; J. Kamm, Hope Deferred: Girls' Education in English
History (1965), pp. 154-9; M. Gomersall, 'Ideals and realities: the education of working-class girls,
differentiation was apparent in larger schools and single-sex schools, it was not so prevalent in 'small
church, alarmed at the growth of dissenting schools, feared not only that its influence would be weakened but also that church membership could be adversely affected. Indeed it had hoped 'to fill empty pews' via educational provision. The religious disputes which were discernible in both Sunday and voluntary schools were rooted in a desire to increase church/chapel attendance, and also because religious beliefs were considered by many to be a vital part of life.

The necessity for increased educational provision eventually became apparent, and thus in 1833 the first state education grant was made to both Societies. Money was made available for school buildings in areas where efforts were already being made, although Roebuck's proposal for a 'rate-financed system of parochial instruction' was rejected. This action precipitated years of sectarian discord, for Nonconformists perceived that grants gave an advantage to National schools, and feared the control of education by the established church. Furthermore while some Anglican bishops considered that state interference would weaken the control of the church in educational matters others believed in national education for 'denominational beliefs could be inculcated through Sunday schools'. In 1839 a Committee of Privy Council on Education was formed, and from the same year grants were only made available to schools which permitted entry to state-approved inspectors. The established church agitated for the right for National schools to have inspectors approved by the Archbishops, and the right to veto inspectors was granted to dissenters in 1843. Further state involvement was defeated by the rejection of Brougham's proposal for rate-supported parochial education.
From the eighteen-forties some deprived children received free education at ragged schools which were often attached to domestic missions. From 1844 the Ragged School Union spread through London and the provinces, and as they accepted children convicted of crime and pauperism they were eligible for government grants until 1862. However, Lord Shaftesbury considered that grants would negate their religious character and thus damage the schools' philanthropic appeal. After 1870 some were taken over by school boards, but others continued to offer education to children not welcome in other schools. In 1866 a school was opened in Leicester, for 'five children in rags'. By 1869 this had grown to accommodate 153 children with 'a night school for lads and a sewing class for girls'. The school moved in 1872 to Wharf Street, 'where its proximity to the brickyards and shoe factories brought the workers plenty of the right kind of material to work upon'.

The threat of Chartism, and Owenite socialism, and a growing awareness of the living and working conditions of the poor caused a renewed interest in education during the eighteen-forties. This influenced Sir James Graham's Factory Act of 1844 which advocated that between the ages of eight and thirteen children were to be given three hours education a day (which was to include religious instruction), in schools financed by church rates with an Anglican schoolmaster, and managed by seven trustees, including the schoolmaster and two churchwardens. These proposals were perceived by the Nonconformists to be an attempt to use public money to finance sectarian education, and in spite of a conscience clause the educational issues proved unacceptable with the result that religious discord increased. The

successful defeat of the Factory Bill encouraged the Congregational Board of Education and the Voluntary School Society to split from the British and Foreign Society and to decry state intervention in education by refusing government grants.  

Nevertheless it was becoming evident that the voluntary system could not cope with the demand for education, and furthermore the inspectors' reports revealed flaws in the effectiveness of the monitorial system. Hence teacher training ('normal') colleges were established which proved to be of benefit for the improvement of literacy. Following a period of sectarian discord concerning the control of the colleges, the state finally became involved in 1846 under the auspices of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, the first Secretary to the Committee of Council on Education. He considered that

'It is impossible for the voluntary efforts of the benevolent part of a nation ever to suffice for the immense and expensive work of educating the nation'.

Basing his opinions on reports published by the Committee, by the Journal of the Manchester Statistical Society, and personal enquiry, he found that in 1850:

'About half of the poor can neither read nor write, have never been in any school, and know little of the doctrines of Christian religion or moral duties'.

He also believed that compulsory education would solve the problems of attendance, crime and pauperism:

'The parents are often too vicious, or too ignorant, or too poor to care to send them, if not compelled and enabled to do so; and a great part of children ... [are] educated and bought up in crime'.

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49 7 & 8 Vic. c. 15. An Act to amend the Laws relating to Labour in Factories. (1844).
51 F. Widdowson, Going up into the Next Class: Women and Elementary Teacher Training, 1840-1914 (1980), pp. 21-8. She suggests that although Kay-Shuttleworth envisaged elementary teaching as a working-class occupation, recruitment patterns of the girls at Whitelands Training College, 1841-1900 refute this image. Indeed only in the mid eighteen-fifties did working-class girls predominate.
53 Kay, Condition of the People, pp. 357-8.
54 Kay, Condition of the People, p. 579.
Dr Hook, Vicar of Leeds agreed that Kay-Shuttleworth was right to advocate a national system of secular education, and considered that denominational instruction should be left to the Sunday schools.56

Attendance also proved to be an on-going problem, and indeed the Census conducted by Horace Mann in 1851 revealed that even though there were places available some children were neither at school nor work.57 It was apparent that parents needed encouragement not only to send their children to school, but to ensure their regular long-term attendance.58 Soloway questions nineteenth-century criticism concerning the quality of education and lack of adequate buildings, and suggests that allowance was not always made for the short erratic attendance of the majority of the children, and the fact that some schools were only partially filled.59 Similarly West warns against 'applying too readily 20th century English standards' to the quality of schooling on offer, bearing in mind irregular attendance and low school-leaving age, and examines claims regarding poor premises and quality of teaching. Even though poverty was blamed for short inconsistent periods of schooling, he concludes that it would be erroneous to suppose that free education would have been the solution.60

55 Kay, *Condition of the People*, pp. 393, 586-90; Soloway, *Prelates and People*, pp. 292-3. However Soloway provides evidence which weakens the alleged connection between illiteracy and crime: 'Having made crime-prevention an important utilitarian justification for the extension of denominational education, they [episcopal defenders of Anglican education] were repeatedly embarrassed by the agitation, disturbances and periodic riots that were often led by literate labourers who had been educated in Sunday or day schools'.

Nevertheless accurate assessment of attendance and provision proved to be as difficult in the nineteenth century as in this:

'The explanation of the different accounts given ..... lies not in any lack of data, but in the different social philosophies (made up from religious and political opinions) the data were supposed to represent'.61

Hence although numerous private and public bodies collected data during the eighteen-thirties and eighteen-fifties in order to calculate the number of available places, length of time in school, and percentage of eligible children who were in receipt of education, their conclusions were thought to be flawed. While attendance appeared to improve during the century, contemporary reports failed to include the populous poorer districts in large manufacturing towns and London where attendance was far lower than that in other areas. Ages were not recorded, and as the majority of children attending school tended to be between six and ten years old, older children were not benefitting from education. Reports also failed to record that the number of children registered did not reflect the number actually in attendance.62 Indeed West used some of these surveys in his work published in the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-eighties in an attempt to clarify the position, but his conclusions were also criticised because they lacked firm evidence.63

Despite their continual expansion, it was apparent by the middle of the century that voluntary schools could not cope adequately with educational needs. Also the demand for a national education system based on religious beliefs was difficult to implement. Not only were there differences between the established church and dissenting churches, but there was a dichotomy of opinion regarding the place of religion in education within the established church itself.64 In 1858 the Report of the Newcastle Commission appointed to inquire into the state of popular education in England verified concerns regarding the efficiency of the existing system. It

63 Sutherland, 'Education', pp. 121-6.
64 Soloway, Prelates and People, pp. 421-5.
concluded that the ratio of children receiving instruction to those without was 1:7.7 and notwithstanding inspected schools producing better results than uninspected, 'a large proportion of the children are not satisfactorily taught that which they come to school to learn'. The Commissioners were against national compulsory education, but their recommendation that state grants be supplemented by payments from local rates was rejected through fears of increased denominational agitation. In 1862 Robert Lowe, the vice-president of the Committee of Council on Education, introduced the Revised Code which modified the administration of school grants. He advocated payment by results to ensure regular attendance, and the attainment of certain educational 'Standards'. The schools therefore tended to concentrate on the three Rs to ensure receipt of the grant. This resulted in a restricted curriculum.

Suspicion of state involvement and denominational discord tended to delay the introduction of a national system of education. Forster's Elementary Education Act of 1870 sought to rectify this, and addressed the problems of attendance, short school life, a shortage of qualified teachers, a restricted curriculum and the shortcomings of the voluntary system. He advocated that directly elected local school boards be set up to 'fill the gaps' in voluntary educational provision. Voluntary Societies were initially allowed one year to make good any deficiencies before the boards were set up, but this was considered to give an unfair concession to Anglican schools. Moreover board schools were to be undenominational, but parents were to have 'the right to withdrawal from religious instruction on grounds of conscience'. This was an attempt to appease the Secularists and Nonconformist by allaying their concerns regarding Anglican control. Nonetheless education was not to be compulsory until Mundella's Act of 1880. An advanced

66 Maclure, Educational Documents, pp. 79-82.
68 39 & 40 Vic. c. 79. Elementary Education Act (1876); Maclure, Educational Documents, pp. 98-105; Rich,
section of the working class took a keen interest in the progress of the 1870 Act and supported
the aims of the National Education League, but the key issues elicited a mixed response. Free
education had the support of the majority and while it was acknowledged that the voluntary
societies had extended educational facilities, it was evident that distribution was uneven and that
many working-class children remained uneducated. Parents were not generally opposed to some
religious teaching, such as Bible reading in school, and did not support a completely secularist
policy. Nevertheless the permissive aspect of attendance was perceived to be inconsistent with
the aim to give compulsory education to all.69

SUNDAY SCHOOLS70

Educational provision in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was thus
overtaxed by population growth, and demographic and economic change. For some children
(and indeed adults), Sunday schools were the sole providers of education, for these had the
benefit of not competing with child labour. Although earlier schools have been recorded,
Robert Raikes, who established a Sunday school in Gloucester in 1780 to maintain order among
working children on the Sabbath, is acknowledged as founder of the movement.71 In Leicester a
nonconformist Sunday school was founded by the Great Meeting in 1783 and an Anglican one in
1788 by St Mary’s. The growth of the movement was rapid but Sunday schools did not always
meet with approval. Indeed the French Revolution heightened fears that education could be
subversive and could cause discontent, but this was countered by concern as to what might
happen if the poor were left in ignorance. Although Sunday schools could not compensate for a
lack in day school provision, they did teach reading, although the prime objective of this was for
Bible study. While some feared that reading could give access to ‘seditious’ books, others

69 McCann, ‘Trade unionists, artisans and the 1870 Education Act’, British Journal of Education Studies, 18
(1913, 1984 edn), pp. 198-213.

70 For an account of the history and development of the Sunday School Movement see Cliff, Sunday School
Movement.
considered that it would lead to indoctrination. Writing was always regarded as a secondary
requisite of literacy, and Sunday schools made only a limited contribution to the acquisition of
this skill, for the teaching of writing on the Sabbath was criticised by some Anglican evangelicals,
and banned by the Methodist Conference in 1823. Despite this, Sunday schools made a
significant contribution to the decline in illiteracy in areas lacking any other form of educational
provision. Their original undenominational character rapidly declined as the established church
fought to maintain its 'exclusive position', and dissenting churches strove to establish their
rights. Indeed McLeod postulates that 'patterns of educational provision helped to maintain
sectarian consciousness'. Despite this both the Anglians and nonconformist churches were
generally united in their desire to prevent the growth of secular education. Nevertheless Pelling
argues that

"The working class ... sent their children to Sunday school; and their willingness
to do so, and their lack of concern about the character of the religious
instruction given, is further evidence of their tolerance, at all events as between
the varying sects of Protestantism."

Historians tend to agree that Sunday schools made some contribution towards literacy, but
there is a dichotomy of opinion as to whether they were agents of social control or whether, as
Laqueur contends, they were upholders of working-class culture and values. Their early
founders were anxious to placate suspicious communities, hence in the late eighteenth century

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71 F. Booth, Robert Raikes of Gloucester (Redhill, 1980).
74 McLeod, Religion and the Working Class, p. 40.
76 H. Pelling, 'Popular attitudes to religion' in his Popular Politics and Society, p. 30. He also noted that in
1861 the Commission on Popular Education reported that 'parents' choice of school in general bore
little relation to sectarian loyalty'.
Hannah and Mary More in their Sunday school in the Mendips reassured hostile farmers that they wished 'to form the lower classes to habits of industry and virtue', and that they allowed no writing, only 'coarse works to fit them for servants'.\textsuperscript{78} Indeed Mrs Trimmer initially believed that keeping the poor in a state of ignorance would maintain the well-being of the nation.\textsuperscript{79} Warner suggested that while the early Wesleyans offered instruction to the poor free of 'any condescending attitude' others insisted that they would fit them 'for an industrious life without endangering their docility'.\textsuperscript{80} E.P. Thompson questioned why the working class submitted to Methodist indoctrination, and whether Sunday schools could be called educational, as the evangelicals appeared to concentrate on "the moral rescue" of the children of the poor.\textsuperscript{81} Nevertheless McLeod argues that the value of schools as 'agencies of indoctrination' can be exaggerated for then as now many reluctant scholars absorbed but little.\textsuperscript{82}

Laqueur refutes arguments favouring the theory of social control, and contends that by the nineteenth century Sunday schools were not provided from above down but were founded by the 'lower orders'. For example a school near to Leicester was established in 1780 by John Moore, a frame-work knitter.\textsuperscript{83} He argues that both scholars and teachers were from the same class and the reason that so few 'political' Sunday schools were established was that Sunday schools were not alien imports but provided cultural and leisure activities acceptable to the working class.\textsuperscript{84}

'Sunday schools were thus undoubtable advocates of refinement and respectability. It is more difficult, however, to determine if they were on the side of the middle class against the working classes, or on the side of counter-revolution against revolution. But the views that were condemned by the Sunday school were almost as often condemned in the working-class press and in the writings of important spokesmen'.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{80} Warner, \textit{The Wesleyan Movement}, p. 236.
\textsuperscript{81} Thompson, \textit{Making}, pp. 411-4.
\textsuperscript{82} McLeod, \textit{Religion and the Working Class}, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{84} Laqueur, \textit{Religion and Respectability}, pp. 85, 92-3, 105, 155, 171-6, 179-86, 227-9, 239, 245.
\textsuperscript{85} Laqueur, \textit{Religion and Respectability}, p. 237.
Nevertheless Laqueur's arguments have been challenged by Dick and Cliff who allege that there is no firm evidence to support claims that teachers and scholars came from the same background, and that Sunday schools were mainly working-class foundations and thus expressions of working-class culture. Dick also contests Laqueur's belief that the Sunday schools were disinterested in the political opinions of the students and teachers. Despite the motives inherent in their establishment, contemporary doubts regarding their value to working-class education, and a restrictive curriculum, it can be assumed that although they were not 'an adequate substitute for extended day education' they did have a 'significant impact' on mass literacy in the nineteenth century. During the second half of the nineteenth century their role changed as elementary education was made more widely available for, 'except for night classes ... for adults, regular secular education vanished from the Sunday schools by the 1870s'.

II - EDUCATION INSTITUTED BY THE ADULT WORKING CLASS

There is a consensus of opinion that working-class consciousness gradually evolved during the course of the century, and that the desire for education was often allied with social, economic and political ambitions. Even before developing working-class movements perceived the importance of education, there was a growing awareness of its necessity. Evidence for this can be found through references to self-education in autobiographies, membership of mutual improvement and Sunday school classes, and an interest in discussions at reform clubs - including those in Leicester.

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86 Dick, 'The myth of the working-class Sunday school', pp. 29-36; Cliff, Sunday School Movement, pp. 43-4, 152
87 Dick, 'The myth of the working-class Sunday school', p. 29.
88 Laqueur, Religion and Respectability, pp. 96-105, 113-23.
89 Laqueur, Religion and Respectability, p. 249.
The popular press also played an active part in disseminating educational and political information. Indeed education was often associated with political demands, and it was in this context that its importance became particularly apparent in an evolving working-class culture. This caused McCann to question the degree to which popular education operated as an agency of political socialisation rather than as a transmitter of literacy. Attempts to provide a system of education by Owenists and Chartists had little lasting success, despite the efforts of William Lovett and Thomas Cooper who was particularly well-known for his endeavours in Leicester. Indeed it was perceived by most Chartists as a vehicle for political reform and by Owenists as a means to social reform rather than an end in itself. However the deprived residuum of the working class remained indifferent or hostile, and their children remained untaught until Forster's Education Act of 1870 made provision for a national system which Mundella's Act of 1880 made compulsory.

SELF EDUCATION

The quest for self-education in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be perceived as a desire for knowledge for its own sake, as a route to political power, and as a manifestation of respectability often linked with temperance. Commenting on the demand for knowledge by the end of the eighteenth century, Dobbs noted, 'the remarkable growth of educational activity among adults of the working class, both as teachers and learners'. Adult Sunday Schools, night classes, book clubs, reading societies and discussion circles all provided educational, and in many cases scientific stimuli, and 'helped to satisfy the desire for self-improvement inspired by certain aspects of the Industrial Revolution'. Indeed Kelly surmised that

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90 P.M.C. McCann (ed.), *Popular Education and Socialisation in the Nineteenth Century* (1977), p. xii.
'The production and sale of cheap journals and books, organised study in class meetings, these - always coupled with active political campaigning - formed the core of educational efforts in the years from 1816-1823. ...self-education (had) become an integral aspect of working-class political activity'.

Working-class autobiographies in particular reveal four specific routes to self-education: an artisan tradition of literacy, the influence of nonconformist religion - usually Methodism - mutual improvement societies, and a pattern of reading. The many problems encountered in the struggle for literacy included poor living conditions, inadequate lighting, long working hours which resulted in fatigue, and in particular, lack of basic education. Keen autodidacts nevertheless valued the limited opportunities for learning which were available and many established mutual improvement societies.

Self-education was generally a minority, lonely process, attracting mainly artisans who because of their educational attributes often became leaders of working-class movements. Nevertheless social and occupational mobility was limited and most were content to remain as 'weaver-poets' or 'cobbler-philosophers', although some were more ambitious and became

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95 R. Johnson, "'Really useful knowledge': radical education and working-class culture, 1790-1848", in J. Clarke et al (eds), Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory (1979), pp. 80-1; D. Vincent, Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth Century Working-Class Biography (1981). This comprehensive study includes a bibliography of working class biographies/memoirs, including three in connection with Leicester; and his Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914 (Cambridge, 1989) in which he discusses the variety of ways to literacy, and the perceived advantages of having a literate populace.
97 Vincent, Bread, Knowledge and Freedom, pp. 110-31.
temperance agents, bookdealers, teachers, or 'professional agitators' as 'a route out of the working class'. However,

'In real terms the opportunities for working men to become upwardly mobile either by an institutional education or by gaining the equivalent by their own efforts, were at a nadir'. Despite this, working-class radicals became aware that knowledge would bring power, and thus:

'The story of the social and political movements of the 1820's and 1830's cannot be divorced from this growing awareness of the power of knowledge, of the inhibiting power of ignorance'.

Indeed 'the articulate consciousness of the self-taught was above all a political consciousness', for membership of The London Corresponding Society and other radical clubs established in the seventeen-nineties was 'overwhelmingly working-class artisans and small tradesmen'. In Leicester several clubs met in public houses until 1793 when 128 innkeepers decided to bar 'subversive meetings'. A period of economic distress in 1816-17 fostered a resurgence in agitation for political reform resulting in the formation of Hampden Clubs. The club in Leicester was claimed to be one of four controlled by 'secret committees' and it was thought to be associated with the frame-work knitters' trade union organisation.

Although 'the industrious classes' encompassed the illiterate as well as men of 'considerable intellectual attainment', illiteracy did not necessarily 'exclude men from political discourse' for books - including the works of Paine and Cobbett - and newspapers were read aloud and

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98 J.F.C. Harrison, Underground Education; B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, p. 146; Vincent, Bread Knowledge and Freedom, pp. 148-52.  
100 Silver, Popular Education, p. 160.  
103 Thompson, Making, pp. 702-4, 714.
discussed in public houses and at meetings. Indeed the power of the popular press should not be underestimated in the dissemination of knowledge and formulation of political consciousness, and financial restrictions on the press were deemed to be 'taxes on knowledge'. During the eighteen-twenties and thirties the unstamped press not only fuelled working-class radicalism but also fostered a network of organisations involved in printing and distribution. Although the views expressed by journalists and working-class leaders were not necessarily representative of the working class as a whole, nevertheless publications such as William Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register*, 1816, and Richard Carlile's *Black Dwarf*, 1817, played an important role in emphasising the importance of education. During the period of agitation for political reform in the eighteen-thirties, Henry Hetherington's *The Poor Man's Guardian*, 1831, which carried the motto, 'Knowledge is Power' and the Chartist newspaper, *The Northern Star*, were particularly influential in propagating the view that education was necessarily linked with political reform.

Thus education became an integral part of an evolving working-class consciousness and the radical movements which developed during the early years of the century owed much to self-educated working-class leaders.

During the nineteenth century major working-class movements (friendly societies, trade unions, Owenite co-operatives and Chartism) developed in response to adverse socio-economic and political circumstances. Dobbs considered that Mill's 'Essay on Representative Government' implied that 'the value of popular movements as educational agencies [would] diminish as they succeeded in achieving their immediate aims'. He also questioned how far they

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did in fact contribute to an increasing political consciousness and the growth of an intelligent minority. Kelly however, emphasised the importance of the educational aims of the early movements and suggested that their leaders were in fact,

'all facets of the same movement, and that movement was inspired by Owen's belief in the infinite power of education to perfect the character of man and his moral and material well-being'.

**FRIENDLY AND TRADE UNION SOCIETIES**

In addition to reform clubs, communal working-class activity was provided by friendly societies and trade unions. Prior to the repeal of the Combination Act in 1824, many trade unions operated under the guise of friendly societies, including the 'seven-year union' of 1819-26 in Leicester. These were numerically the most representative of working-class organisations. All the societies fostered the ideals of self-help and independence: they provided opportunities for the development of organisational qualities, and they became the prototype for later working-class organisations. They also provided 'a unifying cultural influence' in a convivial atmosphere and encouraged formal educational activities.

'It has been suggested that after 1824 until the failure of Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in 1834, trade unions were inter-linked with co-operatives but tended to stand aloof from Chartism.' Education remained an important union issue and the leaders of the

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'new model' trade unions 'campaigned in 1868 for an Education Act for free and compulsory
education' under the auspices of the National Education League, and the T.U.C. - founded in the
same year - also showed concern for educational provision.114

CO-OPERATIVE AND SOCIALIST SOCIETIES

'There was, then, a well-established tradition of self-education before 1820
when the theories of Robert Owen began to exercise a powerful influence on
the growing working-class movement'115

Owen's revolutionary theories for re-structuring society based on co-operative communities
were embraced during the eighteen-twenties and thirties by developing working-class-movements
and also inspired Secularism and Christian Socialism in the eighteen-forties and fifties.116 Central
to his ideology was the provision of infant, adult and factory education, for in his consideration,
'the best governed state will be that which shall possess the best national system of education'.117

Early attempts at forming communities had failed by 1827, but co-operative trading schemes
proved more successful. Co-operative Societies, established by radicals in London in 1825, and
Brighton in 1827, were the first of many societies based on mutual co-operation to be
established.118 Here the working class was encouraged in the 'acquisition and dissemination of
knowledge' for both personal progress and for the good of society. Indeed to achieve this aim
the Brighton Society established a school, and elsewhere debates, lectures and journals, including
the Co-operator all advocated the importance of education as well as the principles of co-

Applegarth also considered it the duty of the state to provide technical instruction; McCann, 'Trade


116 T. Christensen, Origins of Christian Socialism (Aarkhus, 1962), discusses the involvement of Christian
Socialists with the Co-operative Movement through the establishment of Working Men's Associations
especially pp. 117-8, 130-47, 176-9, 269-83, 326-37.

117 G.D.H. Cole, The Life of Robert Owen (1965), p. 126; His life, theories and influence are examined in the
book.

118 E. Royle, Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement 1791-1866 (Manchester,
operation. Holyoake stressed the need for an educational fund to be established as soon as a society was inaugurated, for

'Co-operators can only acquire such knowledge by keeping Libraries, News Rooms, Lecture Halls at their own command, and for their own use'.

The Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society, founded in 1844, allocated specific funds to cover the provision of libraries, evening schools and technical classes but similar problems arose to those encountered by Mechanics' Institutes. The Leicester Co-operative Society, founded in 1861 by five elastic web weavers and a glove worker, was based on the Rochdale Society, although there had been previous attempts at co-operative production and communal living.

While much activity revolved around the creation of local co-operative societies, education assumed an important role nationally, and in 1829 The British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge was inaugurated. At the second Co-operative Congress in 1831 there was a resolution for 'Schools of Industry' to be initiated as well as 'attempts to promote socialist schools independently of co-operative societies'. This led to the establishment of 'Co-operative and Scientific Institutions' or Halls of Science which were pioneered by the school founded in 1831 at the Salford co-operative store.

In the eighteen-thirties Halls of Science were founded by Owenite socialists in many towns - there was a socialist branch in Leicester but not a Hall - to provide intellectual improvement through Sunday schools, reading rooms, adult classes and mutual improvement groups and to

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120 Holyoake, Co-operation, pp. 403-5.
121 Christensen, Christian Socialism, pp. 269-70; M.E. Sadler, Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere (Manchester, 1908), p. 48. Nevertheless, he suggested that this educational provision was eventually restricted to the principles and methods of co-operation; Holyoake, Co-operation, pp. 615-6, 647; and his The History of the Rochdale Pioneers (1858/1878, 1893 edn).
123 William Lovett was secretary for a while, before becoming a Chartist.
provide alternative venues to both church and public house.\textsuperscript{125} Many of the Halls were built and financed by the workers themselves and the programme of lectures, classes and recreation, though similar to that provided by Mechanics' Institutes, was often preferred by the working class. For not only was there then independence from middle-class control, but discussion on political education and reform was allowed, and the need for 'civility, courtesy, fellowship, and brotherly love' was emphasised.\textsuperscript{126} It has been argued that 'as Chartism revived in 1847-48, for many it replaced socialism as the major working-class issue of the day', for Owenism was almost exclusively confined to the 'respectable' among the working classes'. Indeed in the eighteen-fourties attendance at lectures fell, societies declined and 'not enough money could be raised to pay the mortgages on the Halls of Science'.\textsuperscript{127} Although Owenism and Chartism were both working-class movements they remained distinct and espoused different ideologies, for Owen advocated social reform not political action.\textsuperscript{128} However, it has been postulated that his views inspired working-class leaders who by the eighteen-thirties had become convinced that education could provide the route to political reform and hence the eventual transformation of society.\textsuperscript{129}

**CHARTISM**

In 1838 William Lovett, Francis Place and Henry Hetherington, formulated the People's Charter, and according to Royle 'Chartism was therefore born out of the tradition of articulate, politically conscious artisan radicalism in London'. He does suggest however, that many historians would question whether Chartists as a whole were politically conscious.\textsuperscript{130} While

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{125} Royle, *Victorian Infidels*, Appendix 1, pp. 294-5 mentions Owenite Branch 26 at Leicester, 1838-48.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Royle, *Victorian Infidels*, pp. 64, 100-1, 182-3.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Royle, *Victorian Infidels*, pp. 134-7.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Royle, *Victorian Infidels*, pp. 134-7.
\end{itemize}
Chartists and Socialists shared a common interest in education, the former were divided in their opinions. Fergus O'Connor, a 'physical force' Chartist, believed it 'must be subordinated to the immediate political role, 'for 'knowledge without power is useless' and could create a serious divergence from the struggle for universal suffrage. William Lovett, a 'moral force' Chartist, believed that the vote would be given to those who through education, temperance and moderation could prove themselves responsible. In 1842 Lovett left the mainstream movement, and it was in fact 'the political wing of Chartism which effectively conducted the main struggle for educational reform'. Nevertheless he considered that it was important 'to promote, by all available means, the education of the rising generation', and saw the need for state involvement if necessary to achieve his aims. He devised a comprehensive system of education in 1840 while imprisoned in Warwick for Chartist activities, and during the eighteen-forties campaigned for public libraries, and for the Sunday opening of museums and art galleries as alternative venues to the public house as recreational outlets for working-class leisure.

In spite of differences concerning the relative importance of education, the National Charter Association - founded in 1840 - was financed by local contributions to provide speakers, libraries and halls. During the eighteen-forties Chartist evening and Sunday schools - for the instruction of adults and children - and Owenite Halls of Science proliferated and became meeting places for both Owenists and Chartists. Soloway postulates that in the eighteen-forties church leaders feared that educational provision by the Chartists and Owenites was 'filling the gap' caused by the inability of the Church to attract pupils. In Leicester an Adult School was founded in 1842 by

133 Tholfsen, _Working-Class Radicalism_, pp. 83-106. He argues that the Chartist stress on the educability of the working classes was to combat the attitude that they were inferior and capable only of manual labour. He also notes the apathy encountered by Chartist supporters among many working men and their desire to overcome the ignorance of the whole class.
134 Soloway, _Prelates and People_, p. 428, cites E. Denison, _A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese_
Thomas Cooper, who like Lovett was a self-educated Chartist leader. He inaugurated classes, lectures, discussion groups, mutual improvement societies and reading rooms to promote education and political reform. Nevertheless economic distress contributed to the school's closure, for 'the men were too despairing to care about learning to read'.¹³⁵ However by 1845, Leicester Chartists had again established a school for 'the instruction of adults and children on Sunday, and weekday evenings'.¹³⁶

After defeat in 1848, Chartism declined, to continue as a minority movement until the cessation of The Northern Star in 1852, and the demise in 1860 of the National Charter Association. The weakness of Chartism was engendered by a lack of common strategy, unity and coherence, and this was compounded by leaders from varying backgrounds supporting divergent interests, regional diversity and differing aims of the members.¹³⁷ Nevertheless old Chartists maintained an interest in working-class education, and many became peripatetic lecturers who believed that 'Education will follow suffrage as sure as day succeeds night'.¹³⁸

SECULARISM

By the middle of the century the ideologies of the Enlightenment, 'the militant radicalism of Paine and Carlile, the grand schemes and idealism of Robert Owen, and the remains of disillusioned Chartism' lay in the past and a new movement called Secularism was born under the auspices of G.J. Holyoake, 'a self-improved artisan', socialist, lecturer and teacher at the Sheffield Hall of Science, and at Birmingham Mechanics' Institute.¹³⁹ His interest in secular-based reform...
was possibly prompted by the Secular Education League in London and the Lancashire Public Schools Association, both launched in 1847. The latter was established 'in an effort to avoid the bitter sectarian rivalry which was delaying educational developments throughout the country'. It demanded 'national, unsectarian education paid for out of the rates and controlled by a board of directors'. This plan was supported in a speech made in 1849 by William Biggs, mayor of Leicester, and in the same year the Lancashire Public Schools Association, the London Working Men's Association for National Secular Education and similar bodies were united as the 'National Public Schools Association'. However in 1851 a Secular Education Bill was defeated, opposed by Evangelicals who not only denounced secular education, but any comprehensive system of religious education, as being 'doctrinally impossible'.

Although it was a radical movement, Holyoake aimed to make it respectable, and in common with trade unions and co-operatives desired 'to find a place in society, rather than remake society'. Despite this the National Secular Society established in 1866 by Charles Bradlaugh was 'not afraid to smash the religious idols and political images of polite society'. A Secularist Society emerged in Leicester where there was a tradition of radical thought and movements. Royle postulates that over half the Secularist members there were working class, with less than ten per cent from higher social classes - the latter included Josiah Gimson, head of a Leicester engineering firm. Furthermore, W.H. Holyoak, a Leicester bookseller was typical of about one third of the members 'responsible for much of organised Secularism'. Thus, in common with the other working-class movements it did not penetrate 'the lowest of the lower orders'. Finance and accommodation were the chief problems faced by local societies, and discussions of radical literature and lectures were often held in coffee houses, public houses and Temperance Halls and Hotels. Indeed many societies failed through a combination of apathy, the Crimean War,

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political upheaval and economic depression. Nevertheless the Leicester Secular Society was permanently established in 1867, 'the doyen' of all the Midlands societies, and in 1869 it 'acquired premises with a reading room at 43 Humberstone Gate'.

The movements considered above were fundamentally working-class, and were often led by self-educated artisans, who were aware of the power of education to achieve their desired social and political objectives. Fragmentary records make it difficult to estimate accurately the number of Chartist schools and Owenite Halls of Science, or to assess their influence on national education and literacy. However they made the working class aware of its ignorance and of the poverty of the traditional education on offer and by the eighteen-thirties the problem was no longer one of how to prevent the education of the working class, but how to direct it. Indeed while working-class leaders appreciated the power of education in the struggle for social and political emancipation, members of the middle class perceived it to be an economic and/or political necessity, as well as their philanthropic duty to provide instruction for 'the lower classes'. According to Kelly the middle class 'saw education as harnessed to a particular purpose - religious salvation, social order, economic prosperity', but forgot 'about the joy of education'. It also 'overestimated the education, ... underestimated the intelligence, ... and failed to understand the fierce flame of political and social idealism that burned in the breast of (working-class) leaders'.

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144 Silver, Popular Education, pp. 203, 232.
III - EDUCATION PROVIDED FOR THE ADULT WORKING CLASS

In the late eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth century education for working-class adults was provided primarily by Sunday schools and adult schools, both cited as possible precursors of the Mechanics' Institute movement. These were motivated by political, philanthropic, religious and economic aims as well as by educational objectives. During the course of the century other institutions were inaugurated which contended with the Mechanics' Institutes for membership. Lyceums, Temperance Societies, the Young Men's Christian Association, Working Men's Colleges and Working Men's Clubs & Institutes all attempted to solve the problem of providing an attractive alternative to working-class leisure - in particular the culture of the public house - and to offer opportunities for education. Nevertheless the emphasis was placed on education for men, and indeed 'forms of adult education open to working-class women offered a basic curriculum that was sex specific'. This tended to reinforce male dominance and the concept of female 'home-centredness and inferiority'.

SUNDAY AND ADULT SCHOOLS

The evangelical religious revival of the late eighteenth century inspired the provision of Sunday and evening schools, which although primarily established for working-class children, also attracted illiterate adults eager to acquire a rudimentary education. Methodist class meetings were particularly important for disseminating education to adult learners. In 1789 a group of Sunday school teachers, anxious that former pupils should continue their education, established a branch in Birmingham for the 'dissemination of a knowledge of the arts and sciences amongst the labouring people'. This became known as the Sunday Society and later the Brotherly Society, and was possibly the origin of the Mechanics' Institute movement. A mutual improvement

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147 Sadler, *Continuation Schools*, pp. 1-19.
society - together with an Artisans' Library - which developed from this, was established in 1799 and was known as 'The Cast Iron Philosophers'.

In 1798 the first adult school was established in Nottingham by William Singleton (a Methodist) and William Fox (a Quaker) for the education of women in lace factories. Kelly suggested that this was an independent institution and did not lead to the creation of a movement, although Wardle postulated that Joseph Sturge (a Birmingham Quaker) was inspired to expand the adult school movement in the eighteen-forties by a visit to Fox's school. 'Many benevolent individuals exerted themselves' with the result that by 1815 twenty towns had adult schools provided by different denominations. In London provision was limited owing to the lack of people qualified to go from 'house to house in search of the neglected poor'. It was perceived that the establishment of adult schools resulted in both a reduction in crime and the need for parochial relief, and that both teachers and learners benefitted morally. The early adult schools, which were based on those established in Wales and Bristol, concentrated on Bible reading, but schools established during the revival in the eighteen-forties and based on the Quaker school in Birmingham, offered a wider range of subjects with separate classes for adults.

The 1851 Census records 1,545 evening schools for adults in England and Wales with 39,783 pupils, but Kelly questions whether the figures quoted included adolescents. These were usually associated with schools and churches, and offered basic education to those who lacked elementary education, with an emphasis on domestic skills for female students. After 1851

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150 Kelly, Adult Education, pp. 65-80.
154 Hudson, Adult Education, pp. 6-25.
some evening schools were eligible for a government grant.\textsuperscript{155} Indeed in 1853 the Department of Education and Science was established, and State involvement in evening schools increased as they were perceived to be a way of furthering technical education.\textsuperscript{156} Nevertheless in a letter published in 1865 concern was still being expressed regarding the need for evening schools 'to supplement the work of the day-school' and to fill 'the manifest gap which has appeared in the educational life of the working man'. However it is evident that morality rather than the education of the working class was of more concern:

>'The great peril of the system which releases boys at so early an age from the discipline of school, and turns them out loose upon the world imperfectly taught and trained, is, that they are likely to degenerate into a very low condition, mental and moral, and gradually to slip away from all improving and elevating influences',\textsuperscript{157}

Thus the necessity of providing formal education, and the benefits that would ensue through the moral elevation of the working class continued to be discussed. Indeed the motives for establishing Mechanics' Institutes were not exclusively educational.

**MECHANICS' INSTITUTES - THEIR ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT**

A desire for scientific knowledge had developed during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, inspired by technological inventions, public lectures and evening classes.\textsuperscript{158} The Mechanics' Institute movement was by far the most important manifestation of this interest, and the most widespread attempt during the century to provide adult education sometimes by but mainly for the working class. The Institutes had a long history and pre-history (particularly in northern industrial towns), before the foundation of the one in Leicester. Historians researching the Institutes at national and local levels have perceived different reasons behind their origins and development. Indeed 'as the number of historians writing on the subject became larger, so did

\textsuperscript{156} Sadler, *Continuation Schools*, pp. 11-12, 52-61.
the number of institutions or trends, mentioned as precursors to the London Mechanics' Institute of 1823'. It has been perceived that, 'even amongst contemporaries there was much dispute as to who should have the honour of being regarded as "founder of the Mechanics' Institutes"', but in fact their origins were 'the outcome of a complex of causes', and provincial Institutes in particular had a 'variety of origins, motivations, provisions, membership etc'.

Nevertheless, particular reference should be made to George Birkbeck who was influential in the foundation of both the Glasgow and London Institutes. His resolve to give lectures specifically for the mechanics at the Andersonian Institute in Glasgow was a development of the work of Professor Anderson, who in 1760 had allowed a number of mechanics to attend his lectures on experimental physics. Birkbeck's ideas were derided as being impracticable, but his lectures were enthusiastically received from 1800 until his move to London in 1804. It was noted by Tylecote that Birkbeck's motives were altruistic and not designed to promote 'the interests of science and industry and the maintenance of social order which dominated the movement later on'.

Birkbeck was eventually involved in the London Mechanics' Institute which was inaugurated in 1823 by J. C. Robertson and T. Hodgskin, editors of the Mechanics Magazine, to instruct the mechanics 'in the principles of the arts they practise'. Henry Brougham and Francis Place gave


160 Inkster, 'The social context of an educational movement', p. 280; Kelly, 'Mechanics' Institutes', p. 17.


their support, the latter, although in favour of working-class education, foresaw financial and organisational problems if working-class control, advocated by Hodgskin and Robertson, was allowed. However, the rule that two-thirds of the committee must be working-class members was soon evaded in favour of middle-class control, which highlighted the fears that 'men would soon be found who would put the mechanics to one side'.\textsuperscript{163} Although the London Mechanics' Institute was not typical of the movement in general, its stated aims, objectives and problems were repeated in the provincial Institutes, which proliferated after 1825.\textsuperscript{164} It was considered that 'a major catalyst of this sudden explosion was the 1825 publication by Henry Brougham of his \textit{Practical Observations upon the Education of the People}', which publicised the existing Institutes and provided a plan for the inauguration and managing of others.\textsuperscript{165}

Brougham's ideas were not received with universal approval, as was evident through articles in \textit{The Edinburgh Review} written by 'A Country Gentleman' in 1826, who feared social disruption, and by E. W. Grinfield in 1825, who expressed fears concerning 'about seven or eight hundred mechanics being apt to sojourn to the alehouse after meeting at a lecture'.\textsuperscript{166} The conclusion reached by Kelly, that opposition came mainly from the Tories and the church, was challenged by Thomas and Turner, who further suggested that while 'the Established Church, the Tory Party, the Landed Gentry and certain of the Manufacturing Classes', might as bodies have been opposed to Mechanics' Institutes, individual members of all groups gave great support.\textsuperscript{167}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{163} \textit{Mechanics Magazine}, 2 (1824), pp. 436-42.
\item \textsuperscript{166} E. W. Grinfield, 'A reply to Mr Brougham's "Practical observations upon the education of the people, addressed to the working classes and their employers"', \textit{The Edinburgh Review}, 16 (1825), pp. 206-23.
\item \textsuperscript{167} Kelly, \textit{Adult Education}, p. 123; C.M. Turner, 'Political, religious and occupational support in the early Mechanics' Institutes', \textit{Vocational Aspects of Education}, 20 (1968), pp. 65-70; and his, 'Sociological approaches to the history of education', \textit{British Journal of Educational Studies}, 17 (1969), pp. 146-55; R.A. Thomas, 'The Mechanics' Institutes of the Home Counties, c. 1825-70, part two', \textit{Vocational...
Provincial Institutes were inaugurated in response to a variety of local requirements, such as temperance, scientific interests and the demands of industrialists and educationalists. Initially Institutes were founded in heavily industrialised areas but their popularity soon spread, and by 1850 there were approximately 700 Institutes with 12,000 members. In the larger towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire the Institutes owed their foundation to the efforts of men in the employing class, although in Keighley, Halifax, Stalybridge and Burnley it was the mechanics who were instrumental in starting their own Institutes. Simon considered the working-class controlled Mechanics' Institutes established in Lancashire, under the guidance of Rowland Detroisier, president of the Manchester Institute in 1829 to be 'a clear expression of the working-class demand for education and enlightenment; not in any abstract terms, but as part of a live movement for political and industrial action, inspired by the Owenite vision of good society based on reason and justice'.

The idea of admitting women to Mechanics' Institutes was not considered by the early founders, and by the eighteen-thirties the majority still catered only for men. Indeed the few that were mixed-sex or for women only, were still controlled by men. Moreover women were often excluded from newsrooms, and tended to be educated in separate classes in which they were offered a different curriculum. However, many Institutes allowed women into the library, and to attend lectures on payment of a reduced fee.

Lectures, classes, a library and reading room and sometimes a museum of apparatus and models, were all used to disseminate knowledge - with varying degrees of success or failure. Problems experienced were common to many Institutes and can be attributed to a variety of causes which included: inadequate elementary education, long working hours, adverse economic

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171 J. Purvis, A History of Women's Education in England, (Milton Keynes, 1991), pp. 36-42; and her Hard
conditions, local opposition, conflict concerning middle class or working-class control, financial problems, a perception by some of increased interest in entertainment at the expense of science, the aspirations of the founders not being realised, declining interest, changing social class of membership, lack of capable lecturers, theoretical rather than practical lectures and a ban on political and religious discussion. These factors have all contributed to an assessment of perceived success or failure of the Institutes and were all inherent in the demise of Leicester Mechanics' Institute in 1870.

The overall effect of the Institutes on the working-class population is, however, ambivalent: the significance of the figures for percentage attendance of population have been interpreted differently by Cardwell, who quoted attendance as a percentage of the total population in 1851, and Inkster, whose population figure included only adult males - that is the group most likely to attend. Similarly the composition of the tables of social classes given by Hudson and Tylecote is questioned by Royle. Dependent on whether the social divisions were grouped according to status or occupation and into which class artisans and warehousemen were placed determined the perception of the various Institutes as working-class or middle-class establishments and hence whether they had failed or otherwise to cater for the class for which they were intended.

After the Great Exhibition in 1851 the importance of scientific education, to enable Britain to compete with foreign markets, became more apparent. State involvement under the auspices of the Royal Society, eventually supplanted the educational role of Mechanics' Institutes. In addition, following the Public Libraries Act of 1850, Local Councils commenced the inauguration

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173 Cardwell, Organisation of Science, pp. 74-7; Inkster, 'The context of steam intellect in Britain', pp. 11-16.

174 Hudson, Adult Education, pp. 86-7; Tylecote, Mechanics' Institutes, pp. 139, 297; Royle, 'Mechanics'
of both public libraries and reading rooms which supplanted another important role. The Institutes' achievements, however, were not consigned to total oblivion, and even though many did not fulful the aspirations of their founders their legacy was substantial.\(^{175}\)

As the Mechanics' Institutes did not appear to attract 'members of the class for whom they were intended', other societies were founded to provide alternative educational venues. Lyceums were established, firstly in Manchester in 1838, and later in other towns, to provide recreation and elementary instruction at lower subscription rates. T. Heywood of Manchester envisaged these as 'instruments' of 'community welfare and class reconciliation'. However, these too failed to achieve a high level of attendance because it was felt that they 'lacked real conviviality'. Hence Temperance Societies, The Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.), Working Men's Colleges, and Working Men's Clubs and Institutes saw the need to offer amusement as well as instruction.\(^{176}\) Even though political and religious discussion was allowed, and the surroundings were more socially and physically conducive, these organisations still only achieved limited success.\(^{177}\) Their main advantage was that they allowed workers to meet socially, away from the control of their employers - 'we have masters all day long, my lord, and we don't want 'em at night'.\(^{178}\) Nevertheless it was considered that:

> 'great as the disposition to learn is among the working classes ... there is still a necessity for the upper classes coming forward to assist in making the first step.' ... 'Even in the largest towns, it is hardly to be expected that the workmen should yet concert measures for their own instruction'.\(^{179}\)


\(^{178}\) Solly, *Working Men's Social Clubs*, p. 104.

\(^{179}\) W. Davis, 'Hints to philanthropists; or a collective view of practical means of improving the condition of
THE YOUNG MEN'S AND YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The Y.M.C.A. was established initially in London in 1844 by George Williams to safeguard the morals of young shopmen living away from home. It offered a combination of religion, recreation and instruction through the provision of Bible classes, Mutual Improvement Societies, libraries, reading rooms and recreational activities. The movement expanded to include other trades, and became active in both rural areas and towns, including Leicester. The Y.W.C.A. originated in 1855 from two sources: a prayer union, and a house in London for girls coming from the country to work - mainly in the dressmaking trade. In 1877 these two united to become the Y.W.C.A., but although the movement remained separate from the Y.M.C.A. it aimed to provide similar recreational, educational and spiritual opportunities. Its educational aims differed from those of the Women's Movement which was evolving at the same time. Although the Y.W.C.A. promoted education for women, and provided classes, lectures, and libraries, it was nevertheless a philanthropic evangelical movement, and its educational policy tended to centre on the duties of wife and mother, so that women might be a moral influence in the home.

THE WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

The inauguration of a Working Men's College in London had far-reaching consequences for the development of adult and university education in Leicester. For this inspired the Rev. D.J.
Vaughan, vicar of St Martin's, to found a Working Men's Reading Room and Library in 1862, which after the addition of classes was renamed the Leicester Working Men's Institute, and eventually Vaughan College. The London College was established in 1854 by the Rev. F.D. Maurice, who together with C. Kingsley, J.M. Ludlow and other like-minded Christians, had become increasingly worried about the alienation of working-class radicals from the church. Their desire to discover more about the condition of the working class, to show through fellowship and brotherhood that the church was concerned, and to offer practical help was intensified by the Chartist demonstration in 1848. Ludlow originated the name Christian Socialists for this group and thus they became involved in Co-operation through their inauguration of Working Men's Associations.184

The importance of education to the movement prior to the founding of the College is evident through lectures on Co-operation, the establishment of Bible classes, and the inauguration in 1848 of a night school for men in Little Ormond Yard which 'soon extended to include young boys and women as well'.185 While Ludlow advocated educational suffrage, Maurice considered that there could be no absolute educational equality as all men had different talents and vocations which called for different training. Nevertheless he believed that the success of the Working Men's Associations - established for co-operative production and distribution - depended on the education of the workers, and that this teaching should stress the "brotherhood of fellow-work" not the relationship between capital and labour or master and servant.186 Moreover according to the First Report of The Co-operative Conference in 1852:

"The Co-operative Movement was essentially an educational movement; it was connected with the education of the whole man, whether that education came in the shape of lectures and classes, or of music and amusements".187

185 Christensen, Christian Socialism, pp. 91-2, 98, 270.
186 Christensen, Christian Socialism, pp. 75, 80, 140, 260-1, 142-211. Here information on the Associations is given.
Indeed the establishment of schools, a library and museum were advocated in the 'Code of Laws for an Association', although apart from the foundation of a library in 1851, classrooms were not available until the erection of a Hall of Association in 1852. Nevertheless the programme of lectures and classes given during 1852-3 was successful.\textsuperscript{188} Although Christian Socialists were in agreement concerning the importance of education, there was division among the leaders respecting the aims and ideology of the movement, which culminated in Maurice's realisation that for him education was more important than Co-operation.\textsuperscript{189} As the failure of some of the Associations was perceived to be caused in part by the inadequate education of the manual workers, the idea of establishing a college for working men was considered, and from then on Maurice's energies were channelled into this.\textsuperscript{190} He was inspired to some extent by the success of a college in Sheffield, established in 1842 by the Rev. R.S. Bayley, but under student control by 1848. However, he neither adopted its policy of being self-supporting and self-governing, nor its ban on politics.\textsuperscript{191} Indeed his concept of a college was that of

'a corporation of which teaching and learning, in their technical sense, cannot be the only, cannot even be the principal object. A college if it fails to humanize, fails altogether'.\textsuperscript{192}

He also considered that

'The name College is an old and venerable one. It implies a Society for fellow-work, a Society of which teachers and learners are equally members'.\textsuperscript{193}

Although he stressed the need to bridge the gulf between members of the social classes to promote a spirit of reconciliation, and believed that teachers and students should form a self-governing, self-supporting body, he insisted that the curriculum must always be controlled by the

\textsuperscript{188} Christensen, Medical Socialism, pp. 340-1.
\textsuperscript{189} Christensen, Medical Socialism, pp. 218-9, 287, 332, 337, 340.
\textsuperscript{190} Christensen, Medical Socialism, pp. 341-52; J.F.C. Harrison, A History of the Working Men's College 1854-1954 (1954); Maurice, Learning and Working.
\textsuperscript{191} Sadler, Continuation Schools, pp. 32-44. Sadler suggested that the Rev. Bayley may have been influenced by William Lovett's Address of 1837 in which he proposed that colleges or finishing schools be set up.
\textsuperscript{192} F.D. Maurice, 'Working Men's Colleges', Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (1862), p. 294.
\textsuperscript{193} Prospectus of College and First Term Report, quoted in Christensen, Medical Socialism, p. 340.
teachers, who must be upper or middle class. Nevertheless he advocated that fees should be charged for instruction, so that the college could be free from the interference of patrons. R.B. Litchfield, co-founder of the College, also emphasised the equality between students and teachers and stated that:

'we meet on equal ground, but without in the least pretending that there are no differences among us'.

Even though the college was to be self-supporting, Maurice realised that funds were required for its establishment, and thus to promote interest gave six public lectures which were published under the title Learning and Working. In these lectures he revealed his original beliefs that while education should be a matter for the church, sectarian differences had led to inadequate provision, which the college intended to rectify. He also stated his attitudes towards the necessity of teaching politics, the importance of integrating amusement with education and the need to provide a humane education. The importance of taking the working men 'as we find them, not as we would have them to be' was particularly stressed. A prospectus was drawn up, teachers engaged, and in the autumn of 1854 students were sought via Trade Unions and a public meeting. The college opened with 120 students, but the early years were disappointing, for as in the Mechanics' Institutes only half the students were the manual workers for whom the college was primarily intended, the remainder were clerks and skilled workers. Similar problems were also encountered: long working hours, poor domestic arrangements and lack of basic education which highlighted a need for an adult school. From 1855 several provincial colleges were established, which provided libraries, reading rooms, elementary classes and lectures. However most were

194 Christensen, Christian Socialism, pp. 342-9; Harrison, Working Men's College, pp. 2, 29; Maurice, Learning and Living, p. 6.
195 R.B. Litchfield, 'The social economy of a Working Men's College, Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (1863), p. 789.
196 Maurice, Learning and Working, pp. 6, 35, 58, 61, 119, 123, 132, 151; Kelly, Adult Education, 187.
198 Sadler, Continuation Schools, pp. 44-5; Kelly, Adult Education, pp. 187-8; Sanderson, Education, Economic Change and Society, p. 53.
short-lived with the exception of Vaughan College in Leicester which in the 1870s became involved in the university extension movement.

Maurice also stressed the importance of educating wives and mothers, to enable them to support their husbands and educate the children, but he did not allow them to have full membership of the College. The provincial colleges also offered women only partial membership and a limited curriculum, usually in separate classes or departments - as at Leicester. However, in 1864 a Working Women's College was opened in London.199 Purvis contends that attitudes towards women in the Colleges reflected tensions 'between two alternative views of education. Should women be defined as wives and mothers and educated to improve such tasks or should they be defined as individual beings and educated for self-development'?200

Working Men's Colleges were founded primarily as educational establishments, but other contemporary movements concentrated on providing recreational as well as educational alternatives to the public-house for working-class leisure. Thus middle-class reformers aimed to supply useful, elevating and instructive recreational opportunities. While it is difficult to estimate the effect on the improvement of literacy, the movements that developed merit a mention as they were important for the general elevation and education of the working class. Indeed in some instances they were not only embraced by the latter but were taken out of middle-class control. The Temperance Movement and the Working Mens Clubs and Institute Movement both developed from attempts to provide rational recreation as alternatives to the public house.

199 Levine, Victorian Feminism, p. 40; Purvis, Women's Education, pp. 43-51; and her Hard Lessons, 161-220.

200 J. Purvis, "Women's life is essentially domestic, public life being confined to men" (Comte): separate spheres and inequality in the education of working-class women, 1854-1900, History of Education, 10 (1981), p. 231. She suggests that the ideal of the 'homemaker' was emphasised by the evangelicals.
THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

Leicester (in common with many towns) had a Temperance Hall which provided an alternative meeting place for recreation and education to the public house or the Mechanics' Institute. Temperance was perceived to be a route to self-help and respectability by both working-class leaders and middle-class reformers, and thus assumed an important role in the elevation and education of the working class. There tended to be a strong link between temperance reformers and educational causes, for 'teetotallers were enthusiasts for industrial progress, for science, for education' as well as supporting other reforming activities. Advocates of temperance, F.N. Charrington and William Lovett considered that drink caused ragged children to wander the streets without education, and that children 'reared in a drunken home' could not benefit from education. In 1834 a Drunkenness Committee appointed by Parliament advocated the establishment of parks, reading rooms, libraries, and a national education system and the encouragement of temperance societies.

During the eighteen-thirties and forties evangelical and nonconformist middle-class reformers established numerous temperance and tract societies, together with Bands of Hope and Sunday schools for children. Indeed 'a vast propaganda through lectures, sermons, books, magazines and tracts was commenced' in order to educate 'the working classes on the evils of drink'. Although they tended to be suspicious of clubs and societies inaugurated by middle-class reformers, Lovett, Cooper and Holyoake advocated temperance as a route to respectability. Despite the provision of education and recreation in a teetotal environment in Owenite Halls of

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201 Crossick, Labour Aristocracy: See Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, for a comprehensive study on temperance.
202 Harrison, Drink and the Victorians pp. 95, 151, 207, 337-8.
203 Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, pp. 205, 328.
204 Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, pp. 106-7.
206 Bailey, Leisure and Class, pp. 47-50, 97; 'Thompson, Rise of Respectable Society, pp. 310, 319-21; Jones, Chartism, pp. 45-8, 386-7; B. Harrison, 'Religion and recreation in nineteenth-century England', Past
Science, and that in Teetotal Chartism 'working men sought sobriety on their own initiative', many of the working class still preferred the conviviality of public houses.207

THE WORKING MEN'S CLUB AND INSTITUTE MOVEMENT

The Working Men's Club and Institute movement was initially inaugurated to provide a relaxing though teetotal educational and recreational environment for working men. According to Price:

'The working men's clubs were a result of the general re-thinking of social reforming and "improvement" effort that characterised the 1850's and 1860's. ... there was a distinct shift of emphasis from a conception of formal acquisition of knowledge to the more abstract necessity of "civilising", "refining", and "elevating" the working classes of the country. ... to do this any improving institution must bait its hooks by offering facilities for relaxation and amusement.'208

The Rev. Henry Solly (a Unitarian minister) was aware of the existence of clubs for working men in Brighton, London and elsewhere, and of the London Working Men's College, and was thus inspired in 1862 to found the Working Men's Club and Institute Union where working men could 'meet for conversation, business and mental improvement.'209 He aimed to provide a more attractive alternative to Mechanics' Institutes and to replace public houses as meeting places: to help the working class to help itself, and to provide teachers, recreation, alcohol-free refreshments, discussion classes and lectures to 'awaken thoughts and a desire for knowledge' in an atmosphere of mutual help and fellowship.210 He considered middle and upper-class patronage to be necessary and important, while appreciating the need for the working class to have some control in the management of the clubs. Above all he stressed that the purpose of the

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207 Thompson, Rise of Respectable Society, pp. 320-2; Crossick, 'Labour aristocracy', p. 323; Harrison, Early Victorian Britain, 1832-51, pp. 77-8; Harrison, 'Religion and recreation' pp. 113, 121.


clubs was to foster mutual understanding between all classes. Nevertheless the exclusion of beer and tobacco, the admission of juveniles, poor management and over-restrictive patrons caused problems. Although these were eventually overcome, the clubs developed into predominantly 'social institutions rather than institutions of learning'.

OTHER INSTRUMENTS OF EDUCATION

While it was considered important to teach reading in order that morally-uplifting and educationally-improving works might be studied, there were fears of a 'seditious press teaching rebellion, assassination and revolution' and that 'atheistic' propaganda would also be read. Nevertheless, an educated suffrage was felt to be more politically desirable than an ignorant one, and education was seen as a diversion from anarchy. For as Wardle suggests,

'It is a sensible assumption that one of the requirements for the success of a political democracy is an educated population and it is not mere coincidence that the progressive expansion of the franchise was accompanied by the spread of education'.

The role of the publishing industry in the dissemination of knowledge thus merits consideration:

'The response (to the demand for reading material) was to provide special literature for working-class readers, first by philanthropic and religious efforts (tracts by the S.P.C.K. and technical magazines for mechanics), and later by commercial enterprise (Charles Knight and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the Chambers brothers, and Cassell's Popular Educator). Two major problems of communication were encountered by all the publishers: cost, and attracting the interest of the working man. The problem of cost was partly solved by technological advances which made cheaper printing possible, by the final repeal of taxes and

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215 Harrison, *Underground Education*, pp. 1, 4-5.
duties on newspapers in the eighteen-fifties, and by a rise in real wages in the second half of the century. The second problem was more difficult to solve as 'the great part of the working class ... were not actively interested in learning; they wanted to be amused'. Altick considered that after the mid-century the cheap periodical press gave little cause for political alarm 'but it was recognised that, while earlier apprehensions had proved groundless, the reading habit among the masses was contributing little to their cultural improvement'.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

In addition to the press, public libraries, museums and art galleries could also be considered to be 'instruments of adult education'. Prior to the Public Library Act of 1850 which permitted local authorities to levy a rate for buildings and maintenance but not for books, there was only limited provision for working-class readers. This included book clubs, circulating and parochial libraries, and libraries in Mechanics' Institutes and similar organisations. However these often had a religious or class bias and as Altick suggests:

'If they were sponsored by the church dissenters stayed away; if they were sponsored by Brougham's Useful Knowledge party, many workmen avoided them.'

The Museum Act of 1845 authorised the establishment of rate-aided museums in the hope that libraries and museums would provide alternatives to the public house for working-class leisure activities. Two organisations were initially responsible for providing a public library and museum in Leicester. The library was donated by the Mechanics' Institute after its demise in 1870 and the museum was given by The Literary and Philosophical Association.

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216 Webb, Working-Class Reader, pp. 23-58, 158-63; He states (p. 69) that Charles Knight attempted to establish a Library of Entertaining Knowledge. However on his tour of the provinces it was noted that 'in Leicester not 20 copies were sold in a population of 30,000'.
217 Altick, English Common Reader, pp. 262-4, 364.
Adult education thus assumes a central role in two interrelated and controversial debates, the first concerning the wider social and political motives behind its introduction and the second relating to the development of an educated, technically and technologically literate working class during the nineteenth century. Both these debates have been largely, although not exclusively, explored at national level. Detailed research at local level, while conditional on the specific circumstances of the locality, can illuminate this discussion by providing evidence and analysis which contribute to the wider interpretation.

IV - CONCLUSION

A variety of contradictory issues together with a change in emphasis can be discerned in attitudes towards working-class education during the nineteenth century. The majority of the middle class eventually came to appreciate that education could be a means to social and political stability, rather than a threat, and some also considered that an educated industrial workforce might benefit the economy. The condition of the poor, children's working conditions and the fear of Chartist agitation caused a surge of interest among philanthropic reformers in the eighteen-forties. Indeed by mid-century concerns tended to centre around the issues of attendance, the extent of illiteracy, religious control, state involvement and finance. Although many within the artisan section of the working class demanded and welcomed educational opportunities (and were prepared to pay for the education of their choice), large numbers from the deprived 'residuum' were perceived to be hostile or apathetic to education, and their children remained largely untutored.

The Sunday schools, charity schools and voluntary denominational organisations, together with private education - which was favoured by many members of the working class - made a significant contribution to the decline in illiteracy during the nineteenth century, but it was
gradually perceived that such provision could not keep pace with the population increase - especially in the industrialising towns - and that a greater degree of state involvement in education was necessary. From 1833 the state became increasingly involved, but sectarian rivalry particularly with regard to the control of education tended to impede the progress of a national educational system, which did not come into operation until the Elementary Education Act of 1870, and it was not until the Mundella Act of 1880 that compulsory attendance was generally enforced.

Adult education can be considered under two major categories: that provided by, and that provided for the working class. The former tended to be in connection with Chartism and Owenism - both were developing political movements during the first half of the nineteenth century - together with Co-operation and Secularism. Education provided for the working class developed either in response to the desire of middle-class philanthropists to bridge the gap between the classes and/or to provide rational recreation as an alternative to working-class leisure centred around the public house. Thus the Working Men's College, and Working Men's Club and Institute Movement, together with Temperance Societies and the Y.M.C.A, and Y.W.C.A. strove to provide both education and leisure in a teetotal environment. Education for women tended to be subsidiary in the majority of these societies - if considered at all. Mechanics' Institutes however were not only founded as alternative venues for working-class leisure but also to provide scientific and technical training for artisans, but they failed to do this for a variety of reasons, the main one being deficient elementary education, 'which effectively barred [members] from participating in the advantages of the lectures and classes'.

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220 Harrison, Learning and Living, pp. 130-1. He implied that if the artisan elite were struggling, then this would undoubtably have constrained Britain's technological development.
Although Britain's technical skills were evident at the Great Exhibition of 1851, by the Paris Exhibition of 1867 doubt had crept in as to the ability to maintain technical excellence, and the theme of inadequate working-class education became central to debates concerning Britain's economic performance and industrial progress in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Thus following the 1851 Exhibition, the Government became more involved in scientific and technical instruction. The Department of Arts and Science was founded which, together with the Government School of Mines and Royal College of Chemistry, held examinations in scientific subjects, and promoted teacher training. Local authorities were made responsible for education through the Local Government Act of 1888 and the Technical Instruction Act of 1889, which 'empowered them to set up technical education boards and to finance them with a penny rate', together with 'whiskey-money' - an excise duty on spirits.\textsuperscript{221}

The growth of education within the context of national political, economic, social and religious change in the nineteenth century has so far been surveyed. The extent to which class, sectarian and political conflict, together with economic demands affected the provision of working-class education and the decline in illiteracy in Leicester between 1780 and 1870 will be examined. Whether a technically-educated workforce was of particular significance to Leicester as its economy evolved from sole dependency on frame-work knitting to one encompassing engineering, hosiery, boots and shoes and their associated trades will also be evaluated.

CHAPTER TWO

NINETEENTH-CENTURY LEICESTER

'Leicester is an ancient large and populous town, containing about five parishes... They have a considerable manufacture carry'd on here, and in several of the market towns round for weaving stockings by frames; and one would scarce think it possible so small an article of trade could employ such multitudes of people as it does.'

I - THE TOPOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHICAL ENVIRONMENT

Late eighteenth-century Leicester was a county town, provincial capital, and rural and manufacturing centre. Fowler in 1815 considered that it was 'much declined from its former magnitude and importance' and was 'not a handsome town'. Turnpikes had facilitated travel to the surrounding market towns, and coach and mail services provided links with important centres further afield, but communications and economic development were expedited by the Leicester to Loughborough Navigation which was opened in 1794, and subsequent canal development.

'The trade in this place has greatly increased since the Soar has been made navigable to the Trent.' In 1832 the opening of the Leicester to Swannington railway aided 'manufacturing prosperity as well as domestic comfort', and it was considered that 'the Midland Counties railway [opened 1840] ... will establish a rapid communication ... with the metropolis and the south of England.' By 1867 Leicester was also linked by rail to Manchester and Birmingham. Until the eighteen-fifties the staple manufacture was frame-work knitting, which was essentially a domestic industry. Leicester was therefore spared the heavy industrialisation suffered by many northern

7 Simmons, 'Communication and transport', pp. 317-9; Patterson, *Radical Leicester*, pp. 260-74.
textile towns and retained its rural aspect until the mid-century. However in 1864 it was noted that

'The general appearance of the town has changed ... blocks of warehouses have arisen, while the development of new manu-factories ... has raised a forest of long factory chimneys'.

Leicester's rapid population growth during the century can be attributed to natural increase, migration from the county, improved communications, and opportunities for employment - particularly between 1861 and 1871. Patterson considered that 'in the first half of the century canals had contributed to triple the population of Leicester; in the second half railways and new industries dependent upon them ... more than tripled it again'. This growth is illustrated in Table 1 and by its associated graph.

Unlike its neighbour Nottingham, Leicester was able to expand beyond its medieval limits to accommodate this population growth. Although the grounds of Leicester Abbey, and St Margaret's pasture prevented expansion to the north, as did the estates of Westcotes and Dannet's Hall to the west (until the eighteen-sixties), the enclosure of the east field in 1764, and the south fields in 1804 made land available for residential, industrial, and civic building. The clock tower - erected in 1868 in Eastgates became the new centre of gravity. The appearance of the town also altered as medieval timber buildings were replaced by the red brick which was to give Leicester its characteristic aspect.

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8 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 3.
10 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 274; See Table 1 for population growth in Leicester 1801-71.
13 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 8; J. Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, Volume Two: Modern City (1974), pp. 45-7.
Table 1: Population growth in Leicester, 1801-1871.\(^4\)

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Joseph Dare's Reports to the Leicester Domestic Mission established in 1845 by the Unitarian Great Meeting, present an insight into the living and working conditions of the poor, particularly those living in St Margaret's parish.\(^5\) This large and intensely-populated parish was one of the poorest of the six parishes.\(^6\) It also contained one of Leicester's most unhealthy districts situated on the low-lying floodplain of the river Soar, for inadequate sanitation added to the problems of flooding. In 1801 one-third of the inhabitants of Leicester lived in this parish and by 1851 two-thirds, including Leicester's small Irish colony, and the inhabitants of the

\(^4\) Data abstracted from S.M.G. Reynolds, 'Table of population 1801-1951', in W.G. Hoskins and R.A. McKinley (eds), V.C.H. Leicestershire, 3 (1955), pp. 176-217. This is based on census returns.


\(^6\) Report of the Select Committee on the Irremovable poor: with Minutes of Evidence, XVII (1860, I.U.P. edn, Shannon, 1970), pp. 108-9. The richest parish is St Martin's, in the centre of the town, and the poorest is All Saint's. There was a 'lower class of residences' in the poor parishes with wealthy inhabitants in the other.
numerous lodging houses, which Dare considered to be centres of disease and crime.\textsuperscript{17} In 1817 many families in both St Margaret's and in St Mary's parishes were receiving aid.\textsuperscript{18} Poor quality housing was intermingled with industrial developments in Northgate, and in the area of wharves between the canal and the Soar.\textsuperscript{19} The houses were considered to be 'low, ill-ventilated and badly lighted' and 'faulty both in arrangement and structure'.\textsuperscript{20} However, Elliott contests Simmons' view concerning the dating of back-to-back housing in the city.\textsuperscript{21}

Between 1835 and 1860 working-class terraced houses were built in the north-east (in St Margaret's parish) along Humberstone and Belgrave Roads, in the Newarke in St Mary's parish on the east bank of the Soar, and in the West Bridge area.\textsuperscript{22} The Highfields district off London Road developed into a neighbourhood of better-quality terraced housing. Subsequent to the sale of Westcotes and Danner's Hall to the west of the borough more terraced housing was built in the eighteen-sixties.\textsuperscript{23} Middle-class families gradually vacated the houses in the Newarke and St Martin's parish which were close to their business interests, and this area changed in character from high-class residential to commercial and industrial. Such families moved to New Walk and Stoneygate the new residential districts which had developed following the enclosure of the south fields.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{17} Leics. C.R.O., L.D.M.A.R. (1848), p. 21-2; (1864), pp. 11-12; \textit{Report on the Irremovable Poor}, XVII (1860), p. 114 noted that a 'sprinkling of Irish', 'permanently dwell in Leicester'.

\textsuperscript{18} Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, p. 108.


\textsuperscript{21} Elliott, \textit{Victorian Leicester}, pp. 103-7; Simmons, \textit{Leicester Past and Present}, 2, pp. 10-11. Elliott contends that there was evidence for such housing pre 1840, while Simmons states that they became numerous only after 1840.

\textsuperscript{22} R.A. McKinley and C.T. Smith, 'Social and administrative history since 1835', in \textit{V.C.H. Leicestershire}, 4, pp. 261-3. Although the new houses were poorly-sited they were better-built than those in other industrial towns. Older houses of inferior quality in the north of St Margaret's parish were 'largely grouped around narrow courts.'


The population was therefore housed in segregated areas. The poor in the overcrowded, insanitary conditions reported by Dare, where education, and self-improvement were difficult attributes to acquire, and the better-off in the Leicester described in the directories. For in 1848 Leicester was reported to have paved spacious streets, 'well-lighted with gas' and first-class shops. In 1862 White described Leicester as

'an ancient borough and well-built market town, which has been greatly improved by the formation of new streets and the erection of elegant public offices and handsome houses.'

The borough was enlarged in 1835 following the Municipal Corporations Act which brought the liberties on the periphery under its control. Figure 1 which depicts Leicester in 1857, illustrates the growth of the town as well as some of the buildings mentioned in this discussion.

In 1836 the borough police force was improved, and there was also a fire brigade. Ensuing from the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, a Board of Guardians was established in 1836 to administer poor relief in all the parishes and the liberties. The streets had been gas-lit following the formation of a private Gas Company in 1821, but initially this service was considered to be inefficient. An Improvement Act of 1846 authorised the council to provide further amenities, and in 1848 a cemetery was provided, part of which was consecrated for Anglicans and the rest for dissenters, for there was also religious discord at the time of death.

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26 White, Directory (1862), p. 113.
27 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76. Mckinley & Smith, 'Social and administrative history', p. 255.
28 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 222-4.
31 Act for Improving the Borough of Leicester, 9 & 10 Vic. c. 29. Act for establishing a cemetery in Leicester, 1848, 11 & 12 Vic. c. 2. McKinley & Smith, 'Social and administrative history, pp. 266-7; White, Directory (1846), pp. 151-3; See especially J. Storey, Historical Sketch of Some of the Principal Works and Undertakings of the Council of the Borough of Leicester Since the Passing of the Municipal Corporations Reform Act, (5 & 6 Wm. IV., ch. 76) (Leicester 1895).
The Leicester infirmary had been inaugurated by Dr Watts in 1771 and was funded by subscriptions of 'exemplary liberality'. Adjoining the infirmary was an asylum 'for the reception of indigent lunatics'. In 1849 the corporation became a Local Board of Health subsequent to the Public Health Act of 1848, but slow progress was made on improvements to sanitation, water and drainage despite Leicester's high annual mortality of 3% in the years 1840-2, which had been attributed to bad drainage, compounded by its low-lying position. John Moore stated that 'any expectation of a beneficial improvement in our sanitary condition ... has not yet been realised'. Nevertheless in 1854 the Leicester Waterworks Company supplied a large number of houses with water, and sewers were also constructed. Prior to this the town had been 'supplied with water from a public conduit in the market place and from wells in various parts of the town'.

During the century opportunities for culture, education, and recreation increased. In 1790 and 1791 The Leicester Journal carried advertisements for circulating libraries and booksellers, as did The Leicester Directory of 1827, as well as details of the Town Library and subscription libraries inaugurated by Combe and Cockshaw. White in 1846 referred to the General News Room and Library which commenced in 1838, Mr Crossley's library (formerly Combe's), the Medical Library (established 1805) and the Church of England Book Society which held meetings at Mr Brown-Hewitt, booksellers. He also mentioned the Literary and Philosophical Society which was founded in 1835, for the 'gentlemen of the town' (to enable them to meet in a non-political, non-sectarian atmosphere), and the news room and lecture rooms at the Athenaeum which opened in 1845 (and closed in 1853) to offer facilities 'for moral...

and intellectual improvement and rational recreation to the middle class of Leicester'.

The Temperance Society was constituted in 1836, and their hall, library and news room, built in 1853 also offered 'instruction and amusement'. In his Directory of 1862 White noted the Church of England Institute, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association, established in 1859, 1855, and 1857 respectively all of which offered lectures and classes, had libraries and reading rooms, and sought to promote 'the religious, moral and intellectual improvement' of their members. Nevertheless the 1846 Annual Report of the Mechanics' Institute stated that before the foundation of the Institute the 'working classes were debarred almost all means of mental recreation and improvement', as lectures had a high price of admission, libraries were generally confined to the affluent, and reading rooms excluded the working classes, but in 1855 lectures were suspended through lack of funds and interest.

However the Working Men's College and the School of Art, which had 'evening classes for artisans' eventually helped to fulfil the educational ambitions of the adult working-class.

'Fashionable amusements for the upper classes' were provided by the Assembly Rooms 'which were used ... for concerts, and as a playing house', the theatre, and the Vauxhall gardens, near to West Bridge. Recreational facilities for all classes included the theatre in Horsefair Street, established in 1836, the New Hall, built in 1831, and used by the Mechanics' Institute, the Temperance Hall, which was 'let for public meetings, lectures, balls [and] concerts', the Town Museum (which was presented to the Town Council in 1849 by the Literary and Philosophical Society), public baths, the race course, opened in 1806, the New Walk which was 'formed by the

38 White, Directory (1846), pp. 95-7.
40 White, Directory (1863), pp. 187-8. The Y.W.C.A. also offered 'singing and sewing classes'.
41 Leics. C.R.O., L374, Leicester Mechanics' Institute Annual Report (L.M.I.A.R.) (1855); White, Directory (1846), p. 97 reported that it was 'found necessary to make this useful institution more attractive by blending amusement with instruction.'
42 Leicester Trade Protection Society Directory (Leicester, 1870), pp. 9, 11.
Corporation in 1785 as a public promenade', and a cricket ground. There was also an Amphitheatre in Humberstone Gate (1839-48) which was used for entertainment, and Thomas Cooper's Chartist School met in its Shakespearean Rooms. Working-class activities such as dog, and rat fighting, 'loose' dancing and 'disgusting' river bathing were condemned by Dare, but opportunities for more 'respectable amusements' such as cricket, and excursions were increasing. Dare's major concern was working-class drinking, and he was pleased when the opening of the Temperance Hall enabled friendly societies to meet away from public houses. The Working Men's Club which was opened in 1866 was initially a temperance organisation and offered classes, lectures, refreshments, and entertainment, but the Leicester club was the first to serve beer to enable it to be self-supporting. This necessarily brief description of nineteenth-century Leicester has sought to provide the topographical, demographical and recreational environment in which working-class education developed. Although the charity and Sunday schools which were attached to Anglican and nonconformist churches had been established prior to 1800 with little animosity, during the nineteenth century educational provision for children and adults evolved in an environment of political agitation, religious discord, and economic change during a period of emerging middle-class and working-class consciousness.

44 White, Directory (1846), p. 93; (1862), pp. 178-82; Johnson, Glimpses of Leicester, p. 40 stated that the cricket ground opened in 1826 and closed for 'building purposes' in 1866 was also used for a variety of other entertainments including fairs, pony races and balloon ascents, although Patterson Radical Leicester, p. 173 considered that the fees charged 'shut out' 'artisan players'.

45 Johnson, Glimpses of Leicester, p. 403.

46 McKinley & Smith, 'Social & administrative history', pp. 271-2; Read, Modern Leicester, p. 286; Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 378-9; Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 2, pp. 38-9; L.D.M.A.R. (1857), pp. 6-11. The opening of parks and recreation grounds during the latter half of the century, together with cheap train excursions inspired by Thomas Cook, a member of the Leicester Temperance Movement, made a variety of leisure activities available for most.


II - THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN LEICESTER 1780-1870

'The staple trade of Leicester is the hosiery manufacture, particularly the worsted stocking branch. There are more than 2500 frames in the town'.

Although agriculture, brick-making, and retail trades provided employment in Leicester, hosiery was indeed the staple manufacture until the mid eighteen-forties. Adults and children worked on average for 12 hours a day in cramped conditions either at home, in frame-shops, or in the wool-spinning mills. The early age from which children were employed together with the long working day was not conducive to education. John Farmer who worked 16 hours a day had 'never had the opportunity to learn to read or write'. His daughter (who had commenced seaming from the age of five) 'does not go to Sunday School; her eyes are bad; she cannot read or write'. His eleven year old son worked on a frame and attended the Methodist Sunday School. He used to go to day school 'but we had to take him away to earn something'. The manufacture of Berlin gloves also furnished 'a lucrative employment to a great number of children and very young women'. Many women who were aged from 15 to 30 were also employed in factories winding bobbins by hand. Frame-work knitting however was the mainstay of the economy and the involvement of the whole family in either knitting, winding or seaming caused great distress in times of economic depression. Henry Pilkington (an assistant Poor Law Commissioner) considered that 'Leicester's behind no town in the grievousness of its burthens [sic]' and that if the increasing poor rate was not checked it could 'paralyse the industry.

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50 Abstract of Answers from the 1831 Census Report (1833).
and swallow up the prosperity of the whole town'.56 Indeed the frame-work knitters despite 'the most laborious exertions can hardly provide a subsistence', and in times of economic depression the hosiers and tradesmen also suffered, and some became bankrupt.57 After 1850 the manufacture of boots and shoes, and elastic webbing, the development of the engineering industry, and the mechanisation of the hosiery trade, provided increasing employment for both men and women, and the economy of the borough improved.

THE HOSIERY TRADE

By the end of the eighteenth century the number of frame-work knitters who owned their frames was in decline, and those who did tended to be discriminated against when work was scarce. This can be attributed to the fact that many of the middlemen who distributed yarn and gave out work on behalf of the hosiers also rented out frames on their own behalf. It was therefore in their interest to ensure that those to whom they rented frames earned enough to pay their frame-rent. Although frame-work knitters who worked wide frames tended to move into small work-shops or into hosiers' warehouses, many still worked at home on narrow frames. Thus during the first half of the nineteenth century frame-work knitting continued to be a domestic industry, for attempts to introduce mechanisation had been rebuffed through fears of unemployment, together with an antipathy towards the type of regulation a factory-based system would impose.58 While some frame-work knitters worked directly for a hosier who supplied them with yarn, and paid for finished goods, others relied on yarn, orders and payment from

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56 Employment of Children (1833), C3, p. 2. The frame-work knitters 'sallow countenances indicated poverty and misery'.
middlemen who were responsible for 'putting-out' the work on behalf of the hosiers, thus saving
both hosiers and workers time and inconvenience. Some middlemen received a fixed
commission from the hosier (or hosiers for many worked for more than one) which was
deducted from the workers' earnings. Others owned frame-shops and rented-out frames for
which they also levied a standing charge. Many middlemen were thus able to pay less for finished
garments than the price fixed by the hosier, in addition to which they received income from
renting out frames, and could regulate who received work. Indeed when work was scarce, or
even non-existent frame-rent was still demanded. The burden of frame rent was further
compounded by stoppages for needles and candles, which together with deductions for winding
and seaming (if the frame-workers did not have children who could undertake these tasks),
considerably reduced the amount of wages actually received. This caused even greater hardship
when work was scarce, for it was thinly spread among many workers, and the rates paid per
garment were low.\textsuperscript{59} In addition to these problems the decline of the apprenticeship system
which had previously regulated supply and demand, the training of children and paupers in the
trade, together with the small capital outlay required led to eventual overcrowding, over-
production, and stagnation, with detrimental results.\textsuperscript{60} Fashions were also changing, for men
were beginning to wear trousers in preference to breeches, and this lessened the demand for
certain types of hose.

From 1800 to 1815 shirt manufacture, the development of 'fancy goods', and the
requirements of the army had stimulated trade in Leicester. This encouraged people to invest in
frames to rent out, and the availability of frames together with the prospect of a reasonable
income tempted agricultural labourers, domestic servants, and the unemployed to enter the trade.
This abundance of cheap labour was a significant factor in the stagnation and ultimate depression
in the trade and contributed to the low wages paid. Indeed from the end of the war in 1815 the

hosiery industry was beset by grievances relating to work practices and the problems of over-production. As well as frame rents, the lack of a standardised pricing system, and the employment of paupers, the manufacturing process known as 'cut-ups' had become more widespread. Instead of the fabric being woven on a circular frame, the yarn was woven as a straight piece, cut to shape and extensively seamed. Further to this an even more inferior garment was introduced. This was not even cut to shape, but was seamed straight like a tube, and pressed, but once the garment had been washed the shape disappeared. These inferior goods flooded the market as they were cheaper to produce than fully-fashioned hose. Nevertheless there was a dichotomy of opinion among the hosiers as to whether these practices were ruining the trade. A further cause for grievance was the widespread use of the truck system whereby wages were paid in goods instead of money which further increased the dependence of the workers on the middlemen and bag-hosiers.61

The problems of the frame-work knitters were compounded by their habit of bringing up the majority of their children in the trade which in times of depression was particularly disastrous. However their poverty prevented them from apprenticing their children to any other trade, or to ensuring that their children became literate. In addition long hours from an early age, together with the poor conditions in which they lived and worked, adversely affected their eyesight and health, and caused them to become sickly, emaciated, undersize and underweight. This precluded them from following any occupation requiring physical strength had there been the opportunity. Thus their depressed condition, and that of their families was perpetuated.62

Indeed 'from the year 1815 wages continued to fall in the hosiery trade of Leicester, till in 1819

60 Wells, Hosiery Industry, pp. 60-80.
the stocking-makers were not receiving enough to sustain nature' and many went on strike.\(^{63}\)

Support was given by workers, hosiers, the Tory corporation and county landowners to the radical Baptist minister Robert Hall who inaugurated a Frame-work Knitters Friendly and Relief Society (which was a union in the guise of a Friendly Society) to give relief to those on strike.\(^{64}\)

The funds 'were managed by a committee of gentlemen', and of the £6,000 paid out in relief the frame-work knitters contributed £4,400.\(^{65}\) By 1838 their situation was again critical, and many families were in receipt of parish aid, but attempts by the Rev. Mursell to revive the union were rebuffed.\(^{66}\) Indeed it was the condition of the Leicester stockingers that persuaded Thomas Cooper to become a Chartist, and many frame-work knitters became local Chartist leaders.\(^{67}\)

Cooper opened an adult school in Leicester where 'all went well until January, 1842, when the great hosiery houses announced that orders had ceased'. Eventually the school had to close for the workers were destitute, for as one man stated 'what the hell do we care about reading, if we can get nought to eat'?\(^{68}\)

In 1843 the government authorised an inquiry into the condition of the frame-work knitters in response to repeated petitions regarding their grievances.\(^{69}\) Mr Edward Allen, chairman of the Board of Guardians stated that 'they want of every necessary comfort that man requires ... their clothing, their household furniture, their bedding ... are all in a most deplorable state'. In the same Report Dr. Shaw considered their condition be 'much below the average of even the

\(^{63}\) Felkin History, pp. 441-2. In 1816-17 wages were on average 7 shillings per week.
\(^{65}\) Felkin History, pp. 4, 42-3.
\(^{66}\) Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 298-301.
\(^{67}\) T. Cooper, The Life of Thomas Cooper, Written by Himself (1872, 1879 edn); Harrison, 'Chartism in Leicester', pp. 121-2, 129-32, 140. Harrison suggests that these men (who were mainly self-educated) shared a radical, nonconformist tradition, and that 'religion and [their] social and political strivings had to be harmonised'.
\(^{68}\) Cooper, Life, pp. 170-3.
\(^{69}\) Report on the Condition of Frame-work Knitters, see pp. 129-30 for a summary of the grievances. The conclusion reached was that under-demand, and over-production resulting from over-crowding in the trade constituted the major problems; Wright, Directory (1846), pp. 65-7; C. Ashworth, 'Hosiery manufacture' V.C.H. Leicestershire, 4, pp. 303-14; Wells, Hosiery Industry, pp. 106-13.
manufacturing districts in the north'. Thea a Leicester frame-work knitter stated, 'we cannot for shame go out of doors on a Sunday ... I have got no clothes but what I have got on'.

Many of those examined maintained that they desired education for their children but that they were needed at home to 'seam at the age of five and six, and to wind at six and seven years of age'. On Sundays some went to 'Sabbath-school' but often they did not 'for want of things to go decent in'. Working long hours in confined, unventilated, ill-lit accommodation caused both adults and children to be sickly and emaciated, and to suffer from eye-strain. This situation made the acquisition of education very difficult even when opportunities were available. Joseph Dare alleged in 1851 that 'two thirds of the children who should be receiving daily instruction are not at school' and in 1862 suggested that

'Many parents have no better idea of education than merely to get rid of their children by sending them to school, just as long as they are incapable of earning a few pence'.

He also considered that:

'It is of little avail to open free reading-rooms and free libraries so long as the real workers are untaught and untrained'.

Even so William Biggs maintained that 'the education in the town is very good; there is a good deal of teaching on Sundays, and most can afford to pay for it in the week'. His impression of education in Leicester thus contradicted Dare's evaluation of the situation.

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71 Report on the Condition of Frame-work Knitters, p. 112.
74 First Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Employment of Children (1833), C2, pp. 4-10; Second Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Employment of Children in Trades and Manufactures: with Appendix, XIII (1843, I.U.P. edn, Shannon, 1968) p. 199; Second Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children in Trades and Manufactures XIV, (1843), Appendix, Part I, F95, 'Females begin work at so early an age ... that they have no opportunity of learning domestic duties'. F15, The long hours [13 to 16 hours daily], sedentary nature of the occupation and strain on the eyes causes the general health to be impaired.
From the mid eighteen-forties steam-powered factories were gradually introduced which changed the character of the hosiery industry, and helped to improve working conditions.\footnote{Wells, Hosiery Industry, pp. 118-32.}

Although there were further periods of hardship trade improved, and by 1870 hand frames 'fell into misuse and decay'.\footnote{Jones, The Leicester Stockingers, pp. 7-10.} However, the progress from domestic to factory production was not achieved without difficulties, for the acquisition of new machinery was costly and slow, and there was widespread prejudice against factory working in Leicester.\footnote{First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children in Factories, (1833), C2, pp. 1-4, 8, 10. Objections included the 'impropriety ... of congregating young women in employment', the loss of liberty, and 'the employment of machinery'.} These problems were eventually overcome, hastened by the regulation, and subsequent loss of child labour following a series of Factory Acts, and the Education Act of 1870.\footnote{An Act to Regulate the Labour of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories (1833), 3 & 4 Wm. IV, c. 103; An Act to amend the Laws relating to Labour in Factories (1844), 7 & 8 Vic. c. 15; An Act to limit the Hours of Labour of Young Persons and Females in Factories (1847), 10 & 1 Vic. c. 29; The Factory Acts Extension Act (1864), 27 & 28 Vic. c. 48; and (1867), 30 & 31 Vic. c. 103; The Workshops Regulation Act (1867), 30 & 31 vic. c. 146; The Elementary Education Act (1870), 33 & 4 Vic. c. 75; Ashworth, 'Hosiery manufacture', pp. 308-9; Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, pp. 6-8.}

From the eighteen-fifties the gradual mechanisation of the hosiery industry, boot and shoe manufacture, elastic webbing and engineering helped to improve the economic situation in Leicester, and provided more regular employment for both men and women. Nevertheless as can be seen in Appendix 1, from 1850 the numbers of both men and women employed in the hosiery trade began to decline as these other industries were introduced into Leicester.

OTHER TRADES

The manufacture of boots and shoes made an important contribution to Leicester's economy, and it has been suggested that by 1881 it had outstripped hosiery in the numbers employed in the trade.\footnote{P. Head, 'Industrial organisation in Leicester, 1844-1914', unpub. Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester (1960), pp. 4-6.} In the eighteenth century shoemakers had supplied local needs, and although the supply of boots for the army during the Napoleonic War had widened the market, the industry remained on a small scale. During the eighteen-thirties the number of shoemakers increased from 58 in
1829 to 119 in 1835 when two wholesalers were also mentioned.82 One of these was Thomas Crick who in the eighteen-fifties introduced steam-powered machinery and rivetting into what had previously been a hand-sewn method of production, centred round the 'putting-out' system.83 The growth and success of the footwear industry in Leicester can be partially attributed to a 'source of cheap, young, female labour, who worked as machinists'.84 During the second half of the nineteenth century 'the industry grew up in Leicester and involved many family firms', including some who were previously involved in hosiery. The number of wholesalers increased from 21 in 1861 to 193 by 1877.85 Appendix 2 shows a rise from 1851 of men and women employed in this trade.

The manufacture of elastic web, stimulated by the demands of the glove trade and the boot and shoe industry, also contributed to Leicester's economy.86 In 1839 the first factory was opened, in 1853 steam power was introduced, and by 1861 there were twenty firms in production.87 The manufacture of elastic web, and boots and shoes were considered responsible for attracting immigrants to Leicester and for contributing to the growth of the town, particularly in the decade 1861-71 when the population increased by almost 40%.88

Although there had been a tradition of engineering in response to the manufacture and maintenance of knitting frames, and later in connection with the shoe trade, the 'subsidiary element' of iron and brass foundry work did not significantly expand until after the canalization of the river Soar in 1794, and the opening of the railways in 1840, which facilitated the

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83 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 388; V.W. Hogg, 'Footwear manufacture', V.C.H. Leicestershire, 4, pp. 315, 317; Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, pp. 24-34.
84 Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, pp 31-2.
85 Hogg, 'Footwear manufacture', p. 317; Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, pp. 26-7; E.S. Drake, Commercial Directory of Leicestershire (Leicester, 1864); White, Directory (1877).
86 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 381; Read, Modern Leicester, pp. 269-70.
transportation of raw materials. The oldest foundry was that owned by Corts', who were also instrumental in offering apprenticeships, and the most important in the latter years of the century was the Vulcan Works of Josiah Gimson. White in 1846 lists six iron and brass foundries, and in 1877, 15 firms of engineers and machinists are mentioned. The growing importance of this trade from the middle of the nineteenth century can be seen in Appendix 3 which illustrates the membership of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in Leicester.

The expansion of these industries together with developments in communication, alleviated the problems caused by dependency on one trade, and by the second half of the century the economy of Leicester was showing signs of revival. Indeed in 1864 Barclay commented on

'the striking out of new branches of trade and commerce [which] are raising Leicester at a more rapid rate, and the happy results are seen in ... the almost universal prosperity'.

Although in 1870 Leicester was still 'pre-eminent in the manufactory of hosiery, gloves and sewing cotton',

'other most important sources of opulence to the town are its shoes and elastic-web manufactories, wool and yarn mills, agriculture implement works, foundries, coach works, dyers, tanners, brewers, maltings, soap, tallow works, tobacco and cigar manufactures. The hosiery and shoe manufactories are both large and numerous and offer employment to a vast number of hands.'

The developing economy of Leicester depended on local family firms, the founders of which tended to be middle-class Whig or Radical Nonconformists, who it will be seen were at odds with the Tory corporation. In particular, the Unitarian middle-class in Leicester tended to inter-marry locally, and thus formed strong dynastic connections. Moreover many of these families had a tradition of interest in education and philanthropy. Freer suggests that there were 'bonds of

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90 Russell, 'Engineering and metal working', pp. 26-7; Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 1, 132; and his Leicester Past and Present, 2, p. 4; Elliott, Victorian Leicester, pp. 29-30.
91 White, Directory, (1846); (1877).
92 Barclay, 'Modern Leicester', p. 5.
93 Harrod, Directory of Leicester and Rutland (1870), p. 463.
94 A. Everitt, 'Dynasty and community since the seventeenth-century', in his Landscape and Community in England
affection and deference' between employers and their employees, but this is contested by Haynes. Nevertheless having a common tradition of nonconformity, the labour aristocracy may have shared some of the values of the middle class for they 'found in the meeting house an escape from the sycophancy too commonly associated with the parish church, and as well social organisation of a more democratic type'. Lancaster contends, however, that the Unitarian manufacturers in particular held a paternalistic attitude to their employees, and that through the auspices of the Domestic Mission sought to 'interfere in the affairs of working-class everyday life' in order to eradicate 'working-class cultural independence'. They thus considered 'education [to be] a central objective of the mission', both for children and adults.

This nonconformist middle class also had a profound effect on philanthropic provision, for numerous provident and charitable institutions were inaugurated to assist the poor and to encourage habits of thrift and self-help. Nevertheless many members of the working class were also concerned about their own self-improvement. Evidence for their interest in self-help and mutual assistance can be found in the 'numerous lodges of Oddfellows, Foresters, etc., supported by the operative classes for mutual assistance in cases of sickness, misfortune, superannuation and death'. In 1842 there were 31 lodges in Leicester with 2799 members.

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Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, pp. 48-54.


White, Directory (1872), pp. 193-5.

Leicestershire Almanac, Directory and Advertiser (Leicester, 1842), p. 143.
During the late eighteenth, and nineteenth century Leicester was known for its tradition of radicalism. 'The nature of the hosiery trade, the character of the Corporation, and the special qualities of religious life in the town' made the political situation particularly contentious. The corporation, which reflected Tory and Anglican interests, was a closed, self-elected body which by the end of the eighteenth century failed to represent the changing economic and religious climate. Hostility increased between it, and the opposition alliance of county Whig aristocracy, and the mainly nonconformist urban middle-class manufacturers and professionals. Although the economy of the borough became increasingly dependent on such middle-class groups, they were excluded from public office because of the corporation's hostility to dissent, even after the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828. Thus they supported radical movements for political and municipal reform. Working-class leaders initially allied with these middle-class reformers, but eventually turned to trade unionism and Chartism for solutions to their particular grievances.

POLITICS IN LEICESTER PRE 1800

Fears of revolution following events in France in 1789, compounded by disturbances at the 1790 election, motivated the county Whig aristocracy to ally with the Tories. Greaves suggests that the opposition in Leicester then developed a 'more constructive radicalism of the Bentham

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103 Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 1, p. 135.
104 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 23-5 cites S. & B. Webb, English Local Government: Manor and Borough (1908), 2, pp. 475-6. They considered that the Corporation of Leicester was 'perhaps the worst ... of the close bodies governing populous towns'.
105 Thompson, History of Leicester, 2, pp. 177, 194, refers to the Whig Revolution Club of 1782 and the Conservative Constitutional Society established in 1789.
106 H.B., 23.2.1790, 21.3.1828; Thompson, History of Leicester, p. 196.
107 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 27-8, 63-4; Greaves, Corporation of Leicester, p. 106.
108 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 66-7; Thompson, History of Leicester, pp. 204-5, 250-1.
school', and that the meeting houses became 'citadels of reform' where it was feared 'jacobinical or levelling principles' were preached. The Great Meeting in particular attracted 'the most influential dissenters, men of respectability and substance'.

Popular discontent was prevalent during the seventeen-nineties. In 1792 the short-lived radical paper the Leicester Chronicle was established and in 1793 Richard Phillips, the bookseller who founded the Leicester Herald and Adelphi Club - where 'seditious writings' were studied - was imprisoned for selling Paine's The Rights of Man. George Bown secretary of the 'Constitutional Society for Promoting an Equal Representation of the People in Parliament' was unsuccessfully charged with sedition in 1794, and George Vaughan, a teacher at the Grammar school was imprisoned for publishing a seditious hand-bill. A correspondent in the Tory Leicester Journal reported on 'Democratical lectures' and meetings, at least one of which Patterson suggests, had working-class members as it was held in the evening in a public house. After the Seditious Meetings and Assemblies Act in 1795 overt political activity in Leicester declined.

CORPORATION AND OPPOSITION 1800-1835

By the end of the eighteenth century 'the old rivalry of gentlemanly Whig and gentlemanly Tory had gone for ever, to be replaced by a more searching and bitter hostility', and the influence of the liberal opposition 'became increasingly obvious in the parliamentary life of the borough'. Indeed the by-election of 1800 'was a struggle between ... patriotism on one side, and Jacobinism ... on the other'. Parliamentary elections during the following thirty years reflected this tension. In 1802 working-class radicals nominated their own candidate, as did members of a

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111 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 67-73; Greaves, Corporation of Leicester, pp. 110-11; H.B., 29.9.1794; Thompson, History of Leicester, pp. 211-2.
112 L.L., 23.5.1794; Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 73-4; Greaves, Corporation of Leicester, p. 111.
113 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 78, 97.
114 Greaves, Corporation of Leicester, p. 112.
116 Greaves, Corporation of Leicester, pp. 113-20; and his 'Parliamentary history', pp. 141-6.
radical group, 'Friends to Peace, Reform, and Religious Liberty' in 1812.\textsuperscript{117} Patterson suggests that middle-class reformers withheld their support through fear of Luddism.\textsuperscript{118} During the eighteen-twenties the corporation faced persistent challenges from the radical opposition who refused 'to credit [it] with any good intentions' concerning reform, finance and improvements. In most towns reformers collaborated with the corporation in carrying out improvements, but hostility between the two groups prevented this.\textsuperscript{119}

At the election of 1826 the corporation opposed Catholic emancipation, for it feared that similar privileges for Nonconformists would follow. Although their candidates were successful 'the victory [was] won by intimidation, bribery, and the worst form of religious prejudice', it was financially crippling, and caused 'the radical opposition [to redouble] their effort in a campaign of exposure conducted both in Leicester and in the commons'.\textsuperscript{120} Sectarian and party rivalry increased during the years leading to the Reform Act of 1832. In 1831 William Biggs, a Unitarian hosier, became secretary of the Leicester and Leicestershire Political Union which was formed in Leicester after the rejection of the Reform Bill.\textsuperscript{121} In 1832 changes to the franchise and the borough boundaries subsequent to the long-awaited Reform Act, and Boundaries Act favoured the reformers, but an increase in agitation for municipal reform together with renewed attacks against the corporation, ensured that its last years remained as contentious as ever.\textsuperscript{122} Indeed the corporation was antagonistic to the two commissioners appointed to investigate its actions.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{117} Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, p. 101; Greaves, \textit{Corporation of Leicester}, p. 109; Greaves, 'Parliamentary History', p. 139 states that members included the ministers of two dissenting chapels.

\textsuperscript{118} Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 100-3.

\textsuperscript{119} Greaves, 'Parliamentary history', pp. 141-3; Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 98, 141-5; Elliott, \textit{Victorian Leicester}, p. 35; H.B., 4.10.1820, 16.1.1822.

\textsuperscript{120} Greaves, \textit{Corporation of Leicester}, pp. 116-20; Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 146-64.

\textsuperscript{121} H.B., 29.9.1831, 29.3.1832 refer to the corporation's opposition to the Reform Bill; Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 157-64, 176-88: The Political Union demanded the repeal of the Corn Law, the advancement of education, municipal reform and the ending of 'taxes on knowledge'.

\textsuperscript{122} Reform Act, Wm. IV c. 45; Boundaries Act, 2 & 3 Wm. IV c. 64; H.B., 1.4.1833 referred to 'false and scandalous charges' against the corporation. 24.7.1835, referred to a petition from the corporation to the House of Lords opposing the Municipal Corporations Bill; Greaves, \textit{Corporation of Leicester}, pp. 122-3; Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 192-201.

\textsuperscript{123} H.B., 24.9.1833, 7.10.1833; Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 201-211. The Commissioners' report 'denounced the financial mismanagement and political exclusiveness of the Leicester corporation', for it was one of 183
Following the Municipal Corporations Reform Act of 1835 the balance of power in Leicester was held by an alliance of Whig and radical middle-class reformers with the result that 'one dominant orthodoxy [was substituted] for another'.\(^{124}\) Indeed, Thomas Paget the first mayor, and seven subsequent mayors were all members of the Great Meeting which became known as 'the Mayor's nest'.\(^{125}\)

**WORKING-CLASS POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN LEICESTER 1800-1835**

It has been suggested that there were 'three main concurrent and partly overlapping forms of working-class activity - the political radicalism of the Hampden Clubs, the half-submerged and illegal efforts of trade unions, and the crude violence (as distinct from definite revolutionary intention) of the Luddites'.\(^{126}\) The trade unions received sympathy because of the condition of the frame-work knitters, while the Hampden Clubs were considered to be associated with Luddism and were thus regarded with suspicion by the establishment. Indeed Leicestershire was regarded as 'one of the four or five most revolutionary and dangerous counties'.\(^{127}\) Although trade union activity expanded during the century, Luddism and Hampdenism were short-lived, and working-class radicals allied with middle-class reformers to seek solutions for their various grievances through parliamentary reform.

The frame-work knitters were involved in trade activity both before and after the Combination Acts of 1799-1800.\(^{128}\) Failure to secure redress to their problems in 1812 seemed
coincidental with the nomination of a candidate by 'the more plebeian radicals' at the parliamentary election.\textsuperscript{129} Leicester stockingers were not conspicuously involved in the Luddite riots in the county in 1811-13, or those of 1816-7, relying instead on a further petition to parliament in 1816.\textsuperscript{130} Indeed sympathy was shown towards them, and magistrates dealt leniently with strikers following action in 1817.\textsuperscript{131} In 1819 following the rejection of another petition, the frame-work knitters took strike action, and aided by the Baptist minister Robert Hall and supported by the corporation, formed a union.\textsuperscript{132} Following a series of strikes in 1819, 1821, 1824, 1825, legal proceedings against some members, and adverse economic conditions, the Leicester frame-work knitters 'power of resistance and organisation seemed to have been destroyed', although unions were no longer illegal following the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824.\textsuperscript{133}

In 1830 the extant frame-work knitters' union and other trade societies in Leicester joined the National Association for the Protection of Labour which, together with a renewal of interest in radical activities alarmed the local authorities. When it became evident that their grievances would not be solved by the Reform Act, the working class leaders withdrew their support from the Political Union. Many turned to Owen's Grand Consolidated Trades Union until its failure in 1834.\textsuperscript{134} Others established the Leicester branch of the Union of the Working Classes. The rise in the sale of unstamped papers in Leicester can also be attributed to an increase in popular discontent which culminated in support for the Chartist movement and for Owenite socialism.\textsuperscript{135} Although union activity was regarded with sympathy the short-lived Hampden clubs aroused hostility, even though many workers were members of both. Two clubs were established in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{129} Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 101-2.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 58, 105-7.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, p. 112, 117.
\item \textsuperscript{132} Jenkins & Smith, 'Social and administrative history', p. 176; Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 124-7 suggests that the economic situation in 1819 had prevented any involvement in 'the resurgence of popular radicalism in that year'; H.B., 28.3.1820, 11.4.1821.
\item \textsuperscript{133} Jenkins & Smith, 'Social and administrative history', p. 177; Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 130-40.
\item \textsuperscript{134} Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 183-4, 285-90.
\end{itemize}
Leicester in 1816 in which the 'leading figures were small tradesmen or superior artisans', and where reforming policies were discussed. In 1817 even though there was no overt cause for alarm, fears of insurrection were compounded by the friendly relationship between the Hampdens and middle-class radicals, a riot in Oadby, and the arrest and execution of earlier Luddite rioters (which ended Luddite activity). Following a threat to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, the Leicester Hampden clubs disbanded, but anxiety concerning their activities remained.

CHARTISM IN LEICESTER

Following the failure of the Reform Act either to grant universal suffrage, or to solve their grievances, many members of the working class became disillusioned, and looked politically and socially to Chartism for assistance. They were advised not to 'be deceived by the middle class again. You have helped them to get their votes ... but where are the fine promises they made you'. Chartism in Leicester evolved from the educational and political aims of the Working Men's Association, founded in 1836, the struggle for an unstamped press, the conditions of the frame-work knitters, and agitation against the New Poor Law. Thus in 1838 the 'Leicester and Leicestershire Political Union to advance the cause of the People's Charter', was founded.

Initially, under the leadership of John Markham (a Methodist preacher and chairman of the Anti-Poor Law Committee), a policy of 'moral force' Chartism was followed. Leading members were 'self-educated working men or small tradesmen', with a nonconformist background and experience in working-class movements. With the exception of the Rev. Mursell the movement lacked middle-class support, but because of the character of the magistrates, police force and nonconformist employers, it was treated with tolerance and restraint. The

135 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 288-90.
136 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 107.
137 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 109-20.
138 Cooper, Life, p. 136.
Conservatives also expressed their sympathy for they were always ready to discomfort their Liberal opponents who were divided over the issues of church rates and suffrage and at first feared a loss of votes rather than insurrection.\textsuperscript{141}

Harrison contends that the Chartist demonstration of November 1838 'marked a break with the middle classes'.\textsuperscript{142} However Patterson suggests that tension was eased in 1839 through a common interest in the repeal of the Corn Laws, although at a meeting called to discuss this issue, Markham asserted that repeal 'was not a complete panacea for the sufferings of the working classes'.\textsuperscript{143} During periods of national agitation in 1839, and adverse conditions during the winter of 1839-40, peace was maintained in Leicester by the actions of John Biggs, who allowed a Chartist meeting to be held on his land, through the moderation of the magistrates, and the restraint of John Markham. Throughout 1840 William Biggs sought to reconcile the middle-class radicals and the Chartists in Leicester by his renewed support for extended suffrage as well as the repeal of the Corn Laws. Nevertheless working-class leaders, who feared a repeat of middle-class betrayal, decided to establish their own Working Men's Anti-corn Law Association in March 1840, and rejected the 'New Reform Movement' preferring to establish the 'Leicester Radical Reform Association' a branch of the National Charter Association.\textsuperscript{144} In 1839 a female Political Union on the Principles of the Charter was formed to assist the men in 'pulling down tyranny and oppression'.\textsuperscript{145}

Following the arrival of Thomas Cooper in 1841 the character of Chartism in Leicester changed. He eventually challenged Markham for leadership, despite their 'shared passion for self-
education and self-improvement'. Cooper held the middle class responsible for the social conditions in Leicester, and at the by-election of 1841 formed an alliance with the Conservatives. A dispute in 1842 between Cooper who favoured 'physical force' and Markham led to a permanent division among the Chartists. Supporters of Markham continued to meet at All Saints Open, while Cooper inaugurated adult education classes and temperance meetings at the Shakespearean Rooms. It was hoped that a renewed interest in the extension of suffrage in 1841 would reconcile the middle and working classes, but although a Complete Suffrage Association received the support of Mursell and middle-class radicals, and the Working Men's Anti-Corn Law Association, the majority of the middle class and the Chartists rejected it. Adverse economic conditions in 1842 further exacerbated working-class distress. There were demonstrations in the workhouse, strikes by the glove hands and other sections of the hosiery trade, and a disturbance at Mowacre Hill which resulted in a temporary end to overt Chartist activities in Leicester until 1848. In 1843 Cooper finally departed following his imprisonment for his part in the Plug riots.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION 1835-1850

The reformed council faced 'financial chaos and [a] legacy of debt left by the old corporation', which together with the issues of 'religious equality, extension of the suffrage [and] Chartism exposed markedly different degrees of radicalism and strained their unity'. Three main factions eventually developed. While Thomas Paget and his supporters held moderate views, John and William Biggs who were also Unitarians were more extreme, and the policies of both these groups were challenged by the radicals led by the Baptist minister the Rev. Mursell,
and the Independent minister the Rev. Miall who in 1836 founded the Leicestershire Mercury. This reflected their views on church rates, anti-disestablishment, and complete suffrage.152

The various factions were united in their hostility to the Tories, concern regarding Chartism, and in their support for the Anti-Corn Law League. However, after the cessation of Chartist activities, the repayment of debt, and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the divisions between them became more pronounced. While William and John Biggs did not favour Mursell's radical policies neither did they agree with the moderates who wanted educational, prison, and sanitary reform.153 The educational clauses in Graham's Factory Bill of 1843 also created discord, for Mursell favoured voluntary provision and objected to state compulsion in education, as this was perceived to benefit Anglicanism. He stated that the poor man 'had a right, if he chose, to let his child remain in ignorance'.154 While William Biggs opposed Graham's proposals, he welcomed state involvement but advocated free secular education, 'maintained by the rates and governed by local authorities popularly elected'.155 The issue of improvements in the borough further increased internal dissension. Joseph Whetstone, a moderate, and chairman of the Finance Committee, considered that any available money should be spent on reforming the drainage and water supply. The more radical William Biggs, however preferred to improve civic amenities.156

In 1848 there was a revival in Chartism, and further outbreaks of agitation occurred fuelled by revolutions in Europe, and an increase in unemployment and poverty. Middle-class reformers attempted to combine with the Chartists to organise a new petition for an extension of the suffrage. However, in May riots occurred in connection with new Poor Law regulations and, although the disturbances were only indirectly related to Chartism middle-class sympathy ceased.

152 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 229-34; Evans, 'Parliamentary history', pp. 206-8.
153 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 333-5; Evans, 'Parliamentary history', p. 214.
154 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 255 citing the L.C., 1.4.1843.
155 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 256-9.
156 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 335-41; Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 1, pp. 169-73; Elliott, Victorian Leicester, pp. 41-52.
During the summer of 1848 trade revived and Chartism declined, and apart from a brief revival in 1853 it 'was no longer an effective political force in Leicester'.

SOCIALIST AND SECULARIST MOVEMENTS IN LEICESTER

Local historians contend that in Leicester there was a link between earlier radical activity, Owenism, and secularism, and that the latter inherited 'an older, plebeian, radical tradition [which] successfully accommodated itself to latter-century liberalism'. Although attempts at Owen-inspired cooperative production and trade union activity ended in 1834, a small group of Owenites continued to meet for discussions. In 1838 they were evicted from the Mechanics' Institute but held classes at the Commercial Rooms on Monday evenings. An Owenite Social Institute - Branch 26 of Owen's Association of All Classes of All Nations - was established later in 1838, and both George Bown and Robert Owen gave a course of lectures. Although some members combined their interest in Owenism with Chartist or union activities, the socialists as a group kept apart from other political movements, and were regarded as 'godless' and 'infidels'.

By 1842 the Association had become a branch of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists but still maintained a programme of political, educational and social activities. After the closure of the Institute in the mid eighteen-forties, classes and discussions were continued at the Unitarian Domestic Mission. During the eighteen-fifties - following decline in the socialist movement - G. J. Holyoake delivered lectures on secularism which began

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157 Evans, 'Parliamentary history', pp. 217-8; Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 356-64; D. Jones, Chartism and the Chartists (1975), p. 177 cites the Report of George White on his Chartist tour of 1855, 'Leicester - This town is an enigma - I found those whose names have been paraded as big men in our prosperous days, yawning and gasping their doleful doubts as to the probability of arousing the people. I found some ... settling down to the business of small shopkeepers and bemoaning their "awful sacrifices for the cause"'.


159 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 134, 288.

160 L.C., 21.7.1838.


162 Harrison, 'Chartism in Leicester', p. 132; Cooper, Life, p. 174; Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 314-5; L.M.
'an association with the Secularists and Co-operators of Leicester which lasted into the next century'. Many Owenites became founder members of the Leicester Secular Society, including Josiah Gimson, and W.H. Holyoak, a radical bookseller. After years of repeated decline and revival the Society decided in 1872 to commission its own hall. Secularism thus became an established part of life in Leicester. Both men and women were invited to participate in the Society's programme which fostered free-thought together with political, educational, and social activities.

POLITICS IN LEICESTER 1850-1870

The decline of Chartism in 1848, and a lessening of intensity in the church rate protest in 1849 did not restore harmony to the council, in fact divisions intensified as the moderates led by Whetstone and Thompson, editor of the Chronicle, negotiated an alliance with the Conservatives. Following the temporary reconciliation of all factions during the Crimean War the rivalry continued. The hopes of the moderates for a Conservative alliance were thwarted by the founding of a new Conservative Society, and in 1861 divisions among the Liberals in the council enabled the Conservatives to gain their first victory since 1835. This resulted in the formation of a United Liberal Registration Society which had the effect of ensuring Liberal leadership for the next thirty years and indeed in 1864 the two rival newspapers united to become the Leicester Chronicle and Leicestershire Mercury.

18.4.1840.

163 Nash, Secularism, pp. 28-30.
166 See Evans, 'Parliamentary history', pp. 218-24.
After the Reform Act of 1867 politics in Leicester assumed a more peaceful aspect, for the Conservative challenge subsided, and the working class was reconciled to Liberal leadership. However 'the increasing prosperity of the hosiery trade in the later fifties was accompanied by renewed activity on the part of the trade unions'. In Leicester there was a predominance of sectional hosiery organisations - which had originated with the glove union in the eighteen-forties - including the Society of Seamers and Stitchers which was governed by women. Lancaster asserted that despite Leicester's radical tradition and history of Chartism, there were no 'important working-class organisations independent from the major parties', although the longevity of the 'putting-out system' in both the hosiery and footwear trades had 'imbued the working class with a strong sense of independence' which was to characterise the later Independent Labour Party in Leicester. Education continued to be a contentious issue and in 1870 action was taken by 'the working men of a small Radical organisation' who desired representation on the School Board. However the inherent discord between dissenters and Anglicans continued to cause conflict.

IV - RELIGION IN LEICESTER 1780-1870: 'THE METROPOLIS OF DISSENT' At the beginning of the eighteenth century Celia Fiennes had noted the 'great many dissenters [sic] in this town'. While later Nichols considered that the congregation of The Great Meeting House 'are genteel and numerous, several of the first families of the town being Presbyterian'. During the nineteenth century Leicester was know as 'the metropolis of dissent',

167 Evans, 'Parliamentary history', p. 224.
169 Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, pp. 9-16.
170 Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation, and Socialism, p. 79, xx.
172 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 247. He cites The Leicester Chronicle, 18.3.1848. See Thompson, History of Leicester, pp. 261-7 for his discussion on the history of dissent in Leicester.
because of its proliferation of dissenting chapels. Indeed the church of St George, built in 1827 was the first Anglican church to be established in Leicester for two hundred years.

The Great Meeting, the largest nonconformist place of worship in Leicester, was built in 1708, and was Presbyterian until the end of the century when Unitarianism was adopted. Patterson considered that the Unitarians were 'set apart from the other dissenting sects' through their superior social and intellectual interests, and their 'dissidence of dissent'. The existence of a school was first recorded in 1736 but it was reputed to have been established at an earlier date, and a Sunday school was started in 1783. Several members seceded in 1802 and founded an Independent church in Bond Street. This became prominent in the eighteen-forties during the ministry of the Rev. Miall when church rates became a more contentious issue. The Baptists however, were the most numerous of the Nonconformists, and during the nineteenth century had two particularly influential ministers. These were the Rev. Robert Hall who in 1819 founded the Frame-work Knitters' Friendly Society, and the Rev. J. Mursell who in the eighteen-forties vociferously objected to church rates, the educational clauses in the Factory Bill of 1843, and supported the campaign for the disestablishment of the Church of England. By mid-century the eleven Baptist chapels represented the different interpretations of their faith.

176 Patterson, *Radical Leicester*, pp. 16-17; Simmons, *Leicester Past and Present*, pp. 178-9 comments on the contribution of William Gardiner (a member of the Great Meeting during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century) to the intellectual and musical life of Leicester; Johnson, *Glimpses of Leicester*, p. 262 notes the cooperation between the choristers of St Margaret's church and the singers of the Great Meeting chapel.
178 *Leicester Directory*, (1827). An Independent chapel in Gallowtree Gate was also recorded; E.M. Drew, *Those Taking Part 1802-1952: A Brief History of Bond Street Congregational Church Leicester* (Leicester, 1951), pp. 5-10.
180 *Guide to Leicester* (1849), pp. 11-12; Watts, *Walk Through Leicester*, noted one each of Episcopalian, Calvinistic and General Baptist chapels in 1804.
The Unitarians, Independents and Baptists together with the Society of Friends - which was 'neither a numerous nor proselytizing body' but was noted for its philanthropy - had a marked presence in Leicester.\textsuperscript{181} Snell considered that all these sects were 'strongly associated statistically with "urbanisation"', while the Wesleyan Methodists and Anglicans were less so.\textsuperscript{182} John Wesley first came to Leicester in 1770, and his followers were helped in finding accommodation for their meetings by the Unitarians.\textsuperscript{183} In 1791 it was noted that 'Mr Wesley's People have lately built a meeting house, they are numerous'.\textsuperscript{184} By 1849 the various branches of Methodism 'adopted several forms of church government'.\textsuperscript{185} There was also a small Roman Catholic community which from 1777 met for mass in a room in Causeway Lane. In 1824 the building of Holy Cross Church in New Walk, was commenced.\textsuperscript{186} By 1849 there were also four domestic Missions including the one attached to the Great Meeting, and a Church of Latter Day Saints.\textsuperscript{187}

Until 1828 Leicester's Anglicans were served by the five existing medieval churches. Although during the early years of the century the Church of England was active in providing schools it did little to attract the growing working-class population apart from the philanthropic work of the Rev. T. Robinson, the evangelical vicar of St Mary de Castro, who was also instrumental in establishing 'the town's first parochial charity school'. There were no Anglican churches in the new working-class populous districts until St George's Church was built in Rutland Street in 1827, followed by Trinity Church in Regent Street 1838, and Christ Church in Wharf Street in 1839 - all founded to help prevent 'the spread of Jacobin principles' which were thought to be associated with the numerous new nonconformist chapels.\textsuperscript{188} However by 1877

\textsuperscript{182} Snell, Church and Chapel, pp. 23-4.
\textsuperscript{183} Thompson, History of Leicester, pp. 263-7; F. E. Skillington, The Plain Man's History of Leicester (Leicester, 1950), p. 97.
\textsuperscript{184} Universal Directory (1791) p. 589.
\textsuperscript{186} R.A. McKinley & J.D. Martin, 'Roman Catholicism', V.C.H. Leicestershire. 4, pp. 389-90.
\textsuperscript{187} Guide to Leicester (1849), p. 15.
\textsuperscript{188} P. Lloyd & T.Y. Cocks, Fifty Years - Thirteen Centuries: a History of the Church and some Churchmen in Leicestershire to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Refounding of the Diocese of Leicester 1926-1976
eight new Anglican churches had been built as well as many more dissenting places of worship.\textsuperscript{189}

To some extent the dearth of Anglican churches, and failure to attract the working-class were rectified by three developments. These were incitement from the government to build new Anglican churches, the Tractarian Movement - in particular the work of the Rev. W. Andredon, vicar of St Margaret's from 1846-1850 - and the Christian Socialist Movement, especially the contribution made by the Rev. D. Vaughan Vicar of St Martin's from 1860-1893 to the religious and educational life of Leicester.\textsuperscript{190}

The 1851 census for religious worship in Leicester reported that of the Sunday schools returned nine were Church of England, four Independent, eight Baptist, three Unitarian, eight various Methodist sects and one Latter Day Saints.\textsuperscript{191} Nevertheless had the 24,408 sittings provided by the 34 churches and chapels been filled they would only have accommodated just over half the population.\textsuperscript{192}

Commenting on the results of the census Elliott notes,

'Despite their great influence on political affairs in the town, the Unitarians represented only 2.1\% of the churchgoing populace and the Society of Friends less than half of one per cent'.\textsuperscript{193}

By 1882 although the Baptists, Independents (Congregationalists) and Methodists 'still represented, collectively, the largest portion of church attendance' their performance figure had fallen from 1851.\textsuperscript{194} It has been suggested that the reason for declining support for orthodox nonconformity can be attributed to three causes. One was the gradual drift of some Unitarians to evangelical Anglicanism, another was the preference of the working-class for the ritualism of the Tractarian Anglican churches, and a third was the rise in fringe sects which again appealed to

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\textsuperscript{189} White, Directory (1877), pp. 295-305.
\textsuperscript{189} Lloyd & Cocks, Forty Years ... Diocese of Leicester, pp. 54-6.
\textsuperscript{191} H. Mann (ed.), The Census of Great Britain in 1851 (1854), pp. 139-140.
\textsuperscript{192} Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 1, pp. 168-9. Nonconformists provided 57\% of the sittings, Anglicans 41\% and Roman Catholics 2\%; Snell, Church and Chapel, pp. 13-14 questions the reliability of the Census returns for Leicester, 'either the sittings data appears to be unreliably low or the attendance data unreliably high'.
\textsuperscript{193} Elliott, Victorian Leicester, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{194} Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, p. 70.
\end{flushright}
the working class. Nevertheless concern was repeatedly expressed - especially by Dare - with regard to the deterioration in working-class attendance, and lack of interest in religion.

AREAS OF CONFLICT AND CONCERN

Despite discord between the Anglican Tory corporation, and the nonconformist middle-class reformers, the first eleven Sunday schools were established in 1786 as a 'combined undertaking' between the Anglican and nonconformist churches. However by 1796 children of Nonconformists were refused admission to St Mary's Sunday school. Considering the strength of nonconformity in Leicester it is surprising that prior to 1835 the majority of day-school provision was made by the Anglican church, which was a reversal of the contemporary situation in Nottingham, although numerous Sunday schools were established by the nonconformist churches.

Three particular problems dominated the religious life of the town during this period. One was the discord generated by the Anglican Tory corporation's hatred of dissent which engendered the political frustration felt by the influential Nonconformist reformers - many of whom belonged to the Unitarian Great Meeting. After 1835 the involvement of the radical Baptists added to conflicting interests in the council. Ill-feeling intensified during the conflict concerning church rates. A further problem centred around the religious content and control of education. While the third involved the increasing decline in working-class attendance.

CHURCH RATES

Despite the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, and the Reform Act of 1832,
sectarian rivalry did not cease in Leicester. Indeed it seemed to intensify as the dissenters became increasingly resentful at having to contribute to rates levied by the parish vestries, as these were perceived to benefit the Anglican church. Nonconformist ministers the Revs Miall and Mursell who led the opposition to church rates decided upon a policy of non-payment, as well as formulating a Voluntary Church Society aimed at the disestablishment of the church of England. The problem came to a climax between 1838 and 1841 when St Martin's vestry - still resisting demands to relinquish this right - had William Baines (a member of Bond Street Independent Church) cited and imprisoned for non-payment. However this action was not approved by all members of the congregation, and in 1841 the fines of four more parishioners were paid by the elderly Miss Watts, to save further discord. In 1849 payment of church rates became voluntary and in 1868 they were abolished.200

EDUCATION

Education also caused contention, for although initially the majority of Anglicans and dissenters agreed that it was the task of the church not the state to educate, there was conflict concerning the control of the schools and hence which doctrines would be taught. Although education was perceived to be important in its own right, it was believed that the type of religious teaching offered would ensure loyalty to a particular denomination and hence safeguard its viability. Prior to the agitation regarding church rates nonconformist parents had sent their children to the numerous Church of England day schools. Although nonconformist Sunday schools had increased rapidly - particularly during the eighteen-thirties - the only day schools were those established by the Great Meeting, and a British and Foreign Society school built in St Margaret's parish in 1832. The lack of nonconformist schools earlier in the century has been attributed to the nature of dissent in Leicester, and to 'the independence of their [Baptist

200 Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 1, pp. 167-8; Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 247-54, 259; Johnson, Glimpses of Leicester, pp. 417-8.
chapels', the most numerous sect in Leicester. As sectarian discord increased so did discrimination, and children were no longer accepted at Anglican schools if their parents were dissenters.

The dissenters also objected to the administration of grants to schools subsequent to the Factory Act of 1833, for they considered that the system favoured the Church of England. Particularly contentious were the educational clauses in the Factory Bill of 1843 which recommended compulsory part-time education for factory children, but under the direction of the Church of England whose 'catechism and doctrines' were to be taught. Not all dissenters were against state provision as such, it was Anglican control that motivated the antagonism, and thus served to intensify demands for disestablishment. Indeed the Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists refused to accept government grants. However the school organised by the Unitarian Great Meeting became affiliated with the British and Foreign Schools Society and together with the Hill Street schools received grants and was successful. Although many schools were built - especially by the Church of England who were considered to be more efficient than the Nonconformists - a number were too small to be viable. This increased activity in the competition for souls was related to the Anglican revival in the second half of the century inspired by the Tractarian Movement and Christian Socialism.

Conflict intensified in connection with the Education Act of 1870, concerning the perceived advantages granted to the Church of England. Nevertheless despite the efforts of both church and dissent to increase their congregations, and to improve the morality of the parents through the education of the children, the majority of the working-class still rejected mainstream religion.

202 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 255, Mall had left Leicester in 1841 to be the editor of The Nonconformist.
203 Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 256-7.
Falling working-class attendance at Anglican and nonconformist places of worship was regarded with increasing alarm. Lancaster contends that the close association between nonconformity and middle-class manufacturers could have contributed to a decline in interest, although he rejects the idea that 'orthodox nonconformity was becoming totally class-based'. Conversely Ellis argues that nonconformity formed a bond between workers and employers which divided them from 'the privileged classes'. In his Annual Reports which dated from 1846 Joseph Dare made repeated reference to lack of working-class interest in 'popular belief' and suggested some of the possible causes. He questioned the motives of proselytizing clerics intimating that they were more interested in propagating 'certain opinions', than in awakening 'religious sentiment'. The working class was scathing in its opinions of the 'parsons' considering that they did not 'believe or act as they preach', were 'not the friends of poor men', lived 'in fine houses at a distance' and sent their curates 'who act or speak as if they were condescending'. Dare considered that philanthropy was often used as an opportunity to proselytise, and he also denigrated those who sought to exercise 'spiritual tyranny' against workers at the mission. He believed that while many members of the working class had lost interest in 'existing forms of belief' the fringe sects such as Mormonism, Brownism, Spiritualism, and 'traditional belief' supplied a need. Nevertheless the majority shunned religious worship altogether and preferred dancing, drinking and 'slily labouring on their allotments'. Many believed that they would not be welcome in church 'because they have not the means to appear respectable'. Lessons learnt at Sunday school were soon forgotten once at work, and it became

204 Rimmington, Education in Leicester, pp. 56, 58-61.
205 Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, p. 66.
208 L.D.M.A.R. (1848), pp. 8-10.
211 L.D.M.A.R. (1862), p. 5; (1859), p. 15-17; (1851), p. 4; see also Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism, pp. 69-73.
commonplace to 'scoff at religion'. Dare also contended that Sunday schools were 'not in a sound condition' and were more interested in numbers than in religious education. He hoped that once secular education had been provided by the Board schools then Sunday schools could revert to teaching the children of church members religious beliefs.

Although the Reports provide an insight into contemporary religious belief, consideration should be given to possible bias, for Dare was an employee of the Unitarian Great Meeting. As well as the fringe sects mentioned above the ritualism of the Tractarian Movement in the Anglican church was also attracting many working-class members, despite Dare's scornful opinion of 'the Puseyite' with 'his superstitious formularies'. Lancaster attributed the failure of nonconformity in particular to an 'independent artisan culture' which therefore favoured the newer sects, and to the involvement of Anglican priests in the second half of the century in social and political issues compared to the participation of Nonconformist ministers pre 1850. Nevertheless both Anglican and nonconformist churches experienced a decline in attendance, and failed to interest the majority of the working class.

V - CONCLUSION

For the sake of clarity this chapter has considered the socio-economic, political, and religious environment in Leicester from 1780-1870 as separate sections. However, it is evident that all these issues were not contained in distinct compartments, but overlapped and interacted. Political discord between the Tory corporation and the increasingly influential middle-class Whig manufacturers during the early years of the century had its foundation in the sectarian conflict between Anglicans and dissenters. Later, conflict arose between the moderate Unitarian

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215 Lloyd & Cocks, Fifty Years...Diocese of Leicester, pp. 54-5; Lancaster, Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism.
members of the council and the radical Baptists. There was also a link between nonconformity and the hosiery trade, for many hosiers were nonconformists as were several working-class leaders. Indeed the nature of both nonconformity and the hosiery trade, based on the 'putting-out' system, tended to encourage independent thought and action. The work force was not contained within one unit of factory, mine or mill and was thus less likely to adopt the religious practices or politics of their employers. Although many workers initially supported the middle-class nonconformist Whigs, they became disillusioned by their failure to solve working-class political and social grievances, and thus turned to Chartism and trade unions. On several occasions the Tory corporation supported the workers in their grievances against their Whig employers, who nevertheless were often involved in philanthropic works which included the encouragement of the moral and educational improvement of both children and adults.

Religious conflict also affected political policy relating to education, for the dissenters were always wary of Anglican privilege, particularly when connected with the control and management of schools, especially in connection with the educational clauses of the Factory Bill in 1843 and membership of the School Board. Day school and Sunday school provision were seen as a means of gaining converts, as well as an opportunity to influence the moral behaviour of the parents through their children.

During the century the dependency on the hosiery trade was moderated by the expansion of the boot and shoe, elastic web, and engineering industries. Women had always worked in the various branches of hosiery and continued to do so in the boot and shoes, and in the elastic web factories. Nevertheless the years of poverty suffered by the frame-work knitters in particular militated against their attendance at church, or their children at Sunday school, and they became

increasingly critical of mainstream Anglicanism or nonconformity, preferring to support fringe sects or the ritualism of the Anglican Tractarian movement - if they went to church at all.

Education was thus affected by all the issues discussed above. In particular the early age of employment, and long working day in all branches of the hosiery trade were not conducive to study, and many children were withdrawn from school to earn. Although Sunday schools helped to combat the illiteracy of the many children who were denied the opportunity to receive education at day school some lacked suitable clothing and were thus prevented from attending. Indeed the Chartist adult school was forced to close as the students were starving and fatigued. Numerous institutions were established to educate the adult working class in an atmosphere of temperance and rational recreation, and although the Mechanics' Institute failed to retain its working-class members, the Working Men's College succeeded in attracting, and maintaining working-class students.

While educational provision in Leicester will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters, any effects it may have had can only be assessed qualitatively. However it is possible to analyse illiteracy quantitatively, and this will be done in the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

ILLITERACY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I - THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ILLITERACY

The first part of this chapter examines the numerous studies relating to illiteracy in Britain, Europe, and North America from the early modern period to the nineteenth century. In keeping with the accepted convention reference will be made to illiteracy rather than to literacy, and in this study illiteracy is defined as the inability to sign. From this it is assumed - but as we shall see not without reservation on the part of some historians - that the skills of both reading and writing had been acquired. The inability to sign does provide a reasonable indication of illiteracy during this period - for although more people could read than could write many lacked understanding of what they read - and it has the added advantage that it can be measured. Writing was always taught subsequent to reading, and was not taught at all in many Sunday schools where people often acquired their literacy, as it was considered inappropriate to teach this on the Sabbath.

Consideration will be given to various methods used to measure illiteracy, and their disadvantages, and to the many variables affecting its development. These include social and occupational status, gender, age, availability of and attitudes towards schooling, religion, regional differences, and the significance of rural, urban and industrial environments. Some of the effects of illiteracy on the individual, such as possible social stigma or bar to social and occupational mobility, and on society, encompassing economic growth, crime and fertility will also be appraised.

1 This argument has been expressed by R.S. Schofield, 'Dimensions of illiteracy 1750-1850', Explorations in Economic History, 10 (1973), p. 440; J. Fletcher, 'Moral and educational statistics of England and Wales', Quarterly Journal of the Statistical Society of London, 9 (1846), p. 212; D. Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England (Cambridge, 1980), p. 55, suggests that 'it is probable that the level of literacy measured by counting marks overestimates the number able to write with ease, underestimates the number able to read with hesitation and indicates with some accuracy the number who were functionally literate'; R. Houston, 'The literacy myth?: illiteracy in Scotland 1630-1760', Past and
The second part of this chapter concentrates on illiteracy in Leicester and measures this through signatures/marks derived from Anglican marriage registers. Data for the years 1760 to 1890 have been extracted from the town’s Anglican parish church marriage registers which are held on microfiche at the Leicestershire Record Office. These years have been selected so that trends in illiteracy may be demonstrated prior to 1780 and to allow the effects of post-1870 educational provision to be revealed. Illiteracy in Leicester will be compared with national trends, and the data will be examined to ascertain if there were any significant differences regarding gender, age, occupational illiteracy, the effect of the fathers’ literacy status on their children, as well as choice of literate/illiterate spouses. Consideration will also be given to the illiteracy of extra-parochial spouses.

SIGNING: A DIRECT INDICATION OF ILLITERACY

The measurement of illiteracy based on the ability to sign has been chosen by many historians as it satisfies almost all the requirements of a universal, standard and direct measure. From 1754 to 1837 Anglican marriage registers provide a near-universal source of signatures as they contain entries of all marriages other than Royal, Jewish and Quaker, and were signed/marketed by those marrying and their two witnesses. After 1837 other denominations were also licensed to register marriages, and the Registrar-General inaugurated a state system of registration. The parish

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4 6 & 7 Wm. IV, c. 86 (1836), The Marriage Act.
registers not only provide evidence of illiteracy, but usually give age, marital status, occupation of the groom, sometimes that of the bride, and the occupation of their fathers.

One disadvantage of basing research concerning illiteracy on Leicester marriage registers post-1837 is the scarcity of non-Anglican records. However from 1839 to 1914 the Annual Reports of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England provide totals of non-Anglican as well as Anglican weddings for each county, and the ability (or not) to sign the register, and give details of each registration district from 1842-85. See Appendix 4 for percentage illiteracy in England and Wales from 1841-75. Conclusions regarding illiteracy in Leicester based on data extracted from the Anglican parish registers, can thus be compared for the years 1850 to 1885 with data regarding all marriages that occurred in the town.

As we have seen marriage registers are generally considered to be the most reliable universal source for evidence based on signatures from 1754. However a variety of other documents have been employed for research into earlier periods. These also have disadvantages when used as a test for illiteracy as many were incomplete, they tend to lack universality, and the variety of uses for which they were originally compiled makes comparison between them difficult. Indeed Stone who based part of his substantial study on signatures from the Protestation Oath of

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7 R.A. Houston, Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education 1500-1800 (Harwell, 1988), pp. 120-9, notes subscriptions to petitions, contracts, wills, and testimonies of witnesses. See also his Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland And Northern England 1600-1800 (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 267-96; H.J. Graff, 'Literacy in history', History of Education Quarterly, 15 (1975), p. 467, lists wills, deeds, legal depositions, catheoretical examinations, military recruits' dossiers, gaol registers, employment contracts, census material and library records. See also his The Literacy Myth: Literacy and
Loyalty to Parliament in 1642, considers that incomplete records and suspect signatures allow only tentative conclusions to be made. In the same study he used marriage licence documents to measure illiteracy during the years 1642 to 1754. He found - as did Houston in his study of marriage bonds in Durham - that they did not equally represent all classes and that the composition changed over time.

With all sources there are defects inherent in the use of signing as a measure of illiteracy, and these include the following: the measurement is based on a particular occasion in life, and some might never sign again; literary skills once learnt could have been forgotten; old age and infirmity could affect the ability to sign; as could the stress of the occasion. Indeed in some instances bridal modesty could prevent signing, and the officiating incumbent might have signed on behalf of the couple or could have encouraged signing with a mark. Although the signature was not an easy skill to master, some historians question whether it might have been learnt as a trick. Despite all these weaknesses signing remains the preferred measurement for illiteracy although it only provides quantitative information, and further research into the local environment is required to ascertain the quality and usefulness of the literacy acquired.

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8 Stone, 'Literacy' pp. 99-112. He concluded that the overall literacy rate was around 40% in 1800.
READING: AN INDIRECT INDICATION OF ILLITERACY

Imprecision regarding the definition of literacy has led to contention regarding its evaluation, and criticism of the use of signatures as a measurement of illiteracy. The main cause of concern is that the inability to sign does not necessarily indicate a lack of reading ability.\textsuperscript{14} As the latter skill was usually the first to be taught, and as many left school before they learnt how to write, some historians consider that signing does not give a true indication of illiteracy.\textsuperscript{15} This is particularly relevant for women as many could read but could not write.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed a reading campaign in Sweden instigated by the Church Law of 1686, resulted in a low level of illiteracy in the eighteenth century if based on the ability to read, but otherwise the level of illiteracy was high.\textsuperscript{17} Such differences in criteria make comparisons with other countries difficult.

The publication of books and religious tracts expanded from the early modern period, newspaper circulation escalated during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and library membership increased.\textsuperscript{18} These factors have been considered by some historians as evidence of a wider reading, and hence less illiterate public.\textsuperscript{19} Nevertheless, evidence of reading ability is difficult to quantify, and although there does appear to be some correlation between book ownership and literacy it is still preferable to test this assumption against the direct evidence of

\textsuperscript{14} Thomas, 'Literacy in early modern England', pp. 100-3 considers that Cressy's figures for illiteracy in 1640 - 70% men and 90% women are 'a spectacular underestimate' of those who could read.


\textsuperscript{16} Spufford, 'First steps in literacy', pp. 149-50, and her \textit{Small Books}, pp. 34-6; Houston, 'Literacy myth?', p. 82, and his \textit{Scottish Literacy}, pp. 57-70 argues that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries 'girls were conventionally taught reading, sewing and knitting but were usually not given writing instruction in either Scotland or England'. p. 66.

\textsuperscript{17} E. Johansson, 'The history of literacy in Sweden', in Graff, \textit{Literacy and Social Development}, pp. 151-82.


signatures. There are also problems inherent in the use of book production and newspaper circulation as evidence for a decline in illiteracy, for improved technology affected the rate of publication, and the number of newspaper readers was not constant over time, for sales were affected by economic factors such as the lowering of taxes.

In the above section methods used to measure the extent of illiteracy have been reviewed, and some of the variables affecting the acquisition of literacy, have become apparent. The following section will examine a variety of other factors which had an effect on illiteracy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

II - VARIABLES AFFECTING ILLITERACY

SCHOOLING

'The great question is, not how many children are at school, but how many children are educated, and retain their instruction'.

Nineteenth-century investigators attempted to count the number of schools, and to assess attendance in order to ascertain the level of illiteracy in the country. The accuracy of their findings was questioned at the time, and more recent appraisals by West have created similar

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20 This argument has been most marked in the work of Houston, Literacy in Early Modern Europe, pp. 128-9, 192-3, and his Scottish Literacy, pp. 163-71, and pp. 173-9 where he suggests that borrowing books did not necessarily imply readership; P. Clark, 'The ownership of books in England, 1560-1640: the examples of some Kentish Townsfolk', in L. Stone (ed.), Schooling and Society: Studies in the History of Education (Baltimore, 1976), pp. 95-111, finds 'some correlation ... between high or low levels of literacy and book ownership'; Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order, pp. 45-53 states that while it may be assumed that there is 'some correlation between the level and progress of literacy, and book ownership' evidence for book ownership through probate records is unreliable.

21 Schofield, 'Dimensions', p. 438 and his 'Measurement', pp. 314-5. See also Graff, Literacy Myth, pp. 270-1; Spufford, Small Books, pp. 21-3, 45-82 compares the 'explosion in cheap print' in 1642 to that in the eighteen-thirties also a time of 'heightened [political] awareness' and contends that 'this boom in cheap publication ... was not caused by a dramatic rise in literacy: in 1839 33% of men and 50% of women were unable to sign their names at marriage'.

22 Sargant, 'On the progress of elementary education', p. 85. He attributes falling levels of illiteracy to an increase in schools and Sunday schools. pp. 91, 112-25. See also Fletcher, 'Moral and educational statistics', p. 212. The Annual Reports of the Registrar-General directly link school provision with falling illiteracy.

doubts.\textsuperscript{24} The major criticisms have arisen because there was no standard definition of what constituted a school, and no accepted interpretation of average attendance, length of school life or what percentage of the population attended.\textsuperscript{25} The political and religious bias of the surveys has also been questioned.\textsuperscript{26} Although there does appear to be a relationship between the availability of schooling and later illiteracy levels (the time lag between school-leaving age and date of first marriage is usually considered to be around 15 years) there is no direct evidence, and links are by no means universal. Indeed before 1870, formal schools did not provide an exclusive path to literacy, and there was considerable variation at local level.\textsuperscript{27} The importance of informal learning at home, Sunday and private schools, and adult education, cannot be discounted, but their effect on illiteracy is even more difficult to quantify.\textsuperscript{28}

Neither can the extent of illiteracy be accurately ascertained through attendance statistics, for these do not necessarily imply regular attendance or the level of skill attained.\textsuperscript{29} Nor were numbers on the roll an accurate indication of attendance, for the Education Department did not specify that school registers were to be kept until 1853, and even then their accuracy was


\textsuperscript{25} The defects in this method of assessing illiteracy have been addressed by E.G. West, \textit{Education and the Industrial Revolution} (1975), pp. 8-29; R.J. Smith, 'Education, society and literacy: Nottinghamshire in the mid-nineteenth century', \textit{University of Birmingham Historical Journal}, 12, (1969-1970), pp. 42-3 contends that the voluntary nature of the 1851 educational census makes the accuracy of the returns questionable; Hurt, 'Professor West on education', pp. 624-9 states that ambiguities regarding the definition of a school were not resolved until 1850; W.B. Stephens, 'Elementary education and literacy, 1770-1870', in D. Fraser (ed.), \textit{A History of Modern Leeds} (Manchester, 1980), p. 236-7; Altick, \textit{English Common Reader}, pp. 166-71.

\textsuperscript{26} Hurt, 'Professor West on education', p. 624-5.

\textsuperscript{27} This argument is presented by Cressy, \textit{Literacy and the Social Order}, p. 52; Mitch, \textit{Rise of Popular Literacy}, pp. 111-4, 135-40; Stephens, \textit{Education, Society and Literacy}, p. 13; Smith, 'Education, literacy and society', pp. 54, 56, notes that in Nottinghamshire there was 'no direct correlation', and was surprised at the high illiteracy considering 'the proportion of children ... who had received a schooling of one sort or another'; Houston, \textit{Scottish Literacy}, p. 101, and his \textit{Literacy in Early Modern Europe}, p. 117.

considered to be questionable. 

Although regular school attendance was usually incompatible with later high illiteracy, this did not automatically guarantee literacy, or that skills learnt would be retained, for many factors affected the quality and quantity of the education received. 

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

'The degree of ignorance of the elements of writing differs in every county'. 

There is a consensus of opinion that there was considerable geographical variation both at regional and local level in the level of illiteracy, but that national and even county figures tended to obscure this diversity. Indeed differences have been recorded in the illiteracy of adjacent urban parishes, and studies of rural parishes and villages within the same county reveal marked diversity. Urban literacy was usually linked with the economic function of the town, and thus levels of illiteracy altered as the economic base changed. Towns were generally regarded as being less illiterate than rural areas in the pre-industrial period, but during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries the effects of industrialisation were considered to have contributed to an increase in urban illiteracy. 

29 Graff, 'Literacy in history', p. 469. 
32 See Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, for a comprehensive study on regional variations. 
36 W.B. Stephens, 'Illiteracy in Devon during the industrial revolution, 1754-1844', Journal of Educational Administration and History, 8 (1976), p. 3; West, Education and the Industrial Revolution, pp. 245-6; R.A. Houston, 'The development of literacy: Northern England, 1640-1750', Economic History Review, 35 (1982), pp. 199-200, 209-12, his Scottish Literacy, pp. 41-52 and his Literacy in Early Modern Europe, pp. 140-3; M. Sanderson, 'Literacy and social mobility in the industrial revolution in England', Past and Present, 56 (1972), pp. 82-9 contends that in Lancashire's manufacturing districts 'there was a decline in literacy from the mid-
than their hinterlands because of their role as centres of trade and commerce, there was no universal distinction between urban and rural areas.\textsuperscript{37} According to Sargant there was little difference between English towns and rural districts, but he noted that

'if we compare 1760 with 1800, we see that the towns had actually deteriorated a little, while the rural districts had made a large advance'.\textsuperscript{38}

Nevertheless generalisations need to be regarded with caution for the type of rural community affected illiteracy in the same way that different economic functions affected illiteracy in towns.\textsuperscript{39} Indeed variations in illiteracy in rural areas do not appear to follow a definite pattern, and neither do they appear to conform to divisions between pastoral and arable areas.\textsuperscript{40} For example in his study of illiteracy within families in Shepshed, Levine suggests that there were quite real differences between villages with a concentration of frame-work knitters and other villages.\textsuperscript{41}

Moreover the decline of illiteracy was not constant over time.\textsuperscript{42} In the early modern period the north-east was considered to have a high rate of illiteracy compared to the south, but by the later eighteenth century it had the lowest level of illiteracy of any area with the exception of London.\textsuperscript{43} However from the eighteen-thirties illiteracy in Durham increased following the eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century\textsuperscript{44} but that rural parishes declined more than industrialised areas; Stephens, \textit{Education, Literacy and Society}, p. 146 states that there was a 'connection in the midlands between industrial concentration and poor literacy'.

\textsuperscript{37} Stephens, \textit{Illiteracy and schooling}, pp. 28-38 and 44-6, states that 'in large towns generally, there was a tendency for marriage signature figures to be nearer those for the neighbouring county averages'. Leicester was 'slightly worse than Leicestershire', and in his \textit{Education, Literacy and Society}, pp. 4-11, 15, 37-8, he suggests that the greatest differences were to be found 'where the town was a smaller traditional market centre set in a predominantly agricultural area'; Schofield, \textit{Dimensions} pp. 449, 453; Thomas, \textit{Literacy in Early modern England}, p. 111.

\textsuperscript{38} Sargant, 'On the progress of elementary education', pp. 82, 90-1.

\textsuperscript{39} Stephens, \textit{Education, Literacy and Society}, pp. 39-41, and his 'Schooling and literacy in rural England, 1800-1914', \textit{History of Education Quarterly} (1982), pp. 78-9; Schofield, \textit{Dimensions}, pp. 447-9, considers the variety between the parishes in Bedfordshire which was the 'worst county in England for male illiteracy in 1839', for male illiteracy was 33% while the national average for males was 55%.

\textsuperscript{40} Webb, 'Working class readers', pp. 337-9; Stone, 'Literacy', pp. 120-6.

\textsuperscript{41} D. Levine, 'Education and family life in early industrial England', \textit{Journal of Family History} (1979), p. 374. Fletcher, 'Moral and educational statistics', pp. 196-209 considered that 'the frame-work knitters of Leicestershire' were among those 'much lower in the scale of civilisation'.


\textsuperscript{43} Houston, 'Illiteracy in the diocese of Durham', pp. 239, 243-4, and his \textit{Scottish Literacy}, pp. 2, 12, 88; Cressy, 'Social status and literacy,' and his \textit{Literacy and the Social Order}, p. 176.
development of the mining industry. Indeed there is a dichotomy of opinion concerning the progress of illiteracy in the industrialising north between 1760 and 1835, for while Stone considers that it was declining in both urban and rural areas, Sanderson disputes this, and provides evidence to show that it was in fact rising in Lancashire at this time. Studies of other regions also show a rise - not a decline in illiteracy - at varying periods between 1760 and 1830.

GENDER

Not only did the level of illiteracy vary over time and place, but as can be seen in Appendix 4, there was also a noticeable difference between the attainments of men and women. This can be attributed to some extent to attitudes regarding the place of women in society, and thus the type of education that was considered suitable. Nevertheless although women were usually more illiterate than men - especially in areas of high female industrial employment - their rate of improvement was often greater. In many hosiery districts - including Leicester - women were more illiterate than men, whereas in some agricultural areas men were more illiterate. For here -

44 Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, pp. 16-17; Fletcher, 'Moral and educational statistics', pp. 196-209 considers that the 'region making slowest progress in proportion to its ignorance, is the great northern and midland mining and manufacturing district'.
45 Stone 'Literacy', pp. 102-3, 121. Although he does not see a rise in illiteracy in Halifax - his graph shows a semi-stagnant period in male illiteracy around 1780 to 1830. Sanderson, 'Literacy and social mobility', pp. 82-9. This is based on evidence from his study of some Lancashire parishes and he disputes Stone's conclusion that illiteracy was declining in England during this period.
46 F. O'Shaughnessy, A Spa and Its Children (Warwick, 1979), p. 159. There was a rise in Leamington Spa between 1770 and 1790; V.A. Hatley, 'Literacy at Northampton, 1761-1900: some interim figures', Northamptonshire Past and Present, 4 (Northampton, 1966/7), p. 379 shows an increase between 1800 and 1820; J. Bradshaw, 'Occupation and literacy in the Erewash Valley coalfield, 1760-1880', in Stephens (ed.), Studies in the History of Literacy, p. 8 concludes that illiteracy rose from 1760 to 1830; Grayson, 'Literacy, schooling and industrialisation', pp. 55-6 notes that in Worcestershire between 1791 and 1820 illiteracy deteriorated in 'troughs' which occurred at different times in the areas under investigation; W.B. Stephens, 'Illiteracy in Devon during the industrial revolution, 1754-1844', Journal of Educational Administration and History, 8 (1976), pp. 2-4 notes that both male and female illiteracy increased from 1765 to 1785.
47 Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, p. 4, suggests that girls spent considerable time on learning to sew, and his 'Elementary education and literacy' p. 244, Harrop, 'Literacy and educational attitudes', p. 40; Mitch, Rise of Popular Literacy, pp. 96-7; Spufford, Small Books, pp. 34-5 states that in the seventeenth century girls' education concentrated on domestic skills.
48 This argument has been most marked in the works of Sargant, 'On the progress of elementary education', pp. 91-3, who considered that women had 'more room for improvement'; Schofield, 'Dimensions', pp. 442, 446-8, 451-3 reports that female illiteracy was around 60% in the mid-eighteenth century, and around 50% by 1840. Male illiteracy was around 40% until about 1795 and around 33% in 1840; Sanderson, 'Literacy and social mobility', pp. 83-4, notes that in Lancashire in the seventeen-fifties to eighteen-twenties female literacy was just less than half that of male. Stone, 'Literacy', p. 119; Houston, 'Development of literacy', pp. 204, 214; Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, pp. 11-12.
as in other areas of low female employment - girls usually continued their education to a later age, depending on the economic situation of the family. However there was no consistent correlation between illiteracy and the availability of female employment, for even in areas where there was little work for women, female illiteracy was often high. Moreover work did not always have a detrimental effect on female illiteracy, for the ability to read and write could enhance job prospects, particularly in the retail trades, teaching, and supervisory positions in domestic service.

The difference between male and female illiteracy was not confined to England, for in Scotland and Europe women were also generally more illiterate than men, and their education, and attitudes towards them were again contributory factors. Regional differences and the type of community in which they lived, had similar effects on female illiteracy in Scotland and Europe as in England, as did the social position and occupation of their fathers and husbands. Much further afield, albeit with cultural links to the British subjects of study, Graff's research in Upper Canada shows that in 1861 women predominated among the illiterate, and again this is ascribed to their inferior education. It has been suggested that women in New England were also discriminated against, and that relative to men, women of the early nineteenth century were no better off than their forebears two hundred years earlier.

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49 Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, pp. 145-6; Sargant, 'On the progress of elementary education' p. 111, alleged that although usually men were superior - especially in textile districts where 'girls go early into factories' - in some agricultural districts 'boys go early into the fields, and leave their sisters at school'; Bradshaw, 'Occupation and literacy in the Erewash Valley coalfield', pp. 8, 12-13 finds that 'framewokers' daughters ... were less literate than brides in general'.

50 Campbell, 'Occupation and literacy in Bristol and Gloucestershire', pp. 30, 34, finds no evidence of female employment, but despite this the illiteracy of miners' daughters was considerably higher than that of their sons, and higher than that of 'women in general in that parish'. Nevertheless in the agricultural parishes of Gloucestershire his results are consistent with those of Sargant, in that girls were less illiterate.


52 This argument is examined in the work of Houston in his 'Literacy and society', pp. 271-2, 283-5, his 'Literacy myth', pp. 90-3, and p. 99 where he alleges that in the mid-eighteenth century Scottish women were more illiterate than their English counterparts, his Literacy in Early Modern Europe, pp. 134-5 in which he suggests that the ability of women to read approached that of the men, and his Scottish Literacy, pp. 63-8.

53 Houston, Literacy in Early Modern Europe, pp. 135-7, and his, Scottish Literacy, pp. 57-62.

54 Graff, Literacy Myth, pp. 60, 176.

However illiteracy was not only affected by sex but also by age.66 We have seen the negative aspects of ageing in relation to signing, but Galenson considers the positive aspects of age in his study of the indentures of 812 servants - who were to travel to the colonies of British America - from the records of the Middlesex Quarter Sessions from 1683 to 1684, and those registered in London from 1718 to 1759. He concludes that while allowing for factors such as sex, occupation, place of origin and date of registration, they became less illiterate with age (although the women were still more illiterate than the men), which suggests that informal adult learning was as useful as schooling, particularly among the less skilled.57

THE EFFECT OF WEALTH, SOCIAL STATUS AND OCCUPATION

'occupational hierarchy is one of the most consistent features of illiteracy in the past. It is to be found in all regions and all times'.58

There is no all-embracing explanation for the diversity of illiteracy between regions, or for variation over time. The effects of schooling, place of residence, sex and age have already been noted, but it has been also conjectured that differences can be attributed to the fact that levels of illiteracy within a community varied according to wealth, social status, and occupation.59 Indeed the connection between occupation, wealth, and social position, and illiteracy was apparent in early modern England as well as in the nineteenth century.60 A similar hierarchical pattern of

56 The following explore the effects of age on illiteracy: Graff, Literacy Myth, pp. 60-1; Houston, Literacy in Early Modern Europe, pp. 146-7 suggests that in countries where specific literacy campaigns were undertaken, the old were discriminated against.
57 Galenson, 'Literacy and age'.
58 Schofield, 'Dimensions', pp. 459-61;
59 The correlation between occupation and illiteracy is discussed in the work of Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, pp. 4, 11-12, and his Studies in the History of Literacy, pp. 3, 5; Cressy, 'Levels of illiteracy', pp. 6-10 and his Literacy and the Social Order, pp. 118-41; Spufford, 'First steps in literacy', pp. 126-7; Thomas, 'Literacy in early modern England', pp. 116-8, 121; Bradshaw, 'Occupation and literacy in the Erewash Valley coalfield', pp. 10-14 compares the illiteracy of frame-workers and miners; Campbell, 'Occupation and literacy in Bristol and Gloucestershire' pp. 20-36; Grayson, 'Literacy, schooling and industrialisation', pp. 61-3 examines the occupational structure in Worcester and Dudley; Unwin, 'Literacy patterns', pp. 68-70, 74-8; Levine, 'Education and family life', pp. 372-3 found that in Shepshed, frame-work knitters were a little more illiterate than agricultural labourers.
60 This relationship is explored by Houston, Literacy in Early Modern Europe, pp. 131-4, and Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order, p. 88; Stone, 'Literacy', pp. 102-12; Thomas, 'Literacy in early modern England', pp. 110-1.
illiteracy was also revealed in studies of Scotland and Europe, and to some extent in New England.61

In his study of industrial areas in Lancashire, Sanderson asserts that illiteracy was less prevalent among those employed in the older craft trades, and concludes that the new occupations managed to develop with a less literate workforce, with the exception of clerks and those in supervisory positions.62 The extent to which illiteracy was a requirement for various occupations in Victorian England has been classified by Mitch, who also analyses the occupational status of brides and grooms in relation to their fathers' literate and occupational status.63 He concludes that only a minority of the early Victorian labour force were in occupations requiring literacy, that they were not economically rewarded for being so, and that many literate workers were in unskilled occupations. However, although literacy alone did not guarantee respectable employment, or necessarily command higher wages, literate workers - whatever their social origins - were more likely to enter higher-status occupations.64

III - REASONS FOR THE DECLINE IN ILLITERACY

Various factors which could have affected the extent of illiteracy over place and time have been considered above. We shall now examine the influence of 'private choice and public policy' on the decline of illiteracy.65 People could be persuaded to become literate by the 'pull' of

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63 Mitch, Rise of Popular Literacy, pp. 13-14, 22-36. He conjectures that 'male literacy was significantly influenced by occupational demands whereas female literacy may have been more influenced by environmental conditions associated with urbanisation'.


65 Mitch, Rise of Popular Literacy, pp. 7-9, 111-212.
economic need or social prestige, or by the 'push' of religion and education, but it is almost impossible to determine which was the most influential.66

PRIVATE CHOICE AND PUBLIC POLICY

'People learned to read and write from at least the sixteenth century onward because these skills allowed participation in a whole range of religious, economic, political and cultural activities'.67

It is difficult to quantify the extent to which literacy was a necessary attribute for participation in religious, political and leisure activities, and whether it aided self-improvement, or led to economic rewards through better occupational opportunities.68 It has been argued that although literacy did improve job prospects for the working class, it was only of limited benefit, and that even though there was an increase in demand for literate workers, the decline in illiteracy during the Victorian period cannot completely be explained by this factor.69

Indeed many parents did not seem to consider illiteracy to be a barrier to their children's success. While some were apathetic towards education, others could see no economic benefit.70

There also seemed to be little connection between poverty and attitudes towards education, for in Coventry affluent weavers were indifferent towards education, whereas in Leicester

66 Houston, Scottish Literacy, pp. 136-7, 157-8, 211-2, 136-61, suggests that in England (apart from in the north) 'a sense of shame at illiteracy may not have developed until the eighteenth century or later'.

67 Laqueur, 'The cultural origins of popular literacy', p. 268, and see whole paper for discussion; D. Vincent, Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914 (Cambridge, 1989); Stone, 'Literacy', p. 119 conjectures that 'there must have been a significant cultural barrier between the respectable, newspaper-and Bible-reading working class and the illiterate proletariat at the bottom of the heap'; Houston, Literacy in Early Modern Europe, pp. 103-11, suggests that there was no social stigma attached to illiteracy at this time and that for many there were few times when literacy was necessary.

68 This argument is particularly evident in the work of Schofield, 'Dimensions', p. 451; Thomas, 'Literacy in early modern England', pp. 104-5; Houston, 'Literacy and society', pp. 274-5; Graff, Literacy Myth, pp. 114-5, 294-315; Houston, Scottish Literacy, pp. 219-20, contends that literacy could 'reinforce rather than alter social divisions'; Mitch, Rise in Popular Literacy, pp. 43-79 considers that literacy appeared to become more important as the nineteenth century progressed.

69 Mitch, Rise in Popular Literacy, pp. 11-42.

70 This argument has been most marked in the work of Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, pp. 50-3; Graff, Literacy Myth, pp. 212-5, and his Labyrinths of Literacy, pp. 68-70; Unwin, 'Literacy patterns', p. 80, notes poverty, idleness, and indifference to schooling which constrained the spread of literacy; Grayson, 'Literacy, schooling and industrialisation', pp. 63-4 suggests that in the Black Country learning a trade was considered to be more economically beneficial than formal education; Houston, Scottish Literacy, pp. 234-7, 158-9. Nevertheless he also contends that in Scotland and northern Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth
impoverished frame-work knitters desired literacy skills for their children. However parental attitudes generally tended to reflect their own occupational and socio-economic status. Parental illiteracy and status both appeared to have had some bearing on their children's ability to sign, as did family size, but literate spouses seemed to be indifferent to the illiteracy of their partners. Nevertheless while parental status had a minimal effect on illiteracy, parental attitudes towards education had a significant influence on the literacy of their children.

Nevertheless members of the working class - particularly among the artisans - regarded literacy as a means to solving their social, economic and political grievances. Illiteracy tended to be equated by some people with criminality and immorality in nineteenth-century England, as well as being deemed a threat to the existing social order. Thus the social and cultural functions of literacy such as moral reform, and respectability were fostered by many middle-class reformers. Nevertheless members of the working class - particularly among the artisans - regarded literacy as a means to solving their social, economic and political grievances.

RELIGION

Prior to the late-eighteenth century the 'push' to combat illiteracy came mainly from the Protestant desire to make the Bible accessible to all, to save souls, and to promote social order.

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72 Parental attitudes have been discussed in the work of Schofield, 'Dimensions', p. 451; C.A. Anderson, 'Literacy and schooling on the development threshold: some historical cases', in C.A. Anderson & M.J. Bowman (eds), Education and Economic Development (1966), pp. 328-30; Stephens, Studies in the History of Literacy pp. 3-4; Bradshaw, Occupation and literacy in the Erewash Valley coalfield', p. 10, 12, 17-19; Harrop, 'Literacy and educational attitudes'; Campbell, 'Occupation and literacy in Bristol and Gloucestershire', 31-5.

73 Levine, 'Education and family life'; Spufford, 'First steps in literacy', pp. 131-2, 144; Unwin, 'Literacy patterns', pp. 73-4; Graff, Literacy Myth, pp. 152-92, studies the effects of parental illiteracy on their children's economic and social status, and conjectures that 'as literacy did not necessarily bring success, its absence did not guarantee failure'.

74 Mitch, Rise in Popular Literacy, pp. 80-107.

75 Graff, Literacy Myth, pp. 19, 235-67, finds the relationship between immorality, illiteracy, and criminality to be 'ambiguous'; Cipolla, Literacy and Development, pp. 75-8; Fletcher, 'Moral and educational statistics', pp. 212-33 contended that 'moral evils' could be overcome by combatting 'ignorance'; Houston, Scottish Literacy, pp. 212-4, 220-237, 257; Eighth Annual Report of the Registrar General (1849), p. 33, states that 'crime is most prevalent where fewer can write'.

76 Houston, Scottish Literacy, pp. 227-31; Stone, 'Literacy', pp. 77-93; Resnick, 'The nature of literacy', pp. 372-4; Thomas, 'Literacy in early modern England', pp. 111-2; Sanderson, Education, Economic Change and Society, pp. 16-20.
Indeed the extent to which illiteracy was affected by sectarian conflict between Anglicans and Nonconformists for control of education in nineteenth-century England, has been extensively debated. In her study of north-east Cheshire, Harrop suggests that the attitude to education of the Unitarian cotton manufacturing families, and their own low illiteracy levels, had an important influence on illiteracy in that region. In Scotland, the Calvinist church was considered to have had a considerable influence on illiteracy, but - as in England - both secular requirements and the religious 'push' factor were limited by the availability of education, and attitudes concerning the relevance of literacy held by different social groups. Similarly in Europe, religion had an effect on the decline of illiteracy, and there appears to be a link between Protestantism and literacy. Nevertheless the control of education was sought by both Protestant and Catholic churches, and the state. Although the struggle between Church and state for control of French education appears to have had no decisive impact on the progress of illiteracy. Illiteracy in Sweden was resolved through a campaign to encourage reading, and was inaugurated for both political and religious purposes. Further afield, the Protestant religion was considered to have been an essential factor in the rise to universal male literacy in New England. Although religion did play an important role in helping to reduce illiteracy, it was not the only determinant, and other influences need consideration, particularly the economic factor.

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77 Stephens,' Illiteracy and schooling', pp. 46-7, considers the connection between religion and education; and his, Education, Literacy and Society, pp. 42-8; Smith, 'Education, society and literacy', pp. 50-2 finds that as in Leicester the Nonconformists concentrated on Sunday schools rather than day schools; Grayson, 'Literacy, schooling and industrialisation', pp. 65-6; Unwin, 'Literacy patterns', p. 72.

78 Harrop, 'Literacy and educational attitudes'.

79 Houston, 'Literacy myth: Scotland', pp. 81, 89-91, 99-100.

80 Houston, Scottish Literacy, pp. 148-53.

81 Houston, 'Literacy and society', pp. 276-9, 281-2; and his Literacy in Early Modern Europe, pp. 35-7, 41; D. Wagner (ed.), Europe in Literacy: an International Handbook, forthcoming (New York, 1999), pp. 8-9, 22.


83 Johansson, 'The history of literacy in Sweden'.


85 Sanderson, 'Literacy and social mobility', p. 103 maintains that before 1840 religious rather than economic factors influenced educational growth; M.W. Flinn, 'Social theory and the industrial revolution', in T. Burns & S.B. Saul (eds), Social Theory and Economic Change (1967), pp. 9-34.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The argument that literacy was a precondition for further industrialisation has been a feature of much historiography, and the main points here can be summarised. It has been proposed that an industrialising society needs a literacy threshold of between 30-40% if it is to operate at a sufficient and advancing level of expertise. Debate has also centred around investment in human capital as a factor of economic growth. Whether Britain had achieved this necessary threshold prior to industrialisation in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, and whether indeed it was a necessary precondition to her technological advancement has been the subject of considerable debate. It was especially relevant to the textile trades where reliance of early factory industrialisation upon child labour was often associated with high illiteracy. Indeed in his study of the Lancashire textile towns Sanderson contends that industrialisation flourished through around fifty years of declining literacy. In fact the relevance of literacy and education to the acquisition of new skills has been questioned, although it has not been disputed that literacy was necessary for clerical and managerial occupations associated with the new industries.

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86 This argument has been most marked in the work of M.J.Bowman and C.A. Anderson, 'Concerning the role of education in development', in C. Geertz (ed.) Old Societies and New States (New York, 1963), pp. 247-79; C.A. Anderson & M.J. Bowman, 'Education and economic modernization in historical perspective', in Stone (ed.), Schooling and Society. The above all recognise the 40% threshold but suggest that literacy alone was not sufficient to initiate or sustain economic advance; 245-257; M. Blaug, An Introduction to the Economics of Education (Harmondsworth, 1970, 1976 edn), pp. 64-5 states that functional rather than basic literacy was more important for economic growth.


88 R.M. Hartwell, The Industrial Revolution and Economic Growth (1971), pp. 226-44, alleges that the expansion of education in Britain prior to the industrial revolution promoted economic growth; West, 'Literacy and the industrial revolution', and his Education and the Industrial Revolution, pp. 245-57 suggests that Britain had achieved the necessary threshold; Levine, The Social Context of Literacy, pp. 83-6, considers that some occupations created by the new technologies demanded less skill, and lower literacy than traditional trades. The need for a literate workforce in the majority of the new occupations is also questioned by the following: Mitch, Rise of Popular Literacy, pp. 11-42; Houston, 'Development of literacy', pp. 214-5, and his 'Iliteracy in the diocese of Durham', p. 251; Schofield, 'Dimensions', pp. 451-4; Cipolla, Literacy and Development.

89 Sanderson, Education, Economic Change and Society, pp. 12-13, 16, and his 'Literacy and social mobility', pp. 89-94, suggests that the socialising effect of education rather than literacy was an important factor in industrialisation, his 'Literacy and social mobility in the industrial revolution in England: a rejoinder', Past and Present, 64 (1974), and his 'Social change and elementary education in industrial Lancashire: 1780-1840', Northern History, 3 (1968); T. W. Laqueur, 'Literacy and social mobility in industrial England', Past and Present, 64 (1974), argues that literacy had begun to decline before the introduction of steam-powered factories.
and the continuing literacy of members of the traditional trades has been noted.90 However in Leicester, as in many of the Midlands towns, domestic industries - which were as dependent on child labour as the textile trades - continued to operate in an environment of illiteracy. Questions have also been raised as to whether industrialisation fostered a rise or a decline in illiteracy.91 However this appears to depend on the requirements of specific occupations, the degree of child labour involved, and educational provision.

Comparison between different parts of Europe has presented difficulties, as the definition of illiteracy, and sources used vary.92 Despite this problem, by 1700 England was considered to be one of the most literate countries in Europe, and it was thought that this aided her economic development. Nevertheless both her literate and economic position appeared to be under threat during the nineteenth century.93 Indeed in the second half of the century England's economic superiority came increasingly into question, and may have been affected by relatively poor education - attributed by some to insufficient state involvement.94 However, in Scotland and Europe as in England, the role of the state was not the only factor involved in the attainment of literacy.95 Clearly, there are many rival positions in the literature, but it does seem that education for the requirements of industrial life which replaced traditional social habits and customs, may

91 West, 'Literacy and the industrial revolution', and his Education and the Industrial Revolution, pp. 245-57, argues that education did not deteriorate, and that illiteracy in fact declined during the period 1760-1840; Graff, Labyrinths of Literacy, pp. 31-2 maintains that industrial development neither depended on a literate workforce nor served to increase levels of literacy; Houston, 'Literacy and society', pp. 274-7.
92 Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order, p. 178; Houston, 'Literacy and society', pp. 287-8.
93 Cipolla, Literacy and Development, pp. 61-2, 88; Sargent, 'On the progress of elementary education', pp. 93-106, concluded that Prussia and the United States were superior.
95 Houston, 'Literacy and society', pp. 273-4, his Literacy in Early Modern, and his 'Literacy myth?', challenges the commonly-held opinion that Scottish literacy was superior to that of England because of the system of education.
have been more relevant for the majority of the workforce than literacy. It may well be the case that the reduction in illiteracy in nineteenth-century England was more of a cultural change brought by economic growth than a cause of growth.

In this examination of the literature it has been apparent that illiteracy varied over place and time, and that diversity within comparatively small regions can be attributed to differences in urban and rural environments, age, social status, wealth and occupational structures, the effects of industrialisation, and the availability and quality of formal and informal education at both elementary and adult levels. A notable aspect which is common to all regions and countries is the higher percentage of female illiteracy, which can be ascribed to attitudes to women, and the restricted educational curriculum available to them. Despite all these considerations, the most interesting aspect is not how and where, but why did illiteracy decline during the nineteenth century? Indeed there were cultural, religious, social, political and economic benefits for both the individual and society, but it is almost impossible to determine whether personal motivation or public sway had the greater influence.

IV - ILLITERACY IN LEICESTER: 1780-1870

THE PARISHES

Illiteracy in Leicester during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will now be examined through an analysis of data extracted from Anglican parish registers for each decadal year from 1760-1890. The marriage registers are mainly extant from 1760 to 1890 for the ancient ecclesiastical (and civil) parishes of All Saints, St Margaret, St Martin, St Mary and St Nicholas, but not for St Leonard. Although the parish of St Leonard remained distinct, it was

96 Graff, Literacy Myth, pp. 228-9; Houston, Scottish Literacy, pp. 220-1.
97 Graff, Labyrinths of Literacy, pp. 63-6
Figure 2: The parishes and liberties of Leicester.

LEICESTER IN 1857
Based on Spencer's Map
SCALE OF YARDS

1 CASTLE VIEW
2 THE NEWARKE
3 BLACK FRIARS
4 AUGUSTINE FRIARS
5 ST. NICHOLAS
6 ST. LEONARD
7 ALL SAINTS
8 ST. MARTIN
9 ST. MARY DE CASTRO
10 ST. MARGARET

Old municipal boundary
New municipal boundary established in 1856
poor and sparsely populated and lacked a church from 1645 until 1877. The Vicar of All Saints, and later the Vicar of St Margaret's officiated in the parish, but the registers are incomplete and lack detailed records of marriages until 1877.

The size of the parishes varied considerably as can be seen in Figure 2, which provides details of the six parishes and four extra-parochial liberties based on Spencer's map of Leicester in 1857. See Appendix 5 for information relating to their population growth from 1801 to 1891, and Appendix 6 for data relating to the value of property in each parish, and to the amount of poor relief given. St Martin's parish in the centre of the town was small but prosperous, and had been considered a fashionable place in which to live. However during the eighteenth century it gradually became more commercial in character. St Nicholas and All Saints were also small, and were comparatively poor parishes. The northern part of All Saints became industrialised and densely populated following the building of the canal, and one of the first factories in Leicester (for spinning cotton), was built in Northgate Street probably around 1792. St Mary's and St Margaret's were both larger parishes, and during the nineteenth century new ecclesiastical parishes were created within them as their population increased. Indeed St Margaret's was a vast and densely populated parish which housed many working-class families, and the area

98 White, History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the Counties of Leicester and Rutland (1877), p. 305. It was stated that the extra-parochial liberties of Abbeygate and Woodgate 'have long been returned as parts of St Leonard's parish'.
100 McKinley & Martin, 'Ancient borough', p. 365.
101 Report of the Select Committee on the Irremovable Poor: with Minutes of Evidence, XVII (1860), I.U.P. edn, Shannon 1970), pp. 108-9 stated that the richest parish is St Martin's in the centre of the town, and the poorest is All Saint's and that there was 'a lower class of residences' in the poor parishes.
102 McKinley & Martin, 'Ancient borough', pp. 341-2. A tannery and bleach yard were also in existence by 1828.
103 The liberty of Bishop's Fee was generally considered to be part of the ancient parish of St Margaret. The chapelry of Knighton was also part of St Margaret's parish but has not been included in this study as it remained outside the borough boundary until 1935. The inclusion of Abbey Meadow and St Margaret's Pasture within the ancient parish of St Margaret was disputed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The liberties of South Fields and Bromkinthorpe were part of St Mary's parish, but were not formally incorporated for municipal purposes until 1835. McKinley & Martin, 'Ancient borough', pp. 350-1, 369, 375; White, Directory (1877), p. 305.
around Wharf Street adjacent to the canal was considered to be particularly poor and unhealthy.\textsuperscript{104}

Apart from these ancient parishes and their associated liberties there were four extra-parochial liberties.\textsuperscript{105} Black Friars, which had developed into a poor densely-populated district by 1837, became a civil parish in 1857 and was included in the ecclesiastical parish of St Nicholas, as was White Friars - also known as Augustine Friars. From the eighteen-thirties the whole of Whitefriars was taken over by railway sidings, coal merchants' offices, and warehouses. Castle View had a small population and was assimilated into the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary. The Newarke housed some of the town's most prominent inhabitants until well into the nineteenth century, became incorporated within the borough in 1835, and eventually also became part of St Mary's parish.\textsuperscript{106}

During the nineteenth century numerous churches were built to serve the growing population, and these were eventually granted their own parishes. Many were created within the large parish of St Margaret, and separate marriage registers were maintained by the daughter churches as follows: St George from 1853, St John the Divine from 1855, Christ Church from 1857, St Luke from 1869, St Mark from 1872, St Saviour from 1877, St Matthew from 1879, and St Peter from 1874. Several new parishes were also established within the ancient parish of St Mary. Their marriage registers exist as follows: Holy Trinity from 1861, St Andrew from 1864,


\textsuperscript{105} Data concerning the marriages of brides and grooms residing in these liberties have been included in the totals of the parish in which they were married. This decision was taken to ensure consistency of data, for while the early registers gave parishes as place of residence, the later ones gave street names, making it more difficult to distinguish between parishes. The liberties were also assimilated into the borough, and into the ecclesiastical parishes at different times, and sometimes there is confusion as to which parish they belonged to.

\textsuperscript{106} McKinley & Martin, 'Ancient borough', pp. 343-7, 387-8; 43 & 44 Vic. c. 37 \textit{Census of England and Wales 1871: Population Table, Area, Houses and Inhabitants} (1872), 1 Counties, p. 220 places White Friars in the parish of St Nicholas, \textit{Census 1881} (1883) p. 213 includes it in the parish of St Mary.
and St Paul from 1872. Data relating to these parishes have been incorporated into their mother parishes to retain consistency, and to ensure a viable sample.

THE PARISH REGISTERS

From 1754 onwards all the registers contain the date of marriages, and the signature or mark of the brides and grooms. It is therefore possible to use these data to measure both male and female illiteracy for each decadal year from 1760. Again using signature evidence, the percentage of literate spouses marrying illiterate ones can be analysed, as can fully literate or illiterate marriages. As place of residence is usually given, the illiteracy of extra-parochial spouses can also be examined. Prior to 1840 status was rarely given, and at all periods details of age seemed to be dependent on the whim of the incumbent. Sometimes ages were given only for minors, and F. or M. were also used to denote full or minor, but where data do exist it is possible to explore possible links between age and illiteracy. Before 1840 occupations were rarely given, but from then onwards the groom's occupation was always provided, as were the occupations of the fathers of both groom and bride - unless they were deceased and then they were only sometimes recorded. The occupation of the bride was rarely shown, for this information was apparently left to the discretion of the vicar. The connection between illiteracy and occupation of both groom and bride (if possible), and any connection between their illiteracy and the occupations of their fathers may be deduced from these data.

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107 Data were extracted from the parish registers - which are held on microfiche at the Leicestershire County Record Office (Leics. C.R.O.) - for each decadal year from 1760-1890. Their reference numbers are as follows: All Saints, 1D63/1/7-12 (1754-1833); DE 2355/1/8-12 (1833-1890); St Andrew 5D73/5-6 (1864-1893); Christ Church, 3D71/1/9-11 (1857-1906); St George, 3D71/25-28 (1853-1894); Holy Trinity, DE 1543/1-4 (1860-1897); St John the Divine, 1544/1/6-8 (1868-1907); St Leonard, L9293.LE.St L., DE2244/11 (1877-1898); St Luke, 3D71/57-58, (1869-1891); St Margaret, 24D65/D1-D36 (1754-1890); St Mark, DE 1752/8-10 1857-1922; St Martin, DE 1564/5-12 (1754-1922); St Matthew, 3D71/71-73 (1867-1893) St Mary, 8D59/16-19 (1754-1804), D1683/10-27 (1805-1891); St Nicholas, 11D62/5-11 (1754-1891); St Paul, DE 1501/8-9 (1872-1890); St Peter, DE1682/9-11 (1874-1892); St Saviour, DE 2652/12 (1877-1890). The information was then transferred to a database. See Appendix 7 for details of the database construction.
Figure 3.1: Illiteracy in the borough of Leicester for each decadal year, 1760-1890.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL MARRIAGES</th>
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<th>ILLITERATE BRIDES</th>
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<td>52</td>
<td>39.1</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Data from the marriage registers of All Saints, St Margaret, St Martin, St Mary and St Nicholas for each decadal year, 1760-1890, from the daughter churches of St Mary and St Margaret, and St Leonard for the decadal years, 1880-1890.
ILLITERACY AND GENDER

We shall now examine the difference between male and female illiteracy in Leicester, as well as changes in illiteracy over time. Figure 3.1 shows that male illiteracy in Leicester rose from 36.1% in 1760 to 39.1% in 1770, but then fluctuated until it eventually fell to 31.4% in 1810. However, in 1830 it rose again to 38.2%, but showed an improvement from 1840 onwards (apart from a slight rise in 1850). It became apparent from the historiography of illiteracy that variation in male illiteracy prior to the mid nineteenth-century was common to many regions. From 1860 there was a marked improvement which accelerated after 1870, and by 1890 male illiteracy was 3.6%. The significant improvement by 1890 can be attributed to the effect of the board schools. Female illiteracy followed a similar pattern, but at a much higher level, and did not approach the level of male illiteracy until 1890 when it declined to 6.1%. Thus in 1760 it was 62.3% with a pronounced rise to 66.3% in 1790, followed by a steady improvement - except in 1820 when it again rose to 63.5%. Moreover it did not increase in 1850 as did male illiteracy.

With the exception of St Margaret's, the samples are probably too small to attempt precise comparisons between the parishes, but the available data allow the following deductions to be made. In St Martin's - a comparatively small but the most prosperous parish - male illiteracy was consistently lower than in all the other parishes, although there were similar fluctuating peaks and troughs to those observed in Leicester as a whole. A comparable pattern can be seen in the progress of female illiteracy which was again generally lower than in all the other parishes. Although male and female illiteracy were at a relatively high level in 1760, there was an improvement after this date, while in all the other parishes apart from St Mary's - a comparatively poor but much larger parish - illiteracy rose after 1760 before it eventually declined. In 1760 male illiteracy in St Mary's was the highest of all the parishes, but this had fallen by 1810. There were similar peaks and troughs to those already noted, but the dates did not necessarily always coincide. Female illiteracy was again the highest of all the parishes in 1760 but this had fallen by
1810. As with male illiteracy there were periods of deterioration and improvement before a marked decline was apparent by 1890.

St Margaret's was the largest, most densely populated and one of the poorest parishes, but although in 1760 male illiteracy was the same as St Martin's, this had risen by 1800. However in common with the two previous parishes there were periods of improvement which were not maintained. Female illiteracy in 1760 was the lowest in the borough in 1760, but this had risen by 1800. Again the decline in female illiteracy followed a similarly fluctuating pattern to that of male illiteracy in the parish, but the improvement after 1840 was maintained, and there was a sudden fall in 1890. Male illiteracy in All Saints was the lowest of all the parishes in 1760 but this had risen by 1770. A fall in illiteracy in the early years of the nineteenth century occurred in this parish in 1800, but again this improvement was not maintained, and there were periods of fluctuation before it finally fell after 1880. Female illiteracy in 1760 was high, and remained so until 1830 when it began to improve. Even so it was still higher than in all the other parishes. St Nicholas was a small parish with a correspondingly low number of marriages. There were very few marriages in the years 1760 and 1780, and records for the year 1790 are missing. Male illiteracy in this parish rose from 1790 to 1820, without the early-nineteenth century improvement as observed in the other parishes. Although it had fallen by 1890 it was still higher than in all the other parishes (apart from St Leonard's). Female illiteracy rose from 1790 to 1830, when there was an improvement, although it was still relatively high in comparison with that in St Mary's, St Margaret's and St Martin's.

As could be anticipated, illiteracy in St Martin's parish for both brides and grooms was overall the lowest of all the parishes. In St Mary's parish the illiteracy of both partners was slightly higher for most years than that of St Martin's. While the illiteracy of the grooms in both St Margaret's and All Saints was only a little higher than those of St Mary's, bridal illiteracy was
considerably higher, and especially so in All Saints. However the brides in St Nicholas' parish were even more illiterate, whereas the illiteracy level of the grooms was similar to that in All Saints. Although there were variations between the parishes in the extent of both male and female illiteracy, the fluctuating pattern of progress was common to each. Indeed the difference between male and female illiteracy, and the pattern of peaks and troughs over time mirrors the data already analysed for Leicester.

Thus the illiteracy of both brides and grooms in all the Leicester parishes rose towards the end of the eighteenth century, and although there was a marked improvement in the first decade of the nineteenth century this was not maintained, for it rose again in 1820, and there was little steady progress before 1850. After the middle of the century illiteracy began to decline and by 1890 the effect of the board schools was most evident. This disparity between male and female illiteracy in the urban parishes of Leicester is similar to that found in other counties in England and Wales during the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We shall now compare male and female illiteracy in Leicester using data from the Anglican marriage registers, with the data extracted from the Annual Reports of the Registrar General for 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880 which relate to both Anglican and non-Anglican marriages in the registration districts of Leicester, Leicestershire, and England and Wales.

Data extracted from the Annual Reports of the Registrar General relating to illiterate grooms and brides for both Anglican and non-Anglican marriages in Leicester can be found in Figures 3.2 and 3.3. The years 1850, 1860 and 1880 show slightly lower illiteracy for both males and females based on these data than do the figures based solely on Anglican marriage register evidence. However in 1870 the figure for male illiteracy was comparable with 19.8% for Anglican, and 19.9% for all registered marriages, while female illiteracy based on the marriage registers in that year was slightly lower at 31.9% as compared to 33.1% for all registered
marriages. The number of lower-middle, and middle-class Nonconformist families in Leicester could possibly account for the slight discrepancy between the figures extracted from the Anglican marriage registers, and those based on both Anglican and non-Anglican marriages combined, for members of such families were more likely to be literate.

When the figures for both Anglican and non-Anglican marriages in Leicester are compared with similar data for marriages in Leicestershire (again shown in Figures 3.2 and 3.3), male illiteracy in Leicester is slightly lower for all the years, but slightly higher in 1850 if based on data from the parish registers. Nevertheless female illiteracy is higher whatever data are used. Greater opportunities for female employment in Leicester could account for the higher percentage of illiteracy there. Figure 3.2 also shows that male illiteracy based on data for Anglican and non-Anglican marriages in Leicester was slightly lower than that of males in England and Wales, but was higher in 1850 if based on data from the parish records. While female illiteracy in Leicester (as shown in Figure 3.3) was similar to the national figures in 1850 and 1860, it was higher in 1870 and 1880. Again the rise in opportunities for female employment in Leicester after 1860 may have been a contributory factor. In 1880 favourable comparison with the national figures for both male and female illiteracy in Leicester may be too early to be attributable to the effect of the board schools, but the improved economic situation from the eighteen-sixties was probably an important contributory factor.
Figure 3.2: Male illiteracy: Leicester marriage register evidence compared to the Annual Reports of the Registrar General, 1850-1880.109

Data for Graph

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<th>% ILLIT.</th>
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</tr>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>REGISTRAR GENERAL LEICESTERSHIRE - ALL MARRIAGES</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>2389</td>
<td>383</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.3: Female illiteracy: marriage register evidence compared to data from the Annual Reports of the Registrar General, 1850-1880.\footnote{Data from Leicester parish marriage registers 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, & from the Annual Reports of the Registrar General: 1850 (1854), pp. 4, 19-20; 1860 (1862), pp. 4, 18-19; 1870 (1872), pp. 4, 18-19; 1880 (1882), pp. 4, 18-19.}
Indeed during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries there appears to have been a
time lag of around ten years between improvement or decline in Leicester's economy, and a
subsequent reduction or increase in illiteracy. Thus during the late-eighteenth century a decline
in the hosiery trade (due in part to the effects of the American War of Independence), grievances
connected with working practices in this trade, the revolution in France, and popular discontent
all coincided with a rise in illiteracy in 1790 and in 1800.\footnote{During the war of American
Independence the net wages of a journeyman stockinger in Leicester averaged 5s. 6d. a week. \textit{Leicester \& Nottingham Journal} 14.3.1778.} The subsequent improvement in the
hosiery trade in Leicester from 1787-1800 was aided by a commercial treaty with France in 1786,
an agreement on wages with the hosiers at Nottingham in 1787, and the introduction of new
types of goods, but even so not all branches of the trade were flourishing. After 1810 trade was
again in decline apart from in the fancy hose branch, and even here demand was falling with the
onset of new fashions, for as the century progressed socks replaced stockings in men's dress. In
1815 the average net wages of the frame-work knitters was about 14 shillings a week, but in
1816-17 wages in the hosiery trade fell by around 30-40\%, and many were forced to sell their
household goods and seek parish relief.\footnote{A. Temple Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester: a History
of Leicester 1780-1850} (Leicester, 1954), pp. 41-62, 104-5.}

Nevertheless, the brief recovery in the hosiery trade helped to ameliorate the economic
situation in Leicester, and possibly contributed to the decline in illiteracy in 1810, for the
improved state of the economy would have enabled adults to have money and energy available
for self-improvement. They were also less likely to be dependent on their children's wages, thus
allowing children time for education. However the later reduction in trade could have been a
contributory factor to a rise in both male and female illiteracy in 1820 and 1830. Indeed one of
the chief characteristics of frame-work knitting upon which the economy of Leicester was largely
dependent during the first half of the nineteenth century, was the domestic nature of the trade.
This inevitably led to the employment of children, because of the cheapness of their labour.
Until the age of two children generally stayed at home with their mothers. When they were three, or sometimes as soon as they could walk, they were sent to a dame school, not necessarily for instruction, but to keep them out of the way so that their mothers could work, for female employment was very high in Leicester. From the age of five or six they were put to work. This entailed long hours (usually between 10 or 12 hours on average, but this could increase at the end of the week to ensure that orders were met) in cramped, unventilated rooms. Their poor diet, sedentary nature of the work and bad lighting led to eye strain and poor health.113 Boys were employed as yarn winders either at home or in the frame-shops, and girls as seamers almost wholly employed at home where they seamed the fingers of gloves, stocking welts and the seams of cut-up stockings. Boys from the age of seven, and girls from the age of nine also worked on narrow frames. Seaming was extremely low paid, and long irregular hours had to be worked - often until late at night when the goods were required the following day. Nevertheless unless wives and children undertook the winding and seaming, money for these tasks was deducted from the payment received for finished articles, thus reducing the families' income. Indeed children's wages were often essential to family survival. Many men examined during the government inquiry of 1845 into the conditions of the frame-work knitters stated that they desired education for their children, but that they were needed at home to 'seam at the age of five and six, and to wind at six and seven years of age'. The glovers often seamed from an even earlier age, and many of the girls who did attend dame schools took their seaming with them. The only chance many of these children had to become literate was at Sunday school, for Sunday was the only day on which they could be spared from their work. Even so many were

too tired to benefit from instruction at evening or Sunday school, and often lacked 'things to go
decent in', and thus could not attend.\textsuperscript{114}

The children of frame-work knitters in Leicester can be compared to the children of those
employed in Coventry's domestic ribbon industry, or Nottingham's lace industry. The demand
for child labour was also high in these industries, and part-time education (particularly at Sunday
school) was the rule.\textsuperscript{115} The lack of factories in Leicester together with the existence of small
frame-shops, work at home, and from the middle of the century employment in the small work
shops connected with the boot and shoe trade, meant that the children were not covered by
factory legislation. Indeed in 1851 the number of children employed equalled those working in
some factory towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, for the ratio of children to population in
attendance at day school was 9.5, which can be compared to 9.1 in Preston, and 9.2 in Doncaster.
Their working conditions, and the opportunity to attend school did not begin to substantially
improve until after the introduction of the Workshops Regulation Act of 1867, and even then its
terms were often evaded by parents and unscrupulous employers.\textsuperscript{116}

The improvement in both male and female illiteracy in 1840 seems to be unrelated to the
economic situation some ten years earlier (although this could be attributed to an increase in
elementary education). During the eighteen-twenties there were waves of strikes in the hosiery
trade, and in March 1826 approximately 16,000 people were being relieved by subscriptions.\textsuperscript{117}
From 1831-41 ten hosiery manufacturers went out of business, bankruptcy affected sixteen
others, 'wages in the common branch [were] half what they were in 1815', and by 1837 employers

\begin{footnotes}
\item[114] Report from the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Conditions of the Frame-work Knitters, XV
\item[115] W.B. Stephens, 'Early Victorian Coventry: education in an Industrial Community, 1830-1851', in A. Everitt (ed.),
\item[116] The Workshops Regulation Act (1867), 33 & 34 Vic. 146.
\item[117] Leicester Journal (L.J.), 24.03.1826.
\end{footnotes}
had begun to discharge their workforce. Poor Law expenditure increased from £12,654 in 1840 to £20,000 in 1843, and in 1847-48 'a severe depression in trade suddenly raised the number of applicants to such an extent that it became necessary to organise some test of destitution', for expenditure had risen to £37,614. Both Thomas Cooper and Joseph Dare observed that attendance at their evening classes had fallen, that the men had lost interest as employment became scarce, and that they suffered the effects of exhaustion and privation. This extended period of economic distress does appear to have had an adverse effect on male illiteracy which declined in 1850, although female illiteracy showed an improvement. Although there was a 'monetary crisis' in 1857-8 and a 'depression in trade' during the winter of 1858-9 this did not seem to have been reflected in male or female illiteracy in 1870, for the former remained the same as that in 1860, while female illiteracy had declined. By this time increased elementary and adult educational provision had probably begun to offset the effects of economic depression.

In the second half of the century Leicester's economic base broadened as new industries were introduced, and the hosiery industry eventually changed from a domestic to a factory industry.

In addition, the many new churches which had been built in the poorer parishes to cater for the rising population, opened schools and Sunday schools, and there were more opportunities for adults to become literate. Indeed male illiteracy showed a marked improvement from 1860.

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118 L.M., 3.6.1837, 2.6.1838 - in 1837, 6,000 paupers were seeking relief in a workhouse that was intended for 680. This loss of employment was also compounded by a poor harvest. L.C., 11.12.1841 - a report given by the hosiery manufacturer William Biggs. Wages were on average 9 shillings per week, but thousands were out of work.


120 References to the socio-economic situation in Leicester during the eighteen-forties can be found in the following. T. Cooper, The Life of Thomas Cooper: Written by Himself (1872), pp. 170-173 commented on the destitution in Leicester in 1842 as employment in the hosiery trade declined; Leics C.R.O. L288, The Leicester Domestic Mission Annual Reports (L.D.M.A.R.) (1846-1869, 1872-1877), especially (1848), pp. 10, 12; Report from the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-work Knitters, XV (1845, I.U.P. edn, Shannon, 1968).

121 This could be attributed to a higher percentage of girls attending Sunday schools.

122 Report as to the Administration of the Poor Law, pp. 7-9, 13.

123 L.D.M.A.R. (1849), p. 4 stated that 'employment in general has now improved'; L.D.M.A.R. (1850) p. 4 noted the 'continued prosperity of the town'. This however was not maintained and several years of scarce employment and harsh winters were logged until L.D.M.A.R. (1862) p. 4, reported 'several fresh branches of industry have been lately introduced ... which have greatly improved the material prosperity of the town'.

132
Although female illiteracy had begun to improve from 1850 it was still high in comparison with that of their male counterparts. This can partly be attributed to their long working day for Dare noted that the starting time of the female class at the Domestic Mission had to be delayed.\textsuperscript{124}

Many children also still worked long irregular hours which had a particularly deleterious effect on literacy, for not only were the children unable to attend day school, they were too tired to learn at night, and their attendance was spasmodic.\textsuperscript{125} The change from domestic to factory-based industries particularly benefitted children, for their hours and educational provision were regulated under the Factory Acts.\textsuperscript{126} However in Leicester many still worked at home or in workshops, and although the Workshops Act benefitted some of these children, this was dependent on responsible employers. Indeed regulations could be evaded by employers, and also by parents who were apathetic to education, or were too poor to manage without their children's wages.\textsuperscript{127} Moreover some children only received education at Sunday school (if at all) as Sunday was their only free day.\textsuperscript{128} Even where working conditions were favourable, and parents wanted their children to become literate, the rise in population strained existing educational facilities.\textsuperscript{129}

From the late-eighteenth century onwards Anglican and nonconformist schools and Sunday schools were established in Leicester. The opening of St Mary's charity school in 1780, St Martin's in 1789, and the dissenting school at the Great Meeting, together with fifteen Sunday schools which opened in 1786 most probably contributed to the improvement in illiteracy by 1810. Nevertheless the Sunday schools experienced initial difficulty in maintaining interest and regular attendance, and the Leicester Journal reported large numbers of illiterate children in St

\textsuperscript{124} L.D.M.A.R. (1853), pp. 11-12.
\textsuperscript{126} In particular An Act to Regulate the Labour of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories (1833), 3 & 4 Wm. c. 103; An Act to Amend the Laws Relating to Labour in Factories (1844), 7 & 8 Vic. c. 15; An Act to Limit the Hours of Labour of Young Persons and Females in Factories (1847), 10 & 11 Vic. 29; The Factory Acts Extension Act (1864), 27 & 28 Vic. c. 48; and (1867) 30 & 31 Vic c. 103.
\textsuperscript{127} The Workshops Regulation Act (1867), 30 & 31 Vic c. 146.
\textsuperscript{129} L.D.M.A.R. (1867), p. 5. Dare contended that while many children were not being educated, a 'multiplication of schools will not solve the problem', for he considered compulsory education to be the only solution.
Margaret's parish in 1807. Moreover the establishment of a County National School, and an evening school in St Nicholas parish in 1812, together with an evening school in St Martin's parish, and the existence of seven dissenting Sunday schools seem to have made little impression, as overall illiteracy in Leicester rose in 1820, although the situation would probably have been worse without these facilities. Indeed both male and female illiteracy declined in 1840, possibly due to the effect of these educational establishments, as the improvement seems unrelated to the economic environment some ten years earlier. By 1890 the effect of board schools on illiteracy was apparent (the first of these were founded in Leicester from 1874). However, prior to this a high proportion of adult men and women had become literate despite a lack of formal education, for even though the Leicester Mechanics' Institute was in decline by 1850, other adult evening classes and adult schools for both men and women had been inaugurated. It would thus appear that both educational provision, and the economic situation had a considerable effect on the progress of illiteracy in Leicester.

THE CHOICE OF LITERATE/ILLITERATE PARTNERS

The effect of illiteracy on the choice of partner, extra-parochial illiteracy, and the relationship between age, and occupation and illiteracy will now be considered. In Table 2 the number of marriages in each decadal year from 1760 to 1890 is shown, together with data relating to the number and percentage of literate grooms marrying illiterate brides, literate brides marrying illiterate grooms, and those marriages were both partners were either literate or illiterate. This information is then graphically represented in Figure 4.

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130 L& N J., 7.7.1787; L J., 5.6.1807, 31.7.1807.
Figure 4: Marriages in the parishes of Leicester: the incidence of literate/illiterate partners as a % of the total marriages for each decadal year, 1760-1890.132

Table 2: Marriages in the parishes of Leicester: the incidence of literate/illiterate partners as a % of the total marriages for each decadal year, 1760-1890.133

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
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<th>LIT. BR. &amp; ILLIT. GR</th>
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<th>BOTH ILLITERATE</th>
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<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1105</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

132 Data extracted from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1760-1890 where in existence.

133 Data extracted from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1760-1890 where in existence.
In only two decadal years did the total of literate grooms marrying illiterate brides exceed the number where they were both literate, and this was in 1790 and 1820 - both years of high increased illiteracy for both sexes in Leicester. Apart from these two years there was a steady increase in literate marriages (with a marked rise in 1810, a year of an overall decline in illiteracy), which accelerated rapidly from 1860 onwards, which is to be expected, for as illiteracy declined there was more chance of finding a literate partner. Throughout the whole period there is a great disparity between the percentage of literate grooms marrying illiterate brides, and literate brides marrying illiterate grooms which is not surprising considering the greater proportion of illiterate women. Nevertheless the possibility that there was little stigma attached to female illiteracy needs consideration, as does the fact that illiterate men may have felt threatened by a literate woman. Illiteracy might also have been of little consequence depending on the social or occupational status of the couple.

ILLITERACY AND EXTRA-PAROCHIAL MARRIAGES

Table 3 relates to marriages in Leicester which involved extra-parochial brides and grooms. These have been divided into two groups, those who resided in Leicestershire, and those who came from other counties. As the sample is fairly small the data has not been analysed for each decade, but has been grouped into three periods: 1760 to 1790, 1800 to 1840 and 1850 to 1890. The years 1760 to 1790 precede the period of this thesis, and by 1850 communications had improved with the advent of the railway, so an increase in the number of extra-parochial brides and grooms from other counties is to be expected.
Table 3: Leicester marriages which involved an extra-parochial partner: to show the illiteracy of partners resident in Leicestershire and those resident in other counties.\textsuperscript{134}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOTAL MARRIAGES</th>
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<th>BRIDES</th>
<th>GROOMS</th>
<th>BRIDES</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>No. ILLIT.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No. ILLIT.</td>
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<td>1631</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-90</td>
<td>3404</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-90</td>
<td>5580</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were fewer extra-parochial brides than there were grooms, for the marriage usually took place in the bride's parish, and it is not surprising that prior to 1850 more extra-parochial spouses came from Leicestershire than from other counties. It is noticeable that the illiteracy of both brides and grooms from Leicestershire was considerably higher than that of those who came from greater distances, and this is so for all periods. Between 1760 and 1790 St Nicholas had the highest proportion of extra-parochial grooms and brides from Leicestershire, and they were also the most illiterate. Those coming into St Martin's from both Leicestershire and other counties were the least illiterate. Between 1800 and 1850 St Martin's again had the lowest illiteracy level for extra-parochial partners, as well as the highest proportion coming from other counties. In St Mary's parish eleven of the twelve brides from Leicestershire were illiterate, which is the highest ratio for any parish in any period. The growth in population is reflected in an increase in the number of marriages between 1850 and 1890, and the higher proportion of extra-parochial partners can most probably be attributed to an improvement in communication.

\textsuperscript{134} Data from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers, for each decadal year, 1760-1890 where in existence.
Table 4 provides information on the choice of extra-parochial brides and grooms for illiterate/literate partners. This has already been examined in relation to all marriages in Leicester, and the results here are similar. Thus it can be seen that in all three periods the proportion of marriages where both partners were literate far exceeded the other categories, and also that more literate grooms married illiterate brides than did illiterate grooms marry literate brides. (This is what would be expected statistically). This situation was reversed for the extra-parochial brides. Thus out of a total of 366 marriages involving extra-parochial grooms, 298 (81%) married literate brides, and out of 107 marriages involving extra-parochial brides, 72 (67%) married literate grooms. 22 (6%) illiterate grooms married illiterate brides and only 15 (14%) illiterate brides married illiterate grooms. A higher proportion of illiterate brides (17%) married literate grooms than did illiterate grooms marry literate brides (5%), but fewer literate brides (2%) married illiterate grooms than did literate grooms (8%) marry illiterate brides.

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Data from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1760-1890 where in existence.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<th>IG m.</th>
<th>LG m.</th>
<th>IB m.</th>
<th>LB m.</th>
<th>IG m.</th>
<th>IB m.</th>
<th>LG m.</th>
<th>LB m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1760-90</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-40</td>
<td>1631</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-90</td>
<td>3404</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5580</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
I.G. = Illiterate Grooms
L.G.= Literate Grooms
I.B. = Illiterate Brides
L.B. = Literate Brides
m. = Married to
Figure 5: Illiteracy of extra-parochial grooms, as a % of all extra-parochial marriages in Leicester.136

![Graph showing illiteracy rates over time](image)

Table 5: Illiteracy of extra-parochial brides and grooms as a % of extra-parochial marriages in Leicester, 1760-1890.137

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>EXTRA-PAROCHIAL GROOMS</th>
<th>EXTRA-PAROCHIAL BRIDES</th>
<th>ALL MARRIAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>ILLIT.</td>
<td>% ILLIT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

136 Data from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1760-1890.
137 Data from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1760-1890.
The illiteracy for all extra-parochial brides and grooms in Leicester (1760-1890) can be seen in Table 5. Bridal illiteracy has not been graphically represented because the number of brides marrying extra-parochially resulted in a very small sample, but the results have been tabulated for comparison and information. The fluctuation in the illiteracy of the extra-parochial grooms (Figure 5) is similar to that previously noted for all grooms recorded in the marriage registers, although the timing is not quite the same. It can be seen that there was a similar rise in illiteracy in 1790, but whereas in Leicester illiteracy was still rising in 1800 and did not improve until 1810, the illiteracy of extra-parochial grooms declined in 1800. The illiteracy of both resident and extra-parochial grooms rose in 1820 but fell in 1840, and from 1870 there was marked improvement.

ILLITERACY AND AGE

Analysis here of age-related illiteracy is possible only after 1840 for prior to this ages were not given, and even after 1840 many registers do not give ages, or record ages only if the groom or bride were under 21, while some give F. or M. to denote full or minor. Consequently some samples are very small, and are unlikely to be reliable. The most popular age for marriage was of course between 21 and 31 years, and this is the largest group in this sample. The registers also give an indication of schooling which would have taken place on average some fifteen years previously.

It is interesting to note that in 1840 and 1850 (Figure 6.1) the illiteracy of grooms who were under 21 was at least 10% higher than that of all other age groups. If education was a major influence on illiteracy than it would be expected that this age group should have been the most literate. We have already considered that the general improvement in literacy in 1860 could be attributed to a more favourable economic environment which could allow increased opportunities for education, and this appears to be reflected in an improvement in illiteracy of
this group. However in 1870 this was again the most illiterate group, and in 1880 only the grooms aged over 40 were more illiterate. One possible explanation is that grooms under 21 who married in 1870 and 1880 could have been affected by the dramatic rise in population in Leicester after c. 1860 which put a strain on existing educational provision. Even in 1880 the illiteracy of grooms aged under 21 was still high at 16.4% compared to 10.8% for the 21 to 30 age group. It was not until 1890 that their illiteracy fell, while the illiteracy of grooms aged 21-40 steadily declined from 1850 onwards.

Allowing for a time-lag of around fifteen years between attending school and marriage, some of the grooms in the age groups 21-30 and 31-40, would have been educated at the same time as grooms aged under 21. Until 1890 both these groups were less illiterate (apart from the 31-40 year-old grooms who married in 1860) than the youngest grooms. A possible explanation is that the grooms marrying at an older age had taken advantage of the increase in opportunities for adult education. Grooms aged over 40 were more illiterate than those aged 21-40, but in each decade the sample is small. Some causes of illiteracy in later life could be attributed to poor sight and other infirmities, the length of time since leaving school, a lack of interest in self-education, or attendance at classes for adults, the demands of work, or a deficiency in opportunities to acquire basic literacy because of a shortage of school or adult Sunday school places. After 1870 the difference between grooms aged over 40 and all other age groups was more marked.

Although female illiteracy was higher than for their male counterparts, there was a similarity in the gender pattern of illiteracy between the various age bands. As can be seen in Figure 6.2 brides aged under 21 were the most illiterate group in 1840, 1850 and 1870. Again it was not until 1890 that they became the least illiterate group. Even then their illiteracy was 3.3%, as compared with 4.7% for the 21-30 year old brides. In 1840 there were only five brides
Figure 6.1: The relationship between the age of the grooms and illiteracy. Illiterate grooms are shown as a % of the total grooms in each age range for each decadal year.\textsuperscript{138}

![Graph showing the relationship between age of grooms and illiteracy over time.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% ILLIT.</td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>% ILLIT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;21</td>
<td>50.0 (8)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>52.8 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>34.8 (23)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36.5 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>14.3 (1)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34.9 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>25.0 (2)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1 (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% ILLIT.</td>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>% ILLIT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;21</td>
<td>28.2 (29)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>16.4 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>17.5 (70)</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>10.8 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>17.0 (8)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13.1 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>25.0 (8)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27.5 (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Figures in brackets denote number in sample.

\textsuperscript{138} Data from Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1840-180 where in existence.
Figure 6.2: The relationship between the age of the brides and illiteracy. Illiterate brides are shown as a % of the total brides in each age range for each decadal year, 1840 to 1890.\textsuperscript{139}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>% ILLIT.</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>% ILLIT.</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>% ILLIT.</th>
<th>ALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;21</td>
<td>61.9 (13)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60.0 (60)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>45.8 (49)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>46.7 (28)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51.4 (126)</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>37.1 (73)</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>50.0 (5)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60.0 (21)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37.5 (12)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>51.7 (15)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58.8 (10)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>% ILLIT.</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>% ILLIT.</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>% ILLIT.</th>
<th>ALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;21</td>
<td>46.3 (93)</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>28.2 (70)</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>3.3 (8)</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>24.6 (83)</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>18.7 (76)</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>4.7 (25)</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>14.7 (5)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14.3 (8)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>14.0 (8)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;40</td>
<td>38.1 (8)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>64.7 (11)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.3 (9)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Figure in brackets denotes size of sample.

\textsuperscript{139} Data from Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1840-1890 where in existence.
recorded as being over 40, and they were all literate. In 1850 and 1870 they were less illiterate as a group than brides aged under 21, but in 1880 their illiteracy was particularly high, and in 1890 they were still more illiterate than all other brides.

From 1850 the illiteracy of the brides between 21 and 40 steadily fell, and for those between 31 and 40 it remained constant at 14% for 1870, 1880 and 1890. Although many women and girls attended Sunday school, and could have become literate there, not all of these offered instruction in writing. During the 1850's Dare recorded that many women attended evening classes so that they could write to their husbands, brothers and friends who were fighting overseas, or to enable them to read the letters they received. Some betrothed girls wished to become literate before they were married, but many were easily discouraged, or attended classes irregularly. It was apparent that when the economy was depressed classes were affected because of poverty, and when the economy was buoyant many women had ample employment but little time for education.

ILLITERACY AND SECOND MARRIAGES

As marital status was not consistently recorded by all the parishes prior to 1840, analysis here has been restricted to each decadal year from 1840-1890 (Table 6). Widowers ranged from 14% of all grooms in 1840 to 8% in 1890. 3% of total grooms were illiterate in 1840-1870, 2% in 1880, and 0.7% in 1890. The widows ranged from 12% of all brides in 1840 to 6% in 1890. 7% of all brides were illiterate in 1840, 5% in 1850 and 1860, 4% in 1780, and 2% in 1880 and 1890. These second and subsequent marriages could therefore have had a slight effect on illiteracy in Leicester as some of the signatures would have been recorded more than once.

Table 6: The incidence of illiteracy in second marriages in Leicester, as a percentage of the total marriages for each decadal year from 1840-1890.\textsuperscript{141}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>No. OF MARRIAGES</th>
<th>No. &amp; (%) WIDOWERS</th>
<th>No. &amp; (%) ILLITERATE</th>
<th>No. &amp; (%) WIDOWS</th>
<th>No. &amp; (%) ILLITERATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>54 (14)</td>
<td>13 (3)</td>
<td>44 (12)</td>
<td>25 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>72 (13)</td>
<td>19 (3)</td>
<td>51 (9)</td>
<td>27 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>66 (14)</td>
<td>16 (3)</td>
<td>43 (9)</td>
<td>25 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>72 (11)</td>
<td>20 (3)</td>
<td>40 (6)</td>
<td>26 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>72 (10)</td>
<td>19 (2)</td>
<td>50 (6)</td>
<td>20 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>71 (8)</td>
<td>6 (0.7)</td>
<td>49 (6)</td>
<td>16 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ILLITERACY AND OCCUPATION

The relationship between illiteracy and occupation will now be examined, but because of the well-known paucity of evidence relating to the occupation of brides, their fathers' occupations have been used in this analysis.

Table 7 refers to the number and percentage of grooms in each occupational group for the decadal years 1840-1860, and provides information on their illiterate status. Of the 380 grooms who married in 1840, 54 (14\%) were employed in the textile trade, and of these 10 (8\%) were illiterate. There were 41 (11\%) labourers, 25 (21\%) of whom were illiterate. Of the 80 (21\%) frame-work knitters, 50 (42\%) were illiterate, and they were therefore the most illiterate of all the occupational groups. In 1850 out of a total of 554 grooms, there were 84 (15\%) textile workers, and of these 15 (8\%) were illiterate. Labourers accounted for 49 (9\%) of whom 30 (16\%) were illiterate. There were 120 (22\%) frame-work knitters, and 81 (43\%) were illiterate. Again this was the occupation with the highest illiteracy. By 1860 of the 486 grooms 58 (12\%)

\textsuperscript{141} Data from Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1840-1890.
Table 7: The number and percentage of illiterate grooms in each occupational group for each decadal year, 1840-1860.142

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRADE GROUP</strong></td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td><strong>B %</strong></td>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles/Clothing1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame-work Knitting</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Const./Clay/Extr.2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; Service</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>380</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Number of marriages in each trade.
B % of total marriages in each trade.
C Number of illiterate grooms in each trade.
D Illiterate grooms as % of total illiterate grooms.
E % illiterate grooms in each trade.

Notes:
* Although for the majority of occupations the sample size of illiterate grooms is very small, all occupational groups have been included as these show the disparity between these trades and those employed in textiles, and leather or as labourers.
1 Excluding frame-work knitters.
2 Construction, clay and extractive trades.
3 Army, navy, police, customs, prisons, asylums etc.
4 Includes clerks, school teachers, unspecified manufacturers, and various other trades.

142 Data from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1840-1860.
were employed in the leather trade, and of these 16 (17%) were illiterate. There were 45 (9%) labourers, and of these 16 (17%) were illiterate. Of the 69 (14%) textile workers 11 (11%) were illiterate. The frame-work knitters were still the most illiterate, for of the 59 (12%) grooms, 22 (23%) were illiterate. The other occupational groups all represented less than 10% of all grooms who married in these years, and less than 10% of these were illiterate. Indeed, the frame-work knitters, textile, and leather workers, and labourers were the largest occupational groups in Leicester. Figure 7 depicts the progress of illiteracy of grooms in these occupations from 1840-1860.

In 1870, 134 (20%) of the 678 grooms were illiterate as can be seen in Table 8. Of the 162 employed in the leather trades, 55 (41%) were illiterate. 87 grooms were textile workers, and of these 9 (7%) were illiterate, and of the 49 labourers 15 (11%) were illiterate. From 1870 onwards the number of frame-work knitters declined, but although in that year only 38 grooms were recorded in this occupation, nearly half of these were illiterate (13% of all illiterate grooms), even so their illiteracy was lower than that of the leather workers. In this trade the finishers were the most illiterate, for in 1870 over half of all illiterate leather workers were finishers.

Despite an increase in the number of marriages (as was to be expected considering the rise in population), there was a decline in illiteracy from 1880 onwards. Of the 806 grooms, 99 (12%) were illiterate. Thirteen (13%) illiterate grooms were employed in the textile trade, 18 (18%) were labourers, 43 (44%) were leather workers (of these 24% were finishers), and 6 (6%) were frame-work knitters. By 1890 of the 860 grooms only 32 (4%) were illiterate. Of these 6 (19%) were labourers, 4 (13%) were textile workers, and 17 (53%) were leather workers. The finishers, together with the riveters were the most illiterate workers in this trade. There was an improvement in the illiteracy of frame-work knitters for although 20 (2%) grooms were in this trade, none of them were illiterate.
Table 8: The number and percentage of illiterate grooms in each occupational group for each decadal year, 1870-1890.\textsuperscript{143}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRADE GROUP</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B %</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles/Clothing</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame-work Knitting</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Const./Clay/Extr.\textsuperscript{2}</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; Service</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services\textsuperscript{3}</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous\textsuperscript{4}</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Number of marriages in each trade.  
B % of total marriages in each trade.  
C Number of illiterate grooms in each trade.  
D Illiterate grooms as % of total illiterate grooms.  
E % illiterate grooms in each trade.  

Notes:  
* Although for the majority of occupations the sample size of illiterate grooms is very small, all occupational groups have been included as these show the disparity between these trades and those employed in textiles, and leather or as labourers.  
1 Excluding frame-work knitters.  
2 Construction, clay and extractive trades.  
3 Army, navy, police, customs, prisons, asylums etc.  
4 Includes clerks, school teachers, unspecified manufacturers, and various other trades.  

\textsuperscript{143} Data from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1870-1890.
Figure 7: The relationship between illiterate grooms and occupation: a graph to show the illiteracy of grooms in the frame-work knitting, textiles, and leather trades and those employed as general labourers for each decadal year, 1840-1890.\textsuperscript{144}

![Graph showing the relationship between illiterate grooms and occupation.]

Note:
The illiterate grooms in the four occupational groups above are shown as a percentage of the total number of illiterate grooms in each decadal year.

Despite the high level of illiteracy among frame-work knitters in the first half of the century, and that of the leather trade in the second (in particular the finishers and riveters engaged in boot and shoe making) these trades were the mainstay of Leicester's economy. Illiteracy therefore was apparently irrelevant to these trades at this time.

\textsuperscript{144} Data from Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1840-1890.
Figure 8: The percentage of illiterate grooms in each trade for each decadal year 1840–1890. Data taken from column E in Tables 7 and 8.
It is not unexpected to find in an examination of illiteracy by occupation between 1840 and 1890 (Tables 7 and 8, and Figure 8), that the grooms employed in the professions, services and miscellaneous occupations (which included clerks and schoolteachers), were the least illiterate. Although in 1850, 33% of grooms classified as being in the services were illiterate; this was in a small sample of only 6 grooms, of whom 2 were illiterate. These three occupational groups therefore have not been graphically represented because of their literate status throughout most of the period.

The next least illiterate grooms (as can be seen in Figure 8), were the metal workers and wood workers, and those employed in connection with food and drink, for these three groups were less than 10% illiterate throughout most of the period. There were however two exceptions, one being that 14% of the metal workers were illiterate in 1870 and an inexplicably high 24% of wood workers were illiterate in 1850 compared to the other decadal years. Grooms employed in agriculture, transport and in the retail trades can also be ranked together. Although they all exhibited high levels of illiteracy prior to 1850, during the second half of the century their illiteracy dramatically declined. In 1840, 38% of agricultural workers were illiterate, but by 1850 this had fallen to 32%, and in 1860 there was a dramatic decline in illiteracy to 9%, which was maintained in 1870. In 1880 only 4% were illiterate, and by 1890 they were completely literate. Similarly the illiteracy of transport workers was high at 44% in 1840, and 59% in 1850, but by 1860 this had declined to 32%, and decreased rapidly to 6% in 1870. This decline was maintained, and could perhaps be attributed to the fact that the railway network in particular (more so than roads or canals) required an increasingly literate clerical workforce for the maintenance and interpretation of timetables, accounts, ticket booking and invoicing. The illiteracy of grooms employed in the retail trades had also declined to less than 10% from 1870 onwards. Prior to this, in 1840, 30% were illiterate, 23% in 1820, and 13% in 1860. The
improvement in Leicester's economy in the second half of the nineteenth century possibly required a more literate workforce, and in addition more educational provision was available to remedy this need.

The five most consistently illiterate trades were textiles, construction, leather, labourers, and frame-work knitting. The grooms employed in the textile trades showed a steady decline in illiteracy from 1840 to 1870, but this rose again in 1880. Nevertheless by 1890 only 4% of the grooms were illiterate. Construction workers showed a similar steady decline in illiteracy, although this remained on average just under 25% until 1880 when it fell to 15% and by 1890 there were no illiterate construction workers in this sample. Unlike the grooms in the majority of occupations here analysed, those employed in the leather trades became increasingly illiterate between 1840 (11%) and 1870 (34%). It was not until 1880 that illiteracy declined to 18%, which apart from that of the labourers was the highest of all trades, and even in 1890 when the majority of the trades in this sample had literate workers, 5% of leather workers were still illiterate. Only labourers were higher at 14%. Indeed although the illiteracy of the labourers fell to 31% in 1870, this rose again in 1880 to 36% and was still high in 1890 at 14%. However, from 1840 to 1860 grooms employed as frame-work knitters were the most illiterate of all the trades, with illiteracy at 63% in 1840, 68% in 1850, and 37% in 1860. They were even more illiterate than the labourers with 61% in 1840 and 1850, and 36% in 1860. In 1870 the illiteracy of the frame-work knitters rose again to 45%, but declined in 1880 to 16% and surprisingly by 1890 there were no illiterate frame-work knitters.

It is interesting to note that the illiteracy of grooms employed in the leather trades rose during the middle years of the nineteenth century. In 1840, there were 2 illiterate grooms (11%), out of the 19 leather workers recorded. By 1860, 16 of the 58 grooms were illiterate (28%), in 1870, of the 162 grooms employed as leather workers 55 (34%) were illiterate, and even in 1890 when
grooms in most other trades were literate, 17 of the 342 leather workers (5%) were still illiterate. This trade encompassed the expanding boot and shoe industry, which by the second half of the nineteenth century was the highest employer of labour in Leicester, and one of the mainstays of the economy. It is apparent that it expanded in spite of the illiteracy of its workforce. Similarly frame-work knitting which was equally important to Leicester’s economy in the first half of the century and the most labour intensive, existed in an environment of illiteracy. Indeed as the illiteracy of frame-work knitters declined that of the leather workers increased, for the expanding boot and shoe trade comprised a number of processes such as finishing and riveting which were not dependent on a literate workforce. This would doubtless have attracted illiterate workers from trades now demanding a higher level of literacy. Moreover the demand for frame-work knitters (who as we have seen were among the most illiterate workers) was declining during the second half of the century as the hosiery industry became more mechanised. Thus many who would previously have become frame-work knitters would no doubt have been attracted to the boot and shoe industry where again their illiteracy would be irrelevant to the nature of the work.

Similar links between occupation and illiteracy can be seen in the occupational groups of the fathers of illiterate grooms (Table 9), the majority of whom were employed in the textile and leather trades, or as labourers. Until 1850 the highest proportion of fathers of illiterate grooms were frame-work knitters, thereafter fathers who were labourers were the most numerous. Thus in 1840, 37% of the fathers of illiterate grooms were frame-work knitters, 40% in 1850, 35% in 1860, 45% in 1870, 21% in 1880, and 18% in 1890. Although there were few illiterate grooms in 1890 which resulted in a small sample size, the number of illiterate grooms whose fathers were frame-work knitters is still significant. 21% of the fathers of illiterate grooms were labourers in 1840 and 1850, 25% in 1860, 13% in 1870, 22% in 1880, and 31% in 1890. They were the most numerous of all occupations. The incidence of leather workers among the fathers of illiterate grooms is not as marked as among the grooms, as the boot and shoe trade did not expand in
Leicester until after 1860, and hence by the time these workers had children illiteracy would have been in decline in Leicester.

Few brides recorded occupations, but of those who did out of a total of 41 in 1840, 28 were employed in the textile and clothing trade, 10 were in service, and 3 were straw bonnet makers. 16 (57%) of the textile workers were illiterate and 9 of the 10 in service. Only 10 brides recorded occupations in 1850, 7 were literate spinners, and of the 3 servants 1 was illiterate. There were no details of occupation in 1860, and in 1870 there were 2 servants, 1 milliner and one machinist - all literate. In 1880 all of the 43 brides who recorded occupations were literate. Of these 12 were textile and clothing workers, 14 were employed in the shoe trade, 11 were servants, 2 were factory hands, 2 were cigar makers, and there was 1 nurse and 1 schoolmistress. In 1890 of the 81 brides who recorded occupations, 31 were employed in the textile trade - of whom 2 were illiterate, 28 were in the shoe trade, 10 were in service - of whom 2 were illiterate, 9 were factory workers, and there was 1 cigar maker, 1 forewoman, and 1 glasshand.
Table 9: The occupations of the fathers of illiterate grooms for each decadal year, 1840-1890.\(^\text{145}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers’ Trade</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>6 (5)</td>
<td>13 (7)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>9 (7)</td>
<td>11 (11)</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles/Clothing(^1)</td>
<td>5 (4)</td>
<td>16 (8)</td>
<td>15 (16)</td>
<td>10 (7)</td>
<td>12 (12)</td>
<td>3 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame-work Knitting</td>
<td>44 (37)</td>
<td>76 (40)</td>
<td>33 (35)</td>
<td>60 (45)</td>
<td>21 (21)</td>
<td>6 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Const./Clay/Extr.(^2)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>25 (21)</td>
<td>40 (21)</td>
<td>24 (25)</td>
<td>18 (13)</td>
<td>22 (22)</td>
<td>10 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (^3)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Professional</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (^4)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Illit. Grooms</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
* As the sample for most occupations is very small percentages have been given only for those fathers employed in leather and textile trades, and as labourers in order that change over time might be examined.
1 Excluding frame-work knitters.
2 Construction, clay and extractive trades.
3 Army, navy, police, customs, prisons, asylums etc.
4 Includes clerks, school teachers, unspecified manufacturers, and various other trades.

\(^{145}\) Data from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1840-1890.
Table 10: The occupations of the fathers of illiterate brides for each decadal year, 1840-1890.146

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' Trade</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
<td>No. (%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>7 (3)</td>
<td>8 (3)</td>
<td>12 (7)</td>
<td>17 (8)</td>
<td>15 (9)</td>
<td>7 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles/Clothing1</td>
<td>19 (9)</td>
<td>31 (11)</td>
<td>19 (11)</td>
<td>32 (15)</td>
<td>30 (17)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame-work Knitting</td>
<td>74 (35)</td>
<td>106 (38)</td>
<td>59 (33)</td>
<td>60 (28)</td>
<td>36 (21)</td>
<td>10 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Const./Clay/Extr.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; Services</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>43 (20)</td>
<td>49 (18)</td>
<td>37 (21)</td>
<td>35 (16)</td>
<td>28 (16)</td>
<td>13 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Illit. Brides</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
* As the sample for most occupations is very small percentages have been given only for those fathers employed in leather and textile trades, and as labourers in order that change over time might be examined.
1 Excluding frame-work knitters.
2 Construction, clay and extractive trades.
3 Army, navy, police, customs, prisons, asylums etc.
4 Includes clerks, school teachers, unspecified manufacturers, and various other trades.

146 Data from the Leicester Anglican marriage registers for each decadal year, 1840-1890.
The occupations of the fathers of illiterate brides were more diverse than those of the grooms' fathers, but again more were employed in the textile and clothing trade than in any other, and of these the frame-work knitters were the most numerous (Table 10). In 1840, 35% of the fathers of illiterate brides were frame-work knitters, 38% in 1850, 33% in 1860, 28% in 1870 and 21% in 1880. As with the fathers of illiterate grooms, it was not until 1890 that fathers who were labourers (24%) significantly outnumbered those who worked as frame-work knitters, (24% and 18% respectively). Prior to this the fathers of illiterate brides who worked as labourers were as follows: 20% in 1840, 18% in 1850, 21% in 1860, and 16% in 1870 and 1880.

V - CONCLUSION

Although at the beginning of this chapter the historiography of illiteracy revealed that various methods could be used in its measurement, it became apparent that the one based on signatures was the most reliable, for despite its faults it is 'universal, standard and direct'. This was the means used to evaluate illiteracy in Leicester using data from the marriage registers of the six Anglican parishes for each decadal year from 1760-1890. The literature also disclosed that despite considerable regional variation, the most noticeable aspect in all regions (including Leicester), and in all countries, was the difference in illiteracy between men and women, for women were generally far more illiterate than the men.

The reasons for becoming literate, how literacy was achieved, and factors affecting its progress have all been examined in this chapter, but it is difficult to evaluate whether the 'push' of religion and education, or the 'pull' of economic need and social prestige, had the greater effect. A decline in illiteracy can be attributed to some extent to the influence of day and Sunday schools, adult and self-education, although the effects of elementary education on illiteracy were

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not immediately apparent, as there was a time-lag of around 15 years between schooling and measurement at marriage. Indeed the opening of the first board schools in Leicester in 1874 appeared to contribute to the substantial improvement in illiteracy by 1890.

There also appeared to be some connection between change in Leicester's economic environment and a rise or decline of illiteracy some ten years later, although this was more apparent during the first half of the century. Thus wealth, social status, and occupation affected illiteracy in Leicester as elsewhere. Grooms who worked as frame-work knitters, in the shoe trade, and as labourers were more consistently illiterate than those employed in any other occupation for the decadal years 1840-1890. The fathers of both illiterate grooms and brides were mainly occupied as labourers or frame-work knitters, as the shoe trade did not significantly expand until the eighteen-sixties. The connection between economic advancement and literacy has also been considered in its national context, and it is evident that while some occupations depended on literate employees, many appeared to expand despite the illiteracy of the workforce, particularly in the large northern factory towns. During the first half of the nineteenth century Leicester's economy relied heavily of the hosiery trade which tended to be domestic rather than factory-based, and we have seen that prior to 1860 illiteracy was most marked among the frame-work knitters. During the second half of the century the economic base expanded as the boot and shoe, elastic weaving, and engineering trades were developed in the town. Nevertheless illiteracy was high among many workers in the boot and shoe trade - finishers and riveters were particularly illiterate. Thus Leicester's economy appeared to expand despite illiteracy among the workforce. Indeed many manufacturers did not consider that there was a need for a literate or technically-trained workforce. However by 1881 members of the Leicester Chamber of Commerce expressed concern that technical education was essential in order that Leicester might compete with foreign markets, for it was feared that the glove trade had already been lost to
Saxony because of superior designs there.\textsuperscript{148} The acquisition of literacy through elementary and adult education, which would allow technical training to be assimilated more easily, thus assumed a greater importance from then on.

\textsuperscript{148} L.J. 16.3.1862, 17.4.1870; Leics., C.R.O. L381, Leicester Chamber of Commerce \textit{Annual Report} (1882) (1883) (1885).
CHAPTER FOUR

EDUCATION FOR WORKING-CLASS CHILDREN IN LEICESTER, 1780-1870

Education was 'intended to fit them for the station of life it might please God to call them'.

During the nineteenth century the deficiency in elementary education for working-class children increasingly became a cause for concern. Even where schools were in existence, the demand for child labour - which involved long working-hours - together with hostile, apathetic, or poverty-stricken parents militated against regular attendance over an adequate period of time. Girls in particular received an impoverished education, for they were expected to attend to domestic duties even if they did not work. Those that did go to school tended to receive a restricted curriculum with an emphasis on needlework and domestic tasks, to fit them for their future roles as wives and mothers. In Leicester, children were employed from an early age in frame-work knitting, which remained a domestic industry until the second half of the nineteenth century. Although many parents valued education they were forced through necessity to send their children to work, and contended that a lack of suitable clothing prevented their attendance at either day or Sunday school. Indeed those who did attend school were generally the children of warehousemen, clerks and higher paid artisans, not the children of the poorer classes. The schools also attempted to instruct as many children as possible at little cost by using the monitorial system which had been devised in 1798 by Dr Andrew Bell (who was an Anglican),

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1 Leicester Journal (L.J.), 29.5.1857 - comment made by the Rev. Wing at the opening of Laxton Street school in St Mary's parish.
3 Report from the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Frame-work Knitters, xv (1845, I.U.P edn, Shannon, 1968), pp. 112-4. For an analysis of education in Coventry where the economy was similarly based on domestic industry, see W.B. Stephens, 'Early Victorian Coventry: education in an industrial
and Joseph Lancaster (who was a Quaker). This method of teaching was used in the schools established by the National Society for promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church which was instituted in 1811, and those founded by the nonconformist British and Foreign Society which began in 1814. Controversy surrounding the work of Bell and Lancaster, and antagonism between the two Societies contributed to an increase in sectarian rivalry in Leicester as elsewhere.

Although this chapter concentrates on working-class elementary education, in order to ascertain fully the effects of education on adult illiteracy it is necessary to examine all aspects of educational provision. Thus middle-class, and private schools are investigated briefly, for not only did these provide opportunities for a number of working-class children, but as it is not always possible to distinguish between middle-class and working-class brides and grooms from the marriage registers, then their contribution needs consideration. The development of charity schools in Leicester from 1780 until 1833 - when the state first became actively involved in education through the provision of grants for school building - is next examined. The remainder of the chapter is concerned with educational provision from 1833 to 1870. During these years further attempts at state involvement were repeatedly challenged by the Voluntaryists, until the Elementary Education Act of 1870 empowered school boards to assess the local community, 1830-1851', in A. Everitt (ed.), Perspectives in English Urban History (1973).

4 See J. Simon, 'Was there a charity school movement? The Leicestershire evidence', in B. Simon (ed.) Education in Leicestershire 1540-1940 (Leicester, 1968), pp. 94-5. The British and Foreign School Society had originated as the Royal Lancastrian Society - established in 1811 - whose aim was to promote the 'Education of the Labouring Classes of Society of every Religious Persuasion'. The Anglican church responded by establishing the National Society, as it was feared that not only would control of education be weakened because of the proliferation of dissenting Sunday and - to a lesser extent - day schools, but also that potential congregations would be lost to the dissenters.

5 Occupations were not always noted on the marriage registers, and even when these were given it is not always possible to ascertain social status.

6 Although prior to this a select committee had been commissioned by Brougham to enquire into the education of the poor. First to Fifth Reports from the Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders with Minutes of Evidence, and Appendices and an Additional Report, IV (1818).
educational situation, and to provide schools in areas where provision was deficient. The chapter ends with a short account of the first years of the Leicester School Board, the problems it encountered, and the provision it made to educate Leicester's working-class children.

ENDOWED AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

By the end of the eighteenth century the Free Grammar School was struggling to survive, but this tended to provide a classical as well as a limited commercial education for the 'children of the more wealthy citizens'. Alderman Newton, who died in 1761, made provision in his will for an endowed school, for the education and clothing of 35 boys of indigent Anglican parents, but the school was not established until 1785. In addition there was the Collegiate school which was established in 1836 by middle-class Anglican parents who were concerned by the decay of the Free Grammar School. Here approximately 100 boys were educated annually until the school's demise in 1866. Nonconformist middle-class parents were alarmed by the foundation of this school and in 1837 founded the Proprietary school for 128 boys. Although the fees were eventually raised the school was forced to close in 1847 as it was not financially viable. Had one undenominational school for middle-class pupils been established then it might have survived, but Leicester's middle class could not afford to patronise two such schools and thus sectarian conflict adversely affected middle-class as well as working-class education in Leicester. The numerous private academies, dame schools and private venture schools are also here investigated.

THE FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

In 1564 Queen Elizabeth I granted an annual sum of £10 to the mayor and burgesses of Leicester from the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster. This was to be used for the salary of a

7 The Elementary Education Act (1870), 33 & 34 Vic. c. 75.
schoolmaster (who was to be appointed by the mayor and burgesses), 'in order that the youth of
the town might for all time to come be freely instructed in good letters'. In addition she was
instrumental in 1575 in the building of a school and master's house in All Saints parish. A
bequest was also made by William Wigston - a merchant of the Staple - additional endowments
were provided by his executors in 1574, and a gift was made in the same year by the Earl of
Huntingdon. Gifts from other benefactors made during the seventeenth century provided an
income for an usher and under-usher.9 The statutes and orders for the government of the school
specified that the sons of burgesses were to receive a classical education, and an annual exhibition
provided £4 for the education of two poor boys for as long as they remained in attendance.10 It
is apparent from the Alumni that the school tended to cater for the 'sons of burgesses, parsons
and squires'.11

By 1780 the school was in decline, however the corporation attempted to improve this
situation by increasing the salary of the lower schoolmaster by £5 per annum on condition that
he 'receive all poor children free of entrance money'. Although reading, writing, and arithmetic
were taught, together with Latin and English grammar, by 1791 the school was almost without
scholars.12 New rules were formulated by the corporation in a further attempt to attract pupils.
These stated that there was to be one master and that he was to admit the sons of freemen
resident in the borough who were over seven years of age, and who were 'capable of reading
accurately in the testament'. He was to instruct the scholars in the rudiments of English, Latin

9 Report of the Commissioners Appointed in Pursuance of an Act of Parliament made and passed in the 5th and 6th
Years of King William the 4th. c. 71. Intituled (a)"An Act for appointing Commissioners to continue the
Inquiries concerning Chartisties in England and Wales, until the first day of March one thousand eight
hundred and thirty-seven". 32, Part 5 (1838), pp. 2-6.
10 Public record Office (P.R.O.), CHAR/2/145. This information is contained in the Accounts of the Free
Grammar School, 26.8.1836 together with an extract from a topographical dictionary. Leicestershire
County Record Office (Leics. C.R.O.), 3D/42/91 Leicester Free Grammar School Statutes (1564).
11 Cross, Free Grammar School, pp. 38, 50.
12 Leicester Herald (L.H.), 21.8.1792; P.R.O., CHAR/2/145. A reference to a 'falling-off of scholars' in 1791 is to
found in an extract from N. Carlisle, A Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools in England
and Greek, and was to appoint an usher to teach the Classics, and an under-usher to teach writing and accounts as well as English necessary to prepare the boys for an understanding of the Classics. Each boy 'on the foundation' was to pay one guinea on admission and two guineas in lieu of potation money. An additional fee of 7/6 a quarter was to be paid for instruction in writing and accounts. The master was also permitted to take in paying boarders.\(^{13}\)

In 1797 the new headmaster, the Rev. Heyrick, brought 40 boarders from his previous school, but the lower school was closed as it was considered that the non-classical education on offer disregarded the statutes of the founders.\(^{14}\) However in 1802 there was a protest by the freemen who contended that the closure of the lower school denied education to those children for whose benefit the school was originally intended, but this was ignored.\(^{15}\) Nevertheless because the school continued to teach the prescribed classical curriculum, which was unsuited to their needs, Leicester's commercial and manufacturing middle-class families tended to find alternative venues at which to educate their sons, and hence numbers once more declined.\(^{16}\)

During the eighteenth century many grammar schools were faced with the dilemma of whether they should continue to offer a classical education - as prescribed by their statutes - or whether they should offer a curriculum more suited to the changing character of the towns in which they were situated. A further problem which had to be resolved was whether they could afford to continue to offer a free education to poor boys - if this had been stipulated by their founders - or whether their economic viability depended on fee-paying boarders. In addition, during the late eighteenth century alternative educational institutions were founded which in

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\(^{15}\) L.H., 9.4.1802, 16.4.1802, 30.4.1802.
many cases attracted a similar class of students to those catered for in the grammar schools, and thus numbers declined. The dilemmas with which the schools had to contend - whether or not to retain their classical curriculum when faced by declining numbers together with a demand for a non-classical education, and whether to maintain their charitable function - are extensively investigated by Richard Thompson.17

The Grammar School in Leicester had always catered for boarders as well as for the sons of freemen resident in the borough. In common with other grammar schools it continued to offer a classical education despite the fact that the economy of the town depended increasingly on manufacture and commerce, and only provided an alternative non-classical curriculum for a brief period. It also appeared to attract the sons of middle-class families not 'the Freemen of a lower rank [who] never have been in the habit of availing themselves of its privileges'.18 Unfortunately, as well as failing to offer the type of education required by an industrialising town, the Free Grammar School in Leicester was adversely affected by bitter sectarian and political conflict, and these factors all contributed to its decline and eventual demise.

Nevertheless its decline was arrested for a while, for in 1816 the Rev. Davies became headmaster, and under him it was reported that the school admitted more sons of freemen than for the past 40 years.19 However there is conflicting evidence concerning the number of scholars in 1818. Carlisle stated that there were 20 boys 'on the foundation and 10 boarders'. The latter paid an annual fee of 40 guineas and were boarded in a 'good dwelling house' capable of accommodating 40 boys.20 These numbers are supported by the records of attendance furnished


17 R.S. Tompson, Classics or Charity? The Dilemma of the 18th-Century Grammar School (Manchester, 1971).
19 LJ, 18.6.1819.
20 Carlisle, Endowed Grammar Schools in England and Wales, 1, pp. 770-4.
to the trustees by the headmaster the Rev. Davies. However, Brougham’s Returns of 1818 stated that there were '40 boys on the establishment and 20 extra', and that 'the sons of burgesses are entitled to instruction in it by paying 10s and 6d per quarter', but the numbers tended to vary. In 1835 it was reported that the 'Free Grammar School contains 18 or 20 males, and is partly supported from the proceeds of an endowment, and partly by payments from the children; it is open to all sons of burgesses'. Although numbers of both boarders and foundation students increased from 14 freemen's sons and no boarders in 1816, to 25 freemen's sons and 15 boarders in 1819, by 1836 there were only four freemen's sons, one boarder, and no other scholars. It was reported that the freemen's sons 'have left the Free Grammar School and instead attend the Anglican Collegiate School, or the Nonconformist Proprietary School'. These schools were founded in 1836 and 1837 respectively by members of the middle class for the education of their own children. The curriculum of both included practical as well as classical subjects, however they were short-lived, for the Proprietary School failed in 1847, and the Collegiate School in 1866 - victims of sectarian discord - for Leicester's middle-class was numerically too small to maintain two such schools. After the death of Davies in 1841, following a period of ill health during which he was 'incapable of discharging his duties', the school finally closed.

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21 Leics. C.R.O., 3D/42/1/1371, p. 22, Free Grammar School Trustees’ Minute Books, (1837). The children of Dissenters attended the school, but were not on the foundation.
22 A Digest of Parochial Returns Made to the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Education of the Poor, IX (3 vols), 3 (1819), p. 1466; Digest of Parochial Returns, 1, p. 447.
23 Abstract of Answers and Returns Relative to the State of Education in England and Wales, XLI, XLII, XLIII (1835), p. 489.
24 P.R.O., CHAR/2/145. In 1836 the Anglican Collegiate school was opened, and in 1837 the rival Nonconformist Proprietary school was founded, but these schools as the Rev. Davies stated in his letter to the Trustees in 1837, 'are for the most part the property of and supported by persons in that class of life which formerly supplied scholars of the Free Grammar School' - and these were not 'freemen of a lower rank'
Following the 1835 Municipal Reform Act the Anglican Tory Corporation was replaced by one whose members were mainly Nonconformist Whig and radical middle-class reformers. This corporation had little interest in maintaining the Grammar School, and in addition faced financial problems. Thus the contribution to the headmaster's salary (which the Charity Commissioners found to have been regularly paid) was ended in 1836, and the responsibility for other endowments was handed to the trustees of the Church Charities. This body however, was also powerless to revoke the Classical Statutes of the foundation, and thus make the school more attractive and therefore economically viable. It was not until 1860 that a ruling of the court of Chancery empowered the trustees to collect arrears of revenue from the master of Wigston hospital and from the receiver of the Duchy of Lancaster and stipulated that this was to be used to fund free scholars. It was stipulated that the boys were to be aged 8 or over, 'of good character, free from infectious diseases, and whose parents reside in the borough ... a preference being given to those boys whose parents cannot afford to pay for their instruction'. They were initially educated at the Anglican Collegiate school that had been founded in 1836. When this closed in 1866 the free scholars (on average 12 a year) were educated at Mill Hill, and later Trinity Lane private academies.

It is apparent from reports concerning the Free Grammar School, that it was primarily intended to provide a classical education for the sons of freemen, not to alleviate the illiteracy of working-class children. The number of scholars thus educated fluctuated between 5 and 25 a year - the average being around 12 boys a year. Indeed it was stated that 'only the children of the more wealthy citizens avail themselves of the privileges in the grammar school' and many

26 Report of the Charity Commissioners (1838), pp. 6-7, 34. Slight irregularities were found in the administration of exhibitions to enable free scholars to proceed to university. G. Cowie, The History of Wyggeston's Hospital (Leicester, 1893), p. 99.

27 W. White, History, Gazetteer and Directory, of the Counties of Leicester and Rutland (1862), pp. 189-91.

28 Cowie, History of Wyggeston's Hospital pp. 100-3.
proceeded to a university education. However from 1860 it appears that the boys who were nominated to attend the Collegiate school - but were funded by the Free Grammar School foundation - depended on charity for their education, but even so the social class of their parents is obscure. In 1877 a new school was opened in connection with the Wigston hospital foundation and the free scholars were transferred there.

ALDERMAN NEWTON'S ENDOWED SCHOOL

This endowed school was established in the parish of St Nicholas through the bequest of Alderman Gabriel Newton, for the clothing and educating of 35 boys, out of his personal estate, and for instructing them in toning and psalmody. The will was to be executed by the mayor and burgesses of Leicester, and the corporation was to act as trustees. Alderman Newton died in 1761, but there was much controversy concerning his will - even though this was unrelated to the bequest regarding the school in Leicester - and the school was not established until 1785. He had stipulated that 35 boys between seven and fourteen years of age - the sons of 'indigent or necessitous parents of the Established Church' who were not in receipt of poor relief - were to be instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic and psalmody. However the corporation decided that the upper age limit should be 11 years. The boys were to be provided with green clothing, and thus the school became known as the Greencoat School. In 1809 the number of boys was increased to 80 under a power in the trust deed. Entries in the Leicester Corporation Hall Books recorded that from 1809 the age of entry was to be nine years, and the maximum length of time in school was to be three years, with exceptions for illness. From 1811 no boy who had been removed from any other charity school was to be accepted, and proof of age was required.

30 P.R.O., CHAR/2/145.
from all entrants, as well as certification from the minister or churchwardens that 'the parents are of the established church'.

By 1826 however it was apparent that boys of dissenting parents as well as those 'chargeable to the parish' had been admitted, for the committee felt that further enquiries should be made regarding nominations. The numbers were increased in 1828 to 100, and a small library was formed for which the boys had to pay a halfpenny per week. In 1836 the new Liberal council appointed an exclusively Anglican body for administering church charities, and thus the 15 new Anglican trustees of the school were able to ensure that the conditions of entry to the school remained unaltered. The Charity Commissioners appointed new trustees in 1848, and 1862.

**PRIVATE EDUCATION**

Private schools patronised by the working class were referred to as dame schools, common day or private venture/adventure schools. Children up to the age of seven generally attended dame schools, while common day schools usually catered for older children, but there was no absolute restriction on age. The Minutes of the Leicester School Board in 1871 stated that the dame schools as a general rule supplied 'sufficient education to children under five years of age' and 'in some cases where the charge is unusually high they may be regarded as efficient for children of an age somewhat above this'. The Minutes also noted that while some private adventure schools catered for boys or girls others were mixed. The main distinction was in the curriculum, for dame schools tended to concentrate on reading, and sometimes sewing, while

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33 Digest of Parochial Returns, 1, p. 467; Report from the Select Committee, 3 (1818).
34 H.B., 9.3.1810, 29.1.1811, 8.4.1811, 11.12.1815.
35 H.B., 5.9.1826, 5.1.1809, 27.8.1828. The numbers were increased by 16 in 1828 - there had been 80 boys in 1809.
36 Abstract of Returns (1835), p. 490; P.R.O., CHAR/2/145 contain the returns made by the Rev. Dane to the Charity Commissioners in 1836 relating to the school.
37 Report of the Charity Commissioners (1838), p. 12. The Commissioners reported that the school was 'a substantial brick building, near the churchyard of St Nicholas'. Analytical Digest of Reports of Inquiry into Charities (1843), p. 146, Schools not Classical, stated that 100 boys were taught singing and chanting together with reading, writing and arithmetic according to the National system. This was based on the terms of the will of G. Newton dated 1761, the income from which was £47-47s.
common day schools offered writing and accounts in addition to reading. The average weekly fee charged by dame schools fluctuated between three pence and sixpence, and for common day schools between six pence and nine pence. Many of the schools were very small and were classified as 'mere dame schools' or inferior schools on reports and returns. Indeed White's Leicestershire Directory of 1877 commented that in dame schools, 'the teacher gained a poor living, the pupils little knowledge'.

Nevertheless the reason why such schools attracted criticism was not necessarily that the education they provided was inadequate, but that their pupils were not receiving social and moral training in accordance with middle-class values.

With the aid of local directories the number of schools offering private education can be estimated through an examination of the lists of occupations, but the ephemeral nature of these establishments needs consideration as does the possible lack of accurate information regarding occupations. Gardner considered that it was 'excessively difficult to assess accurately the number of working-class private schools in Bristol at any given point [or] to calculate the number of children attending them', and I find this to be the case in Leicester. Moreover it is not always possible to differentiate between working-class and middle-class establishments. It has been suggested however that schools that accommodated boarders were most likely to have catered for the middle class, as were the ones that had more than one proprietor. Some schools also specified that they aimed to cater for 'ladies' or were 'academies for gentlemen' where a commercial or classical education might be obtained. Also middle-class schools tended to be situated in better-class residential areas of the town.

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38 Leics., C.R.O., 3D/42/1-25, Minute Books of the Alderman Newton Charities (1836-1865).
39 Leics. C.R.O., 19D59/V1/1, Leicester School Board Minute Books (L.S.B.M.B.), 15.5.1871, pp. 84-6.
for few appeared in subsequent editions of the directories. In some cases the schools could have been taken over by new proprietors, but this is not evident from the directory entries. Where advertisements had been placed in the local press it is usually possible to ascertain whether the schools were aimed at working-class or middle-class pupils, by the type of curriculum on offer, the tone of the advertisement, and in particular the amount of fees charged.\(^{42}\) Although few working-class private schools could afford to advertise, it is evident that there were numerous dame schools, as these were referred to in reports and memoirs, and in the statistics collected by the School Board after 1870, but because of their ephemeral character their records are fragmentary or extant.

Indeed the numerous advertisements to be found in the local press tended to be aimed at the children of tradesmen, or those of Leicester's commercial and professional middle-class families. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries advertisements for girls' schools included one that in 1783 only offered needlework, but by 1790 reading and writing had been added to the curriculum. The proprietor also took in darning so the school was most probably patronised by lower middle or working-class parents despite its aspirations to appeal to 'young ladies'.\(^{43}\) In 1791 a girls' school was opened which included English grammar, geography, and various types of needlework in the curriculum. The fees were six shillings a quarter plus one shilling entrance, and boarders were eventually accepted for fees of twelve pounds a year. Writing was offered for an extra fee of six shillings a quarter, plus one shilling entrance. The fees for this school would have been too high to attract working-class patronage, as were those charged by the Misses Simpson at the school they opened in 1792. Here French, music, and dancing were offered as well as more basic subjects, for fourteen guineas a year for boarders, and

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\(^{42}\) LJ*, 13.7.1792, 10.2.1792.

\(^{43}\) LJ*, 8.3.1783, 2.4.1790.
half a guinea a quarter for day-girls, plus half a crown entrance. The fees demanded by these obviously middle-class schools can be contrasted to those charged by Miss Potts who in 1793 offered reading and needlework at six pence a week with no extra fees. Although it can be assumed from the curriculum — reading and sewing — that this was a dame school, even this would have too much for many working-class families to afford. At the turn of the nineteenth century the net wages for a journeyman stockinger in Leicester averaged five shillings and six pence a week. This would leave little to spare for schooling, especially in a large family.

Boys' schools were also advertised, and many of these doubtless attracted patronage from middle-class families, for they would have supplied the need for a commercial or classical education previously met by the Free Grammar school prior to its decline. In 1792 the Rev. Rogers charged eighteen guineas a year to enable 'young gentlemen' boarders to receive a classical education, and four guineas for day pupils. In the same year William Chamberlain taught grammar, writing and accounts for six shillings a quarter in his school in Churchgate. Thomas Munson advertised his commercial school in 1794 which catered for 'boys designed for trade' and aimed to make them expert men of business. The curriculum also included Latin. Henry Carrick had previously described himself as a writing master, but in 1791 he advertised his school as an academy, and this was attended from the age of seven by William Gardiner, the son of a middle-class dissenting family. Before this he had been sent from the age of two years to a dame school which was also attended by a local physician's son. It is apparent from Gardiner's memoirs that boys here were in the minority — although dame schools were usually mixed — and that this school tended to cater for young children, which was a common feature. Moreover it is evident that dame schools attracted both middle and working-class children, and this creates

45 L.13.7.1792, 10.2.1792, 25.1.1794.
46 W. Gardiner, Music and Friends (3 vols), 3 (1853), pp. 2-4; L.71.1791.
problems of classification in a study of working-class education. In addition to these obviously middle-class schools there was one that would possibly have appealed to better-off artisans. This was a school opened in 1801 by John Cockshaw - who was a writing master and printer. There was no charge for entrance, and the fees were four pence a week for reading, and sixpence for writing and accounts. The weekly fees and curriculum suggest that this was most likely to have been a common day school. It is evident from an investigation of a sample of advertisements that there were few schools with fees low enough to attract working-class children. Either such schools could not afford to advertise, or they did not need to because they relied on word of mouth within their local neighbourhood. Thus reliance must be made on local directories and official reports to provide information on schools patronised by working-class parents.

47 LJ, 23.1.1801; Gardner, Lost Elementary Schools, p. 22. Gardner argues that dame and common day schools with fees of less than 9d a week most likely catered for the working class. There was however a considerable overlap between fees, ages, and sex of children, and curriculum which again prevents accuracy of classification.
Table 11: Private schools in Leicester, 1794-1877.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1794</th>
<th>1815</th>
<th>1822</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1833</th>
<th>1840</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Schools</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13*</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male¹ Boarding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female¹ Boarding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male¹ MC.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female¹ MC.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male² Other</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female² Other</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Private Pupils</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>429b</td>
<td>ND.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Private Pupils³</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>ND.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1849</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1855</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1877</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Schools</td>
<td>71c</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>70*</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male¹ Boarding</td>
<td>7c</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female¹ Boarding</td>
<td>15c</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male¹ MC.</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female¹ MC.</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male² Other</td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female² Other</td>
<td>35c</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Private Pupils³</td>
<td>1,598d</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>2,021</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>2,185f</td>
<td>ND.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Private Pupils³</td>
<td>31.3%d</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>ND.</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>ND.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
ND. Data are not available.
1 Male/female. Schools are classified according to the gender of the proprietor.
2 Male/female other. Schools cannot be classified as definitely middle class or working class.
3 Figure shows the % of private pupils to all elementary pupils.
a There were 15 day schools in addition to the 13 private day and one boarding school.
b Figure comprises 278 boys, 151 girls.
c Data are taken from Hagar & Co., Commercial Directory of the City of Leicester (1849).
d Data are taken from W. Biggs, Report upon National Education (Leicester, 1849).
e Data are taken from The Post Office Directory (1855). There were 28 public day schools.
f Data on schools are taken from White Directory (1871), pp. 841-3 and figures are taken from the report of a debate by Leicester City Council concerning educational returns in connection with the Education Act (1870). The returns referred to 2185 pupils in 40 private adventure schools. Eight of these were classified as superior and were attended by 532 pupils, and 32 were considered to be inferior, and were attended by 1653 pupils.
In Table 11, I have listed the number of private schools noted in the local directories at intervals from 1794 until 1870. The dates selected were dependent on available sources for the period. Also included are statistics from the Abstract of Returns (1835), a Report on education given in 1849 by W. Biggs, the mayor of Leicester, Mann's Census of 1851, and reports emanating from the Leicester School Board in 1870/71. Information concerning private schools in Leicester was lacking in Brougham's Returns of 1818. The schools listed in the directories have been classified according to whether they were girls' or boys' boarding schools, or were obviously schools intended for middle-class boys or girls. The remaining schools have been classified according to the gender of the proprietor, but it is impossible to determine the sex and age of the children, how many were instructed, or whether they catered for middle-class or working-class pupils. For example Weston's Leicester Directory of 1794 lists five boarding schools for young ladies, two for young gentlemen and three reading and writing schools with male proprietors which could have been private venture schools catering for either middle-class or working-class pupils.

The pattern of private school provision in Leicester tended to reflect that of the development of the charity schools. This is to be expected, for both sectors were affected by the political, religious, economic and social environment, and in particular the rise in population. By 1790 there were three charity and two endowed schools in Leicester, and ten private schools, although

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50 Weston's Directory (1794), pp. 35-6.
the endowed and private schools tended to be middle-class rather than working-class in social composition. By 1815 there were still only fifteen private schools, and only two more charity schools had been founded. The reluctance to establish more schools can no doubt be attributed to fears that education would lead to a rise in Jacobinism and hence to revolution, together with a period of economic depression in Leicester.

The situation was still static in 1822, but by 1830 there was an increase in both private and charity education. The former showed a significant rise from 11 entries in the Directory of 1822 to 37 in 1830, and 71 in 1849. However there was a significant difference between the number of private schools given in the Directory of 1830, (there were 25 schools that could be either middle or working-class), and the 13 returned as a result of Kerry's educational enquiry of 1835. This can be attributed to discrepancies in the returns, for there was no standardised classification, and local terminology added to the confusion. The returns did not refer to dame or common day schools, but to infant (defined as schools catering for children up to seven years of age), daily or Sunday schools. In Leicester some infant schools were supported entirely by the parents, while others had been founded by the Infants' Schools Society (established in 1828) and in addition to parental fees were supported by annual contributions or subscriptions. Of the 29 schools returned I have analysed 15 as public day or infant schools, and 13 as private, plus one that was obviously boarding. There were 2,559 children in attendance at these 29 schools, and of these 429 were pupils at private schools (16.9%).

It is evident from Biggs' Report of 1849 that of the 5,099 school pupils in Leicester at this time 1,598 children attended private schools (31.3%). Similarly in the Census of 1851 Mann identified 5,589 school pupils in Leicester, of which 1871 were at private schools (33.5%). Nevertheless these figures depended on the quality of local enumerators, as well as possible
differences in classification. However it was apparent that both public and private provision was increasing, and this was most certainly in response to a rise in the population, government aid in the public sector, and in the second half of the nineteenth century to an improvement in the economic environment. Indeed by 1855, there were 5,834 elementary school pupils and of these 2,021 (34.6% of all elementary pupils) were attending private schools. From 1860 the decline in the number of private schools was possibly the result of an increase in National and charity elementary provision, and after 1870 can be attributed to the effects of the Elementary Education Act. The figures returned to the Education Department from Leicester school managers noted that the accommodation for 13,360 children included places for 532 in 8 superior dame schools, and 1,653 in 32 inferior ones (private adventure schools were apparently included under dame schools). Thus private accommodation accounted for 16.4% of all school accommodation. A discrepancy can be detected between the number of dame schools listed, and the 33 private schools noted in the Directory of that year. Nevertheless the latter did not necessarily include all or indeed any dame schools. Doubtless the ephemeral nature of such schools, together with inaccurate classification of occupations, or failure to declare the occupation of school-keeper could account for differences in the listing of these schools.

The decline in the number of working-class private schools in Leicester and elsewhere was accelerated by the Elementary Education Act of 1870, for local school boards were reluctant to grant them a certificate of efficiency, which entitled them to government aid. Indeed an entry in the Leicester School Board Minute Book stated that ‘sufficient dame schools were visited to assure me that no account should be taken of them in estimating the existing provision of school accommodation’ although a previous entry had stated that 500 children are in efficient dame

51 Gardner, Lost Elementary Schools, pp. 17, 54.
52 Gardner, Lost Elementary Schools, pp. 68-72, 90. Gardner noted similar discrepancies in his study of working-class private schools in Bristol between 1851 and 1871. In 1870 there were 61 recorded private venture
After the Education Act of 1876, children between the ages of ten and thirteen who had not received a certificate of proficiency from a certified efficient school could not be legally employed, which ensured that working-class parents would be reluctant to maintain their patronage of such schools.

Nevertheless although working-class private schools declined after 1870, they had provided many children with an opportunity to receive some elementary education despite the numerous criticisms that such schools attracted. Indeed parents who were generally suspicious of other educational establishments paid to send their children to dame and common day schools to enable them to become literate. This refutes the argument that the majority of working-class parents were apathetic or hostile to all forms of educational provision. The schools thus made a valuable contribution to the decline of illiteracy during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century.

I - VOLUNTARY EDUCATIONAL PROVISION 1780 TO 1833

In 1780 there was little educational provision for working-class children in Leicester, for the few charity schools that were in existence during the early years of the eighteenth century had disappeared. Nevertheless some charitable provision had survived for the education of poor children. The will of M. Simon in 1712 provided £4 annually to be administered by trustees for 12 boys to be placed in school to learn to read and to be instructed in the principles of religion.

Gardner, Lost Elementary Schools, pp. 188-210.
J. Nichols, The History and Antiquities of the Town and County of Leicester (4 vols, 1795-1815, 1971 edn), 1, p. 513 refers to charity schools in existence at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but these seem to have disappeared before the end. See also J. Simon, 'Was there a charity school movement?' pp. 55-100.
They were eventually taught in a National school. In 1749 F. Power effected a deed which provided for the education of 10 poor children in the parish of St Martin to be executed by parish officers, although it is not known where these children were educated. However by 1800 three charity day schools - two parochial and one nonconformist, an endowed school, and a female asylum had been established to instruct and clothe working-class children, as well as a number of Anglican and nonconformist Sunday schools. The charity schools were founded partly in response to middle-class philanthropy based on religious principles, and partly to allay middle-class concern over an ever-increasing working-class population. It was feared that if children were allowed to roam the streets unchecked, the resultant increase in crime and immorality would affect the quality of middle-class lives. Hence the children were not only educated in basic subjects - with an emphasis on sewing for the girls - but were also given instruction in religious knowledge, and guidance on morality, orderliness and cleanliness. Even so, the education of the poor was not regarded favourably by all, for a correspondent in the Leicester Journal contended that the teaching of reading had enabled 'pernicious pamphlets' to be read, and that education militated against everything that 'constitutes a good servant'. This concern was largely unfounded at that time, for out of a population of around 16,950 in 1801 there were only school places for approximately 250 children in the day schools, and a further 740 were receiving instruction in Sunday schools. Indeed adult male illiteracy at this time was just over 36% and female illiteracy was around 60%.

**DISSENTING CHARITY DAY SCHOOLS**

The school established by the Unitarian Great Meeting was the oldest surviving charity

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56 Analytical Digest of Reports of Inquiry into Charities (1843), pp. 97, 607.
57 Abstract of Returns of Charitable Donations (1816) p. 663.
58 An in-depth study of the history of Sunday schools in Leicester can be found in chapter five.
59 The interest of Quaker and Unitarian middle-class business families in good works included a desire to improve the lives of the 'lower orders' physically, mentally and morally. This - together with the rise of evangelicalism - was central to the provision of educational facilities for poor children.
school - although the actual date of its foundation is obscure.\textsuperscript{61} An advertisement in 1792 for the annual charity sermon stated that the school began in 1748 with 12 boys.\textsuperscript{62} The church records of that year also refer to payments to Ann Page who was 'an elderly dame in receipt of chapel relief' - for teaching and washing the children.\textsuperscript{63} By the end of the century 40 children 'of any denomination' were receiving education in the boys' and girls' day schools which were supported by annual charity sermons, as well as by subscriptions.\textsuperscript{64} At the Vestry meeting in 1831 it was resolved to increase the number of boys to 70.\textsuperscript{65} This school was the only nonconformist one to be established until 1832 when the British and Foreign School Society opened a school in Hill Street, for 'the Nonconformists as a body had been slow in advancing the cause of secular education among the people'.\textsuperscript{66} This can most likely be attributed to the fact that the dissenting churches had less funds at their disposal, that they concentrated more on opening Sunday schools, and that dissent by its nature was fragmented because of the independence of the individual churches. Interest in education was not restricted to the Anglicans and Nonconformists, for in 1824 a Roman Catholic day and Sunday school was opened at Holy Cross chapel.\textsuperscript{67} The advertisement for the charity sermons in 1830 reported that 200 children were instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic, and that the school was open to children of all denominations.\textsuperscript{68} Although the Great Meeting lead the way in providing a charity school for

\textsuperscript{60} L\textsubscript{Leic.}, 12.10.1804, 9.11.1804.
\textsuperscript{61} A.H. Thomas, \textit{A History of the Great Meeting, Leicester, and its Congregation: with an Appendix, dealing with the Day Schools, from notes by the late Edwin Clephan, J.P.} (Leicester, 1908), p. 65 referred to the existence of a school in 1708 with 20 scholars, together with a reference to a teacher in the church Minute Books of 1736 - no longer extant.
\textsuperscript{62} L\textsubscript{Leic.}, 20.7.1792.
\textsuperscript{64} L\textsubscript{Leic.}, 20.7.1792; Nichols, \textit{History of Leicester} 1, p. 514; Leicester Chronicle (L.C.). The following charity sermon advertisements were included: 20.9.1818, 6.4.1823, 24.4.1825, 29.5.1831; J. Fowler, \textit{The Leicester Directory} (1815), p. 86 reported that 40 children were clothed and instructed in 1815, and that a new school was erected in 1813.
\textsuperscript{68} L\textsubscript{Leic.}, 13.6.1830, 1.31.1832.
working-class children, other dissenting churches – apart from the Roman Catholics – did not follow their example. This is unexpected in such a nonconformist town. Indeed it was the Anglican congregations that contributed much to the education of the children of the poor in Leicester.

PAROCHIAL CHARITY DAY SCHOOLS

The first parochial day school, for the education and clothing of 50 poor children in the parish of St Mary, was established in 1780 by the evangelical vicar Thomas Robinson. By 1785 - when a purpose-built school was opened - 50 poor children a year had been clothed and taught to read, write and cast accounts. The school was supported by voluntary subscriptions from members of the congregation, who - according to a charity sermon preached in 1787 to raise funds:

'lamenting the extremely corrupt state of their poor, ... were desirous to check the increase of this dangerous evil ... not to teach what is unsuitable for their situation or to take them out of their proper sphere but to fit them for acting that part well in that line of life in which they are placed.'

The children were provided with 'all things necessary' - including clothing - to spare their parents any expense. The boys were taught reading, writing and accounts, and the girls were taught to read and to sew

'the boys' shirts, their own shifts, caps, tippets, aprons etc. and any other plain work for the benefit of the charity'.

The new building accommodated the boys and girls in separate departments, and was managed

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69 L.I. 26.8.1780. There was an advertisement for a school master and subscribers.
70 Report of the Charity Commissioners (1838), pp. 114-5. The Report stated that a deed had been drawn up concerning the conditions governing the use of the land for the school, but that there was to be no further inquiry as the school was maintained entirely by voluntary subscriptions and managed by trustees. Public Record Office (P.R.O.), CHAR/2/145. There is reference to a parochial school in 23.5.1785 for the education of 50 poor children by voluntary subscriptions. National Society Archive (N.S.A.) File 47, contains a copy of the deed dated 23.5.1785, which stated that parents of the 50 poor children who were to be instructed and clothed by voluntary subscriptions were to reside in the parish or in the Newarke.
71 Leics. C.R.O., Pamphlet Volume (Pam. Vol.) 50, Sermon Preached in the Parish of St Mary for the Benefit of the Charity School Lately Instituted in that Parish (1787).
by trustees and subscribers. By 1787 sufficient money had been raised to educate 45 boys and 35 girls aged between 6 and 14.\textsuperscript{73} Eventually 170 children - 'exclusively of this parish' - were being educated by the Madras system, as well as clothed.\textsuperscript{74} The School Rules of 1824 stressed that only children from the parish and its adjoining liberties were to be admitted, that the master and mistress were to be Anglican, and that they were to pay attention to the morals of the children. School was to begin and end with prayers, and all children were to be regular in attendance, orderly in conduct, cleanly and decently dressed and were to remain in school for three years.\textsuperscript{75}

Table 12.1: Educational Provision in Leicester by 1788.\textsuperscript{76}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Charity - Will</td>
<td>1712</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Charity - Deed</td>
<td>1749</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Grammar School</td>
<td>1574</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting Charity</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Charity</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Newton's Endowed (Green Coat School)</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Day School Pupils</strong></td>
<td><strong>1788</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>177</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Moore</td>
<td>1778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting</td>
<td>1783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Undenominational</td>
<td>1786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Sunday School Pupils</strong></td>
<td><strong>1788</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Children Educated</strong></td>
<td><strong>1788</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
* Data not available.

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Sermon} (1787)
\textsuperscript{73} \textit{L.J.}, 6.11.1784, 9.4.1785, 15.10.1785, 22.4.1786. Leics., C.R.O. 9D43/34, contains title deeds and conveyancing documents in connection with St Mary's charity school. The subscription list was organised by the vicar, and supported by John Gregory the proprietor of the \textit{Leicester Journal} who considered the school to be 'a useful charity'. Nichols, \textit{History of Leicester}, p. 514 stated that the children were clothed in light brown and were kept 'orderly and clean'.
\textsuperscript{74} Third Annual Report of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (1814), pp. 135-6 stated that the school was not in the Union, but used the Madras system to instruct 120 children in the day school, and 150 in the Sunday schools. \textit{Digest of Parochial Returns}, 1, p. 467; Fowler, \textit{Directory} (1815), p. 86; \textit{L.C.}, 29.3.1817, 30.3.1823, 29.4.1832. This figure appeared to have decreased to 120 in 1832.
\textsuperscript{75} Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 33, \textit{Rules and Orders for the Charity School of St Mary} (1824).
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Abstract of Charitable Donations}, 1786-1788 (1816) p. 663; \textit{Report of the Charity Commissioners} (1838), pp.2-12, 34, 114-5.
In 1780 there was educational provision for only 22 poor children, and this was made possible by two private charities, for the one school in existence – the Free Grammar School - was almost without pupils. It is apparent from an examination of the data contained in the returns of 1788 (Table 12.1), that by 1788 the situation had improved slightly, for three more schools had been established. Alderman Newton's endowed school provided education and clothing for 35 boys of indigent Anglican parents, the nonconformist Great Meeting school educated and clothed 40 children of any denomination, and an Anglican charity school in the parish of St Mary educated and clothed 80 Anglican children. There were also 15 Sunday schools - apart from the one at the Great Meeting where 80 boys and girls were instructed. Thus in 1788 approximately 177 poor children were being instructed in four day schools, and an indeterminate number in the Sunday schools.

In 1789 St Martin's, (known as the Blue Coat Charity School), was established and managed by a committee of subscribers and supported by voluntary contributions. Sectarian conflict was not yet in evidence, for at the opening ceremony the musical society of the Great Meeting sang, and J. Coltman - a hosier and member of the Great Meeting - was on the subscription list. The boys were taught to read and write, and the girls were taught to read and work, and all 65 children were clothed. As at St Mary's school the girls made shirts, shifts, sheets, frocks, caps and tippets, which were regularly sold to aid the finances of the school. Inattentive pupils were dismissed, and children from other parishes were only admitted if there

77 Sunday school education in nineteenth-century Leicester is examined in Chapter 5 below.
78 Report of the Charity Commissioners (1838), p. 112 gives the abstract of the deed by which the school premises were acquired. P.R.O., CHAR/2/145, and N.S.A., File 46, St Martin, refer to a deed dated 24.3.1790 in connection with a charity school in St Martin's parish for teaching poor boys and girls.
79 L.J., 3.7.1789, 4.8.1788. The schools were maintained by voluntary subscriptions, and annual charity sermons, and were managed by a committee of subscribers.
80 Johnson, Glimpses, p. 385; S. Watts, A Walk Through Leicester (Leicester, 1804, 1967 edn), p. 132; L.J., 19.4.1788, 3.7.1789; Nichols, History of Leicester, p. 514. He considered that the school was in a 'healthful spot' and that the master and mistress resided in 'genteeel apartments'.
81 Leics. C.R.O., 9D43/29/1/2, St Martin's school accounts, 12.9.1788-31; 12.1842 give details of the garments
was a 'deficiency of parishioners' children'. In 1812 evening classes were also established for older children in connection with the Sunday school, in an effort to 'promote the peace of the town'. By 1815 the monitorial system was being used to instruct 100 children, although the school was not a National society school, and by 1827 this figure had increased to 150 boys, and 84 girls.

Table 12.2: Educational provision in Leicester by 1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Charity - Will (a)</td>
<td>1712</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Charity - Deed (a)</td>
<td>1749</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Grammar School</td>
<td>1574</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting Charity</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Charity</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Newton's Endowed</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Charity</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Asylum</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES (10)</th>
<th>At 1794</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Known Day School Pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>258</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting Unitarian</td>
<td>1783</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friar Lane Baptist</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeacon Lane Baptist</td>
<td>By 1800</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond Street Independent</td>
<td>By 1800</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Anglican</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Anglican (4)</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Anglican</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Nicholas Anglican - + evening class from 1812 (a)</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Known Sunday School Pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(a) Assimilated into County National School from 1814.
* Data not available.

Thus by 1800 (as illustrated in Table 12.2) educational provision had been increased, for an Anglican charity school had been established in the parish of St Martin, and here 65 children made.

82 Leics. C.R.O., 9D43/29/3, St Martin's Charity School Minutes, 15.6.1799-19.5.1809 (the last entry). From 1804 the minimum age limit was 9.
83 LJi, 12.6.1812.
85 Data from sources as noted in descriptions of individual establishments.
were educated and clothed. However, the number of pupils attending the other schools remained unchanged. Nevertheless a female asylum had been established in 1800 in the Newark Liberty which was supported by voluntary contributions, and here between 16 poor girls between the ages of 13 and 16 were clothed and fed for three years. Although they were 'trained for the purposes of domestic servitude' they were also given religious instruction and taught 'reading and writing and the rudiments of arithmetic'.

Four nonconformist and five Anglican Sunday schools were also instructing at least 740 children (270 and 470 respectively). There were in addition 10 private schools, but these apparently catered for middle-class children. Therefore in 1800 just over 250 poor children were in receipt of education in day schools, and at least 740 in the Sunday schools. It seems unlikely that the limited educational provision between 1788 and 1800 could have accounted for the decline in adult illiteracy between 1800 and 1810. Indeed, as previously discussed, this decline can possibly be attributed to an improvement in Leicester's economic environment between 1787 and 1800. By 1820, adult illiteracy had again risen, and this was most likely to have been caused by economic decline and population rise, together with a deficiency in day school provision.

The population of Leicester in 1821 was 30,125, nearly double that of 1800, and in 1820 over 38% grooms and 64% brides have been found to be illiterate. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that in 1800 (when some of the brides and grooms were school-age or had recently left school), only around 250 children were attending day schools. Although over 700 were attending Sunday schools, some children would most certainly be members of both day and Sunday schools, which would reduce the total figure in receipt of education. In addition those who only

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86 L.C, 17.1.1819. The advertisement for the annual charity sermon states that they were trained in habits of 'frugality, cleanliness, diligence and religion', to fit them for servants; Leicester Directory (1827), p. xxvi; Abstract of Education Returns (1833), p. 490.

87 As discussed earlier.
attended Sunday school would receive just a few hours education each month, and often this was restricted to reading.

There was a gap of 18 years from the foundation of St Martin's school in 1789 to that in St Margaret's parish in 1807, and this can possibly be attributed to the war with France, for it was feared that the education of the poor would lead to a rise in Jacobinism. The population in St Margaret's parish increased from 5,899 in 1801 to 10,158 in 1811, but prior to 1807 only the parochial Sunday school and the one at Archdeacon Lane Baptist church were providing opportunities for education. In 1805 the Rev. R. Davies informed the parishioners that around 1,000 poor children in the parish lacked weekday educational provision. Steps to obtain a suitable site in Church Gate, donations to build a school, and subscriptions to support it were raised largely through his efforts, and in August 1807 the school opened. It was initially intended to limit the teaching to reading, and to clothe 50 children aged from 9 to 12 for one year only as the numbers were so large. Nevertheless not all the places were filled, and parents were urged to contact subscribers for recommendation. This situation must have been remedied, for in 1808 it was stated that 100 children had been taught to read, write and account as well as being clothed, and the following year attendance for two years was recommended. From 1812 the school became under the auspices of the National Society and the monitorial system was used in the school to instruct 130 children, but numbers fluctuated over the years.

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88 N.S.A. File 44, St Margaret, contains a draft trust deed which was drawn up on 25.12.1799, so it was obviously the intention to establish a school at an earlier date.
89 LJ, 20.9.1805.
90 LJ, 26.2.1808, 4.3.1808, 11.3.1808, 3.2.1809, 30.8.1816. By 1816 the need for regular attendance was particularly stressed.
91 LJ, 11.10.1805; Nichols, History of Leicester, p. 513.
92 LJ, 11.10.1805; Nichols, History of Leicester, p. 513.
93 LJ, 11.10.1805; Nichols, History of Leicester, p. 513.
94 Fifth Annual Report of the National Society (1816), Appendix, p. 95. Fowler, Directory (1815), p. 9; LJ.
A National day school had been established in 1819 in Charlotte Street, All Saints parish, which was free to all children of the parish. The school used the Madras method of instruction, and was supported by subscriptions and charity sermons. The parish was very poor and 'much in want of pecuniary support towards the maintenance of the new school'. The school was capable of accommodating 250 day and Sunday scholars, and 130 were also taught at the evening school (however some of these most probably also attended the Sunday school) however it was reported in 1823 that only 200 children were receiving instruction. Nevertheless in the Returns of 1835 which resulted from a government survey into education instigated by Lord Kerry in 1833, only a Sunday school was noted, and an infant school which was commenced in 1828. However the Returns from the Church School Inquiry of 1846-7 included a day and Sunday school for boys and girls as well as an infant school. Nevertheless in 1863 there was an appeal for subscriptions, and a letter was sent to the National Society which gave thanks for a grant in order that the schoolroom could be enlarged. The parish was without a day school, for 'few wealthy persons now reside in this part of the town'. The 'parish of St Nicholas [also] maintained a school, the whereabouts of which is not recorded, for some years previous to its union with the County National School erected in 1814 in the "Holy Bones", opposite to St Nicholas Church'. Alderman Newton's endowed school, also known as the Green Coat school was also situated in this parish. St Leonard's parish remained without a day or Sunday school until 1846.

20.9.1821. 100 children were educated in 1821; Johnson, Glimpses, p. 385. 73 boys and 41 girls were educated in 1827.

95 Seventh Annual Report of the National Society (1818), Appendix, p. 79.
96 Digest of Parochial Returns, 3, p. 1466; Digest of Parochial Returns, 1, p. 417 stated that in Leicester 'the poorer classes are without sufficient means of education, though greatly desirous of possessing them'.
97 Leicester Directory (1827), p. xxiii, gives 160 children; L.C., 5.7.1823. An advertisement for the annual charity sermon stated that the monitory system was used and that the children were not clothed.
THE COUNTY NATIONAL SCHOOL

Despite the conviction that Leicester - above all other comparable towns - could 'boast of ample means for the religious and moral education of the infant poor', by 1814 only 500 working-class children were being educated in the day schools, and approximately 2,000 were 'without the means of efficient education'. However, in 1814 the County of Leicester Society for the Education of the Infant Poor in the Principles of the Established Church founded a school opposite St Nicholas church to serve the children of all city and county parishes. This also initially operated as a central or normal school for the instruction of male and female teachers in the Madras (Bell's) monitorial system of education. The patron of the Society was the Duke of Rutland, and the president was the Bishop of Lincoln; 'it was maintained by subscription throughout the county, and was governed by an annually-appointed committee of twelve clergymen and twelve laymen'. The National Society in London contributed £300 the corporation of Leicester £100, and £73 was donated by the parishioners of Leicester - which suggests that there was little interest in the project. The Archdiaconal Board of Education which was founded in 1839 also became instrumental in establishing schools in connection with the National Society.

The school was available to all poor children of six years and over, 'without distinction of sect or party', was maintained by voluntary contribution, and was designed to accommodate 300 boys.

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99 LJ, 1.7.1814; Fowler, Directory (1815), p. 86. The population in 1811 had increased to 23146, and my research illustrates that male illiteracy was around 31%, and female illiteracy was approximately 49%.

100 LJ, 12.6.1812. The parish of St Nicholas had a Sunday school with 60 pupils, and in 1812 an evening class was established. The congregation did not wish to see these merged with the new school, or to have such a large school sited in their parish. However the vicar - the Rev. R. Davies who had been the instigator of the charity school at St Margaret's - was anxious to involve the parish in the new venture, and a bitter struggle ensued.

101 LJ, 10.9.1813, 17.9.1813, 26.11.1813, 3.12.1813.

and 200 girls, although it often failed to achieve this aim. They were taught reading, writing and arithmetic using Bell’s monitorial system, as well as being given religious and moral instruction. However, the ultimate objective of the Society was the moral and religious education of the children of the poor. In the Annual Report (1832), it was noted that the children were favoured as apprentices and servants, for they were punctual regular attenders, and remained free from crime after leaving school. The need to 'outstretch the hand of mercy and compassion' to the destitute children of the poor was emphasised, for if their moral and religious education were to be neglected then 'baneful consequences' would ensue. Thus the school was conducted on lines of order, discipline and regularity, for which it received much praise.

Table 12.3: Educational provision in Leicester by 1818.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Grammar School</td>
<td>1575</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary’s Charity</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Newton’s Endowed</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin’s Charity</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Asylum</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret’s Charity</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County National (totals school designed to accommodate)</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints National</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES (12) At 1815 | * | * | * |
| Total Known Day School Pupils              | 602 | 316 | 1296 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY SCHOOLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonconformist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting Unitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friar Lane Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeacon Lane Baptist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103 White, Directory (1862), pp. 182-3.
104 Fowler, Directory (1815), p. 3; Digest of Parochial Returns, 1, p. 467.
108 LJ, 15.9.1815, 22.9.1815.
Table 12.3 is based on data extracted from the returns of 1818 made in response to Lord Brougham’s enquiry. Here it can be seen that a charity day school had been established in 1807 in St Margaret’s parish for 60 boys and 40 girls, and from 1814, 300 boys and 200 girls could be accommodated at the County National School in St Nicholas’ parish. A National society school had also been founded in All Saints parish where 250 children were receiving instruction. St Martin’s charity school was now instructing 100 children, and 110 boys and 60 girls were taught in the school in St Mary’s parish. The Great Meeting school continued to instruct 40 children, the Free Grammar School had revived and was educating 40 boys, and Alderman Newton’s school had increased its intake to 80 boys. Thus approximately 1,300 children were being educated in nine establishments, plus an indeterminate number in 12 private schools and academies. Nevertheless while the Anglican schools were increasing in size and number there were still only 40 children receiving instruction in one nonconformist day school, and not all of these were the children of dissenting parents. However nonconformist and Anglican Sunday schools continued to thrive – an evening school had also been provided - and these were

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110 The children provided for by the private charities were eventually instructed in a National school.
instructing over 1,000 children in 1818. The rival Sunday schools were at this time apparently instructing similar numbers of children, although figures are not available for three nonconformist chapels, and the Sunday school in the parish of St Nicholas had been lost to the County National school.

Although over 2,000 children were attending day and Sunday schools by 1818, the population of Leicester was increasing rapidly, and therefore more school places were required. Indeed in 1830, out of a population of 39,904, male illiteracy was still over 38% - a drop of only 0.5% since 1820 - while female illiteracy had decreased by nearly 6%. The decline in female illiteracy can possibly be attributed to the fact that although fewer girls attended day school, the increase in Sunday school provision was of benefit to them, as more girls than boys attended Sunday school.

However between 1818 and 1835 day school provision increased, for a school was opened in St. George's parish (1828). St Leonard's parish was still without a charity school, but it was reported that 'the poor are desirous of the means to educate their children, of which they are destitute'. In 1834 a National school intended to accommodate 250 boys and 150 girls, was opened in Canning Place, in St Margaret's parish. In addition a Sunday school and day school for Roman Catholic children were established in 1824, and 1827 respectively. Nevertheless, the increasing numbers of very young children still roaming the streets was noted with concern, and thus infant schools were established as a solution to this problem.

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111 N.S.A. File 39 noted that an application had been received regarding the necessity of establishing a school to give gratuitous education to children between 7 and 13 years of age. The school was intended to accommodate 120 boys and the same number of girls in 2 separate rooms. Johnson, Glimpses, p. 385; L.C., 11.8.1832 reported a charity sermon in connection with St George's day and Sunday schools.

112 Digest of Parochial Returns, 1, p. 467.

113 N.S.A. File 44; Johnson, Glimpses, p. 385.
THE INFANTS' SCHOOL SOCIETY SCHOOLS

In 1828 the lack of education for the children of the poor, together with the fact that so many were left unattended while their mothers worked, had become an increasing cause for concern, and prompted middle-class radicals, county Whigs, and Anglicans to establish an Infant School Society based on undenominational principles. The Rev. Mitchell (the vicar of St Mary's and All Saints), Thomas Babington (M.P. for the borough), and his son Matthew both of whom were bankers, the M.P. Otway Cave, bankers Paget, Pares and Hodgson, and the Unitarian hosiers Brewin, Coltman, and Whetstone, all favoured the founding of an infant school, for they were aware of the changing needs of an industrialising society. They were opposed by the Rev. E. Vaughan - the vicar of St Martin's - who considered that not only were the children too young to be taken from the care of their parents, but that children of Anglican parents must only be educated by Anglican churchmen. However, Babington stressed the importance of providing an unsectarian school to improve the minds, 'health, morals, and behaviour' of young children whose parents were at work. The Rev. Mitchell argued that many children ran wild in his parish because of their mothers' employment, and then commenced work at a very young age, and were thus denied education at home or school. He was supported by Mr. Fosberry - a shoemaker and dissenting lay-preacher - who demanded to know how illiterate parents were expected to instruct their children. The Rev. Vaughan was out-voted by those who were more aware of a change of requirements as Leicester developed into a manufacturing town. A committee was inaugurated consisting of equal numbers of churchmen and dissenters, and in July 1828 an infant school was opened in the Newarke. Infant schools were eventually founded in Metcalfe Street, Oxford.

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114 A meeting held on 2.2.1828 was reported in both the Leicester Journal and Leicester Chronicle; see also Patterson, Radical Leicester p. 161. The Infants' School Society was inaugurated in London in 1824.
115 L.C., 26.2.1828, 31.1.1829, 7.5.1832. The school was supported by subscriptions, and in 1829 had 140 pupils.
Sectarian rivalry had thus been overshadowed by the necessity to provide for those children who would otherwise have remained uneducated.

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN SOCIETY SCHOOL

A meeting - chaired by Isaac Hodgson (who was an Anglican radical banker), and supported by other radical reformers - was called in July 1831 to discuss the establishment of a British and Foreign Society school in Leicester. They considered that an increase in educational provision was needed for an educated suffrage, to prevent crime, and to provide an alternative to the National school. The school was to offer non-sectarian education for the children of dissenters who were excluded from the National schools, and was to be open to all denominations, providing that the children attended a Sunday school. Despite these non-sectarian aspirations, the committee consisted largely of dissenters, for few Anglicans attended the meeting. In 1833 the school opened in Sandpit Lane (later changed to Hill Street), in St Margaret's parish, and was supported by annual subscriptions and fees. The curriculum included reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and music, and the teaching was based on the Lancastrian monitorial system. Care was taken however to ensure that the children only received education 'suitable for their sphere'. At the opening ceremony Thomas Paget - a Unitarian banker - emphasised the need for an educated working class for political stability. In the second Report presented by the Committee to the subscribers it was stated that the average attendance was 360 boys, and it

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116 L.C., 2.9.1837, 30.12.1837. These schools continued to receive support and subscriptions from middle-class radical manufacturers and professionals. Johnson, Glimpses, p. 386; Martin. 'Schedule of schools', pp. 335-7; Report of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendix (1857-8), p. 133 implied that the Archdeacon Lane school became a feeder to the British schools.

117 L.C., 9.7.1831.

118 Abstract of Education Returns (1835), p. 490. It was stated that the school 'contained 440 males', but girls were not mentioned.

119 L.C., 20.4.1833, 11.10.1834.

120 L.C., 20.4.1833.
was noted with regret that boys were often kept at home by their parents and were withdrawn from school at early age.\textsuperscript{121}

Thus until the eighteen-thirties, most of the elementary education for working-class children in Leicester was provided by middle-class philanthropists - many of whom were clergymen. As well as a genuine interest in the education of the poor, there was also a desire to maintain the existing social order, to increase denominational attendance, to create a politically responsible working-class, and to provide an antidote to crime and immorality. The schools had been established with some degree of harmony between the Anglicans and dissenters, but from the early eighteen-thirties sectarian rivalry gradually increased, and the instruction of the poor became an increasingly important political issue. Nevertheless some working-class parents chose to pay to send their children to dame or common day schools in preference to charity schools, for they considered private schools to be part of their own culture, and thus free from charitable condescension, over-regulation and social discipline.\textsuperscript{122} Also the girls were able to take their seaming to dame schools as the environment was less restrictive. In addition, many dame schools catered for very young children, and this enabled their mothers more time to work when the opportunity arose. A government survey instigated by Lord Kerry revealed the extent of educational provision in Leicester in 1835 (Table 12.4) although it has been suggested that there were omissions in the returns.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{121} British and Foreign School Society Annual Report (B.F.S.S.) (1834), pp. 59-60; (1835), pp. 82-3.
\textsuperscript{122} Gardner, Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England; Laqueur, 'Working-class demand'; Z. Crook & B. Simon, 'Private schools in Leicester and the County 1780-1840', in Simon (ed), Education in Leicestershire, pp. 103-29.
Table 12.4: Educational provision in Leicester by 1835.124

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Grammar School (closed 1836)</td>
<td>1575</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Charity</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Newton's Endowed</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Charity</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Asylum</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Charity</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County National</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George National</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British School</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret Canning Place National</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Day Pupils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>1653</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFANT SCHOOLS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Charlotte Street</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Archdeacon Lane</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Infants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Day/Boarding</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Infant</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Daily</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Private</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>278</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Day School Pupils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1531</td>
<td>638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Anglican</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Unitarian</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Independent/Congregational</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 General Baptist</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Particular Baptist</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Wesleyan Methodist</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Primitive Methodist</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Denomination Unknown</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Nonconformist</strong></td>
<td>1329</td>
<td>1471</td>
<td>2800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Roman Catholic</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Sunday School Pupils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Children Educated</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3549</td>
<td>2438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADULT EDUCATION</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics' Institute</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
* Data not available.

The increase in educational provision between 1818 and 1835 can largely be attributed to the concern and apprehension exhibited by many members of the middle class regarding the growing numbers of unattended children roaming the streets. The low wages in the frame-work knitting trade contributed to the necessity for many women to work thus leaving children too young to work unattended because families could not afford school fees. The population had risen from 30,125 in 1821, to 39,904 in 1831 – a rise of nearly 10,000 – but day school attendance had also increased from 1,300 children in 1818 (Table 12.3) to over 2,550 in 1835 (as can be seen in Table 12.4). This comprised 1,653 pupils in 12 endowed, parochial, National and dissenting day schools, 477 children in 3 infant schools, and 429 in 14 private schools. Two new National schools, one British and one Roman Catholic school had been founded together with three infant schools and numerous private establishments. This increased provision doubtless contributed to the decline in male illiteracy from 38.2% in 1830, to 34.1% in 1850, and to that of female illiteracy from 572% in 1830 to 50.2% in 1850, despite a substantial rise in population in 1851 to 60,584. Nevertheless in 1840 male illiteracy had declined to 31% and female to 56% despite the fact that there had been little new school provision prior to 1825. Hence other factors must have contributed to this decline, one of which could have been the establishment of a Mechanics’ Institute in 1833 which had on average 300 members. Also the number of Sunday schools, as well as attendance was increasing – particularly in those established by nonconformist congregations. Here 2,800 children were accommodated compared to under 700 in parochial Sunday schools. Although there were similar numbers of girls and boys attending Sunday schools, in the day schools the boys outnumbered the girls by more than three to one.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION

Education proved to be a controversial issue at the meetings of the Leicester and Leicestershire Political Union, for while some members considered that education was a right,
not a subject for charitable provision, and that only legislation could secure this, others feared that government control would increase Anglican influence.\textsuperscript{125} Voluntary provision was also vigorously supported, and Seal (who was a working-class political leader) contended that it was lack of means rather than indifference, which prevented the working class from educating its children.\textsuperscript{126} The interest shown in education by all political parties and classes increased after 1835 when the Liberal reformers - the majority of whom were dissenters - gained control of the corporation.\textsuperscript{127} The controversy regarding the compulsory payment of church rates also had educational implications, for although dissenters' children had initially been received into church schools, as pressure for places grew so dissenters' children became less welcome.\textsuperscript{128} In 1832 the dissenters in St Margaret's parish objected to the proposal that a grant of £10 be made to St Margaret's school, and argued that dissenters should also have a share as they had to pay rates.\textsuperscript{129}

With the commencement of state intervention, education assumed greater importance both locally and nationally. In 1833 the government became actively involved in education through the authorization of grants for school buildings to both the National and British and Foreign School Societies, in areas where efforts had already been made.\textsuperscript{130} During the following year a select committee was appointed to examine the state of education in England and Wales.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{125} This had been formed by both middle and working-class radical reformers subsequent to the rejection of the Reform Bill.

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{LeCol}, 17.12.1831.

\textsuperscript{127} The Reform Act (1832), Wm. IV c. 45; The Municipal Corporations Reform Act (1835), 5 & 6 Wm. IV c. 76. The Unitarians assumed particular importance as Thomas Paget - the first mayor following reform - and 7 subsequent mayors were all members of the Great Meeting.

\textsuperscript{128} Patterson, \textit{Radical Leicester}, pp. 247-54.


\textsuperscript{130} Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices and Plans of School Houses (1839-40), pp. 1-3.

\textsuperscript{131} Reports from the Select Committee of Inquiry into the Present State of Education of the People in England and Wales, with the Application and Effects of Grants made by Parliament for the Erection of Schools, with Minutes of Evidence, Appendices and Index, IX (1834); Reports from the Select Committee of Inquiry into the Present State of Education of the People of England and Wales, with Minutes of Evidence, Appendices and Index, VII (1835): Reports from the Select Committee of Inquiry into the Present State of Education of the People of England and Wales, with Minutes of Evidence, Appendices and Index, X (1835).
Hostile reactions were elicited from those who perceived this as state interference which gave an unfair advantage to National schools. Indeed sectarian rivalry tended to increase after 1833, especially in places such as Leicester, 'the metropolis of dissent'. However, surprisingly few dissenting schools were established which was the reverse of the situation in Nottingham according to Wardle. Smith however, in his study of three districts including Nottingham contended that while the Nonconformists were anxious to provide Sunday schools they exhibited a 'lethargic attitude' towards the provision of day schools. However factors such as children's employment and familial poverty as well as a deficit of places continued to militate against school attendance.

The Factory Act of 1833 attempted to alleviate long hours spent at work thus releasing children for instruction. It prohibited the employment of children under 9 in textile factories, legislated that children between 13 and 16 should not work more than 69 hours a week or 12 a day, forbade night work, instituted a system of inspection to enforce the Act, and specified that

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132 Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices (1840-1), Appendix 2, pp. 92-5 refers to the application for a parliamentary grant from Christ Church school, Leicester.
133 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 247. He cites The Leicester Chronicle, 18.3.1848.
134 See D. Wardle, Education and Society in Nineteenth Century Nottingham (Cambridge, 1971), p. 53. Up to 1833 the dissenters had provided more school places there.
136 First Report on the Employment of Children (1833), pp. 4-14. A frame-work-knitter stated that his daughter attended Sunday school but could not read or write, for her eyesight had been affected by her work. His son had been removed from the county school as he was needed to 'earn something', and now he could no longer read. It was found that the health of a 'large proportion ... of young persons between the ages of six and eighteen' employed in frame-work knitting was worse than those employed in the factories, and that many children - wherever they were employed - returned home at night too tired even to play.
137 An Act to Regulate the Labour of Children and Young Persons in Mills and Factories (1833), 3 & 4 Wm. IV, c. 103. Further Acts increased the legislation concerning child labour. An Act to Amend the Laws relating to Labour in Factories (1844), 7 & 8 Vic. c. 15; An Act to limit the Hours of Labour of Young Peoples and Females in Factories (1847), 10 & 11 Vic. c. 29; The Factory Acts Extension Act (1864), 27 & 28 Vic. c. 48; and (1867), 30 & 31 Vic. c. 103.
employers should make educational provision for children under 13 years of age.\textsuperscript{138} The Commissioners who investigated working conditions in Leicester found

'many children of very tender years employed both in the worsted and woollen factories, more particularly the latter, from the age of eight upwards. They appear to be worked the same number of hours as the other hands' - [around 12 hours a day].\textsuperscript{139}

Nevertheless the Act of 1833 (which had significant effect on factory towns) and subsequent Acts, had little overall effect on the children of Leicester, for the majority were still employed in various aspects of frame-work knitting which being a domestic industry was not included. Unsurprisingly the Act of 1833 failed to stimulate school provision in Leicester because the frame-work knitting industry fell outside the scope of the Act - between 1833 and 1840 only three new schools were founded. These were the British school in 1833, and two National schools, one in St Margaret's parish in 1834, and one in Christ Church parish in 1840. However these schools were all comparatively large, and by 1840 had capacity for nearly 1,000 children.

**II - SCHOOL PROVISION IN LEICESTER FROM 1833**

'The education of the neglected and destitute youth ... is considered a benefit of no ordinary magnitude'.\textsuperscript{140}

It was apparent by 1833 that many members of both the working and middle classes appreciated the importance of education, and were anxious that the children of the poor should receive instruction. However, it was becoming increasingly obvious that voluntary provision was unable to cope with the need - if not the demand - for school places, and the quality of


\textsuperscript{139} *First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Collect Information in the Manufacturing Districts as to the Employment of Children in Factories and as to the Propriety and Means of Curtailing their Hours of Labour. With Minutes of Evidence and Reports of District Commissioners*, XX (1833, I.U.P. edn. Shannon, 1968), C2, pp. 1-3. Five returns were received from the 16 factories in the town.

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{LeCo}, 24.4.1852. It was considered that as well as providing an educated suffrage, moral and intellectual character would be improved, and domestic misery and crime would be reduced by the education of the poor.
instruction was also criticised. The *Annual Report* of the National Society (1838) commented on the lamentable deficiency of education in Leicester.\textsuperscript{141} Indeed three major topics continued to dominate local and national debates on education. The first was the controversy regarding voluntary as opposed to state controlled provision, for it was feared by the dissenting congregations that increased state involvement would inevitably favour National and Anglican schools. A further cause of concern was whether education should be compulsory or not, and the third was whether education should be free to all children - financed through local rates. The most controversial issues however, were the relevance of religion in education, and the type of instruction to be offered. In addition to this the schools had to contend with parental indifference, irregular attendance, attendance over a short period of time, and the low age of the majority of the children.\textsuperscript{142}

Although efforts were made to bring up 'the rising generation in the habits of propriety, order and virtue', both the quantity and quality of education in Leicester continued to be deficient, for in 1841 the majority of working-class children did not attend any day school.\textsuperscript{143} The increasing desire to establish efficient elementary schools was stimulated in part by sectarian rivalry, and partly by fear of the consequences if the working class was left in ignorance.\textsuperscript{144} Nevertheless although the middle-class Collegiate and Proprietary schools had been founded in the eighteen thirties, only one school specifically for working-class children was established between 1835 and 1840. This was Bow Street National School in Christ Church a 'populous but exceedingly poor'

\textsuperscript{141} Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the National Society (1838), p. 184.

\textsuperscript{142} Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices, 1 (1846), pp. 150-2, commented on the low age and irregular attendance of children in elementary schools generally, and on the inadequacy of the monitorial system.

\textsuperscript{143} L.C., 30.6.1838. A comment made in a report on a parade of school children during the Coronation festival. 15.6.1839, 24.10.1840; Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices (1841-2), pp. 79-82. The Rev. Fry commented on the deficiency in quantity and quality of elementary education for the 'lower classes of society', and drew attention to the work of the Leicester Archdiocesan Board of Education in training teachers; L.C., 17.2.1838, 31.8.1839, 14.12.1839; L.J., 29.4.1842, 11.11.1842 stated that many teachers had themselves only received a basic education.
part of St Margaret's parish. The school, founded in 1840, was to be supported by subscriptions and fees, and was intended to accommodate 172 boys and 128 girls. A lack of school places was only one area of concern, for of those that did go to school, many still attended irregularly, for a short period of time, and left at a young age (the average age of leaving was 10 years). They were taught by the monitorial system - which by this time was considered to be inadequate - or by inefficient teachers, and in the opinion of Mr Grainger (the commissioner for the Leicester area) were 'entirely destitute of anything which can be called ... an useful education'. Indeed there was 'no attempt to teach anything connected with the principles of machinery and implements connected with the various manufactures'. It is significant that even manufacturers did not regard education primarily as a means of improving industry, but as a way of producing a trustworthy, respectful, and responsible workforce conscious of their social duties. Similar criticisms were raised in the Report on the Condition of the Frame-work Knitters. It was also noted in the Report that some of those giving evidence questioned the inability of parents to provide instruction for their children because of poverty. Nevertheless others argued that parents did not 'have the means of giving their children instruction', for they were 'compelled, through the circumstances in which they are placed, to seam at the age of five and six, and to wind at six and seven years of age'. Indeed even children who attended dame schools took work

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144 L.C., 15.6.1839; Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices (1840-1), pp. 92-5.
145 N.S.A. File 10. Letter dated 27.4.1840 acknowledging a grant. Until 1840 there was only a Sunday school in this area.
146 Second Report on the Employment of Children, XIV (1843), Appendix, Part I, F34-37; Second Report on the Employment of Children, XIII (1843), pp. 194-204 concluded that many parents were only interested in the attendance of their children at day school until they were old enough to earn.
147 L.C., 15.6.1839, 24.10.1840; Second Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Employment of Children in Trades and Manufactures, XIV (1843, I.U.P. edn, Shannon, 1968) Appendix, Part I, F38. Education was seen as a means to combat crime and as a way of reducing pauperism and hence the poor rate.
148 Report on the Condition of Frame-work Knitters, pp. 112-9 It was stated that 'a knowledge of reading and writing, is deemed education, rather than being regarded as merely the instruments by which it is acquired'. 'Popular instruction' is unconnected 'with the probable pursuits in after life of the pupils'. The Rev. Irvine, Minister of St Margaret's, contended that there was too much 'general apathy', and that the quality of instruction was 'wholly incomplete and inefficient'. The Rev. Vaughan, Vicar of St Martin's, concluded that it was impossible to keep children at school beyond the age of 11 or 12.
with them. In addition girls not only lacked basic literacy, but were also ignorant of household management. This was attributed to the young age at which they commenced work, and the failure of sewing classes to prepare them for their future roles of wife and mother.

However some provision had been made for scientific instruction for adults at the Mechanics' Institute which opened in 1833, but although there were nearly 400 members in the second quarter of 1834, this dropped to 250 in the fourth quarter, and eventually the membership became largely middle class. The Owenite Social Institute and Cooper's Chartist adult school opened in 1836 and 1841 respectively, but the latter was short-lived and the former eventually evolved into the Secular Society which became established in the eighteen-sixties.

Table 12.5: Educational provision in Leicester by 1840.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissenting Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>British School</td>
<td>1833</td>
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<td>Roman Catholic</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Dissent</td>
<td>580</td>
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<td>680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglican/National Schools</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Charity</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Newton's Endowed</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Charity</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>214</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Asylum</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Charity</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>County National</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>450</td>
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<tr>
<td>St George National</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret Canning Place National</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church Bow Street National</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Anglican/National</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>586</td>
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<td>1938</td>
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<td>Other Establishments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workhouse</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Known Day Pupils</td>
<td>1476</td>
<td>586</td>
<td></td>
<td>2655</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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152 Data are from Thirtieth Annual Report of the National Society, Appendix (1841); B.F.S.S. Annual Report (1835) p. 82; Guide to Leicester (1843), pp. 7-16; L.M., 4.4.1840;
As can be seen in Table 12.5, Christ Church Bow Street National school (the only school for working-class children established since 1835) was accommodating 300 children, as was St Margaret’s school in Canning Place. However, all of the other parochial/National schools had increased their intake from approximately 1,000 pupils in 1835 (Table 12.4), to approximately 2,000 in 1840. There were no new dissenting schools, and although the Great Meeting school had increased its numbers, those of the British school had declined. In addition a school had been established in 1834 at the workhouse where 37 pupils were receiving instruction. The Free Grammar school had closed, but middle-class parents had founded the Anglican Collegiate school in 1836, and the nonconformist Proprietary school in 1837, both of which had on average 100 pupils. There were probably also an estimated 500 children attending the 34 private schools, and 400 attending infant schools. The Sunday schools also continued to thrive, for over 1,000 children were attending the 6 Anglican Sunday schools, and over 4,000 attended the 20
nonconformist Sunday schools associated with the recently established Sunday School Union, plus 150 at the Roman Catholic Sunday school, and 150 at the Great Meeting. The Mechanics’ Institute continued to provide lectures and classes for adults.

It is significant that of all the pupils in day schools only a third were girls, and only a third of the pupils were attending dissenting schools. However only one quarter of pupils attended Anglican Sunday schools compared to dissenting ones. The population in Leicester had increased from 48,167 in 1840, to 68,056 in 1860, but despite this, male illiteracy had declined to 19.5% and female to 37%. The higher level of female illiteracy can no doubt be attributed to the fact that significantly fewer girls received full-time education, and their higher attendance at Sunday schools compared to that of the boys did not necessarily mean that they were receiving adequate education for their needs.

National concern regarding the inadequacy of working-class education became evident in the numerous Acts that had been introduced, and in the Reports of the Committee of Council on Education. The introduction of inspection on receipt of an application for a government grant, and proposals for teacher-training in 1839, led to an increase in sectarian discord, and petitions were organised by Anglicans and dissenters who initially rejected any form of state involvement in church schools. Nevertheless grants enabled more efficient schools to be established. Sir James Graham’s Factory Bill which was introduced in 1843 contained legislation regarding the hours that children worked in factories and mills, and clauses specifying educational provision. As in 1833 the Bill would have had little effect on education in Leicester because more children worked at home or in workshops than in factories. However, it caused great controversy

\[\text{Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education (1839-40), pp. 1-25. The National Society claimed the right to inspect its own schools. The dissenters had to wait for a similar privilege. See Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, 1 (1846), p. 24 which referred to the appointment of specially approved inspectors}\]
nationally and locally for two major reasons: the first was its compulsory element, and the second was the fear of religious control through the proposed management of the schools. The Bill was dropped as had been similar Bills inaugurated by Brougham in 1820, and Roebuck in 1833, and it was not until 1870 that a national system of education was implemented. The Factory Act of 1844 merely modified the Act of 1833, although by legislating for a longer period of schooling it did enable the half-time system to become more effective.

In Leicester, although the Liberal reformers were all opposed to the educational clauses in the Bill, they were not united in their response. The Revs. Mursell and Miall - who were dissenting clergymen - objected to any interference by the state (especially when it appeared to favour the Anglican church), for they were ardent supporters of voluntary provision. William Biggs - a hosier - approved of education by the state in theory, but not in this case, while the Leicester Chronicle considered that any form of national educational provision was better than none. At a protest meeting the Voluntaryists became increasingly incensed, and it was apparent that religion, not the quantity and quality of education, was the main point of contention. The situation was further aggravated in 1846 by the proposal to appoint certain schools - dependent on a favourable report from the inspectors - as centres for the training of pupil teachers in an attempt to improve the quality of teaching. A further protest meeting was held in Leicester, during which the Voluntaryists declared that the measure was a further example of state

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154 This was the result of the inquiries of the commissioners investigating children's employment.
155 The schools were to be under the direction of a clergyman and two church wardens, the teachers were to be approved by the bishop, and the doctrines of the Church of England were to be taught, although there was a conscience clause for the children of dissenters.
156 An Act to Amend the Laws relating to Labour in Factories (1844), 7 & 8 Vic. c.
157 L.C., 25.3.1843, 1.4.1843 reported a meeting of dissenters called to protest against the educational clauses; L.M. 8.4.1843 published a protest petition formulated by the teachers at Archdeacon Lane Sunday school. By 27.5.1843, 131 petitions had been sent from Leicester.
158 L.C., 1.4.1843, 8.4.1843, 20.5.1843.
159 L.C., 20.5.1843.
160 Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education (1846); White Directory (1846), p. 97 stated that St Margaret's National school instructed 200 boys and 150 girls, and was 'one of the training schools to which
interference which would give more financial aid to Anglican-controlled schools. Subsequently the Baptists and Congregationalists nationally and locally alienated themselves from any form of state involvement by their refusal to accept government grants. This had a negative effect on the provision of dissenting schools in Leicester, and prompted the Unitarian missioner Joseph Dare to assert that church schools were the most numerous and efficient. Wesleyans, Catholics and Unitarians however overcame their opposition to government grants, for as William Biggs (who was the mayor and a Unitarian middle-class hosier) contended, the main concern should be the education of the working class, not sectarian rivalry.

Table 12.6: Educational provision in Leicester by 1847.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonconformist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British School - could accommodate 400 boys, 250 girls</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanvey Gate Baptist</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
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<td>Osborne Street Congregational</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>140</td>
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<td>Gallowtree Gate Congregational</td>
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<td>Total Dissent</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>235</td>
<td></td>
<td>1110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglican/National</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Charity</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>207</td>
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<td>1785</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Charity</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>177</td>
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<td>Female Asylum</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Charity</td>
<td>1807</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>134</td>
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<td>County National</td>
<td>1814</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>344</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Saints National</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>200</td>
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</table>

persons are sent to be qualified as teachers'.

161 LC, 10.4.1847.
162 LM, 9.3.1844.
163 Leicester Domestic Mission Annual Reports (L.D.M.A.R.) (1849), p. 8. Between 1846 and 1870 nine more Anglican schools were opened, and of these three were established by the National Society. 2800 more places were provided by these schools. J.D. Martin, 'Primary and secondary education', in R.A. McKinley (ed.), V.C.H. Leicestershire 4, pp. 330, 355-7.
164 LM, 20.3.1847, 3.4.1847. Nevertheless Biggs also considered that the existence of a state church made the 'acceptance of a religious scheme of education impossible'.
165 Church School Inquiry 1846-7: Summary of Returns, pp. 8-9; Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices, 2 (1846), pp. 186-7; Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices, 2 (1847-8), pp. 126-7, 218; Guide to Leicester (1849) supplementary pages.

206
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
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<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Anglican/National</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2024</strong></td>
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<td><strong>OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td>48</td>
<td>106</td>
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<td><strong>Total Anglican Sunday School Pupils (a)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>973</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2225</strong></td>
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<td>MALE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics' Institute - average membership</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School Teachers Institute (440 at opening in 1842)</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Adult</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>550</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(a) The majority of the children at Anglican Sunday schools also attended the day school in the parish.
* Data not available.

Few changes had taken place in educational provision in Leicester between 1840 and 1847 as can be seen in Table 12.6. However, a parochial school maintained by subscribers, had at last been established in St Leonard's parish in 1846 to accommodate 60 children.166 References were made to an infant school and day school for girls at the Gallowtree Gate Congregational chapel, and to a boys' school in Osborne Street which was supported by the same congregation, but these eventually became ragged schools.167 In addition there was a school in Sanvey Gate for 115 girls and 105 boys' founded by the Particular Baptist chapel in Harvey Lane.168 This school was 'maintained for several years independent of government aid' and thus requested 'support from all friends of the voluntary principle'.169 However it was not returned in the Census of 1851 and this closure was blamed on the refusal to accept government grants. The nonconformist Proprietary school had also closed, and the Mechanics' Institute was in decline. Nevertheless one of the most significant contribution to adult, elementary and Sunday school education during this period was the foundation in 1845 of the Domestic Mission in All Saints Open by the congregation of the Great Meeting.170 Two new Anglican Sunday schools had also been established, and a Sunday School Teachers Institute had been commenced by the Union to

166 N.S.A. File 42.
167 *Guide to Leicester* (1843), p. 11; *Guide to Leicester* (1849), p. 13; Johnson, *Glimpses*, p. 386; L.C., 2.11.1844, 22.3.1846. Evening instruction was also available for working children over nine years old. Only one Congregational school was recorded at the Census of 1851, and there is a possibility that the boys' and girls' schools became ragged schools.
168 *Guide to Leicester* (1843), pp. 9-14; *Guide to Leicester* (1849), supplementary pages; Johnson, *Glimpses*, p. 386 recorded that the Baptists 'for a time maintained Day Schools which were afterwards discontinued'. The Baptist school was apparently the one established by the congregation at Harvey Lane. L.C., 8.5.1856, 8.5.1858, 13.4.1867.
169 L.C., 8.5.1858.
instruct 440 teachers. Although over 2,000 children were attending 10 parochial/National schools, and over 1,000 were attending the dissenting schools there was available accommodation for more than this number. Indeed it was noted in the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education of 1846 and 1847 that in Christ Church, St Nicholas and St Margaret's National schools that although just under 700 children were in attendance, there was accommodation for twice that number. Also in the British school, only 350 had attended in a school designed to accommodate 650. Nevertheless it was reported that there was a depression of trade which would have militated against school attendance. There were still more boys than girls at day school, and twice as many children were attending Anglican day schools compared to dissenting ones, however in the Sunday schools the situation was reversed. In 1870 out of a population of 95,220 there were 19.8% illiterate grooms, and 31.9% illiterate brides. Although female illiteracy continued to decline slowly but steadily, male illiteracy had increased slightly since 1860. It was thus apparent that day school provision could not keep pace with population growth, for from 1861 this had accelerated.

In a lecture on national education in 1849 before an audience of 'all sects, parties, and classes', Biggs explained why he considered unsectarian education to be a right not a charity, and also provided statistical evidence to prove the connection between ignorance, crime and immorality.\textsuperscript{171} He argued that the voluntary system was inadequate, and that there should be a national plan for education, supported by local rates (it was hoped that money would eventually be saved through a reduction in crime and pauperism) and governed by local authorities, and that all religious beliefs should be respected. In support of this he pointed out that children in workhouses and prisons were compulsorily educated, while the children of the 'honest poor' were denied this right. He was aware that many were opposed to government interference, were

\textsuperscript{170} This is discussed in more detail below.
satisfied with voluntary provision, objected to an increase in rates as they considered that parents should be responsible, and considered unsectarian education to be valueless. He countered the last objection by suggesting that sectarian distrust should be replaced 'by a higher notion of duty'.

Joseph Dare — the missioner at the Domestic Mission in All Saints Open - supplied Biggs with figures (as illustrated in Table 12.7), to illustrate the failure of voluntary provision to provide adequate education for working-class children. These showed that two-thirds of the children who should have been receiving instruction were not being catered for at day school. Of those who did attend school, the average age of admission was from between five and seven years, attendance was irregular, and the majority only attended for two years. Of the 5,599 children who attended day school, 1,824 went to Anglican schools, 795 to nonconformist schools, 110 to Roman Catholic schools, 1,598 to private schools, and 772 were accommodated at infant schools. The Domestic Mission, ragged schools and evening schools instructed a further 500.172

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171 Biggs, Report of a Lecture upon National Education.

210
Table 12.7: Educational provision in Leicester by 1851.\footnote{A comparison between the figures of Biggs, Report of a Lecture upon National Education (1849), and Mann}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mann (1851)</th>
<th>Biggs (1849)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF SCHOOL</td>
<td>TOTAL PUPILS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANGLICAN SCHOOLS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowed</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican / National</td>
<td>909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican / Charity</td>
<td>857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Anglican Schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>1866</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISSENTING SCHOOLS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarians (British)</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarians (Other)</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British School</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Dissenting Schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>1199</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workhouse</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants Orphan</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Subscription Schools</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Day Schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>5589</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUNDAY SCHOOLS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Anglican</td>
<td>1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISSENTING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>2505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarian</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Methodist</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Reform</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Methodist</td>
<td>724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Association</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latter Day Saints</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Dissenting</strong></td>
<td><strong>5794</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sunday School Pupils</td>
<td>7705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total children educated</td>
<td>13294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

* Data not included as a separate category – has possibly been included under another heading.
Biggs' figures are not directly comparable with those extracted by Mann from the *Census* of 1851 as can be seen in Table 12.7. Nevertheless, allowing for a difference of two years between the returns, as well as the inclusion of certain schools under different categories, there is a similarity in the results. However it is apparent that they used the same Sunday school returns. Leicester was one of 12 towns with 40% or less of school-age children who were not at school on Census Day, and one of 21 towns where the percentage of children between 5-14 at Sunday school was greater than those at day school. Indeed while acting as a Census enumerator Dare ascertained that in one district which had a population of around 600, only 50 were returned as being at school and of these 32 were under 9 years of age. Dare, who was an ardent supporter of compulsory education, contended that the voluntaryists had failed the working-class children of Leicester, and that a 'multiplicity of schools will not help' for there was 'more room in school than is occupied'. Nevertheless at a public meeting in 1851 supporters of voluntary provision, rejected the idea of compulsory education.

Table 12.8: Educational provision in Leicester by 1855.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican/National</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

174 Mann, *Census*, pp. 34, 52. In 1851 the population of Leicester was 60,584, and in 1850 there was 34% male illiteracy and 50% female. W.B. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society, 1830-70: the Geography of Diversity in Provincial England* (Manchester, 1980), p. 39. Only one in 10.81 children were in school on Census Day in Leicester, compared to one in 9.68 in Nottingham, and one in 12.9 in Coventry. Leicester was therefore average in similar Midlands towns.


177 *C.L.C.* 19.4.1851, 17.5.1851; *L.J.* 19.4.1851. The Journal supported the Anglicans in their rejection of secular education.

Table 12.8 provides a résumé of the situation in 1855. Between 1850 and 1855 two new National schools had been established. One was Laxton Street School, St Andrew’s (part of St Mary’s parish), which was founded by a deed dated 5.8.1851 on land belonging to the Rev. Fry.\textsuperscript{179} The other was Christ Church Curzon Street National school which was opened in 1852 to accommodate 170 boys and 130 girls, with the possibility of extending this to 428 pupils, as there was no other school in the area. A grant was requested as the ‘great poverty of the district made it difficult to raise the necessary funds’, for the highest rank of society was that of small

\textsuperscript{179} N.S.A. File 37. There was no early correspondence or details.
shopkeepers, the bulk of the population being engaged in frame-work knitting. An Infant Orphan Asylum was also founded in 1851 'for the education and maintenance, of 30 girls from the age of 6 years. Although the British and Great Meeting Schools had increased their intake, the two nonconformist ragged schools were struggling to survive. However, the Roman Catholic Sunday school was now also providing daily elementary education. Although between 1847 and 1855 the number of children attending parochial and National schools had risen from 1,964 to 4,710, attendance at dissenting schools, and infant schools had remained stable. Additional opportunities were provided by private schools which accounted for another 2,021 children, and Sunday schools also maintained their high numbers.

In the adult sector there were falling numbers at classes and lectures organised by the Mechanics' Institute, but this could be attributed to the foundation of other educational establishments for adults. Indeed on average 100 men and women attended classes at the Domestic Mission, as well as at the discussion class which had commenced in 1850. The Y.M.C.A. had opened in 1855 with 350 members, and Gallowtree Gate Mutual Improvement Society had 50 members at its opening in 1854. It is difficult however, to assess how long it took before adult education had a significant effect on the decline in illiteracy.

Table 12.9: Educational provision in Leicester by 1860.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonconformist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting</td>
<td>1783</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British School</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Nonconformist</td>
<td></td>
<td>814</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>1378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

180 N.S.A. File 48 contains a conveyance and correspondence dated 1852 relating to the establishment of a school for 'labourers, manufacturers and other poorer classes' in the parish of St Margaret.
181 White, Directory (1862), pp. 192-3.
### Roman Catholic (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Charity</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Newton's Endowed</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Charity</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Asylum</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Charity</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County National</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George National</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret Canning Place National</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church Bow Street National</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Leonard's Charity</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrew Laxton Street National</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church Curzon Street National</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John Knighton Street National</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Anglican/National</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>3206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Day School Pupils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1054</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>4784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Infant Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Charlotte Street</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Archdeacon Lane</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford Street</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metcalf Street</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Caroline Place</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Orphan Asylum</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Infants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>655</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Establishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66 Private Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican Collegiate School (closed 1866)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Mission</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragged Schools</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workhouse School</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Anglican Night Schools (average)</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>490</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sunday Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School Union</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Sunday School Pupils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>10200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Children Educated (a)</strong></td>
<td>1544</td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>16448</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Adult Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishments</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic's Institute</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Mission</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Instruction Society</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.M.C.A.</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperance Hall (lectures)</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.W.C.A.</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester Young Men's Institute</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Young Men's Institute</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester Co-operative Society</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Adults Educated</strong></td>
<td>396</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>496</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
(a) Most Anglican children attended both day and Sunday school.
* Data not available.
As can be seen in Table 12.9, in 1860, 3,206 of the 4,784 pupils attending day schools were in those established by the Anglicans. Only 1,378 children were in nonconformist schools, 200 were attending Roman Catholic schools, 655 were in infant schools, and 388 were in mission, ragged and workhouse institutions. An indeterminate number were also receiving instruction in the 66 private schools and academies. Indeed the Anglicans were anxious to enlarge and increase their schools to ensure control of the education of their children and thus during the eighteen-fifties and sixties an increasing number of parochial and National schools were founded or extended and the use of pupil teachers was increased. The Rev. Fry was instrumental in promoting the building and extension of many of these schools, as well as personally training numerous teachers. In 1857 an application was made for a grant to enlarge the temporary school room in Knighton Street, St John’s parish which had been in use since 1853. It was proposed to have three rooms to accommodate 121 boys, 121 girls and 68 infants. Poor trade for the past two years had made it difficult to raise money, and the Roman Catholics who had built a large school in the immediate neighbourhood were ‘using every effort to draw our children into their school’. Also in 1857, St Mary’s charity school was enlarged, and placed under government inspection, and an infant school was established in St Margaret’s, Caroline Street for 200 pupils, although seldom more than 85 attended. Nonconformist congregations were still continuing to concentrate on Sunday school provision, as it was more difficult for small fragmented congregations to fund day schools, and the majority were still unwilling to accept government. Indeed 8,000 children were attending Sunday School Union schools compared to 2,000 in those maintained by the Anglicans. Evening classes had also been established to enable

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183 Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1857-8), p. 366 recorded that 5 National schools and St Mary’s charity school were in receipt of grants for pupil teachers.

184 J.T. Biggs, Leicester Versus Sanitation (1812), pp. 66-8. The Rev. Fry financed the building of schools in St John’s and St Matthew’s parishes as well as Deacon and Laxton Street schools in St Andrew’s parish.

185 N.S.A. File 40. A separate Infant school was established in 1867.

186 L.J., 29.5.1857. At the opening of St Mary’s school, the Rev. Wing requested that parents ensured that their children attended regularly and punctually, and to keep them at school until the age of 12, not 9 or 10 which was a common occurrence at the County National schools. N.S.A. File 44; L.C., 13.8.1864, 3.4.1869; Boys'
those at work to become literate, an indeterminate number of children were being educated in the 66 private schools and academies, and adult education was steadily increasing. The Temperance Hall built in 1857 provided a venue for lectures, and the Y.W.C.A. established in 1857, together with three more institutes for men also provided opportunities for education. Indeed despite a continued increase in population, male illiteracy in 1880 was 12.3% and female 21.5%. Therefore both were showing a substantial decline from 19.8%, and 31.9% in 1870. The greater reduction in male illiteracy could be attributed to the more numerous opportunities provided for men to attend classes, and that more boys than girls attended day school.

The following appraisal provides a more detailed discussion of some of the schools which were in existence in Leicester prior to 1870, the majority of which were founded through voluntary provision. Apart from the log books of the National schools which are extant from 1863, and the Vestry Minute Books of the Great Meeting which allude to the schools, few records remain of the other dissenting and parochial schools. Thus reliance must be made on entries in the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, National Society Annual Reports and National School Files, the British and Foreign School Society Annual Reports. Returns from two British schools to the Newcastle Commission in 1858, together with local directories, the local press, and comments made by local writers. References to the workhouse schools are made in the Minutes of the Leicester Poor Law Union, and the instruction classes at the Leicester Domestic Mission are well-documented by Joseph Dare in his Annual Reports.

DISSENTING SCHOOLS

Although in 1849 the Great Meeting boys' school was placed under government inspection - and was thus eligible for grants - as were the British Schools in 1853 - few other dissenting...
schools were established. In an attempt to improve efficiency, a minimum age limit of seven years was enforced at the Great Meeting schools in 1853, pupils were to remain for three years, and the recommended number of boys was 220. The schools became affiliated to the British and Foreign School Society in 1857, and by 1858 had 312 pupils, who were mainly the children of artisans, and the lower-middle class. The average age at which the children were admitted in 1857 was seven years, and the average age of leaving was ten and a half. Of the 329 boys, 218 were between six and twelve and (of the 329), only 133 attended for 176 days. Of the 90 girls, 65 were between six and twelve, and (of the 90), only 60 attended for 176 days. Children of all denominations continued to be accepted, and the schools were considered to be efficient and to provide excellent discipline and instruction. Despite having a good reputation pupils still remained on average for only 18 months, and at a meeting in 1867 the chairman (Alderman Whetstone) urged parents to make sacrifices to keep their children longer at school. While he complimented the British school - which was the only other unsectarian school in Leicester - he regretted that by refusing government grants dissenters had allowed their children to fall into the hands of the church, or to remain without education. He did not advocate compulsion, and argued that this would not be necessary if parents would send their children regularly to school for a longer period than at present. Other speakers argued that parents would only do this if they

187 White, Directory (1877), pp. 277-8; Leics. C.R.O., N/U/179/39, Vestry Minute Book of the Great Meeting, (1824-1853), 15.5.1848. Application was made for assistance for the boys' school; Leics. C.R.O., N/U/179/40, Vestry Minute Book (1854-1872), 5.10.1858. It was resolved to place the girls' school under government inspection; Report of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendix (1869-70), pp. 92-3 commented that only three nonconformist schools in Leicester received a government grant.

188 Vestry Minute Book (1824-1853), 5.12.1853, 14.12.1853; Vestry Minute Book (1854-1872), 12.6.1855, 3.6.1856, 5.4.1859; L.C., 18.12.1869. The average age of the boys was still under nine, and the average length of stay was one year and five months.

189 Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1857-8), p. 133; Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1858-9), p. 178. Of the 312 pupils listed, 46 were children of tradesmen who employed hands, 72 were children of tradesmen who did not employ other hands, 162 were children of artisans (chiefly employed in the hosiery trade), and 15 had parents who were employed in public service.

190 Returns made to the Newcastle Commission in 1858.

191 L.C., 3.6.1854, 21.3.1857, 22.12.1860, 29.3.1873. Pupil teachers were successfully used; L.J., 16.12.1870 noted there were 631 pupils. The inspections which were held each June/July were reported in the local press.
were compelled to do so, and therefore the state 'should step in', to prevent children being left in ignorance.192

The British schools in Hill Street were the largest of 60 such schools inspected in the region, and also mainly accommodated children of artisans and the lower-middle class.193 The schools appeared to have suffered from frequent changes of teachers but later reports showed improvement (the discipline and geography teaching were especially praised), the master was complimented on his ability, and despite the use of the monitorial system the boys' school was considered to be 'one of the best schools of the old style'.194 The inspectors gave the schools favourable reports, and considered that they 'maintained a high character', and although in 1870 there was concern regarding irregular attendance, this appeared to have been rectified by 1873.195 In 1857 of the 560 boys, 510 were between six and twelve years old, but (of the 560), only 174 attended for more than 176 days. Of the 564 girls, 403 were between six and twelve years and 56 were over twelve. However only 156 of the 564 attended for 176 days. The average age of admittance was eight and a half, and that of leaving was eleven years.196 In 1860 the average attendance was 485 boys and 450 girls, and although this had declined in 1862 to 450 boys and 420 girls, by 1870 it had risen to 460 boys and 468 girls, although there were 540 and 617 respectively on the books.197 At the opening of the Wesleyan day schools in 1867 Mr Ellis (who was a Quaker businessman), stated that the British schools were reputed to be 'one of the best and most useful institutions in the town'. Even so dissenters who favoured the voluntary system

193 Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1858-9), p. 178. Of the 1175 children on the books, 120 were children of employers of hands, 200 were children of trades-persons who employed no assistants, 800 were children of artisans and labourers, and 75 were the children of public servants. The Report also commented (p. 175) that the committee members of the British schools were generally fully employed in business and had little time other than to attend formal meetings, unlike their counterparts in church schools who could spend more time superintending the teachers.
194 L.M., 10.6.1843, L.C., 1.8.1840; Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, 2 (1846), pp. 101, 186. 650 pupils were enrolled although only 320 were present on the day of inspection; L.L., 25.11.1870. Pupil-teachers were later trained in these schools.
196 Returns made to the Newcastle Commission in 1858.
objected to the fact that the schools were in receipt of government grants. Although the Great Meeting and British schools were commended, dissenters were otherwise reproached for not having made enough effort to meet the needs of the poor. Indeed the Gallowtree Gate and Osborne Street Congregational schools had become ragged schools and the Baptist school in Harvey Lane had failed to survive. Despite this there was often spare capacity in the schools because parents had 'failed to secure education for their children at small cost', although sometime later it was felt that the 'poorer classes' were revealing 'a growing desire ... to avail themselves of education'.

Nevertheless additional dissenting schools were not established until 1867. In that year a school was founded by the Wesleyan Methodists in Clyde Street, and in 1871 there was reference to a school at St Paul's London Road Methodist Chapel, and to a Baptist school in Thorpe Street. There was also reference in the School Board Minutes of 1871 to a Congregational school in London Road, although this was not included in the Returns of 1871. The day school connected with the Roman Catholic Church in Wellington Street also instructed 60 children who paid 1d a week 'according to circumstances'. At a meeting held in 1867 to discuss popular education, the mayor considered that by refusing grants the dissenters had neglected education not through indifference but through misplaced opinion, and as a result many children of dissenting parents were either left in ignorance or had to depend on charity. By comparison, numerous elementary Anglican day schools had been established in Leicester (although many were small), in the hope that by instructing children in the doctrines of the established church,

199 L.C., 5.1.1867; Leics.C.R.O., 19D59/VI/1, Leicester School Board Minute Book, Main Series (L.S.B.M.B.), (1871-2), 24.7.1871; Leics. C.R.O., Misc. 835, *Report on Various Charities in St Mary's Parish* (Leicester, 1861) stated that 'with the exception of an infant day school in Thorpe Street there are no dissenting schools in the parish'.
201 L.C., 13.4.1867.
religious supremacy might be retained.\textsuperscript{202} It had proved necessary to build numerous schools as parents would only patronise schools in their immediate neighbourhood.\textsuperscript{203}

**PAROCHIAL CHARITY AND NATIONAL SCHOOLS**

In 1849 when William Biggs delivered his Lecture on Education, there were five parochial schools in Leicester, and another four established by the National Society, which the local inspector considered to be only tolerable.\textsuperscript{204} Christ Church school in Bow Street had become less efficient, and although the master of St Nicholas' school was commended, it was considered impossible that he could effectively teach 200 boys, and the use of pupil-teachers was thus recommended. The master and mistress at St Margaret's 'were assisted by teachers from Mr Fry's training school' but even so the school 'passed a very indifferent examination'.\textsuperscript{205} The inspector also considered that much remained to be done to increase the quantity and quality of education at the County National School.\textsuperscript{206} The logbooks of this boy's school recorded problems that were common to all the schools during this period. Poor attendance was frequently noted, and this tended to coincide with local events such as the annual cattle fair, horticultural show, and race week.\textsuperscript{207} Inclement weather and fever also affected attendance, as did the inability of parents to pay school fees - this was particularly noticeable after holiday periods, but often there was no

\textsuperscript{202} L.C., 26.9.1857, 7.12.1860. As further inducements to attendance, annual treats such as teas and outings were arranged by the schools.

\textsuperscript{203} Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1857-8) pp. 366-7. Blandford during his inspection noted the opening of Laxton Street school in St Mary's parish, and the proximity to this of the school in Knighton Street which was attended by 'a different class of children'; Rimmington, Education, Politics and Society pp. 59-61; L.C., 29.5.1857.

\textsuperscript{204} Guide to Leicester (1849), pp. 10-16. These schools were St Martin's, St Margaret's, All Saints, St Leonard's, St Mary's, parochial, and St Margaret's, St Nicholas', St George's, and Christ Church National which were in receipt of government grant. Between them they instructed under 2,000 children. Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices, 2 (1844), p. 559, reported that the area around Christ Church school was 'demoralised and lawless', and that walls around St Margaret's school had been damaged.

\textsuperscript{205} Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices, 2 (1847-8), pp. 218-9.

\textsuperscript{206} L.C., 2.10.1852.

apparent reason. The boys played truant, were frequently late, tiresome, and ill-disciplined, and their poor behaviour was attributed by the inspector to 'unusually poor home circumstances'. During his visit in 1857 the inspector urged parents to keep their children at school for a longer period of time, as the majority were removed at age nine to work. Few boys managed to gain certificates, for this entailed remaining at school until the age of 12, having attended for at least three years and having good conduct records. The girls' school tended to receive favourable reports and discipline was better, but attendance still gave cause for concern, especially on a Friday as 'the children stay away to carry work to the different warehouses'. Both schools offered religious instruction, literacy, numeracy, geography and history, and the boys were also taught drawing, and the girls sewing.

EVENING CLASSES

Evening and Sunday schools often provided the only opportunity for many working children to acquire literacy, and Joseph Dare made continual references to the need for evening classes, and criticised religious organisations for failing to provide this type of instruction and 'moral training'. From 1851 evening schools were eligible for a government grant, which - following the Revised Code of 1862 - was dependent on satisfactory attendance, and successful attainment of the Standards in reading, writing and arithmetic. Such night schools were held at the County National School, Knighton Street, and St John's schools. These had a total of 196

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208 Boy's National School Log Book, 17.6.1863, 3.7.1863, 5.12.1863, 21.7.1874. On 20.1.1869 it was reported that the school had received no grant for the pupils who had made fewer than 200 attendances. The entry on 11.8.1869 noted that the irregular attendance of the half-timers caused particular difficulties.

209 Boy's National School Log Book, 6.5.1863, 22.4.1868, 20.1.1869, 1.9.1869. When the school was adopted by the Leicester School Board in 1875 it was in 'a fair state of efficiency'.

210 Leics. C.R.O., 2D 58/4 County National School Log Book: Girls' school (1863-75), 1.6.1863, 5.6.1863, 18.12.1864, 13.9.1870, 11.7.1867, March 1969, Feb. 1870, April 1873, 29.7.1875 - the last entry before the school was adopted by Leicester school board.

211 Leics. C.R.O., Leicester Domestic Mission Annual Reports (L.D.M.A.R.) (1854), p. 16; (1864), p. 7. Dare recorded that evening instruction was available at most public schools but there were often restrictions on
boys and 16 girls under 14 years of age 'on the books' in 1859.213 Classes were also organised by the Nonconformists in Sanvey Gate, Carley Street and Paradise Row, but despite the fact that 670 children were on the books, in November 1868 the average attendance was only 356. By 1869 Dare was pleased to report that free evening instruction similar to that provided by the Mission had been offered in several places in Leicester by various denominations.214 Additional venues had been established at St Martin's school, and Belvoir Street Baptist church.215 Numbers enrolled were reported to be around 1,000 in 1871, with an average attendance of 600, and of these a quarter were aged under 13 and could thus be classified as elementary students. However Mr. Blakiston the local inspector, contended that many did not frequent night schools 'with a view to self-improvement', but saw the acquisition of literacy as having 'a direct value in the labour market'.216 Nevertheless despite the above educational provision, the most destitute children were almost wholly neglected prior to the eighteen-forties, and many remained so, although others received instruction at the ragged schools, in classes organised by Joseph Dare at the Domestic Mission, and compulsorily in the Parochial Union School.

RAGGED SCHOOLS217

'The ragged urchins of our back streets have not escaped the penetrating eye of benevolence'.218

Ragged schools were generally founded by missions to provide religious and moral education, as well as instruction in basic literacy for children of parents who could not afford school fees - or were indifferent to the needs of their children - and whose neglected condition...

213 Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1858-9), pp. 74-5 stated that the average attendance was only around one-third the number on the books, and that the major obstacle to the schools' development was the lack of competent teachers.
217 I have included Ragged Schools in this chapter rather than in the one concerned with Sunday schools as their role was similar to that of the Domestic Mission.
made them unwelcome in the majority of schools. In 1846 a school for ragged boys (who were found to be 'rude and unmanageable') was opened in Osborn Street, and one for girls in Gallowtree Gate, however in the summer of 1847 it was reported that attendance had declined, and the 'teachers had fallen off'. Although by 1849 the schools contained 60 boys and 70 girls 'under the tuition of philanthropic teachers', this momentum was not maintained, for sometime between 1849 and 1853 the Osborne Street school temporarily closed because of financial problems and lack of teachers. Indeed suitable accommodation, lack of teachers, fluctuating attendance and finance were problems that continually beset schools of this type. There was also reference to a ragged school in 1866 which was established in the home of Miss Fanny Wheeler in Bedford Street. This school moved in 1868 to Belgrave Gate, then to Yeomans Lane and eventually to Wharf Street - near to the brickyards, coal depots and factories. The ragged schools were eventually supplanted when Board Schools were built in the neighbourhood.

THE DOMESTIC MISSION

In 1845 a committee inaugurated by the Great Meeting opened 'an excellent room in All Saints' Open for educational purposes'. This formed part of the work of the domestic mission under the auspices of the missioner Joseph Dare. Evening classes were established for boys and

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218 Guide to Leicester (1849), supplementary pages.
220 H. Ranger, A Century of Work for the Young 1835-1935: commemorating the 100 years of service by the Leicestershire and Rutland Sunday School Union (Leicester, 1935), p. 21 cited the Annual Reports of the Sunday School Union (1845-6) (1847-8); L.D.M.A.R. (1847), p. 16 mentioned a ragged school in Osborne Street which was held on Sunday evenings; L.C., 7.3.1846, 9.10.1847.
221 Guide to Leicester (1849), supplementary pages; Ranger, Century of Work, p. 22 cited the Annual Report (1853) of the Sunday School Union which reported the re-opening of the school, but no further references were made to these schools.
222 C.J. Montague, Sixty Years in Waifdom: the Ragged School Movement in English History (1904, 1969 edn), pp. 228-9. However it was stated in L.C., 8.6.1867 that there were no ragged or industrial schools to 'instruct or train' the 'poor juveniles' in the town; L.C., 11.1.1869 commented that 150 children 'belonging to the most destitute' had been admitted to a ragged school that had opened the previous January. These children were not only ragged but many were also homeless.
223 19D59/VI/4, L.S.B.M.B., 6.10.1879 reported the closure of Gladstone Street ragged school which left 200
children requiring temporary accommodation.


226 L.D.M.A.R. (1846), p. 18; (1847), p. 12; (1854), p. 13; (1856), p. 7. Despite the lack of teachers Dare considered the monitorial system to be 'worse than useless' and 'a mere apology for education'; (1848), p. 11; (1849), p. 10. He noted that the boys' conduct was 'rude and undisciplined', and that a large proportion could be classed as ragged; (1873), p. 16 - the boys were still ill-behaved.

227 L.D.M.A.R. (1846), p. 20; (1858), p. 13. Winders, trimmers, and sweeps in particular lacked instruction; (1848), p. 14; (1862), p. 16; (1863), p. 4; (1866), p. 17. Dare mentioned parental indifference and contended that many sent their children to school to keep them out of the way until they could earn.

228 L.D.M.A.R. (1851), p. 10; (1852), p. 15; (1856), p. 7; (1863), p. 16; (1857), p. 6. Dare noted that 'several excellent schools have been opened by the various sects in suitable locations.

229 L.D.M.A.R. (1846), p. 20 & p. 7. Dare stated that children were put to work as soon as they 'could move their fingers, and that they were too tired to go to night school'; (1847), p. 11; (1849) p. 10. He noted that attendance was affected by 'fluctuations in employment' but a few attended regularly; (1859), p. 6. Many children under 10 worked from 5 am until 11 pm or later; (1864), p. 19 - attendance was still irregular; (1874), p. 13. Attendance continued to be irregular when the evening classes were transferred to the Great Meeting, following the closure of the mission.

Dare initially thought that the girls were 'more docile and tractable' than the boys as well as 'more numerous', but by 1873 he found them to be 'forward and petulant'.

A sewing class was established for the girls in addition to instruction in basic literacy, but although classes were generally well-attended, this fluctuated according to the demands of employment, and the ages of the girls tended to decrease over time. Even so girls under the age of nine were not admitted as Dare considered that they needed rest, despite the fact children employed in dyeing and fancy work were sometimes kept at work until midnight. In 1853 it was noted that 'full employment has called off the older girls' and enabled parents 'to send younger girls to a regular day school'.

Dare's last Annual Report in 1875 rejoiced in the fact that the need for the Mission had diminished because of improved social conditions, and thus 'our labours ... amongst the little ones of school age are no longer required', for:

> 'When we commenced our labours there were some thousands of wholly neglected children wandering at large, without the possibility of attending any means of instruction ... there are now six excellent Board Schools open in the town. It will therefore, be a better service to induce such children to attend efficient schools, than attempt to instruct them in any other way during school hours'.

**WORKHOUSE EDUCATION**

'We are perfectly aware that for the general diffusion of right principles and habits we are to look ... to the influence of a moral and religious education'.

So far only voluntary provision for the education of working-class children has been examined, but education for the children of those in receipt of in-door relief was compulsory. The education of pauper children was to be undertaken by a qualified schoolmaster (although

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232 L.D.M.A.R. (1846), pp. 17, 20; (1848), p. 11; (1850), p. 9; (1851), p. 12; (1847), p. 8. Dare was aware however, that poverty-stricken parents relied on their children's earnings.
233 L.D.M.A.R. (1855), p. 9; (1864), p. 19. He noted that many girls came late and some fell asleep; (1859), p. 12. He recorded that classes started at the later time of 8 p.m. because of work commitments. See also (1861), p. 17.
236 Report from H.M. Commissioners on the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Law, with
competent ones proved difficult to find), who was to instruct them in basic literacy, morality and industry. Education and industrial training were considered necessary to enable the children to become self-sufficient. It was hoped if the children were educated then 'the evil habits of many who inhabit workhouses' would be corrected. Nevertheless the Boards of Guardians were anxious that the education of pauper children should not be superior to that offered by local schools, and that paupers were not educated above 'the station of life nearest to that which they were born to'. If numbers were too small children could be sent to the local school, but in 1844 smaller unions were empowered to combine to finance district schools, although many Boards of Guardians - including the one in Leicester - preferred to maintain their own. The instruction initially provided for pauper children was considered to be 'low in its aims and meagre in its outline', the schools to be 'wretchedly supplied with books', and the schoolmasters to be 'generally ignorant and unskilled'. From 1846 workhouse schools came under government inspection, and teachers had part of their salary paid to the guardians by the government.

The Minutes of the Leicester Poor Law Union contain more information regarding the employment of schoolmasters and mistresses than on the education of the children. This is not surprising considering the regularity with which teachers either tendered their resignations or were dismissed, for Leicester - in common with other parochial unions - found it difficult to


237 New Poor Law Act (1834), 4 & 5 Wm. IV c. 76. Local Boards of Guardians established under the Act were controlled by central Poor Law Commissioners. Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 77, A Report as to the Administration of the Poor Law in the Leicester Union (Leicester, 1861), p. 5. Prior to 1834 education 'was entrusted to a pauper' in return for 'a little indulgence'.

238 Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, 1 (1846), pp. 47-8. The need to educate pauper children was stressed to ensure their future independence so that they would not become a burden on the rates. Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 43, Leicester Union: Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider the Propriety of Enlarging the Workhouse and the best means of Accomplishing the Same (Leicester, 1858), pp. 10-11, 13 cited benefits to education as one reason for enlargement.

239 Report from the Select Committee on the Education of Destitute Children together with Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix (1861, I.U.P. edn, Shannon, 1970), pp. 307-9, 313; Report as to the Administration of the Poor Law (1871), p. 16 It was considered to be impossible to over-educate such children because of their many disadvantages.

240 The Poor Law Act (1844), 7 & 8 Vic. c. 101.
attract or to keep competent staff. Indeed between 1839-71 there were 19 schoolmasters, and 10 schoolmistresses, and between 1848-71 there were 10 infant schoolmistresses. In 1849 58 boys and 48 girls were in attendance but both the discipline and instruction at the Leicester workhouse schools were considered by the inspector to be imperfect and below average, the secular books were found to be unsuitable, and the girls' school lacked maps and a blackboard.

The committee was advised to improve the quality of instruction given 'to meet the wants of society and to promote the real welfare of the children'. The quality of instruction tended to improve slightly after this, and occasionally a teacher proved to be outstanding. In 1858 and 1865 the schoolmasters were awarded certificates of competency, which guaranteed grants of £35, and £42 respectively, and the state of the school was considered to be fair. Pupil teachers were also used in the schools. From the Minutes and the inspectors' Annual Reports it can be deduced that the children were taught religious knowledge, reading, writing, arithmetic, as well as history and geography. In 1867 new schools were built to accommodate 400 children in order to keep them separate from the main workhouse. However, the schools were to be controlled by the master and matron of the workhouse, not by the school staff.

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244 Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendices: Schools of Parochial Unions (1847-8-9), pp. 126-7. On a further visit the boys' school was found 'in the same condition', but 'the girls' school was improved'. Leics. C.R.O., G/12/57d/3, Poor Law Union Letters from Central Authority, 17.12.1849. The Poor Law Commissioners questioned the quality of education given and the efficiency of the schoolmaster.
245 G/12/8a/5, L.P.L.U.M.B., 18.9.1849.
246 G/12/8a/4, L.P.L.U.M.B., 23.2.1847. The attainment of the girls however was considered inferior to that of the boys, and their needlework was also criticised. Leics. C.R.O., G/12/57b/2, Poor Law Union Letters to Central Authority, 15.6.1849. The new Infant mistress was praised for her efficiency and for the condition of the school.
247 G12/57d/8, Letters from Central Authority, 18.12.1858; G/12/57d/11, Letters from Central Authority, 18.10.1865. In 1858 the schoolmistress was awarded a certificate of probation which attracted a lower grant of £24.
248 Leics. C.R.O., G/12/57a/18, Poor Law Union General out Letters, 20.6.1862, 25.7.1862, 12.8.1862,
249 G/12/8a/4, L.P.L.U.M.B., 23.2.1847; G12/57d/8, Letters from Central Authority, 18.12.1858; G/12/57d/11, Letters from Central Authority 18.10.1865.
250 G/12/57d/11, Letters From Central Authority, 27.4.1865 - regarding the proposed site; G/12/8a/11, L.P.L.U.M.B., 26.9.1864, 2.5.1865, 12.9.1865 refer to plans for a separate site; 28.1.1868 The rules of the school with regard to both school staff and children were stated.

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It was proposed in 1849 to use the building formerly occupied by the Free Grammar School to establish a school for the children of those on outdoor relief. Nevertheless the use of rates for this purpose was declared illegal, and the school was forced to close within a month of opening. Indeed it was not until the Poor Law Act of 1855 that Boards of Guardians were enabled to finance the education of outdoor pauper children from the rates, but even so many were reluctant to do this. Parents were equally reticent to claim, partly through apathy and partly through fear of losing their relief, with the result that when they 'come upon the parish the children are withdrawn from school'.

There were also few references to industrial training in the earlier Minutes, but from 1842 the boys were evidently employed in shoemaking, in 1844 a tailor was engaged to instruct them, and by 1849 they were taught to bake. They were not instructed in frame-work knitting as the trade was already overloaded, and would therefore 'only lead to pauperism under another name'. In 1858 the guardians were advised to train more than the eight boys who were already being instructed in shoemaking as the trade was flourishing in the town, but this was rejected as there were no other available boys strong enough to undertake training of this nature. In addition to in-house instruction, between 1844 and 1871 a total of 315 children were apprenticed, and of these 243 went to masters in Leicester who were mainly engaged in shoemaking, tailoring...

251 26D68/3/9, Letters to Central Authority, 31.5.1849, 23.11.1849; G/12/57a/7, General Out Letters, 8.5.1849; G/12/57d/3, Letters from Central Authority, 6.6.1849; G/12/8a/5, L.P.L.U.M.B., 1.5.1849, 15.5.1849, 29.5.1849; L.D.M.A.R. (1852), p. 7.
255 G/12/57a/4, General Out Letters, 8.12.1845.
256 G/12/57d/8, Letters from Central Authority, 14.10.1858; G/12/57b/3, General Out Letters, 23.10.1858.
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and baking. It was difficult to provide suitable training for the girls to fit them for domestic occupations, or housewifery, but it was felt that the establishment of schools in buildings separate from the workhouse would enable suitable instruction to be given.

Although there had been an increase in voluntary and compulsory education for working-class children in Leicester, many still lacked any form of instruction, and this issue was central to numerous meetings held in the decade prior to the Education Act of 1870. Indeed in 1860 out of a population of approximately 68,000, it has been discovered that male illiteracy in Leicester was 19% and female illiteracy was 37%. Nevertheless - as can be seen in Table 12.10 - additional accommodation was provided, for in 1862 an infant school was established in St Martin’s, Union Street, a new schoolroom was opened in All Saints parish in 1863 to accommodate 140 boys and 140 girls, and in 1865 Deacon Street parochial School was established in St Andrew’s. However, Curzon Street school in the parish of All Saints was becoming overcrowded as 100 children were being instructed in a space intended for 40, and even so only one child in 30 in the parish was receiving instruction. Infant schools were founded in the parishes of St John and St Peter in 1867, and in Brunswick Street in 1868, and Chester Street in 1869 in the new parish of St Matthew’s. Financial aid was requested in order that 240 infants could be instructed at Chester street, and 460 ‘children of the poor’ at Brunswick Street as ‘no one in the parish can afford to give more than a trifle’ for the population comprised the ‘poorer labouring classes’. According to the return of schools noted in the Leicester School Board Minutes of 1871-2, new schools had

257 Leics. C.R.O., G/12/38/1, Poor Law Union Register of Apprentices (1844-1927); G/12/57a/11, General out Letters, 11.11.1852; G/12/57a/21, General out Letters, 2.11.1866. These refer to problems with apprentices’ masters.

258 Report as to the Administration of the Poor Law in the Leicester Union (1861), pp. 12, 15-16.

259 N.S.A. File 2 notes an application to increase accommodation in All Saints parish. N.S.A. File 36. Deacon street school was known as the Victoria School.

260 N.S.S. File 40 refers to a Deed dated 16.4.1857 in connection with an Infant school in St John’s parish, and File 50 refers to an infant school in the parish of St Peter.

261 N.S.A. File 48.
been founded in the parishes of St George and St Luke, and a school was in the course of completion or erection in Holy Trinity.\textsuperscript{262}

Alderman Newton's endowed school was still in existence, and the 100 boys selected according to the stipulated conditions were taught by the National System. They were provided with books and stationery, and were given a Bible and prayer book on leaving school. In 1864 fresh accommodation was sought, but objections were raised to the proposal to place the school in St Martin's parish - one of the most exclusive areas in Leicester - as the residents considered the boys to be mischievous.\textsuperscript{263} In 1865 it was considered that the boys were deficient in reading and writing, and therefore before they were accepted they had to take tests in writing and arithmetic as well as reading a portion of the New Testament.\textsuperscript{264} In 1871 the Leicester School Board were uncertain as to whether it should become a middle-class fee-paying school, or retain the original intention of its founder to provide for the free education of the poor. The trustees feared a take-over, but the Board was content merely to include it in their returns as an efficient Anglican school, and thus reduce the deficit of places.\textsuperscript{265}

It is interesting to note that although there were still no new dissenting schools, the Great Meeting and British schools still had spare capacity even though they had increased their intake. Nonconformist Sunday schools also continued to grow, for in 1865 there were 9,366 pupils in the Union schools alone. Nevertheless of the 14,000 children who were eligible to receive education only approximately 6,000 were attending a day school, and of these only one quarter were in schools not associated with the Anglican church. Evening classes and mutual

\textsuperscript{262} N.S.A. File 20 notes a Declaration of Trust in connection with Holy Trinity dated 15.10.1870; N.S.A. File 43 refers to an application for a grant in 1870 and to a Declaration of Trust in 1871 in connection with St Luke's school.
\textsuperscript{263} LJ, 19.8.1864.
\textsuperscript{264} Leics. C.R.O., 3D/42/1-25, Minute Books of the Alderman Newton Charities (1836-1865).
\textsuperscript{265} LJ, 24.7.1871.
Improvement societies continued to supply a need and were increasing, and from 1861 science schools and adult schools were established in Leicester. In addition to adult education already in existence, the Leicester Working Men's College had been established in 1862. Although it is not always possible to ascertain the numbers of adults attending classes, lectures, discussion groups and mutual instruction societies, this increase in educational provision for adults must have contributed to the decline in illiteracy in 1880.266

The population in Leicester had risen from 48,167 in 1841, to 60,584 in 1850 and from 68,056 in 1860 to a dramatic 95,220 in 1870, so that more educational provision was necessary to maintain the status quo. The acceleration in the growth of population from 1861 can be attributed to some extent to the establishment and expansion of the new boot and shoe, and elastic web industries which placed more demand on Leicester's labour market, and thus attracted more workers into Leicester, many with children needing education. This placed an extra burden on day school provision. Indeed male illiteracy had increased slightly in 1870 to 19.8%, although female illiteracy had declined to 31.9%, aided no doubt by Sunday school attendance. Nevertheless it was considered that

'Charity, National and other schools for the gratuitous education of the poor, or for imparting information on the lowest terms, with the aid of subscriptions and donations, are as numerous in Leicester ... as those of most other towns of similar magnitude.'267

266 Adult education is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.
267 White Directory (1862), pp. 191-3; Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education (1858-9), p. 73 noted that the girls' school in Curzon Street had closed.
Table 12.10: Educational provision in Leicester by 1865.\textsuperscript{268}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonconformist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting (average attendance 385 boys, 250 girls)</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British (average attendance 490 boys, 435 girls)</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>1152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Nonconformist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>2032</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roman Catholic (2)</strong></td>
<td>1824/7</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anglican/National</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Charity</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Newton's Endowed</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Charity</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Asylum</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Charity</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County National</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George National</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret Canning Place National</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church Bow Street National</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Leonard's Charity</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrew Laxton Street National</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church Curzon Street National</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John Knighton Street National</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints National</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrew Deacon Street</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Anglican/National</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFANT SCHOOLS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Charlotte Street</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Archdeacon Lane</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford Street</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metcalf Street</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Caroline Street</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Union Street</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Orphan Asylum</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Infants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Day School Pupils in 23 public schools (a)</strong></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>7627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Mission (boys irregular attendance)</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workhouse School (new building)</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragged Schools (closed by 1867)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Anglican Night Schools</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Nonconformist Night Schools (average attendance 356)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{268} B.F.S.S. Annual Report (1862), pp. 62-3; N.S.A. Files 2 & 36; Local Directories & press.
### SUNDAY SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School Union (29 schools)</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>9366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican Sunday Schools (2000 estimated total)</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic (200 estimated total)</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Mission</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Sunday School Pupils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>9431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Children Educated (b)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ADULT EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADULT EDUCATION</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic's Institute</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Mission</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Instruction Society</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.M.C.A.</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperance Hall (lectures)</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.W.C.A</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester Young Men's Institute</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Young Men's Institute</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of England Institute</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester Co-operative Society</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society of Friends Adult School</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's and St Margaret's Science Schools</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester Working Men's College</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Evening Class</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrew's Mutual Instruction Society</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Adults Educated</strong></td>
<td>138</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(a) Data from Debate on Popular Education in Leicester L.C. 13.4.1867
(b) Most Anglican children attended both day and Sunday school.
* Data not available.

### III - LOCAL RESPONSE TO NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ISSUES FROM 1860

'That the children of our poorer Brethren should be raised from ignorance and vice and trained up in their duty to God and man, is an object which all alike have an equal interest.'

The sentiments expressed in 1861 in this appeal 'to all classes and denominations' had changed little during the course of the nineteenth century, for it is evident that the emphasis was still on moral regeneration rather than on an improvement in literacy, or the creation of a more technically-educated future workforce. Although Lowe's Revised Code of 1862 was an attempt
to improve nationally the quality of instruction, it resulted in an increase in rote learning, and in addition alienated the teachers. Some progress had been made in providing efficient education for working-class children in Leicester, but many were still denied the opportunity for despite Factory Acts which legislated for a regulation in the hours, and educational provision for working children, instruction was difficult to enforce, for rules could be evaded. Moreover the majority of working children in Leicester were employed in small workshops, or in a domestic environment, and remained unaffected by legislation. Indeed a government inquiry during 1863-4 was made into the condition of children such as these, and the results of these investigations culminated in the Workshops Regulation Act of 1867.

The evidence that William Biggs gave to the commissioners in 1863 concerning the educational situation in Leicester, appears to be diametrically opposed to his estimation in 1849.

'The general education in the town is very good: there is a good deal of teaching on Sundays, and most can afford to pay for it in the week. I believe decidedly that the result of this is shown in the moral condition of the population. There has been a decided improvement in the manners of the lower classes.'

This impression was contradicted by Joseph Dare whose figures Biggs had used in 1849 to support his case that education in Leicester was deficient. Dare contended that 'The condition of those who are called the neglected and dangerous classes is just the same as it was 20 years ago. The Government, Church and denominational schools of all kinds are effecting but very little compared with what they might do; and this is in consequence of the system of employment of the young at so early an age'. They leave week-day schools by about 9 or 10 years old ... and rarely stay for more than a year and a half ...

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and they cannot come to evening schools because they are so late at work; or if they can come, they are too tired to be interested, and often fall asleep.'273

Dare concluded his evidence by stating that

'if ignorance, pauperism and crime are to be diminished amongst us, and these classes socially and morally improved, there must be some regulation of all juvenile employments and some kind of compulsory instruction and moral training'.

The evidence of the few children who were examined confirmed that many children began work before they were 12 years of age and that some were even younger.274 They were aware that they had only received instruction in basic literacy, and some had already forgotten what they had previously learnt. Nevertheless there was an indication in the Reports that late night working had begun to diminish because of the need to work to railway timetables (rather than to carriers who were more flexible) and that employers would be amenable to the regulation of the hours of young workers.275

The Workshops Regulation Act of 1867 had more effect on the education of children in Leicester than previous Factory Acts. Indeed this Act improved the condition of children not previously catered for, and resulted in half-time school attendance for 583 Leicester children (out of the 7,000 who were apparently receiving no instruction).276 A great many of these attended the Great Meeting schools, for the British schools would only admit those who had previously attended before commencing work, and one school would not admit them at all.277 Nevertheless it was found that although 'the more respectable employers comply with the system', 'the Act is

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273 First Report on the Employment of Children, (1863), pp. 292-3. Dare considered that winding and errand boys, and girls employed as seamers received the least instruction. Mr Hepworth - a first-class certificated teacher - supplied figures from the Great Meeting boys' school (which was considered to be one of the best schools in Leicester) to prove Dare's argument that children rarely remained in school for more than 17 months.


276 The Factory Acts Extension Act (1864), 27 & 28 Vic. c. 48; and (1867), 30 & 31 Vic. c. 103. These Acts made provision for children in boot and shoe factories with over 50 employees, and children employed in workshops and houses. Every child under 13 thus employed had to attend school for at least 10 hours a week.
chiefly evaded by small unprincipled employers, needy, ignorant or drunken parents', and 'less scrupulous teachers', and that some employers merely discharged any children affected. The local inspector found the education of working girls in Leicester a particular cause of concern for he had been informed that of the

'102 factories "under the Act" not less than 1000 girls are employed; and that at least 1,000 more are at work in the 110 warehouses under inspection. But, in addition to those 102 factories under inspection there are 30 others which are not inspected... for the most part they are uneducated in every sense of the word'.

The girls who did attend school as half-timers tended to 'interfere with the usual school routine' and either remained at home when work was in short supply, or changed factories and thus schools when work was available. Indeed the ease with which young girls could find employment meant that it was 'almost impossible to keep a first class, especially in a poor district'. By 1869 it was alleged that only half the children who should have been attending school as half-timers were in fact doing so, and the inspector resorted to enlisting 'a sergeant and constable ... systematically to enforce its provisions'.

It was becoming evident that compulsion could resolve the problem of the numerous children in Leicester who remained uneducated, and at a meeting convened in 1867 to discuss popular education the failure of the voluntary schools to promote sufficient day school accommodation was viewed with regret. Out of a population of approximately 85,000, there

and obtain a certificate.

277 L.C., 3.4.1869.
278 Report of the Committee of Council on Education: with Appendix (1867-8), pp. 96-101; Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1869-70), pp. 96-7 recorded that 'children are constantly represented as two or more years older than they are'; L.D.M.A.R. (1868), pp. 5-6, and (1869), pp. 7, 17; L.C., 3.4.1869. At the opening of St Mary's new parochial school, the chairman asserted that employers should not employ illiterate children, thus putting the onus on parents to ensure that their children were educated.
279 Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1869-70), pp. 234-5. 4000 girls were employed in various 'manufactories' in Leicester from a very early age. Of 61 scholars examined in 1866 under Standard I in a Leicester evening school 25 had received less than 1 years schooling, 7 less than 2 years, 9 less than 3, and only 5 had received 4 years schooling.
280 Report of the Committee of Council on Education (1869-70), Appendix B.

237
were 14,000 children aged between 6 and 14, but of these only 7,000 were in receipt of instruction. The deficit was partly attributed to the failure of many dissenting congregations to either accept government grants, or to combine in order to finance schools. Nevertheless a lack of schools was not the only problem, for there were 1,000 unoccupied places in the existing ones. At the opening of a new parochial school in St Mary's parish in 1869 (which can be seen in Plate 1), the merits of compulsory as opposed to voluntary education were discussed, and likewise the benefits of unsectarian in preference to denominational schools. The mayor favoured non-sectarian education as he considered it wrong that children were excluded from schools because of the religion of their parents. Mr Pell wished to retain the existing system of voluntary state-aided schools, while the chairman (who was a magistrate) stressed the need for compulsory education, for he considered ignorance to be 'a great social evil', and a cause of crime. Understandably the bishop emphasised the value of religious education, and while he believed that compulsory education was preferable to no education, he was aware that compulsion was not always popular. He thus suggested that if parents would ensure their children's attendance, then compulsion would not be necessary. He concluded that children also acquired habits of obedience, order, self-respect and cleanliness at school.
The above issues continued to be subjects for debate at numerous meetings organised in 1869 by the National Education League, and the National Education Union. The former promoted a system of free, unsectarian, compulsory education, managed by the local authority, but subject to government inspection. It was nevertheless suggested that most parents would prefer to continue paying for their children at denominational schools of their choice, to keep them separate from 'that class of children who would resort to a free school'. Not surprisingly the majority of Anglicans and Tories favoured the views of the Education Union which endorsed the retention of denominational schools, and opposed compulsory education, for it was believed that compulsion would remove parental responsibility, and that education without religion would

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286 The League had been founded in Birmingham in 1869 by Joseph Chamberlain who was a Unitarian, and the Union - which was supported by Anglicans, Wesleyans and Roman Catholics was established in Manchester the same year. See Lawson & Silver, Social History of Education, pp. 315-6, Rimmington, Education Politics and Society, pp. 65-6.
be meaningless. However at a meeting of the Education League held in Leicester, A.J. Mundella maintained that unsectarian should not be equated with irreligious, and Joseph Chamberlain asserted that parents could still choose to support denominational schools. Indeed it was argued at a further meeting that schools should focus on 'impacting useful knowledge', while Sunday schools should concentrate on religious teaching. The ensuing discussion revealed concerns that denominational schools would suffer from the proposed changes, for many Anglicans feared competition from a free, compulsory system of education. Nevertheless it was hoped that the forthcoming Education Bill would result in a reduction in crime, as well as in an increase in prosperity for the country.

IV - THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT AND THE LEICESTER SCHOOL BOARD

'Mr. Forster's Education Act of 1870 proved of immense benefit to the town by the creation of the School Board and the gradual erection of efficient schools in every locality; thus bringing the advantages of cheap education to the very doors of the working classes.'

The Education Bill was considered by many liberal reformers to be limited in its recommendations, for school fees were not abolished (although poor parents could apply for aid), and compulsory education for children aged from 5-13 was to be left to the discretion of school boards, as was the type of religious instruction to be given - although withdrawal from this on the grounds of conscience was guaranteed. In Leicester it was feared that if the

280 L.J., 3.9.1869, 21.1.1870, 28.1.1870. At a meeting on National Education in 1869 it was suggested that the Bible should be read without comment or bias, but at a meeting of the Union in 1870 doubts were expressed as to whether this could be done.
282 L.C., 12.2.1870. Report of a meeting concerning denominational as opposed to non-sectarian education.
283 L.C., 27.11.1869.
284 J.S. Machure, Educational Documents: England and Wales, 1816-1967 (1965, 1968 edn), pp. 98-105. The religious content was later amended to ensure that 'no catechism or religious formulary, which is distinctive to any particular denomination shall be taught'. Voluntary schools were given six months to make good any deficiency in provision, they were to receive a 50% government grant, but the building grant would end. If at
Anglicans gained control of the Board this would lead to an increase in sectarian discord.

However John Ellis - a Quaker businessman - considered it preferable to have the Bill in its present state because of the deficiency in schools, rather than no Bill at all.295 Indeed Samuel Stone - the Nonconformist Town Clerk - reported that an additional 3,000 places were needed to fulfil the requirements of the Act which he considered to be fair, as it was undesirable to leave 3,000 children in ignorance 'to satisfy the caprices of political Churchmen who are anxious to retain unfair advantage'.296 The dissenters, who had built few schools in Leicester, considered Board Schools to be the only means of reaching the lowest class of children who failed to attend any school, but the Anglicans were urged by the diocesan bishop to promote a sufficiency and efficiency of church schools to negate the need for Board Schools.297

By November 1870 it was apparent that gaps in educational provision could only be filled by Board Schools (especially as the original deficit in school places had been under-estimated), and permission was requested for the inauguration of a School Board in Leicester.298 The thirteen Board members were to be elected from 'all religious persuasions' and were to be 'representative of all classes'.299 The successful candidates were four Anglican clergyman, two Anglican merchants and a Roman Catholic who were anxious to preserve denominational schools, while the four Liberal Nonconformists and two working men wished to provide an alternative non-sectarian system.300 Thus during the Board's first term of office educational provision continued the end of six months provision was still inadequate, then school boards were to be elected to 'fill the gaps'.

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295 L.C., 5.3.1870. This was stated during a meeting of the Education League called to discuss the proposed Bill.
296 L.C., 10.10.1870; L.J., 14.10.1870. The children who were in receipt of some instruction were accommodated in 23 Anglican schools, the rest attended 5 dissenting, 2 Roman Catholic, a ragged school, a workhouse school, 42 dame schools, and 4 schools under 'uncertified' teachers.
297 L.C., 22.10.1870, 26.11.1870. Although compulsory education was felt by some to be the only solution in the case of drunken or apathetic parents, others considered persuasion to be preferable. It was also contended that if parents had adequate employment then they would educate their children.
298 L.J., 25.11.1870. See also L.C., 31.12.1870, 7.1.1871, 4.1.1871 for reports on the campaigns and manifestos of the candidates which concentrated on compulsory education, and religious instruction.
299 L.C., 6.10.1870. Since the Representation of the People Act (1867), the franchise had been extended to include certain artisans who were thus eligible to vote for, and be members of the school board.
300 Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 86, S. Stone, A Short Account of the Election of the First School Board for the
to be affected by religious, and political discord.\textsuperscript{301} Indeed it was contended by a Nonconformist minister that there were two lines of policy, one to supply the best education as soon as possible, and the other to make sure that the existing church schools were unaffected.\textsuperscript{302} The Anglican-dominated Board attempted to apply the recommendations of the Act to ensure that no Board School was to be built in an area served by a church school - even if the latter lacked accommodation for all the children in the area.\textsuperscript{303}

The four themes which had dominated debates on education during the second half of the nineteenth century were still current and needed to be addressed by the board. These were provision of school places, religion, fees and compulsion.\textsuperscript{304} The type of religious instruction to be given in schools continued to be a contentious issue, and a compromise was reached whereby the Bible was to be read daily with explanatory comments, but without attempts to proselytize.\textsuperscript{305} The question of the remission of fees for poor children in denominational schools caused further problems, as it was argued that public money should not be used to support denominational schools.\textsuperscript{306} However others contended that they should not be expected to pay rates to support Board Schools if they were to be denied choice as to where they could send their

\textsuperscript{301} L.C., 27.12.1873. At a meeting of the Working Men's Conservative Association, the Rev. Fry asserted that the Liberals and Conservatives should work together to educate the children.

\textsuperscript{302} LJ., 6.12.1872.


\textsuperscript{304} Compulsion was also expected to address the problems of unpunctuality, irregularity, and young age of leaving. Leics. C.R.O., L370, J.B. Harrison, Diocese of Peterborough, Archdeaconry of Leicester: Report upon School Inspection (1875), pp. 9-10 commented on unpunctuality in the schools inspected. Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 50, H. Major, Report on the Leicester Board Schools (1877), p. 4 also noted 'the useless migration of children from school to school'. This put an additional burden on the rates and on the denominational schools.

\textsuperscript{305} Leics. C.R.O., 19D59/V1/1, L.S.B.M.B., (1871-2), 26.2.1872; L.C., 20.12.1873. However, many nonconformists argued that religion should not be taught in schools.

\textsuperscript{306} L.C., 29.7.1871, 24.8.1871, 11.1.1873, 18.1.1873, 20.12.1873, 27.12.1873; 19D59/V1/2, L.S.B.M.B. (1873-5), 6.2.1873, 7.7.1873 noted that the responsibility for fees of indigent parents had passed to the Board of Guardians.
Compulsory attendance was not favoured by all Board members - although some considered it to be a necessary evil - but until there were sufficient places it proved difficult to enforce. In 1872 bye-laws concerning compulsion were approved by the Education Department, but it was not until 1874 that these were implemented. To enforce this the town was divided into four districts, and a visitor was appointed to each with authority to enforce attendance under the terms of the bye-laws. It was reported in 1875 that as a result of the visitors' efforts a further 1,500 children had attended school. However the attendance of half-timers still proved difficult to regulate, and when they did attend they disrupted school routine, although the situation was eventually improved by the establishment of a separate department in the Oxford Street school. The Board also considered the number of inspectors specified under the Workshops Act to be inadequate, and suggested that a certificate of age be made a condition of child employment.

307 L.C., 27.12.1873.
308 L.J., 25.11.1870, 6.1.1871; L.C., 31.12.1870. Compulsion was supported by many liberals but was opposed by the chairman the Rev. Vaughan who argued that it would bring hardship to families dependent on child employment. L.C., 20.12.1873. The dilemma was still under debate during elections to the Board in 1873.
309 19/D59/VI/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 16.12 1872; 19/D59/VI/2, L.S.B.M.B. (1873-5), 2.6.1873, 18.8.1873, 17.11.1873, 1.12.1873, 5.1.1874, 16.11.1874. The visitors reported that 3,730 children aged between three and thirteen were not attending school (but of these 1,021 were under five); Gill, 'Leicester school board', p. 169. The Education Act of 1876 prohibited the employment of children under 10, and employment between 10 and 14 was dependent on gaining a leaving certificate.
310 L.D.M.A.R. (1872), p. 14. The School Board was urged to enforce compulsory attendance; (1875), pp. 6-7. The problems of the Board regarding half-timers was appreciated, and penalties for employers who failed to comply with the regulations were recommended. 19D59/VI/2, L.S.B.M.B. (1873-5), 19.5.1873 stated that provision for half-time children was imperfectly carried out. Major, Report on the Leicester Board Schools, p. 4.
312 19D59/VI/2, L.S.B.M.B. (1873-5), 2.6.1873, 5.1.1874 - stated that half-timers were irregular in attendance, that many children under 13 were fully employed, and that the half-time clauses in the Factory and Workshops Acts were 'evaded and ignored'.

243
Table 12.11: Educational provision in Leicester in 1871.313

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (a)</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nonconformist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meeting</td>
<td>1748</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan School Clyde Street</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Paul's Chapel School</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorpe Street Baptist</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>134</td>
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<td>London Road Congregational School</td>
<td>not mentioned in return</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Nonconformist Accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2381</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Holy Cross Roman Catholic School</strong></td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anglican/National</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's Charity</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Newton's Endowed</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>St Martin's Friar Lane Charity</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Church Gate Charity</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>295</td>
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<tr>
<td>County National</td>
<td>1814</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George National</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret Canning Place National</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church Bow Street National</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Leonard's Charity</td>
<td>1846</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
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<td>St Andrew Laxton Street National</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church Curzon Street National</td>
<td>1852</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John Knighton Street National</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Vine Street</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrew Deacon Street (Victoria School)</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Luke Parochial</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George's New Schools</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Trinity (in course of erection)</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Anglican Accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5386</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFANT SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St John's (part of original parish of St Mary)</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Charlotte Street - in existence but not mentioned</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metcalf Street</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford Street Paradise Place</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
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313 Data are from the following: Leics, C.R.O., 19D59//VI//1 L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 15.5.1871, 24.7.1871; Report of the Committee of Council on Education with Appendix ((1869-70), p. 605 - Schools aided by parliamentary grants; B.F.S.S. Annual Report (1871), pp. 87-90. This Report noted an average attendance of 460 boys and 468 girls at the British school although 540 boys and 617 girls were on the books. This figure is slightly more than the total of 828 in the Return. It is interesting to note that a slightly higher number of girls than boys were now in attendance. L.C., 10.10.1870.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFANT SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Yeoman Lane (Archdeacon Lane?)</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Caroline Street</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin's Union Street</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John's Dover Street Infant School</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter's Upper Conduit Street</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Matthews Brunswick Street</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Matthews Chester Street</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Infant Accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2222</td>
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**Private Schools (considered to be efficient)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Clarke's School</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Woodward's School</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Monk's School</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Hickling's School</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Hickling's School</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Private Accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
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**Miscellaneous**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 School in course of erection/contemplated</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcotes School (not categorized)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Miscellaneous</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>289</td>
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**Total Elementary Accommodation in Return**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>10791</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Mission</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workhouse School (new building)</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragged schools (re-opened)</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Anglican Night Schools (average attendance 470)</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Baptist Night Schools - (average attendance 657)</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Dame Schools (superior)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Dame Schools (inferior)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>4068</td>
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**Total Elementary Education**

|                |       |       | 14859 |

**SUNDAY SCHOOLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School Union (29 schools)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>10981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican (17 schools)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Sunday School Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**Total Children Educated (many attended day and Sunday School)**

|                |       |       | 31640 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADULT EDUCATION</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic's Institute</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Mission</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Instruction Society</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.M.C.A.</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADULT EDUCATION</td>
<td>FOUNDED</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperance Hall (lectures)</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.W.C.A</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester Young Men's Institute</td>
<td>1856</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
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<td>St Martin's Young Men's Institute</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of England Institute</td>
<td>1859</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leicester Co-operative Society</td>
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<td>Society of Friends Adult School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Science Schools 1861-1871</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leicester Working Men's College</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Margaret's Evening Class</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrew's Mutual Instruction Society</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Men's Club and Institute</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular Hall</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royce Institute</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult School Sanvey Gate</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Art</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Known Adults Educated</strong></td>
<td><strong>890</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>1444</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

(a) Data from Leicester School Board Minute Books (1871-2), p. 116.
* Data not available.

The major dilemma the Board had to resolve however was how to provide enough places without affecting the existing denominational schools, and the resolution of this issue resulted in great discord throughout the first term of its existence.\(^{314}\) In February 1871 a committee was formed in response to a directive from the Education Department, to inquire into educational provision in Leicester.\(^ {315}\) The results of this inquiry – upon which Table 12.11 is largely based - revealed an overall deficit of over 8,500 places (in efficient schools). The worst areas were All Saints Ward, North, Middle and East St Margaret's Wards and West St Mary's Ward which were mainly populated by working-class families who were 'the poorest of the Leicester poor'.\(^ {316}\) Of the 39 schools listed in the returns, 22 were parochial/National elementary and infant schools, and 5 had been established by the Nonconformists, although it must be noted that two of these were very large schools. In addition there was 1 endowed, 5 Infant School Society schools, 1

\(^{314}\) L.C., 6.1.1872. This began with controversy over a site owned by the Rev. Fry.

\(^{315}\) L.C., 17.2.1871; L.C., 10.6.1871. See also L.C., 4.3.1871, 11.3.1871, 29.7.1871; 19D59/VI/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2).

\(^{316}\) 19D59/VI/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 15.5.1871, 2.10.1871. However, in St Martin's and East St Mary's Wards there
Roman Catholic, and 5 private. From 1867 the Nonconformists apparently became more interested in elementary school provision, for a school was opened in Clyde Street by the Wesleyan Methodists. Schools had also been established at St Paul's Methodist chapel, Thorpe Street Baptist church, and London Road Congregational church according to the Leicester School Board Minutes of 1871. These, which together with the British school and the school founded by the Great Meeting comprised the contribution made by the Nonconformists to day schools in Leicester. At the opening of the Methodist school, Voluntaryist principles were condemned for it was considered that they deprived children of education, for of all the children in day schools only a quarter did not attend Anglican/parochial schools. Moreover, the Anglicans had continued to open new schools, for since 1860 infant schools had been founded in the parishes of St Martin (1862) St John, and St Peter (1867), and two in the parish of St Matthew in 1868 and 1869. New elementary schools had also been established in the parishes of All Saints, (1863), St Andrew (1865), St George and St Luke (both in 1871), and one was in the course of erection in Holy Trinity. Also a new workhouse school to accommodate 500 children had been opened in 1867, and the Domestic Mission was still attracting pupils. Private schools accounted for at least another 2,000 pupils, but few of these were considered to be efficient. Nevertheless the Rev. Isaacs contended that 'the average attendance of children between the ages of 5 and 13 is much below the capacity of the existing schools', and proposed the payment of school fees for poor children as a remedy for this situation, but this was rejected. In addition the Sunday School Union had over 10,000 children in attendance, and at least 6,000 were receiving instruction in Anglican and Roman Catholic Sunday schools. Also over 600 children and adults were attending evening classes that had been established in 1869 at four Baptist chapels. Science classes were also becoming popular, and by 1871 there were 200 students at 4 centres.

was an excess of accommodation.

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Opportunities for adult education were also increasing, for many adults still lacked basic literacy. Despite the closure of Mechanics' Institute in 1871 (following years of declining membership), classes and lectures were held at other venues. These included the Secular Hall, the Temperance Hall, the Co-operative Society, the Working Men's Club and Institute, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. and the Working Men's College - which had increased its membership to over 600. St Andrew's Mutual Instruction class opened in 1867 with 50 members, in 1868 Mary Royce began to instruct 30 men at a Sunday school class (this eventually became the Royce Institute), and by 1870 more than 200 men and women were attending adult schools established by the Society of Friends. In 1870 the School of Art was established, and opened with 179 students, which by 1875 had increased to 268. Many adults had been unable to attend day school either through poverty, the demands of work, or because of a lack of places in elementary day schools. Indeed many Nonconformist congregations preferred to support alternative forms of education - including Sunday schools, missions, ragged, and evening schools, as well as adult education - rather than day schools, while others were unwilling to accept government grants. Thus the lack of day school provision can be attributed to some extent to the Nonconformists, and this deficiency contributed to the need for adult provision. Moreover, adult education must have been partly responsible for the decline in illiteracy in 1880, for despite a population rise to 122,376, male illiteracy had declined to 12.3% and female to 21.5%. Nevertheless the significant decline in illiteracy in 1890 to 3.6% male and 6.1% female can almost certainly be attributed to the efforts of the School Board which after a hesitant beginning eventually established new schools in areas previously deficient of school accommodation. It is not surprising that compulsion speeded up the process of instructing children not reached by any other method.

Indeed the Board recommended the adaptation of existing premises in Charlotte Street and Soar Lane in All Saints parish to meet the urgent need of providing sufficient accommodation, but it was decided instead to purchase sites in Elbow Lane, Slater Street, Syston Street, Oxford Street, and King Richard's Road. However the Board failed to reach any decisions on these sites, or on the type or size of the proposed schools, because of discord between its members, and when they eventually did decide progress was slow. The delay was partially caused by the need to wait for approval from the Education Department on proposed sites for schools, and for confirmation regarding the deficit of places, but it could also be attributed to the disinclination of many members of the Board to sanction competition with existing denominational schools.

Indeed a memorial had been received from the managers of St Mary's and St Martin's public elementary schools objecting to a proposed Board School in Oxford Street.

By July 1872 little progress had been made, and it was asserted that 'there is an obvious incapability or unwillingness to decide and settle the questions for which they were elected'. However, the problems were to increase, for the managers of the Great Meeting school proposed to close their school and to offer it to the Board under certain conditions. The managers of a Congregational school which had been established on London Road, and those of St Paul's Methodist school also proposed to discontinue their schools, and because of the deficiency of

\[318\] 19D59/V1/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 15.5.1871, 18.9.1871, 16.10.1871, 19.2.1872, 4.3.1872, 18.3.1872, 20.10.1872.


\[320\] 19D59/V1/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 2.1.1872, 19.2.1872, 15.4.1872; L&J., 22.9.1871, 6.10.1871, 23.11.1871, 8.12.1871. Merrick objected to the proposed school in Elbow which he feared would affect the Great Meeting Schools. There was an objection to the purchase of the Slater Street site as it was felt there was more need in other areas, and a similar objection was raised by the Rev. Vaughan regarding the proposed site in Oxford Street.


\[322\] L&J., 20.7.1872 and L&J. were both in agreement over this.

\[323\] Leics. C.R.O., N/U/179/79, Unitarian Great Meeting Boys School Committee Minute Book (1860-1872), 13.3.1872, 3.6.1872, 1.9.1872, 19D59/V1/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 15.4.1872; L&J., 11.5.1872, 22.3.1873 suggested that the proposed closure would add to the deficiency of places, and later reported falling attendances at the school as parents were unwilling to support an expiring school.
places the Board had little option than to temporarily adopt them.\textsuperscript{324} Other schools were finding it difficult to attain the levels of efficiency required. In a letter concerning the Catholic school in Royal East Street it was stated that all efforts were being made to instruct the children 'as far as their irregular attendance would admit', for they could 'justly be described as "street Arabs"'.\textsuperscript{325} By the end of 1872 the situation had slightly improved with the building or modification of Anglican schools, but population rise tended to offset any increased provision.\textsuperscript{326} The Statistical Committee reported in November 1872 that increased accommodation had been provided in certain denominational schools, and that others had been placed under government inspection. However two schools had closed, and the Great Meeting schools was to close in at the end of 1873, when the new Board School in Elbow Lane was expected to open.\textsuperscript{327}

By the end of 1873 there was an overall deficiency of 8,500 school places, and it was considered unlikely that any of the proposed schools would be completed by the end of the year, although existing schools still had unfilled places.\textsuperscript{328} The final report of the Board's first term of office in January 1874, noted that King Richard's Road, and Syston Street schools were expected to open later that month, the anticipated date of completion for Oxford Street, Slater Street, and Elbow Lane was June, and the Belgrave Road school was not expected to be ready until the summer.\textsuperscript{329} Plate 2 shows the Board School in Slater Street (which is still in use today) which

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{324} 19D59/VI/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 22.1.1872, 19.2.1872, 4.3.1872. The recommended regulations for these temporary Board Schools stated that fees were to be 3d, school was to start and end with a prayer and hymn to be approved by the board, and parents had the right to withdraw their children from religious instruction. In addition to reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, history, geography, vocal music, drill, and (if possible) elementary drawing and physical science, the girls were to be taught plain needlework and cutting out.
\item \textsuperscript{325} 19D59/VI/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 15.4.1872.
\item \textsuperscript{326} 19D59/VI/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 12.10.1872. St Marks' parish notified the Board of a new school for 450-500 children, which was to be built near the public wharf in Belgrave Gate. It also intended to repair Caroline Street school and to bring both schools under government inspection.
\item \textsuperscript{327} 19D59/VI/1, L.S.B.M.B. (1871-2), 19.2.1872, 9.5.1872, 20.5.1872. 3.7.1872, 4.11.1872. Increased accommodation was provided at schools in St.Martin's, St.Mathew's, St.Mark's and St Luke's parishes, but the Board had to find temporary managers for the Great Meeting schools until their closure.
\item \textsuperscript{328} L.C., 20.12.1873, 19D59/VI/2, L.S.B.M.B. (1873-4), 2.7.1873 17.11.1873. The slow progress in building King Richard's school was noted.
\item \textsuperscript{329} 19D59/VI/2, L.S.B.M.B. (1873-5), 5.1.1874; Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 70, \textit{Leicester School Board Report} 250
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
aimed to provide 'good, sound, plain training' to fit the expected 946 children for their later roles in life. At the opening ceremony the link between a lack of education and a life of crime was again cited as the main reason for educating 'those at the bottom'. Nevertheless Mr. Hewitt (who was a newspaper proprietor) stated that the working class must be educated to ensure England's industrial future. Indeed as Forster commented during the first reading of the Elementary Education Bill in 1870:

'A upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity. It is of no use trying to give technical teaching to our artisans without elementary education; uneducated labourers ... will become overmatched in the competition of the world'.

The educational provision in Leicester in 1874 at the end of the Board's first term of office can be seen in Table 12.12. In a Report dated 16.11.1874 it was stated that although 16,151 children aged between 3 and 13 were attending school, 3,730 children were still not attending. Of the children attending school, 4,779 were accommodated in 5 board schools, and by 1875 the two new schools that had been opened could accommodate an additional 855 children. Two hundred children and adults were also attending evening classes inaugurated by the School Board.

(Leicester, 1884), p.3 noted that Syston street, and King Richard's Road schools opened in January 1874, but Oxford Street, and Slater Street schools did not open until August 1874, Elbow Lane in September 1874, and Belgrave Road School was delayed until August 1875.

Le.C., 7.3.1874. The opening of the school was reported. The curriculum included reading, writing and arithmetic, plus English history, grammar, vocal music, geography and drill with the addition of bookkeeping in the boys' school. See also Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 26, Slater Street Boys' School - Free Library for the Day School (Leicester, 1877).

Maclure, Educational Documents, p. 104.

19D/59/V1/2 L.S.B.M.B. (1873-5)

School Board Report (Leicester, 1884), p. 3.
Table 12.12: Accommodation inaugurated by the Leicester School Board 1871-1875.\textsuperscript{334}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEICESTER BOARD SCHOOLS</th>
<th>FOUNDED</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syston Street</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Richard's Road</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford Street</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slater Street</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbow Lane</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgrave Road</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdeacon Lane (previously Infant School Society School - rebuilt)</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening Classes in 3 Board Schools</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Accommodation in Board Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
* Data not available.

Plate 2: Slater Street Board School, Leicester, 1874.\textsuperscript{335}

V - CONCLUSION

From the late eighteenth century until the Elementary Education Act of 1870, education for working-class children was largely inaugurated and controlled by middle-class philanthropists who exhibited humanitarian motives. In Leicester throughout most of this period, education was

\textsuperscript{334} Leics. C.R.O. Pam Vol. 70 \textit{Leicester School Board Report} (Leicester, 1884), p. 3.
\textsuperscript{335} Haynes, \textit{Working-Class Life}, p. 61.
relied upon to ensure a disciplined, respectable, responsible workforce. However only basic literacy was considered to be necessary, for if the working class was over-educated it was feared that it might rise above the station in life in which God had seen fit to place it, and thus threaten the existing social order. It was also assumed that the working class lacked intelligence, did not need 'a fancy education', and that members of the working class were not 'best-fitted to pronounce upon the means to be taken to satisfy their educational wants'.

Once the desirability of working-class education had been accepted by the middle class, the initial problem was how to persuade working-class parents to send their children to school rather than to work, and then how to ensure that the children attended regularly and punctually over a sufficiently long period of time. The major concern, however, was how to achieve an adequate provision of schools, staffed by competent teachers in areas of educational destitution. The latter became increasingly important as the population in Leicester continued to rise and indeed to accelerate after 1860. The following tables and graphs (Table 12.13, a, b and c, and Figure 9 a, b and c) illustrate educational provision, population and illiteracy between 1788 and 1890. The slight slackening off in educational provision between 1847 and 1851 can possibly be attributed to incomplete data. Both population increase and educational provision appear to slow down between 1855 and 1860, but both accelerate from 1860 onwards, and from 1870 both male and female illiteracy significantly declines. The data are discussed in more detail after the following tables and figures.

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336 LaC., 7.12.1861; LaJ., 13.7.1867, 27.11.1869.
Table 12.13a: Educational provision in Leicester, 1788-1870.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>DAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>NIGHT SCHOOLS</th>
<th>PRIVATE SCHOOLS</th>
<th>SUNDAY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>ADULT SCHOOLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. PUPIL</td>
<td>No. PUPIL</td>
<td>No. PUPIL</td>
<td>No. PUPIL</td>
<td>No. MEMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1296</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2130</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2655#</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>301#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3718</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3991</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5944</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5857</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8177</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>39#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10983</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
* Data not available.
# Incomplete data.
A Estimated

Table 12.13b: Adult illiteracy in Leicester, 1790-1890.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ADULT ILLITERACY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.13c: Population increase in Leicester, 1801-1891.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>POP.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>16953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>23146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>30125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>39904*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>48167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>60584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>68056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>95220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>122376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>142045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9a: Graph to show educational provision in Leicester, 1788-1870.

Figure 9b: Graph to show adult illiteracy in Leicester, 1790-1890.

Figure 9c: Graph to show population increase in Leicester, 1801-1891.
The gradual increase in elementary schools in Leicester from 1788 can be seen in Table 12.13a, and Figure 9a. Between 1788 and 1818 only three new day schools were provided, although during the next 20 years six more were established. This figure included schools founded by the Infant Schools Society in 1828 and 1830. Until 1845 the Nonconformists had only established two schools, however during that year they opened the Domestic Mission and in 1847 three more schools were founded but these were short-lived. From 1860 to 1870, ten new Anglican schools were founded and four nonconformist ones. This was doubtless in response to continual public debate concerning state control and compulsory education, and all of the denominations feared loss of control over education and thus the possibility of an eventual decline in their congregations. Private education made a valuable contribution to the decline in illiteracy, for private schools continued to increase until 1870 when the number of recorded schools dropped. This could possibly be attributed to fears concerning their future following the establishment of the Leicester School Board. Anglican and nonconformist night schools were also opened in response to a demand for instruction from children too old to attend either day or Sunday school who were becoming aware that illiteracy might hamper their future job prospects. Sunday schools continued to expand and whereas the majority of Anglican children who attended day schools also had to attend Sunday school, for the majority of nonconformist children Sunday school attendance usually provided them with their only chance to become literate. Moreover adult education should not be underestimated, even though numbers attending the various institutes are not always available which makes the results difficult to quantify. Indeed in Leicester many children had been denied the chance of receiving instruction in the day schools, either through poverty, the demands of work, or because they were the children of nonconformist parents, and were thus forced to rely on the limited instruction provided by Sunday schools. Thus as we shall see, adult education assumed great importance (although attendance figures here prove of little value as there are so many gaps in the data), and
doubtless had a significant effect on the decline of illiteracy from 1833 onwards.

The effect of elementary school, night school and Sunday school attendance can be seen on adult illiteracy some 12 to 15 years later (Table 12.13b, and Figure 9b). Thus the lack of educational facilities in 1788, together with economic hardship, is reflected in the high level of male and female illiteracy (36.2% and 60.3% respectively) in 1800. Similarly the continued deficiency of adequate educational provision in 1800 contributed to the rise of 38.7% male and 63.5% female illiteracy in 1820. The decline in adult illiteracy in 1810 can most likely be attributed to an improvement in trade from 1787 to 1800, for there is little evidence of sufficient educational provision to account for such a decline during these years. The increase in provision in 1835 most probably contributed to the decline in male illiteracy in 1850 to 34.1% and female to 50.2%, nevertheless male illiteracy had increased from 31.1% in 1840, although female illiteracy had continued to decline. This decline can possible be attributed to the higher attendance of girls at Sunday schools, and the increase in male illiteracy was most likely affected by years of severe economic depression during the eighteen-thirties and eighteen forties. Educational provision continued to increase, although it is not possible to ascertain the quality of instruction given, and by 1870 male illiteracy had declined to 19.8% and female to 31.9%. Additional educational provision was made available by the opening of Anglican and nonconformist night schools.

The higher level of female illiteracy throughout the period can be attributed to the fact that more boys than girls attended day schools, and although the situation was reversed in Sunday school attendance, the quality of instruction tended to be inferior at Sunday schools. It was not until after 1874 when the school board opened large schools in deprived areas that illiteracy significantly declined, for by 1890 male illiteracy had declined to 3.6% and female to 6.1%.
Indeed all forms of educational provision played a vital role not only in the increase and improvement of the opportunities for instruction but in the attempt to keep pace with the rapid rise in population, particularly in the working-class districts where the poorest of Leicester's poor lived. Table 12.13c and Figure 9c illustrate population rise in Leicester from 1801 to 1891. Even allowing for a crude estimation that one in four of the population was a child of school age, it is apparent that day school provision in Leicester was inappropriately small for the size of the population. It is most likely that other factors (including economic change and alternative forms of educational provision) must also have aided the decline in illiteracy. The effects of economic change have already been discussed in chapter three, and the efficacy of Sunday schools and adult education are discussed in chapters five and six.

Although the Anglicans had established numerous schools in Leicester, the Nonconformists were inclined to concentrate their efforts on Sunday schools. Indeed until 1867 only two of the elementary schools in Leicester had been founded by the Nonconformists, nevertheless this lack of nonconformist day schools was in direct contrast to their very active patronage of Sunday schools. However Leicester's Nonconformists were not alone in this, for there was a similar situation in nineteenth-century Leeds where dissent and Voluntaryist principles were equally as strong. In Leeds also a much higher proportion of the population attended church schools than dissenting schools, and nonconformist congregations appeared to be apathetic towards educational provision and were thus accused of neglecting their children.337 Despite the large number of Nonconformists in Leicester they were split into many denominations and were thus fragmented. It is evident that rather than joining together to establish viable day schools many congregations preferred to support Sunday schools and mission schools, and in addition their principles prevented them from accepting government aid. Leicester also lacked the patronage

337 W.B. Stephens, 'Elementary education and literacy, 1770-1870', in D. Fraser (ed.) A History of Modern Leeds
of wealthy families, and the majority of the businesses were small family concerns (the members of which tended generally tended to be nonconformist), as much reliant on the fluctuations of trade as their employees. However it could be argued that Voluntaryism denied many children of Nonconformist parents a chance to attend day school, for if their parents were unwilling for them to attend Anglican schools, they had no chance for instruction apart from that provided by the nonconformist Sunday schools. Indeed the refusal of many nonconformist congregations to accept government aid diminished their chances of providing and maintaining their own day schools. This added to the failure of the Voluntaryist sector to provide sufficient education for the needs of the children and thus paved the way for a greater degree of state intervention. Even with the benefit of government aid for buildings from 1833, and guidelines on the curriculum and teacher training, together with regular inspections from 1846, it became apparent that voluntary provision was failing to keep pace with need. Nevertheless, although the population was increasing, some schools had spare capacity.

The provision of places thus contributed to an increase in sectarian rivalry in Leicester, for the issues of state-funded secular schools, as opposed to voluntary denominational ones, were frequently debated, together with the desirability of compulsory education. It was felt by the majority of liberal reformers in Leicester, that the only way to ensure that children received an adequate education was to make it compulsory, but Anglicans feared loss of control through this measure. Nevertheless compulsion was seen to be the only solution for the many children who remained educationally destitute, together with those employed in small workshops who attended only irregularly, according to the availability of work. Even the limited powers of the Factory Acts failed to improve the situation in Leicester because of the domestic nature of much of the employment. Thus the Anglican-controlled School Board had to contend with the issues of

compulsion - including the enforcement of half-time education - the type of religious instruction
to be provided by the schools, and the payment of fees for the children of indigent parents. In
addition they were attempting to protect the interests of the denominational schools.

Mitch suggested that during the second half of the nineteenth century there appeared to be
less emphasis nationally on religious and moral indoctrination, and more on the need for literacy
and the acquisition of skills necessary for employment. However in Leicester the importance
of having a literate and technically-educated workforce was not appreciated until the last quarter
of the century, when it was feared that the local hosiery trade was suffering from foreign
competition.

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CHAPTER FIVE
SUNDAY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Sunday schools made a significant contribution to the decline in illiteracy of both working-class children and adults throughout much of the nineteenth century. Alderman Ellis in a speech given in Leicester in 1870 concerning national education, stated that they were 'pioneers of education' at a time when it was considered dangerous to educate the working class.\(^1\) Indeed Wesley considered them to be 'one of the noblest institutions which has been seen in Europe for some centuries'.\(^2\) However both teachers and the curriculum attracted criticism. For although

'by their unpaid and most meritorious services [the teachers] conferred the deepest benefits on the community, [they] must yet as a body be regarded as not duly qualified for the highly important office they have undertaken ... and how restricted are the subjects usually taught [that] it will not be a matter of surprise that Sunday schools should have been productive of less advantage than many persons have anticipated'.\(^3\)

Nevertheless in towns such as Leicester (and other areas of domestic industry or manufacturing) where child labour was prevalent, their role was particularly important.\(^4\) Sunday was the only day working children had free, and thus 'Sunday schools provided virtually all their formal education'.\(^5\) Sunday schools also gave many adults an opportunity to become literate, although in

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\(^1\) Leicester Chronicle (L.C.), 26.11.1870.
\(^4\) This aspect is discussed by Snell, 'The Sunday-school movement', pp. 139-146, 167-8, and by W.B. Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, 1830-70: the geography of diversity in provincial England (Manchester, 1987), pp. 111-38.
\(^5\) Second Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children in Trades and Manufactures (1843) Appendix, Part 1, F 98-9. The report of R.D. Grainger concerning the Friar Lane Baptist Sunday school, Leicester revealed that of the 54 boys (who were aged between 5 and 14), only 16 were at day-school and these were all under 10 years of age. None of the 47 girls (who were aged from 6 to 16) were attending day school. Half the girls and one third of the boys could not write or could only write a little, but only 2 boys and 2 girls were unable to read. Many boys and girls worked from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. and some had commenced employment at the age of 5 or 6 years. Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society, pp. 27, 156 suggests that in the eighteen-thirties and forties at least 25% and sometimes 75% of English Sunday school
Leicester this was apparently limited to classes established at the Domestic Mission, for many Sunday schools tended to dismiss older pupils because of limited accommodation. Indeed there are no records of adult Sunday schools in Leicester such as the ones in Nottingham and Bristol. While all Sunday schools provided religious instruction, the majority also taught reading - primarily that all might have access to the scriptures - and many taught writing. However the suitability of teaching this on the Sabbath caused controversy in some dissenting and evangelical congregations.

The contribution made by the Sunday schools to the social, moral and educational development of the working class during the nineteenth century has elicited a variety of responses from twentieth-century historians. For example Frank Smith considered that 'it was through the Sunday School that the idea of universal education was first conceived possible', and that they were instrumental in 'humanising the poor', while E.P. Thompson alleged that they used to indoctrinate the poor with middle-class values. From a different viewpoint Laqueur asserts that they developed in response to working-class demand rather than being 'an imposition ... from the outside', and that both scholars and teachers tended to be from the same class. He also contends that the cultural and leisure activities provided were acceptable to the working class.

This argument has been challenged by Dick and Cliff who maintain that there is no firm evidence to support Laqueur's claims that teachers and scholars came from a similar working-class
background, and that Sunday schools were mainly working-class foundations and thus expressions of working-class culture.\textsuperscript{11}

I - SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN LEICESTER: 1780-1835

'\textit{That the minds of the poorer classes might be illumined by the rays of education}'.\textsuperscript{12}

Many of the Sunday schools in Leicester (particularly those established in connection with the Anglican churches) have left at best incomplete records, and this has necessitated reliance on local newspapers, directories, commemorative booklets, and brief references in contemporary works. Nichols referred to a Sunday school in Leicester in 1778, where John Moore taught poor children, and this appears to have been followed by one founded by the Great Meeting in 1783.\textsuperscript{13} However it was not until 1786 (six years after Robert Raikes began his work in Gloucester) that the movement gained support in the town.\textsuperscript{14}

At a meeting which was supported by both Anglicans and dissenters, it was proposed that Sunday schools should be provided at different venues for poor children of every denomination. The number was to be dependent on the amount of financial aid received. Gregory (the proprietor of the \textit{Leicester and Nottingham Journal} who had been campaigning for their establishment since 1784), and Mansfield (who was a banker) were appointed by the inter-


\textsuperscript{12} Leics. C.R.O., 24D71/III/1, Sanvey Gate S.S.M.B., 25.3.1834.

\textsuperscript{13} J. Nichols, \textit{The History and Antiquities of the Town and County of Leicester} (4 vols, 1795-1815, 1971 edn) 1, Appendix, p. 122; Anon, \textit{The Centenary Book of the Great Meeting Sunday schools} (Leicester, 1883), p. 2.

\textsuperscript{14} The founding of the Sunday school movement in 1780 is attributed to Robert Raikes, although other Sunday schools had been established prior to this. \textit{Sunday School Movement in England}. 263
denominational committee to raise subscriptions.\textsuperscript{15} Eleven Sunday schools were to open in July 1786, as £97.9s.6d. had been received, but it appears that fifteen were actually established.\textsuperscript{16}

Despite initial enthusiasm interest declined within a year of their opening, vacancies were reported, and parents were requested to ensure their children's attendance so that 'they may receive the benefit intended to be produced from this institution and that the benevolent design of the subscribers may not be frustrated'.\textsuperscript{17} However support increased, and Nichols was able to record that there was 'a Sunday school for each of the churches of the Established Religion', that there was a Sunday school at the Great Meeting for 80 scholars, and that the 'General Baptists had a large Sunday school at their meeting in Friar Lane' where 'Mr. Lancaster's improved plan of education' was implemented.\textsuperscript{18} These early Sunday schools were established in Leicester before the escalation of sectarian rivalry, and were founded partly from genuine concern to provide instruction for the children of the poor, and partly to ensure their 'orderly behaviour', on the Sabbath.\textsuperscript{19} By the end of the eighteenth century inter-denominational co-operation was coming to an end as it had become apparent that not only were they important agencies for educational provision, but also for denominational control, and that the future viability of the various congregations relied on their success in attracting pupils.\textsuperscript{20}

**CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOLS**

The fact that both Anglican and dissenting Sunday schools continued and were maintained by subscriptions and charity sermons, suggests that they were the result of middle-class support, rather than (as Laqueur contends) working-class involvement.\textsuperscript{21} Indeed it was reported in 1791

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} L.\& N.J., 15.7.1786, 22.7.1786, 29.7.1786.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Leicester Journal (L.J.), 7.7.1787.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Nichols, History and Antiquities, 1, p. 514.
\item \textsuperscript{19} L.J., 19.11.1785.
\item \textsuperscript{20} See Snell, 'The Sunday-school movement', pp. 136-8.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Snell, 'The Sunday-school movement', p. 132-3, supports the argument that (at least prior to the eighteen-thirties),
\end{itemize}
that if the subscribers did not provide financial aid then St Martin's Sunday school would have to be dissolved. The problem was apparently overcome, for in 1805 at least 90 children were in receipt of clothing and instruction. This figure had risen to 160 by 1818, but in 1832 it was noted that 120 children were educated and partly clothed. In 1796 there were four Sunday schools in St Mary's parish, which by 1817 educated and clothed 200 children. In 1818 approximately 100 boys and 130 girls were educated and 40 boys and 60 girls were also clothed, 240 children were receiving instruction by 1830. There was no mention in The Digest of 1818 of any Sunday schools in the part of St Margaret's parish within the Borough (it is most likely that all efforts had been put into the charity school which had opened in 1807). Similarly numbers were not given for the one in All Saints', although the advertisement for the annual sermon in 1810 noted that there were 130 children in the school, and of these 100 were clothed, however by 1830 only 'upwards of 70 children are clothed'. The Sunday school which had been established in St Nicholas' parish, was replaced in 1814 by the County National school.

**DISSENTING SUNDAY SCHOOLS**

The Great Meeting Sunday schools, which were originally intended to educate and clothe 40 boys and 40 girls, continued to be supported by annual charity sermons, and by 1816, 135 children were taught reading, writing and arithmetic in addition to religious instruction. In 1832 it was suggested that no child should be admitted to the Sunday school who already attended a day school, to ensure that greater numbers of children could receive instruction. The Great Meeting (which can be seen in Plate 3) was attended by many prominent middle-class

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22 LJ., 22.4.1791, 6.5.1791, 28.10.1891. Reports on the meeting of St Martin's subscribers, and charity sermons; LJ., 17.6.1803. Advertisement for St Margaret's Sunday school charity sermon; LJ., 14.1.1791, 3.7.1801, 9.7.1802, 10.6.1803. Reports on sermons in support of Friar Lane Baptist Sunday school for the education and clothing of 40 poor children; LJ., 15.7.1791 - charity sermon for the Great Meeting Sunday school.

23 LJ., 15.11.1805; A Digest of Parochial Returns Made to the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Education of the Poor, IX (3 vols), 1 (1819), pp. 447, 461; LC., 24.11.1832.

24 LJ., 23.11.1796; LC., 8.11.1817, 31.10.1830; Digest of Parochial Returns, 1, pp. 447, 461.

25 Digest of Parochial Returns, 1, pp. 447, 461; LJ., 7.9.1810; LC., 10.10.1830.

26 LJ., 13.12.1816.

27 LJ., 15.7.1791, 15.5.1801, 15.3.1805, 17.4.1812, 22.3.1816; LC., 19.4.1818, 24.4.1830.
philanthropists and Liberal reformers who contributed a great deal to the political life of the town after 1835. Indeed Thomas Paget and six subsequent mayors were members, together with John and William Biggs, Robert Brewin, Thomas Stokes, Samuel Stone and Joseph Whetstone, who all gave moral and financial support to elementary and adult educational projects in Leicester. Members of their families also taught in the Sunday schools. It is thus apparent that these Sunday schools were founded under the auspices of middle-class philanthropy, possibly in response to working-class demand.

Plate 3: East Bond Street Unitarian Chapel. The Great Meeting, 1866.

The first indication that the spirit of co-operation between Anglicans and dissenters in Leicester (engendered by their common desire to promote Sunday schools) was coming to an end, was the refusal of St Mary's Sunday school in 1796 to admit the children of dissenters.

28 Anon, Centenary Book, pp. 5-9. There were 150 scholars in the girls' school by this time.
30 M. Elliot, Victorian Leicester (1979), plate 5.
However the Baptists in Friar Lane had established their own in order to provide religious instruction, reading, writing and arithmetic for at first 40, and later 70 children. Plate 4 depicts the chapel in 1785 from a contemporary engraving. The children were expected to attend regularly, and to be clean, washed and combed. However, the school was not established in a spirit of sectarian rivalry, but in response to a need to provide instruction for the children of dissenters. A committee of teachers and officers of the church was appointed in 1806 to 'conduct the business of the Sunday school', and in 1807 it was agreed that two rooms were to be built over the vestry 'for the purpose of school rooms'. In 1812 there were 145 scholars, 14 teachers and 14 assistants who were all bound by strict rules of conduct, and by 1815 there were 216 scholars. Pupils were excluded for poor attendance, inattention, lateness, and bad conduct. Discipline was enforced by the means of detention, or by corporal punishment through the use of the log and shackles. As could be expected teachers and superintendents were expelled for drunkenness, but they had to pay forfeits of 1d or 2d if they were late or absent (unless this was through illness). The library benefitted from the proceeds of these fines. Children were rewarded for good behaviour by the receipt of tickets to be exchanged in the library for catechisms, which they then had to learn and recite. Treats were also provided for

31 J.W. Smith, History of the General Baptist Church Meeting at Friar Lane, Leicester: 1656-1896 (Leicester, 1896), pp. 36-7 cites a report in The General Baptist Magazine (1798), of a sermon preached on behalf of the Sunday school which raised £12.1s.9d; Leics. C.R.O., L286, B. Williams, The Sunday School of Friar Lane and Braunstone Baptist Church: 1796-1976 (Leicester, 1976), p. 3. There was however an advertisement in L.J. as early as 14.1.1791 for a sermon on behalf of the Sunday school at the Meeting House in Friar Lane. See also L.J., 3.7.1801, 9.7.1802, 10.6.1803.
32 Leics. C.R.O., 15D66/1 Friar Lane Baptist Church M.B. (1749-1822), 21.10.1804, 20.4.1806, 16.3.1807; L.J., 10.7.1806, 17.7.1806. 110 children were taught 'on the plan of Mr. Lancaster'.
33 The General Baptist Church Repository (May, 1812) cited in Smith, History of the General Baptist Church Meeting at Friar Lane, pp. 38-40. Children were not admitted after the age of 14, and if they could read in the fifth class they were dismissed honourably. As with the Great Meeting Sunday school the aim was to give as many children as possible the chance to become literate.
35 Smith, History of the General Baptist Meeting at Friar Lane, pp. 40-1.
36 F.L.S.S.T.M., 30.10.1815, 8.9.1816, 15.12.1817, 10.12.1820. The library was originally for the use of teachers in 1815, but was opened to the children in 1817.
the children, and a letter thanking the Sunday school for the many benefits that had been received was recorded in the Minutes.38

By 1816 the Sunday school had become overcrowded and the children were thus divided into three divisions, two for those who could write, and one for readers only.39 A branch was opened in Woodgate in 1823 to accommodate 50 children, but this was dissolved in 1825, and the children returned to Friar Lane.40 By 1824 around 400 children were being instructed by 40 teachers.41 Eventually 60 children with their teachers moved to a room in High Street, and then to Free School Lane where they remained until new school-rooms were opened in Oxford Street in 1828.42

Sunday schools were also founded in the early-nineteenth century by the General Baptist Meeting in Archdeacon Lane (for 80 children), the Particular Baptist Meeting in Harvey Lane, and the Independent/Congregational chapels in Bond Street and Gallowtree Gate.43 These were all maintained by charity sermons.44 Sunday schools were also established at the Hepzibah chapel in Granby Street, and by the Wesleyan Methodists in Millstone Lane.45 Although the Sunday schools at Archdeacon Lane and Bond Street are well-documented, there are few references to the Harvey Lane Sunday school in the Church Minutes; the Church Book of the Gallowtree Gate

38 F.L.S.S.T.M. 19.5.1826.
39 F.L.S.S.T.M., 24.6.1816; L.C., 4.10.1817 reported that 220 children relied on the proceeds of the charity sermon for instruction and clothing.
41 L.C., 13.9.1873 - stated in a report on the history of the Sunday school.
42 Smith, History of the General Baptist Church Meeting at Friar Lane, pp. 44-6.
43 L.J, 16.9.1803, 17.5.1805, 14.9.1804; E.M. Drew, Those Taking Part, 1802-1952: a Brief History of Bond Street Congregational Church, Leicester (Leicester, 1951), pp. 5-9. There is a brief mention of the minister in the eighteen-twenties teaching 'the elements of learning' to children from poor homes, who were 'without the rudiments of education'. Many of these children joined the Sunday school.
44 L.J, 3.5.1811. At a charity sermon given to aid Archdeacon Lane Sunday school, support was requested to prevent children from 'forming habits pernicious to society and destructive to themselves'; L.J. 5.4.1806, 11.9.1808, 9.3.1810 - sermons in support of Harvey Lane Sunday school; L.C., 26.7.1817, 26.7.1830 - charity sermons for Archdeacon Lane; L.C., 23.3.1818, 11.10.1818. At a sermon in support of the Sunday school at Bond Street Independent Meeting, it was stated that 200 children were instructed (100 more than the previous year); L.C., 17.8.1823, 12.8.1832 - charity sermons for Gallowtree Gate Congregational Sunday school.
45 L.J, 2.9.1814, 9.9.1814 - charity sermons for Hepzibah chapel; L.C., 10.5.1817, 23.5.1818, 19.4.1823, 10.4.1825. Charity sermons in aid of the Sunday school were given at Millstone Lane Wesleyan Methodist chapel.
chapel refers to separate Sabbath school Minutes, which are only extant from 1853-70 (in conjunction with the Bond Street Sunday school Minutes); and the Wesleyan Methodist's Sunday school superintendent's Minute Book only contains records from 1838-1850.46

Plate 4: Friar Lane Baptist Chapel, Leicester, 1785.47

Archdeacon Lane Baptist church Sunday school which was in existence by 1803, became one of the largest founded by the dissenters. The Church Meeting Minute Book gives brief references in 1806 to the Sunday school charity sermon, in 1807 to the appointment of a treasurer and teachers, in 1827 of the need to enlarge the school, and to lectures on Tuesday evenings. A superintendent was appointed for the Sunday school in Soar Lane, which from 1828

46 Leics. C.R.O., N/B/179/101-7, Archdeacon Lane Church Meetings M.B. (1806-1962); 15D64/43-5, Bond Street S.S.M.B. (1804-1888); 24D71/1/1-2, Harvey Lane Baptist Church Minutes (1760-1867); DE/3194/1, Gallowtree Gate Chapel Church Book (1824-1867); N/M/179/280, Millstone Lane Superintendent's Minute Book (1838-50).
47 D. Ashby, Friar Lane: the Story of Three Hundred Years (1951), p. 34.
was considered to be as one with Archdeacon Lane. In 1831 it was once again considered
necessary to enlarge the school-rooms.48

The Bond Street Independent/Congregational Church Sunday school Minute Books began in
1804, and rules drawn up in that year stated that the children were to be divided according to
qualifications, and that there were to be four teachers (aged over 16 and under 35) and a
superintendent. By 1807 there were 38 girls, and 46 boys, and in 1810 it was agreed that five
boys and five girls were to be taught to write - on separate evenings. Their writing was to be
examined after every two lines, and if there was an error or blotch they had to say a portion of
the Bible before they were allowed to leave. By 1813, 20 children were being taught to write, and
this continued until at least 1825.49 A system of fines and rewards was used from 1810, similar to
the one in operation at Friar Lane Baptist Church, and from 1819 tickets given as rewards were
to be exchanged in the library (which had been established in 1815).50 In 1819 the Lancastrian
monitorial system was used, but from 1834 'the lesson system of teaching was to be introduced'.51
The parents were apparently poor as articles of clothing were provided, and frocks were
presented to children 'destitute of clothing for the charity sermon'.52

In 1803 a question was raised as to whether there were sufficient poor children in the
neighbourhood and congregation of Harvey Lane Baptist church to make opening a Sunday
school worthwhile, as there were already several in the town. It was obviously decided to open a
Sunday school for by December 70 children were in attendance, and the Sunday School Society
in London was requested to provide 30 spelling books, 20 Testaments, and 6 Bibles. Hymns and

48 Leics. C.R.O., N/B/179/101 & 102, Archdeacon Lane Baptist Church: Church Minute Books (1806-1827, 1827-
49 Leics. C.R.O., 15D64/43-4, Bond Street Congregational Church S.S.M.B.: Teachers' Meeting (1804-1852, 1853-
1872), 14.7.1804, 25.7.1810, 25.5.1811, 10.6.1811, 4.9.1812, 29.3.1813, 28.4.1825. Three teachers were
appointed in 1813 to teach writing every Tuesday evening for one year, and at the end of that time they were
each to receive £1, if they failed to attend they were fined 3d.
50 Bond Street Congregational S.S.M.B., 25.11.1810, 25.3.1815, 29.3.1819, 23.8.1820.
51 Bond Street Congregational S.S.M.B., 29.3.1819, 4.7.1819, 11.12.1834.
Psalms were purchased in 1806. The school was maintained by charity sermons, and articles of clothing were provided as well as instruction.\textsuperscript{53} A Sunday school (which was conducted on the Lancastrian system) was also opened in 1831 by the Baptist congregation in Charles Street, for 50 boys and 50 girls over six years of age. Here also punctuality, regular attendance, cleanliness, and good conduct were stipulated in the rules - which applied to both children and teachers - but corporal punishment was not to be used. Rewards were given to deserving children - who were also to be taught to write - and ill-disciplined children were excluded. A library was established in 1833.\textsuperscript{54}

In 1825 a Sunday school was opened by Carley Street Evangelical Baptist church which had been established in 1823 in the Wharf Street area of Leicester. By 1834 this accommodated 70 children, but there did not appear to be a good relationship between the Sunday school and church, as teachers were accused of insulting members of the church, and disrupting the peace. There were plans to provide two school-rooms when the church was enlarged in 1851, and by 1864 there were 258 scholars, but during the eighteen-seventies the church faced temporary closure because of financial difficulties.\textsuperscript{55} There was also a Sunday school connected with Dover Street General Baptist church which was erected in 1824.\textsuperscript{56}

Sanvey Gate Sabbath school was opened in 1834 under the auspices of the Sunday School Union, and was maintained by voluntary subscriptions. The committee was anxious to establish a school in a part of Leicester which was 'destitute of such useful and valuable institutions', and

\textsuperscript{52} Bond street Congregational S.S.M.B., 5.11.1813, 26.6.1815, 28.7.1817.
\textsuperscript{53} S. Mitchell, \textit{Not Disobedient: a History of the United Baptist Church. Leicester: including Harvey Lane, 1760-1845; Belvoir Street, 1845-1940; Charles Street, 1831-1940} (Leicester, 1984), pp. 34-5, 58. The Rev. Mursell preached two charity sermons in 1826. Leics. C.R.O., 24D71/1/1-2, Harvey Lane Baptist Church Minutes 1794-1867), 22.11.1835. Mr. Mundella preached two sermons for the Sabbath school.
\textsuperscript{54} Leics. C.R.O., 1D66/III/8 Charles Street Baptist S.S.M.B., 15.9.1831, 6.3.1832, 16.4.1833.
\textsuperscript{55} P.H. Adams et al (ed.), \textit{Carley, 1822-1973} (Leicester, undated), pp. 4-10; H. Ranger, \textit{A Century of Work for the Young, 1835-1935: commemorating the 100 years of service by the Leicestershire and Rutland Sunday School Union} (Leicester, 1935), p. 25. This work is based on the Annual Reports of the Union.
\textsuperscript{56} Ranger, \textit{A Century of Work for the Young}, p. 25; \textit{Guide to Leicester} (Leicester, 1843), p. 9.
the congregation of Sanvey Gate Baptist church who considered it 'a blessing to the scholars in
the neighbourhood', agreed to support and conduct the school until March 1835. Officers were
appointed, and again the necessity for cleanliness and regular attendance was stressed (the latter
applied to both children and teachers). By January 1835, 118 scholars had been admitted, many
of whom were regular attenders and could 'now read tolerably'. The school was maintained by
voluntary subscriptions. The school register reveals that in 1843 of the 66 scholars recorded, 34
were the children of frame-work knitters, and 8 were the children of labourers, while in 1853 of
the 85 pupils noted, only 24 had fathers who were frame-work knitters, and 11 were the children
of labourers. The majority of the remaining fathers in both years were in working-class
occupations. Between 1833 and 1853 the main reasons for leaving were to attend another
Sunday school, or because the pupil had left the neighbourhood (or gone into service), or 'gone
to the Union'.

II - SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN LEICESTER: 1835-1870

In the eighteen-thirties six of the dissenting Sunday schools in Leicester formed a Union. As
a result of a canvas inaugurated by the committee in 1835, it was found that out of a population
of around 45,000, approximately 4,000 children were receiving instruction in Sunday schools
(2,757 in Union Sunday schools and 1,320 in other schools), but some were 'destitute of clothes
necessary for their decent appearance'. Nevertheless during a further canvas in 1836 it was found
that 'some parents were indisposed to avail themselves of religious instruction for their children'.
The committee also inaugurated 'a depository for the publications of the Sunday School Union
and other books proper for Sunday schools', from which schools in the Union could purchase at

reduced rates. These publications together with the libraries that were established, must have made a positive contribution to the eventual decline in illiteracy in Leicester.59

Seventeen schools had joined the Union by 1836, and by 1838 the majority of them had abolished corporal punishment. The decrease in numbers in 1840 was partly attributed to the 'strenuous efforts by some of the Sunday Schools connected with the Established Church to draw away scholars from our schools by means of gifts and the promise of free teaching in the daily free schools' - this allegation was reiterated in 1845-6. Despite this in 1840 the twenty Union schools in Leicester had 4,000 scholars and 658 teachers, and in 1841 it was proposed to form a Teachers' Institute to provide instruction for the teachers. However by 1843 it was reported that the lectures were 'above the educational grasp of the teachers of that day' which could suggest that they were from the working-class.60 The necessity to continue the teaching of writing was questioned in 1854 as more day schools had been established, and it was hoped that more attention could be paid to religious education. It was also noted that although dissenting Sunday schools had 4,710 children and 631 teachers, 'the Established Church had shown an increase in zeal'.61 By 1864 the Union schools had 9,366 scholars in the town (an increasing number of whom became church members), but there were still fears that the Anglican schools were drawing the children away 'by material gifts'. Although by 1869 there were 29 schools and 10,981 scholars in the Leicester Sunday School Union, a lack of teachers continued to be a problem, and many who offered their services were inefficient and failed to attend on a regular basis.62

59 Ranger, A Century of Work for the Young, pp. 13-18. A.T. Patterson, Radical Leicester: a History of Leicester, 1780-1850 (Leicester, 1954), p. 245 questioned the quality of instruction received, as in a report from Millstone Lane Sunday school (1836, Ranger, p. 17) it was stated that within one year 10,000 verses of scripture and hymns had been memorised and repeated.
60 Ranger, A Century of Work for the Young, pp. 17-20. Dover Street lamented the apathy of its teachers in 1837.
61 LC., 11.11.1854. The Sunday School Union Annual General Meeting. Reports from many of the eighteen schools commented on the need for more efficient teachers.
62 Ranger, A Century of Work for the Young, pp. 23-7; LC., 2.10.1869.
As can be seen from Table 13 - which gives details of schools within the Sunday School Union in 1842 - the nonconformist Sunday schools were numerous and accommodated large numbers of children. Sunday schools not in the Union included those organised by the Anglican churches, and the Catholic Sunday school in Wellington Street, where 70 boys and 80 girls were instructed by 11 teachers. William Biggs in his lecture in 1849 stated that 2,544 children attended Anglican Sunday schools (but of these 1,824 were also members of the parochial day schools), 5,138 children belonged to Sunday schools connected with the Union, a further 416 went to other dissenting Sunday schools, 240 were instructed in Catholic Sabbath schools, and 500 were catered for by the Domestic Mission, ragged and evening schools. There were also 772 children in Infant departments. Nevertheless Biggs alleged that although these children on average received instruction over a five year period, this only amounted to 'not quite three-quarters of a year of education'.

63 Guide to Leicester (1843), pp. 9-14; Guide to Leicester (1849), pp. 11-15. The numbers showed an increase in all the Sunday schools between 1842 and 1849.
Table 13: Leicester Sunday School Union, (1842).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>DENOMINATION</th>
<th>TEACHERS</th>
<th>CHILDREN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archdeacon Lane</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carley Street</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Street</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dover Street</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friar Lane</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey Lane</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanvey Gate</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soar Lane</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond Street</td>
<td>Congregational</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallowtree Gate</td>
<td>Congregational</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborne Street</td>
<td>Congregational</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Open</td>
<td>Unitarian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braunstone Gate</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denman Street</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Street</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill Street</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metcalf Street</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millstone Lane</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethel</td>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are similar to those recorded at the Census in 1851, as can be seen in Table 14, although this contained no reference to the Catholic Sunday school. It is apparent from the data in this table that the number of children attending dissenting Sunday schools as a whole far outnumbered those attending the ones organised by the Anglican churches, but that denominationally only the Baptists had a higher attendance. The Sunday schools in St Margaret’s parish in particular attracted high numbers of children, in common with those in many northern

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65 Data extracted from Leicestershire Almanac, Directory and Advertiser (Leicester, 1842), p. 36; Guide to Leicester (Leicester, 1843), pp. 9-14; Leics. C.R.O., 24D71/III/2 Sanvey Gate S.S.M.B. 2.9.1845, noted that Bond Street teachers had given up the school room in All Saints Open, and had taken over premises in Sanvey Gate previously used by the church.
Despite the growth in provision during the first half of the nineteenth century, it was alleged in 1854 - during a teachers' meeting connected with the Sunday school Movement - that 3,000 children still relied on Christian philanthropy to provide Sunday schools in areas that were not yet served.

Table 14: Sunday schools in Leicester, 1851.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DENOMINATION</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>1083</td>
<td>1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>1040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>1432</td>
<td>2505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Methodist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Methodist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Association</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan Reformers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latter Day Saints</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>3600</strong></td>
<td><strong>4215</strong></td>
<td><strong>7705</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some schools suffered temporary set-backs caused by financial problems within the church to which they were connected - as in the case of Carley Street Baptist, and Millstone Lane Methodist churches - but the number of children attending most Sunday schools continued to increase during the years 1835 to 1870. Indeed in the eighteen-sixties Belvoir Street Baptist church and Bond Street Congregational church each maintained Sunday schools for over 500 children. The Baptist churches in particular found it necessary to open new school-rooms in the eighteen-sixties and seventies to cope with the expansion, and branches were established in

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67 Leics. C.R.O., N/M/179/280, Millstone Lane Superintendent's M.B. (1838-50), 2.5.1838. The school opened with 237 children and 50 teachers and although 'some of the lower classes [did] not make much progress ... some of the girls [made] considerable advances in elementary knowledge'. By 26.8.1842 the decrease in numbers was attributed to 'fresh schools in the neighbourhood' and the fact that many of the poorer classes were unable to send their children to school as they lacked suitable clothing. The school appeared to close on 1.1.1850 but re-commenced on 27.11.1859 in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist church in Bishop Street.
68 H. Mann (ed.), The Census of Great Britain in 1851 (1854), pp. 140, 72, 34. There were 15.7% Sunday scholars to the population in Leicester, compared to 12.3% day scholars.
69 Leics. C.R.O., N/M/179/280, Millstone Lane Superintendent's M.B. (1838-50), 2.5.1838. The school opened with 237 children and 50 teachers and although 'some of the lower classes [did] not make much progress ... some of the girls [made] considerable advances in elementary knowledge'. By 26.8.1842 the decrease in numbers was attributed to 'fresh schools in the neighbourhood' and the fact that many of the poorer classes were unable to send their children to school as they lacked suitable clothing. The school appeared to close on 1.1.1850 but re-commenced on 27.11.1859 in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist church in Bishop Street.
70 Drew, Those Taking Part, p. 12. At Bond Street 'in 1866 the scholars in the Sunday school numbered 536'. Leics.
other parts of the town. A new Sunday school was opened in 1857 in connection with the chapel in St Peters Lane, in 1868 a mission school for boys was founded in Sanvey Gate by Gallowtree Gate Congregational church, and the Wesleyan Methodists established a Sunday school in 1874 at King Richard's Road church. Night schools were also opened to cope with the demand for instruction, as these (together with the Sunday schools) still provided the only chance of education for many working children in Leicester. Financial support continued to be provided for these institutions through annual charity sermons and subscriptions.

Many Sunday schools provided libraries from which books could be borrowed either for a small fee or free of charge. Lesson books were purchased from the Sunday School Union, and tracts were distributed. Bible classes, mutual instruction, and discussion classes, and evening lectures were held for older pupils, and at 16 when they were usually considered to be too old to

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71 Leics. C.R.O., N/B/179/107, Archdeacon Lane Baptist S.S.M.B., 24.7.1848, 29.5.1861, 16.1.1862, 18.6.1862, 17.6.1863, 14.6.1865, 17.6.1868, 2.6.1869 referred to the erection of new class rooms in 1862 to accommodate 800 children, and of the continuing growth of the school; 24D71/1/2 Harvey Lane Baptist Church M.B., 31.5.1865 resolved to build new school rooms; Smith, History of the General Baptist Meeting at Friar Lane, pp. 77-8, referred to the opening of new schoolrooms in 1846 at a cost of £700; L.C., 13.9.1873. New school rooms were commenced at Friar Lane Baptist church at an estimated cost of £1,990 which was raised through subscriptions. Prior to this, children were accommodated in Bakehouse Lane, Abbey Gate, High Street and Oxford Street - all in St. Mary's parish.

72 Leics. C.R.O., 15D64/54 Gallowtree Gate Chapel S.S.M.B. (1853-1872), 7.1.1868; L.C., 7.3.1874 noted that the mission school had 500 Sunday and evening scholars on the books; L.C., 22.8.1857 referred to a sermon preached on behalf of the newly-established Sunday school at St Peter's Lane chapel; L.C., 3.1.1874, 28.7.1874, 10.10.1874, noted a new Wesleyan Methodist Sunday school in King Richard's Road.

73 Leics. C.R.O., 1D66/7, Belvoir Street S.S.M.B., 15.10.1869, 29.10.1869 refer to the recommencement of the night school, which by 1.1.1870 accommodated 657 children and 53 teachers. The unsatisfactory progress made by some scholars was noted in 20.10.1870.

74 Leics. C.R.O., 1D66/11/8, Charles Street Baptist S.S.M.B., 11.6.1851 referred to the annual charity sermon; Leics. C.R.O., 24D71/1/1, Sanvey Gate S.S.M.B., 20.1.1835, recorded that voluntary subscriptions were needed to aid the poor financial state of the school, and 9.9.1851 noted that Harvey Lane and Sanvey Gate schools were to be supported from the same fund.

75 Leics. C.R.O., 1D66 III/8-11, Charles Street Baptist S.S.M.B. 16.4.1833, 18.12.1838. Children were allowed to borrow books for 1/2d a month, 21.2.1840, 13.5.1851, 23.4.1861, 28.8.1863. Library books were issued free of charge; 15D64/54, Bond Street/Gallowtree Gate Congregational S.S.M.B., 2.1.1854, 21.6.1857; N/M/179/280-2, Millstone Lane Methodist S.S.M.B., 15.1.1863. Report of the formation of a library at Braunstone Gate Sunday school, 6.11.1861, 12.7.1863. The Minutes record the formation of a library at Millstone Lane; N/M/179/281, Millstone Lane Accounts (1862-6), contain two receipts from J.R. Rowe's, Circulating Library for books; 15D66/36-40, Friar Lane Baptist S.S.M.B., 4.1.1838, 26.12.1863, 28.12.1866. The 375 books in the library were found to be 'suitable and interesting', and were available free of charge; 24D71/1/2, Sanvey Gate Baptist S.S.M.B., 24.4.1842, 4.3.1846. Children were now to pay 1/4d instead of 1/2d to borrow books.

76 Leics. C.R.O., 1D66 III/8-11, Charles Street Baptist S.S.M.B., 18.12.1838, 19.7.1839, 15.6.1847; N/M/179/280-2, Millstone Lane Methodist S.S.M.B., 2.8.1842, 27.11.1859. Application was also made to the Wesleyan Sunday
attend Sunday school they were presented with books. Although all the Sunday schools taught their pupils to read, only some considered writing to be necessary, or indeed a suitable subject to teach on the Sabbath. Indeed some taught writing on weekday evenings to overcome objections to the latter. Discipline and irregular attendance continued to cause problems, even though school rules stressed the importance of regularity, and corporal punishment was allowed in some Sunday schools. Although a lack of suitable teachers was noted in some Minute Books, others commented on the teachers' long and devoted service. While there generally appeared to be a good relationship between the church and the Sunday school, for indeed - as in Friar Lane Baptist Sunday school - many members of the congregation were teachers, this was not the case at Archdeacon Lane, where rivalry over the control of the school escalated during controversial discussions regarding the teaching of writing, but this was eventually resolved. As well as providing instruction, Sunday schools also supported benefit societies, Bands of Hope, and organised social events such as teas and outings in order to encourage the children to attend their schools for books; 24D71/III/2, Sanvey Gate Baptist S.S.M.B., 30.1.1843.

77 Leics. C.R.O., 15D64/54 Bond Street Congregational S.S.M.B. 9.9.1855. Evening lectures were proposed; 26.9.1865, 7.2.1866, 27.3.1866. A teachers' reading society was established; 20.9.1869, 28.12.1869. A mutual instruction class was formed. N/B/179/107, Archdeacon Lane Baptist Church M.B. The entry in June 1868 recorded that Bible and senior classes were very helpful; 15D66/37, Friar Lane Baptist S.S.M.B., 14.1.1839. Books were presented to scholars.

78 Leics. C.R.O., 1D 66/III/10, Charles Street Baptist S.S.M.B., 11.2.1856. The teaching of writing was considered to be desirable. 15D64/54, Bond Street Congregational S.S.M.B. 25.3.1855, 24.6.1855, 28.9.1864, 26.9.1865, 3.10.1866, 16.10.1867, 29.9.1868. In the eighteen-sixties writing classes for boys and girls were held in the winter months; N/B/179/104-5, Archdeacon Lane Baptist Church M.B., 11.12.1837, 15.2.1841, 15.3.1841. Controversy concerning the teaching of writing on the Sabbath contributed to the struggle between the Sunday school teachers and the church regarding control of the Sunday school. N/M/179/280, Millstone Lane Methodist Superintendent's M.B., 26.8.1842 noted that a writing class had been established. Smith, History of the General Baptist Church Meeting at Friar Lane, p. 76, commented that writing had been taught for '40 or 50 years after its commencement'. 24D71/III/2, Sanvey Gate Baptist S.S.M.B., 29.11.1842, 13.12.1842, 4.7.1844. Concern was expressed regarding poor attendance at writing classes.

79 Leics. C.R.O., 1D66 III/8 & 10, Charles Street Baptist S.S.M.B., 15.9.1831, 13.6.1841. Children were dismissed if they were absent for over a month. 9.9.1851. The boys' disorderly behaviour was noted. 24D71/III/1, Sanvey Gate Baptist S.S.M.B., 2.4.1834; 15D66/39-40, Friar Lane Baptist S.S.M.B., 5.2.1856, 26.12.1863. Late and irregular attendance was recorded. N/M/29/1, Belgrave Gate Methodist Teachers' M.B., 27.1.1838. Teachers were allowed to strike the children on the head with a cane.

80 Leics. C.R.O., N/M/29/1, Belgrave Gate Methodist Teachers' M.B., 27.1.1838. Teachers were fined for absence or lateness. N/B/179/107, Archdeacon Lane Baptist church M.B., 13.6.1866, 19.6.1867. Entries were made regarding the need for more teachers and the lack of teachers of quality. 15D66/38 & 40, Friar Lane Baptist S.S.M.B., 27.3.1853. A presentation was made to Mr Lunn who had taught for 30 years, but on 26.12.1863, it was recorded that many teachers had attended irregularly, and on 21.12.1864 that there was a deficiency of male teachers; 24D71/III/2, Sanvey Gate S.S.M.B., 1.5.1844. The lack of male teachers was similarly recorded.

81 Leics. C.R.O., N/B/179/104-5, Archdeacon Lane Baptist Church M.B., 11.12.1837, 15.2.1841, 15.3.1841,
particular denomination. The following facilities at Bond Street Congregational church in 1866 were noted:

'Bible classes for young women, writing classes for boys and girls during the Winter months ... a Young Men's association, a Clothing society for poor members, and a female sick society.'

**ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOLS**

From existing records, it appears that the Sunday school established in 1845 at the Domestic Mission - which was founded by the congregation of the Great Meeting in All Saints Open under the auspices of the missioner Joseph Dare - was the only which catered for adults as well as children. Some of the other Sunday schools had a maximum age of 16 as accommodation was limited. Although steady progress was reported, irregular attendance and a shortage of teachers tended to cause problems. Despite the suggestion that only those who did not already attend a Sunday school should be admitted, many of those who applied to join the Domestic Mission were already pupils at other institutions, but were not taught how to write. Dare castigated other Sunday schools for their lack of secular instruction, and suggested that if necessary this could be provided on weekday evenings instead of on the Sabbath. Nevertheless, he became concerned that because of the need to teach basic literacy, religious instruction was neglected. By 1855 the first class (which was held in the mornings) was comprised mainly of adults, and attendance there tended to be regular. The afternoon class contained the 'more neglected', many of whom had been refused admission to other Sunday schools because they lacked suitable clothing. As well as

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23.10.1843, 24.9.1844, 23.6.1846.

82 Leics. C.R.O., N/B/179/107, Archdeacon Lane Baptist Church M.B., 20.4.1859. The annual tea meeting was recorded; N/M/179/280-2, Millstone Lane Methodist Superintendent's M.B., 4.9.1844, 14.2.1864. A scholars' tea was proposed, 6.11.1864. A tea meeting for parents was to be held; 15D66/3, Friar Lane Baptist Church M.B., 2.2.1864, reported a tea meeting provided for the scholars.

83 Drew, Those Taking Part, p. 12; Leics., C.R.O., 15D64/54, Bond Street Congregational church S.S.M.B., 5.7.1860. A trip to Bradgate Park was proposed, 12.8.1861. The annual trip to the races was discussed, 1.4.1867. A Band of Hope was suggested.


85 L.D.M.A.R. (1849), p. 8; (1851), p. 15. Many were reaching womanhood unable to read the Holy Scriptures. (1855), p. 16.

86 L.D.M.A.R. (1855), p. 16; (1859), p. 14, (1861), p. 19. Dare commented that although the average attendance at the morning class was between 60 and 70, this was lower than normal as the adults needed to rest on Sundays.
sacred and secular instruction, a sewing class, library and provident club were also provided.\textsuperscript{87} However, by 1872 Dare found the Sunday school to be in a 'poor condition' as many of the children in attendance did not belong to parents of any congregation.

III - CONCLUSION

Although the contribution made by Sunday schools to the decline in illiteracy has been generally appreciated, some contemporary observers and twentieth-century historians have questioned their educational significance, and found it difficult to quantify. Indeed it has been alleged that standards were not high, that the curriculum was limited, and that 'many working-class teachers in the midlands were barely literate'.\textsuperscript{88} Nevertheless not only did the schools provide opportunities for education (which were enhanced by numerous publications and libraries), but through their social events, benefit societies, and discussion groups, they became central to the 'broader transmission of culture, morality and belief'.\textsuperscript{89} In many areas such as Leicester where the industry was largely on a domestic basis, and reliant on child labour, Sunday schools frequently provided the only opportunity for children to become literate.\textsuperscript{90}

Indeed in Leicester, although there was an apparent lack of adult Sunday schools, the number of children catered for was particularly impressive. Once initial resistance and apathy had been overcome, the Sunday schools increased rapidly in number and size. Despite the borough being known as 'the metropolis of dissent' both Anglicans and Nonconformists contributed towards

\textsuperscript{89} Snell, 'The Sunday-school movement', pp. 127-8, 130, 138.
\textsuperscript{90} W.B. Stephens, 'Early Victorian Coventry: education in an industrial community, 1830-1851', in A. Everitt (ed.), Perspectives in English Urban History (1973), pp. 162-8; and his Regional Variations in Education During the Industrial Revolution, 1780-1870: the Task of the Local Historian (Leeds, 1973), p. 31. In 1851 Leicester had one pupil for every 7.85 of its population, Coventry had one pupil for every 9.45, Derby had one pupil for every 5.34, and Nottingham one pupil for every 5.87.
their establishment, although early co-operation eventually developed into rivalry as churches vied to attract members into their congregations. Moreover while the Nonconformists tended to concentrate on Sunday school provision, the Anglicans founded numerous day schools as well as establishing Sunday schools. Nevertheless at the 1851 Census the number of children attending Anglican Sunday schools was second only to those in Baptist establishments. Problems concerning the lack of suitable teachers (and male teachers in particular), discipline and irregular attendance, appeared to be a common factor in all the Sunday schools where records are available.

The majority appeared to rely on annual charity sermons for financial support, and many also sought subscriptions. Indeed the early Sunday schools founded by the Anglican churches, and the one in connection with the Unitarian Great Meeting, seemed to have been established and maintained through the efforts of members of the middle class. Some of the later nonconformist ones could have been opened in response to working-class demand (although here is no definite proof of this), as the teachers appeared to lack proficiency in basic literacy. Many working-class parents welcomed the opportunity to educate their children (although some could not take advantage of this provision as their children lacked suitable clothes), but others 'were indisposed to avail themselves of religious instruction for their children'.

Sunday schools in Leicester as elsewhere, helped to ease the deficiency in elementary education prior to 1870, and made the acquisition of basic literacy possible for hundreds of working children who would otherwise have been denied the opportunity. Notwithstanding allegedly low standards, and criticism regarding rote learning, the children had access to print.

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91 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 247. He cites a reference in L.C., 18.3.1848.
93 Ranger, A Century of Work for the Young, p. 16.
many were taught to write, and they received other benefits which included habits of self-discipline and cleanliness.
CHAPTER SIX

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR WORKING-CLASS ADULTS IN LEICESTER, 1780-1870

Many members of the working class valued education, for they not only appreciated its relevance to self-improvement and respectability, but also saw it as a way to ameliorate their living and working conditions. Nevertheless not all working-class adults shared this view, and many preferred to follow other leisure-time interests which were disapproved of by some members of their own class. 1 Middle-class reformers were also anxious to elevate and improve the working class, and thus provided many educational facilities, and opportunities for 'rational amusement'.

There is no substantial evidence for the existence of educational facilities for the adult working class in Leicester before 1833. There are few autobiographical accounts and reminiscences, and not surprisingly, details of any mutual instruction societies that may have been in existence during this early period no longer survive. 2 There were evening classes in maths and philosophy from 1788-93 at a philosophical society called the Adelphi, which was established by Richard Phillips (who became a Radical bookseller and was eventually imprisoned for selling Paine's The Rights of Man). However, it is almost certain that membership of these classes was middle rather than working class, as was that of the Leicester Literacy Society also founded by Phillips in 1790. 3

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1 D. Merrick, The Warp of Life or a Social and Moral Thread: a Narrative (Leicester, 1876), pp. 6-7, 18-22, 44; R. Appelbee, Glimpses Back Through Eighty Years (Leicester, 1895), pp. 10-15. He recalled the lack of educational and recreational facilities, and adversely commented on 'common amusements'.
2 Appelbee, Glimpses Back, pp. 10-15. He reminisced that 'schools of the lower kind' taught the 3 Rs but did not encourage intelligent reading or the understanding of the principles of arithmetic. His love of books, and an 'impulse for self-improvement' was fostered by his parents and by discussions with a female bookseller.
Some members of the working class were encouraged to become literate through their interest in political reform, indeed Leicester was known for its radical political activity rather than for its contribution to education. The circulation of Paine's *The Rights of Man*, and a rise in the sale of the unstamped papers could be used as evidence of literacy, although many copies were read aloud in public houses. Prior to the eighteen-thirties working-class energy appears to have been directed more towards membership of the Hampden Clubs, Luddism and trade union activity (frame-work knitters in particular favoured unions, seeing them as a way to address their many grievances), than towards education. Nevertheless membership of these societies can be viewed as a type of educational activity - if not as a direct means of reducing illiteracy - for rules and regulations needed to be formulated and petitions had to be organised and presented.

Despite the paucity of evidence, and a preference for involvement in political concerns, there was some interest in education among members of the working class in Leicester, for in 1833 a group of working men attempted to establish a Mechanics' Institute. The Institute that was eventually founded in 1833 was not disbanded until 1870, but it soon lost much of its working-class support. Thomas Cooper's Chartist adult school - which was predominantly working class - and classes run by Owenites in the eighteen-forties were equally short-lived.

This chapter concentrates on the various agencies that endeavoured to combat illiteracy, and to provide education for working-class adults in Leicester during the nineteenth century. The role of the middle class, class consciousness, religious and political dissent, and the socio-economic environment will all be considered during this examination of educational provision. One of the earliest agencies was the Leicester Mechanics' Institute, which was established mainly

4 Patterson, *Radical Leicester*.
to provide vocational technical training for working-class men in Leicester, although women also attended lectures and classes, and a few became members.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE LEICESTER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

It was suggested in 1825 that Leicester should have some form of scientific or literary society as the town was 'visibly inferior in mechanical inventions', and a Mechanics' Institute would be of great benefit in providing the opportunity for the study of the arts and sciences. It needed only the efforts of the 'gentry to give it birth'. In an address to the frame-work knitters it was suggested that the secretary of each district should establish evening schools, 'that the leisure hours of the youth may not be spent in dissipation but in the acquisition of useful knowledge'. The idea of forming an Institute was again mooted in 1827 for the 'moral improvement of the working class', as it was felt that something was needed after charity school to prevent the increase of crime and juvenile delinquency and the frequenting of 'haunts of immorality and vice'. However, when an Institute was eventually inaugurated it was not under the auspices of the gentry or middle-class reformers, but was initiated by a group of working men, who desired a news and reading room for working-class members. At the initial meeting - which was considered to be provocative and anti-establishment - the chairman, was accused of being an agent of Carlile. Thus the plan to rent a building near to West Bridge for free discussion, and the provision of unstamped papers was not regarded favourably by those employers who were present. Nevertheless they suggested that the establishment of a properly-constituted Mechanics' Institute would be well-supported. At a meeting to discuss this proposal it was resolved that a Mechanics' Institute should be established, 'accessible on easy terms ... for the benefit of the working classes and the public in general' and that the following, together with S. Stiff, a sinker

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6 Leicester Journal (LJ*), 25.3.1825, 8.7.1825.
7 LJ*, 22.4.1825.
8 LJ*, 9.2.1827.
9 Leicester Chronicle (LC), 2.11.1833.
maker and J. Burton, a printer should form a committee. The membership of which was as follows,

K. Plant, bookbinder
J. Jennings, shoemaker
C. Rozzell, hosier
J. Birtchnell, hosier
J. Whitworth, carpenter,
R. Gamble, shoemaker
W. Hickling, shoemaker
T. Warren, woolstapler
J. Beales, hosier
W. Perry, woolcomb-maker
R. Clephan, printer.\(^{10}\)

The occupations of this group of artisans and masters were representative of the major trades in Leicester. Although the proposed Institute was supported by over 100 men, it was felt that it lacked the patronage of more substantial citizens. Thus John and William Biggs, who were influential hosiers as well as being philanthropic Liberal reformers, and the Revs Mursell and Berry, who were Nonconformist clergy, were invited to a further meeting. They all pledged support for the Institute, and although they guaranteed payment of rent of £25 for one year, felt that it should be self-supporting, thus furthering the cause of self-help. It was proposed that the Institute should be housed in the New Hall at a rent of £20 a year, that handbills should be circulated requesting subscriptions, and that a newsroom, library, classes for mutual instruction, and lectures on the arts and sciences should be provided, at fees not to exceed 2/- per quarter, but that the Institute was not to open on Sundays.\(^{11}\) Handbills in the local press advertised the inaugural meeting and requested the attendance of all classes. The town and county members of parliament of both parties were invited to attend, but Halford, the county Tory Member of Parliament, declined.\(^{12}\)

\(^{10}\) Leicestershire County Record Office (Leics. C.R.O.), Minute Books of the Leicester Mechanics' Institute (L.M.I.M.B.), 19.11.1833.

The working class (for whose benefit the Institute was intended), took little active part in the public meeting which was held on 30 December 1833 with W. Evans, Whig Member of Parliament, in the chair. However, it was well-supported by Liberal Unitarian hosiers William Biggs, Joseph Whetstone and Thomas Stokes, and lawyer Samuel Stone, the Baptist minister the Rev. Mursell, and Quakers W.E. Hutchinson, a radical chemist, and John Ellis who was chairman of the Midland Railway. Liberal Anglicans - bankers Matthew Babington and Isaac Hodgson, together with Dr Noble, and the Rev. Holt - also gave their support, but there was a lack of prominent Tory support. Political and religious controversy was already apparent in the exchange between William Biggs, and the Rev. Holt. Nevertheless the Institute received financial aid in the form of donations of money and books from members of both the upper and middle classes, many of whom were to serve as chairman or secretary in future years. Indeed it was considered

'That the diffusion of knowledge among the great body of people, commonly called the working classes, is productive to them of incalculable good, by refining and exalting their tastes, and fitting them for the enlightened performance of their social and moral obligations'.

'That it is not only the duty, but also the interest, of the wealthier and more educated classes of the community, to lend their support to all institutions which have for their object the dissemination of knowledge'.

A Mechanics' Institute was therefore established in Leicester to give instruction 'in the principles of the Arts [the members] practise, and in the various branches of Science and other general and useful knowledge'. The rules and regulations related to the admission of members, the appointment of officers (two-thirds of whom were to be of the working class), and the

13 L.C., 4.1.1834.
14 Leics. C.R.O., L374, Leicester Mechanics' Institute Annual Report (L.M.I.A.R.) (1835). Donations of £50 were received from William Evans, M.P. £20 from the banker Thomas Pares, £10 each from William Biggs, Isaac Hodgson and Dr. Noble, £5.00 each from Mr. Whetstone, and Mr. Paget junior and senior, both surgeons.
15 L.C., 4.1.1834. This was included in a resolution by Anglican Liberal banker Matthew Babington. Similar sentiments were expressed by the Rev. T Mitchell.
16 L.C., 4.1.1834. This was moved by Anglican Radical banker Isaac Hodgson, and seconded by the Unitarian Radical hosier, William Biggs. A similar resolution was moved by Quaker Radical chemist, W. E. Hutchinson.
running of the newsroom, library, lectures and classes. It was also proposed that a museum of models and scientific apparatus should be established, and that although the purchase of newspapers was to be unrestricted, 'no immoral or blasphemous publications' were to be bought or such donations admitted into the library. Indeed lectures and books were to be 'scrupulously free from political or theological controversy'. Despite these measures, the Institute sustained criticism and prejudice from the press during its first year. There was also controversy over the political background of the librarian who was a Liberal. Furthermore, problems were caused by books donated to the library, as it was felt that those 'on the subject of religion and party politics were at variance with the objects of the Institute', moreover, the return of the books to their owners, 'with a respectful note' caused division in the committee.

The 1834 Annual Report stated that a library and reading room, with 829 books, had been established, as had classes in astronomy, geography, grammar, mathematics, and mutual instruction. It was also reported that 20 lectures (mainly on scientific subjects) had been delivered by lecturers who had willingly offered their services, and that ladies had been admitted at reduced prices. There were ten life members who paid £10 in money or books, 92 annual members paying £1, and 369 quarterly members contributing 2/- each quarter. Nevertheless the secretary stated that they had hoped for more patronage as the 'pursuit of knowledge elevated the minds of men and led them from the grovelling and degrading pursuits that too many followed', and that he 'knew of no reason why working men should be deprived of cultivating [their] talents'. The Rev. Mursell requested the support of the working class together with that of more wealthy members to 'cherish mutual good feeling and friendship between all orders of the community'. Controversy continued into 1835, for a similar objection was raised to the one at

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19 L.M.I.M.B., 27.1.1834.
20 L.M.I.M.B., 10,17,20, 24.2.1834, 3.3.1834.
21 F.B. Lott, The Story of the Leicester Mechanics' Institute 1833-1871 (1935), pp. 5-6; L.L., 14.3.1834, 4.4.1834; L.C.
the London Mechanics' Institute in its early years, in that two-thirds of the committee had not - as stated in the rules - been selected from the working class.22 There was also political and religious controversy, for the reading aloud of The Morning Chronicle was regarded as a violation of political neutrality, and a lecturer was accused of encouraging religious discussion in his shorthand class.23

More seriously, a greater rift was caused by a series of letters, sent to the Institute by the Rev. Holt, the Liberal curate of Oadby which were also published in the local press.24 He felt that all Christians should 'unite for the prevention of [Institutes] being perverted to schools for the diffusion of infidel, republican and levelling principles'. He saw evidence of this in the seating arrangements for lectures, 'the absurd and impracticable doctrine of equality of ranks', as the wealthy were not seated separately as in church and chapel. In his opinion the ladies were 'affronted by being seated near to wives of mechanics'. In addition he attacked the suggestion of Sunday opening - even though this would benefit the working-class members - and objected to books in the library by Carlile and Cobbett. His main objection however, was that the Institute was 'commenced chiefly by mechanics [and that] they had secured to themselves a predominant authority in the direction of its affairs'. He suggested that the 'levellers' who had failed to establish a newsroom at West Bridge had gained places on the Institute's committee, and had too much influence. After he was replaced as chairman he criticised the fact that 'a low mechanic was chairman', and felt mechanics who were not masters should be removed from the committee by having a sliding scale for fees, and that only higher payers should be eligible for office.

Leicester mechanics had more influence than those at the Liverpool and Lincoln Institutes, he surmised, despite the alternative objection that working-class members were not fully represented on the committee. He assumed that because of working-class control, the Institute was not

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22 L.M.I.M.B., 12.1.1835.
23 L.M.I.M.B., 10.2.1835, 13.4.1835.
managed efficiently, and that this caused financial difficulties. Nevertheless a scale of charges for lectures was in his opinion preferable to raising subscriptions, as he felt that the latter was unfair to poorer members. The Committee refuted all his accusations, and argued in particular that it was right that the class for which the Institute was intended should have equal right to good seats at lectures.25

It has been conjectured that Mechanics' Institutes failed, and a 'potentially useful instrument of adult education was wrecked by ideological and class warfare', and that the issue of Holt at Leicester was an example of this.26 Indeed Turner postulates that because of Holt, active radical working men left the Institute, and cites as evidence the fact that during the Chartist troubles of 1839 no member of the Institute was involved, and thus concludes that working-class radicals were no longer associated with the Institute. He refutes Patterson's view that 'despite the Institute's profession of political and sectarian neutrality it was regarded from the first as a Radical affair' and suggests that the Tory opinion that it was 'a hot-bed of republicanism and religious unbelief' was also upheld by the Liberals.27 They both agree however, that the middle class rather than the working class made most impact on the Institute. Evidence of this can be seen in the composition of the 1835 committee where out of 20 members only 8 were working-class. Middle-class membership was preferentially arranged by raising subscriptions to discourage too many working men, and by 1840 tradesmen had largely replaced mechanics, the latter having lost interest through a variety of reasons, a common experience in many Institutes.28

28 Turner, "Politics in Mechanics' Institutes", pp. 135-6; Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 238.
Although membership had increased during 1835, and the library continued to flourish, attendance at lectures and classes had declined, and the Institute was in financial difficulties.\(^{29}\) Membership continued to increase during 1836-7, although it was noted that from a population of around 50,000 only 600 had 'regularly participated in the benefits, and few resident gentlemen had volunteered as lecturers'. A letter in the Leicester Chronicle by a working-man stated that he felt out of place in his 'filthy working dress among a number of well-dressed men' but that if he went home to change all the papers would have gone.\(^{30}\) However in 1837 class attendances improved, and classes for 'females' in French, geography, 'globes', writing, arithmetic and grammar had been established, and were held at two infant schools in the town. Nevertheless the character of the Institute was changing, for social events commenced with the first of a series of annual tea parties, and lectures in music, philosophy, German literature and painting had largely replaced scientific topics.\(^{31}\) Despite this the Institute was the only place apart from Sunday schools where education for the adult working class could be obtained.\(^{32}\) It was suggested that the Institute would attract more members if it had its own building, a subject noted in many Annual Reports, and consequently a building fund was begun.\(^{33}\)

Despite the fact that membership rose in 1838, it was still considered low in proportion to the population. Classes were held on three nights in the winter, and lectures which now 'blended instruction with amusement' included ventriloquism together with astronomy, architecture and acoustics.\(^{34}\) Fortnightly informal discussion groups were introduced in 1839, at which members read their papers. Seven classes were offered, and free lectures, the library stock had increased, and the reading room was 'frequented by large numbers'. Prejudice against the Institute appeared to be diminishing, finances had improved, and there was an atmosphere of harmony and good

\(^{29}\) L.M.I.A.R. (1835).
\(^{31}\) L.M.I.A.R. (1837).
\(^{32}\) L.M.I.M.B., 1.9.1837.
\(^{34}\) L.M.I.A.R. (1838).
will. However, some members who supported Owenite ideas were locked out of the Institute and formed their own organisation. Despite this the Institute appeared to be well-established and successful, and there were plans to join an association with other Midland Institutes, and to hold an Exhibition to aid finances. Nevertheless, the original aim to teach science to the working-man was increasingly overshadowed by lighter more recreational activities (including a midsummer concert), for the committee felt justified in 'relieving the somewhat dry details of science by the introduction of an entertainment of a lighter character'.

**THE DECLINE AND DEMISE OF THE LEICESTER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

The Exhibition - which was intended to aid finances as well as to promote scientific interest - opened in May 1840. The hours (10 a.m. to 10 p.m.) were designed to facilitate working-class attendance, and admission fees of 6d per day, 2/- per month or 7/6 per season, permitted the viewing of a wide range of exhibits. Special trains were provided to take passengers to a similar Exhibition in Nottingham, and for a reciprocal journey to Leicester. The Exhibition lasted for six months, but it curtailed many of the Institute's regular activities, and incurred financial losses rather than benefits. Support for the Institute was requested, for lectures and fortnightly papers had been suspended through lack of interest, and no additions could be made to the library because of lack of funds.

During the eighteen-forties a variety of external and internal factors added to the Institute's problems. The lack of suitable accommodation was considered to have an adverse effect, for it was assumed that class membership in particular would benefit by being in the same building as

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35 L.C., 21.7.1838, 4.8.1838.
37 L.C., 21.7.1838, 4.8.1838.
the rest of the Institute. The financial position also continued to be a source of concern, and eventually necessitated a series of cuts, which included cheaper class-rooms, the temporary suspension of paid speakers at lectures, and the purchase of library books. In addition, long hours, low wages, and lack of basic education continued to affect the attendance of 'those for whose benefit the Institute was chiefly intended'.

The opening in Leicester of other societies which offered similar facilities, were also considered to have a damaging effect. Indeed local opinion suggested that the Domestic Mission was superior to the Mechanics' Institute which was not considered suitable for the working man. However the committee stressed the advantageous subscription rates, and superior facilities of the Mechanics' Institute compared with the rest, and noted that previously the 'working classes were debarred almost all means of mental recreation and improvement'. Nevertheless committee members were sad that this 'ennobling influence may not have reached so many of the working class as [they] would have wished'. Despite this competition, by 1848 membership had increased, aided perhaps by lower subscriptions for ladies to the library and lectures, although they were excluded from the reading room. The committee was also able to report that the whole of the New Hall was now available for rent, and hence the library and reading room could occupy the lower floor, and classes and lectures the upper.

Although the Institute existed professedly to 'raise [working-class] members in the scale of humanity by teaching them their own true worth while performing the duties of their respective stations', the committee lamented the small numbers of working-class members who had availed

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40 L.M.I.A.R (1840).
41 L.M.I.M.B., 15.6.1844, 22.10.1844, 29.3.1845, 24.6.1845, 2.2.1846, 14.9.1846.
43 Leicestershire Mercury (L.M.), 14.11.1846.
44 L.M.I.A.R. (1845).
45 L.M.I.A.R. (1848).
46 L.M.I.A.R. (1847).
themselves of these worthy aims. In more wealthy members but it was feared that the Institute 'does not yet effect all these objects for which it was and still is designed'. In common with other Institutes, it was evident that artisans had lost faith in the Institute. Indeed (as can be seen in Appendix 8), by 1854 the occupational composition of members currently on the books was predominantly middle-class, and of these 690 members, only 32 were women. Evidence for an increasingly middle-class membership can also be deduced by the support given to the Institute from the previously critical Leicester Journal.

Moreover the extensive calendar of social events provided during the eighteen-forties reflected a change of occupational status. These became increasingly important, and at times seemed to overshadow all other aspects, for the committee found time to discuss the annual tea-party, concert, and proposed trip to Bradgate Park while debate on the state of the classes was continually deferred. However this was justified by the conviction that the 'solid and enduring nature of the Institute' needed to be tempered by 'something that shall appeal to the feelings and senses as well as the understanding', and that the concerts were not so much for pecuniary gain but to give members of the working class a chance to attend functions that were generally too expensive. However, it is interesting to wonder how many working-class members attended the Institute's annual tea-party which presented a picture of 'elegance and variety which has never been surpassed'.

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48 L.M.I.A.R. (1845).
49 From the sources available, it appears that there was a predominance of retail and clerical occupations, together with manufacturers, merchants and professionals. For some of the trades it is difficult to distinguish between those who employed others, and those who were employed, but despite this it is apparent that few members could be classified as working class. Membership could be annually or quarterly.
51 L.M.I.M.B., 18.3.1844, 8.4.1844, 21.4.1844, 12.5.1844, 26.5.1844, 28.5.1844, 9.6.1844, 16.6.1844, 223.6.1844.
52 L.M.I.A.R. (1846, 1843, 1841).
Although financial difficulties curtailed the acquisition of library books during the years 1841-3, in 1846 the purchase of predominantly popular and entertaining books again reflected the changing nature of the Institute.\textsuperscript{54} For as is evident from Appendix 9 (which lists the categories and circulation of books) lighter works increased in popularity, while those on science-based subjects diminished.\textsuperscript{55} The reading room continued to be popular, particularly after 1844 when a chess set was presented by J. Biggs.\textsuperscript{56} However (as can be seen in Appendix 10), the number of lectures declined after 1840, as did their quality and content, for financial constraints prevented the appointment of paid lecturers.\textsuperscript{57} Moreover the number of classes diminished through the decade, (as is evident from Appendix 11) and those that were held tended to lack support.\textsuperscript{58} Indeed as early as 1845 it was feared that they existed only in name.\textsuperscript{59}

Animosity in the committee in 1847 was revealed when bitter exchanges were aired through The Leicester Chronicle. While the reading room was bright, cheerful and well-stocked as was the library, it was suggested that the classes were held in a cramped, poorly-lit back-kitchen, and that incidental expenses had to be met by the students, including their own candles for lighting. Some committee members considered that the Institute needed to be more attractive, and that the introduction of dancing might attract more people, but others suggested that the Institute had been inaugurated to impart scientific knowledge, and that dancing would be demoralising.\textsuperscript{60}

Although the Annual Report of 1848 was optimistic, for the Institute was now under one roof,

\textsuperscript{54} L.M.I.A.R. (1841, 1843, 1846, 1848).
\textsuperscript{55} Total works of fiction and general literature increased from 138 in 1838 to 585 in 1853, and their circulation in 1442 reached 1493, as opposed to a circulation of 222 books of a scientific nature, 72 mathematical books, and 41 concerned with commerce and manufacture.
\textsuperscript{56} L.M.I.M.B., 9.1.1844; L.M.I.A.R. (1845).
\textsuperscript{57} L.M.I.A.R. (1841, 1842, 1843, 1844). In 1835 out of a total of 35 lectures, 33 had a scientific content, but in 1845 only 3 of the 12 lectures were scientific, of the remainder, 6 were on the Arts and 3 were connected with entertainment.
\textsuperscript{58} By 1837 classes in astronomy and geography had ceased, and those in English grammar failed to exist after 1842. The mathematics classes appeared to be spasmodic, and after 1847 arithmetic classes failed to materialise, as did writing classes after 1841. From 1836 until 1857 drawing classes appeared to be well-supported. In 1837 women apparently attended classes on English grammar, arithmetic, globes, and writing, but their possible attendance at other classes was not recorded.
\textsuperscript{59} L.M.I.A.R. (1841, 1843, 1845, 1846).
\textsuperscript{60} L.C., 16.1.1847, 23.1.1847, 27.2.1847.
and a Midland Counties Union had been formed which gave beneficial terms for lecturers, the emphasis appeared to be on social rather than educational provision to ensure the solvency of the Institute.

There are no Annual Reports for 1849-1851, no minutes for 1847-1851, and records for the eighteen-fifties reveal persistent decline. Despite this, the committee proposed a union of County Institutes which was launched at an impressive soirée in 1852, but this incited adverse reports from the press. In 1852 the Institute became associated with the London Society of Arts, but failed to benefit from this as there was a lack of interest in the lectures, and classes were not established in accordance with the examinations offered, and thus by 1857 all connections had ceased. The School of Design which opened in 1854 ran successful classes in drawing and mechanical drawing for a while, but membership at other classes continued to be spasmodic, and by 1852 they were 'completely in decay' apart from singing and choral. In 1853-4 there were no classes, in 1855 only the School of Design classes were operational, drawing, mathematics and arithmetic ran in 1856, and drawing and singing in 1857, but by 1858 classes were no longer held, and their apparatus was sold. The public reading of papers had also ceased by 1852 and, lectures were infrequent and poorly-supported, for in 1853 there were no lectures on scientific subjects, in 1854-6 there were no lectures at all, and in 1857 only 2 were held. The lack of interest, and the failure of members of the working class to 'avail themselves of the advantages to the extent contemplated by the originators of the Mechanics' Institute [had] always been a matter of surprise' to the committee. Even the social events declined during this decade, apart from excursions which were well-attended. Although books were annually added to the library until

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61 L.M.I.M.B., 16.1.1854, 7.2.1854.
63 L.M.I.A.R. (1852, 1854, 1856, 1858); L.M.I.M.B., 22.4.1856, 17.6.1856.
65 L.M.I.A.R. (1852, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858); L.M.I.M.B., 29.5.1855, 8.4.1856, 6.7.1858.
1857, the number issued declined rapidly after 1853, and in 1856 the paid librarian was dispensed with. There was however, much discussion concerning the extension, refurbishment and location of the reading room - the most successful aspect of the Institute - as the popularity of chess had made it very overcrowded and uncomfortable.

The financial situation continued to deteriorate despite moves by the committee to improve it. Unfortunately an increase in subscriptions combined with the opening of similar institutions in the town, and membership continued to decline. 1854 ended in debt as did 1856, and by 1858 the Institute was forced to close the upper room, as classes and lectures had ceased, and only the sale of equipment, and a donation from John Biggs (a middle-class hosier, M.P. and patron of the Institute), enabled it to continue into the next decade.

The Institute's aim had been to extend 'the blessings of literature and art to the working classes and it has only succeeded in part ... its shortcomings have proceeded from causes which no Institute can control or oversee'. It desired only 'the spread of knowledge in its various branches and the moral and mental elevation of its members in whichever class in society they happen to belong', in an atmosphere free from 'secularisation or party differences'. However from 1855 it had ceased to be a society promoting serious study and had become a club with a library and reading room. At the annual meeting of 1862, Mr Matts - a working man - remarked that while he was proud of the Institute, a lack of working-class support could be

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70 L.M.I.M.B., 22.3.1854, 21.3.1854, 27.5.1854; L.M.I.A.R. (1852).
72 L.M.I.M.B., 22.3.1853, 6.7.1854; L.M.I.A.R. (1852, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1858). The donation of £16-13-7d comprised the profits from the New Hall Shares.
73 L.M.I.M.B., 21.3.1854.
74 L.M.I.A.R. (1854).
75 Lott, Leicester Mechanics' Institute, pp. 12, 18.
attributed to 'the low state of education among [the working class] and want of a taste for mental improvement'.

There are no extant Annual Reports for the remaining years and the minutes consist of terse entries, brief reports concerning the Annual General Meeting, and financial statements. In 1862 an offer to hand over the library to the Borough Council in exchange for a settlement of liabilities was rejected. From 1863–7 funds were aided by successful concerts and penny readings held at the Temperance Hall, although these ceased when the hiring of a larger hall proved unsuccessful. In 1865 a Working Mens' Club opened in Leicester which created a further threat to the Institute's social provision for working-class members. The committee was only too aware that the educational aims had also been superseded by other providers which included the Temperance Society in 1836, the Young Men's Christian Association in 1855, and the Working Men's College in 1862. Although the reading room was still well attended, numbers continued to fall, and the debt to grow. By 1870 it was obvious that the Institute was no longer viable, and at the Annual General Meeting in January 1870 it was decided that it should cease on Lady Day 1870. Liabilities would be paid by the Council, in exchange for the library. This resolution was confirmed in March 1870 and the '5,000 volumes in the library became the foundation stock of the Free Library and Reading Room which was opened to the public on 9 January 1871'.

How successful had the Mechanics' Institute been in realising its objectives? In common with others it had sacrificed educational provision for novelty and entertainment in order to
remain solvent. Scientific lectures and classes had not been well-supported, but this was caused by a variety of factors (some of which were beyond its control), which included poor teachers and lecturers, a lack of basic education, and long working hours among the working-class members. Also middle-class attempts to enforce working-class self-improvement, and perceived attitudes of condescension were resented by working-class members. 'Some people who really tried to do good to working-class people failed because their idea of doing them good was to make them more like themselves'.

Despite the protestations of the committee that religious and political neutrality was preserved, and that they desired an atmosphere in which the different social classes could meet, the Institute seemed fated to have reported in the press its failures in these respects. Indeed political and religious discussion was desired by some working-class members. In spite of its failure to further scientific enquiry by any great extent, the Institute was a fore-runner in educational provision, and library and reading room facilities for the working-class, and it was significant that the library remained 'available for the recreation and enlightenment of the class for whose benefit it was primarily gathered together'.

The Institute was initially established for working men, but women were also catered for, although in a very minor capacity as was the case in many institutes. There was a small minority of female members, and women were admitted to lectures, and to the library (at reduced prices), but not to the reading room. It is apparent from Holt's letter that both middle-class and working-class women attended lectures. Separate classes, including French, globes, writing, arithmetic and grammar were organised for women but these were held in a separate building.

84 Lott, *Leicester Mechanics' Institute*, p. 19, citing Mr P. Wicksteed.
85 L.M.I.M.B., 11.1.1870.
However there did not appear to be classes in domestic subjects which were often considered more suitable for women than academic courses.

I - POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND ADULT WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

It is not surprising that the Mechanics' Institute failed in its attempt to attract working-class members especially during the eighteen-forties. Indeed in Leicester 1840 was considered to be the darkest period in trade, 'surpassing in severity the great distress and suffering experienced by the stockingers in 1819'. The wages of Leicester frame-work knitters were half those of farm labourers in Lincolnshire (4s. 6d. for a long working week). This left little to spare for fees, and when the economy did improve and attendance at classes could be resumed many had forgotten any skills they had learned previously, and became discouraged. It was also apparent after 1832 that political affiliation with middle-class radical reformers was not going to solve working-class grievances, and many members of the working class turned instead to Chartism, Owenite socialism, and eventually to Secularism and/or Cooperation. In addition the political rivalry between Anglican Tories, and dissenting radical reformers concerning the control of the corporation, and their desire to attract working-class support for this aim had repercussions within the Mechanics' Institute, for the Tory Leicester Journal denounced the Institute from the outset as a 'Radical affair', although alarm at initial working-class control was shared by Tories and Liberals alike. Middle-class attempts to enforce working-class self-improvement were also resented by many working-class members, who in addition felt inferior because their long working hours necessitated attendance at classes and lectures in their working clothes. Some other providers of adult education established during the nineteenth century (especially the Working Men's Club and Institute), provided a welcome alternative to the Mechanics' Institute.

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and attracted more working-class support, as they tended to have a more informal atmosphere, or were more receptive to working-class problems.

THE CHARTIST ADULT SCHOOL

The Chartist adult school, and Owenite Social Institution, were established during the early formative years of the Mechanics' Institute - albeit briefly. They developed in response to working-class political ideology, unlike the Mechanics' Institute which was inaugurated specifically to promote scientific education, and to provide an alternative venue for working-class leisure. Both had more appeal for working-class members than the Institute whose middle-class patronage and management tended to alienate them.

There were Chartist lectures and discussions in Leicester before Thomas Cooper (a prominent Chartist leader) inaugurated an adult Sunday school in 1841, 'for men and boys who were at work on the week days', in the Shakespearean Room of the Amphitheatre in Humberstone Gate. Additional meetings were held on weekday-evenings, when Cooper lectured on Milton, Shakespeare, English history, geology and phrenology. He reported that

'Our meetings were well-attended, the number of our members increased greatly, and all went well until January 1842 when the great hosiery houses announced that orders had ceased, and the greater number of the stocking and glove frames must stand still'.

The sale of the Chartist papers the Northern Star and the Extinguisher, declined as the men became desperate through lack of food. The adult school had to close because 'they were too despairing to care about learning to read'. However another Chartist adult school was opened in Leicester in 1844.

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93 Cooper, Life, pp. 164-70.
94 Cooper, Life, pp. 170-73.
95 Northern Star, 30.11.1844.
It is difficult to assess the effect of the Chartist adult school on illiteracy in Leicester, but a group of Leicester working-class Chartist poets and hymn writers were initially inspired by Cooper. Although the content of Chartist lectures, discussions and journals was largely political, they also contained information on cultural and scientific subjects which provided material for discussion. Women were not specifically mentioned in connection with Cooper's adult school, but they were generally involved in Chartist activities.

THE OWENITE SOCIAL INSTITUTION AND THE SECULAR CLUB AND INSTITUTE

Although there was no Owenite Hall of Science in Leicester, in 1836 a Social Institution was founded (branch number 26 of Owen's Association of All Classes of All Nations). We have seen that in 1838 some members who openly supported Owenism were dismissed from the Mechanics' Institute, but in July 1839 a hall was acquired in the market place by George Fleming who was an Owenite propagandist. Classes were held in elocution and dancing, and discussions, a library, a self-improvement class, and a series of lectures (including six by Owen), attended by men and women were organised. The Institute had become a branch of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists by 1842, and maintained its programme of political, educational and social activities until its closure in the mid eighteen-forties. Members continued their discussion classes at the Domestic Mission where the right of free speech was always respected, and each member was 'at liberty to speak in his turn for ten minutes'. Joseph Dare was aware that 'unbelief and socialist notions prevail amongst many of them', but welcomed the discussion of such topics as the Charter, popular education, self-improvement, and secularism in

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96 Harrison, 'Chartism in Leicester', pp. 144-6.
the hope that this would 'soften extreme notions in politics and religion, or rather unbelief'.¹⁰¹ A lecture on secularism was given by G.J. Holyoake which - following decline in the socialist movement in the mid-eighteen forties - inspired many former Owenites to become founder members of the Leicester Secular Society.¹⁰²

There are only spasmodic references to secularist meetings, Sunday evening lectures and discussions prior to the eighteen-seventies, for the Society found it difficult to find accommodation, and was in fact rejected in its application to use the new Temperance Hall.¹⁰³ An address to the public was inserted in the local press attacking religious intolerance and bigotry in a town which purported to support 'freedom of opinion ... and religious liberty'. It was addressed in particular to the Quaker directors of the Hall.¹⁰⁴ By 1867 the Society had revived, and in 1869 had acquired an Institute and Clubroom in Humberstone Gate. A series of activities including a mutual improvement society was organised to enable both male and female members to 'contribute to their intellectual improvement without being dependent on the public-house'.¹⁰⁵ In 1872 the Society commissioned premises for its own hall (see Plate 5) which also accommodated class and committee rooms, as well as a library and reading room.¹⁰⁶ The purpose of the Club and Institute was for

'the delivery of lectures and addresses on scientific, social, political, religious, or

¹⁰³ Leics. C.R.O., 10D68/1, Minute Books of the Leicester Secular Society (13.6.1852-23.11.1855) made reference to a series of lectures and debates; Gould, Leicester Secular Society, pp. 9-10 cited a notice in The Reasoner, 6.4.1855 which referred to a Sunday evening lecture and discussion to be held at 148 Belgrave Road. The next references which appeared in The Reasoner in January 1861, and ceased after April 1862, advertised meetings at the Russell Tavern Rutland Street.
¹⁰⁴ L.M., 29.4.1854 - cutting affixed to Leicester Secular Society Minute Book, 3.5.1854.
¹⁰⁵ Gould, Leicester Secular Society, p. 11; Leics. C.R.O., 10D68/6, Rules and Principles of the Leicester Secular Society (1873) which is included in a scrapbook of printed material 1873-1908.
¹⁰⁶ Nash, Secularism, pp. 34-5, discusses the establishment of the Secular Hall Company which was inaugurated under the auspices of Josiah Gimson (a former Unitarian and founder of the largest engineering firm in Leicester) in order to raise capital for a Hall paid for by the membership through shares. Gimson owned 66.5% of the shares, and other local manufacturers including the dye manufacturer, John Sladen, the elastic-web manufacturer, Michael Wright, and Thomas Coltman the hosiery-machinery manufacturer bought smaller quantities.
theological questions, with the design of stimulating inquiry and promoting instruction in these subjects, and of improving the condition of the working classes'.

It is again difficult to assess the contribution made by the earlier Social Institute, or by the Secular Club and Institute to adult illiteracy, and to working-class education in general as much of the evidence is so slight, but both welcomed both male and female members. The Secular Society did support the National Education League in its desire to exclude theological teaching from schools, as this was in keeping with its own views on religious neutrality.

Plate 5: Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, 1881.

108 M. Elliot, Victorian Leicester (1979), plate 8.
THE LEICESTER WORKING MEN'S CLUB AND INSTITUTE

The Working Men's Club and Institute Movement was initially instituted by middle-class reformers to provide educational as well as recreational activities in a convivial yet teetotal environment. Leicester Working Men's Club and Institute was established in 1866 in St Martins to provide 'cheerful and agreeable', but teetotal facilities for education, relaxation and amusement for working men, and to promote self-help and self-improvement. Lectures, discussions, entertainments, and classes were organised, but initially it was only supported by a small number of working men. In common with other Clubs it was intended to provide an 'improving' environment that was at the same time more conducive to the working class than that of the Mechanic's Institute. The Clubs also aimed to foster a spirit of conciliation between the classes. Indeed in a letter to the editor of the Leicester Journal it was emphasised that the Club was open to 'men of all ranks and parties', and requested more support from 'Churchman and Conservatives that the Club may be truly representative'.

The Leicester Club was welcomed by Joseph Dare and other middle-class reformers for its educational facilities and teetotal environment, however both aspects were doomed to fail. For 2d a week members were entitled to use the 'convenient rooms for reading, smoking, refreshments, conversation, concerts, discussions, public readings', and other recreational activities, and by 1867 classes in writing and arithmetic were offered. However the teetotal aspect of the Club - which was stipulated by its patrons - was soon rejected, and in February 1866 a letter was sent to The Working Man by the secretary who stated that if alcohol were to be

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109 L.C., 25.11.1865, 27.4.1867.
110 L.C., 4.5.1867.
113 L.J., 16.3.1866; L.J., 16.2.1867.
allowed it would enable 'examples of moderation' to be observed. Nevertheless this appears to have failed for in 1867 the Committee stated that it 'would be glad to see the Monday and Saturday evenings conducted so as to lead to a more refined and elevated state of morals'.

The sale of alcohol also enabled Clubs eventually to become self-supporting, and thus free from middle-class patronage.

Initially 'penny readings' (which comprised a mixture of music and recitation) were popular. These were considered to be 'highly recreational, and calculated to do much good in creating a taste for higher intellectual enjoyment on the part of the public'. At Leicester an adaptation of Hamlet was 'delivered to a crowded meeting of working men, who listened to the reading with the most earnest attention'. Nevertheless by the eighteen-eighties penny readings were no longer popular, and although lectures and discussions on political subjects attracted an audience, music-hall style entertainment was in demand. A decade later 'the educational side of club life [was] quite forgotten', and caused much debate as to how this might be remedied.

Indeed in Leicester as early as 1866 Dare recorded that classes in singing, instrumental music and games had been organised, and there were also discussions and lectures, and that:

'an extensive list of newspapers and periodicals has been provided, but the majority of the members do not patronize the reading department. The rooms best filled are those for general conversation and popular games'.

Thus the Club failed in its attempt to further the education of working-men in Leicester, as was envisaged by its early middle-class supporters.

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115 L.C., 4.5.1867.
116 L.C., 15.1.1870.
117 Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 77, J. Hunter, The Story of Hamlet Adapted and Intended for a Reading by Mr Hunter at the Working Men's Club and Institute Leicester, on the 24 September 1866 (Leicester, 1866). The introduction cites the first quotation from the Leicester Mail and the second from the Leicester Free Press.
THE LEICESTER COOPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD

In 1860 a group of five elastic-web weavers who wished to improve not only their own living and working conditions, but also those of their fellow men, called a meeting with the intention of forming a committee to inaugurate a society based on co-operative principles. One member who had received 'more educational advantages' than any of the others, became their acknowledged leader. At a public meeting held in the Town Hall, rules were formulated which were registered in July 1860, and in September the Leicester Industrial Cooperative Society began trading from a shop in Belgrave Gate. The Society was seen as an 'instrument of social redemption' and thus worthy of support, by the Rev. Vaughan (an Anglican clergyman who was also instrumental in founding a college for working-men), Edward Ellis - who was a Quaker, and chairman of the Midland Railway - and George Stevenson, the Mayor. The conditions of membership stated that 'the objects of this Society are the social & intellectual advancement of its members and all classes of working men'. The values of self-reliance, self-help, independence, and joint responsibility were encouraged, and in addition committee members acquired financial, and organisational skills. By 1871 membership of the Society (which in 1862 was named the Leicester and Leicestershire Industrial Provident Society, following an Act which legislated on industrial societies) had reached 3143, and its fame had spread to other towns. The Leicester Society gave help to newly-formed societies, thereby demonstrating that 'there could not be a sweeter or more striking example of the brotherly love of the Cooperative spirit.'

Education was considered to be an important aspect of co-operation (but was usually confined to teaching its concepts) and in 1868 an educational fund was commenced. From 1875 an education committee was established, and education was budgeted for on regular basis (a

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121 J.T. Stephen, Social Redemption or The Fifty Years' Story of the Leicester Co-operative Society Ltd, 1860-1910 (Leicester, 1911), pp. 13-28. The Rev. Vaughan had compassion for members of the working class who could not read or write. Ellis gave financial support as well as advice on management, and Stevenson was both solicitor and adviser to the Society.
122 Stephen, Social Redemption, p. 36.
percentage of each quarter's profits was used for this purpose). In 1876 the Society re-registered as The Leicester Cooperative Society Ltd under new rules, and its offices were transferred to premises in Union/High Street. Here there was a library, and on Saturday evenings a discussion class was held - in rooms that were normally used for reading and conversation - where free expression, and an interchange of ideas were encouraged.\textsuperscript{124}

The contribution made by the Society to a decline in illiteracy, or to general education was probably minimal, but it did encourage self-help and self-reliance. These were qualities which aided interested members of the working class (both male and female), in their desire to improve their social conditions. Involvement in committees also led to the acquisition of organisational, and financial skills, as did membership of friendly societies, trade unions, and political parties, all of which had an impact on the social, and political, education of the working class.\textsuperscript{125}

\textbf{II - MIDDLE-CLASS PHILANTHROPY AND ADULT WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION}

\textbf{THE LEICESTER DOMESTIC MISSION}

Apart from the Mechanics' Institute, another major contributor to working-class adult education during the middle of the nineteenth century was the Domestic Mission, which was established at All Saints Open (which was in a very densely-populated area of poor housing in north Leicester) in 1846 by the Unitarian Great Meeting, under the auspices of its missioner Joseph Dare. It was thus founded in response to religious ethics regarding the improvement of the physical and moral lives of the poor. Although it was under middle-class patronage (as was the Mechanics' Institute) and sought to promote values based on self-help and rational recreation,

\textsuperscript{123} Stephen, Social Redemption, pp. 35, 46.
\textsuperscript{124} Steven, Social Redemption, pp. 64-6, 137-43, 185.
\textsuperscript{125} For a discussion of working-class improvement in Leicester through membership of friendly societies, trade unions, and political parties see especially B. Haynes, 'Working-class respectability in Leicester c. 1845-80', in Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 65 (1991); B. Lancaster, Radicalism.
it proved to be more successful in attracting both male and female working-class membership.

This was almost certainly due to Dare's attitude and hard work, for although the tone of his Reports tended at times to be patronising, it is apparent that he genuinely believed in education for the working class. This was not only for the good of society in general, but especially for the benefit of the poor. Nevertheless he was only too aware that 'scarcely any of our efforts influence the lowest classes'.

Dare's Reports which are extant from 1846-1869, and from 1872-1877, reveal that although the organisation of practical aid for the poor accounted for much of his time, he considered that education was the only long-term solution to their social and physical problems. He recommended that money from the rates should be spent on education to save expenditure on poor relief at a later date. He also considered that Sunday schools which disapproved of the teaching of secular subjects on the Sabbath should open their school rooms on weekday-evenings for mutual instruction societies, and as reading rooms, for 'the Lyceum must put down the taproom'. He suggested also that employers should insist on their unmarried male employees attending classes.

The First Annual Report (1846) records the decision to inaugurate an Instruction Society. Following his visits to several families he found that 'most of the failings of the poor arise from the want of education, and that from necessity', as

'scarcely two in ten of the working hands could both read and write. Work at times ... is so scarce, and wages so low that men cannot look to their learning'.

The committee therefore

'fitted up an excellent room in All Saints Open for Educational purposes. A Sewing School, an Adult Class, for men, a Boys' and Girls' Class - on separate

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Cooperation and Socialism: Leicester Working-class politics, 1860-1906 (Leicester, 1987); Patterson, Radical Leicester.

evenings, a Reading Room, Library and Sunday School have been established ... with various but decided success'.

The men's class opened in February 1845 with 11 members, but soon grew to an average of between 40-60 with an age range of 18 to 'grey hairs'. Classes were held in reading, writing and arithmetic, geography, and the arts and sciences. The main problem was found to be irregular attendance which was caused by sickness, fluctuation in the availability of work, exhaustion, and frequent house moves. As the education of many of the men had been 'wholly neglected', the instruction needed to be of a 'humble character'. A library was established, and a reading room, in which a discussion class was held based on the principle of mutual instruction. The reading room was open free of charge on Saturday evenings from 7-10.30 pm, although Dare eventually considered that to increase its use it needed to be open every evening and dinner time, for 'many by self-culture have been improved'.

By 1846, the men's class - which was always well-attended - had between 60-70 members. Fortnightly lectures were inaugurated, which included some on scientific subjects.

Nevertheless scarcity of employment, expensive food, and severe weather during the winter of 1847-8, caused 'exhaustion and privation', and a 'visible effect on attendance' (50-60 attended on average in the winter, half that number in the summer). The female and girls' class also proved to be popular, and attracted an average attendance of between 100-150 with an age-range of 8-40 (even in the summer 'except on the hottest days'). In 1847 a female adult class was established, as some women were embarrassed at their ignorance in front of the 'little ones'. This was continually well-attended, and in addition to the 3 Rs, mental arithmetic, dictation and geography were taught.

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131 L.D.M.A.R. (1847), pp. 13,18; (1848), 16; (1849), 12; (1855), p. 16; (1856), p. 9.
Dare recorded that an improvement in the economic situation from 1848-50 resulted in increased attendance at the men's class. Although he lamented their 'deficiency', and lack of the 'merest rudiments of knowledge', he found that they 'exhibited earnestness'. As the availability of work increased all classes were forced to begin at the later time of 8 pm. to enable both male and female workers to attend. Although employment was more unsettled during the years 1850-58 (with the exception of 1853 a year of 'unusual prosperity'), and many experienced difficulty, attendance at the men's class did not decline, even in the winter of 1857-8 when 'an unusual number of people were begging'. In the female class several girls learned to read and write, motivated by forthcoming marriage, or by the desire to write to brothers in the army, or 'friends at war', but many were easily discouraged, and left after two or three attendance. In all the classes a shortage of teachers proved to be a problem, and Dare commented in 1854 that 'scarcely any working men, who had been improved in the Mission, came forward to assist in teaching their less instructed fellows'.

The Report of 1859 noted that work was abundant, and that there was a better feeling between employers and work people, although there was still a need to 'cultivate a taste ... for rational amusements'. Dare considered that factory workers were better fed, clothed and educated, and that regular hours left more time for instruction. Although the availability of work affected attendance in the women's class, members of the men's class found time to help in the 'juvenile branches'. Between 1860 and 1861 employment again became unstable because of the situation in Europe and America, and many lost interest in the classes, although one member of the men's class taught others to read as they were 'too ashamed to join the regular reading

132 L.D.M.A.R. (1849), pp. 1, 9; (1850), p. 12; In his Report of 1851 he noted that a great number of adults could not write, and that landlords and shopkeepers filled in forms on their behalf.

133 L.D.M.A.R. (1850), pp. 6, 8.

134 L.D.M.A.R. (1853), p. 7; (1858), pp. 5-6, 11.


137 L.D.M.A.R. (1859), pp. 6, 11, 14, 26. Dare recorded that out of 50 members of the women's class, only 25 had attended day school.
class'. Indeed many of the men were not considered intelligent enough to attend the reading room and discussion classes. In the women's class many could read imperfectly, and others were learning to write on a slate.\textsuperscript{138}

From 1862 onwards the Reports recorded an improvement in the material prosperity of the town which was attributed to the influx of new trades. By 1869 'Leicester's lean stockinger' had disappeared, and opportunities for well-paid female labour had increased. Dare questioned however whether there was a similar moral and social improvement.\textsuperscript{139} The Report of 1853 recorded an improvement in the 'reading taste of the masses', and a decline in the sale of 'licentious tales', but by 1865 the library was considered to be 'abused rather than used'. In 1874 the reading room was used only by members of the music and discussion classes, and in 'the opinion of a large bookseller ... the mental condition is very low'.\textsuperscript{140} However, classes at the Mission were generally well-attended, as were the social events which were organised to counteract other working-class leisure activities. These included annual rambles, literary and musical entertainments or "Penny Readings" as they are called', and tea meetings with recitations and music.\textsuperscript{141}

During the eighteen-sixties and seventies many more establishments catered for the education, and 'rational amusement' of the adult working class. These were all welcomed by Dare in his Reports. He particularly appreciated the proliferation of free evening classes in 1869, and the service provided by the Free Library which was opened in 1870.\textsuperscript{142} Although facilities

\textsuperscript{139} L.D.M.A.R. (1862), p. 4; (1863), p. 4; (1869), p. 4; (1875), p. 10; He attributed the irregular attendance at the women's class to a preference for the 'liquor vaults' (1873), p. 17.
\textsuperscript{142} L.D.M.A.R. (1864), pp. 6-7, 17. He recorded lectures at the museum, penny readings and music at the Mechanics' Institute, St Martin's Working Men's reading room and discussion class, and literary and musical entertainments at the Temperance Hall; (1866). On page 6 he noted the foundation of the Leicester Working Men's Club, and on page 12 he commented on the opening of the Friend's new school room in Soar Lane; (1869), p. 6. Dare reported on the opening of several free evening institutes; (1873), pp. 11-13.
for education and recreation had been provided by the Mission, and were now being provided by many other religious bodies, it was apparent that many members of the working class remained unaffected by all these efforts, and indeed preferred their own forms of leisure activities. It is almost certain that many working-class men and women appreciated the opportunities to become literate, and the recreational facilities which the Mission provided in the small area of Leicester in which it operated between 1846 and 1877. Although by 1849 there were three other domestic missionaries, Dare was the only one to organise educational and recreational facilities. If this service had been provided in other parts of the town then adult illiteracy in Leicester might have declined more quickly.

A MISCELLANY OF SOCIETIES, INSTITUTES, AND ASSOCIATIONS

While some discussion groups and mutual improvement societies are well-documented, there are only fleeting references to others, and many have probably been lost without trace. In 1854 there was evidence of a mutual improvement society at the Congregational Sunday school in Gallowtree Gate, and White's Directory of 1877 reported another at St Andrew's in 1864. This had 50 members who met during the winter 'for the discussion of topics of public interest', and there was also a large library. There was a similar though smaller one at St Stephen's. St Martin's Young Men's Institute met in the Wycliffe Rooms in 1853-4 for lectures, and classes in singing, algebra, and Euclid. Because records are so slight it is impossible to be certain of the social background of the members of these institutes, but it can be assumed that at least some were working-class. It is apparent that these societies were initiated by religious organisations, and other associations, and institutes were similarly founded during the eighteen-fifties and sixties.
to provide religious and secular instruction, and recreational activities, but again it is almost
impossible to determine the social structure of their members.

The Leicester Temperance Society was established in 1836, and in 1853 a Temperance
Hall was built. This comprised an assembly room, a lecture hall, committee rooms, a library
which contained 3000 volumes, and a news room. It was also let for public lectures and
concerts, and other 'rational amusements'. However by 1862 the library and newsroom were in
financial difficulties, and Thomas Cook (who was instrumental in building the Hall which is
depicted in Plate 6) called a meeting of friends and subscribers with a view to discontinuing the
newsroom.

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Plate 6: Temperance Hall, Granby Street, Leicester, 1853.

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150 Elliot, Victorian Leicester, plate 12.
The Young Men's Christian Association was established in 1855

'to promote the religious, moral, and intellectual improvement of young men, by means of devotional meetings, biblical and other classes of instruction, the delivery of lectures, and the establishment of a reading room, and a properly-selected library'.

The rooms in St Martin's were open from 8 am. to 10 pm. each day - except Sunday - where 'classes for essays and discussion, drawing, writing, bookkeeping, arithmetic, grammar, composition, and elocution are well-attended'. The first Annual Report (1857) stated that meetings were to be for 'mutual edification and encouragement', and that the 350 members were 'united together for self-improvement, and for benefitting those around them'. It was specifically intended for the young men in the town 'whose early education had been neglected'. As well as classes and lectures on secular subjects, there were also devotional meetings, a Bible class, and tract society. As with all the societies seeking to promote education, the Report ended with an appeal for more members, and financial help. The Association still held classes for 'intellectual improvement', organised lectures, and had a free reading room in 1877.

The Young Women's Christian Association was established in 1857 in Hotel Street. 'Its objects and results are similar to those of the Young Men's Association, with the addition of singing and sewing classes'. At the second annual meeting it was stated that classes had been held in Bible study, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and sewing, and that the aims were to bring young women under Christian influence, but not to interfere with attendance at other classes in the town. The Rev. Barker considered that although women had been neglected, it was

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152 Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 47, First Annual Report of the Young Men's Christian Association for the Promotion of the Spiritual Welfare of Young Men (1857); see also L.C. 12.1.1856, 7.11.1857, 13.3.1858, 8.10.1859. Here the Second Annual Report was recorded and it was noted that John Ellis was in the chair. 15.10.1864 reported that classes were held 'for a trifling charge'.
154 White, Directory (1862), p. 188.
not the intention to emulate the belief in the rights of women as expressed by 'our American cousins', but to acknowledge the right to share in 'a moral and intellectual culture'.

In 1859 the Leicester Journal reported on the Church of England Institute's first annual meeting 'since the adoption of its new title'. The Institute which was accommodated in Loseby Lane had a library, reading room, and rooms where classes of 'instruction of a practical nature' were held, and although these were well attended, there were no lectures during the first year. It aimed to 'provide sound mental and moral instruction ... and healthy social relaxation for the younger branches of the community'. 'As an additional stimulus to self-improvement', the Institute became associated with the Society of Arts. Those who were either members or had attended for three months previously, were eligible to take examinations in May, and to receive certificates if successful. The committee considered that the Institute could not fail to be successful, as it aimed to impart 'useful and permanent knowledge'. This Institute was still in existence in 1863 to aid 'the religious, moral and intellectual improvement of its members', who paid 21s. per annum or 10s. for the junior rate, and non-members who paid 2s per quarter for classes and lectures. It was also the intention to open 'free reading rooms for the operative classes, in various parts of the town'. Although it was still offering evening classes in 1864, it was not mentioned by White in the 1877 Directory.

All of these miscellaneous institutes and societies would have catered for only a minority of the adult working class, and most probably (as in the Mechanics' Institute) many of their members would have been lower middle-class. The moral and religious aspect was stressed rather than the educational, and it was apparent that education was seen as a means to an end rather than as the main reason for the existence of these societies. It was not until the eighteen-sixties

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155 LJC, 8.10.1859.
156 LJ, 14.1.1859.
that education became the prime reason for the establishment of institutes, although there was still an overtone of moral and religious improvement. Indeed religion was central to the lives of the majority of the middle-class philanthropists who instigated educational establishments which included adult schools, the Working Men's College, and the Royce Institute.

THE ROYCE INSTITUTE

The Royce Institute was inspired by the desire to improve the lives of working-class men, but women were totally excluded. It was developed under the auspices of Miss Mary Royce (later to become Dr Royce), who in 1868 was invited to open a Sunday school by the Rev. Picton, the minister of the Gallowtree Gate Chapel. It was held in a former stockinger's shop in the Sanvey Gate district of Leicester which was an area of back-back housing, where as children the men had worked long hours from an early age assisting frame-work knitters. She soon began evening classes for these men who had little chance of education, and taught reading, writing and arithmetic, the 'elementary rudiments of science', French, and singing. Indeed 'many of the older members have to thank Miss Royce for what education they now possess'. She desired also that her pupils should 'lead pure lives' and thus bring 'others into the fold of Christian Brotherhood'.

The Institute eventually moved to Sanvey Gate Mission Hall, where the new minister insisted that members must attend the mission. Rather than jeopardise her class by forcing the men to go, she moved to Slater Street Board school where the class numbered between 25-30 members.

One member stated:

'It was to me a puzzle why a lady of her social sanding and education should condescend to come up these courts and into these vile dens to look after young fellows like me'.

158 L.C., 22.10.1864.
159 E. Smith, A Short History of the Royce Institute, together with a Biographical Sketch of Dr Mary Royce (Leicester, undated), pp. 3-5; F.J. Wardle, The Founder; being a brief story of the life of Dr Mary Royce, Founder of the Royce Institute, South Church Gate, Leicester (Leicester, 1970).
160 Smith, Short History of the Royce Institute, p. 17. Miss Royce became a G.P. and was elected to the Leicester
Premises were later acquired in Church Gate where numbers increased. A mutual instruction class was commenced, and the billiard room was eventually replaced with a library and reading room, for although Dr Royce recognised the value of recreational activities, she considered that they were being abused. Card games were also banned to remove the temptation of gambling from the class, and although the men were not required to be teetotal, drinking was not allowed on the premises, nor smoking in the chapel.\textsuperscript{161} The Rules reflected her desire for the men (only adult males were allowed to be members) to meet in a spirit of Christian brotherhood. 'The object of the Institute was the improvement in the spiritual, mental, and social condition of mankind', and thus social intercourse, discussion and educational activities were all encouraged.\textsuperscript{162}

The Institute was described by Mary Royce's uncle as a mutual improvement society, where members were 'bound together for mutual advice, mutual instruction, and mutual help'.\textsuperscript{163} It was thus apparent that Dr Royce supplied a need for education in a caring environment for a small district in Leicester, as did Joseph Dare. Both were motivated by religious principles, but could only serve a limited area. Nevertheless their work must have made some contribution to the decline in illiteracy in the borough.

**THE WORKING MENS' COLLEGE AND INSTITUTE\textsuperscript{164}**

Prior to his appointment as vicar of St Martin's, the Rev. David Vaughan had made the acquaintance of Denison Maurice. He was impressed by the latter's establishment of a Working Men's College in London because of its underlying philosophy of Christian Socialism, and its ideals of a free brotherhood. Similarly, the Leicester Institute was inaugurated in response to Vaughan's Christian ideals, and his faith in the brotherhood of men. Vaughan exhibited a genuine concern for his students, and was anxious to ensure that at all times they felt that they

\textsuperscript{161} Smith, *Short History of the Royce Institute*, pp. 24-109.
\textsuperscript{162} Leics. C.R.O., L374, Rules of the Royce Institute.
\textsuperscript{163} Appelbee, *Glimpses Back*, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{164} For a full account of the history and development of the College see A.J. Allaway, *Vaughan College Leicester*. 

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were valued members of the Institute/College. He considered that education would help to alleviate their social problems, and as well as providing elementary classes in a determined effort to reduce illiteracy, he also believed in the value of educating the whole man.165

The College in Leicester originated from an evening school for men and boys which was founded at St Martin’s school, Friar Lane in 1860, by the Rev. Atkins (headmaster of the school), and the Rev. Vaughan. This was frequented by men whose early education had been non-existent or irregular, but who wished to rectify this. Atkins recalled the 'general lamentable ignorance of [these] men', who typified the educational condition of working men in Leicester, for the majority needed elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic.166 Classes in physics, chemistry, bookkeeping and mechanics were later offered after a science school - the first of its kind in Leicester - was established by the Rev. Atkins, to cater for those who had reached a minimum standard in elementary subjects.167

In 1862 Vaughan decided to found a Working Men's Institute specifically for working-class men who were embarrassed at having to attend the same elementary classes as youths. He was also incited by the negative attitude to Maurice's College which was exhibited by middle-class members of the Literary and Philosophical Society following a discussion of a paper on the subject.168 Weekly wage-earners were invited to attend a meeting called on 26 March 1862 (between 30-40 did so), where it was resolved to open a reading room and library for working men at the Union Street infant's school (see Plate 7), at a fee of 2d a week, or 6d a month. The inclusion of working men, and non-parishioners on the first committee reflected the fact that all

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165 L.D.M.A.R. (1864), p. 12. Vaughan was considered to be a 'liberal vicar' who gained the 'respect and affection of the more intelligent classes'. C.J. Bilson, Leicester Memoirs (Leicester, 1924), pp. 77-8.


167 The Government's Science and Art Department established a system in 1859 whereby science schools could be founded by any person who passed the Department's examination. The Rev. Atkins was an approved science teacher, and was thus entitled to receive a grant dependant on the success of his students.

168 L.C., 1.3.1862.
were welcome, and that it would be free from sectarianism. Eventually the library and reading room together with the classes at Friar Lane were to be known as the Working Men's Institute with Library, Reading Room, and Classes. The reading room was opened immediately, but the attempt to hold classes at Union Street was initially unsuccessful because of the reluctance of the men to transfer from Friar Lane. As was the case with the Mechanics' Institute, classes, and reading room and library were thus in separate buildings. Classes were held in reading, writing, book keeping, mensuration, English grammar, history, geography, and drawing, for which a fee of 1d a night or 2d weekly was charged, which included free entry to the reading room. Classes were finally established at Union Street in 1865, and included shorthand, and Bible study as well as a successful discussion class, and a series of lectures, and at the annual meeting in 1867 it was reported that members and the number of classes had increased. In 1868 the name of the Institute was changed to the Working Men's College and Institute, to reflect the aim that 'in a humble, yet earnest endeavour [it might] improve and elevate the working classes of the town, intellectually and morally'. Vaughan became the first president of the College (and remained so for the next 36 years), and instigated the motto 'Sirs, ye are brethren' to encourage working men who might otherwise have been deterred by the title of College.

By 1870 classes included French, Italian, German, singing, English literature, as well as the science class which was held at St Martins. Although attendance was not always as regular as the committee would have wished, some students successfully sat examinations organised by the Society of Arts. The introduction of the above subjects could be seen to reflect a change in the social status of membership, but Vaughan always ensured that working men were made to feel welcome, and that a spirit of brotherly love and Christian self-sacrifice prevailed. The initial

170 L.C., 13.4.1867. Prizes had also been given for essays regarding the best means of elevating the working classes'.
171 Atkins, Vaughan College, pp. 50-1; Allaway, Vaughan College, pp. 4-6; L.D.M.A.R. (1869), p. 6 commended the fact that membership was not restricted to those residing in St Martin's parish.
aims of self-improvement, mutual improvement, and cooperation remained in order that the working class of the town might be elevated intellectually and morally. Additional accommodation was provided in 1871 at the Union Street building to cater for an increasing number of students, for by this date classes were held on every night of the week, with three sessions on Sunday, and catered for 600-650 students. This had been achieved without wealthy patrons but through a reliance on voluntary, often self-taught teachers.

Although women were welcome to attend social events, they were not welcome as students in the College for its emphasis was on the education of working men. Indeed a request in 1870 to allow female voices in the singing class was refused (not to be sanctioned until 1910).\textsuperscript{173} Despite the opening of a sewing class for women in 1869 in Union Street, it was not until 1880 that classes were opened in a separate women's department in the Friar Lane schools, which after a disappointing start became very successful. However, hopes that there might be a Working Women's College were never realised.\textsuperscript{174}

During the eighteen-seventies a wider variety of subjects was introduced for students who had already benefitted from an elementary education, and the College successfully applied to be recognised as an organised science school by the Science and Art Department, and thus became eligible for grant aid. However, a series of lectures introduced in 1873-4 in connection with the University Extension Lecture Society were not successful.\textsuperscript{175} By 1877 the College was endeavouring to extend itself upwards socially by introducing courses for 'young men engaged in business', and thus it became increasingly necessary to engage certificated paid teachers. As the hosiery and boot and shoe industries became more mechanised, the number of vocational

\textsuperscript{172} L.C., 9.4.1870. A report on the annual meeting. 
\textsuperscript{173} Atkins, \textit{ Vaughan College}, pp. 52-61; Allaway, \textit{ Vaughan College}, pp. 6-19; \textit{The Leicester Vaughan Working Men's College}, p. 3. 
\textsuperscript{174} Allaway, \textit{ Vaughan College}, pp. 17, 27-8. 
\textsuperscript{175} L.C., 21.6.1873.
Plate 7: Leicester Working Men's College and Institute, Union Street Building, 1862-1908.  

Allaway, Vaughan College, p. 4 (facing).
courses in technical subjects increased, indeed subsequent to the opening of the Technical School in 1884 special classes were established to prepare students for entry. Nevertheless the ethos of the College was still biased towards improving working-class conditions by making men happier and more intelligent, rather than providing technical education.

Although from the eighteen-sixties the College made an important contribution to the education of working-class men, the women's department was not opened until 1880, and even then the subjects offered were designed to reinforce the status of women in their role as wife and mother, and not necessarily to further their educational development. Despite this Vaughan had achieved his initial objectives regarding the aim and function of the College, for it was intended to be 'no mere secular institution ... to give cheap instruction and useful knowledge, but quietly and unobtrusively to elevate, humanise, civilise, and Christianise all who could be induced to come under its influence', and to engender a 'kindly human brotherly feeling'. That he had succeeded in this is evident in a letter from a student, which was printed in the Wyvern in 1899.

'A few short desultory periods of school life were all that came to me. ... I attained the age when I began to know how ignorant I was, and felt a thirst for information. ... One of my acquaintances invited me to go with him to some rooms in Union Street on a Sunday afternoon. ... The teachers were mostly working men, better instructed than their fellows, and generously helped us recruits ... the real soul of the organisation ... is dependent on the spirit of self-sacrifice of the students for each other.'

The contribution to male working-class education made by the College is also apparent in the autobiography of Tom Barclay (1852-1933), whose only formal education had been provided by a Sunday school. His mother taught him to read although she could not sign her own name, and once he had learned to read he was anxious to educate himself. In 1875 he obtained a Society of

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177 Allaway, Vaughan College pp. 23-6. Atkins left the College to take charge of the Technical School which was accommodated in a wing of Wyggeston School.
179 Purvis, Hard Lessons, pp. 161-234 discusses the 'struggle to gain admittance to these male-orientated institutions and to obtain an education'.
180 The Vaughan Working Men's College; Allaway, Vaughan College, pp. 32-5.
Arts certificate for English language, made possible by his attendance at classes at the Working Men's College, and he continued his education there. His eventual interest in socialism led him to become a speaker at the Leicester Secular society. He denounced members of his class who did not seek to better themselves, and could not understand their indifference, and sometimes even contempt for education.

ADULT SCHOOLS

Although adult schools had been established in many towns during the first half of the nineteenth century, the first in Leicester (apart from the Chartist adult school) was founded by the Society of Friends in 1861. It was initially accommodated in a small room in Sanvey Gate, but in 1864 moved to Soar Lane, adjoining the Friend's Meeting House. By 1866 there were 105 members on the register who paid 1d for each evening attended, (the average attendance was 71), and by 1870 membership had risen to 210. In 1870 a school in Sanvey Gate was founded by the Rev. J. Whitton (a Congregationalist minister), who wished to improve working-class conditions. This was followed by the opening of a school in 1874 - for 14 men all eager to learn - which was held in the laundry of Belgrave Hall (the home of the Ellis family who were Quakers). By 1877 membership had increased to 60 and the school moved to premises in Bath Lane - an infant school also owned by the Ellis family.
Other schools were established during the eighteen-seventies and eighties, which in common with those in other towns appeared to have developed from or alongside those initially established as evening schools for children.\(^{188}\) Classes were usually held on Sunday mornings - the only free day for most workers - and were generally taught by middle-class teachers who fortunately appreciated the need to include the teaching of writing even though it was the Sabbath. The schools aimed to provide a 'common ground ... free from secularism, class prejudice and party bias' where 'men were wedded together in a comradeship of service', and it was claimed that membership resulted in drunkards giving up drink, and gamblers burning their betting books. Despite being considered 'a foolish and godless experiment' by their critics, they continued to grow.\(^{189}\) Initially the schools concentrated on elementary instruction in reading and writing together with dictation, history, geography, science, Bible reading and discussion, but as elementary education became more accessible following the 1870 Education Act they had to cater for better-educated artisans, and thus extended their range of educational and recreative activities.\(^{190}\)

**EVENING SCHOOLS**

'Evening schools for the labouring classes are now universally acknowledged to be of immense advantage, and should be established in every village as well as county town ... to provide for the leisure hours of working men and boys to prevent their resorting to beer shops'.\(^{191}\)

Evening classes were initially established in schools and Sunday schools to cater for the older children 'of the neglected classes', although many adults also took advantage of the opportunity to become literate.\(^{192}\) The 1851 Census recorded that there were 20 evening schools for adults in

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\(^{190}\) Rowntree and Binns, *History of the Adult School Movement*, pp. 54-6, 67-76; M.E. Sadler, *Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere* (Manchester, 1908).

\(^{191}\) *L.C.*, 8.3.1861. It was suggested if the vicar taught at the evening schools then he could also encourage attendance at places of worship.

\(^{192}\) *L.C.*, 15.10.1864, 22.10.1864, mentioned classes for 'a trifling sum' for 'adults of both sexes' at St. George's and
Leicestershire, and of these 14 were also used as day schools. They were attended by 327 male, and 457 female students, who paid between 1d and 3d a week for classes, which included reading, writing, arithmetic, singing and religious knowledge. Of the known occupations of the students, 107 were employed in domestic service, 164 were labourers, 91 were factory hands, and 232 were artisans. From 1851 evening schools could apply for a government grant, but in 1871 the regulations concerning grant aid altered, and no student over 18 was eligible (21 after 1876). From 1851 evening schools could apply for a government grant, but in 1871 the regulations concerning grant aid altered, and no student over 18 was eligible (21 after 1876).  

In his Annual Report of 1869, Dare noted that free evening instruction was offered 'in several places under the kindly co-operation of various denominations', and that 'many day schools had opened in the evening for instruction in the sciences and higher elementary branches'. In 1870 The Leicester Chronicle also praised the foundation of free evening classes, and commented that they were 'doing a benevolent and useful work for Leicester', for although many people still could not read or write, they were anxious to acquire these skills. It was noted that the 700 scholars who attended had an age range of 7-30, that the average attendance was 500, and that the young women were making good progress. Despite the fact that premises were usually provided rent-free by various denominations, donations and subscriptions were requested in order that books and desks could be bought, and an appeal was made for more teachers. In 1871 the committee responsible for free evening classes reported that numbers had risen to 1000 with an average attendance of 600. Three-quarters of the students were over 13, and consequently evening classes were their only means of obtaining even

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193 H. Mann (ed.), The Census of Great Britain in 1851 (1854), pp. 144-49. No distinction was made between older children and adults in these returns.
195 L.D.M.A.R. (1869), p. 6. A return by Rev. Whitton listed the following classes: Sanvey Gate, 236 boys and 166 girls, Carley Street, 103 boys, 111 girls, Paradise Row, 51 boys. The average attendance was 356 in November 1868, but this had doubled by 1869.
196 L.C., 8.1.1870, 5.2.1870, 26.2.1870; L.L., 3.2.1871; L.D.M.A.R. (1869), p. 6. Dare noted that in November 1868 Sanvey Gate had 236 boys and 166 girls, Carley Street had 103 boys and 114 girls, and Paradise Row had 51 boys.
rudimentary education. The classes, which were mainly in reading and writing with a little arithmetic, were conducted on non-sectarian principles. Fears that support would die following the initial enthusiasm were unfounded, and acknowledgement was made for the liberal contributions received.\textsuperscript{197}

The Leicester School Board in 1874, established evening schools on the premises of two of its day schools, to cater for the demand from adults, and from children who were beyond the regulation age, who had realised that they would be disadvantaged by their illiteracy. Reading, writing and arithmetic were taught, with the addition of drawing, history and geography if required. The fees were 1d a night or 2d for three nights.\textsuperscript{198} In a printed report attached to the Minutes of 1875-8 it was stated that for three years there had been increased success in the three centres now established, and that 157 men and boys over 13 had attended.\textsuperscript{199} Despite opposition from some members of the Board, schools were also let privately - for example the Elbow Lane school was used as a science school - but all costs had to be met by the teachers.\textsuperscript{200} In 1877 the School Management Committee proposed that evening classes should also be held for women and girls, and these were established at the Belgrave Road school, and in 1878 at Oxford Street.\textsuperscript{201} Restrictions on government grant aid for adult students did not initially appear to deter the Leicester School Board who were aware that many students were over eighteen.\textsuperscript{202} However, after the receipt of a copy of a memo from the Birmingham School Board to the Education Department, requesting an increase in the number of permissible subjects for grant aid, the Leicester School Board made a similar request.\textsuperscript{203}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{197}] Leics. C.R.O., 19D59/VI/2, Leicester School Board Minute Books (L.S.B.M.B.) (1873-5), 7.9.1874; Leics. C.R.O., 19D59/VI/3, L.S.B.M.B. (1875-8), on 4.5.1874. It was proposed that four schools should be opened, but this was not done until 1875, 27.9.1875, 4.10.1875.
\item[\textsuperscript{198}] Leics. C.R.O., 19D59/VI/3, L.S.B.M.B. (1875-8).\textsuperscript{327}
\item[\textsuperscript{199}] Leics. C.R.O., 19D59/VI/3, L.S.B.M.B. 4.10.1875.
\item[\textsuperscript{201}] Leics. C.R.O., 19D59/VI/12, L.S.B.M.B. Management Committee (1875-80), 4.4.1875. The report from Slater Street School recorded 134 students under 18 and 37 over.
\item[\textsuperscript{202}] Leics. C.R.O., 19D59/VI/ 4, L.S.B.M.B., 24.3.1879. Grants were only given for instruction in reading, writing
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
III - TECHNICAL EDUCATION

THE SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN

An indifferent attitude towards technical education, and a shortsighted approach to industrial developments contributed to the comparatively late provision of a School of Art and Design in Leicester. The desirability of establishing such a school was supported by the local press following a lecture in 1848, and at a public meeting in 1849 it was considered that not only would it contribute to intellectual improvement, and help to elevate taste, but that trade might be increased by the introduction of new patterns and techniques.\(^{204}\) Although a School of Design was affiliated to the Leicester Mechanics' Institute in 1854, only classes in drawing were available, and we have seen that by 1858 all classes had ceased at the Institute. In March 1862 J. Hammersley stated that fifteen years previously he had spoken in Leicester on the desirability of establishing a School of Design in the town, and subscriptions had been promised, but the School had not materialised. Indeed he had heard it said that there was 'little room for the display of decorative skills in the manufacture of hosiery - the staple trade of your town; therefore a School of Art would be out of place'. He considered that despite this, it would benefit other trades, and stated that he would like to see artisans among the pupils.\(^{205}\)

The School of Art was finally opened in March 1870 (financed by private donations and subscriptions), after it was agreed that even if art education was not needed for the staple manufactures of Leicester, it would be of use to other trades, and would raise the standard of

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\(^{204}\) LC*, 24.5.1845, 16.10.1847, 18.3.1848, 6.1.1849, 13.1. 1849; LM*, 11.3.1848, 10.2.1849. A memorial was presented to the Board of Trade requesting a School of Design for Leicester signed among others by the hosiers John and William Biggs and N. Corah and Sons, Samuel Stone, Isaac Hodgson, Thomas Paget, and William Flint an architect.

\(^{205}\) LJ*, 14.3.1862.
industrial and commercial design. Morning classes were available 'for both sexes', afternoon classes were for 'teachers and pupils at private schools', and evening classes were held 'for artisans'. During the first year 98 evening students attended out of a total of 179. In a letter to the editor of the Leicester Chronicle in 1870 it was suggested that manufacturers should send their apprentices to the evening classes, and contribute towards their attendance, in order to 'elevate the tastes of the people'. It was also emphasised that trade depended on technical education, and that manufacturers should therefore encourage this. Students were successfully entered for Science and Art Department examinations, and hence the School was eligible to receive grants, for although the Town Council contributed to its new accommodation in 1877, it did not otherwise provide financial assistance until after the passing of the Technical Instruction Act in 1889.

SCIENCE SCHOOLS

Instruction in elementary skills to combat illiteracy was therefore not the only form of education available for working-class adults. Indeed the Leicester Mechanics' Institute had attempted to provide instruction 'in the various branches of science and other general and useful knowledge'. Nevertheless by 1856 interest in most classes had declined, and examinations organised by the Society of Arts to enable artisans to gain formal qualifications could not take place there. However in 1859 the Department of Art and Science inaugurated a system whereby teachers approved by the Department could establish science schools, and from 1861 receive a grant for each pupil who achieved success in their examinations. As has previously been noted a science school was founded at the Friar Lane evening school by the Revs Atkins and Vaughan, which was later transferred to the Working Men's College. Science classes were also held at the

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206 L.C., 17.4.1870.
207 Leicester Trade Protection Society, Street, Alphabetical and Trade Directory (1870), p. 9; L.C., 15.1.1870, 26.2.1870.
208 L.C., 26.2.1870.
museum, and were established at St Margaret's National school in 1868, at the Great Meeting
British school, and Belgrave National school in 1870, and at St George's National school in 1871.
However from 1868-1872 the number of students attending classes did not exceed 200 in any
one year, and this figure included children.  

At a meeting of the Leicester School Board in 1878 it was debated whether 'progress in
elementary education had removed the necessity for old-fashioned night schools', and it was
decided that night schools of a different character were required. The science schools that had
previously been established to enable artisans to acquire a theoretical knowledge of science were
felt to be too advanced, and in addition did not offer the techniques necessary for specific trades,
for classes of a more practical nature were preferred by the artisans. Hence, a trade school was
suggested as a bridge between night schools and science classes, to enable the 'working men of
Leicester to become better artisans', and the school management committee was empowered to
take steps to open one at the Oxford Street school. Following the Industrial Exhibition in Paris
in 1867 national interest in science and technological education had increased, for it was felt that
if Britain was to continue to be competitive as a manufacturing nation, then it was necessary to
provide instruction in these subjects. Indeed in the second half of the century the connection
between relatively poor education and England's economic superiority came increasingly into
question, and remains a subject for considerable debate. In Leicester however, there had been
little demand for technical education from either manufacturers or trade unions, possibly because
of the domestic basis of the staple trades - together with their fluctuating economic stability - and

211 Committee of the Council on Education, Reports of the Science and Art Department, 18 (1869), 19 (1870), 20
(1871).
212 B.T. Hall, Our Sixty Years (1822), p. 16, commented that at a conference on technical education organised by the
Working Men's Club and Institute Union at Birmingham in 1868, dissatisfaction with the theoretical nature of
science school classes was evident.
213 The argument is summarised by D.N. McCloskey, 'Why did Victorian Britain Fail?', Economic History Review,
23 (1970), pp. 446-59; C.M. Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West (Harmondsworth, 1969), pp. 62-
99; D.L. McClelland, 'Does education accelerate economic growth?' Economic Development and Cultural
Floud & D. McCloskey (eds), The Economic History of Britain Since 1700 (3 vols), 1: 1700-1860 (Cambridge,
also because small family firms, not large factories, were the dominant unit of manufacture. This lack of interest was still apparent in that the cooperation and financial assistance considered necessary for the success of the trade school did not materialise, as it appeared only to run for one term.214

Indeed it was not until 1881 that action was taken to make substantial provision for technical education in Leicester, when the subject was raised by the secretary of the Leicester Chamber of Commerce - W.T. Rowlett, who was a Unitarian hosiery manufacturer. A committee was appointed in 1882 to liaise with the governors of Wyggeston school (who were already offering continuation classes in science), the purpose of which was to found a technical school in Leicester.215 Members of the Chamber of Commerce considered that Leicester was lagging behind other manufacturing towns in providing such a school, and the threat to the hosiery trade in Leicester from foreign manufacturers - particularly the German glove trade - necessitated its establishment.216 A new technical wing was thus added to the Wyggeston School at a cost £4,300. An amount of £2,200 was provided by the Wyggeston School Foundation, grants from the Science and Art Department, and the London City and Guilds, and the remaining £2,100 was raised by private subscriptions, together with a donation from the family of E.S. Ellis after whom the wing was named.217 Its opening in 1884 coincided with the report of the Royal Commission on Technical Education (the Samuelson Report).218

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217 M. Seaborne, 'Education in the nineties: the work of the technical education committees', in B. Simon (ed.) Education in Leicestershire. 1540-1940 (Leicester, 1968), pp. 179-80; M. Elliott, Victorian Leicester (1979), p. 26, stated that the Ellis family were Quaker philanthropist. John, and his son and Edward Shipley Ellis were chairmen of the Midland Railway Company, and the latter was also chairman of the Waterworks Company, and the Board of Guardians.
218 J.S. Maclure, Educational Documents: England and Wales, 1816-1967 (1965, 1968 edn), pp. 121-7. See also pp. 106-11, The Report of the Royal Commission on Scientific Instruction and the Advancement of Science (The Devonshire Report); Seaborne, 'Education in the nineties' pp. 179-81. In 1888 the Technical Instruction Act empowered local authorities to finance technical education by raising a rate which was not to exceed 1d. This was followed in 1890 with the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act which allowed councils to use 'whisky money' to finance technical education.
Classes on the technology of hosiery were offered initially, and the sons of manufacturers were expected to attend during the day, and artisans in the evening, 'for as small a fee as possible'. Classes on the technology of footwear were soon added, and both courses included 'young working men quite of the operative class', although many still had difficulty in assimilating the subjects taught because of their inadequate elementary education.

Participation in various organisations, together with confidence gained in the many discussion groups that had been formed, gave members of the working class courage to express their opinions, and to request more opportunities for rational recreation. William Smeeton and Harry Davis in their prize essay recognised the importance of a library and museum to working-class improvement, and we shall see that demands for a free public library were instigated by a group of working men. Indeed such recreational and educational facilities were as much desired by members of the working class as by the middle class as a means to working-class improvement.

THE MUSEUM

Leicester was one of the first towns to have a museum following the Museums Act which empowered councils to raise 1/2d rate to finance them - although this was not due to the efforts of the council. The Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society which was established in 1835, and whose members consisted of 'gentlemen of the town', opened their museum to the public from 1842 on the introduction of a member. It was decided by the Museum Committee to present the museum to the town if suitable accommodation could be found. In 1847 the town council purchased the premises of the defunct Proprietary School, and on 19 June 1849 the

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220 L.C.C. Annual Report (1885), 29.4.1885.
222 An Act for encouraging the establishment of Museums in large towns, 8 & 9 Vic. (1846).
223 Wright, History, Gazetteer and Directory of Leicester (1846), p. 97; F.B. Lott, The Centenary Book of the
museum was formally opened.\textsuperscript{224} As well as having a permanent display of exhibits, free lectures were presented on Saturday evenings in the winter, which were sponsored by the Literary and Philosophical Society and were 'especially adapted for the working class'.\textsuperscript{225} Science classes were also held, and as these were taught in accordance with the Science and Art Department, students could be entered for examinations.\textsuperscript{226}

**THE FREE LIBRARY AND READING-ROOM**

Members of the various institutes and societies could use the libraries and reading rooms provided for a small fee, and some churches and chapels also had parochial, or circulating libraries for the use of their congregations and scholars.\textsuperscript{227} However the absence of a free library and reading room made self-education difficult for those who did not wish to belong to any of these institutions, or could not afford to do so. The cost of a subscription to the General News Room and Permanent Library, the Town Library, and numerous private circulating libraries, or purchasing through bookellers, was also beyond the means of the majority of the working class.\textsuperscript{228} Those who could afford to do so bought works published by the cheap press or purchased the 'more than 6000 copies of penny publications taken weekly in this town', a third of which were considered to be 'decidedly immoral', or patronised the penny newsrooms which

\textsuperscript{224} Lott, Centenary Book, pp. 35-40; R. Read, Modern Leicester: Jottings of Personal History and Research (Leicester, 1881), pp. 32-3.

\textsuperscript{225} Leics. C.R.O., Misc. 1042, Leaflet containing details of a course of scientific subjects (1876-7); Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 69, Report of the Committee on Science Classes held at the Town Museum (1877-8). None were too old or young to join, and no previous knowledge of science was needed.

\textsuperscript{226} Leics. C.R.O., Misc. 1042, Leaflet containing details of a course of scientific subjects (1876-7); Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 69, Report of the Committee on Science Classes held at the Town Museum (1877-8). None were too old or young to join, and no previous knowledge of science was needed.

\textsuperscript{227} Guide to Leicester (1843), pp. 9-14; Guide to Leicester (1849), pp. 10-12; White Directory (1877), p. 315; L.C. 7.1.1854 reported the formation of a 'cheap newsroom in the Temperance Hall ... based on broad unsectarian principles'.

\textsuperscript{228} Guide to Leicester (1849), pp. 1-2 of supplementary pages, states that members of the News-room paid 25s a year, and 21s for membership of the Permanent Library; and pp. 19-20; White, Directory (1846), pp. 95-7; White, Directory (1877), pp. 312-3, 315; White, Directory (1862), pp. 185-6, 188; T. Combe & Son, Leicester Directory (1827), pp. xxvii-xviii, 52; L.C. 19.11.1790, 2.9.1791; L.C. 23.1.1851; Leics. C.R.O., Pam. Vol. 9, F.S. Herne, History of the Town Library and Permanent Library, Leicester (Leicester, 1891).
could be seen 'in every street in Leicester'.229 Prior to 1870 the only free library was the one in the workhouse, and this facility was much appreciated.230

The desirability of having a free library was raised in the local press following the Public Libraries Acts of 1850 and 1855.231 However this was not seriously considered until 1862 after it had been brought to the council's notice by Alderman George Stevenson, by means of a Memorial which was instigated by Thomas Palmer, a frame-work knitter, and signed by 'working men and others, including ministers' (both churchmen and dissenters). A proposal was made in September 1862 that a free library should be established and financed by a 1/2d rate, and this was 'supported by gentlemen of all shades of political and religious opinion'.232 Despite this it became a contentious issue, and was hotly debated in the local press. One writer in support of a free library considered that Leicester should 'be mindful of the welfare of its poorer brethren', and another considered it important for the 'moral and intellectual improvement of the working class.233 Nevertheless concern was expressed (by F. Hewitt a newspaper and bookseller) concerning the use of money from the rates to finance it, and the committees of the Temperance Hall and Mechanics' Institute feared that it would adversely affect the use of their facilities. It was also suggested that the resolution had been hurried through without proper debate, but Stevenson - who was an ardent supporter of a free library - strongly denied this.234 The matter was finally resolved in 1869, when the Council acquired New Hall in Wellington Street, and the Mechanics' Institute on its demise donated its library to the council. This became the foundation of the news-room, and library which were opened to the public on 9 January, and Easter Monday 1871 respectively.235

230 LJ, 18.1.1856.
231 Public Libraries Acts, 13 & 14 Vic. c. 65 (1850); 18 & 19 Vic. c. 70; LJ, 18.4.1856.
233 LC, 1.2.1862; LJ, 3.10.1862.
235 Read, Modern Leicester, pp. 40-1, stated that the news-room had a 'private table for ladies'. L.D.M.A.R, (1873), pp. 11-13. Dare noted the 'volumes from the Free Library in so many working men's cottages'.
IV - CONCLUSION

The plethora of adult education in Leicester from 1833 until 1870 can largely be attributed to the domestic nature of the predominant industry - frame-work knitting - with its heavy reliance on child labour which left little time for elementary education. The resulting demand for and supply of adult education came from two main sources, one of which was the attempts at self-improvement by members of the working class, and the other was through the efforts of middle-class philanthropists - both Anglican and nonconformist - who not only believed that educated men made more responsible citizens and employees, but who also wished to make the working class aware of its own value. Indeed it has been suggested that from the end of Chartism in 1848, until 1870 the essential feature of philanthropic provision was a deepened sense of personal responsibility for collective welfare.236

A similar interest in adult education can be perceived in Nottingham. Here an Artisan Library was opened in 1824 - shares in which were taken up by 30 men who were prominent in charitable works. They also founded the Nottingham Scientific and Mechanical Society in 1871. In 1837 a Mechanics' Institute was established, followed in the eighteen-forties by Operatives' Libraries which were possibly connected with Chartism. By 1851 there were 8 adult schools, and numerous branches of the Working Men's Association which were attached to various churches. The People's Hall, People's College and Town and Country Social Guild also provided opportunities for adult education.237 Leicester can thus be favourably compared to Nottingham in its provision for adult education, and in common with other towns had a branch of the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., a Working Men's Club and Institute, a Co-operative Society, library and museum.

236 M.E. Sadler, Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere (Manchester, 1908), pp. 10-11.
It could be argued however that the numerous opportunities for adult education in Leicester were a counterpart to the lack of elementary education, particularly in the nonconformist sector, because Voluntaryist principles and the fragmented nature of dissent in Leicester resulted in the establishment of few nonconformist schools. In addition, adult education could be perceived to be cheaper, free of state control, and would not attract children from their work in the factories. However I do not believe this to be necessarily the case in Leicester, for in some instances the same philanthropists were responsible for providing educational facilities for both children and adults. This is particularly relevant to the middle-class congregation of the Unitarian Great Meeting many of whom were prominent members of the Liberal Council after 1835. They subscribed to both the British Great Meeting schools and to the Domestic Mission which catered for elementary and adult education in one of the poorest districts in Leicester. Also elementary education could not be considered to be a threat to child labour in the factories as there were so few of these in Leicester, and thus factory owners would not be attracted to adult provision in preference to elementary for financial motives. Indeed in some schools there was a surplus of places because children could not be spared from their work connected with frame-work knitting which was a domestic, not factory-based industry. Thus efforts were put into the development of Anglican and nonconformist Sunday schools as these provided many children with their only chance to become literate as Sunday was their only free day, and in addition it was hoped that this was a way of securing future congregations.

Moreover, adult education in Leicester should not be perceived as merely a cheap alternative to elementary education, for it was considered by many philanthropists to be a necessity if the poor moral and physical conditions of the working class were to be improved. This sentiment is particularly relevant in the case of Dr Mary Royce, who having established Sunday school classes at the Gallowtree Gate Congregational Chapel, started an evening class for frame-work knitters.
who had been deprived of the chance of elementary education. Although this establishment
eventually came to be known as the Royce Institute, it is evident that Dr Royce undertook classes
to meet a need and not for personal recognition. For similar reasons the Working Men's College
and Institute was founded by the Rev. David Vaughan, vicar of St Martin's, Leicester. This was
in response to his Christian ideals and his belief in the brotherhood of men. He too felt concern
for the physically and socially impoverished condition of the frame-work knitters, and believed
that this could be alleviated through education. Indeed he had 'an intense desire to promote
[working class] material and intellectual prosperity and progress', and was filled with compassion
for those who could not read or write. After his death in 1905, the College became known as
the Vaughan Working Men's College in honour of its founder.

Nevertheless, despite concerns expressed by middle-class philanthropists, it is apparent from
both middle, and working-class commentators that not all members of Leicester's working class
were interested in education during the years 1780 to 1870. Indeed Dare considered that the
'lowest classes' were scarcely touched by any attempts to influence them. Moreover prior to
the establishment of the Leicester Mechanics' Institute in 1833, those who wished to learn had
little chance of doing so. Although some attempts were made by members of the working class
to provide instruction, the majority of the educational facilities that were eventually established in
Leicester were mainly proposed and financed by middle-class Liberal reformers and
philanthropists. Education was seen by them not only as a way of reducing illiteracy, but as a
means to the social, moral and physical improvement of the lives of the working class.

Even though the Mechanics' Institute in Leicester was initially proposed by working men, it
was eventually inaugurated and controlled by middle-class members. The objectives were stated
to be 'the diffusion of general knowledge', and the provision of 'cheap instruction' in 'the

principles of the Arts [the members] practice, and in various branches of Science', and aimed to promote 'the moral and mental elevation of its members', but the sentiments expressed by the middle-class supporters were more concerned with 'fitting them for ... their social and moral obligations', as well as with 'the dissemination of knowledge'. However few of these aims were realised, for the Institute failed to attract working-class members socially or educationally. This factor together with inadequate elementary education, and political and class rivalry contributed to its eventual demise. Members of the working class were also instrumental in the establishment of classes at the Chartist adult school, Owenite Social Institute, Leicester Co-operative Society, and the Working Men's Club and Institute, but these institutions either failed to survive, or changed in character. The Chartist school closed because of harsh economic conditions in the eighteen-forties, as well as a change in political ideology, as did the Social Institute. The Working Men's Club turned into a venue for entertainment and political discussion, rather than a centre for the promotion of self-help, self-improvement and education as had been the intention of the founders. However the Leicester Co-operative Society continued to promote the intellectual advancement of its members through the principles of co-operation. The Secular Society also maintained an interest in education, and aimed to 'stimulate inquiry', promote instruction and to improve the 'condition of the working classes'.

Although the Mechanics' Institute attracted political, sectarian and class conflict during much of its existence, other educational establishments in Leicester appeared to have developed in an atmosphere relatively free from sectarian or political contention. Indeed Tory involvement in adult education appeared to be slight, as the most vociferous proponents were Liberal reformers many of whom were Unitarian. In addition many members of the working class saw education

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241 L.C., 25.11.1865, 27.4.1867.
242 Stephen, social Redemption, p. 35.
243 Gould, Leicester Secular Society, p. 14. However it was not firmly established until 1872.
as a means to political awareness, and hence reform. The attitude of middle-class reformers towards the working class could be construed as patronising, however the overall impression is one of genuine concern for its condition, while at the same time protecting their own class interests. They believed that through education not only would the working class become morally, physically and intellectually improved, but that by reducing illiteracy the danger of ignorance would be overcome. Thus members of both the middle and the working class hoped that much would be achieved through education.

Indeed the Domestic Mission, Royce Institute, Working Men’s College, Young Men’s and Young Women’s Christian Associations, together with church institutes and adult Sunday schools were all established by middle-class philanthropists out of genuine concern for the working class. Although these establishments were inaugurated by different religious denominations they were usually unsectarian, their main objective being to instruct and help rather than to proselytize (although this too would have been a consideration).

From 1840 both male and female illiteracy began to decline in Leicester, for although most of the emphasis on adult working-class education was on provision for men, women were also eager to learn. Some women joined classes at the Domestic Mission and others became members of the Mechanics' Institute where they could attend lectures and use the library, but were denied access to the reading-room. Separate classes were arranged in a different building, although they did not appear to have been offered a restricted curriculum. However, when women were eventually admitted to the Working Men’s College the courses offered there tended to reinforce their traditional role in society. In a similar way the Chartists considered the acquisition of knowledge important for women, but it was to enable them to instruct their children rather than for their own intellectual development.
With the advent of technical education in the eighteen-seventies, it was noted that the aim of the Working Man's College was not merely to provide technical education, but to make men happier and more intelligent, and to elevate the working class in the town.\(^{244}\) Indeed the need for a technically-trained workforce was considered to be of little relevance to Leicester before 1870. The School of Art and Design was not founded until 1870, as previously decorative skills were considered to be unnecessary for the hosiery trade.\(^{245}\) Moreover although science schools had been established during the eighteen-sixties, the Leicester School Board in 1878 considered that the theoretical content was too advanced for the artisans, and that they did not offer techniques necessary for specific trades. However, the trade school proposed by the Board as an alternative, failed to survive through lack of support from either trade unions or manufacturers, and it was not until 1884 that a Technical School was opened under the auspices of W. T. Rowlett, who was a hosiery manufacturer and chairman of the Leicester Chamber of Commerce.

It is apparent that prior to 1870 provision for adult working-class education in Leicester was largely reliant on the work and financial support of middle-class philanthropists and Liberal reformers, many of whom were Anglican or nonconformist clergy, men in the professions, and hosiery manufacturers - it was not until the eighteen-sixties that the boot and shoe, elastic web and engineering industries were developed in Leicester.\(^{246}\) The majority of manufacturers either failed to appreciate the need for a technically-educated workforce, or lacked the capital to provide large-scale financial backing, because of fluctuations in their trade. Despite this the domestic industries in Leicester continued to operate in an environment of illiteracy, and indeed the argument that literacy was a precondition for further industrialisation has been a subject of

\(^{244}\) Atkins, Vaughan College, p. 60.

\(^{245}\) L.C., 24.5.1845, 16.10.1847, 18.3.1848, 6.1.1849, 14.3.1862, 26.2.1870.

\(^{246}\) These included John and William Biggs, Robert Brewin, Thomas Stokes, and Joseph Whetstone. They were mainly involved with the Mechanics' Institute, and the School of Design, although as Unitarians they also formed part of the Congregation of the Great Meeting which promoted the Leicester Domestic Mission. W.T. Rowlett who raised the need for a Technical school in 1881 was also a Unitarian hosier.
extensive discussion.247 However if earlier consideration had been given to technological training, then Leicester's staple trades might have become mechanised more quickly, thus aiding Leicester's economic advancement. It was not until 1881 that concern was expressed in the Chamber of Commerce that Leicester could be failing to compete in foreign markets because of inadequate technical expertise, although similar sentiments had been voiced nationally during the second half of the nineteenth century.248 In Leicester during the period 1800-1870 'moral regeneration' appeared to be of more concern than 'industrial retardation'.

247 This argument has been most marked in the work of C.A. Anderson & M.J. Bowman, 'Education and economic modernization in historical perspective', in Stone (ed.), Schooling and Society, pp. 245-57; M. Blaug, An Introduction to the Economics of Education (Harmondsworth, 1970, 1976 edn), pp. 64-5 states that functional rather than basic literacy was more important for economic growth; M. Sanderson, Education, Economic Change and Society in England, 1780-1870 (1983), pp. 12-13, 16, and his 'Literacy and social mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England', Past and Present, 56 (1972), pp. 89-94, suggests that the socialising effect of education rather than literacy was an important factor in industrialisation.

248 Debate regarding this issue has been noted above, and is further explored in Floud & McCloskey, Economic History, 1, J. Mokyr, 'Technological change, 1700-1830', pp. 17,40; K. Harley, 'Foreign trade: comparative advantage and performance', p. 329-30, where it was considered that skilled craftsmen had maintained competitive advantage until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the lack of formal scientific and technical training in Britain became more critical as new, more complex technologies developed. See also Floud & McCloskey, Economic History, 2, 1860-1939, R. Floud, 'Britain, 1860-1914: a survey', p. 23; S. Pollard, 'Entrepreneurship, 1870-1914', pp. 68, 77; M. Edelstein, 'Foreign investment and accumulation, 1860-1914, p. 196' where inadequate provision by the government in science and technical education, together with the conservative attitude of British manufacturers, and their suspicion of change caused Britain to be disadvantaged in the later years of the nineteenth century.
CONCLUSION

My thesis here has concentrated on the provision of elementary and adult working-class education, and the progress of illiteracy in Leicester between 1780 and 1870, together with an assessment of the requirements for a literate workforce for the town's economic viability. The effects of political, sectarian and social conflict have also been considered both nationally and locally, as the period between 1780 and 1870 was one of considerable political, economic, religious, and social change. A sharp rise in population together with migration, placed a great strain on existing educational facilities, particularly in the industrialising towns. Social and political stability was also perceived to be threatened by the existence of this increasing, uncontrollable urban working-class population, by the revolution in France, and later by the fear of Chartist uprisings.

During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Leicester was known for its tradition of radicalism, and was also considered to be 'the metropolis of dissent'. Prior to 1835 the corporation reflected Tory and Anglican interests, and was a closed, self-elected body. Hostility increased between it and the opposition alliance of county Whig aristocracy, and the mainly nonconformist urban middle-class manufacturers and professionals. Although the economy of the borough became increasingly dependent on such middle-class groups, they were excluded from public office during the early years of the nineteenth century because of the corporation's hostility to dissent. Thus they supported radical movements for political and municipal reform, and in 1835 replaced the Tory Corporation. Politically-aware members of the working class allied with these middle-class reformers, but eventually turned to trade unionism and Chartism.

3 Thompson, History of Leicester, p. 196.
for solutions to their grievances. Although these various factions were united in their hostility to the Tories, the divisions between them intensified especially in relation to educational provision.⁵

There was also a development of working-class consciousness during this period which can partially be attributed to the leadership of radical members of the working class who were often self-taught or had gained their knowledge of organisation by participating in friendly societies and trade unions. Respectability, self-improvement and independence were perceived to be the means to achieve economic, social and political reform and thus education assumed great importance. Many parents - particularly among the artisans - were willing to pay to educate their children at dame, private venture or common day schools. Indeed those members of the working class who did not wish to improve themselves or their children attracted criticism from the more 'respectable' members. The middle class also had ambivalent feelings towards education for the working class. Initially it was considered unwise as it was thought that this would enable seditious literature to be read, but it was eventually perceived that it would be more dangerous if working-class children and adults remained illiterate. Many members of the middle class were concerned that an increasing urban semi-literate or illiterate working-class population would threaten social stability, and that crime and immorality would increase. Nevertheless only basic literacy was considered to be necessary to ensure that the working class did not rise above the station in life in which God had seen fit to place it. Philanthropic reformers however, acted through genuine concern for the poor, and aimed to bridge class barriers. Thus middle-class values of respectability and morality were encouraged, and attempts were made to alleviate the condition of the working class through the establishment of charitable institutions which included facilities for rational recreation, and elementary and adult education.

Elementary education in Leicester in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries - as in

⁵ Patterson, Radical Leicester, pp. 255-9, 333-5.
the majority of towns - was provided by charitable endowments such as the one responsible for
the foundation of Alderman Newton's School, or by parochial charities, together with private
education favoured by some working-class parents. Many of the charity schools eventually came
under the auspices of the Anglican National Society, the nonconformist British and Foreign
School Society, and the Infant Schools Society. Destitute children were catered for at the
Domestic Mission or in ragged schools, and workhouse schools gave instruction to the children
of those on indoor relief. Thus until the eighteen-thirties education for working-class children in
Leicester was provided mainly by middle-class philanthropists - many of whom were clergymen -
who were inspired by humanitarian motives, or by those who hoped that education would reduce
crime and political and social unrest, and would ensure a disciplined responsible work force.6

From 1833 the state became increasingly involved in elementary education, but the ensuing
legislation was perceived by dissenters to give an unfair advantage to the voluntary Church of
England schools. However, the Anglican church feared that the growth of nonconformist
Sunday schools could weaken its influence, and that church membership would thus be affected.
Indeed education gave rise to sectarian as well as political conflict, as many dissenters objected
to the administration of grants for school buildings and to inspection. Particularly contentious
were the educational clauses in the Factory Bill of 1843 which recommended compulsory part-
time education for factory children, but under the direction of the Church of England whose
'catechism and doctrines' were to be taught.7 However few children in Leicester benefitted from
this provision as domestic industries were not adequately legislated for until the Workshops
Regulation Act of 1867, and the half-time system was often abused by indifferent parents and
unscrupulous employers. Not all dissenters were against state provision as such, it was fear of

6 W.B. Stephens, 'Elementary education and literacy, 1770-1870', in D. Fraser (ed.), A History of Modern Leeds
(Manchester, 1980), p. 232; and his 'Early Victorian Coventry: education in an industrial community, 1830-1851',
in A. Everitt (ed.) Perspectives in English Urban History (1973), p. 181 notes similar humanitarian concern in
Leeds and Coventry.
7 Patterson, Radical Leicester, p. 255.
Anglican control that motivated much of the controversy. Nevertheless the Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists refused to accept government grants for their voluntary schools although the schools established by the Unitarian Great Meeting in Leicester and the British and Foreign Society Hill Street schools received grants and were successful.

Although sectarian discord contributed to a delay in the provision of a national education system, in Leicester - as elsewhere - religious controversy nevertheless served to accelerate elementary provision. The nonconformist congregations - in particular the Baptists - were very active in the foundation of Sunday schools, but they tended to found fewer day schools than the Anglican churches. Indeed the only successful dissenting day schools until 1867 - when a Wesleyan Methodist school was opened - were those inaugurated by the Great Meeting, the British and Foreign Society schools, and two Roman Catholic schools. The lack of nonconformist schools earlier in the century has been attributed to the nature of dissent in Leicester, in particular to 'the independence of their [Baptist] chapels', the most numerous denomination in Leicester.

It became apparent however, that provision was still inadequate, and many working-class children in Leicester remained illiterate; for as well as a lack of schools in certain areas the effectiveness of elementary education was hindered by other factors. These included inadequate teachers, parental indifference, the early age and long hours of employment, irregularity of attendance together with the low age of the children who did attend - for many young children were withdrawn from school in order that they might earn. Although agriculture, brick-making,
and retail trades provided employment in Leicester, hosiery was the staple manufacture until the mid eighteen-forties. Here adults and children worked on average for 12 hours a day in cramped conditions either at home, in frame-shops, or in the wool-spinning mills. However in some areas school places remained unfilled and compulsion appeared to be the only solution to the numerous children who remained uneducated. Indeed Joseph Dare (the domestic missioner) alleged in 1851 that 'two thirds of the children who should be receiving daily instruction are not at school'. In 1862 he suggested that

'Many parents have no better idea of education than merely to get rid of their children by sending them to school, just as long as they are incapable of earning a few pence'.

However William Biggs (the mayor) considered that 'the education in the town is very good; there is a good deal of teaching on Sundays, and most can afford to pay for it in the week'.

The introduction of a national system of education had been delayed to some extent by suspicion of state involvement and by sectarian discord, but in 1870 the Elementary Education Act sought to provide a system of national education to include all children. However this caused contention in Leicester. The main areas of concern were voluntary as opposed to state control of the schools, whether education should be compulsory or not, whether it should be free or financed through the rates, and the role of religion in the schools. Indeed the major problem
with which the Anglican-controlled Leicester School Board had to contend was how to provide enough places without affecting existing - particularly Anglican - voluntary schools, and thus avoid further controversy.

In Leicester - as in other areas with an economy much dependent on child labour - Sunday schools often provided the only opportunity for both children and adults to become literate. Although there was initial cooperation between the different denominations in their desire to create Sunday schools, this later turned to hostility, and sectarian discord increased as the churches vied for members. The 1851 census of religious worship in Leicester reported that of the Sunday schools returned, nine were Church of England, four Independent, eight Baptist, three Unitarian, eight various Methodist denominations and one Latter Day Saints.18

Although Sunday schools helped to combat the illiteracy of the children who were denied the opportunity to receive education at day school, it has been alleged by both contemporary observers and twentieth-century historians that the standard of instruction was poor, and that many only taught reading - although some taught writing on weekday evenings. In addition extant log books relating to Sunday schools in Leicester frequently recorded similar difficulties to those experienced in the day schools. These problems included irregular attendance, lateness, poor conduct and a shortage of suitably qualified teachers. However many children were denied even this chance to become literate as they could not attend 'for want of things to go decent in'.19

Although education at both day and Sunday school was perceived to be a way of gaining converts as well as providing an opportunity to influence the moral behaviour of the parents through their children, many members of the working class failed to attend any religious establishment. Nevertheless the Sunday schools offered a social as well as a religious venue as

19 Report from the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into Condition of Frame-work Knitters, XV (1845, I.U.P. edn,
well as improving working-class illiteracy, for the log books recorded tea meetings, outings, libraries and mutual instruction classes, as well as anniversary celebrations.

There is no substantial evidence for the existence of educational facilities for the adult working class in Leicester prior to 1833, although self-education and support for mutual instruction societies doubtless existed, and many joined trade unions and friendly societies - and later cooperative societies - in an attempt to improve their social and working conditions. The popular press also helped in the dissemination of knowledge. Indeed the working class was not just a passive recipient of middle-class aspirations and concern for its improvement. In 1833 there was an attempt by some members of the working class to found a Mechanics' Institute in Leicester, but this was eventually established under the auspices of middle-class manufacturers, clergy and professionals. Throughout much of its existence it had financial problems, and also attracted criticism from the press as well as suffering the effects of political and sectarian controversy.20 Its failure to appeal to the working class for whom it was originally intended can largely be attributed to a lack of basic education, long working hours and an apparent attitude of condescension from the middle-class members. Although the Chartist adult school in Leicester was forced to close as the students were starving and fatigued, it initially had many members, some of whom later became members of the Secular society which also encouraged self-improvement through education.

The middle class eventually came to appreciate the importance of educating the adult working class, not only to ensure a disciplined workforce who were aware of their place in society, but also because the social and economic conditions of the working class had become an increasing cause for concern. Thus numerous institutions were established in order that working


20 Stephens, 'Early Victorian Coventry', p. 181. Stephens alleges that the development of the Mechanics' Institute in Coventry was hindered by religious and political differences in the eighteen-thirties.
men - women were often not catered for - could benefit from education and 'rational recreation' in an atmosphere of temperance. These included the Domestic Mission, the Working Men's Club and Institute, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., societies attached to places of worship, the Temperance Society, the Royce Institute and the Working Men's College, together with science schools and night schools. The Domestic Mission was successful in attracting many working-class men, women and children who were eager to become literate. Class numbers fluctuated according to the economic and social conditions of the members, for both the availability and the lack of work affected attendance. Nevertheless the classes, library, reading room and discussion groups were well-supported. The Working Men's Club in Leicester was also well-supported, although it did not realise the aims of its middle-class founders regarding education or temperance. Nevertheless, of these societies, the Mechanics' Institute and Working Men's College can be considered to be the most important. Indeed the 1846 Annual Report of the Mechanics' Institute stated that before its foundation the 'working classes were debarred almost all means of mental recreation and improvement, as lectures had a high price of admission, libraries were generally confined to the affluent, and reading rooms excluded the working classes'. Even so in 1855 lectures at the Institute were suspended through lack of funds and interest.\textsuperscript{21} However the Working Men's College - where the ideal of brotherhood between the classes was stressed - and the School of Art, which had 'evening classes for artisans' eventually helped to fulfil the educational ambitions of the adult working-class in more convivial, and less patronising environments to the one found in the Mechanics' Institute.\textsuperscript{22} Libraries and the museum - which ran a series of science classes - also helped to educate the working class and contributed to the decline in illiteracy.

While the effectiveness of educational provision is difficult to evaluate - and indeed the link

\textsuperscript{21} Leicestershire County Record Office (Leics. C.R.O.), L374, \textit{Leicester Mechanics' Institute Annual Report (L.M.I.A.R.)} (1855); White, \textit{Directory} (1846), p. 97 reported that it was 'found necessary to make this useful institution more attractive by blending amusement with instruction.'

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Leicester Trade Protection Society Directory} (Leicester, 1870), pp. 9, 11.
between school attendance and later adult literacy has been questioned - illiteracy can be analysed quantitatively. The historiography of illiteracy has revealed that various methods can be used in its measurement, but it has become apparent that the one based on signatures is the most reliable. This was the means I used to study illiteracy in Leicester, using data from the marriage registers of the six Anglican parishes for each decadal year from 1760-1890. The literature also disclosed that despite considerable regional variation, and an erratic pattern over time, the most noticeable feature in all regions (including Leicester), and in all countries, was the difference in illiteracy between men and women, for women were generally far more illiterate than men. This can be attributed to a restricted curriculum and fewer opportunities for girls and women to become literate. Indeed during the years 1780 to 1870 education for girls and women remained largely inferior to that available to boys and men, for they usually received only sufficient instruction to enable them to be good wives and mothers. Thus at the charity schools there was an emphasis on sewing. While women were admitted to lectures and to some classes at the Mechanics' Institute they were not accepted into full membership, and they were not welcomed as students at the Working Men's College until 1880, when a special department was inaugurated for them.

Although the decline in both male and female illiteracy in Leicester can be attributed to a variety of factors during the period 1780 to 1870, this decline was most noticeable following the opening of the first Board Schools from 1874. Initially the middle class tended to oppose working-class education, however in Leicester it was through the humanitarian motives of middle-class philanthropists that the majority of both elementary and adult provision was made. Meanwhile the working class displayed an ambivalence of attitudes towards education, from

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23 Smith, 'Education, society, and literacy', p. 56. He alleges in his study of Nottinghamshire, that 'there was no direct correlation between school attendance and literacy rates'. W.B. Stephens, 'Illiteracy and schooling in the provincial towns, 1640-1870: a comparative approach', in D.A. Reeder (ed.), Urban Education in the Nineteenth Century (1977), p. 43. Stevens considers that although there was 'a general relationship between lack of schooling ... and later illiteracy it was by no means an automatic relationship'. Nevertheless the decline in adult illiteracy in Leicester following the foundation of the board schools suggests that there was quite a strong link.
apathy and hostility, to an appreciation of the ensuing benefits to social and political reform, and many supported politically-motivated movements which also provided opportunities for education.

Political and sectarian discord - while delaying the onset of a national system of education - appeared to stimulate the provision of Anglican and Roman Catholic day schools and nonconformist Sunday schools in their attempts to retain congregations and to impart their own particular dogmas. Eventually however they failed to satisfy demand or to reach the most destitute. While social, political and sectarian discord contributed towards the failure of the Leicester Mechanic's Institute, other institutes and societies founded in response to middle-class concern were relatively free from sectarian and political controversy.

The connection between economic advancement and literacy has also been considered in its national context, and it is evident that while some occupations depended on literate employees, many appeared to expand despite the illiteracy of the workforce, particularly in the large northern factory towns. During the first half of the nineteenth century Leicester's economy relied heavily on the hosiery trade which tended to be domestic rather than factory-based, and we have seen that prior to 1860 illiteracy was most marked among the frame-work knitters. During the second half of the century the economic base expanded as the boot and shoe, elastic weaving, and engineering trades were developed in the town. However illiteracy was also high among many workers in the boot and shoe trade - finishers and rivets were particularly illiterate. Indeed Leicester's economy apparently expanded despite illiteracy among the workers, and the necessity for a literate and technically-trained workforce did not appear to have been widely acknowledged. Although during the eighteen-seventies the Working Men's College offered vocational courses in technical subjects, the ethos of the College was still biased towards helping working-men to become happier and more intelligent rather than providing opportunities for technical education.
A proposal in 1848 to establish a School of Art and Design in Leicester was initially met with indifference, and in 1862, the Leicester Journal reported that many manufacturers were of the opinion that there was 'little room for the display of decorative skills in the manufacture of hosiery'. Indeed it was not until 1870 that a School of Art and Design was opened in Leicester, and the Leicester Chronicle urged manufacturers to encourage their apprentices to attend as trade depended on technical education. However in 1878 an attempt by the Leicester School Board to establish a trade school in Leicester to enable working men to become better artisans failed to gain support from either manufacturers or trade unions. This could be attributed to depression in the hosiery trade in the 1870's, and also to the fact that Leicester's hosiery, and boot shoe trades were run by small family-based businesses not by large-scale industrialists. Profit margins in these businesses left little to spare for financing technical education. Similarly the workers were more concerned about the lack of full-time employment than with their lack of technical expertise. It was not until 1881 that members of the Leicester Chamber of Commerce expressed concern that a technically-educated workforce was essential in order that Leicester might compete in foreign markets, and in 1884 they were instrumental in the establishment of a technical school in Leicester.24 Prior to this the threat of foreign competition had made little impact on technical education in Leicester. However many of the artisans attending technical courses in the evenings had difficulty in assimilating the subjects on offer because of their inadequate elementary education. Thus despite the efforts of middle-class philanthropic reformers and radical working-class leaders to provide elementary and adult education for the working class in Leicester during the nineteenth century, it was not until around 1890 - after the opening of the first Board Schools in Leicester in 1874 - that there was a marked decline in illiteracy.

24 Leicester Journal (LJ), 16.3.1862, 17.4.1870; Leics. C.R.O., L381, Leicester Chamber of Commerce Annual Report
It can thus be concluded that in Leicester prior to 1870 there was a lack of demand for a literate work force. Frame-work knitting continued to operate in an illiterate context, and similarly the boot and shoe industry which expanded during the second half of the nineteenth century did not depend on literate workers for its success. Indeed the manufacturers lacked foresight with regard to the need for a literate workforce. The apathetic attitude concerning illiteracy is reflected in the limited elementary educational provision, however, many factors contributed to this. One was the antipathy of the Voluntaryists toward state involvement, for they allowed their principles to over ride any obligations to the children in their congregations. This was compounded by the segregated nature of dissent in Leicester, for each Baptist chapel (the Baptists were the most numerous nonconformist denomination in Leicester) preferred to control its own Sunday school in preference to joining with other congregations in financing day schools. Nevertheless the Unitarians - the most politically active and commercially important of the Nonconformists in Leicester - were instrumental in the provision of both elementary and adult education. However, the major reason for the low demand for elementary education in the first half of the nineteenth century can be attributed to the domestic basis of Leicester's chief industry, indeed the majority of the working population was involved in frame-work knitting. Families relied on child labour for their economic viability and therefore children could not be spared from their work during the day even if there had been more educational provision. Many schools had spare capacity, but even when it was possible for the children to attend it was only for a short period of time, at irregular intervals and they left at a young age. The numerous Anglican and nonconformist Sunday and evening schools thus provided limited education at times when children were available to attend and assumed great importance in Leicester.

Adult education became significantly more important in Leicester because many adults had been denied the chance to attend elementary school, either through economic necessity or  

(1882) (1883) (1885).
because of a lack of opportunity. Many philanthropists expressed concern with regard to the impoverished financial, moral and social condition of the working class. Indeed moral improvement took precedence over economic benefits in discussions concerning the need for adult working-class education. It was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that it became apparent that an illiterate work force could hamper the acquisition of technical expertise, and that this would seriously affect Leicester's future economic development. By this time the hosiery and boot and shoe industries were becoming more mechanised which in turn stimulated the development of engineering in Leicester. In addition the Workshops Act of 1867 together with the Education Act of 1870 legislated for the educational provision for more children. This contributed to the demise of the domestic nature of work in Leicester, for a lack of cheap child labour made the mechanisation of the hosiery, and boot and shoe industries in Leicester seem more attractive and eventually the workers overcame their hostility towards the factories.

It could be argued that had the Voluntaryists overcome their principles and accepted state aid thus enabling them to add to the elementary provision in Leicester, then illiteracy might have declined more rapidly and at a much earlier date, thus allowing the workers to assimilate new technology more readily. Nevertheless considering the reluctance of both the manufacturers and the workforce (in particular the frame-work knitters who preferred their independence to the discipline of the factory) to accept change in working practices it is unlikely that Leicester's economy would have modernised very much earlier. It was fortuitous that the decline in illiteracy following the Education Act of 1870 coincided with the realisation that Leicester needed a literate workforce if the economy was to be modernised, and could thus succeed in an increasingly competitive market. Had this not occurred then the engineering industry would probably have failed to develop, the hosiery and boot and shoe industries would have failed to modernise, and the economy of Leicester would have stagnated.
APPENDIX 1:
Numbers employed in hosiery in Leicester, 1841-1871.¹

![Graph showing employment trends in hosiery from 1841 to 1871 for men and women.]

APPENDIX 2:
Numbers employed in footwear in Leicester, 1841-1871.²

![Graph showing employment trends in footwear from 1841 to 1871 for men and women.]

² Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 2, p. 151.
APPENDIX 3:
Members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in Leicester, 1851-1881.

Data extracted from the 19th century Labour Markets Database (LMDB) at Queen Mary and Westfield College London University; the original source being monthly reports of the A.S.E. An acknowledgement is made to Mr Humphrey Southall of QMWC for permission to use these data.
APPENDIX 4:

Data used in the construction of the graph above. 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841-45</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846-50</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851-55</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856-60</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861-65</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866-70</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-75</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 5:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARISH etc</th>
<th>1801</th>
<th>1811</th>
<th>1821</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1841</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL SAINTS A.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>2838</td>
<td>3362</td>
<td>3440</td>
<td>3284</td>
<td>4608</td>
<td>5131</td>
<td>5945</td>
<td>6458</td>
<td>6371</td>
<td>6867*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST NICHOLAS A.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>1589</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>1494</td>
<td>1501</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1662</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>1670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST MARTIN A.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>3167</td>
<td>3254</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>3034</td>
<td>2889</td>
<td>2863</td>
<td>2778</td>
<td>2507</td>
<td>2171</td>
<td>1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST MARY A.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>3454</td>
<td>4079</td>
<td>5406</td>
<td>5168</td>
<td>5840</td>
<td>10942b</td>
<td>13264</td>
<td>21097</td>
<td>26110</td>
<td>30828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHFIELDS Lib.</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>(762)*</td>
<td>(1608)*</td>
<td>(2560)*</td>
<td>13264</td>
<td>21097</td>
<td>26110</td>
<td>30828</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST MARGARET&lt; Part of A.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>5899</td>
<td>10158</td>
<td>15026</td>
<td>23954</td>
<td>30784</td>
<td>36699</td>
<td>41194</td>
<td>59062</td>
<td>78805</td>
<td>92929*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST LEONARD A.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>3046</td>
<td>3409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASTLE VIEW&lt; E.P.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE NEWARKE Lib. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>1178</td>
<td>1341</td>
<td>1666</td>
<td>1688</td>
<td>1776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACKFRIARS E.P.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>1152</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td>1175</td>
<td>2108</td>
<td>2512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITEFRIARS E.P.P. &amp; C.P.</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

Abbreviations: A.P. = Ancient Parish, C.P. = Civil Parish, E.P.P. = Extra-Parochial Parish, Lib. = Liberty

a: Part of St Margaret (pop. 498 in 1891) was transferred to All Saints in 1885.
b: Part of St Mary A.P. - South Field liberty - was returned separately until 1851.
c: Part of St Margaret - Knighton Chapelry - lay outside the borough & was returned separately - Bishop's Fee was never returned separately.
d: Castle View was returned as outside the borough until 1851.
e: No return was made in these years.
f: The Leicester Extension Act of 1891 changed the area of Leicester with effect from January 1892.
* Figures bracketed are part of St Mary data.

---

APPENDIX 6:
Data on the six parishes of Leicester.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
<th>Column 5</th>
<th>Column 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YEAR</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>1811-51</td>
<td>c. 1832-5</td>
<td>1831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints</td>
<td>Property Value</td>
<td>£5809</td>
<td>5131</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Leonard</td>
<td></td>
<td>£1275</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Marg.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>£24812</td>
<td>36699</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin</td>
<td></td>
<td>£13671</td>
<td>2863</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>2037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary</td>
<td></td>
<td>£6884</td>
<td>10942</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Nicholas</td>
<td></td>
<td>£2206</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

1 St Margaret's parish with Bishop's Fee.

Column 2 Annual value of real property in 1815.

Column 3 Population in 1851.

Column 4 Population annual growth rate between 1811 and 1851.

Column 5 Poor relief total in c. 1832-1835.

Column 6 Per capita poor relief in pounds using the above variable, against the 1831 population size.

---

APPENDIX 7:
Illiteracy in Leicester: database construction.

Leicester Anglican marriage registers (which are held on microfiche at the Leicestershire County Record Office), were examined for each parish at ten-yearly intervals for each decadal year from 1760 to 1890. Data extracted from the resulting 5580 records comprised (where available) date of marriage, ability of both groom and bride to sign, marital status, age and occupation of both groom and bride, occupation of both fathers and place of residence if outside of Leicester. In order to analyse various aspects of illiteracy, the data were transferred to a flat-file database management system. They were reproduced in tabular format and where applicable were copied to a spreadsheet and reproduced as graphs. The data were allocated to the following field names:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIELD NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groom Sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groom Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groom Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groom Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groom Father's Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groom Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bride Sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bride Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bride Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bride Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bride Father's Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bride Residence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The database was searched in order to ascertain the number of weddings in each parish and hence in Leicester. This same information was also used to compare illiteracy in Leicester based on Anglican parish marriage registers, with the figures of the Registrar General relating to both Anglican and non-Anglican marriages in Leicester, Leicestershire and England and Wales. The relationships between illiteracy and gender, the choice of literate/illiterate partners, illiteracy and age, and illiteracy and second marriages were also considered. The number and percentage
of extra-parochial brides and grooms was also examined by categorising their place of residence as Leicestershire or other counties. Their literate status was then analysed, and compared to illiteracy in Leicester.  

The totals of each of the grooms' occupations, and the brides (where available) were tabulated in groups according to the type of trade, and any connection between illiteracy and occupation was analysed, as was the effect of the occupation of the fathers on the illiteracy of their children.

---

7 The registers referred from 1840 onwards to the address of each spouse rather than the parish. This makes information on extra-parochial marriages within Leicester difficult to establish without an accurate street map, and without consulting the banns of marriage and licences.
APPENDIX 8:

*Occupations of members of the Leicester Mechanics’ Institute, 1854.*

Of the 690 members who were listed I have traced occupations for 287 (42%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountants</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architects</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailiffs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobbin makers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookbinders</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booksellers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boot/shoe makers</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box manufacturers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush makers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builders</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butchers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cab owners</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemists</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal merchants</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn dealers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drapers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elastic web makers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers (railway)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellmongers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour dealers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework-knitters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture brokers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaolers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas fitters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentlemen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glaziers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glovers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocers</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosiers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innkeepers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironmongers</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joiners</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Machine makers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Millers</td>
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<td>Milliners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overlockers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
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<td>Pawnbrokers</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Publishers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saddlers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeepers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinker makers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldiers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitors</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinners</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone masons</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeons</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailors</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tea dealers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber merchants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehousemen</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchmakers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharfingers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whimakers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitesmiths</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine merchants</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool staplers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No trade</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youths</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No trade</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youths</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L.M.I.A.R. (1854), lists 690 members. Their occupations have been deduced using the following sources: White, *Directory* (1862); Melville and Co., *Directory and Gazetteer of Leicestershire* (1854); Hagar and Co., *Commercial Directory of the City of Leicester* (1849).
APPENDIX 9:
The Leicester Mechanics' Institute Library: total works 1838, 1853 and circulation 1839-1842.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>1838 TOTAL WORKS</th>
<th>1853 TOTAL WORKS</th>
<th>VOLUMES CIRCULATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>1841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture &amp; Gardening</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy, Physiology, Medicine &amp; Phrenology</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture &amp; Fine Arts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronomy, Navigation &amp; Geography</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry, Electricity, Geology &amp; Mineralogy</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Manufactures</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclopedias</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Literature</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric &amp; Metaphysics</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History &amp; Antiquities</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>1253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines &amp; Reviews</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>1171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural History</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Philosophy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels &amp; Fiction</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>1396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry &amp; Drama</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Economy/Politics &amp; Statistics</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pneumatics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology &amp; Ethics</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voyages &amp; Travel</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

* See Natural History.
1 Includes Politics & Statistics.
2 Includes Agriculture & Gardening.
3 Moral & Political Philosophy only.

---

APPENDIX 10:
Annual totals of lectures by category.¹⁰

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>1834</th>
<th>1835</th>
<th>1836</th>
<th>1837</th>
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Notes:

There are no data for the years 1844, 1849-1851 inclusive.
There were no lectures from 1858-1863 inclusive.

APPENDIX 11:
The Leicester Mechanics' Institute: class attendances 1834-1843.11

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Notes:

yes = class held, no attendance data available.
F = female class.

APPENDIX 11 CONTINUED:
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Notes:

yes = class held, no attendance data available.
1844, 1849-1851, no data available.
After 1858 all classes ceased.

\textsuperscript{12} L.M.I.A.R. (1845-1849) (1852-1858).
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