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‘Middlesbrough’s Steel Magnates: Business, Culture and Participation: 1880-1934’

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**‘Middlesbrough’s Steel Magnates: Business, Culture  
and Participation: 1880-1934’**

**Thomas (Tosh) Warwick**

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

**December 2014**

## Abstract

In assessing the rapid emergence of Middlesbrough as a nineteenth century 'boom town', Asa Briggs' seminal *Victorian Cities* pointed to the centrality of the early businessmen and industrialists in the growth of 'a new community'.<sup>1</sup> The Quaker pioneers and the early ironmasters established the manufacturing basis of mid-Victorian Middlesbrough and dominated the Ironopolis' early business associations, municipal institutions and political organisations. In contrast to the leading mid-century industrialists at the heart of urban governance in the manufacturing town, Briggs contended that the second and third generations of industrialist families failed to fill the void left behind by their retired or deceased fathers, instead abandoning the urban sphere and following the pattern of other English businessmen by choosing to live in the country rather than the town. This apparent urban 'withdrawal' aligned with what Wiener has considered a 'decline in the industrial spirit' amidst the adoption of a gentrified lifestyle, has been assumed rather than proven, with little exploration of the spatial dynamics of the industrial elites' interactions with urban space.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis challenges the extent of elite 'withdrawal' by assessing wider spheres of urban governance hitherto underexplored, contributing an improved understanding of the wider social dynamic of urban life and industrial elites with emphasise on challenging the extent of declining urban engagement. Drawing upon newly accessible archival evidence and focusing on late nineteenth and early twentieth century Middlesbrough as a case study, it is contended that this period, most closely associated with declining urban engagement, was instead one of realignment and reconfiguration of urban authority and industrialist participation. By exploring the composition and makeup of Middlesbrough's charitable, commercial, civic and cultural life during this period, it will be shown how country house-

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<sup>1</sup> Briggs, A. *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), pp.254-257

<sup>2</sup> Wiener, M.J. *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (London, 1981)

residing elites continued to be engaged with the industrial centre and played an important role by establishing new infrastructure, institutions and organisations. Moreover, through exploring the hitherto underexplored semi-private realm of Middlesbrough's steel magnates beyond the town in their country estates and the surrounding villages of the North Yorkshire countryside, it is argued the country house and rural sphere served as arenas for extending interactions with urban interests spanning business, associational, cultural and philanthropic activity.

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## Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of the Arts and Humanities Collaborative Doctoral Studentship Award programme and I would like to place on record my gratitude to the AHRC. I would like to acknowledge the assistance I have received from the Economic History Society in supporting research trips in the UK and Australia, and also place on record my gratitude for the support received from the staff and postgraduates in the History Department of the University of Huddersfield, including my Personal Tutor, Professor Keith Laybourn, and Professor Paul Ward, who was Internal Examiner of this thesis. Special mention goes to Professor Barry Doyle who throughout my time in West Yorkshire has been a leading figure of encouragement, advice and a font of knowledge. Duncan Stone, Daniel Travers and Christine Verguson too have constantly been on hand with advice and good humour. I am grateful for the assistance provided by the staff of the various archives and libraries that I have visited in carrying out research for this thesis, in particular the staff at Teesside Archives who have been on hand in providing access to material and assisting with queries. I am also indebted to the various conference participants who have provided invaluable feedback on earlier versions of this work, including Professor Bob Morris, Professor Richard Rodger and Dr Shane Ewen, who also served as External Examiner. Colleagues at Middlesbrough Council have also been supportive of my research during my time working on the HLF Tees Transporter Bridge Visitor Experience Project. My friends and family have provided encouragement over the years to continue to pursue my passion for history, for which I am extremely grateful. I am especially thankful to Ellen for her patience and support in completing this study.

I dedicate this thesis to my late uncle, Neil Harvey, and grandparents Mary and Hugh (Paddy) Boyle, all of whom passed away during the completion of this work. This work would not have been possible without their support over the decades.

## Chapter 1: Introduction: Urban elites and the industrial town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century

Middlesbrough experienced rapid growth and transformation in the nineteenth century beyond comparison with anywhere else in Britain, at the heart of which were the industrialists that founded the initial coal export industry before the ironmasters manufacturing concerns boomed and brought an influx of workers and entrepreneurs to a town. In 1801 Middlesbrough was nothing more than a small hamlet yet a century later had a population exceeding one hundred thousand that brought vast changes to the infrastructure, power structures and economy of the locality. The iron manufacturing centred development of Middlesbrough in the mid nineteenth century saw the ironmasters play a central role in the early economic development and government of the town as well as the economic development of the town. Asa Briggs' seminal *Victorian Cities* charted the growth of the new community at Middlesbrough and in doing so pointed to a late nineteenth century shift in the dynamics of authority, influence and power, contending:

The sheer growth of the town made it more and more difficult for either one man or a group of families to control it...there were many signs that the will to control of the ironmasters was being blunted as they followed the pattern of other English businessmen and chose to live in the country rather than in the town...neither the children nor the managers who succeeded them in their works, when their enterprises grew in size and were transformed into local limited liability companies, necessarily shared the feelings of the older generation about the links which bound them to the town.<sup>3</sup>

Pointing to the residential 'exodus' from the town by the founding ironmasters, the new generation's relative disinterest in the Town Council, and declining influence amidst the

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<sup>3</sup> Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.257

‘intermediate social classes’ enjoying greater prominence and acquiring social and political authority, Briggs placed Middlesbrough at the forefront of notions of the declining place of the industrial elite in the manufacturing town.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis provides a reassessment of this supposed declining influence of Middlesbrough’s late Victorian industrial elite in the manufacturing town. In doing so it challenges both the extent of withdrawal from participation in the traditional municipal and business spheres focused on by Briggs, whilst also looking to wider spheres of governance and associational life in Middlesbrough, arguing declining manufacture engagement has been overemphasised due to too narrow a focus on industry and the Council Chamber.

The intention of this chapter is to introduce some of the key concepts that are central to this thesis, whilst placing this study within the wider historiography and debates surrounding urban elites, urban government, urban governance and notions of withdrawal. Working definitions of these sometimes fluid terms are outlined, tying into the body of work that has emerged in urban history concerned with new ways of exploring urban power, authority and engagement in modern Britain. Attention will then turn to contextualising Middlesbrough’s manufacturers’ place within this historiography and the reasons for the focus on this north-east manufacturing town. In doing so Briggs’ representation of town’s industrialists will be further explored and it shown how subsequent histories of the town’s urban elites have embraced this representation and assumption of withdrawal, relatively unchallenged for over half a century. Before engaging in detailed exploration and assessment of Middlesbrough’s steel magnates business, political and associational affiliation in the manufacturing town during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, this introduction will outline the various areas that this thesis explores, whilst also

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp.257-259



highlighting some of the limitations of this study. Furthermore, it will be outlined why Middlesbrough, and in particular the leading steel magnate Bell and Dorman families, are the focus of this study. Finally, the methodology adopted in exploring Middlesbrough's steel magnates' business activities, cultural engagement and extent of urban participation will be explored, referencing how this work builds upon earlier studies centred upon the municipal sphere and goes further in exploring what Morris and Trainor have termed 'non-municipal arms of local government, voluntary institutions, and the organisations of professional and business life' and makes use of newly accessible archival material.<sup>5</sup>

### **Historiography of urban elites and decline in urban governance**

Urban elites, those social groups identified with a concentration of power affiliated to their authority and leadership of the urban sphere, have played an important part in the historiography of urban history.<sup>6</sup> Earlier studies dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, a period when urban history was a burgeoning field under the leadership of Dyos, focused heavily on the traditional sphere of urban government centred upon municipal government, with the Town Council at the epicentre of debates. Attempts were made to develop an understanding of power in the most familiar of urban institutions – the Town Hall – as biographies of urban government in individual towns and cities emerged.<sup>7</sup> A decade after Briggs assessment of the declining role of Middlesbrough's manufacturers in the Council Chamber, E.P. Hennock's assessment of the composition of nineteenth-century Birmingham and Leeds Town Councils considered debates of a decline of 'fit and proper persons' in urban government.<sup>8</sup> Studies of other regions and towns including Dauntton's study of the 'Coal Metropolis' of Cardiff looked to urban government and the role of the

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<sup>5</sup> Morris, R.J. and Trainor, R.H. 'Preface', in R.J. Morris and R. H. Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (Aldershot, 2000), p.ix

<sup>6</sup> Ewen, S. *What is Urban History?* (Cambridge, 2016), p.56; Trainor, R.H., *Black Country Elites: The Exercise of Authority in an Industrialised Area* (Oxford, 1993), p.377

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.23

<sup>8</sup> Hennock, E.P. *Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in nineteenth-century urban government* (London, 1973)

middling sort rather leading industrialists on the town councils, whilst studies such as Garrard's study of leadership and politics in north-west industrial towns and the Derek Fraser edited collection on history of Leeds followed in the 1980s edged towards a broader approach to urban power and elites.<sup>9</sup> The late 1970s through to the 1990s saw an emerging exploration of the dynamics of urban elites and power, Smith noting a heightened emphasis on the wider mechanisms of power utilised by elites attempting to ascertain authority in the urban sphere.<sup>10</sup> It was in this period that Hatfield's study of the political and social attitudes of Middlesbrough's ironmasters emerged which, whilst primarily focused on municipal and political activity, looked at the wider character of the elites' urban interactions.<sup>11</sup>

In his assessment of two centuries of urban growth, Morris defines 'urban governance' as encompassing issues of 'ordering of order...[and] the organisation and legitimacy of power' through 'patterns of procedures which create and organise authority, provide access to resources, provide for the delivery of services, and generate and deliver policy'.<sup>12</sup> In expanding the focus beyond (but not exclusive of) the Town Council, Ewen points to how this can reveal 'a plurality of organizations that enjoyed access to the power structure of urban government, and offers scope for detailed longitudinal...studies'.<sup>13</sup> This multifaceted approach gained momentum in the 1980s by broadening exploration of elites by increasingly looking to cultural, educational and social apparatus. Adopting such an

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<sup>9</sup> Garrard, J. *Leadership and Power in Victorian Towns* (Manchester, 1983); Fraser, D, *A History of Modern Leeds* (Manchester, 1980)

<sup>10</sup> Smith, J. 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, 27, 2 (2000), pp.225-275; Morris, R.J. 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1950: An Analysis', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), pp.95-118. See also Morris, R.J. *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Hadfield, D.W. 'Political and Social Attitudes in Middlesbrough 1853-1889: With especial reference to the role of the Middlesbrough ironmasters', unpublished Teesside Polytechnic PhD Thesis, 1981

<sup>12</sup> Morris, R.J. 'Governance: two centuries of urban growth', in R.J. Morris and R. H. Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance*, p.1

<sup>13</sup> Ewen, *What is Urban History?*, p.69

approach, Wiener's much-cited *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* contended that once prosperous the urban industrial middle class pursued culture and education rather than coal and engineering as a mechanism for social advancement, in doing so turning away from industry and the manufacturing towns.<sup>14</sup> Wiener's notions had echoes of Briggs' assessment of Middlesbrough's ironmasters' departing the manufacturing town for a more cultured, peripheral existence. Subsequent works advanced this narrative of a highpoint of industrial or business elite involvement in the early to mid-nineteenth century by means of residency, occupation and associational culture. A story of decreased participation in the industrial, urban environment leading up to, and accelerated by, a period of 'withdrawal' 1880s to 1914 emerged, pointing to decreased involvement in local government, withdrawal from direct business management by abandoning the shop-floor, with the elites instead adopting an oppositional, gentrified lifestyle embracing a rural idyll beyond the smoke-filled urban sphere.<sup>15</sup> The new generations' ideologies shifted from an (apparent) concern for and commitment to the locale, to a regional or national lifestyle detached from the urban setting, bringing reduced business effectiveness, a decline in the public display of cultural influence by the 'men of wealth and influence' who no longer controlled the 'symbolic and visual register of civic life'.<sup>16</sup> Roberts' work on civic culture and ritual in Middlesbrough and Darlington has made similar, if tempered, assessments of this decline noting the absence of industrialists and leading figures in twentieth century civic spectacle.<sup>17</sup> Garrard too has identified a decline

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<sup>14</sup> Wiener, *Decline of the Industrial Spirit*; Trainor, R.H., 'Urban elites in Victorian Britain' in *Urban History Yearbook* (1985), pp.1-17

<sup>15</sup> Garrard, J. 'Urban Elites, 1850-1914: The Rule and Decline of a New Squirearchy?', *Albion*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1995); Gunn, S. *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2007); Smith, J. 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history'; Rubinstein, W.B., 'Britain's Elites in the Interwar Period, 1918-39' in A. Kidd and D. Nicholls, *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity Since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), pp.186-202; Wiener, *Decline of the Industrial Spirit*

<sup>16</sup> Gunn, *Public Culture*, pp.190-191

<sup>17</sup> Roberts, B.K.O. 'Civic Ritual in Darlington and Middlesbrough in Comparative Perspective, c.1850-1953', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Teesside, 2013

in the participation of urban elites which, following a period when authority had received limited challenge, explained by a combination of a steady erosion of power by challenge from below and the development of interests beyond the town.<sup>18</sup> Rubinstein has suggested generational dislocation from provincial, industrial cities partially explained by the offspring of early industrialists having been incorporated into a 'national elite' during and after the First World War based with shared education and cultural pursuits.<sup>19</sup> Returning to Middlesbrough, a mid-1990s collection on the history of the town from 1850-1950 reprinted Briggs' chapter from *Victorian Cities* (along with a foreword by Briggs), further asserting the influence and prominence of the piece in Middlesbrough's historiography and the chapters which appeared in the publication.<sup>20</sup> Lewis' chapter draws heavily upon Hadfield's earlier work concerned with municipal government pointing to a declining role of Middlesbrough's ironmasters by the 1880s from a position of relative dominance up to the late 1860s.<sup>21</sup> Orde's study of the Quaker entrepreneurial Pease family also points to a dynasty which, after founding Middlesbrough in the 1820s, was one driven by financial interest without active participation, a claim countered in Roberts' in arguing their important role into the 1920s through political interest, a rare instance of his study pointing to continued industrial elite urban engagement.<sup>22</sup> Challenges to the established urban elite owing to the important role the 'shopocracy' increasingly played in local government by means of strong representation of retailers on the council has been aligned with a decline in the government expenditure and local improvement, Doyle

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<sup>18</sup> Garrard, 'Urban Elites'

<sup>19</sup> Rubinstein, W.B. 'Britain's Elites in the Interwar Period, 1918-1939', A. Kidd and D. Nicholls, *The Making of the British Middle Class?*, p.188; 194

<sup>20</sup> Pollard, A.J. (ed.), *Middlesbrough: Town and Community* developed by academics at Teesside University begins with a reproduction of Briggs' chapter on Middlesbrough.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, D. 'The Infant Hercules and the Augean Stables: A Century of Economic and Social Development in Middlesbrough, c.1840-1939' in Pollard (ed.), *Middlesbrough*; Taylor, D. 'Conquering the British Ballarat: The policing of Victorian Middlesbrough', *Journal of Social History*, 37, 3 (2004), pp.755-771; Hadfield, D.W., 'Political and Social Attitudes'

<sup>22</sup> Orde, A. *Religion, Business and Society in North-East England: The Pease family of Darlington in the nineteenth century*, (Stamford, 2000) cf. Roberts, 'Civic Ritual in Middlesbrough and Darlington', p.56

pointing to the 'growing prominence of retailers in the urban elite' as reflective of 'the gradual shift taking place from production to consumption in British life'<sup>23</sup>. Key figures in the retailing sector such as Amos Hinton in Middlesbrough emerged as beneficiaries of the redistribution of influence, with Doyle suggesting this represented as emblematic of decline in urban government in Middlesbrough.<sup>24</sup>

### **Reassessing elite withdrawal and decline**

The extent of elite withdrawal from the urban sphere and abandonment of the obligations to the towns and cities of their fathers by second and third generation members of industrialist families has been revised in recent decades. The 1995 Urban History Group Conference on the theme of 'Urban Elites' pointed to the revival of the theme, with a number of papers reconsidering the extent of elite withdrawal, its implications for power, culture and space, with particular emphasis on local studies and the nineteenth century with overspill into the twentieth century.<sup>25</sup> Doyle's paper on the structure of elite power in Norwich in the early decades of the twentieth century pointed to an enduring commitment to urban society and politics into the inter-war years, whilst Garrard suggested decline neither as accelerated or extensive as previously suggested. Key works followed at the turn of the century marking a shift from pessimism of urban elite engagement to one pointing of cautious optimism emphasising continued urban activity into the inter-war years. In 2000 the third volume of *Cambridge Urban History*, spanning 1840-1950, brought to the fore issues of reassessing the role of the middle class in urban Britain and

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<sup>23</sup> Doyle, B.M. 'Introduction', in B.M. Doyle (ed.), *Urban Politics in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Regional Perspectives* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.7-8

<sup>24</sup> For a detailed discussion of the shopocracy in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Middlesbrough, with particular reference to Councillor, Alderman and Mayor Amos Hinton, see Taylor, D. 'The Jamaican Banana: or how to be a successful businessman in nineteenth-century Middlesbrough', *Cleveland History*, 42 (1982), pp.1-18

<sup>25</sup> Doyle, B.M. 'Conference Report: Urban Elites: Urban History Group Conference, Edinburgh, 30-31 March 1995, *Urban History*, Vol.22, No.2, (1995), pp.272-275

the dynamics and structure of elite power in provincial cities.<sup>26</sup> In the same year the Morris and Trainor edited *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* brought Morris' assessment of two centuries of urban government and Trainor's reassessment of 'the 'decline' of British urban governance since 1850', which moved to play down the extent of withdrawal and the associated declinist narrative.<sup>27</sup> Instead the important wider spheres of elite urban influence and participation spanning business associations, politics and voluntary action are vital in supporting a range of urban services and projects.

The heightened emphasis on exploring the wider spheres of urban governance has not gone unnoticed in Budd's recent thesis on the development of Middlesbrough's sporting culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Adopting a wide-ranging focus beyond the traditional arenas of business and politics, Budd has highlighted extensive involvement of ironmasters, steel magnates and general managers in the financing and organisation of numerous sporting clubs and leisure provision in late Victorian and Edwardian Middlesbrough.<sup>28</sup> The prominence of Middlesbrough's steel magnate families in the urban apparatus has also received new attention by Menzies in his study of Middlesbrough during the First World War. The popular study of the town during the conflict has pointed to the active role of Sir Arthur Dorman and Hugh Bell in business activity during the period, whilst noting the role of magnate family supported initiatives such as the Middlesbrough Winter Garden and the foundation of Cleveland War Hospital Work Guild in the war effort, as well as noting how Gertrude Bell addressed citizens in Middlesbrough Town Hall on the reasons for England's entry into the conflict.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Dauntton, M. (ed.). *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III: 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2000)

<sup>27</sup> Trainor, R.H. 'The "decline" of British urban governance since 1850: a reassessment', in Morris and Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance*, pp.29-46

<sup>28</sup> Budd, C. 'The Growth of an Urban Sporting Culture – Middlesbrough, c.1870-1914', unpublished PhD thesis, DeMontfort University, 2011

<sup>29</sup> Menzies, P. *Great War Britain: Middlesbrough: Remembering 1914-1918* (Stroud, 2014)

Thus, the historiography of Middlesbrough's manufacturers in the iron and steel town which has until recently been dominated by negative representations of the manufacturers' urban engagement, has begun to challenge assumptions of elite withdrawal. At least some of the trickle of recent histories focusing on the town by engaging in assessment of wider spheres of governance and culture, spanning sport, leisure and voluntary action, have pointed to continued urban activity into the twentieth century, albeit these assessments' chronological focus often finishes before or at 1918.

Given the place allocated to Middlesbrough as the Victorian boom town by Asa Briggs' widely read landmark text, it might be argued that the work since 'Middlesbrough: a study of a new community' has been relatively scarce. This might be explained by the limited access to archival material relating to the manufacturing industries and manufacturers which this thesis has been amongst the first to make use of, or might be explained by the remote nature and relatively small size of Middlesbrough when compared to other towns and cities that have received more extensive attention such as Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle. Indeed, the town's sitting between Yorkshire and the North East with an identity in a state of flux might explain the passing treatment of Middlesbrough in general surveys of Victorian cities.

Assessment of the apparent spatial withdrawal of industrial elites, closely aligned by Briggs and subsequently Wiener in narratives of abandonment of the urban sphere, has been scarce in the case of Middlesbrough. Cognate studies to this thesis have however challenged the extent to which this represented any real departure from urban life, with Trainor's focus on the Black Country pointing to the limited impact of this process of 'gentrification' on the industrial elites urban engagement, contending that the large residences on the peripheries of the industrialised area served as venues for hosting

events linked to urban interests.<sup>30</sup> For Middlesbrough, a recent short study of the Dorman family has stressed the uses of the country estate in extending notions of noblesse oblige through the hosting of garden parties and events for Dorman Long workers in the grounds of their Grey Towers home, situated on the peripheries of Middlesbrough at Nunthorpe.<sup>31</sup>

The above summary provides only a brief overview of debates in urban history relating to elite power and urban power dynamics, some of the existing and ongoing research of urban elites that are relevant to this thesis have been outlined. The historiography whilst not departing from notions of decline and the flights of the elites has evolved to look beyond the limitations of local, formal and government to instead focus on the wider spheres of urban governance and the potential the study of these broader platforms of large capitalist's involvement in the towns and cities that housed their business concerns reflects a continued zeal to gain a better understanding of who ran the cities, contributed to urban governance and shaped the structures of elite power in late nineteenth and early twentieth century towns and cities. In particular the value of focusing on given locations in acquiring empirical evidence to gauge if and how traditional urban elites did, or did not, engaged in towns and cities.

## **Methodology**

Given this thesis' focus on both the traditional elements of urban elite engagement such as municipal government and newer approaches centred upon urban governance, the methodology adopted in this study draws inspiration from a number of approaches already described above, as well as classical ways of understanding the urban sphere. Writing in the early 1980s, Checkland pointed to five idioms of approach:

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<sup>30</sup> Trainor, R. 'Elites in the Victorian City revisited', unpublished conference paper, *Victorian Cities Revisited: Heritage and History Conference*, Middlesbrough, October 2014

<sup>31</sup> Mullen, B. (ed.), 'Sir Arthur Dorman and Lady Dorman Golden Wedding', *Nunthorpe History Group Newsletter (NHGN)*, No.5, January 2013, 3-5



Firstly that which lies through an attempt to comprehend the city as a product and manifestation of a larger system of total interaction, namely society as a whole...Secondly, there is the thematic aspect...these can be grouped under five main headings, namely the economic, the social, the governmental, the spatial and the perceptual. Thirdly, there is what might be called the grand processes approach. By it, certain qualitative changes in society are envisaged...chief exemplars ...are industrialization (now also given its reverse form of de-industrialization), and urbanization (with perhaps a reverse paradigm of de-urbanization...the fourth approach which focuses upon a particular city...seen as the history of a closely observed town or city, viewed as an organism of interacting parts...conceived as urban biography...our fifth idiom, namely a family of cities within the same society, or group of societies...embodying a common experience rooted in geography or and history.<sup>32</sup>

As this thesis looks at the role of elites in wider society in Middlesbrough adopting a thematic approach which hones in on business, culture and participation during the industrialization of this particular town, in turn considering the experience of elite engagement in the wider corpus of studies of urban governance, this study in essence draws upon a number of Checkland's idioms.

In its concern on not only the council but also with the interactions between the various bodies involved in the governing of Middlesbrough through the various groups and movements within the civil society, the thesis echoes themes found amongst those studies which 'seek to understand the 'order' of British towns and cities between 1750 and 1950 [by identifying] multiple sources and patterns of power and authority involved in the

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<sup>32</sup> Checkland. S.G, 'An Urban History Horoscope', in Fraser, D. and Sutcliffe, A. (eds.), *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983), p.451

creation and implementation of policy, and in the social 'steering' attempted by elites and other interest groups.<sup>33</sup>

By focusing on this particular aspect of urban society from 1880-1934, the thesis both fails to fulfil the criteria, and yet goes beyond the scope, of those works arising towards the end of the twentieth century which adopted an approach Reeder termed 'urban biography in the modern style'.<sup>34</sup> Yet it also eagerly embraces 'fresh approaches and neglected themes' found in works found in modern urban biography, by exploring hitherto underexplored arena of urban governance in Middlesbrough, delving into the cultural and (semi) private lives of the elites beyond the town and makes use of newly accessible archival material. In doing so the thesis follows in the footsteps of the Binfield et al edited volumes on the history of Sheffield in its attempt to expose the complex, multifaceted 'interrelations between industry and the city'.<sup>35</sup>

The multipronged approach of exploring wider elements of Middlesbrough's steel magnates associational, business and cultural interactions during and beyond the period of decline is beneficial in a number of ways. In adopting a case study approach of selected provincial elites operating across different spheres of governance in a north-east manufacturing town, this thesis contributes to a key element of urban history and seeks to assist in fulfilling the need, identified by Rubinstein and Smith, for further exploration of the provincial elites, their activities and the means by which authority was exercised.<sup>36</sup> In exploring the wider spheres of Middlesbrough's elites' participation such as voluntary action, civic culture, public and private culture and leisure, this study looks to those areas

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<sup>33</sup> Morris, 'Governance: two centuries of urban growth', in Morris and Trainor, *Urban Governance*, p.12

<sup>34</sup> Reeder, D. 'The industrial city in Britain: urban biography in the modern style, *Urban History*, 25, 3 (1998), pp.368-378.

<sup>35</sup> Reeder, 'The industrial city in Britain', p.272

<sup>36</sup> Rubinstein, 'Britain's Elites in the Interwar Period, 1918-1939'; Smith, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930', pp.225-275.

traditionally overlooked where focus on 'urban government' has meant that the town's late Victorian manufacturers have been portrayed as disengaged from the town compared to their industrialist predecessors. In doing so the study contributes a better understanding of the urban elites role in the provincial towns through a plethora of agencies as has been evident in and emphasised by works since the turn of the century by Morris and Trainor, Doyle, Miskell, Kidd and Nicholls that look to business organisations, kinship networks, clubs, societies and voluntary action in understanding the role of urban elites into the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup> Importantly, as well as challenging the extent of withdrawal posited by Briggs in his excellent study of Middlesbrough, the thesis in moving into the interwar period also provides an interpretation of 'what happened next', both by exploring the 'significance of the cultural environment in which elite politics were formed' but not at the expense of the traditional spheres of politics and municipal government at the heart of Briggs' study, now often overlooked 'in the midst of other urban history enthusiasms such as civil society and culture',<sup>38</sup> In doing so the political differences that divided the elites between Liberal free traders and Conservative protectionists and Anglicans and non-conformists are considered alongside those areas that might be referred to as more cultural leaning that point to a heightened sense of elite homogeneity.

In order to understand divides and unity within Middlesbrough's elite along political and economic lines, and the degree of any coming together of those different ideological

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<sup>37</sup> Doyle, B.M (ed.), *Urban Politics in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Regional Perspectives* (Newcastle, 2007) introduces key themes in urban history at present, including 'Urban Politics' and 'The Urban Elites'. The collection acknowledges both the recent shift to a 'wider discussion of governance and participation', whilst not denying the undoubted continued importance of politics. See also Colls, R. and Rodger, R. (eds.), *Cities of Ideas: Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain 1800-2000* (Aldershot, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Doyle, 'Introduction', p.10; Trainor, R, 'Conflict, community and identity in Victorian and Edwardian Urban Politics: A case study of the Black Country', in Doyle, B.M. (ed.), *Urban Politics in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p.30

viewpoints and practices, this study focuses on Middlesbrough's steel magnates with a particular emphasis on the Dorman and Bell families – two of the leading manufacturing dynasties in the area that combined to contribute to the vast expansion of Dorman Long in the twentieth century. By adopting a focused approach centred on the Liberal free trader, second generation manufacturer Sir Hugh Bell, and the first generation industrialist and Conservative protectionist Sir Arthur, the approach showcases the ways in which these two magnates and their families embodied, on the one hand, patterns of elite unity and, on another, the conflict and divide across economic approaches and political affiliation despite operating within the same firm. This approach is useful as it also provides a solid case study approach with clear examples of the participation of the elites in and beyond the urban sphere and, moreover, moves beyond the First World War and with it, incorporates the role of the industrial elites during the interwar period which marked a key two decades of apparent economic and political change nationally and locally.

The focus on the steel magnates also helps this study avoid any over-simplified categorisation of elites as unified or in conflict, with the dynamics of elite interactions instead shown to be a more complex relationship across several spheres of urban governance and dictated as much by individualism as by party or policy. Adopting an approach centred upon Middlesbrough's two leading twentieth century manufacturers is also useful in facilitating comparisons and contrasts with the two leading earlier manufacturers referenced by Briggs - the founding ironmasters Henry Bolckow and John Vaughan. Through an assessment of the company, familial and individual activities underpinned by these two great steel manufacturers, this thesis argues that although their means of engagement with the town altered from the early ironmasters whose endeavours provided the platform for the early growth of the 'infant Hercules', the maturity of the infant was also underpinned by the steel magnates involvement in the later nurturing process.

Whereas the early manufacturers led by Bolckow and Vaughan set about establishing institutions, played a role in the burgeoning political and associational systems of Middlesbrough, the subsequent generations of industrialists led by Bell and Dorman remained active in supporting and improving the institutions – political, economic and philanthropic – established by their predecessors, whilst also leading new urban initiatives of their own.

### **The steel magnates**

It is useful at this point to turn attention to the two steel magnates who provide the central, but not only, focus of this assessment of the business, commercial and associational activities of Middlesbrough's manufacturing elites from the late nineteenth century into the interwar years. Arthur Dorman was born in Ashford, Kent in 1848, the son of a sadler and, having studied at Christ's College and in Paris, was amongst the body of men who moved to the area seeking economic opportunities, drawing upon family ties to work in a puddling furnace at ironworks in South Stockton (modern day Thornaby), worked in the rolling mill and fetched beer for his fellow puddlers.<sup>39</sup> Having progressed to managing director of an iron merchants, Dorman joined in business with Albert de Lande Long to establish the firm Dorman Long in 1875. In contrast, Sir Hugh Bell was the son of the prominent Chemist, Metallurgist and MP Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell and was educated at The Sorbonne and Gottingen University and travelled widely in his formative years. In contrast to Dorman's link to a distant relative working along the Tees, Bell in contrast was in the privileged position to undertake a career in heavy industry and in the tradition of familial capitalism was expected to pursue a career in the Bell Brothers firm his father had founded alongside John Bell and Charles Bell.

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<sup>39</sup> Willis, W.G 'Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell', *Cleveland History*, 26, (1981)

Dorman's modest early residence near Stockton also distinguished the Kent-born industrialists from his future business partner, who in his earlier years resided at the grand country house of Old Washington Hall in County Durham.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, given his familial links, Bell's early life as the son of a major industrialist meant he was seen as 'marked out for leadership in industry'.<sup>41</sup> The initial business pursuits of both individuals further reinforce the differences between the two. Dorman was able to contribute only £1,500 towards the purchase of Samuelson's West Marsh Works with Albert de Lange Long in 1876, leasing Samuelson's Britannia Works ten years later to begin larger scale manufacturing of steel that would eventually see the company dominate the industry. In stark contrast Hugh Bell combined role as his father's right hand man at his family's Bell Brothers works with forays into related industrial enterprises such as the railway, coal and iron industry made for a greater access to capital.<sup>42</sup>

As will be explored further in this thesis, the political and economic ideologies of the two men, notably on the issue of free trade and protectionism, could not have been more diametrically opposed. Bell was a renowned advocate of Free Trade, with Dorman stressing the need for a tariff on foreign iron and steel that, in his eyes, threatened to lead to a downfall in Middlesbrough which would see with grass growing in the streets of the town. The divide even spilled over into the letter columns of the local newspaper, *The North Eastern Daily Gazette*, with Dorman replying to his partner and firm friend but political opponent, Sir Hugh Bell, with 'vigorous, well-conceived, and cleverly reasoned' arguments.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Willis, 'Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell', p.19

<sup>41</sup> Bone, W.A. 'Obituary Notices. Sir Hugh Bell, Bart., C.B., D.L., LL.D., D.C.L. 1844-1931', *Journal of the Chemical Society*, 1932, 1327

<sup>42</sup> Bolckow Vaughan. *A Romance of Industry* (Cheltenham, 1928)

<sup>43</sup> *The Tees-side Chamber of Commerce Journal*, February (1931), p.141

Willis offers an insight into the 'clashes' between the two on the issue and gives a sense of the elite's combination of working together with conflicting ideologies:

This divergence of views - Sir Hugh when speaking to Sir Arthur on the telephone announced himself as "Free Trade speaking" to be met with a growl or a grunt – did not affect their friendship and mutual respect.<sup>44</sup>

Beyond political ideals, it will be shown how the Dorman Long business partners differed in their service to the Town Council, contrasting Bell's long-service, role as Mayor of Middlesbrough (thrice), Alderman, Justice of the Peace and Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding with Dorman's fairly sparse direct formal Town Hall in his short-lived role as councillor in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Their contrasting extent of engagement with business organisations and roles on national bodies will also be explored, with Bell active in a multitude of roles including as President of the Economic Section of the Royal Society, Chairman of the National Association of Manufacturers and President of the Iron and Steel Institute with Dorman exerting less high profile institutional influence as President of the National Federation of Iron and Steel Manufacturers.<sup>45</sup> Yet it will be shown that despite Bell's greater fame or prominence than his business partner, the dynamics of elite participation were varied and extensive with the perceived extent of urban engagement very much dependent upon to which aspect of urban society is assessed.

Both men held roles reflective of their industrial interests in the area and the expectation of industrialists to take an active role in the town's cultural and philanthropic affairs. This

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<sup>44</sup> Willis, 'Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell', p.21

<sup>45</sup> Stubbs, I. 'Some brief biographical notes about members of the Dorman Family', *Cleveland History*, 86, 2004, pp.39-48; Bone, W.A 'Obituary Notices. Sir Hugh Bell, Bart., C.B., D.L., LL.D., D.C.L. 1844-1931', *Journal of the Chemical Society*, 1932, pp.1325-1330; Willis, 'Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell', pp.19-28

thesis will show how Bell played an important role in supporting the development of education and leisure provision in the town,<sup>46</sup> whilst Dorman too was active in the local area, being awarded the Freedom of the Borough in recognition of 'the distinguished and manifold services he has rendered to the town', which included the Vice Presidency of the Captain Cook Bicentenary Committee, donations of buildings including the Dorman Museum, St Mary's Church, a new school and schoolhouse.

One element not explored in this study but perhaps a peripheral feature that underlines the cultural and personal differences between the two captains of industry was their appearance and persona. The two contrasted markedly with Bell often donning dark clothing, including a half morning coat, whilst Dorman 'invariably wore tweeds and appeared rather as a country squire than as head of a great industrial enterprise', fitting for a man who enjoyed walking around his Grey Towers estate at Nunthorpe.<sup>47</sup>



**Figure 1: Sir Hugh Bell and Sir Arthur Dorman attending a Dorman Long meeting at the Cleveland Institute, no date (Dorman Museum)**

<sup>46</sup> Willis, 'Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell', p.21; Bone, 'Obituary Notices. Sir Hugh Bell, Bart., C.B., D.L., LL.D., D.C.L. 1844-1931', *Journal of the Chemical Society*, 1932, p.1326

<sup>47</sup> Willis, 'Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell', pp.23-24



Yet as will be shown this gentrified, rural persona was not reflective of a man possessing just rural ideals, with Dorman combining the two in bizarre fashion with proxy-company meetings at his bedside. Although the residential patterns of the two steel magnates varied too in terms of the distance of their homes from Middlesbrough, it will be shown how despite apparent different geographical relationships to the urban sphere, both were in fact well-connected to Middlesbrough as to facilitate engagement with the town's citizens and urban institutions.

## Sources

As is evident from the brief summary above of the activities, affiliations and attributes of Dorman and Bell, these two steel magnates and their families were active in the businesses, political activities, philanthropic and voluntary action and culture of the manufacturing town, all of which will be explored further throughout this thesis. This thesis' exploration and original contribution to knowledge has been aided significantly by the ability to explore the role of elites in these various facets of urban governance and culture owing to the new availability of archival resources and technologies not readily at the disposal of predecessors who have explored nineteenth and twentieth-century Middlesbrough.

Most significantly for an assessment of the urban engagement of Middlesbrough's steel magnates, this study is amongst the first to draw upon the key output of the British Steel Archive Project – the British Steel Collection. Until recently the records of dozens of manufacturing firms and business associations which operated in the Cleveland, Middlesbrough and Teesside district have been relatively inaccessible to researchers. However, the introduction of a new information management system by British Steel in the 1990s which led to the collection's deposit at Teesside Archives meant that there was

potential to explore funding and project options for making this important material – including details of Bolckow Vaughan’s early enterprise and blueprints of Dorman Long’s Sydney Harbour Bridge – accessible to the public. The subsequent British Steel Archive Project in the late 2000s, supported by bodies including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Corus, the Community trade union and the AHRC, has made this material readily available to the public since 2011 following an extensive cataloguing, conservation and engagement programme.<sup>48</sup> The British Steel Collection provides key information on the operation of iron and steel firms including key Middlesbrough companies Bell Brothers, Bolckow Vaughan and Dorman Long, providing a key insight into the mechanisms of power within the companies, the decision-making processes within the organisations and the companies’ responses to the economic and social conditions of the towns that housed their business interests. In utilising the newly accessible collection, this thesis explores the history of Middlesbrough’s manufacturers at a time of peak interest at a local level, with other initiatives such as the £2.6m HLF supported Tees Transporter Bridge Visitor Experience also focusing on the story of the town’s iron and steel firms in new heritage trails and resources under development, whilst a multi-million project has also recently been completed to restore the grounds and remains of Henry Bolckow’s estate at Marton. Moreover, the 2015 end of steel manufacturing on Teesside has arguably led to a heightened interest and awareness of the area’s iron and steel heritage which offers the potential for this thesis and research arising from it to inform public understandings and celebration of this key part of the area’s identity.

Whilst the ready availability of these records has no doubt allowed for a better understanding of and access to information concerning the dynamics of authority, power, process and wider communal engagement by the iron and steel firms and the role played

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<sup>48</sup> See the British Steel Collection website <http://www.britishsteelcollection.org.uk/> for more details on the British Steel Archive Project and outcomes including company histories, an online accessible catalogue, conservation and community engagement activities.

by individuals in this process, there are of course limitations and problems posed by company records and an over-reliance on the information recorded in the minute books and annual reports.<sup>49</sup> The surviving records suffer from absences in the historic record which have limited their usefulness in exploring philanthropic contributions to given causes, particularly when it is recorded that a non-specified list of subscriptions having been laid out and agreed to. The agents in this process are often not recorded in the written record and furthermore, explanations of the reasons for agreeing a particular proposal or rejecting a request for support are sometimes not recorded. Cowman too has observed that whilst organisational records such as minute books can add to our knowledge of internal, private organisation and decision making processes but possess an array of 'potential gaps and limitations as a source' including the pitfalls and frustrations of 'unminuted discussion'.<sup>50</sup>

Beyond the iron and steel records, this study has also been able to draw upon increasingly sophisticated online newspaper archives which have allowed access to newspapers spanning decades from various parts of Britain and overseas with which the steel magnates were connected. In doing so this valuable resource has arguably provided a less arduous research process than those encountered by Briggs, Hadfield and even those contributors to The A.J. Pollard edited *Middlesbrough: Town and Community* collection published in 1996. Yet, again, there are limitations to the reach of the online search engines, optical character recognition software and the newspapers that have been digitised. Despite such limitations, this thesis has benefited greatly from digitisation of

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<sup>49</sup> Warwick, T. 'Business Archives and Voluntary Action, Voluntary Action History Society Blog, 2011 <<http://www.vahs.org.uk/2011/08/business-archives-and-voluntary-action/>> [Accessed 12 January 2013]

<sup>50</sup> Cowman, K. 'Minutes of the Last Meeting Passed': The Huddersfield Women's Social and Political Union Minute Book January 1907-1909, a New Source for Suffrage History', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13, 3 (2002), pp.298-315

resources which has helped aid the research process and promises to develop further capabilities with technological advances.

### **Structure of the thesis**

The organisation of this thesis plays an important part in its attempts to; firstly, challenge existing historiographies underpinned by those more traditional, narrower spheres of urban government, before then moving to explore those hitherto underexplored bordering on untouched themes centred upon the role of Middlesbrough's steel magnates beyond the Town Hall and direct business activity. Having outlined the purpose and aims of this thesis and established its place in the wider historiography of work exploring urban elites, Chapter 2 will provide an outline of the economic and social changes, developments and patterns in the area's iron and steel industries and the manufacturing town from the town's early days through to the interwar years by drawing extensively upon the records held in the British Steel Collection. This provides a useful platform for understanding the wider demographic, economic and social context in which Middlesbrough's steel magnates operated and shaped. It will be shown that the period from 1880 to 1934 reflected the cyclical nature of the iron and steel industries during this period and with it brought challenges in the management of the concerns and had an impact on Middlesbrough's socio-economic make-up. In Chapter 3, attention will then turn to the traditional spheres utilised when researching the roles of urban elites in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain, first turning attention to the municipal and political involvement of Middlesbrough's steel magnates. It will be shown how the traditional emphasis on a decline in involvement in the council and in local political mechanisms has been overemphasised, despite a general trend pointing to numerical decline in representation – itself a problematic issues. In particular, it will be shown that the figures are somewhat misleading as they do not take into account the elevation of ironmasters to the higher office of Alderman, which reflected

not only their standing amongst fellow councillors but also a willingness to continue to serve the council as one of its more elite members. Furthermore, it will be shown how the manufacturing mayors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reflected not only the continued steel magnates engagement in holding the municipality's most prestigious office, but furthermore, reflected the willingness of the new generations to engage in municipal politics at a time of increasing representation of the petite bourgeoisie. The role of Middlesbrough's steel magnates on co-opted bodies linked to the municipality will also be shown to be a continued arena for influence and active contribution to the functions of local government.

Focus turns to the business activities of Middlesbrough's steel magnates in Chapters 4 and 5. Attention will turn initially to the management and in-house operations of the iron and steel firm in Chapter 4. Specific reference will be made to Dorman Long – the company with which Bell Brothers, Bolckow Vaughan and Samuelson's had all amalgamated with by 1929 – in a case study approach that will showcase the role of the second and third generations of the industrialist families in the mechanisms of the iron and steel companies. The evolving role of Sir Hugh Bell, Sir Arthur Dorman and their families in the management of the business interests will be explored through assessment of their day-to-day activities in the company, positions occupied in the firm, contributions to projects and influence exercised in shaping the direction of the firm. The continued involvement of Sir Hugh Bell and Sir Arthur Dorman is chronicled across shifting ownership of the firm, the vast expansion of the firm, semi-retirement and the dynamics and challenges of familial capitalism. It will be contended that even with the rise of the general manager and an increased delegation of management duties owing to Dorman Long's expansion, the elder statesmen of industry remained active in the boardroom and

in representing the firm with both Bell and Dorman dying 'in harness' in 1931. Some of the different forms this continued engagement took will be outlined spanning representation of the firms at royal visits, continued input into corporate policy and even in their commitment to explore Dorman Long's operations first-hand on site in scaling the Tyne Bridge and heading to Sydney to inspect work on the Harbour Bridge in the mid-1920s. In continuing the focus on the firm beyond the death of the steel magnates, the last part of Chapter 4 will critically assess the direct implications this had for the continued involvement of the Bell and Dorman families within Dorman Long once its Victorian captains of industry had died.

Continuing on the theme of business, Chapter 5 extends exploration of Middlesbrough's steel magnates' commercial activities and interests through a focus on a selection of business associations in which they enjoyed varying degrees of authority and prestige. This case study approach assesses their role as members, leaders and patrons of organisations including the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association, the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce and the River Tees Conservancy Commissioners, pointing to how these bodies served as an extension of their own business interests as sites of urban governance, economic influence and political power. Through assessment of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association, the role of the leading manufacturing families in the organisation is showcased through the second and third generation steel magnates' involvement in representing the company (and with it, family) interest through membership, representation on committees and in serving as leaders of the Association. The Chamber of Commerce as a cross-trade organisation (albeit one centred on the manufacturing industries) will be shown to have relied heavily upon the support of the iron and steel firms and in turn, provided a recognised platform through which the steel magnates could legitimately exercise authority and negotiate both with central government and local organisations. It will be shown through the appointment of Mr Arthur Dorman as president

in the late 1930s that the second generation of industrialist families maintained an active role in commercial, associational life of the town beyond the firm beyond the period of this study. Furthermore, through a study of the duties of Sir Hugh Bell in his presidency of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners of some three decades, the benefits of focusing on a given individual in order to better understand the intricacies of authority, engagement and influence and how these were manifest.

Moving beyond the arenas of traditional focus into the spheres of urban governance beyond government, Chapter 6 assesses the role of the steel magnates in the arena of voluntary action. Once again a narrow selection of case studies are explored in order to understand the variations in both the extent of activity and mechanisms through which philanthropic, urban influence operated. Beginning with an assessment of the ways in which the iron and steel firm acted as a mechanism for elite patronage and urban engagement, initial focus turns to subscription lists which Flew has argued can help...

...uncover the different funding streams for an organisation and also to analyse how these funding streams changed over time....They can identify the businesses and people that made donations to the organisation. This, when analysed, uncovers which sector of society gave the most support'.<sup>51</sup>

Through analysis of company minute books held within the British Steel Collection alongside subscription records of philanthropic organisations operating in the district, it will be shown how both leading steel magnates, and the maligned second and third generations of industrialist families played a crucial role in deciding which philanthropic appeals to support and even the amounts to donate. Continuing the theme of philanthropy, the extent of steel magnate support of voluntary action beyond the firm in

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<sup>51</sup> Flew, S. 'Money, Money. Money', Voluntary Action History Society Blog, 2011  
<<http://www.vahs.org.uk/2011/10/money-money-money>> [Accessed 12 June 2015]

terms of holding honorific offices, offering personal financial support to existing institutions and in funding the development of new initiatives will be highlighted, pointing to the key role manufacturing families such as the Bells, Cochranes, Dormans and Samuelsons played in the development and extension of medical, educational and leisure provision, including through the actions of the wives and daughters of Middlesbrough's steel magnates. This includes contributions to bodies such as the Guild of Help, Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee and industrialist family led enterprises such as Lady Bell's Winter Garden and Lilian Dorman's Girls' Club.

Chapter 7 turns attention to that element of the industrial elites' interactions least understood – the cultural and private pursuits of Middlesbrough's manufacturers beyond the town amidst residential withdrawal. The chapter explores new ground in exploring the semi-private and public culture of Middlesbrough's steel magnates and considering what this might tell us about the extent to which changing residential patterns reflected the emergence of a 'gentrified' lifestyle immersed in the rural idyll and at odds with continued involvement in the 'Ironopolis'. In doing so the chapter highlights the implications of space and gender in the rural-residing elites' continued, indeed vibrant, interactions with the urban sphere and institutions headquartered in the manufacturing town. By turning attention to events such as visits of the Iron and Steel Institute, pageants and wedding anniversaries, the blurred boundaries between elite urban engagement and the country homes of Middlesbrough's steel magnates, positing the notion that these apparent embodiments of escape from the manufacturing town in fact played an important role as an extension of it.

In each chapter exploring different, albeit interconnected, aspects of urban government, governance and/or culture, this approach highlights the varied facets of steel magnate life,



operating across a number of spheres, which to different degrees reflected changing, continued and, at times, declining, urban participation. Clearly, the approach adopted here is but one of a multitude that might have been pursued given that the potential scope of this research topic is much wider and could cover many more or different aspects of urban elite life than those are addressed here. Yet in adopting a focus on key individuals, outlining the setting and exploring familiar terrains of urban government and less familiar elements of urban governance, this work reveals the wide ranging spheres of magnate influence. In drawing together these various strands of elite activity, the conclusion convincingly challenges emphasis on detrimental withdrawal from the urban sphere by Middlesbrough steel magnates, pointing to how the approach utilised in this thesis might prove beneficial when exploring the nature of elites, elite power, culture and space in other towns and cities.

## **Chapter 2: The Setting: Middlesbrough's industrial and demographic development**

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century Middlesbrough was a town entering a significant phase in its industrial development, building upon the foundations laid by the Quaker founding fathers and the early ironmasters. This chapter aims to provide an outline of the demographic, industrial and social context in which Middlesbrough's late nineteenth and early twentieth century steel magnates operated, exercised influence, contributed to wider urban governance and shaped the culture of the manufacturing town. Moreover, the chapter attempts to set the scene in terms of the early manufacturers' role in the development of Middlesbrough as a Victorian boom town and Ironopolis. In adopting such an approach, this chapter follows in the footsteps of Briggs' assessment of 'Middlesbrough: The Growth of a new community', in which the town's urban and industrial development by entrepreneurs is charted before moving on to consider how Middlesbrough allegedly did not, and could not, maintain its mid-Victorian, ironmaster-centric character. Furthermore, in outlining the narratives and trajectories of economic decline, industrial conflict, political battles in which the steel magnates engaged, business concerns and commitments of the manufacturers at given junctures, along with the wider societal challenges to which philanthropic initiatives responded, this chapter attempts to provide the reader with a greater understanding of Middlesbrough as both a platform and part of the wider issue of urban governance, elite withdrawal and decline in urban government.

### **Early development as a coal export hub**

During a visit to Middlesbrough in 1862, Gladstone famously declared this new industrial town on the banks of the Tees as a 'remarkable place, the youngest child of England's enterprise...an infant Hercules'. Indeed, in little over half a century, the town had experienced unprecedented growth from a small agrarian hamlet on the banks of the Tees

to one housing major iron works that had seen over 18,000 people flock to this growing urban concentrate. As other regions experienced the economic impact and demographic and social consequences of industrialisation, Middlesbrough was very much an insignificant hamlet out on a whim some five miles from the north-east coast. The changes that ensued in the subsequent decades of the nineteenth century made Middlesbrough a source of Victorian fascination and admiration in this age of industry.

The development of the modern, that is industrialised, Middlesbrough can be seen to have its origins in a group of Quakers, headed by Darlington's Pease dynasty, purchasing the Middlesbrough Estate in 1829 at a cost of £30,000, in turn becoming the 'Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate'.<sup>52</sup> With Stockton's coal export potential limited by both its lack of staithes and the River Tees' inability to allow for vessels of 100 tons or more to leave the berths at Stockton fully loaded, the directors of the Stockton & Darlington Railway recognised Middlesbrough's potential as a cheaper and shorter route for coal export by means of extension of the railway.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the key role played by railway in facilitating the transport of heavy raw materials underpinned the development of industrialised regions throughout Britain during this and ensuing decades.<sup>54</sup> In the case of Middlesbrough the first tangible benefits of this technology were in evidence when the first cargoes were loaded at the new staithes in January 1831.<sup>55</sup>

However, despite additional minor developments such as that of very small 'pottery and ironworks' by Otley, Davidson, Garbutt, Taylor et al in 1834,<sup>56</sup> as well as initial success in

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<sup>52</sup> North, G.A. *Teesside's Economic Heritage* (Cleveland, 1975), p.11

<sup>53</sup> North, *Economic Heritage*, p.11

<sup>54</sup> Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.25

<sup>55</sup> North, *Economic Heritage*, pp.11-12

<sup>56</sup> Reid, H.G. *Middlesbrough and its Jubilee* (Middlesbrough, 1881), p.84

coal exports, the local economy encountered stagnation by the end of the 1830s,<sup>57</sup> Ward Jackson having opened up West Hartlepool as a more efficient port for coal export.<sup>58</sup> The development of an iron and engineering works by Henry Bolckow and John Vaughan in 1839 was not initially a great success - Ore supply from Grosmont was inadequate and its transportation to the company's furnaces some 25 miles away at Witton Park cumbersome, the enterprise been saved from folding by support from the Pease family.<sup>59</sup> Modest developments occurred elsewhere in other spheres such as the service and building industries.<sup>60</sup> The trade depression in the late 1840s, however, brought many companies to their knees. The coal exporting trade at this point was all but lost to West Hartlepool, the Stockton & Darlington Railway encountered financial difficulties, and Joseph Pease, Bolckow Vaughan's eleventh hour saviour as bailiffs loomed, faced the real threat of bankruptcy himself.<sup>61</sup> The very fabric of this 'wonderful result of purely English enterprise and sagacity...[to] ever be recorded as one of the commercial prodigies of the nineteenth century', 'such stuff as dreams are made of', was seemingly quickly dissipating.<sup>62</sup>

Faced with such difficulties, John Vaughan subsequently sought significant iron ore seams in close proximity to make the Bolckow Vaughan venture economically feasible.<sup>63</sup> It was to be the 'discovery' of ore following detailed exploration, modern research having dismissed the 'chance discovery' popular amongst contemporaries that told of Vaughan

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<sup>57</sup> Moorsom, N. *The Book of Middlesbrough* (Buckingham, 1986), p.39

<sup>58</sup> Doyle, B. 'Corus – Men of Steel', in *Middlesbrough & Teesside Memories: Corus Special Edition* (Halifax, 2007), p.52

<sup>59</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.29

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, pp.15-17

<sup>61</sup> Moorsom, *The Book of Middlesbrough*, p.39; Nicholson, "Jacky' and the Jubilee' in Pollard (ed.), *Middlesbrough*, p.40

<sup>62</sup> Ord, J.W. *The History and Antiquities of Cleveland* (1846), p.535 cited in Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.9

<sup>63</sup> Doyle, 'Corus', p.52

(accompanied by John Marley, the mining engineer) kicking a stone out shooting in the Cleveland Hills,<sup>64</sup> that was to bring the 'qualitative and quantitative advance' that would see Middlesbrough's tangible and ideological environment transform dramatically.<sup>65</sup>

### **The discovery of Cleveland iron ore and the development of the iron industry, 1850-c.1880**

The 16-foot 'main seam' discovered in the Eston Hills in 1850 revitalized the local iron industry and spurred unparalleled expansion that 'inspired authors and industrial experts'.<sup>66</sup> It was to be the subsequent boom in pig and malleable iron manufacturing that would see Herculean rhetoric deployed in description of the town just 12 years later, the 'iron making capital of the world'.<sup>67</sup> Bolckow Vaughan officially opened Eston Mines in 1851 and its Eston Iron Works in February 1852 with 6 blast furnaces and a further 4 in Middlesbrough, having some 68 puddling furnaces in operation by 1863, the following year becoming a limited liability company.<sup>68</sup>

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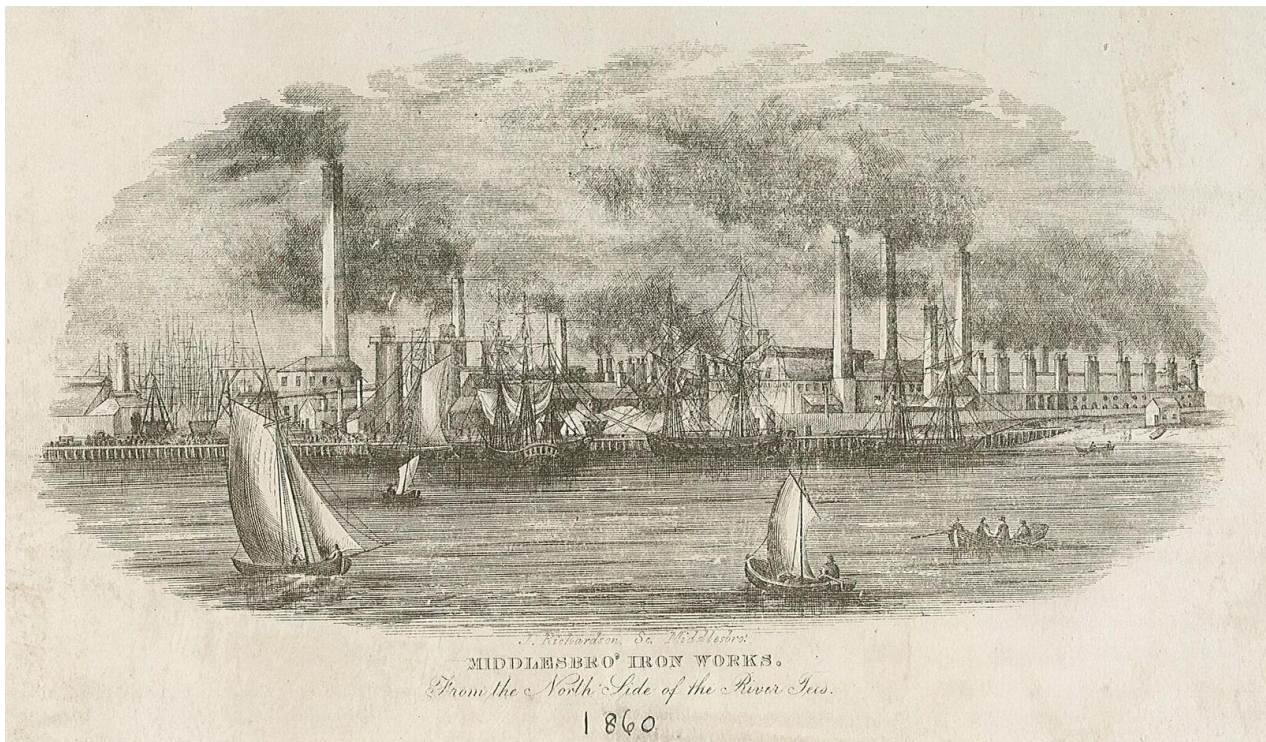
<sup>64</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', pp.29-30. For a contemporary understanding of the discovery in which 'by an accident Mr John Vaughan discovered iron stone' see the 'Fifty Years' Progress in Middlesbrough' from *The Daily Exchange*, Tuesday 3 March 1887, cited in Moorsom, N. *Middlesbrough in 1887* (Middlesbrough, 1988), p.1

<sup>65</sup> Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.25

<sup>66</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.96

<sup>67</sup> Doyle, 'Corus', p.53

<sup>68</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.97



**Figure 2: Early Middlesbrough ironworks and the River Tees (1860)**

The firm was quickly joined in large-scale iron production by the now familiar name (and a familial interest of one of the key figures of this study, Sir Hugh Bell) of Bell Brothers, the company expanding rapidly on the north bank of the Tees from its initial 2 furnaces in 1854 to 8 by 1865 and 12 in 1875.<sup>69</sup> Similarly well-known names as Fox, Head & Co., Sir Bernhard Samuelson's, Cochranes, Gilkes, Wilson and Pease, Hopkins and Co., Gjers Mills too developed interests in and around Middlesbrough as the town became increasingly defined by this single industry.<sup>70</sup> The increase in iron production was nothing short of spectacular, 1852's 46,200 tons dwarfed by 1854's 81,000 tons, a figure that

<sup>69</sup> James, S. 'Bell Brothers', <[www.britishsteelcollection.org.uk](http://www.britishsteelcollection.org.uk)> [Accessed 21 July 2010]

<sup>70</sup> Reeder, D and Rodger, R. 'Industrialisation and the city economy, in Dauntton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History*, note Middlesbrough amongst a number of 'highly specialised industrial towns...entirely dominated by a single industry', with 'concentration reinforced when the leading industry was in the hands of one or two large organisations... [Such as] the two large firms (after 1914) of Dorman Long and Bolckow Vaughan', p.564.

tripled to 305,000 by 1859, a figure again almost doubled by 1861's 609,900 ton haul, even more impressive considered in light of slumps in the late 1850s.<sup>71</sup>

Year	Iron Production increase, 1852-861 (tons)
1852	46,200
1854	81,000
1859	305,000
1861	609000

**Figure 3: Cleveland Iron Production, 1852-1861<sup>72</sup>**

Moreover, expansion in the iron industry directly facilitated the development of the dependent engineering and ship building industries. Rake Kimber and Co. made the first iron ship at Middlesbrough in 1858, whilst Backhouse and Dixon shipyards sprung up on the banks of the Tees in the mid-1860s.<sup>73</sup> However, the 1860s would further highlight the problems associated with the fluctuating demands for the produce of heavy industry and problems of industrial unrest. The mid-1860s again saw a period of slump, fall in demand and further strikes as factors staggering growth with workers striking for increased pay and reduced hours, including 1,200 workers at Bolckow Vaughan and later 1,500 men at Hopkins' in protest at the company's comparative low wages.<sup>74</sup> The particularly turbulent

<sup>71</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, pp.99-100; Taylor, 'Infant Hercules', *Middlesbrough*, p.55

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Taylor, 'Infant Hercules', p.57

<sup>74</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, pp.99-100; Taylor, 'Infant Hercules', pp.55-57



decade of industrial strife was in contrast to the comparatively amenable industrial relations enjoyed by the later steel magnates achieved through conciliation and joint committees.

Despite the challenges of the 1860s, the iron industry weathered the storm. The early years of the 1870s proved prosperous, Henry Bessemer, the President of the Iron & Steel Institute recording 'the favourable circumstances, and happy auspices' under which the Institute convened in August 1872.<sup>75</sup> Samuelson had launched his new Britannia Iron Works with a capital of £200,000, whilst the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association reported an increase in pig iron production to 493,605 tons the previous quarter compared to 478,120 tons for the same period in 1871, with the following year considered the zenith of iron production in the town.<sup>76</sup> In 1873 the district's puddling furnaces topped 400 in number whilst 120 blast furnaces with a total output topping 2 million tons per annum were in blast.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, 600,000 tons of wrought iron was produced in the same period, as demand for iron and iron products peaked owing to railways expanding around the world, iron ships replacing wooden ones and the use of iron in construction and decorative works.<sup>78</sup>

### **The challenge of steel, steady expansion, competition and war: c.1880 – 1918**

The period of rapid growth in the iron industry came to an end as 1873 drew to a close in harsh, devastating circumstances with the onset of a great depression reducing new investment and staggering output in Middlesbrough, nationally and internationally.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *The Journal of the Iron & Steel Institute*, Vol. II, August 1872, p.3

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p.204; Bullock, I. 'Origins of Economic Growth on Teesside, 1851-1881', *Northern History*, Vol. IX (1975), p.87

<sup>77</sup> Taylor, 'Infant Hercules', p.57. See also H. Beynon et al. *A Place Called Teesside: A Locality in a Global Economy* (Edinburgh, 1994), pp.26-27

<sup>78</sup> Doyle, 'Corus', p.53; *The Journal of the Iron & Steel Institute*, Vol. II, August 1872, p.210 has Isaac Lowthian Bell, speaking in May 1872, as estimating Cleveland provided 'close on one-third' of British pig iron.

<sup>79</sup> Bullock, 'Origins', p.85. See also Vaizey, J. *The History of British Steel* (London, 1974), pp.6-9



Writing in the 1950s, Lillie, County Librarian and author of the only major history of the town to date, described the late 1870s as 'critical years in our [Middlesbrough's] industrial history as Steel was beginning to replace Iron'.<sup>80</sup> Taylor has dubbed the period from the 1870s up to the outbreak of the Great War one of 'maturity, prosperity and poverty', a period of 'mixed economic fortunes' where fluctuating, cyclical demand making uncertainty an 'ever-present reality for many employers and employees'.<sup>81</sup> Certainly the depression in the 1870s had severe consequences for both the smaller iron firms in the area and the well-known companies, impacting directly on the ironmasters themselves. Operations ceased at Fox, Head & Co.'s Newport Rolling Mill as malleable iron production felt the effects of falling demand, whilst Bolckow Vaughan, the town's largest employer, closed all puddling furnaces at Middlesbrough, whilst over at Samuelson's the Britannia Ironworks that has opened just a few years earlier, followed suit. The closure of the Britannia Works would, however, have longer term consequences for this study with the decline in the iron market eventually resulting in Arthur Dorman and Albert De Lande Long leasing the works for their new steel enterprise.

The difficulties of the mid to late 1870s had pointed firmly in the direction of steel as the only viable way forwards. With the area 'beginning to go out of mourning'<sup>82</sup> for the iron trade, steel was posing a heightened threat to iron's predominance in the boiler and ship plate trade, with iron's stranglehold on the rail market having all but been relinquished at the expense of steel.<sup>83</sup> Nationally, the switch to steelmaking was a more staggered process than the mushroom like growth of the iron trade, McCloskey noting the 'miserably

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<sup>80</sup> Lillie, *Centenary*, p.27

<sup>81</sup> Taylor, 'Infant Hercules', p.60

<sup>82</sup> *NEDG*, 8 April 1879

<sup>83</sup> Doyle, 'Corus', p.54

slow pace', with steel growth nationally occurring at less than 1% per year.<sup>84</sup> At a local level, the scale of this change varied between the companies in and around the town. The transition to steel from iron afforded opportunities for both established firms and newcomers to emerge from the peripheries, most notably Dorman and Long whose enterprise would go on to define twentieth century industry on Teesside. Bolckow Vaughan established their first steel works at Eston in 1876, having already purchased a steel works in Manchester and Spanish ore mines.<sup>85</sup> Gilchrist and Thomas, the developers of the basic steel production process that removed unwanted phosphorus – a particular problem in Middlesbrough's shift to steel production given the high levels of phosphorus in the local ore - established the North Eastern Steel Company in 1881.<sup>86</sup> Meanwhile, Dorman Long, set up by Arthur John Dorman with Albert de Lande Long in 1875 in leasing the West Marsh iron works, switched their initial focus from iron puddling to steel, utilising its old Rolling Plant and appealing to its old client base, and purchased the Britannia works of Sir Bernhard Samuelson in 1879.<sup>87</sup> In the long-term Dorman Long's pursuance of steel production would see them become the second largest steel firm in the country in the year before the outbreak of the Great War.<sup>88</sup> Bell Brothers were slower to pursue the transition to steel, their perseverance in the iron industry reflected in the company only leasing out their ironstone mines at Normanby in 1883.<sup>89</sup>

Despite disparities in the chronology and extent of uptake of steel manufacturing, the 1880s saw Middlesbrough emerge as a steel-producing town, with the *Daily Gazette* in 1882 having little doubt that steel was 'The Future Capital of Cleveland', reporting that this

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<sup>84</sup> McCloskey, D.N. *Economic Maturity and Entrepreneurial Decline: British Iron and Steel, 1870-1913* (Harvard, 1973), pp.40-46 cited in Tolliday, S. *Business, Banking and Politics: The Case of British Steel, 1918-1939* (London, 1987), p.48

<sup>85</sup> Doyle, 'Corus', p.54; Lillie, *Centenary*, p.28

<sup>86</sup> 'Memorandum and Articles of Association, N.E.S. Co. Ltd', 1881, TA, 21\1\22

<sup>87</sup> Lillie, *Centenary*, p.28; Tolliday, *Business, Banking and Politics*, p.47; Judge, *Dorman Long*, p.5

<sup>88</sup> Tolliday, *Business*, p.47

<sup>89</sup> North, *Economic Heritage*, p.24

'many-sided branch of industry is firmly established here...[and] new and extensive steel works are being constructed'.<sup>90</sup> Bolckow Vaughan, despite a decline in demand for steel rails, declared a profit of £132,788 in 1886, whilst Dorman Long under the stewardship of Arthur Dorman developed its steel operations in the form of three Siemen-Martin 18-ton furnaces with capacity to turn out 600 tons of steel a week.<sup>91</sup> The company became a limited liability company in 1889, a trend Briggs has aligned with the rise of managers that lacked commitment to the locale.<sup>92</sup>

A slowing down in growth towards the end of the 1880s and decline in the early 1890s would again highlight that despite the shift to steel, the vulnerability to depression and cyclical demand was still very much part of the town's economic make up.<sup>93</sup> The early to mid-1890s figures yielded more depressing results as a worldwide depression and resultant fall in demand for steel railways hit the area hard, with Dorman Long hampered by the cancellation of orders which led to a loss of £100,000 in 1891.<sup>94</sup> Industrial unrest and depression would further dampen trading results at Dorman Long, with no dividend paid in 1895. Similarly, the fluctuations posed problems for Bell Brothers, the firm undergoing financial restructuring in both 1895 and 1899 which marked the development of collaboration with Dorman Long, explored in further depth in Chapter 4. One of the key firms to emerge during this period was South Durham Steel and Iron Company under the control of William Gray and Christopher Furness who also played an important role in the political and civic life of the Hartlepoons, later joined by Benjamin Talbot who was appointed director in 1904.<sup>95</sup> The amalgamations and coming together of industrialists in the early decades of the twentieth century are significant to note in assessing the

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<sup>90</sup> *Daily Gazette*, 3 March 1882, p.2

<sup>91</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.289

<sup>92</sup> Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.257

<sup>93</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.290

<sup>94</sup> Judge, *Dorman Long*, p.6

<sup>95</sup> North, *Economic Heritage*, p.28; Willis, W.G. *History of South Durham Steel & Iron Co. Ltd* (Portsmouth, 1969), Foreword

mechanisms of power and influence in the district's manufacturing industries, with Vaizey's study of the British Steel industry noting changes during the early part of the century across Britain, despite the hundreds of firms engaged in the steel industry, meant 'output was in the hands of a relatively small number' of industrialists.<sup>96</sup>

Outlining some of the problems and fluctuations that had come to characterise the industry too are useful in providing the background to some of the causes of unemployment and hardship in Middlesbrough that, almost in a cyclical fashion, saw the citizens of the town turn to the indirect support of steel magnate families offered through the philanthropic enterprises industrialists supported.<sup>97</sup> Long-term decline and challenge from abroad during this period coupled with the dumping of cheap foreign steel also led to relative decline in Britain's share of the market which has subsequently been aligned with British entrepreneurial failure.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, the adoption of import tariffs, allowed these two emerging world powers to gain a larger share of the world market in the opening decade of the new century.<sup>99</sup> Nationally, the British steel industry endured a period of slow growth in overall demand as America and Germany established this unassailable dominance,<sup>100</sup> with

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<sup>96</sup> Judge, *Dorman Long*, p.6; North, *Economic Heritage*, p.29; Doyle, 'Corus', p.55; Pitt, 'How the mighty have fallen: Bolckow Vaughan Co. Ltd. 1864-1929', p.7, 19th Annual Accounting, Business & Financial History Conference, Cardiff, September 2007, <[www.cardiff.ac.uk/carbs/conferences/abfh07/pitts.pdf](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/carbs/conferences/abfh07/pitts.pdf)> [Accessed 10/06/2010].

<sup>97</sup> Turner, J.J. 'Middlesbrough and The National Coal Strike of 1912', *Cleveland History*, No. 43, Autumn 1982, p.1

<sup>98</sup> Boyce, G. 'Cargo Fleet Iron Company, 1900-1914: Entrepreneurship, Costs, and Structural Rigidity in the Northeast Coast Steel Industry', *Business History Review*, 63 (Winter 1989), pp.841-842; Elbaum, B. 'The Steel Industry before World War I', in Elbaum, B. & Lazonick, W (eds.) *The Decline of the British Economy* (Oxford, 1987), Table 1 (p.59) shows an increase in total British output of steel compared with the USA's much more rapid growth.

<sup>99</sup> Vaizey, *British Steel*, pp.8-9 notes that of the 18.36 million tons of steel produced in 1896, Britain produced less (4.13 million tons) than both their counterparts in Germany (4.63 million tons) and the United States (5.28 million tons), Britain's share of the market dropping further by 1906 with Germany producing 10.53 million tons and the USA 23.40 million tons of the estimated world output of 50.40 million tons, Britain producing only 6.46 million tons.

<sup>100</sup> Vaizey, *British Steel*, pp.8-9

Elbaum arguing it was at this point that the British steel industry 'surrendered world leadership...[and] a spiral of competitive decline from which it has never recovered'.<sup>101</sup>

From the turn of the century to the outbreak of the First World War, Middlesbrough was beset with fluctuating fortunes and was hit hard by a number of acute depressions.<sup>102</sup> Reports of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade and the *Gazette* echoed concerns at the fortunes of industry and reported on infrequent operations, declining prices and the blowing out of furnaces.<sup>103</sup> The decline in the local area's industry continued in the subsequent years with Henry Lee, Chairman and Director of Bolckow Vaughan and to whom this thesis returns later, observing the consequences of 'sudden change' that had seen profits decline, reductions in dividends paid, wage reductions, and conditions which made it 'impossible for us [Bolckow Vaughan] to forecast our prospects'.<sup>104</sup> Periodic optimism was found across several firms with Arthur J Dorman in 1906 arguing 'the general condition of the steel trade promises well for the year',<sup>105</sup> justified with the company's investment in plant development assisting a profit of £176,231 in 1906, compared to just £10,923 in 1905,<sup>106</sup> with profits increasing further to £224,192 in 1907.<sup>107</sup> These trends are important to outline not for pointing to the relative prosperity in the town, but rather in showing a Dorman Long board made up of second and third generation industrialists enjoying at least some success arising from investment in plant improvement. Yet lower prices, poor orders, 'vanishing margins of profit', severe hardship and

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<sup>101</sup> Elbaum, 'The Steel Industry', p.53

<sup>102</sup> Astor & Bowley, *The Third Winter of Unemployment: The Report of an Inquiry Undertaken in the autumn of 1922* (London, 1922), p.240

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>104</sup> 'AGM 1901', BV, TA, BS.BV/13/2/1 pp.13-15

<sup>105</sup> 'AGM 1905', DL, p.7, TA, BS.DL/1/6/14

<sup>106</sup> 'AGM 1906', DL, p.11, TA, BS.DL/1/6/15; 'AGM 1907', DL, p.14, TA, BS.DL/1/6/16

<sup>107</sup> 'AGM 1907', DL, p.14, TA, BS.DL/1/6/16

unemployment would return and see the formation of bodies such as the Guild of Help in the town.<sup>108</sup>

On the cusp of the outbreak of the steel industry enjoyed a recovery locally and the events at the end of June 1914 in Sarajevo would indirectly have a profound effect on the town's steel industry, with Middlesbrough's iron and steel industries gearing themselves towards the war effort, producing a wide range of products and munitions and in employing women also seeing the steel magnates exert direct authority, albeit mediated by the government, on a female workforce for the first time. Throughout the war effort Dorman Long placed the whole of its resources at the disposal of the Government and the works underwent a number changes to match the demand, including the purchase and expansion of the previous idle works of Walker Maynard & Co. at Redcar, as well as the later purchase of the Newport Ironworks at Middlesbrough (1917).<sup>109</sup>

In terms of the financial implications of the war years for the steel magnates' companies, the Great War provided something of mixed fortunes and in the long-term would have an impact on the operation and future direction of the firms and associations of which Sir Hugh Bell and Sir Arthur Dorman were and would later be closely affiliated with. Most notably, a long legal battle between the government and a Bolckow Vaughan reliant on government reimbursement to the tune of £592,674 for plant development during the war would help push the firm towards the 1929 amalgamation with Dorman Long.<sup>110</sup> Despite the manifold issues that arose from the various companies' engagement in war service, it

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<sup>108</sup> 'AGM 1909', DL, pp.13-16, BS.DL/1/6/18

<sup>109</sup> Robertson, *Middlesbrough's Effort*, p.34, 211; North, *Economic Heritage*, p.59. In fact, of all the major steel firms on Teesside, it was only South Durham and Cargo Fleet that did not undertake programmes of expansion during the war years or immediately after.

<sup>110</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the case see Pitts, 'Bolckow Vaughan', pp.29-31

can be said that the period was one of general profitability and heightened demand, albeit often for products that required modification of pre-war machinery and processes.<sup>111</sup>

### **Post-war boom to blues, 1918-34**

Despite the optimism that prevailed before the outbreak of war and during the troubles, the post war years failed to deliver the boom in the industry that had been anticipated. Addressing Dorman Long's shareholders in March 1920, Sir Arthur Dorman, in something of a triumphant manner, reflected on the history of the firm in an attempt to illustrate the vast expansion and growth that had occurred since becoming a limited liability company in 1889. Nevertheless, no matter how Sir Dorman might have tried to gloss over it, the recent expansion by accumulation that included the purchase of the Carlton Iron Co and that at Redcar of Walker Maynard's, saw the geographical spread of Dorman Long over what Tolliday has described as 'a large, rather disconnected area without any clear center of production'.<sup>112</sup> Going further, Tolliday has considered the general structures of the firms entering the 1920s as ones with 'a motley collection of new and old plant and a clear need for a major shakedown, concentration, centralization, and reorganization'.<sup>113</sup> These developments are important to consider when forming an understanding of the Middlesbrough's steel magnates at the heart of this study as to remove the elites from the wider social and economic context in which they operated. For instance, by considering the impact of the 'difficult twenties' which included coal strikes of 1920 and 1921, cyclical worldwide downturn in the steel industry and local issues also contextualises and underlines the importance of the steel magnates' enterprises in everyday life in Middlesbrough.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> 'AGM 1919', DL, p.12, BS.DL/1/6/28; 'AGM 1919', SD, pp.2-5, BS.SDS/1/8/14

<sup>112</sup> Tolliday, *Business*, p.51

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, pp.51-52

<sup>114</sup> Vaizey, *British Steel*, p.30; Astor & Bowley, *Third Winter of Unemployment*

By placing the steel magnates amidst wider societal concerns and occurrences that go beyond, but are not separate to, the nuances of business mechanics and organisations focused on elsewhere in this thesis, this brief introduction to Middlesbrough as a manufacturing centre is important in providing an overview and context. In highlighting the fortunes of the iron and steel industries throughout the period and providing an overarching summary of their wider societal impact and some of the implications of their strife and success, the centrality of the steel magnates' enterprises has been underlined. As such, the value of exploring the role of the industrialists responsible for managing these enterprises is underlined, as is a sense of their relative position in the wider story of the Ironopolis.



### **Chapter 3: Steel Magnates and the evolution of Middlesbrough's political culture**

Just as the late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban elites' economic and business activities encountered a state of flux owing to a combination of heightened labour representation and the maturity of Middlesbrough's commercial sphere, the political dynamic too has been seen as having changed markedly throughout the period. With the ironmasters having dominated the early municipal and parliamentary hierarchies of the burgeoning manufacturing town, led chiefly by that chief protagonist Henry Bolckow so often the figurehead of meetings, committees, civic gatherings and celebration, the death of the founding father in 1878 meant that from the last quarter of the nineteenth century the town's manufacturers entered uncharted territory. This chapter will consider the political participation of Middlesbrough's steel magnates in the shift from active engagement in Middlesbrough's political life to a more withdrawn role by the turn of the century. Firstly however, some of the methodological issues concerning gauging and quantifying power in the political arena will be briefly touched upon.

The very analysis of the extent of elite, and indeed wider, political engagement and power is fraught with difficulties from the outset for historians, particularly those looking to untangle the web of individuals and groups who sought representation from the nineteenth century onwards, an issue observed by Roth and Beachy as they asked the question 'who ran the cities?':

It is notoriously difficult to analyse the distribution of political power in modern cities.

With the rise of broad political participation through the course of the nineteenth

century, the questions of how and whether traditional elites maintained influence in municipal government are not easily answered.<sup>115</sup>

Continuing, the same authors have suggested that the way to overcome this problem is to

Combine several fields of research, which have otherwise often remained separate: the economic, social and cultural history of elite groups, on the one hand, and the political history of power resources and decision-making on the other.<sup>116</sup>

Thus, when considering both the homogeneity of the urban elites and the relative contribution of a given group or individual to the political arena, it is important to look at those who held municipal and parliamentary office and to consider whether holding office (or indeed not holding office) meant given individuals were in fact the executors of political power. A much celebrated Alderman or Mayor might not necessarily be heavily engaged at a hands-on level in the political decision making process. Jones' study of municipal politics of Birmingham has pointed to the difficulties in gauging and quantifying influence despite several studies existing on the composition of the second city's council.<sup>117</sup> For Middlesbrough, Hadfield too has observed the problems surrounding the use of titular recognition in quantifying power and decision making:

In 1865 seven ironmasters appeared as members of the Election Committee for the Liberal Candidate [in the North Riding], whilst others served on a committee specifically for the town. (Of course, a name on a list is no indication of how active

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<sup>115</sup> Roth, R. & Beachy, R. 'Introduction: Who Ran the Cities?' in Roth, R. and Beachy, R., *Who Ran the Cities? City Elites and Urban Power Structures in Europe and North America, 1750-1940* (Aldershot, 2007), p.xvi

<sup>116</sup> Roth & Beachy, 'Introduction', p.xvi

<sup>117</sup> Jones, L.J. 'Public Pursuit of Private Profit? Liberal Businessmen and Municipal Politics in Birmingham, 1865-1900', *Business History*, No. XXV, p.240.

persons were, and it may have been that membership for many was purely a matter of form).<sup>118</sup>

Evidently, establishing the exercise of authority by Middlesbrough's steel magnates in both parliamentary and particularly municipal affairs is something of a minefield. Merely looking to the lists of councillors, alderman, MPs and mayors that served the town before, during and after our period is insufficient and instead the more complex networks and mechanisms of election campaigns and political organisations, interactions in the Council Chamber and public political performance are aspects in need of further study in order to understand the structure and extent of elite power. Nevertheless, the composition lists should not be readily dismissed as irrelevant and unreflective as holding of office, whether it be by general election or conferred by peers, indicates both the desire of the wider community for industrialists to remain in the fold (even if only as figureheads) and a willingness and even eagerness by the likes of Arthur Dorman and Hugh Bell to serve the town in public service. With these considerations in mind, this chapter will adopt both a quantitative and qualitative approach in assessing the extent of political participation by the leaders of the iron and steel industry during a period that was preceded by the broadening of political representation of the working classes and by the end of it had seen the town's industrialists contest parliamentary and municipal elections in an environment of universal suffrage.

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<sup>118</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.240, p.260. The North Riding committee members included Isaac Lowthian Bell, H.W.F. Bolckow, John Vaughan and Isaac Wilson, whilst the Middlesbrough committee members included C.F.H Bolckow, E. Gilkes, H.F. Pease and Bernhard Samuelson

## Perceptions of Middlesbrough's early elites' political engagement

Fraser's introduction as editor of the collection on municipal reform and the industrial city suggests nineteenth century councils sought to 'establish their social status by the participation of leading urban citizens', a trait very much in evidence in Middlesbrough's Town Council's formative years.<sup>119</sup> The perception of Middlesbrough's 'traditional elites' – its early Quaker entrepreneurs and founding industrialists - has been one of an elite dominated by the major proprietors of its coal and iron industries only to decrease in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, little analysis of political activity in Middlesbrough has focused upon the practical, decision making elements of municipal involvement with the temptation to instead point to the raw statistics of council composition and holding of office. Briggs study of the 'new community' of Middlesbrough noted the numerous industrialists that served as the town's early mayors and referenced Bolckow's role as Middlesbrough's first Member of Parliament in 1868, yet said little of the ways in which such figures contributed to the day-to-day activities of the Town Council or in representing their constituents. The Middlesbrough seat was the most working class constituency on Teesside but its 'instinctive Liberalism' that had seen Henry Bolckow's (1868-1878) tenure as the seat's inaugural occupier succeeded by fellow ironmaster Isaac Wilson's fourteen years in office (1878-1892) was under challenge by the turn of the century. In 1892 a 'Lib-Lab' candidate defeated the official Liberal Candidate, barrister W.S. Robson, bringing 'to the surface new elements in Middlesbrough's political life' with the political flavour changing again in 1900 with the Conservative and Chemical Manufacturer Samuel Sadler enjoying narrow success in taking the seat in 1900.<sup>120</sup> In 1906 and 1910 the Liberals were successful with steel magnate Penry Williams, son of Victorian ironmaster Edward Williams, successful in the latter election and retaining the

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<sup>119</sup> Fraser, D. 'Introduction: Municipal reform in historical perspective', in Fraser (ed.) *Municipal reform and the industrial city* (Leicester, 1982), p.7

<sup>120</sup> Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.260

seat into the 1920s. In the Cleveland Division of the North Riding, Middlesbrough's neighbouring constituency, the presence of iron-stone miners more or less guaranteed the seat for the Liberals.

For the period of this study, the overt role played by the town's steel magnates in terms of acting as Councillors on the town council or Members of Parliament for the Middlesbrough constituency (and later the town's two constituencies) declined, with numerical representation in sharp decline. The period saw the heightened challenge for urban political power from a plethora of those lower down the socio-economic scale, ranging from the petty bourgeoisie grocer to the blastfurnaceman at the local steel works. Yet it is unclear whether this led to a decline in the industrial elites' front line engagement, with the elite reframing their position in Middlesbrough's political apparatus.

There were no such issues in Middlesbrough's early municipal or parliamentary affairs, with the chiefly Liberal *Middlesbrough Weekly News* under the stewardship of Liberal Joseph Richardson expressing no doubt as to the centrality of the ironmasters as the key candidates as the first Parliamentary election for the Borough loomed, reporting how three of the four initially proposed candidates were ironmasters and suggesting that should Bolckow stand, 'no one would think of opposing him'.<sup>121</sup> Their central importance is reaffirmed in the *Weekly News* considering the next week the potential of Thomas Vaughan, son of Bolckow's founding partner John Vaughan, standing as a parliamentary candidate.<sup>122</sup> The homogeneity of the elite in evidence through intermarriage also appears to have been an apparatus that spilled over into the political arena, with Wilson citing amongst his reasons not to oppose Bolckow, which also included the weakness of the

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<sup>121</sup> *Middlesbrough Weekly News*, 21 June 1867

<sup>122</sup> *Middlesbrough Weekly News*, 2 July 1867, cited in D.W. Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', pp.273-274

Conservatives in the town, the friendship with Bolckow and his position as a relative through marriage.<sup>123</sup>

Henry Bolckow's uncontested election should not belie the fact that all the subsequent parliamentary elections up to 1886 were contested with varying ferocity, including the great ironmaster himself having to stave off the contest of ironworker's union secretary John Kane and Conservative ironmaster W.G. Hoskins in the 1874 contest. The 1874 election, the first to use the secret ballot, was further significant in John Kane's polling of more votes than the Conservative ironmaster Hopkins, strengthening Lewis' argument that 'Kane's candidature broke the brittle unity of the industrial and commercial elite of the town'.<sup>124</sup>

Having successfully seen off the contest of the Conservative candidate Samuel Alexander Sadler at the by-election of 1878, Isaac Wilson again saw off opposition from Sadler, as well as the Lib-Lab/ 'Independent Liberal' Candidate E.D. Lewis in 1880. The other contested election of the 1880s, that of 1885, saw Wilson triumph over shipbuilder Raylton Dixon, a well-respected employer in Middlesbrough and director at previous contender's Samuel Sadler's chemical works. Dixon fought a valiant campaign and increased the Conservatives' share of the vote to over 30 percent of the vote, a marked improvement on both Hopkins' and Sadler's performances.<sup>125</sup> Thus, the decades prior to and at the beginning of this current study can be seen as significant in terms of parliamentary political terms, as both seeing the position of Liberal industrialists challenged more substantially by both Conservatives of a similar occupational background, and significantly, in 'three cornered fights [with] the third candidate standing as a labour or working man's

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<sup>123</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.274

<sup>124</sup> Lewis, 'The Evolution of a Political Culture', pp.114-115

<sup>125</sup> Pimlott Baker, A. 'Dixon, Sir Raylton (1838–1901)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46882>> [accessed 6 January 2011]

representative'.<sup>126</sup> The rise of the third party would eventually see the defeat of the Liberal Party to which the vast majority of the ironmasters were aligned, not only by the Labour vote, but also the Conservatives.

In terms of the wider political apparatus of party in the town at the beginning of this study, the key Liberal political figures in the town were 'leading industrialists, who were by and large ironmasters', whilst the Conservatives' hierarchy was made up of the local gentry interspersed by the occasional industrialist.<sup>127</sup> Yet the importance of the iron and steel industries was not lost on the Conservatives when putting forward nominees, with those who stood for parliamentary office having strong interests in the iron and steel industries of the town through directorships, shares or reliance on the said industries for supply and demand for their respective shipbuilding and chemical industries. From the 1880s onwards the political party dynamic changed with the third party candidacies having a profound effect on the parliamentary role played by the captains of the town's iron and steel industries. Not only would the challenge from below see the Liberals defeated by the labour vote, but it would also benefit the weak Conservative interest in the town by splitting the left. Furthermore, by the early 1880s the Liberal Association too was in a state of flux, Briggs noting that the re-formed 1881 Association 'failed to win the substantial support from the ironmasters'.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, the presidency of ironmaster Hugh Bell was hailed as the last of the great leaders, with the Conservative *Middlesbrough Daily Exchange* delighting in reporting of this 'last rose of the summer'.<sup>129</sup> Hadfield has also pointed to a decided lack of support from other ironmasters received by H.F. Pease in his Liberal candidacy for the neighbouring Cleveland Division, with only Edward Williams (who had presided over the flotation of Bolckow Vaughan) and William Hansen silent attendees at meetings with the

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<sup>126</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.292

<sup>127</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.294

<sup>128</sup> Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.259

<sup>129</sup> *Middlesbrough Daily Exchange*, 15 September 1885 cited in Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.309

old Liberal guard having died out or left the town, such as Edgar Gilkes who departed following business failure. More significantly, several formerly prominent Liberal figures had crossed over to the Conservatives, most emblematically the second-generation Bolckow and Vaughan - Henry Bolckow's heir, nephew Carl Bolckow, and John Vaughan's son, Thomas Vaughan reflecting the divide in the Liberal camp amidst the decline of 'instinctive Liberalism'.<sup>130</sup> Vaughan's switch and support of Dixon's contest in 1885 was especially notable given that a young Vaughan had been mooted as a potential Liberal candidate to become the town's first Member of Parliament, Hadfield arguing 'a clearer example of changed attitudes could not be found'.<sup>131</sup> In fact, as recently as 1878 Thomas Vaughan had still been an active proponent of the Liberal cause in the town, attending the Liberal meeting at South Bank in support of Isaac Wilson's successful candidacy that year.<sup>132</sup> However, perhaps signs of this second generation ironmaster's drift to the right can be seen in evidence at the 1881 Jubilee celebrations, Mr and Mrs Vaughan's public invitation being as guests of Major Dixon at The Oatlands, the organising committee having overlooked the bankrupt Vaughan in the official celebrations.<sup>133</sup> Vaughan's Conservative ties were in evidence again in 1883 when attending the town's Conservative Banquet, his presence heralded as 'eagerly embraced...as a popular illustration of the class who patriotically join the Conservatives to stem the torrent of democracy which would "sweep away the very foundations of our great and glorious Constitution"'.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, Vaughan's direct political involvement with the Conservatives was limited, rejecting overtures by those in Whitby for him to stand as a Conservative parliamentary candidate. Although his realignment might show evidence of an ideological shift and occasional attendance at public meetings, the lack of further involvement or commitment

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<sup>130</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.309; Lewis, 'Political Culture', p.109; Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.260

<sup>131</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.310

<sup>132</sup> *NEDG*, 3 July 1878

<sup>133</sup> *NEDG*, 5 October 1881

<sup>134</sup> *NEDG*, 30 March 1883



to the Conservative cause underlines the limited impact in inducing practical political action in this instance.<sup>135</sup>

Despite the failure to induce Vaughan into further Conservative flag-flying, there was more to come from the Conservatives in gaining a foothold amidst the manufacturing elite engaged in Middlesbrough's burgeoning steel industry, with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century steel magnates coming from Liberal and Conservative traditions. Most notably Dorman Long's co-founders Arthur J. Dorman and Albert De Lande Long were ardent Conservatives, the latter like Thomas Vaughan having deviated from his father's political affiliation – the four time mayor of Ipswich Peter Bartholomew Long, elected amongst the county's first aldermen in 1835 as a Liberal.<sup>136</sup> The Dormans would play a visible part in the mechanisms of the Conservatives parliamentary ambitions in late Victorian Middlesbrough both directly as candidates and in nominating those standing for the Middlesbrough seat.

Whatever creed the iron and steel work owners' stemmed from, their relative lack of success in gaining Middlesbrough's parliamentary seat during the period covered by this period was not for want of trying. Joseph Havelock Wilson's 1892 Parliamentary election for the Middlesbrough Division saw the labour representative displace the incumbent ironmaster Isaac Wilson as the lead national political figure for the town, Cass hailing this success as amongst 'the first challenges to the old order, even if it was in a rather muted Lib/Lab variant'.<sup>137</sup> Factoring in the fact that ironmaster Hugh Bell, standing as a Unionist, finished in last place with 3,333 votes compared to the victor's 4,691 in an election that drew a turn-out of over 79 percent reflects the eagerness for the manufacturers, Liberal

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<sup>135</sup> *NEDG*, 1 December 1900

<sup>136</sup> *The Ipswich Journal*, 10 June 1898

<sup>137</sup> Cass, 'Labour in Middlesbrough', p.14

and Conservative, to at the very least contest the Middlesbrough seat.<sup>138</sup> Hugh Bell three thousand plus votes constituted a relative success 'which revealed how the underlying strength of popular Conservatism had grown since 1874' although might at least partially be considered as a result of Bell's good standing in the town.<sup>139</sup>

Havelock Wilson was to hold onto the town's seat until the success of chemist Sadler in the 1900 election, a narrow victory reflecting wider national trends increasingly aligned with the national political picture at the 'Khaki election'. However Sadler's links with the military, having joined the cadet corps as a Volunteer, accepted the Lieutenant Colonelcy of the 1<sup>st</sup> Durham Volunteers in 1875, and holding the office of Honorary Colonel at the time of the election, can have done little harm in steering him to a majority of just 55.<sup>140</sup> The success came as a surprise to the Liberal *North Eastern Daily Gazette* who a week prior to the election has organised a prize competition calling for submissions of political cartoons in preparation for the upcoming election. The 26<sup>th</sup> November 1900 edition featured a cartoon depicting Havelock Wilson towering over Sadler and his supporters Hugh Bell and Raylton Dixon, affirming the newspaper's confidence that Havelock Wilson would triumph over the 'most distressful Tories of Middlesbrough' 'despite the powerful hold these men have, as employers and public benefactors, over the local community'.<sup>141</sup>

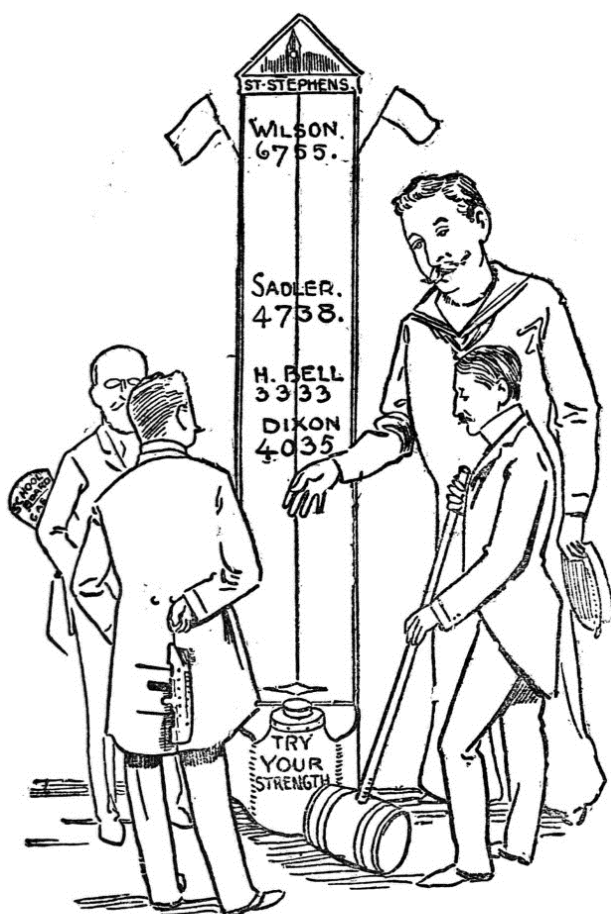
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<sup>138</sup> MBCER, Middlesbrough Parliamentary Election July 1892, TA, CB/M/C 17/15

<sup>139</sup> Lewis, 'Political Culture', p.116

<sup>140</sup> 'Middlesbrough Yearbook and Who's who on Teesside 1906', TA, CB/M/C/11/1 (7). Sadler's canvassing card was quick to seize upon jingoistic sentiment, the piece including a verse to the tune of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home!" including the lines 'For Sadler we'll vote and the Khaki men, And they'll all feel gay. When the Colonel tops the Poll', Lewis, 'Political Culture', p.119

<sup>141</sup> Harding, 'Political Cartoons & the 1900 General Election on Teesside', *Cleveland History*, No, 69, 1995, pp.25-27



Owner (J. Havelock Wilson): "Come on; pay your pennies, and try your strength. So, my gallant friend, you are really going to have a nother try!"

**Figure 4: The 'Political Cartoon', *North Eastern Daily Gazette*, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1900**

Despite drawing on the support of prominent industrialists such as Charles Dorman and J.J. Burton, Sadler's and the Conservatives' occupation of the seat was to be short-lived, the Conservatives themselves later reflecting that 'long before the election...it was quite clear the Middlesbrough seat was lost'<sup>142</sup> Havelock Wilson's 9,271 votes in January 1906 saw him returned to Parliament with over half of the votes cast, beating the former incumbent by some 2,400 votes<sup>143</sup> The election brought little progress for the burgeoning Independent Labour Party in the town, the future Labour Leader George Lansbury polling just eight percent of the vote owing to a combination of factors including failure to win the

<sup>142</sup> Middlesbrough Unionist Association, *Progress of the Unionist Party in Middlesbrough* (Middlesbrough, 1908), p.12 cited in S. Cass, 'Labour in Middlesbrough 1900 to 1914', unpublished MA thesis, Teesside Polytechnic, 1982, p.12

<sup>143</sup> MBCER, Middlesbrough Parliamentary Election January 1906, TA, CB/M/C 17/15

Irish vote and fears amongst voters of a split of votes between the Liberals and Labour leading to a Conservative hold via the back door .<sup>144</sup>

The first 1910 General Election was to prove more encouraging for the ILP, Pat Walls, the leader of the Blastfurnacemen's Union, finished last with 2,710 votes but in doing so almost doubled the party's share of the electorate. More importantly for the present study is the election bringing into direct competition for the first time two second generation steel magnates jostling for the Middlesbrough seat in this apparent show of twentieth century engagement in the urban sphere. In the event the Liberal President of the Ironmasters' Association Penry Williams, son of the late Linthorpe Ironworks proprietor Edward Williams emerged triumphant, staving off the challenge of Arthur John Dorman's son, the Conservative former mayor and Director of Dorman Long, Arthur Charles Dorman, by 9,670 votes to 6,756.<sup>145</sup> Combined with Hugh Bell's standing as a candidate for the City of London, South Durham Steel and Iron Company's Chairman Sir Christopher Furness' successful (although later rescinded) contesting of Hartlepool and the triumph of his nephew and Director of South Durham, Stephen Furness, in the subsequent by-election of June 1910, there was clearly a desire amongst the proprietors of the major iron and steel manufacturing companies to engage in parliamentary politics in the locale and sub-regions.<sup>146</sup> Steel magnate Penry Williams retained the seat in the December 1910 by a majority of 61 percent against the Conservative jeweller and chairman of Middlesbrough Football Club, Thomas Gibson Poole (the ILP not fielding a candidate and instead advising voters to abstain), who had attempted to bribe the Sunderland captain into throwing the

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<sup>144</sup> Lewis, 'Political Culture', p.119

<sup>145</sup> MBCER, Middlesbrough Parliamentary Election October 1910, TA, CB/M/C 17/15

<sup>146</sup> 'Register of Directors and Managers', 1901-1914, TA, BS.SDS/1/9/1

game against Middlesbrough in the hope that a victory for Poole's team over their arch-enemies would boost his election prospects.<sup>147</sup>

Thus, in the decades leading up to the outbreak of the First World War, steel magnates seeking election to parliament faced a heightened challenge from labour representatives, both in the Liberal fold and by Conservatives and the ILP but nevertheless enjoyed at least some absolute and partial success in spite of the small inroads made by the ILP in securing union support (as opposed to Lib/Labism). Moreover, despite the Conservative victory at Middlesbrough in 1900, the manufacturer's traditional Liberal Party were still very much in the ascendancy, despite both temporary and permanent loss of key figures and 'second generation' industrialists to the Conservative cause during this period. Despite the final pre-war election having seen Poole increase the Conservative share of the electorate to 38.9% compared to 34.6% twelve months earlier, this was against the backdrop of the Liberal steel magnate increasing his party's share of the vote by 10%, far exceeding the Liberals' 0.7% national swing.

The outbreak of the war meant that there were no elections until that which followed the 1918 Reform Act, bringing with it an additional seat distributed to Middlesbrough, with the town's parliamentary representation split into 2 seats (East and West), as well as a huge increase in the size of the electorate. The manufacturers still wanted to have their say as evidenced in Penry Williams' election in 1918, loss of his Middlesbrough East seat in 1922, regaining of his position in 1923 before his loss to Ellen Wilkinson in 1924. Moreover, there was still magnate family involvement behind the scenes during the elections of the early 1920s and into the years after the Second World War. In particular the Dorman and Bolckow families (themselves Conservative converts) families played a prominent role in the candidature of merchant and shipbroker John Wesley Brown for the Middlesbrough

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<sup>147</sup> Cass, 'Labour in Middlesbrough', p.36.

East seat in November 1922. Amongst those who proposed Brown were the second generation magnate Charles Dorman, his sister Frances Mary Bolckow, sister-in-law Dorothy Dorman and representation of the Gjers manufacturing family.<sup>148</sup> In the 1930s, the unsuccessful Conservative candidature for the same seat by Benjamin Chetwynd-Talbot of the South Durham Steel and Iron Company in 1935 reflected a continued appetite in some manufacturing quarters for parliamentary sway, a battle that would continue with Alfred Edwards beyond the Second World War.

### **Parliamentary candidature beyond Middlesbrough**

Although not a central focus of this study, it is useful to briefly turn attention in particular to attempts by Hugh Bell and Arthur Dorman to seek election to parliament beyond Middlesbrough. In particular, Dorman's contesting of the Cleveland Division as a Unionist in 1892 is significant in terms of gauging steel magnate political engagement in the locale given the iron and steel manufacturing centred upon Middlesbrough has by this point had spilled into its neighbouring constituency. Dorman ultimately fought a strong contest against Henry Fell Pease, polling 4,049 votes compared to Pease's 4,397, a significant gain on the 4,103 majority the Quaker businessman had enjoyed in 1885.<sup>149</sup>

It is useful to return to Bell's second parliamentary candidacy as a Liberal at the invitation of the Liberal Association in 1910 as another example of continued parliamentary engagement beyond the bounds of the town by its steel magnates. Bell has been involved in the local election in the previous year supporting Herbert Samuel's successful re-election to the Cleveland Division seat in the July 1909 by-election.<sup>150</sup> However, standing for election in the City of London was a very different form of parliamentary engagement

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<sup>148</sup> Parliamentary Election File 1922, TA, CB/M/C (2) 17/3

<sup>149</sup> *NEDG*, 30 June 1904

<sup>150</sup> *The Times*, 10 January 1910

for the steel magnate, the principled Bell doing so to ‘uphold the principles of Free Trade and constitutionalism in the City of London’, rather than allowing the Liberal presence in the City to disappear ‘by default’.<sup>151</sup> The move was symbolic given that the Liberals having no chance of success, a fact freely acknowledged by the ironmaster both throughout and after his candidature, Bell remarking to Sir John Brenner of the ‘delightful time contesting the city...all the more agreeable because I am sure it will not lead to the untoward result of my being returned to parliament’, and in later correspondence with Horace Marshall reflecting on the ‘week’s holiday’.<sup>152</sup> Bell was convincingly defeated by the Unionist Sir Frederick Banbury by a majority of 12,679, having polled 4,623,<sup>153</sup> unsurprising considering the Tories had won the February 1906 by-election with a similarly convincing 11,340 majority, the previous month’s General Election having also seen a significant net Unionist majority of 10,306, keeping intact the City’s record of returning two Unionists in every election since 1885.<sup>154</sup>

Similarly, the attempted or actual parliamentary engagement of steel magnates beyond the realms of the town which housed their works had limited impact on their local participation. Francis Samuelson played a very much active role in the management of the North Riding Infirmary throughout the early part of the twentieth century alongside his role serving as Member of Parliament for Banbury. His father Sir Bernhard Samuelson too managed to combine his commitments as an MP in Oxfordshire, serving as a key advisor to parliament on education reform and ensuring his Middlesbrough ironworks ran smoothly.

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<sup>151</sup> *The Times*, 10 January 1910; 11 January 1910

<sup>152</sup> Bell of Rounton Grange Records, NYRO, ZFK  
 <[http://archives.northyorks.gov.uk/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqSearch=\(RefNo=='ZFK'\)](http://archives.northyorks.gov.uk/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqSearch=(RefNo=='ZFK'))> [Accessed 11 January 2011]. See also, *The Times*, 10 January 1910; 11 January 1910; 14 January 1910, in the latter of which Bell, addressing a Liberal meeting at Salisbury House, ‘declared that had not the contest been a forlorn hope he would have not have been on that platform’.

<sup>153</sup> *The Times*, 18 January 1910

<sup>154</sup> *The Times*, 10 January 1910; 11 January 1910

## Municipal council engagement

Whilst parliamentary representation offered a high profile national platform for industrialist involvement in the political affairs of the manufacturing town, the municipal council was the traditional apparatus everyday government in Middlesbrough operated. From libraries to sewage, a multitude of the mechanisms of the urban sphere were managed under the direction of the councillors, aldermen and mayors elected by various procedures. The granting of the Charter of Incorporation in 1853 had seen a number of key industrialists elected to office with Henry Bolckow heading up the council with fellow ironmasters including John Vaughan and Isaac Wilson amongst the early membership. Yet by the late nineteenth century the presence of the manufacturing elites in municipal affairs has been presented as dwindling amidst withdrawal from the urban sphere, Briggs pointing to the *Daily Gazette's* 1874 editorial responding to the Town Council elections which brought a 'real source of regret and danger to the town...that generally the men with the largest stake and best qualified to full an onerous and responsible office, are withdrawing from the Council'.<sup>155</sup> Lewis' work on Middlesbrough's political culture has vindicated the contemporaries concerns in arguing 'the later generations of ironmasters had even lower levels of participation; only three non-pioneers' played any part at all'.<sup>156</sup> The observation at first reading is convincing and conjures up an image of a council with limited reflection of the iron and steel manufacturing interests at the heart of the Ironopolis'.

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<sup>155</sup> *Daily Gazette*, 3 November 1874; Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.258

<sup>156</sup> Lewis, 'Political Culture', p.106



Occupation	1853		1858		1863		1868		1873		1878		1883		1888	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Building Trade	1	6.2	1	4.1	3	12.5	9	28.1	4	12.5	6	15.0	3	7.5	3	7.5
Businessmen - Large	2	12.5	1	4.1	1	4.1	3	9.3	3	9.3	6	15.0	4	10.0	5	12.5
- Small	2	12.5	1	4.1	2	8.3	3	9.3	3	9.3	6	15.0	7	17.5	4	10.0
Drinks Trade	1	6.2	3	12.5	1	4.1	1	3.1	2	6.2	5	12.5	6	15.0	3	7.5
Gentlemen	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.1	1	3.1	4	10.0	4	10.0	4	10.0
Temperance Hotelier	-	-	1	4.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ironmasters	4	25.0	3	12.5	4	16.6	5	15.6	9	28.1	3	7.5	4	10.0	4	10.0
Iron merchants	-	-	1	4.1	1	4.1	1	3.1	1	3.1	2	5.0	-	-	2	5.0
Iron Works Employees	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.1	1	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Profession	-	-	1	4.1	1	4.1	1	3.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2.5
Professions (Exc. Medicine)	-	-	2	8.3	2	8.3	1	3.1	1	3.1	1	2.5	2	5.0	1	2.5
Retailers	3	18.7	6	25.0	8	33.3	2	6.2	3	9.3	6	15.0	8	20.0	9	22.5
Shipbuilding Trades	2	12.5	3	12.5	1	4.1	2	6.2	2	6.2	-	-	2	5.0	1	2.5
Butchers	1	6.2	-	-	-	-	2	6.2	1	3.1	1	2.5	-	-	2	5.0
Unknown	-	-	1	4.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>32</b>		<b>32</b>		<b>40</b>		<b>40</b>		<b>40</b>	

**Figure 5: Middlesbrough Town Council: Occupational analysis of Alderman and Councillors, 1852-1888<sup>157</sup>**

Despite the decline in number of iron and steel representation as Middlesbrough councillors from the late nineteenth century, it will be argued in the following pages that this numerical assessment is both misleading and flawed when considering actual engagement and contribution to the municipality. Indeed, Lewis acknowledges that “there was always an iron trade presence on the elected bodies of the town – the borough council, board of guardians and school board after 1871’ and it will be shown that this continued presence brought with it significant, high profile local interaction, authority and esteem.<sup>158</sup> ‘The quality and quantity of influence that individuals could command’ was not

<sup>157</sup> Hadfield, ‘Political and Social Attitudes’, p.411

<sup>158</sup> Lewis, ‘Political Culture’, p.106

gained through numerical advantage and instead was a product of long-service, wider societal activity and the ability to serve the needs of the electorate.<sup>159</sup>

The first Town Council enjoyed a healthy representation of ironmasters, the four men ensuring ironmasters were both the dominant occupation and those amongst the upper echelons of the new body with Bolckow as Mayor and Wilson and Vaughan two of the four Aldermen. The rest of the council consisted of a group from varied occupational backgrounds, namely those of iron merchant and shipbuilder, butcher, doctor, ship owner and broker agent, home painter, miller, chandler and sail maker, draper, auctioneer, grocer, coal fitter, and finally printer.<sup>160</sup>

In fact, the relatively high proportion of members of the industrial elite as Town Councillors in the Municipality's early years bodes favourably in comparison to other areas engaged in iron and steel production. Sheffield's local Liberal newspaper noted the shunning of municipal engagement by the town's chief business leaders in 1864, observing 'the main reason for the degradation of the Council has been that intellect and property of the town has stood aloof from it...the Town Council has had no self-respect'.<sup>161</sup> Some three years later *The Independent* bemoaned the absence of the town's chief businessmen, arguing 'the cultivated mind of the town has not done its share in the government of the town, and by its abdication has left open the seats of the Council to be scrambled for by persons whose intentions we need not question, but whose fitness to rule has been signally

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid, pp.106-107

<sup>160</sup> Lillie, *Centenary*; Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', pp.90, 113-114, 306, 406-407, 414; Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.166

<sup>161</sup> *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 7 July 1864, cited in Fraser, 'Introduction', p.7

deficient'.<sup>162</sup> In such a climate, the early Middlesbrough council composition can be seen as relatively commendable. Indeed, a Stockton Town Council meeting of 1874 noted the very absence of a Bolckow or Pease figure amidst its ranks.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, there is little doubt the ironmasters' centrality on the Town Council, and indeed their very seats, showed signs of having been challenged during the period 1880-1934, as is illustrated by analysis of the contests within the town's wards. Certainly, albeit not strong in numbers by the turn of the century, those steel magnates active in the town's wards played a significant role. Charles Dorman served as a Councillor for the Cannon Ward from 1897-1912, with his candidature in 1900 uncontested and the steel magnate going on to serve as Mayor in 1903, presiding over the opening of the Dorman Museums in doing so.<sup>164</sup> However, there is evidence of the rise of the shopkeeper and professional amidst the Town Council ranks in the subsequent decade. The Fish Merchant John Reveley (1902, 1908, and 1911) saw off the challenge of Steel Works Manager and one time secretary-manager of Middlesbrough Football Club, John Henry Gunter, in 1902.<sup>165</sup> Later, in 1906, Charles Dorman faced competition for his place in office from George Brennan, Wire Tester, in 1906, receiving 867 votes to Brennan's 204, although Dorman was re-elected unopposed in 1909.<sup>166</sup> Thomas Thompson, the 'North east theatre magnate' who had recently purchased the town's Cleveland Hall as a cinema entered the Town Council unopposed in 1912 and served the Ward for six years,<sup>167</sup>

Elsewhere in the town business wards emerged, such as the Cleveland War, which attracted businessmen attached to smaller interests operating in Middlesbrough. The

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<sup>162</sup> *The Independent*, 21th November 1867

<sup>163</sup> NEDG, 30 May 1974

<sup>164</sup> BMCER, Cannon Ward, November 1900, TA

<sup>165</sup> BMCER, Cannon Ward, November 1902, TA

<sup>166</sup> BMCER, Cannon Ward, November 1909, TA; BMCER, Cannon Ward, November 1906, TA

<sup>167</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.212; BMCER, Cannon Ward, November 1912, TA. William Stanley Gibson, nephew of Thompson, would later succeed him of Thompson Enterprises and enter the Town Council for the Cannon Ward in 1923, BMCER, Cannon Ward, November 1923, TA; Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.212

much maligned jeweller, corrupt Chairman of Middlesbrough Football Club, Mayor (1907, 1909, and 1927) and donor of Poole Sanatorium, Thomas Gibson Poole, entered the Town Council via the Ward in 1896, serving continuously until his death in 1937, first as Councillor and then Alderman (1910 - 1937). An array of less celebrated merchants, retailers and smaller businessmen and professionals represented the ward as councillors including; Hay and Straw Merchant Thomas Dodgson (1895-1910),<sup>168</sup> Yet, the Cleveland Ward too witnessed progress for those concerned with socialist movements in the town, including the Trade Union Secretary Peter Tevenan who enjoyed a brief stint as a Councillor from 1912-1914.<sup>169</sup> Marion Coates-Hansen, Secretary of the Middlesbrough Independent Labour Party and former election agent to George Lansbury, becoming the first female representative of the Ward in the 1920s, having served in the same role for the Exchange Ward 1919-1921 until her defeat by Hannah Martha Guthrie.<sup>170</sup>

The interests of the iron and steel concern were reflected in the candidatures for the Exchange Ward, albeit by the 1890s subject to increased challenge from below. Hugh Bell served as Alderman and Returning Officer for the ward and was joined by a mixture of petite bourgeoisie and labour interest, including printer Alex Main (1891-1906, Alderman 1906-1907), the solicitors Theodore Henry Ward (1883-1901, Alderman 1901-1902) and George Hutton Bowes-Wilson (1907-1916), the General Manager and Treasurer of Middlesbrough Co-operative Society,<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.470

<sup>169</sup> Ibid

<sup>170</sup> BMCER, Cleveland Ward, November 1923, TA. For a further discussion of Coates-Hansen's role as agent of George Lansbury see Purdue, A.W. 'George Lansbury and the Middlesbrough Election of 1906, *International Review of Social History*, 18 (1973), pp.333-352 and Shepherd, J. *George Lansbury: At the Heart of Old Labour* (Oxford, 2002)

<sup>171</sup> BMCER, Exchange Ward, November 1919, TA

Into the interwar period, the management of the steel works and directors continued to play a small role in the election fold, albeit lacking any major steel manufacturers. Amongst the group was Illtyd Hedley, who contested and was elected a Grove Hill Ward Councillor in November 1919.<sup>172</sup> Yet, the age of steel magnates and even general managers was at an end in terms of contesting for seats as councillors and marks a withdrawal from the process of public contestation from the upper echelons of the manufacturing concerns in Middlesbrough. Yet, the significance of this reduced participation in councillor elections should not be overstated given that there were other mechanisms by which to gain recognition and authority in the municipal fold.

### **Freeman, aldermen and mayors**

The elevation to Freeman of the Borough, underpinned by the ‘business success and expertise...[that] played a significant role in determining the selection and promotion of a candidate for municipal honours’ was conferred on a number of industrialists during our period.<sup>173</sup> Ironmaster Isaac Wilson was awarded the honour in 1892 as recognition of a man ‘intimately connected with the commercial, industrial, social and religious life of the town’ for some fifty years, with compatriot Hugh Bell making ‘kindly allusions to Mr Wilson’s long and capable services to the town’ upon the presentation to Wilson.<sup>174</sup> Similarly, Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell’s receipt of the honour two years later was, the local press noted, in recognition of the contribution his firm had made in striving to improve the area’s industry by its significant investment in seeking a means to remove the phosphorus from Cleveland ironstone.<sup>175</sup> Long-serving Alderman Sanderson in this self-congratulatory

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<sup>172</sup> BMCER, Grove Hill Ward, May 1919, TA

<sup>173</sup> Jones, ‘Public Pursuit of Private Profit’, p.245

<sup>174</sup> NEDG, 14 September 1892

<sup>175</sup> *The Yorkshire Herald*, 3 November 1894

process and ceremony hailed Bell's stature 'throughout the civilised world' as an 'authority on the iron trade'.<sup>176</sup> On the same day Sir Lowthian Bell's son was and fellow ironmaster Hugh Bell's receipt of the same honour further reinforced both the central role the Bell's occupied in the idealistic register of Middlesbrough's municipal political culture and further affirmed the importance attributed to honouring the captains of industry through council mechanisms. The subsequent honouring of Sir Samuel Sadler in 1897 and Arthur John Dorman in 1904 suggests the aura of magnate influence on the town council still loomed large into the twentieth century.<sup>177</sup> Despite Dorman having not been active on the council since the 1880s, the 'worthy citizen' was awarded the Freedom of Middlesbrough 'in recognition of the distinguished and manifold services...rendered to the town during the past 25 years, and also as a mark of the high esteem in which he is held by the people of Middlesbrough'.<sup>178</sup> Business contributions made by the town's ironmasters and steel magnates combined with holding of higher municipal office were clearly one of the criteria for elevation to this esteemed standing. As well as leaders of industry, Wilson, Bell and Dorman had all previously served as mayor, a position Garrard has argued is 'illustrative of local elite values'.<sup>179</sup>

For those steel magnates who did not enjoy elevation to the status of Freeman of the Borough, there was still praise for, and evidence of, municipal contributions into the 1880-1934 period most closely associated with elite 'withdrawal'. Following a narrow success in the 1892 municipal elections, Charles Lowthian Bell in 1892 was subsequently selected as Mayor of Middlesbrough, his peers in the town hall perhaps anxious to ensure his continued participation in local government.<sup>180</sup> A *North Eastern Daily Gazette* article 'Our

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid

<sup>177</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.473

<sup>178</sup> *NEDG*, 11 October 1904

<sup>179</sup> Garrard, 'Introduction', p.2, in J. Garrard (ed.), *Heads of the Local State: Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters Since 1800* (Aldershot, 2007)

<sup>180</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.467; *NEDG*, 10 November 1892

Northern Mayors' followed the week after the industrialist's elevation to the municipality's highest office, moving to hail Bell as amongst those undertaking mayoral duties between the Tees and the Tweed disproving the 'depreciatory allegation so far as the North-East of England is concerned...[that] public, and more especially municipal, service is falling into disrepute – that men of character and talent are showing an increasing desire to shirk its acceptance and performance'.<sup>181</sup> Mayor Bell was seen as a 'representative of a family honourably distinguished alike in our municipal and industrial annals... [which] must be a spur to the local patriotism of the new Mayor'.<sup>182</sup> Clearly there was much value placed on the esteem Bell brought to the office whilst at the same time reflecting contemporary 'depreciatory allegation' reflecting notions of elite withdrawal and with it associations of decline in urban government. For his part, Bell did not disappoint when fulfilling municipal duties. On the occasion of forthcoming elections of Middlesbrough's Board of Guardians in 1895, the same newspaper observed that whilst 'attendance records are not a true criterion perhaps...nevertheless they afford some indication of what is the real constitution of the Board' before praising Bell's frequent attendance at Middlesbrough Union meetings in his *ex-officio* capacity.<sup>183</sup> The underlying rumblings of discontent of absenteeism amongst industrialists apparently serving in office in the town was again in evidence however, with fellow large employers Raylton Dixon, C.F.H. Bolckow, H.W.F. Bolckow and Henry Cochrane amongst those singled out for missing meetings.<sup>184</sup>

The mayoralty, and in particular the Middlesbrough's second and third generation industrialists holding of this office, appears to be another position overlooked and too readily downplayed in the interest of emphasising withdrawal over continued manufacturer involvement. Briggs' observation that 'of the eighteen mayors from 1893 to 1912 only two

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<sup>181</sup> NEDG, 10 November 1892

<sup>182</sup> Ibid

<sup>183</sup> NEDG, 28 November 1895

<sup>184</sup> NEDG, 28 November 1895

belong to the class of large manufacturers' once again highlights problems of this quantitative rather than qualitative approach given that Charles Dorman and Hugh Bell presided over the opening of the Dorman Museum (1904) and the Tees Transporter Bridge (1911) – arguably the two most high-profile, ceremonial events to occur during this period that provided a platform serving to underline the importance of these manufacturers in Middlesbrough. Similarly, the implications of changes in council composition from ten ironmasters and seven shopkeepers councillors in 1872 to fifteen shopkeepers and a solitary ironmaster councillor by 1912 have been overstated by Briggs in dubbing the process the 'quiet local revolution'.<sup>185</sup> Instead, this was an evolution whereas Middlesbrough's demographic and population expanded, a 'broader elite...new stakeholders within the middle class, including professionals, managers, and retailers' emerged.<sup>186</sup> Although Charles Dorman was the sole ironmaster councillor by 1912, there was still representation of the iron and steel interest in evidence. Wilsons, Pease & Co.'s Alderman John Frederick Wilson, nephew of Isaac Wilson, was by the early 1910s a managing partner of Wilsons, Pease & Co., and had accumulated some two decades of serving before his elevation to the aldermanic bench in the same year, a role he would continue to fulfil until 1919. Moreover, Wilson was an active member of the council who served as chairman of the council's Finance and Stores, Education, and Kirby School committees.<sup>187</sup>

The role of alderman and more importantly, the iron and steel proprietors who held this office, is worthy of further attention as there is a scarcity of work on the role of aldermanic office in assessments of urban government. The Middlesbrough case points to this having skewed portrayal of town council service beyond the role of councillor and given that the

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<sup>185</sup> Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.258

<sup>186</sup> Doyle, 'Introduction', p.7

<sup>187</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.52, p.405; *Middlesbrough Municipal Year Book 1912-13*, pp.6-29



aldermen were in effective, the higher ranking than councillors (their seniority relevant in cases of tied votes) this was arguably a more significant sphere of influence and certainly one of some distinction. This scarcity of work on aldermanic office perhaps might be explained by the lack of uniformity of aldermanic election procedure across the country identified by Dunbabin in his study of new county councils' composition.<sup>188</sup> Despite disparities bringing limited function for comparison there is certainly value in analysing this office which Doyle has argued made up one of three levels of 'elite municipal office' alongside those of mayor and sheriff.<sup>189</sup> In early twentieth century Middlesbrough aldermanic election was, like at Birmingham, by the town council for a period of six years, the given alderman would be assigned to a ward to which they would act as returning officer, usually to the last Middlesbrough ward they had served as councillor.<sup>190</sup> The fact that the ironmasters progressed to the aldermanic bench is a further marker of their esteem and value placed upon their interaction within the spheres of municipal governance.

### **Conclusion: A state of flux**

Evidently, Middlesbrough's political environment was in a state of flux during the period of this study. The parliamentary contest was fought more vociferously from the 1880s onwards through a combination of heightened contests for the seat, both from Conservative candidates including manufacturers and later and representatives of labour which meant that there was a wider representation of Middlesbrough's demographic by the interwar period. Yet there was still nevertheless contests and representation by

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<sup>188</sup> For instance, see J.P.D. Dunbabin, J.P.D. 'IV. Expectations of the New County Councils, and their Realisation', *The Historical Journal*, viii, 3 (1965), Table 1, p.378-379 for a survey of alderman election procedures for the New 1888 County Councils under scrutiny, practices ranging from Northumberland's election from 'chiefly within the council', the East Riding's election of electing 9 of its 17 alderman from outside the council, to Gloucestershire's 20 alderman all hailing from outside the council.

<sup>189</sup> Doyle, B.M. 'The structure of elite power in the early twentieth-century city: Norwich, 1900-35', *Urban History*, 24, 2 (1997), p.187

<sup>190</sup> Hennock, *Fit and Proper Persons*, p.13; Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, pp.468-472

Middlesbrough's manufacturing elite in parliament beyond the First World War and even into post Second World War elections. In terms of local, town council activity, there appears to have been both resilience amongst those manufacturers who wished to remain involved to do so, and an eagerness amongst the municipality to invite steel magnates to engage in the higher offices of alderman, freeman and mayor. Crucially this also removed the need to compete directly in wider ballots with rising working-class contest. Yet, even in cases of challenge from below, there were no issues of steel magnates having been ousted from their seats by the local municipal council electorate and the extent of political decline and withdrawal has been overemphasised. Furthermore, the steel magnates remained very much a part of the symbolic register of the Council long after their departure, both through the Freeman of the Borough's commemoration plaques in the Council Chamber, but also with large portraits of Henry Bolckow, John Vaughan and Sir Hugh Bell which literally overlooked the proceedings of the shopkeepers, workers' representatives and professionals who followed in the ensuing decades.

## Chapter 4: Business Activities and development, expansion and ‘decline’ at Dorman Long

The key role played by Middlesbrough’s ironmasters’ entrepreneurial drive in the early development of major iron production in the town from the 1850s is a familiar story in the annals of the industrial history of Middlesbrough and in wider studies of the Victorian cities.<sup>191</sup> Henry Bolckow and John Vaughan are the familiar leading figures in the narrative of visionary manufacturers at the heart of the first major ironworks in Middlesbrough, Bolckow Vaughan, utilising the ironstone they had ‘discovered’ in the nearby Cleveland Hills to set about the ‘boom’ of Middlesbrough.<sup>192</sup> Despite the centrality of Bolckow and Vaughan in Middlesbrough’s story, comparatively little has been made of the business activities of the subsequent generations of steel magnates that followed after the phase of rapid growth and demographic expansion outlined above.<sup>193</sup> This chapter will remedy this by focusing on the relatively underexplored later industrialists within the context of wider discourses on urban elites, business history and industrial decline.

Given the wider aims of this thesis to explore the business, culture and participation of Middlesbrough’s steel magnates during the period of supposed withdrawal from active involvement in the town, it is necessary to explore the role of the second and subsequent generations of steel magnates within the firms themselves and beyond them. In exploring this key area of engagement, this chapter will consider to what extent and how the families of Dorman, Bell and other industrialists attached to Dorman Long remained a part of the

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<sup>191</sup> In addition to Briggs’ *Victorian Cities*, see Morris, R.J & Rodger, R (eds.). *The Victorian City 1820-1914: A Reader* (Harlow, 1993) esp. chapter 1. The role of Bolckow and Vaughan in the industrial development of Middlesbrough was popularized locally in Craig Hornby’s *A Century of Stone* (United Kingdom, 2004)

<sup>192</sup> See Nicholson, A. “Jacky’ and the Jubilee’ in Pollard (ed.), *Middlesbrough*

<sup>193</sup> British Steel Collection <[www.britishsteelcollection.org.uk](http://www.britishsteelcollection.org.uk)> [Accessed 21 July 2014].

industrial and commercial fold during and after the period of apparent withdrawal. The primary focus will be on the evolution of the firm that brought together famous names such as Bell Brothers, Samuelson's and Bolckow Vaughan but reference will also be made to the leading figures of other firms in order to place Dorman Long within patterns elsewhere. Such an approach will allow for greater attention to be paid to internal business dynamics while the perspective provided by focusing on over half a century of one firm's evolution will improve understanding of the extent of changes and continuities over time. This assessment of steel magnates' activities at a company level is timely as it takes place within the context of an increased interest not only in elites but also in the area's iron and steel heritage and the firms at the heart of Teesside's manufacturing past.<sup>194</sup>

This chapter is not intended to provide a summative history of Dorman Long but rather it will look at how different types and periods of engagement within the firm can contribute to our understanding of the position of key second and third generation industrialists such as Charles Dorman, Maurice Lowthian Bell and Francis Samuelson within the context of wider debates on 'the decline of the industrial spirit' emphasised by Wiener. In doing so issues such as displacement within the firms and elite disengagement with industry and the towns that housed it will be considered by looking at the mechanisms of business organisation and mechanisms of power within the firm. The role of the family heads within the firms will initially be outlined, considering continuity and change in the steel magnates' business involvement compared to first generation industrialists in the town. Attention will

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<sup>194</sup> The heightened interest in the industrialists and the firms that underpinned the town's steel manufacturing development has been evident in high profile Heritage Lottery Fund projects focusing on companies including Dorman Long, such as the British Steel Archive Project and the Tees Transporter Bridge Visitor Experience Project and *Bridging the World* exhibition in 2014. More abstract, artistic approaches have risen to prominence too, most notably through the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art's (mima) first artist in residence's HA(SOFT)RD installation focusing on 'iron and steel making, and its...pioneering heritage that gave the town its 'Infant Hercules' image at the height of the industrial revolution', *Evening Gazette*, 25 April 2014.

then turn to the evolution of the Dorman Long enterprise and the changing role of the steel magnates within this climate of partial share acquisition, mergers, allied firms and heightened financial instability and local and worldwide trade challenges. In doing so the part played (or not as the case might be) by the subsequent generations of the industrialist families will be considered, looking at the positions they held within the companies at different times and touching upon the implications of this involvement at both a practical and symbolic level especially in light of the importance of the firm and the industrialist in contemporary perceptions and representations.

The chapter contends that the extent to which the steel magnates 'descended from a peak of leadership at which Britain was truly the workshop of the world', as argued by Erickson, has been overemphasised. Instead it is argued the implied decline of management and the declining position of British steel manufacture in the world did not mean Dorman Long were not a world leading firm.<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, it will be shown that the diversity of the make-up of the iron and steel firms studied here was so great and the character of the individual industrialists so complex, that generalisations pointing to a decline in engagement with business, industry and manufacturing towns by the second and subsequent generations of industrial elite families, whilst undoubtedly the case for some of the offspring, is too sweeping an approach and neither useful nor reflective of the actual realities of interaction.

### **The birth and expansion of Dorman Long**

Following the turbulent mid-1870s which led to many of Middlesbrough's iron manufacturers falling by the wayside or suffering severe damage to their standing owing to critical trade slump and financial failure, the 1880s heralded a new age with Middlesbrough's industrialists and press increasingly looking to the importance of steel for

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<sup>195</sup> Erickson, C. *British Industrialists: Steel and Hosiery 1850-1950* (London, 1959), p.9

the town's manufacturing future. In an 1882 *Daily Gazette* article entitled 'The Future Capital of Cleveland', there was little doubt by the author that steel had toppled iron as the key manufacturing hope for the area, reporting that this 'many-sided branch of industry is firmly established here...[and] new and extensive steel works are being constructed'.<sup>196</sup> Amongst those leading the way with steel development in the town were Dorman Long under the leadership of the youthful Arthur John Dorman and Albert de Lande Long. Commencing production in 1876 having leased the West Marsh Ironworks, the partnership's initial focus on iron puddling switched quickly to steel, utilising its old rolling plant and appealing to the works' old client base.<sup>197</sup> The firm's early success led to the acquisition by the partnership of the Britannia Works of Sir Bernhard Samuelson in 1879 as they expanded their production capacity.<sup>198</sup> Dorman Long's initiative in bringing together Dorman's experience and Long's capital, the model that had served Bolckow and Vaughan well, allowed the firm to gain a foothold in the industry, with G.A. North pointing to the comparative slowness of other firms, including Bell Brothers, in pursuing the transition to steel.<sup>199</sup>

The early years of production at Dorman Long were characterised by the active, hands-on involvement of Arthur J Dorman, who drew on his experience in industry to pursue expansion through the adoption of new technology. In 1887, the firm built three Siemens-Martin 18 ton furnaces with capacity to turn out 600 tons of steel a week.<sup>200</sup> The success of the model contributed to the company becoming a limited liability company in 1889, following the trend of other long-lived, major iron and steel firms in the area including

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<sup>196</sup> *Daily Gazette*, 3 March 1882

<sup>197</sup> Lillie, *Centenary*, p.28; Tolliday, S. *Business, Banking and Politics: The Case of British Steel, 1918-1939* (London, 1987), p.47

<sup>198</sup> Tolliday, *Business, Banking and Politics*, p.48; Judge, *Dorman Long*, p.5

<sup>199</sup> North, *Economic Heritage*, p.24

<sup>200</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.289

Bolckow Vaughan and Samuelson's.<sup>201</sup> In his study of the growth and transition in the Cleveland iron and steel industry up to the First World War, James has drawn comparisons between the conversion of Bolckow Vaughan into a limited liability firm in the mid-1860s and that of Dorman Long three decades later, noting how both firms made many of the ordinary shares available to wider investors, which allowed capital to be raised without bringing with it erosion of the control of the original owners over the business.<sup>202</sup> This was significant as it ensured the authority of the firms' founders and allowed them and their families to maintain a continued, active role in the direction of the firm if desired. However, in contrast to the transition to limited liability at Bolckow Vaughan, as well as that experienced at future partner firm Samuelson's, the founders at Dorman Long did not initially step down. John Vaughan had stepped down from Bolckow Vaughan in 1864 for a life at his country residence, whilst at Samuelson's, upon the firm becoming a limited liability company in the mid-1870s, Sir Bernhard Samuelson retired from 'all business engagements requiring his personal attention'.<sup>203</sup>

At Dorman Long, Albert De Lande Long remained a Managing Director after the partnership had converted to a limited liability interest although his commitment to the firm did prove relatively short-lived and within a decade he had ultimately followed the same career trajectory and retired completely from involvement in the firm. Thus, the first signs of his declining engagement in the firm were in evidence at Dorman Long's AGM in December 1894, when Charles Arthur Head (Long's brother-in-law following his marriage to Justina Charlotte Long) moved the resolution that 'Albert de Lande Long, Esq. be re-elected a Director of the Company; I think you are all aware that he was one of the original

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<sup>201</sup> James, S. 'Growth and Transition in the Cleveland Iron and Steel Industry, 1850 to 1914', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Durham, 2013, p.123

<sup>202</sup> James, 'Growth and Transition', pp.144-145

<sup>203</sup> Jeans, J.S. *Pioneers of the Cleveland Iron Trade* (Middlesbrough, 1875), p.225

proprietors of this Company, and has devoted a great deal of his time to it. He has been one of the Managing Directors, but now wishes to act as an ordinary Director'.<sup>204</sup> The step down marked the penultimate stage of Albert de Lande Long's eventual withdrawal from involvement in the firm with the co-founder finally leaving the board in 1900. His co-founder Arthur J. Dorman reflected upon the loss to the firm when addressing the shareholders at the following year's AGM, stating 'I regret very much that my old friend and partner...has resigned his seat on the Board. I am sure we all miss his company and advice very much'.<sup>205</sup> Albert de Lande Long would move south to London before returning to North Yorkshire where he took up residence until his death in 1917. Yet Long's relatively early retirement in his mid-fifties should be seen within the context of generally broad engagement when compared to those who withdrew earlier from Middlesbrough industry. With none of Long's sons attached to the firm to take up the mantle left by their father, the retirement did mark the end of the involvement of the co-founder's family in the enterprise associated with Middlesbrough to this day. The lack of involvement reflected the limited visibility of Long in the wider community in Middlesbrough, with the manufacturer playing only a peripheral role in the locality through his affiliation with the local Conservative Association and in his interest in sports clubs and particularly rowing.

The departure of Albert De Lande Long from the firm following the amalgamation activity conforms to those patterns observed of British industrialists by Charlotte Erickson in her monumental study of British industrialists in the steel and hosiery trades:

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<sup>204</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1894, p.11, TA, BS.DL/1/7

<sup>205</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1901, p.11, TA, BS.DL/1/7



Because of the waves of amalgamation and absorptions of British steel firms in 1898-1903 and 1925-1930, a higher proportion of British careers in the twentieth century tended to be terminated abruptly...20 per cent of British steel leaders in 1905-25 left office prematurely because of amalgamations, loss of financial control, or by being voted out of office.<sup>206</sup>

Initially, it appeared that Arthur Dorman might follow in his co-founder's footsteps when in 1900 he too provided an indication of a step back away from the firm's day to day activities. The man dubbed 'the moving spirit in connection with the company' at Dorman Long's 1897 AGM, just three years later announced his 'retirement' as Managing Director. The move occurred at a time when the spread of power and influence within the firm was undergoing change following significant developments in the firm's interests through Dorman Long's share purchases of Bell Brothers, which saw Hugh Bell join the Dorman Long board as a representative of the Bells' interest.<sup>207</sup> Prior to the purchase of 1899 the two firms had been working together on the process of using Cleveland Ore in steel production and enjoyed good relations, with Bell Brothers' representatives on the board of Dorman Long beforehand. It is unclear how far the Bell acquisition impacted upon Dorman's decision to announce at the end of his Chairman's statement at the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1900 Dorman Long AGM that

There is now only one thing more to refer to in the Report, and that is of a personal nature, it is in reference to my retirement from the position of Managing Director, a

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<sup>206</sup> Erickson, *British Industrialists*, pp.77-78

<sup>207</sup> James, 'Growth and Transition', pp.234-235; Church, R. 'The Family Firm in Industrial Capitalism: International Perspectives in Hypotheses and History' in G. Jones and M. Rose, *Family Capitalism* (London, 1993), pp.17-43.

position I have held since the formation of the Company. It is with great reluctance that I have now decided to give it up, but you can readily understand a time comes when one feels inclined to take things a little easier; it is a heavy strain to give that constant care and attention to the details of the business which is so necessary to its success. I have been constantly at it now for 30 years, and I hope, with your permission and with good health, that I may remain for many years longer your Chairman, and with the assistance of the other Directors, and the special Committee, continue to give advice and assistance to the new Managing Directors, for I assure you that so long as I live I shall always take a keen and lively interest in the affairs of the Company. I have watched its growth from small beginnings to its present dimensions, and hope to live to see it continue to prosper and progress which I have every confidence it will do under the new management.<sup>208</sup>

The new management structure combined the Dorman family interest and saw the elevation of Panton who had progressed within the firm, bringing with it, at least symbolically, a shift in power. Arthur Dorman continued

Mr Panton has been General Manager for many years past and...I think we are to be congratulated that we have such a thoroughly capable man, and one who has been associated with the Company for so many years to take up the position lately held by me. As for my son, Mr. Charles Dorman, is concerned he has had the management

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<sup>208</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1900, p.13, TA, BS.DL/1/7

of the Wire and Sheet departments for some years past, he is wishful and willing to serve you, and I think in many respects will be a useful colleague to Mr. Panton.<sup>209</sup>

Despite Arthur J Dorman's apparent partial withdrawal, the steel magnates' speech was littered with allusions to his maintaining a watching brief over the activity both through advisory activities and the establishment of infrastructures so as to temper the handover of total control. On the face of it, through the appointment of Charles Dorman and William Panton as joint managing directors, the new management partnership married together the ideals of hereditary family capitalism and the benefits of 'the rise of the general manager' drawing upon industrial experience rather than capital. His son Charles maintained a Dorman family hands-on involvement in the firm alongside the practical experience of Panton within the firm and industry more widely.

This model on one level was not too far removed from that bringing together of knowledge and experience that had seen the original Dorman and Long partnership prosper.<sup>210</sup> Panton's pattern of progression through the firm was not unique to Dorman Long and was echoed at rival and future partner firm Bolckow Vaughan, where Edward Windsor Richards and David Evans had enjoyed similar trajectories.<sup>211</sup> Having been apprenticed at the

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid

<sup>210</sup> The traditionally held view is that Dorman brought industrial experience through his apprenticeship at Thornaby, with De Lande Long having acquired capital through industrial enterprise in Lancashire. Recent conversations between the author and Graeme De Lande Long, great grandson of Dorman Long's cofounder, have suggested that De Lande Long's financial resources have been somewhat overstated.

<sup>211</sup> Erickson, *British Industrialists*, p.14; pp.166-167; Stead, J.E. & Evans, J. 'The Influence of Copper on Steel Rails and Plates', *Journal of the American Society for Naval Engineers*, 13, 3 (1901)

Rhymney Iron Works where his father was General Manager, Windsor-Richards progressed to the position of assistant engineer at his brother's firm in Tredegar prior to his move north, a common practice reflected in the strong representation of Welsh industrialists, communities and Eisteddfod on Teesside in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>212</sup> Samuelson's eventual partner William Hanson too had progressed through the ranks via various management roles within the firm having hailed from a draper family, whilst at South Durham Christopher Furness, the son of a coal trimmer, built upon his own enterprise to lead the firm to its early twentieth century success.<sup>213</sup> In fact, the similarities to Furness are worthy of further elaboration, for his progress within the firm having also included a number of different, progressive roles. Having served as a consultant, he came to have a more direct involvement in the works through membership of an Expert Committee (1903) before eventual elevation to the board (1904) and then directorship.<sup>214</sup>

In the case of Dorman Long, however, the reality of this progression was not as clear cut. Although the partial move away from exclusively hereditary handover of affairs bringing in external influence and bringing within it a shift in the firm's dynamics by pairing individual progress with hereditary practice, Dorman's 'great reluctance' in retiring hindered any grand departure. His assurance of an enduring 'keen and lively interest' in the company expressed at his retirement came to manifest itself in a series of interferences through mechanisms he put in place to ensure continued control. These actions, commencing with the inauguration of a special management committee at his retirement, followed by his eventual return as a co-managing director and eventually as the sole Managing Director

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<sup>212</sup> Erickson, *British Industrialists*, p.14; Lewis, R. 'Culture, Politics and Assimilation: The Welsh on Teesside, c.1850-1940', *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 17, no. 4 (Dec. 1995), pp.550-570.

<sup>213</sup> Erickson, *British Industrialists*, p.15

<sup>214</sup> James, 'Growth and Transition', pp.202-203;

hampered any independence the new structure might have had. James has traced how the steel magnate's reluctance to step down initially manifested itself through putting in place structures within the firm to ensure his continued oversight, before reintroducing himself into the managing director fold alongside his son and Patton, and ultimately taking over completely. Initially Dorman created a Special Management Committee which included Hugh Bell. Instead of focusing on the organisational structure of the company as was its overt purpose, it operated as a mechanism whereby Arthur J. Dorman could 'keep a close control over the firm without becoming involved in the day to day production and trading activities', the Committee reporting on and scrutinising the new management in ways that Dorman himself would surely have objected to in the years before.<sup>215</sup> It was apparent that the elder Dorman was unable to withdraw from involvement in the firm, particularly following the amalgamation of Bell Brothers, with the bringing together of the two firms showing his unwillingness to allow his son Charles Dorman to take over as the active family figure in the firm bearing his name. Yet just two years after stepping down, Arthur J. Dorman once again assumed the position of Managing Director following the amalgamation with Bell Brothers in 1902, affirming James' characterisation of a manufacturer not quite ready to retire as his business partner had. The 1899 partial merger with Dorman Long had seen 50% of Bells' shares purchased by Dorman Long with Arthur Dorman becoming a director, while a complete amalgamation was completed in 1902 through Dorman's purchase of the remaining Bell shares with Dorman Long shares.<sup>216</sup> The merger brought further changes in the management of the two firms with A J Dorman handing over Dorman Long's Chairmanship to Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell, the former becoming Vice Chairman. James has suggested that in appointing the 86 year old 'grand old man of iron and steel', Dorman Long did so in an honorary guise - the Chairman

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<sup>215</sup> James, 'Growth and Transition', p.235

<sup>216</sup> James, 'Bell Brothers Limited'; Judge, *Dorman Long*; pp.6-7

did not present any of the annual statements during his tenure, in his first year handing over the duty to Charles Dorman, 'someone thoroughly familiar with the transactions of the Company'.<sup>217</sup> Other presentations were cancelled owing to ill health and eye-sight operations for the elderly statesmen of manufacturing. In reality, Lowthian Bell's involvement was limited to occasional board meetings and the solitary AGM mentioned above. Yet, despite his limited activity as Chairman of Dorman Long, it is likely that the involvement of a nationally and internationally recognised voice of iron and steel manufacturing as the symbolic, tokenistic leader of the firm did the profile of the group little harm.<sup>218</sup>

Despite both the less than clear cut temporary retirement of Arthur J Dorman and the limited input of the elderly Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell between the interregnum period between 1899 and 1902, Charles Dorman's period of Managing Director was not one of inactivity. Owing to a combination of a lack of familiarity with the affairs of Dorman Long and several illnesses, Charles Dorman stepped in for the octogenarian Lowthian Bell at A.G.Ms during this period. His time as joint Managing Director also saw Charles Dorman chair the directors' meetings of the firm and thus can be seen as indicative of at least some element of direction of the company's trajectory. Moreover, he also led a delegation of representatives of the firm on an overseas trip to America in his first year as Managing Director, allowing the firm to make use of his knowledge of this strong market for the firm's Wire Department that he had managed. The trip saw Charles Dorman visit plants across

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<sup>217</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1902, p.12, TA, BS.DL/1/7

<sup>218</sup> James, 'Growth and Transition', p.235

the United States to research the iron and steel manufacturing processes, feeding back his findings at board meetings and the annual meeting of the firm.<sup>219</sup>

Following the amalgamation with Bell Brothers, Charles Dorman was joined by another of the younger members of the industrialist families, Maurice Lowthian Bell. Like his counterpart he had prior experience in the industry at the Bell Brothers' Clarence Works on the north banks of the Tees. These two new entrants had also both enjoyed an elite education, with Rugby and Eton educations aligning to those career trends of industrialists' sons observed by Coleman, in what is often seen as an attempt by fathers to prepare their offspring for their place in the higher ranks of society as well as succeeding them in business in providing an education that some of the earlier generations had lacked.<sup>220</sup> In following their fathers into firms, Middlesbrough's second and third generation Dorman Long directors reflected those trends observed by Dintenfass in his reassessment of the apparent anti-industrial society in which he argues against notions of decline in the latter generations' industrial zeal.<sup>221</sup> In fact, Charles Dorman was the very embodiment of the apparently gentrified characteristics Dintenfass has found among steel manufacturers between 1865 and 1953. He was among the one in four hailing from landed families and amongst the one quarter of late nineteenth century Rugby School cohorts who entered the

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<sup>219</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1901, p.19, TA, BS.DL/1/7; Letter Book – Wire Department, 1899-1902, BS.DL/6/7/1/2. Charles Dorman's visit to works abroad was by no means unique, with industrialists from Europe and America visiting each other's works, both in their role within their own firms and through affiliation on trade institutions. Detailed reports of subsequent visits to America can be found in the British Steel Collection at Teesside Archives. For the June 1926 visit to America by Mr Arthur Dorman, Walter L Johnson and E.D. Morgan see 'Report on a Visit to America', TA, BS.DL/7/5/1/1.

<sup>220</sup> Coleman, D.C. 'Gentlemen and Players', *Economic History Review*, 26, 1 (1973), p.105. Despite the trend to provide the younger generation of industrialist families with a significant educational grounding, the issue divided manufacturers on the relevance of such training, an issue on which Coleman elaborates citing the example of George Courtauld's reservations on the value of a college course as fit preparation for business life (p.107). The later addition of Francis Samuelson to the board also mirrored the career path of Charles Dorman, both having attended Trinity and Eton.

<sup>221</sup> Dintenfass, M. *The Decline of Industrial Britain, 1870-1980* (London, 1992), p.61

manufacturing trade, going some way to counter the alleged incompatibility of elite education to industrial management, notions suggested by Rubinstein in contentions that schools produced a national facing culture and in Wiener's emphasis on anti-industrial attitudes.<sup>222</sup>

For all the progress of the junior steel magnates in the period between Dorman's retirement in 1900 and the death of Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell in 1904, the passing of the Chairman marked a retrograde step with Arthur J. Dorman returning to the leadership as Chair of the company, reasserting his authority and influence once more. The death of director Henry Echalaz in 1908, who had been involved in the firm at an early stage performing an important role as a regional agent of Dorman Long, provided the Dorman family with a further opportunity to extend boardroom influence.<sup>223</sup> Mr Arthur Dorman was dually appointed as a Director of the company, with Sir Hugh Bell, in approving his appointment, citing Dorman's experience at the Clarence Works where 'it was thought he had served a long enough apprenticeship to give his advice and counsel to the Board'.<sup>224</sup> By 1911 Francis Samuelson, the son of the late Sir Bernhard Samuelson, had joined the Dorman Long board in combination with his chairmanship of Samuelson's as Dorman Long sought to bring together the supply of molten iron which had been previously drawn from the Newport Works of Samuelson's. This move, however, stopped short of full amalgamation.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Dintenfuss, *The Decline of Industrial Britain*, pp.60-64

<sup>223</sup> Echalaz's loss to the firm was significant and his career as Dorman Long serves as a cautionary tale in aligning spatial distance with disengagement, with Charles Dorman at Dorman Long's 1900 AGM reflected on how Echalaz's residence in 'the south' (Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire) as 'of great assistance to the Company and the Board in the way in which he gives supervision to the operations of the Company in London in connection with the London yard', Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1900, p.10, TA, BS.DL/1/7.

<sup>224</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1908, p.15, TA, BS.DL/1/7

<sup>225</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1911, pp.13-14, TA, BS.DL/1/7



Thus, contrary to expectations, the expansion and hold of the familial influences within the firm in the lead up to the First World War increasingly elevated the Dormans, Bells and Samuelson as recognisable captains of industry in the locality, none more so than the chairman himself. This was exemplified in the response of the company and community to the distress caused by the coal strike of 1912. This clearly demonstrated the place the Dormans held in the local psyche as the leading industrial figures in the town, as the press reported the 'friendliness of employers' being instigated by Chairman Arthur J Dorman himself who personally sought to keep the very lowest paid in work and also offered a 10s a week advance during the stoppage as well as coal.<sup>226</sup>

By the outbreak of the Great War, Dorman Long with its cross generational directorship of the firm had through its pursuit of steel production and acquisitions expanded to become the second largest steel firm in the country. The series of acquisitions and the agglomeration strategy had helped reduce potential for competition, built upon joint working such as that between Dorman Long and Bell Brothers and allowed for consolidation of resources. By the end of the 1910s further wartime expansion allowed Sir Arthur Dorman to claim that the combined plants of the company constituted 'the largest capacity under one control in the United Kingdom'.<sup>227</sup> The war years proved to be defining for the further development of Dorman Long. The acquisition of the Walker Maynard iron works at Redcar expanded the firm's interests eastwards, further enhanced by the government loan aided construction of a new steel works costing in excess of £4 million, as well as the development of the new industrial village of "Dormanstown", completed in

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<sup>226</sup> Newspaper cutting dated 27 March 1912, DMC, Dorman Family Albums No.1

<sup>227</sup> Tolliday, *Business, Banking and Politics*, p.47

1920.<sup>228</sup> The new town would see the mobilisation of the younger generation of the industrialists working alongside rising managers in the operation of the latter venture through the Dormanstown Tenants Limited, established in 1919. Charles Dorman was the Chairman of the group, his brother Mr Arthur Dorman Vice Chairman, and Maurice Lowthian Bell amongst the shareholders alongside T.D.H. Stubbs (who would play an important role in the attempts to rearrange the finances of the firm in the late 1920s) and Lawrence Ennis, future manager of the Sydney Harbour Bridge project.<sup>229</sup> The war years had also brought the death of Walter Johnson who was replaced on the board by his son Walter Lyulph Johnson, the Grandson of Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell.<sup>230</sup>

### **Dorman Long, interwar management and the family firm**

The importance of the firm and the rising stock of the individuals within it was confirmed during and immediately after the war. Arthur J Dorman as Chairman of a firm which produced half of the high explosive shells used by the army and supplied some 1.7 million tons of shell steel for the war effort, was awarded a knighthood.<sup>231</sup> Lloyd George in December 1917 informed Dorman that he was to be knighted 'in recognition of the services rendered by you in connection with the war', with recognition also forthcoming for Sir Hugh Bell (C.B), the Chairman's son Bedford Lockwood Dorman (O.B.E), who served as Staff Captain at the War Office, Dorman Long General Manager and rising star Laurence Ennis (O.B.E) and Dorman Long's Redcar steelworks Manager, Robert Gray

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<sup>228</sup> Robertson, *Middlesbrough's Effort*, p.68; Buckley, C. 'Modernity, Tradition, and the Design of the Industrial Village of Dormanstown, 1917-1923', *Journal of Design History*, 23, 1 (2010), pp.21-41 provides an overview of the development of the intended garden city in the context of building during wartime.

<sup>229</sup> Dormanstown Tenants Ltd Minute Book 1 1920-1931, TA, BS.DORT/1/1-2

<sup>230</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.78

<sup>231</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.38; Menzies, *Great War Britain: Middlesbrough*, p.148

(M.B.E). Representatives of other firms and families including Bolckow Vaughan's George Scoby-Smith (C.B.E) and Cargo Fleet Iron Company Manager George Wilson, (M.B.E) were also recognised amongst the wartime honours.<sup>232</sup> Not only did the recognition of the managers and owners of the manufacturing industries mark the importance of the iron and steel works in the war effort, but furthermore underlined the important of Teesside to the war effort in general.

The grand expansion of the company and its interests during and immediately after the war saw Dorman Long become the name synonymous with contemporary steel manufacture, aided no doubt by its vast new plant at Redcar and an industrial garden city bearing the firm's name. But this did not deflect the general need for rationalisation – the business fashion of the period – and in 1923 moves were undertaken across the allied firms that reflected these developments. In the absence of Sir Arthur Dorman, who had only recently arrived back from a holiday to Jamaica, it fell to Sir Hugh Bell to announce at an Extraordinary meeting of April 1923 plans for all of Dorman Long's allied firms, including his own family concern Bell Brothers, to align under the Dorman Long brand. In doing so Bell, as well as looking forward, took time to look backwards exclaiming

We are a great public Company – we have about 16,000 Shareholders to whom the prosperity of the undertaking is of deep importance. But, in spite of this, we have retained some of the traits which characterised industrial enterprise before the great Joint Stock movement of the middle of the last century began. We are still inspired to a very considerable extent by the spirit of the family concerns which existed prior to that date. It is, I believe, because of this that our relations with the workmen in our

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<sup>232</sup> 'David Lloyd George to Arthur J. Dorman, 24 December 1917, Sir Philip Dorman Private Collection; Robertson, *Middlesbrough's Effort*, pp.239-241

employment have remained of a more intimate and personal character than is usual in concerns of this kind.<sup>233</sup>

Although not stating it directly, there is a sense that in looking back Bell recognised the importance of the hands-on, recognisable role the Bell family dynasty had played. Through meetings with workmen's representatives at their Clarence Works and the internal joint committees, the Bell family had helped ensure cordial industrial relations and effective addressing of issues by dealing directly with the workmen's representatives into the twentieth century. Into the 1890s and early 1900s Charles Lowthian Bell, Hugh Bell and his son Maurice Lowthian Bell negotiated directly with the representatives of the workers on issues including ranging from staffing to pay disputes.<sup>234</sup> Furthermore, the Bell family had led the way amongst the Middlesbrough facing industries also in developing employee welfare provision through their instigation of the Coffee Palace scheme at Port Clarence in 1881, discussed in more detail elsewhere in this thesis.<sup>235</sup>

The amalgamation of the firms would see the relinquishing of the name of Bell Brothers made synonymous with good relations, as well as that of Sir Bernhard Samuelson's as part of the proposals, Bell continuing

The result of this action, in which we are asking you to concur, will be to extinguish the firm of Bell Brothers...Since 1862 I have personally taken an active part in all its affairs. It is with deep reluctance that I have agreed [to the name change]...Before I leave this part of my subject I must name yet another of the pioneers of Cleveland –

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<sup>233</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Extraordinary Meeting 1923, p.3, TA, BS.DL/1/7

<sup>234</sup> Minutes of Meetings at Clarence Ironworks, 7 March 1895, TA, BS.BB/6/3/1

<sup>235</sup> NEDG, 6 December 1881

the late Sir B. Samuelson came to the Tees very shortly after the Bells. Until his death in 1905 he took a deep interest in all that concerned its welfare. His son, our colleague, carried on the tradition and “Samuelsons” have shared with “Bells” and “Dormans” the characteristics to which I am referring.<sup>236</sup>

Clearly there was a sense of grand departure and an aura of loss about Bell’s statement on the Dorman Long name adoption alongside a stress on the good industrial relations based upon this hands-on, familial approach. Thus, whilst at first glance Bell’s words seemingly reflected Macrosty’s observations in his work on trust movements that ‘old and well-established firms never welcome the complete loss of their identity that is implied in amalgamation’, there was also a sense of the continued importance of employer responsibility.<sup>237</sup> Yet, Bell was not pessimistic but instead was keen to point out the continued influence of not only the senior industrialists from the families, but also the strong representation of the much maligned second and third generations of industrialist families, declaring:

The Directorate of the present Companies contains eight members of the three families I have named. The families they represent hold a very large stake in the undertakings. Their wellbeing is closely bound up with the prosperity of the enterprise. We consequently felt we might safely assume your consent to any

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid, p.4

<sup>237</sup> Macrosty, H. *The Trust Movement In British Industry A Study of Business Organisation* (London, 1907), p.16

scheme which, after due deliberation, we had satisfied ourselves was not prejudicial to our interests, which were in fact identical with yours.<sup>238</sup>

Amidst all the changes, there was a strong sense of continuity in financial, stakeholder interest in the newly expanded Dorman Long brand. So too, the sense of shared obligation, industrial experience and interest associated with Bell Brothers and the Bell's own direct involvement was still part of the new structure's makeup and was not perceived to be incompatible with either name or structural change. Despite the apparent 'loss' of Bell Brothers as an entity, Dorman Long very much represented the same interests that had underpinned those ideals described by Bell in his address.

Boswell has argued that it was this family capitalism that was the notable feature of a directorate pointing, as it did, to a continued engagement of earlier industrialists such as Arthur Cooper and Charles Head (loosely linked by marriage to the founder Long) who had over half a century of service between them, with the new structures.<sup>239</sup> The familial, generational nature of Dorman Long demonstrated an endurance that does not fit with accusations of declining participation, even if, as will be shown below, it might reflect a weakening of ability. For even when opportunities arose to introduce new, external blood it was not embraced, as evident in the same year as the amalgamations. The 1923 annual report delivered by Chairman Sir Arthur Dorman brought the announcement that owing to the 'increase of work consequent upon the amalgamation' he was to relinquish his role as Managing Director, in turn appointing his son Arthur Dorman to the position.<sup>240</sup> Sir Hugh Bell deviated from convention to elaborate on the Chairman's statement to express his regret at losing Sir Arthur as a Managing Director, before praising the appointment of Mr

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid, pp.4-5

<sup>239</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.78

<sup>240</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1923, p.11, TA, BS.DL/1/7

Arthur Dorman as successor. The move can be seen as a (second) semi-retirement by Dorman but still one that reflected the 'family' ethos to which Bell had alluded at the Extraordinary meeting earlier that year. In a less positive sense, it can also be seen as a key moment in the continued presence of the 'Victorian hangover' to which Boswell referred, with the continued presence of the co-founder pulling the strings and restricting the introduction of new blood.

In doing so, it also ensured that the Dorman and Bell family partnership continued – one that was at times fractious and brought internal conflict at points on the divides between the two families on free trade and protectionism. With Bell as a key advocate of free trade and with it encouraging the import of foreign iron and steel to be made into finished products, he not only represented a key divide with many of the majority of his steel magnate peers, none more so than Sir Arthur Dorman who called for protectionism as the way of saving the British steel industry from the advance of foreign competition. The polarised views of the steel magnates, despite the unity of the two steel magnates displayed at the 1923 annual meeting and their enduring involvement, reached a highpoint during this period. The conflicting views of the Conservative Dorman and Liberal Bell featured in an exchange of letters on the 'Leaders Conflicting Views' in the pages of *The Times*, with the letters of the two men juxtaposed alongside one another in December 1923 in the aftermath of the 'free trade' election.<sup>241</sup> The divide was nothing new but represented arguably the public highpoint of their conflict that had endured since their joining together at the turn of the century and had seen Bell, in his presidency of the National Association of Manufacturers, pontificate on the evils of state intervention and

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<sup>241</sup> *The Times*, 3 December 1923; Macrosty, *Trust Movement*, p.29

barriers to international trade.<sup>242</sup> The link to the conflict and the retirement of Dorman cannot be proven, although the public spat coming after Dorman's step back from active involvement might point to the shackles of daily contact allowing for freer expression of ideologies. However, such high profile, highly politicised and polarised public disagreement reflected why their firm was referred to locally as 'Dorman versus Bell', pointing to the homogeneity and united front portrayed in some spheres were not universally evident. The divide also spilled over in social interactions between the two, albeit in a more jovial manner than the pages of *The Times*. Their contemporary W.G. Willis later described how telephone communication between the two would have Sir Hugh Bell answering a call from Sir Arthur Dorman with the response 'Free Trade Speaking' to be met with a grunt from his fellow industrialist.<sup>243</sup>

By the mid-1920s starting with the death of Charles Head in 1924, the decline of the old guard's presence on the board began. The firm began to conform to Erickson's model of progression within the firm, centred upon the idea of the interwar steel management including those who worked in a number of roles within the firm before elevation to the higher echelons of the concern. At Dorman Long, the progression within the firm was epitomised by the rise of Lawrence Ennis who was elevated to the board in 1924 and appointed manager of the landmark Sydney Harbour Bridge construction.<sup>244</sup> The move

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<sup>242</sup> *Journal of the Chemical Society*, 1932, p.1328. Bell also contributed numerous articles on the importance of free trade for the local and national economy. See Bell, H. 'The Iron and Steel Trade', in H. Cox, *British Industries under Free Trade: Essays by Experts* (London, 1903), pp.266-293.

<sup>243</sup> Chandler, A.D. *Scale and scope: the dynamics of industrial capitalism* (Harvard, 1994), p.328; Willis, W.G. 'Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell', *Cleveland History*, No. 26, (1974), p.23

<sup>244</sup> Ennis Memorial Scholarship, TA, BS.DL/3/2/1/3/44



marked the midpoint of Ennis' trajectory, with the Scottish-born director being appointed Managing Director in 1932 upon completion of the Sydney Harbour Bridge contract.<sup>245</sup>

Yet even with the appointment of Ennis to the Sydney Harbour Bridge scheme, Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell could not resist direct involvement by going to see the works for themselves. Attending the foundation stone laying ceremony in March 1925 was no mean feat for the two elderly industrialists given the months at sea the journey involved. Even more remarkable was the fact that within hours of their arrival in Sydney the two men set about an inspection of the works and the construction site of the scheme.<sup>246</sup> Indeed, whilst in Australia the two steel magnates acted as the public faces of the firm, with the Australian press reporting extensively on their experience in England, the history of the firm and the speeches both gave in Sydney and at the launch of the company's steamers at Newcastle, New South Wales the fleet being established to transport granite from Moruya for the Bridge's pylons.<sup>247</sup> Alongside Ennis, the press hailed Dorman and Bell as the "Big Three" and reported on Sir Arthur Dorman declaring 'We are an Australian firm – we have been established 27 years in Melbourne', whilst Bell in his typical manner of advocating free trade stating 'We have not come to talk politics; our business is to build the bridge. Of course, I am known the world over as a notorious free-trader'!

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<sup>245</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1923, p.15, TA, BS.DL/1/7; Erickson, C. *British Industrialists*, p.70;

<sup>246</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 and 26 March 1925; Unattributed newspaper cutting, March 1925, Dorman Museum Collection

<sup>247</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 April 1925



**Figure 6: Australian newspaper report of the meeting of Sir Arthur Dorman, Sir Hugh Bell and Lawrence Ennis in Sydney. Undated, unknown newspaper cutting, DMC, Dorman Family Albums No.1**

Despite the award of the Sydney Harbour Bridge contract, the firm struggled to secure orders in the strife-ridden mid-1920s, culminating in the strikes of 1925 and the General Strike which brought manufacturing to a halt, bringing a loss of £178,000 for the year and unemployment to 16,000 men in Middlesbrough.<sup>248</sup> Boswell's study of three steel firms has charted the financial problems of Dorman Long that escalated in the late 1920s as a result, in doing so pointing to the uninspiring Charles Dorman's role and the difficulties and clashes that emerged between family loyalties, non-family staff such as T.D.H Stubbs and Colonel Byrne, and the banks.<sup>249</sup> The letters recording the conflict that Boswell uses as a platform for charting the clashes within the firm are both revealing of the lack of faith in

<sup>248</sup> Judge, *Dorman Long*, p.7; Taylor, D. 'Infant Hercules' p.78

<sup>249</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, pp.103-105

Charles and Arthur Dorman to deliver, and a strong impression that Sir Arthur Dorman as an aging man with stress and illness was at the heart of the firm's difficulties – a situation compounded by both his physical and mental inability to cope mixed up with his very deep passion for and attachment to the firm. The company's commercial and financial difficulties and Sir Arthur Dorman's approach to his own and the firm's problems are useful for informing our assessment of the wider debates regarding elite withdrawal and the extent to which gentrification and residence beyond the town resulted in a decline in business activity and commitment to manufacturing industry. Certainly, in the case of the bed-ridden elderly Dorman, there was still considerable evidence of the steel magnate's eagerness to remain involved in business even when he could not attend meetings in person. The most extreme example of this commitment was embodied in Dorman having company officials come to his home when he was ill and unable to attend meetings in person. For example, in a letter to Byrne of the 14th July 1927, Dorman Long's Secretary, Stubbs reports how he was having most of his meals at Sir Arthur's home at Grey Towers, stating 'I see him [Sir Arthur] in bed in the morning when we discuss business, after lunch we go round the estate and are farmers. In the evening we talk about everything else except business'.<sup>250</sup> Effectively, Byrne was acting as Dorman's personal confidante in the extreme circumstances of the bedside as a quasi-boardroom. As such, Dorman's practice can be seen as the exceptional embodiment of Gunn's Victorian industrialist who could 'ride with the local hunt, build himself a castle in the country, and adopt a 'neo-feudal' post of paternalist employer, without...compromising in any way the imperatives of capitalist production'.<sup>251</sup> Going further, it can be argued that such commitment reflected the eagerness or at least influence by Dorman on decisions and processes that would do much to shape the prosperity of urban life and employment more broadly. Furthermore,

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<sup>250</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.104

<sup>251</sup> Gunn, S. 'The 'failure' of the Victorian middle class: a critique', in J. Wolff and J. Seed, *The Culture of capital: art, power and the nineteenth-century middle class* (Manchester, 1988), p.29

Stubbs' correspondence is revealing of a Chairman unable to attend to his business in person, walking on his landed estate as the lord of the manor, adopting the rural lifestyle in the countryside facing farmer role, yet embodied in the ailing Victorian captain of industry.

The acquisition of Bolckow Vaughan in 1929 and amalgamation into the 'Dorman Long' brand did little to ease either Dorman's or the firm's difficulties. The merger reflected a declining grasp of control on the financial affairs by the steel magnate, the deal having been agreed amid strong pressure by bankers Barclays who wanted to see the two ailing giants rationalise at a time of wider problems in the industry both Teesside and across the UK.<sup>252</sup> The purchase was a change to the dynamics of previous acquisitions, with the bank effectively forcing through the sale to Dorman Long by making the renewal of Bolckow Vaughan's overdraft conditional upon the merger.<sup>253</sup> The dynamics of the company were changed significantly as a result of heightened financier involvement in management, whilst the unexpected death of Charles Dorman in 1929 brought further challenges. Charles Dorman had effectively emerged as a middleman between his father and the bankers in financial disputes within the firm and his passing meant a further restructuring. To make matters worse the firm was haemorrhaging money and was hit severely by the crash and subsequent worldwide collapse in demand for iron and steel, with plants operating below 52 percent capacity in pig iron production and 65 percent in steel production by 1930.<sup>254</sup> On a public level, the turmoil was downplayed and Sir Arthur Dorman remained the key, and positive, public figure of the merger. Thus the press reported the steel magnate's 81<sup>st</sup> birthday and the impending merger with Bolckow Vaughan under the headline 'Sir A. Dorman on British Iron and Steel Merger Plans' and

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<sup>252</sup> Tweedale, G. *Steel City: entrepreneurship, strategy, and technology in Sheffield, 1743-1993* (Oxford, 1995), p.239

<sup>253</sup> Hannah, L. *The Rise of the Corporate Economy* (London, 1976), p.73

<sup>254</sup> Dorman Long Print Book No.6 1928-1931, TA, BS.DL/7/3/1/1

marked the occasion with an 'exclusive birthday interview' to the *North Eastern Daily Gazette*. This gave Dorman the opportunity to express his confidence in the financial reliability of the firm, paid tribute to long-term partner Sir Hugh Bell and reported on the latter's recovery from illness.<sup>255</sup> In the same newspaper another short article entitled 'Two Grand Old Men' exclaimed

What wonderful old men Teesside can claim among its industrial leaders! Sir Arthur Dorman, head of the great Middlesbrough iron firm, celebrates his eighty-first birthday to-day, and marked this eve yesterday by a bright and penetrating discussion of affairs in an interview with our representative...We echo heartily the cry that young men should be given a chance and that men who have held the reins until they have nothing to give but experience might well make way for vigour and enterprise. But there are men and men. Sir Arthur Dorman at eighty-one and Sir Hugh Bell, another director of the same great firm, at eighty-five, are remarkable exceptions to an almost universal rule – remarkable examples of the truth that a man is as old as he feels.<sup>256</sup>

The report again makes clear the importance of the individual in the direction of the firm even at this late interwar stage, and especially the exceptional, 'remarkable examples' of Sirs Arthur and Sir Hugh. Moreover, the *North Eastern Daily Gazette* article reflects the importance of the Dormans and Bells in the psyche of the wider area as figureheads and a link to an era of entrepreneurship, boom and individual development and leadership of industry. It might also be seen as reflecting the central role the two grand old men of industry played in the wider structure of the community as two insurmountable characters

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<sup>255</sup> *NEDG*, 8 August 1929

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid*

who could and should not be replaced. They had contributed significantly to the establishment of institutions such as the Winter Garden, Dorman Long Athletic Club, the town's Dorman Museum and their departure to be replaced by less well-known, and even outsiders not from a manufacturing background, posed potential for a sense of loss and departure by severing a link to the heyday of Middlesbrough's boom. At this point it is useful to cite the example of a publication by Bolckow Vaughan in the 1920s, just before the take-over by Dorman Long, which conveys the sense of change felt in the industry during this period. *A Romance of Industry* argued that

In the case of this vast iron and steel industry certain unexpected things have happened. The most striking, perhaps, is the fact that the modern ironmaster is not an ironmaster only. John Vaughan would be bewildered and helpless to-day in the concern which he helped to found in 1839. The actual process of iron making, of steel making, of silica and fireclay refractory making, of research, of office routine, of labour management, of the compiling of statistical returns, and output charts – each one of these is...in the hands of a departmental chief, which is what the Victorian ironmaster really was. The modern ironmaster is compelled to know a little of each of these things, and a great deal about modern economics. He must understand such intangible things as the drift of European politics, of Eastern affairs, of the money market, of the Home Government, of the frame of mind of Labour, even of the main lines of industrial development during the next decade. Few men are fit to control the iron and steel firms, but when such are found the great issues they control will be neither wasteful nor ungainly, but, on the contrary, efficient and purposeful. The firm will possess unity and individuality.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Bolckow Vaughan, *A Romance of Industry*, p.10

Despite the press championing the elder statesmen of industry and their endurance and adaptability to the new conditions of industry portrayed as far removed from that with which the Victorian ironmasters were associated, the old guard's endurance was beginning to wane. The retirement of Arthur Cooper, the former Chairman of the North Eastern Steel Company, brought with it the appointment of financier Charles Dalziel to the board along with Charles Mitchell - who had risen through the ranks within the firm - who replaced the deceased Charles Dorman.<sup>258</sup> This shift away from family allegiances was furthered the following year with Mitchell's elevation to the role of joint managing director alongside Mr Arthur Dorman following the expansion of the firm through the Bolckow Vaughan acquisition. Yet the seeming decline of family representation was countered slightly by the appointment of Ivor Lowthian Johnson of the Bell and Johnson family coupling, who had worked in the collieries department of the firm. By this point the seniority of the old Victorian businessmen of Dorman and Bell was further questioned both from within the firm and beyond it, with the rumours of a loss in the region of £2,000,000 on the Sydney Harbour Bridge contract, reconstruction scheme capital queries and the 15,000 men unemployed in Middlesbrough in 1930. Together these factors forced Sir Hugh Bell, deputising in the chair for the ill Sir Arthur Dorman, to deliver an extensive, defensive response at that year's AGM.<sup>259</sup> Writing prior to his death in 1992 the last Chairman of Dorman Long, E.T. Judge, reflected on how Dorman in these latter years and in failing health was 'presiding somewhat ineffectively over Dorman Long and sank it into near bankruptcy'.<sup>260</sup> Combined with the widespread decline in the industry bringing

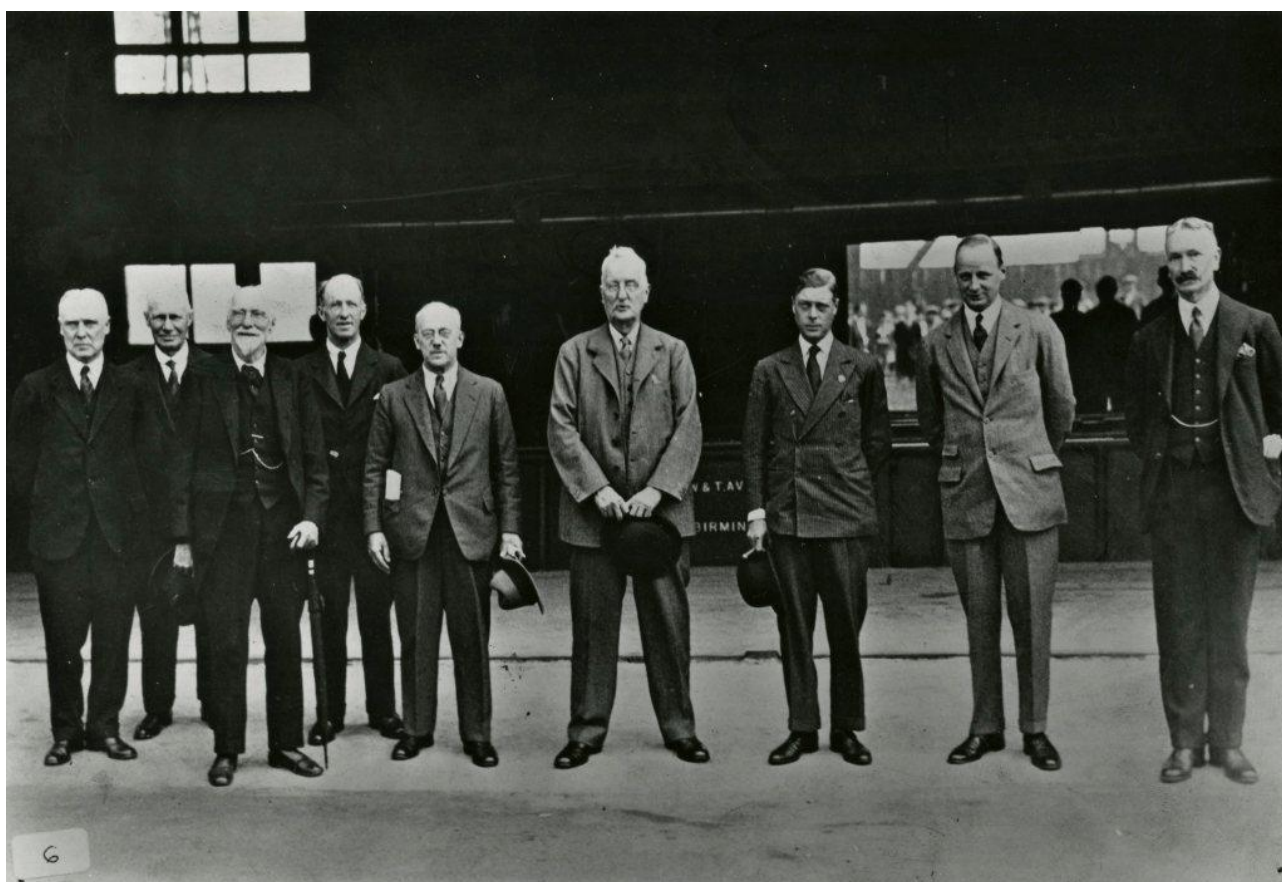
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<sup>258</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.157; Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1929, p.19, TA, BS.DL/1/7

<sup>259</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1930, pp.26-28, TA, BS.DL/1/7; Tolliday, S. 'Steel and Rationalization Policies 1918-1950', *Steel and Rationalization Policies 1918-1950*, in Elbaum, B. & Lazonick, W. (eds.). *The Decline of the British Economy* (Oxford, 1987) p.86 has pointed to a trend for 'irritable gerontocracies that headed the firms' during the interwar merges, citing the example of one Bolckow Vaughan meeting having to be 'conducted in slow loud voices for the benefits of the chairman's ear-trumpet'.

<sup>260</sup> Judge, *Dorman Long*, p.8

‘unparalleled depression’ and the vast losses sustained on the Sydney Harbour Bridge contract, which owed much to currency exchange fluctuation, it is difficult to ascertain how far blame and failure can be attributed to Sirs Arthur or Hugh. What cannot be doubted is their eagerness to remain engaged with the firm literally from their sick beds in the case of Dorman, and it is difficult to align this with a decline of industrial energies amongst the manufacturers.



**Figure 7: The Prince of Wales during the visit to the Britannia Works in 1930.<sup>261</sup>**

The occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales to Middlesbrough and the firm’s Britannia Works in July 1930 proved to be the last high-profile, ceremonial public appearance by Sir Hugh Bell and Sir Arthur Dorman, with a photographer on hand to capture members of the Dorman Long board, including the steel magnates and their sons, with the Prince of Wales

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<sup>261</sup> Visit to Britannia Works by Prince of Wales, 1930, TA, BS.DL/7/2/1/1/140



(above).<sup>262</sup> Bell, in particular played an important part in the ceremonial activities of the day, having earlier overseen the opening of Constantine College in his role of Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding. At the plant, the steel magnate, Sir Arthur Dorman and Mr Arthur Dorman escorted the Prince around the works where he witnessed the testing of a new 1,250 ton machine and also tapped a furnace. The visit was widely covered in the local press, serving to showcase the active, figurehead role played by Dorman and Bell as leaders of the industry and their support for the new Constantine College.

### **The aftermath of the deaths of Sir Arthur Dorman and Sir Hugh Bell**

The deaths of Dorman and Bell would come within a few months of one another in 1931 and marked the cessation of Dorman Long's ties to its Victorian origins and with it the men at the heart of the firm's expansion through to the early years of the twentieth century. Sir Arthur Dorman was the first to pass away, his death on 9th February followed by Sir Hugh Bell on 29<sup>th</sup> June. In the interim period Bell briefly replaced his long-time partner as Chairman of Dorman Long, much to the despair of many within the firm who feared this continuity would impede the opportunity to revive the management structure.<sup>263</sup> Bell's death marked the end of the founding families' occupancy of the chair that went back to the 1850s (Bell Brothers), with Charles Mitchell appointed as Chairman, completing his rise through the ranks of Dorman Long. Despite Mitchell's speech at the 1931 AGM talking of how Dorman and Bell had 'left behind them traditions which will be respected and maintained, and which remain as a testimony to the important part these two great men played in the iron and steel industry in general and to the district in particular', the

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<sup>262</sup> TCC, *Souvenir of the Royal Visit to Teesside: Opening of the Constantine Technical College*

<sup>263</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.108

reality was very different.<sup>264</sup> The management structure of the firm was overhauled within a matter of months, with the executive management placed into the hands of a newly appointed Management Committee. The move saw Mr Arthur Dorman allocated the responsibility of representing the firm in national and international industrial organisations, a move Boswell has compared to a House of Lords appointment bringing an effective honorific role removed from policy and with limited practical power.<sup>265</sup> The Bell family links faced further demotion with both Maurice Lowthian Bell and Walter L Johnson stripped of executive powers in the collieries division, although both remained on the board, a move Boswell argues 'probably left sore feelings in still-influential quarters', although no apparent recorded evidence of this has come to light as yet.<sup>266</sup>

Yet the families' influence was restored in 1934 with the resignation of Charles Mitchell both as Chairman and from the Dorman Long board. Mitchell had attempted to move the operational focus of Dorman Long to London, causing much resentment in Teesside as a result. This move for centralisation combined with a failed attempt to merge with South Durham Steel and Iron Company and a threatened receivership all made his position untenable. Lord Greenwood, Member of Parliament and barrister, replaced Mitchell as Chairman, with Ellis Hunter assuming the position of Managing Director, dubbed by Judge in his company history as the 'Enter the Accountant' stage given Hunter had spent his entire career in finance.<sup>267</sup> Maurice Lowthian Bell and Walter L Johnson were reappointed to leadership roles and remained important members for a number of years to come.

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<sup>264</sup> Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1931, p.9, TA, BS.DL/1/7

<sup>265</sup> Ibid, p.10; Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, pp.109-110

<sup>266</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.110

<sup>267</sup> Judge, *Dorman Long*, p.8; Erickson, *British Industrialists*, p.72. Ellis Hunter's rise in the industry would extend further with his appointment in 1938 as deputy chairman and managing director of Dorman Long, succeeding to the chairmanship in 1948. See Wilson, C. *A memoir of Sir Ellis Hunter: A Man and His Times* (Middlesbrough, 1962), esp. pp.11-14

Moreover, this further restructuring marked a volte face as Chairman Greenwood, in his only AGM, emphasised a return to the company's roots by declaring:

We are opening a new chapter in the long and notable history of Dorman, Long...Although this meeting is in London, the home and heart of Dorman, Long is in Middlesbrough, on Tees-side, and the North-East Coast. Our Head Office and principal works are in that town created by our Company.<sup>268</sup>

Although the roles of the Dorman and Bell dynasties within Dorman Long had come under threat following the deaths of their respective figureheads in 1931, familial involvement was re-established and would remain into the post war period. It was not until that the Dorman family connection with the company ended with the resignation from the board of Mr Arthur Dorman after over fifty years of 'active association with the firm'.<sup>269</sup> Dorman served as Managing Director at Dorman Long, Chairman of British Structural Steel Company and also as President of numerous business and industry organisations including the National Confederation of Employers' Organizations and the Iron & Steel Institute.<sup>270</sup> Similarly when Francis Samuelson, described as 'of the old school of pioneers of the Tees-side iron and steel industry in which the late Sir Hugh Bell and the late Sir Arthur Dorman were such conspicuous figures' died in 1946 he had, like Arthur Dorman, exceeded over 50 years of service within the industry and over thirty years with Dorman Long.<sup>271</sup> The enduring strength of the Bell, Dorman and to a lesser extent, Samuelson families had not only survived but maintained an important influence on company policy in

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<sup>268</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.158; Report of the Dorman Long Annual Meeting 1934, p.5, TA, BS.DL/1/7

<sup>269</sup> 'Death of Mr Arthur Dorman' newspaper cutting', Sir Philip Dorman private collection

<sup>270</sup> *Iron & Steel*, October 1957

<sup>271</sup> *NEDG*, 7 January 1946

one of the largest, concentrated industries in the country.<sup>272</sup> They had endured the rise of the general manager and a temporary transfer of power from the regions to London to see the firm they forefathers had built on the industrial toil of Teesside return to that district, albeit in a form beyond recognition compared to those earlier works established in the mid-nineteenth century on the banks of the Tees.

### **Conclusion: Expansion, delegation and continued engagement**

The period 1880-1934 saw the transformation of the iron and steel industries of Middlesbrough in both the management of the town's firms and the associational activities engaged in by their leaders. In the case of Dorman Long this witnessed major individual firms such as Bell Brothers, Sir Bernhard Samuelson's and, by 1929, Middlesbrough's founding iron manufacturing firm itself – Bolckow Vaughan – all became part of the company's ailing empire. Although the family names disappeared from peak controlling positions in the firm in 1923, individual family members remained involved in evolving ways, with Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell's chairmanship of Dorman Long leading the way and his son Sir Hugh Bell following suit with a directorship and short term chairmanship of the Teesside conglomerate. The later generation – led by Francis Samuelson, Maurice Lowthian Bell and Arthur Dorman - stepped into the void left by their deceased fathers thus continuing their family name in the industry. Yet the responsibilities and power structures had changed as appointment to the highest offices were no longer limited to the Dormans and Bells. Thus, the appointment of Charles Mitchell as Chairman and Lawrence Ennis as Managing Director in the 1930s signalled the end of the Bell and Dorman dominance of affairs. Moreover, the increased influence within the firms of the banks, accountants and

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<sup>272</sup> Church, 'The Family Firm in Industrial Capitalism', p.18 cited in Lloyd-Jones, R., et al. *Personal Capitalism and Corporate Governance: British Manufacturing in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Surrey, 2011), p.9

barristers saw the adoption of management structures that relied far less on individuals but instead spread responsibilities across the firm. Yet the shift instigated by Mitchell that had threatened to bring a further reduction in the involvement of the industrialist families in the key company roles was tempered by his untimely departure and Greenwood's decision to return the firm and its identity back to its Middlesbrough heartland, in the process ensuring the continued, albeit still comparatively limited, involvement of Mr Arthur Dorman, Francis Samuelson and Maurice Lowthian Bell.

As will be seen in the following chapter on business activities through the associational culture of commerce and industry in Middlesbrough, the combination of internal and external activities throughout the period across generations pointed to endurance alongside increased demands and the needs of a vastly expanded manufacturing concern and wider industry. As in politics, philanthropic and welfare provision, the family engagement in the firm that had previously been their exclusive, arguably unchallenged preserve, now reflected the wider societal patterns of increased challenge and a need to adapt to maintain involvement and authority.

## Chapter 5: Business Associations and Employers' Organisations

Just as the board room and the internal organisation of firms performed an important role in the decision making processes of the companies and their prosperity, the numerous 'associations for the purposes of collecting statistics, negotiating with trade unions, railways...and defending their general trade interests' also played a central role in the iron and steel industries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>273</sup> Bodies such as commissioners, employer associations, chambers of commerce, institutes and exchanges, were pivotal in the organisation of industry, collective action, interactions with cognate associations and individuals and in sharing ideas. The importance of such interactions was not lost upon contemporaries of the likes of Bell and Dorman, with Macrosty writing in 1907 identifying how

Ironmasters or their representatives...meet regularly in the daily or weekly pig-iron markets, held at the local Metal exchanges...where they have opportunities of discussing the condition of trade and exchanging views. In this way they informally thresh out a common price, for in a restricted market each man's business is easily known.<sup>274</sup>

These informal gatherings played a key role in the evolution of industry across Britain and crucially in Middlesbrough during the period of this study. Yasumoto in his study of the rise of Middlesbrough as the 'Victorian Ironopolis' has argued that the 1860s proved to be a highpoint of the founding of business organisations, with Cleveland manufacturers pursuing several methods of 'joint endeavour' dealing with industrial disputes and the exchange of knowledge outlined by Macrosty above.<sup>275</sup> Just as Trainor has observed in the emergence of joint organisations in the Black Country around the same period to

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<sup>273</sup> Macrosty, *Trust Movement*, p.51

<sup>274</sup> Ibid, pp.51

<sup>275</sup> Yasumoto, *Victorian Ironopolis*, pp.44-46

temper industrial disputes and bring collective, cohesive action amongst the ironmasters of the Staffordshire district, similar organisations emerged within and cognate to Middlesbrough's manufacturing industries.<sup>276</sup> Companies were established for the formation of employers' associations, most notably the Middlesbrough Exchange Company, the central focus of which was the construction of the grand gothic Royal Exchange headquarters for trading, company offices, associational gatherings and on occasion civic gatherings, centred at the heart of Middlesbrough's commercial quarter.

The meetings for the various bodies that emerged, among them the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association, Cleveland Mineowners' Association and the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce, took place in the heart of Middlesbrough's commercial district which also provided the home of the offices of Bell Brothers' and Dorman Long. At the heart of this district were the aforementioned Royal Exchange buildings, the origins of which can be traced back to a Chamber of Commerce committee that set up the Middlesbrough Exchange Company Limited.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, pp.162-174

<sup>277</sup> 'History of Commercial and Industrial Properties: Middlesbrough's Commercial Centre', n.d, TA, U/S 1433; *The Times*, 20 November 1866; Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.108; 'The Middlesbrough Exchange Company Limited', BS.MEX material at Teesside Archives contains extensive records of the company up until it was dissolved in 1970.



**Figure 8: The Royal Exchange Buildings, constructed by the Middlesbrough Exchange Company Ltd, Middlesbrough Council Image Library**

Through the assessment of a number of the bodies that emerged during this period and continued to serve Middlesbrough into the interwar years, this chapter explores the role of the steel magnates in industry specific employer associations, wider commercial bodies and management collectives governing manufacturing, the River Tees and its banks. It is shown how the business associations acted as a platform for continued, albeit evolving urban and industrial engagement for Middlesbrough's manufacturers through a host of leadership roles, executive powers, business networks and honorific recognition. Furthermore, it is shown that through attendance at regular meetings in the heart of the town's industrial and commercial areas, as well as in formulating grand, civic occasions such as bridge openings and royal visits, there was an active day-to-day engagement in the urban, commercial activities of Middlesbrough's manufacturing operations. Thus, assessing participation in business organisations, particularly when considered alongside



involvement in nearby town halls, voluntary institutes, company offices and private clubs, informs part of our understanding of spatial withdrawal and the physical spheres of elite activity, power and commerce.

### **Cleveland Ironmasters' Association**

The Cleveland Ironmasters' Association was arguably the leading employers' organisation in the iron industry throughout the period of this study. Established in an attempt to organise, coordinate and strengthen the position of the area's ironmasters during 1866, Henry Bolckow was the Association's inaugural president in 1867, followed in the seat by the leading ironmasters and previous year's Vice President (a tradition adhered to almost universally throughout the Association's existence) Isaac Wilson, Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell, Thomas Vaughan and Edgar Gilkes. The Association was reorganised and amended rules were adopted at a meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> June 1876, which identified the group as

An Association for the regulation of all questions arising between themselves and their workmen, or as amongst themselves, as to the wages and employment of workmen, and for the protection of members by mutual indemnity against losses arising from strikes or limitations of labour of workmen, and to procure and tabulate all returns connected with the trade, which may be required for the purposes of the Association.<sup>278</sup>

Bringing together representatives from over a dozen firms to exchange local, regional and national intelligence, the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association mirrored developments in the iron manufacturing districts elsewhere including South Wales, Scotland, Staffordshire,

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<sup>278</sup> Cleveland Ironmasters' Association Minute Book (CIA MB), No.2, Modern Records Centre (MRC), MSS.365/IST/210, 2 June 1876

Yorkshire and Derbyshire.<sup>279</sup> The Cleveland Ironmasters' Association from its inauguration could list the major iron firms in Middlesbrough amongst its number, bringing with it significant representation by industrialists of their firms' interests, whilst also bringing the opportunity for the regulation of prices, joint approaches to schemes, coordination and limited owner solidarity. It was evident that in the years leading up to the beginning of the period of this study, the Association were a powerful organisation with Bolckow Vaughan (E.W Richards), Gilkes, Wilson, Pease & Co (J.F. Wilson), Lloyd and Co. (A.S.S McDonald), Samuelson and Co. (W Hanson) and T Vaughan & Co. (G Neesham) all represented at their 28 January 1878 meeting.<sup>280</sup> Into the 1880s the Association continued to attract new members despite the stagnation in the iron industry in the latter part of the previous decade, with Edward Williams, the proprietor of the Linthorpe Ironworks, former General Manager of Bolckow Vaughan and a major contributor to the wider municipal life of the district, joining in March 1880.<sup>281</sup>

In the years leading up to this current study, Bell Brothers were represented by Hugh Bell from the Association's early days, with Hugh Bell presiding over his first meeting in 1866 when the Association was 'in course of formation' and elected President for the 1876 sitting, chaired proceedings at the January 1878 gathering and also served as President in 1879.<sup>282</sup> As with many of the organisations with which Bell was associated, the ubiquitous steel magnate played multifaceted roles within the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association, with the surviving records of the Association, housed at the University of Warwick's

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<sup>279</sup> Birch, A. *The Economic History of the British Iron and Steel Industry* (London, 1967), pp.140-120 provides a useful overview of the early nineteenth century developments of ironmasters' associations aligning industrial integration of plant alongside combination by the owners.

<sup>280</sup> CIA MB, No.2, Modern Records Centre (MRC), MSS.365/IST/210, 8 January 1878

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid*, 15 March 1880

<sup>282</sup> 'CIA Secretary's Report for 1931', MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

Modern Record Centre, pointing to the active role played by the manufacturer.<sup>283</sup> Even after his period as President in 1879-1880, Bell was a regular presence at meetings and in ad-hoc leadership roles during the 1880s, stepping into the chair in the absence of the President and Vice-President on a number of occasions throughout the decade.<sup>284</sup> During the same period the Association continued to attract new members despite the stagnation in the industry in the previous decade, with Edward Williams, the proprietor of the Linthorpe Ironworks and a major contributor to the wider municipal life of the district, joining in March 1880.<sup>285</sup>

Alongside the directors of the firms that made up the membership, in the years immediately preceding 1880, the organisation was in a state of flux, reflecting the new responsibilities created for the managers of the major firms in the town. The burgeoning Practical Committee of Works Managers first appeared in the minutes of the 28 January 1878 meeting, a move that reflected their position in providing an insight into the day to day operations of the works, information that when firms were smaller concerns were the preserve of ironmasters that directly managed their firms themselves.<sup>286</sup> The appointment at the same meeting of a Special Committee to consider reductions of wages that consisted of both three employers' representatives and three works managers indicates how the works managers bridged the gap between the various companies' board rooms in the commercial district offices of Middlesbrough and their manufacturing plant along the banks of the Tees.

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<sup>283</sup> CIA MB, No.2, 8 January 1880, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>284</sup> For instance, see CIA MB, No.3, 7 September 1885, 21 September 1885, 28 September 1885, 5 April 1886

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, 15 March 1880, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>286</sup> Ibid, No.2, 28 January 1878, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

In acting as a hub for the ironmasters firms' interests, the Association drew together the wider manufacturing community in joint action, whilst also providing a platform for collective bargaining with other organisations as well as employees. Such functions played a key role in the industrial prospects of the firms and importantly their bank balance, providing a forum to negotiate prices with other industries and industrialists that supplied or connected their various concerns. One particular area that received the attentions of the Association joining together to represent the iron interest was the North Eastern Railway Company. The railway firm played a key role in the transportation of the raw materials required for iron production and the distribution of finished products. In 1880 the Cleveland Mineowners' Association joined with the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association in appealing to the Directors of the North Eastern Railway over a 5% rate increase, a reflection of the shared interests of both associations' industrial interests and crossover in membership.<sup>287</sup> In fact, such was the interlinked nature of the industrial community in Middlesbrough that in reality this meant the Bell's as represented ironmasters on the Association, were effectively negotiating with the N.E.R in which they were shareholders, members and directors. Hugh Bell's father Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell was by this point one of the leading figures in the N.E.R and he proactively ensured favourable conditions for ironmasters. Moreover, his Bell Brothers' works had collaborated extensively with the railway company on removing phosphorus from Cleveland iron which prevented its wider use in rails and related products, reflecting the interlinked relationship between cognate concerns amongst the relatively small industrial elite.<sup>288</sup> A similar occurrence followed in

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<sup>287</sup> 'Durham Coal Owners' Association Annual Report', 1912, TA, 26/6/3 (4/4); 'Cleveland Mine Owners' Association Minute Book', TA, BS.CMA/1/2/5. The Cleveland Mine Owners' Association and the cognate Durham Coal Owners' Association could list several iron and steel masters amongst their ranks into the 1920s. Hugh Bell was not only a member of the former's Minimum Wages Committee, but along with Bell Brothers' compatriot Walter Johnson, Chairman of the latter, occupying this role into the late 1920s.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid, 28 May 1880, 15 June 1880; G. Tweedale, 'Bell, Sir (Isaac) Lowthian, first baronet (1816-1904)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30690>> [Accessed 10 September 2012]

July 1885 when the Ironmasters' Association again lobbied the N.E.R alongside the Tees Conservancy Commissioners, another body with extensive interlocking of membership, seeking to reduce the rates charged by the railway company.<sup>289</sup>

The negotiating functions of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association in serving as a platform for direct involvement of the manufacturers in industrial relations was in evidence in August 1882 when the Association entered into negotiations with disgruntled blastfurnacemen seeking to achieve conciliation. Within three weeks a joint meeting was held between employers and employees, a clear illustration of the role of the organisation in conciliation and negotiation in the district, with J.F. Wilson, Swan, Hanson and Edward and Illtyd Williams all in attendance as representatives for the Association.<sup>290</sup> By 1890 Charles Lowthian Bell of Bell Brothers had joined Illtyd Williams as the lead contacts in the negotiations with the blastfurnacemen. In 1894 a major conference on conciliation and arbitration took place, with the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association represented amongst the various organisations connected with the coal, iron and steel trades of Northumberland and Durham that gathered to consider the 'desirability of forming Boards of Conciliation for these counties'.<sup>291</sup>

In addition to providing a platform for collective responses to pay disputes and rates with other companies and workers, the involvement of numerous ironmasters and steel magnates in the association from across firms also meant the grouping was able to improve communication, cohesion and joint action in their industrial practice. This

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid, No.3, 13 July 1885, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 21 August 1882, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, No.6, 8 January 1894, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

manifested itself from general discussions on the condition of the trade to significant decision making that had severe impact on the operation of firms, none more so than at the gathering of 7th January 1884 when debating the causes of the 'unsatisfactory state of affairs'.<sup>292</sup> The debate led to the group deciding that a large number of blast furnaces would be blown out, with subsidies to be paid to those firms for losses occurred under the agreement.<sup>293</sup> The implications of such decisions reflects the importance of each manufacturers' presence and stake in the Association and can be seen as rivalling or at least reflecting the company board room as a sphere of power and decision making given the impact for the wider economic prosperity of the region, firms and the social condition of its population.

The Cleveland Ironmasters' Association also acted as one of the leading organisations in late nineteenth century Middlesbrough with which local government and national trade institutes would liaise when seeking the input of the manufacturers, a further indication of the importance of the cohort. At a local level the strength and sway of the Association was in evidence in January 1889 when Middlesbrough Mayor Raylton Dixon requested by letter to the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association that a general holiday be held in the town on the occasion of the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales visit to the town for the opening of the new Town Hall. Despite the prestige of the event bringing with it the opening of Middlesbrough's newest and grandest municipal building by royalty, the Association refused the request citing the difficulties posed in stopping the blast furnaces.<sup>294</sup> Roberts' study of civic ritual has pointed to how criticism of the proposal to close the works for the day reached the local press, with correspondence from an unnamed ironmaster sharing

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid, 7 January 1884, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 17 January 1884, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, No.5, 7 January 1889, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

the view that there would be negative economic consequences of closing the works.<sup>295</sup> It is not unreasonable to assume that the same ironmaster might have been amongst those who rejected Mayor Raylton Dixon's approach, or was at least represented within the Association or aware of the collective decision of the affiliated ironmasters.<sup>296</sup> Going further, it might be contended that the corresponding ironmaster's stance reflected the solidarity and a degree of homogeneity and consistency achieved through business associations.

The role of the Association participating in and informing civic, ceremonial and industrial activities of visitors to the town was not always as negative. A key part of the civic and industrial culture of Middlesbrough and one that acted as statements of the Ironopolis' importance were the numerous visits of industrialists from both within the United Kingdom and abroad. The occasion of a visit by Belgian engineers to the Cleveland District in 1886 to explore industrial practices in England saw the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association mobilise in welcoming their Belgian counterparts on a visit to Middlesbrough organised by the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, forming a reception committee comprising of some of the area's leading ironmasters. The group was led by Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell, Past President of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, alongside his brother John Bell and son Hugh Bell as well as E. Windsor Richards, Carl Bolckow, Walter Johnson, John Stevenson, J.F. Wilson, W. Hanson and A.C. Downey.<sup>297</sup> Not only did such visits offer opportunities to showcase the products on offer on Teesside and with it raise the potential for knowledge exchange, but furthermore this crossover of associational activity and

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<sup>295</sup> *NEDG*, 7 January 1889, cited in Roberts, 'Civic Ritual in Darlington and Middlesbrough', p.225

<sup>296</sup> The extent to which this was adhered too is questionable, with the Prince having noted the lack of smoke on his visit. I am grateful to Ben Roberts for this reference and further information on the Royal Visit of 1889.

<sup>297</sup> CIA MB, No.3, 12 July 1886, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

business interests served as a mechanism for affirming industrial elite culture and homogeneity amongst the manufacturers. The visit also serves to underline the importance of the Bells as local, national and international figures, with the Bells in particular represented in Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell's past presidential affiliation, hosting lunch for the visit at the Bell Brothers' works in Port Clarence, and through the Tees Conservancy Commissioners' provision of the steamer that transported the delegates to the said works. This reflects the multifaceted roles of the Bells in the industry and the wider leadership and power they exercised across several spheres of influence tied to manufacturing. Further visits to the region by industrial associations saw the industry of the area celebrated and the elites mobilised, including on the occasion of the visit of the British Association to both Newcastle and Middlesbrough in 1899, with the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association agreeing to send David Dale (mineowners) and Carl Bolckow (ironmasters) should be representatives of the industries on a Local Reception Committee.<sup>298</sup> Evidently, representation on such visits was valued by the Association, reflecting the important role of showcasing the strength of industry in the region and allowing key figures to serve as representatives and advocates of the region's interests to national organisations.

Into the twentieth century, the manufacturer members of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association also helped inform the activities of the Middlesbrough Juvenile Employment Committee. The organisation was set up by the Middlesbrough Education Committee, the Association electing J.J. Burton as one of four representatives of employers alongside 10 members of the Education Committee.<sup>299</sup> They were joined by four workers' representatives, two teaching staff members and one representative from the town's

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid, No.9, 13 May 1899, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>299</sup> Ibid, No.19, 1 July 1924, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230



voluntary organisations, displaying how affiliation through the Association brought with it influence in wider governance alongside representatives from the petite bourgeoisie and proletariat. The changing composition of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association throughout the period provides a useful platform for assessing the extent of withdrawal or disengagement amongst the manufacturing families in direct affiliation. The 1890s were traumatic for the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association with high levels of mortality amongst the elder statesmen of the iron and steel concern., with the loss of leading industrialists in a short space of three years including H.F. Pease (1896), Charles Cochrane, Alfred Pease (both 1898) and Jeremiah Head and William Hanson (1899).<sup>300</sup> The 1905 death of Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell, who had served as President of the Association in 1870, brought further loss of a well-known industrialist who owing to ill health had played a less active role in the preceding years.<sup>301</sup> Despite the losses of these men of experience, the second and third generation industrialists emerged to fill the void left by the deaths of the elder manufacturers, challenging Wiener's notion of a declining commitment to industry and its associational culture, a point further reinforced in their occupying of positions amongst the higher echelons of the organisation either side of the turn of the century. In 1894, Francis Samuelson was elected President of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association, whilst in the early twentieth century Penry Williams would follow in his father Edward's footsteps in playing an active role in the Association as representative of the Linthorpe-Dinsdale Smelting Company Ltd. Bell Brothers' director and third generation industrialist Maurice Lowthian Bell also played an active role in the Association by the mid-1900s, with Dorman Long director and second generation industrialist Arthur Dorman also entering the fray during the war years following the company's acquisition of Walter Maynard at Redcar.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid, various, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>301</sup> Ibid, No.11, 23 January 1905, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>302</sup> Ibid, No.17, 23 September 1918, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

The emergence of this new blood within the association alongside the rising importance of Sir Hugh Bell as the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association's most celebrated figure reflected a successful combination of the older industrialists and their offspring continuing active engagement in the Association. The occasion of the 1907 visit of the Iron and Steel Institute to the town led the Association's council to agree that their interests should be represented through Bell, concluding that 'it was now the more appropriate that a further visit should be made to this district owing to the Presidency at this time of the Institute being held by Sir Hugh Bell'.<sup>303</sup> Clearly, Sir Hugh Bell's prominence as a key national figure in the iron and steel industry was recognised as a strength by the Association and reflected the importance of Bell's affiliation.

Whilst thus far it has been shown how the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association - and with it the significance of membership and affiliation for this study's steel magnates - played an important role in setting wages, rates, sliding scales and collective representation of the industry in the district, the influence, power and cohesiveness of the organisation should not be overstated. There were a number of issues that either divided the membership of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association or were at least deemed to be outside the jurisdiction of collective decision making that the Association facilitated in other areas. The important issue of hospital provision was a dividing issue for the masters on which it was decided to leave the issue to individual firms, whilst the matching of blastfurnacemen's contributions to the Hospital Sunday Demonstrations of 1892 was deemed to be a decision that should also be dealt with by the individual companies, although some of the firms represented at the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association did express 'a readiness to fall in

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid, No.12, 21 October 1907, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

with the suggestion'.<sup>304</sup> So too beyond the remit of the cartel was 'anything likely to lead to be business [which] must, it was considered, be the result of individual firms', evidenced in the rebuffing of the proposition of the Blackburn Chamber of Commerce, made via the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce, that sought to promote the benefits of a commercial mission to China.<sup>305</sup> The issue of not engaging as an Association in the pursuance of new business is notable in showcasing the limitations of the Association when it come to the wider competition of the industry and can also be seen as reflective of the different capacities of and markets with which individual firms and manufacturers were interested in or familiar with.

Beyond the issues of the power of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association and the functions with which it was concerned, there is another important area when gauging elite withdrawal and business engagement that the records of the organisation shed light on – that of declining industrial spirit and its relationship to the distance of manufacturers' residence and primary industrial concerns from business associations. The appointment of Consett Iron Company general manager George Ainsworth as Vice President in 1896 is worthy of further elaboration in showcasing the limited impact of distance from Middlesbrough in membership and elevation to the higher echelons of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Associations leadership. Residing at The Hall, Consett, and with his primary working interest over thirty five miles from Middlesbrough, Ainsworth made particular reference in his acceptance of the role to express his gratitude at 'the very considerate way in which they [the Association] offer to waive the objection to my holding the office

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid, No.6, 1 July 1892, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>305</sup> Ibid, No.3, 4 November 1895, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230. Dorman Long would go on to pursue extensive bridge and structural building contracts in China, whilst also setting up Dorman Long (China) Ltd with Arthur Dorman a director throughout and by proxy on the Board of the China Association during and after World War II. For more information see BS.DL/1/19/3, TA

owing to the distance I am from Middlesbrough and consequent inability to frequently attend the meetings'.<sup>306</sup> Whilst this might be viewed as a negative development, marking a lack of readily available local candidates resulting in the Association casting its net further afield in recruiting Vice Presidents, the reality probably reflects the wider interests of iron manufacturing beyond the immediacy of Cleveland, particularly given the regional dimensions of the industry and the potential to glean information and secure ties from further afield through Ainsworth's appointment. Furthermore, this reflects the regional dynamic to local elite activity during this period and the perceptions amongst organisation of the limited impact of absenteeism. Political and economic considerations did however provide the basis for other manufacturers in the Association reducing participation in the Association. In March 1910 Penry Williams was compelled to resign his position as representative of the Linthorpe-Dinsdale Smelting Company owing to his heightened commitments amidst his re-election as MP for Middlesbrough.<sup>307</sup> He had however returned to the fold as a representative of the same firm by interwar years.<sup>308</sup>

Despite the presence of Penry Williams and the wider emergence of the second and third generation of industrialists to fill the void of retired and deceased ironmasters in the twentieth century, the composition of the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association council by the mid-1930s, the end period of this study, had shifted from the highpoint of major industrialist representation in evidence up to the early part of the twentieth century. Much of this can be accounted for by the high levels of mortality in 1931, the Secretary's Report of that year noted

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid, No.8, 24 February 1896, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230; Richardson, H.W. and Bass, J.M. 'The Profitability of Consett Iron Company before 1914', in Tucker, K.A. (ed.), *Business History: Selected Readings* (Abingdon, Reprinted Version 2006), p.156

<sup>307</sup> Ibid, No.13, 7 March 1910, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>308</sup> 'List of the Works and Members of the Association and of the Committees 1934', MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

Death has taken a toll on the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association during 1931. By the passing of Sir Arthur J Dorman, Bart., Sir Hugh Bell, Bart., Mr J.J. Burton, Mr Illtyd Hedley, Mr R.T. Wilson and Mr E.T. John, the Association has lost the services of gentlemen who, for many years, were closely identified with its activities.<sup>309</sup>

After the deaths and departures of leading figures, the appointments made to the highest offices of the group could no longer draw upon a ready supply of chairmen and directors from leading firms.<sup>310</sup> The 1931 presidency of Walter L Johnson, grandson of Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell who was not even born when his grandfather first held the same office, would prove to be the last representative of Dorman Long's familial ties in the Presidency during our period. The meeting of January 1935 marked a watershed for the Association signalling the decline in participation of the major manufacturers in associational activities through the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association. The organisation departed from the almost invariable custom of annually electing a President who held a directorship of an associated iron firm, with it proving increasingly difficult to secure the services of directors for leading positions owing to their numerous business engagements. The managers and company secretaries that filled the void reflected a final move away from the centrality of the magnates such as the likes of Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell, Sir Hugh Bell, Sir Cecil A. Cochrane and Sir Francis Samuelson holding the Association's highest office.<sup>311</sup> Thus, the 1930s can be seen as a period of relative decline in terms of a reduction in magnate engagement yet this should not overshadow the evidence that suggests the second and third generation of manufacturers played an active role in the Cleveland Ironmasters'

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<sup>309</sup> CIA Secretary's Report for 1931, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, No.22, 15 January 1935, MRC, MSS.365/IST/230

<sup>311</sup> The latter three examples had not succeeded to their respected baronetcy at the time of appointment.

Association into the twentieth century. Through their involvement in the organisation in a hands-on fashion as members of committees, presidents, in attending to visits of foreign industrialists or by consulting with workers' representatives over pay and conditions, the presence of Middlesbrough's later generations of industrialist families in Cleveland Ironmasters' Association meant that they were, to varying degrees, a part of a key sphere of influence and engagement up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Through this engagement they played an important role in encouraging comparative cooperation and homogeneity and arguably helped maintain cordial industrial agreements and smooth interactions between firms and with the workmen.<sup>312</sup>

### **North East Coast Steel Makers' Association**

There are numerous issues and limitations brought about by focusing upon one or just a handful of industrial associations, none more so than concentration on a given group that might overlook active involvement of industrialists in other spheres not covered by the selected case studies. In an attempt to counter the above concentration on the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association, we briefly turn attention to another manufacturers' organisation in the region that set about working as a combine - the North East Coast Steel Makers' Association.<sup>313</sup> Like the Ironmasters' Association, the organisation brought together industrialists from across the region, whilst also playing an active role in establishing prices and approaches beyond the immediate manufacturing district.

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<sup>312</sup> For example, Macrosty, *Trust Movement*, p.52 notes how the Cleveland manufacturers showed a greater degree of unity than their Scottish Association which was hampered by individual firms reneging on agreements made within the organisation.

<sup>313</sup> Morgan-Rees, J. *Trusts in British Industry, 1914-1921: A Study of recent developments in business organisation* (Aberystwyth, 1922), pp.68-99 discusses the wider organisation of the iron and steel industry into trusts, exploring the North East Steel Makers' Association alongside those found in South Wales and Scotland.

Both (later Sir) Arthur J Dorman and his son Mr Arthur Dorman played an active role in the organisation, both before and after the First World War, using the Steel Makers' Association, formed in the late nineteenth century, as a means for promoting their firm's interests. At the October 1908 meeting in Newcastle, a letter received from Dorman Long was read expressing that the firm dissatisfaction 'with the working of the Association', with Arthur J Dorman, in light of his company not receiving 'their fair share of the orders' asking for a 'division of orders on a fair and equitable basis', with the issue eventually deferred for a future meeting.<sup>314</sup> Despite Dorman Long's discontent at the work of the Association, the firm subsequently gained a greater share of work and subsequently the firm took on an active role within the organisation through the younger Dorman. From 1917 Mr Arthur Dorman assumed the mantle of representing the firm as a member and regular attendee at meetings in Middlesbrough, Birmingham, Darlington, London and Newcastle, at which the Association met with the Midland Steel Anglemakers' Association and the Scottish Steel Makers' Association to set wartime prices.<sup>315</sup>

The post war records of the North East Coast group also highlight how Mr Arthur Dorman continued to play a key role into the interwar period, establishing himself as a key figure during a time when the majority of the Makers' Association members aligned behind the protectionism that the Dormans had championed.<sup>316</sup> The second generation industrialist also sat on the Plates and Angles Subcommittee alongside Bolckow Vaughan's Scoby-Smith, who would go on to clock-up some 60 years' experience in the industry. This combination of the old and new guard (albeit some had been active in the firm for some

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<sup>314</sup> North East Coast Steel Makers' Association Signed Minutes (NECSMASM), MRC, MSS.365/BISF/1477, 9 October 1908

<sup>315</sup> NECSMASM, MRC, MSS.365/BISF/1477, 5 July 1917, 29 October 1917, 27 November 1917, 28 March 1919, 11 April 1919, 4 September 1919, 20 November 1919

<sup>316</sup> Rooth, T. *British Protectionism and the International Economy: Overseas Commercial Policy in the 1930s* (Cambridge, 1993), p.44

two decades) played an active role in developing and retaining the membership of firms with the Association by setting about interviewing representatives of firms who had relinquished their membership of the organisation.<sup>317</sup>

Whilst only a snapshot of two relatively underexplored organisations that merit further study that offer the potential to understand regional and national elite associational activity, we are able to gain a sense of the various forms and spheres of power and influence exercised across industry specific organisations by the steel magnates both young and old. The records of these industry specific organisations, whilst at first glance focusing with the industrial concerns with which the affiliated firms and capitalists were associated, are a rich resource in highlighting the wider implications on events and occasions seemingly far removed from the iron and steel concern. The records expose the active role of the younger industrialists in the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association and North East Steel Makers' Association from attendance at meetings to engagement in decision making processes and dialogue. They show the second and third generations informing developments which had a bearing on manufacturing at a local, district and regional levels, as well as imposing influence on the industry's involvement in national business institutes such as the visits of the Iron and Steel Institute, international industrialists and nationally significant civic events such as royal visits tied into industrial visits. The importance of this industry specific business association engagement thus can be seen to be relatively wide reaching in its impact on the wider life of Middlesbrough, and also can be seen as consolidating the place of the second and third generations of industrialists in the industrial networks at local, regional and national levels.

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<sup>317</sup> Bolckow Vaughan Report and Accounts 1926, TA, 13/2/6, p.9



## Middlesbrough/Teesside Chamber of Commerce

Just as the Cleveland Ironmasters' and North East Coast Steel Makers' Associations played a key role in providing a voice and forum for the iron and steel industries during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Chamber of Commerce too brought together representatives of the iron and steel industry. It also acted as a nationally recognised platform for liaison with and petitioning of other organisations and individuals at the centre of not only Middlesbrough's commercial interests but those of Britain and, on occasion, Europe.

In his review of Robert J. Bennett's ground-breaking *Local Business Voice*, an extensive survey of the history and functions of Chambers of Commerce, Peter Bounous has argued that 'of all the independent business institutions in Britain, the chambers of commerce are arguably the most significant and certainly the longest surviving. For over two centuries they have been the voice of local, regional, and national business interests and the proponents of strategic economic development'.<sup>318</sup> The importance of these pivotal organisations was reflected in the Middlesbrough and Teesside organisation that emerged amidst the Victorian manufacturing boom in Middlesbrough in serving as 'business pressure groups representing specific industries or branches of trade' by coming 'closest to expressing a consensus of business opinion, both locally and nationally'.<sup>319</sup>

The aims of individual chambers were determined by local conditions and evolved alongside the wider economic environment in which they operated and it is of little surprise that iron was the instigator for the birth of Middlesbrough's Chamber of Commerce.

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<sup>318</sup> Bounous, P. 'Book Review: Bennett, R.J., *Local Business Voice: the history of chambers of commerce in Britain, Ireland, and revolutionary America 1760–2011* (Oxford, 2011)', *Economic History Review*, 66, 1 (2013), pp.365-366

<sup>319</sup> Ridings, E. 'Chambers of Commerce and Business Elites in Great Britain and Brazil in the Nineteenth Century: Some Comparisons', *The Business History Review*, 75, 4 (2001), pp.739-740

Founded in the early 1860s and incorporated in 1873, the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce was one of the leading organisations amongst the plethora that emerged to represent manufacturing interest, reflected in the fact that at the height of the Victorian period the Chamber of Commerce attracted the leading businessmen of the burgeoning boom town. The ironmaster Isaac Wilson presided over the first gathering in April 1863 of 'some forty leaders of industry and commerce' that would come together to 'promote trade interests, furnish trade statistics, interpret government orders and generally to keep the trade of the district flowing smoothly'.<sup>320</sup> The Chamber would play a key role in 'lobbying, representing, informing, and making the concerns of business known to government and other agencies throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century'.<sup>321</sup>

The incorporation of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce led to ironmaster Henry Bolckow's election as the first president of the newly incorporated chamber at its meeting of 22 April 1873. However, the ironmaster's role in the Chamber of Commerce was limited and in reality Bolckow was President in name only, with his Parliamentary duties, and, later his ill-health having 'prevented him from taking up the practical duties of the office' with fellow ironmaster Isaac Wilson instead acting as Chairman.<sup>322</sup> This early ironmaster engagement in the founding and initial leadership of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce would continue in the roles held by later ironmasters and steel magnates within and in relation to the Chamber of Commerce during the period of this study. Through a series of interactions within the organisation and between Middlesbrough's manufacturers and business associations, the organisation through its steel magnates played an

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<sup>320</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.106

<sup>321</sup> Bennett, R.J. *Local Business Voice: The history of chambers of commerce in Britain, Ireland, and revolutionary America 1760–2011* (Oxford, 2011), p.3; Tees-side Chamber of Commerce, *Souvenir of the Royal Visit to Teesside*, p.17

<sup>322</sup> Tees-side Chamber of Commerce, *Souvenir of the Royal Visit to Teesside: Opening of the Constantine Technical College*, TA, CB/M/C 11/2 (29), p.15

important role in securing favourable deals and in creating an environment of employer-employee mutuality during our period.<sup>323</sup> In reassessing the decline of urban governance since 1850, Trainor has noted how the chamber of commerce played a part in the useful division of labour between leading magnates, 'still substantial but less well-off middle-ranking manufacturers' and professionals in managing commercial institutions.<sup>324</sup> Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce like those elsewhere brought the same combinations together in shaping wider business activity into the post-war period, playing a key role by acting as a type of 'economic club' through which it transcended the blurred boundaries between business activities, 'clubland' and the social pursuits of the industrial elites.<sup>325</sup> In doing so the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce during the period of study through its leadership, activities and influence operated as a vital platform through which Middlesbrough's steel magnates continued to exercise industrial and urban influence.

From the 1880s through to the 1920s there were a number of industrialists and professional managers who held the honorific figurehead role of the presidency of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce, which included chairing meetings, participation in civic ceremony and effectively serving as the voice of its members. In between Isaac Wilson's tenure as president in the 1870s and 1880s, and fellow ironmaster J.F Wilson's occupancy of the same role in the mid-1900s, the solicitor John T. Belk (partner in J.T. Belk and Cochrane - the other partner being fellow solicitor Henry Cochrane from the iron manufacturing family of the same name) served in the office for eighteen years, making

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<sup>323</sup> For a further discussion of the implications for the linked mine owners organisations in enhancing industrial relations see Nicholson, A. 'Common Ground: The Dynamics of Mutuality in the Cleveland Ironstone Mining District 1850-1914', unpublished PhD thesis, Teesside Polytechnic, 1988.

<sup>324</sup> Trainor, 'The 'decline' of British urban governance', p.35

<sup>325</sup> Casson, M. 'Book Review: Bennett, R.J, *Local Business Voice: the history of chambers of commerce in Britain, Ireland, and revolutionary America 1760–2011* (Oxford, 2011)', *Urban History*, Vol.39, No.2, (2012), p.546

him the longest serving president in the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce's history.<sup>326</sup> Following J.F. Wilson's tenure, Bell Brothers' and Dorman Long's Walter Johnson occupied the presidency, in doing so becoming the first representative of those firms at the head of the Chamber. He was followed by Walter William Storr, secretary and director of Bolckow and Vaughan, before ironmaster J.J. Burton served into the mid-1920s. John Amos tenure represented a departure from representation at the helm by manufacturers, with the Tees Conservancy Commissioners secretary occupying the presidency from 1926-27. In the late 1920s through to the outbreak of the Second World War, the presidency passed to managers and engineers, including the iron founder Harry B. Toy and slag works manager Horace W. Jarvis, both of whom were also active in the Cleveland Institute of Engineers.<sup>327</sup> By the end of the years immediately before the outbreak of the Second World War, Sir Arthur Dorman's son and director of Dorman Long Mr Arthur Dorman served as president as his remit at the steel manufacturers focused on associational representation of the firm.

As well as the occupants of the presidency reflecting the centrality of the iron and steel concern in the commercial make up of Middlesbrough and Teesside throughout the period in question, the membership of the elected council of the Chamber of Commerce also reflected the importance of manufacturing. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there was a consistent, strong concentration of representatives of Middlesbrough's major firms. By the 1900s Charles Dorman, J.J. Burton, Laurence Gjerns, W.W. Storr and Francis Samuelson were all amongst the council membership.

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<sup>326</sup> Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, p.106 notes that from 1931 presidents were elected for a period of two years.

<sup>327</sup> I am grateful to the Cleveland Institute of Engineers for providing information on their historic membership and occupational status.

<b>Middlesbrough/Teesside Chamber of Commerce Presidents 1873-1939</b>	<b>Years served</b>
H.W.F Bolckow	1873-1878
Isaac Wilson	1879-1887
J.T. Belk	1887-1905
John F. Wilson	1905-1906
Walter Johnson	1906-1912
Walter W. Storr	1912-1918
J.J. Burton	1918-1926
J.H. Amos	1926-1927
H.W. Jarvis	1927-1928
B.O. Davies	1928-1931
W.H. Crosthwaite	1931-1933
H.B. Toy	1933-1935
J.W. Brown	1935-1937
Arthur Dorman	1937-1939

**Figure 9: Presidents of the Middlesbrough/Teesside Chamber of Commerce, 1873-1939<sup>328</sup>**

As occurred elsewhere, the membership of the Chamber of Commerce expanded in response to the Liberal government's social policy that encroached upon the administration and finance of the business world, with Doyle observing how in response 'businessmen sought a non-party forum to challenge this interventionist policy and to provide a unified voice in discussions with government'.<sup>329</sup> The Chamber's inextricable links to the iron and steel trades were reflected in the issues addressed in the Chamber of Commerce's meetings and reports, with the concerns of the manufacturing industries dominating the agenda. These included issues such as railway carriage provision, dock extension schemes, smoke abatement, reports on works in operation and tariff reform – all

<sup>328</sup> List of Presidents of the Teesside Chamber of Commerce Plaque, North East Chamber of Commerce Offices, Middlesbrough

<sup>329</sup> Doyle, 'Structures of elite power', p.189

familiar issues that appeared on the agendas of cognate organisations such as the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association discussed above. The meeting reports were distributed in business circles and were relayed across the local and national press, with the monthly reports on industry appearing regularly in the *North Eastern Daily Gazette*.<sup>330</sup> The Chamber provided a legitimate platform of collective action for petitioning and appealing to Parliament both before and after increased government intervention in the interwar period, whilst also acting as a platform whereby the steel magnates' interests along with those of other business concerns could be presented to organisations, be it in providing a collective front in discussing river frontages with the Tees Conservancy Commissioners or lobbying the North Eastern Railway Company for improved rates.<sup>331</sup> The Chamber of Commerce also acted as a means of collective negotiation with the Middlesbrough Corporation, the combined action of the two organisations leading to the establishment of a Stamp Office at Middlesbrough that helped improve the efficiency of local business.<sup>332</sup> The collective action and spheres of influence in which Middlesbrough's Chamber exercised influence were not dissimilar to those of chambers elsewhere in the country that petitioned local and national bodies for support that would enhance business. Lloyd-Jones and Lewis' work on British industrial capitalism since the industrial revolution has pointed to examples of Sheffield steel magnates' at a local level using the organisation as a way to promote mass production techniques observed in the USA, whilst the Manchester Chamber of Commerce was used as a platform by local

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<sup>330</sup> A search for the 'Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce' on the British Library Nineteenth Century Newspapers online database <http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/> returns over 300 hits up to 1900. Reports on the Chamber's activities appeared in newspapers in Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester.

<sup>331</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 3 March 1927

<sup>332</sup> *Northern Echo*, 29 April 1880. In 1880 the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce sent a petition to Isaac Wilson MP for the appointment of a Minister of Commerce.

merchants to address the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry in 1886 calling for government support in opening up new market.<sup>333</sup>

After 1911, the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce's agendas and 'voice' had evolved to reflect the interests of its broadening membership through wider service functions alongside its primary *raison d'être*. In doing so the Chamber provided a wider demographic with a 'voice' through 'the advancement of the commerce and manufacturers of Middlesbrough and its neighbourhood' across new areas.<sup>334</sup> Issues linked to but beyond the immediate concern of the iron and steel industries were addressed by the Chamber focused, with the 1910s witnessing the emergence of newly developed Shipping and Education Committees.<sup>335</sup>

Despite this diversification owing to the wider industrial and commercial expansion of Middlesbrough in the twentieth century, the importance of the iron and steel industry and the continued representation of it by the familial connections to the Bells and Dormans should not be understated.<sup>336</sup> Moreover, the broader functions of the Chamber in addressing issues such as shipping and education did not result in the departure of industrialist familial connections. In fact, there was a continued engagement of the key industrialists alongside the professionals and representatives from related industries. This allowed Middlesbrough's Chamber of Commerce to maintain its strength throughout the period as a site of ironmaster and steel magnate authority. This was in contrast to some chambers elsewhere which, as Doyle has observed for Norwich, were comparatively weak

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<sup>333</sup> Lloyd-Jones, R. & Lewis, M. *British Industrial Capitalism since the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1998), p.83, 140

<sup>334</sup> Bennett, *Local Business Voice*, pp.56-57.

<sup>335</sup> MCCAR, 1912, TA, Q/CC 1/1

<sup>336</sup> MCCAR, 1907 and 1912, TA, Q/CC 1/1

into the twentieth century or lacked the ability to represent wider economic interests.<sup>337</sup> In short, Middlesbrough did not experience the relative decline in power that was evident elsewhere, a continued importance that was not lost upon the long-serving Walter Johnson, Director of Bell Brothers and President of the Chamber for six years. In his 1912 departing presidential address, the son-in-law of the late Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell stated how the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce rather than experiencing decline or stagnation was instead an organisation of growing importance

It was really the mouthpiece of the town when the latter felt very strongly upon any matter that concerned it commercially. Representations came better from a Chamber of Commerce than from a Town Council which had other functions to perform...If there was a consensus of opinion upon any particular matter from the Chambers of Commerce the Government was not long in giving attention to that matter. Many things which had been advocated by the Chambers of Commerce had become law during the last twenty years.<sup>338</sup>

Despite Johnson stepping down in 1912, the steel magnate families continued to play an active role in the Chamber of Commerce beyond the First World War. However, the ways in which this was manifested was through the boards of iron and steel firms putting forward managers from their firms. The immediate successor to Johnson was Walter Storr, Commercial Manager and Director at Bolckow Vaughan, who was elected to the

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<sup>337</sup> For example Doyle, 'The structure of elite power', pp.188-189 has noted the relative weakness of the Norwich Chamber of Commerce until the 1910s.

<sup>338</sup> MCCAR, 1912, p.27-28, TA, Q/CC 1/1



presidency following Johnson's stepping down.<sup>339</sup> Later Mr Arthur Dorman's appointment reflected a new stage in affiliation in the continued delegation of responsibility within the firms which also combined direct representation of the industrialist families.

The importance and longevity of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce was celebrated in 1923 with a golden jubilee dinner at Middlesbrough Town Hall, with the notable figures of the district in attendance including Lady and Sir Guisborough, Lord Gainford (the grandson of Joseph Pease whose railway led to the development of Middlesbrough) and Sir Hugh Bell and Lady Bell. The gathering was addressed by a Pease family double act of Sir Arthur Francis Pease and Lord Gainford speaking on the values of free trade.<sup>340</sup> The Peases were intimately linked with the members of the Chamber of Commerce through their own business interests in mining and railways, further reflecting how the Chamber brought together interlocked business interests. Sir Arthur Francis Pease was not only a shareholder and directors of the North Eastern Railway Company, but he was also one of the directors of Horden Collieries Ltd in which Walter Johnson, Sir Arthur John Dorman, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Sir Hugh Bell and Maurice Lowthian Bell all had shares or sat on the board of the company during the period of this study, and in the case of Maurice Lowthian Bell, into the 1940s.<sup>341</sup>

Sir Hugh Bell would later play an important role in the Chamber of Commerce's wider activities in the community as representative of the Chamber (amongst his multifaceted roles) at the official opening of the Constantine Technical College (now Teesside

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<sup>339</sup> MCCAR, 1913, TA, Q/CC 1/1

<sup>340</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 10 February 1923; *Yorkshire Post*, 10 February 1923

<sup>341</sup> 'Declarations of Investment 1912-1947', TA, BS.BB/4/1/38; pp.167-168; Emery, N. 'Pease and Partners and the Deerness Valley: aspects of the social and economic history of waterhouses, esh winning and Ushaw moor', unpublished MA thesis, University of Durham, 1984, pp.14, 167-168

University) in July 1930. Underlining the importance of the (now Tees-side) Chamber of Commerce, the organisation published a special souvenir edition of its monthly journal that was available alongside an official opening brochure produced by the Council.<sup>342</sup> The brochure acted as an aid in promoting the College as a vital organ of the technical developments in the industries of Teesside, with the 130 pages also detailing the history of the town, its institutions and the industrial outlook, alongside advertisements for firms. Significantly, the publication also included a detailed two page 'History of Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce', highlighting the important role of the iron and steel manufacturers in the foundation of the Middlesbrough organisation and listing the inaugural members.<sup>343</sup> The article's author, J.J. Burton, noted that 'it is very pleasing to record that of the above-named gentlemen we have still present with us, hale and active, Sir Hugh Bell, who continues to take keen interest in and devote his wide experience to promoting the welfare of the district and the extension of its trade and commerce'.<sup>344</sup> Despite no longer an active member of the Chamber of Commerce, Bell was ceremonially presiding over the opening of Constantine College in his capacity as Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding and the Chamber of Commerce were keen to embrace this source of 'brand capital', seizing on the historic link and the patron from the elite as a means to promote the Chamber's affiliation not only to the royal event but also the latest technical education establishment and the town's prosperity more widely.<sup>345</sup>

Before moving on from this brief survey of the Middlesbrough and Teesside Chamber of Commerce, it is useful to note in considering the impact of physical withdrawal from the

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<sup>342</sup> Tees-side Chamber of Commerce, Souvenir of the Royal Visit to Teesside: Opening of the Constantine Technical College, TA, CB/M/C 11/2 (29)

<sup>343</sup> Ibid, pp.15-17

<sup>344</sup> Ibid, p.15

<sup>345</sup> Bennett, *Local Business Voice*, p.90

town on participation in the organisation as this flight to the suburbs and beyond has often been aligned with industrial elites turning their back on the manufacturing districts. In common with Hadfield's assertion that moving beyond the immediate vicinity of the town had limited if any influence on the engagement of industrialists in the Borough Council in the late nineteenth century, the residence of Middlesbrough's industrial elite beyond the town seemingly had little impact into the interwar period on council membership of the Chamber of Commerce. In the early years of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce, Isaac Wilson resided at Nunthorpe throughout the duration of his quasi and actual presidencies; Walter Johnson (during which time meetings were held in Bell Brothers' board room) was residing at the Bell's Rounton estate near Northallerton, whilst his successor Walter W. Storr resided at The White House at Coatham, Redcar. The trend mirror those identified in Daunton's study of Cardiff in the years leading up to the First World War, in which he shows that residence beyond the 'Coal Metropolis' had little impact on business association involvement. The membership of the Cardiff Chamber of Commerce which had been dominated by those living in the city in 1875 had shifted to a composition that by 1911 members residing outside Cardiff exceeded 58 percent of the membership.<sup>346</sup>

The Middlesbrough and Teesside Chamber of Commerce throughout the period of this study undoubtedly evolved, just like the Borough Council, to reflect the wider dynamic of the middle class business interest in the town – albeit one heavily concentrated on industry and manufacture in particular. The occupants of the presidency from the 1880s to the 1930s had a strong link to the iron and steel firms in Middlesbrough, be it as leading ironmasters, general managers, directors, shareholdings, business organisations or

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<sup>346</sup> Daunton, M.J. *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914* (Leicester, 1977), p.138

associations. The membership of the organisation's council was consistently populated with owners or managers of the iron and steel concerns in the town, with several members of the Bell, Dorman and Samuelson families amongst its number. Even with the diversification of its remit and membership from the 1910s onwards with an increased emphasis on shipping, there was a strong representation of the iron and steel concern. Moreover and perhaps because of the influence the prestigious families brought through affiliation to leading industrial figureheads and interlinking membership of cognate bodies, the power of the Middlesbrough Chamber was sustained through petitioning of other organisations, government and through working alongside like-minded bodies such as the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association and the Tees Conservancy Commissioners. It is to the interlinked, yet river focused latter organisation to which attention now turns in attempting to gauge the participation of Middlesbrough's steel magnates in an organisation with wider jurisdiction, scope and legislative powers than those outlined above.

### **Tees Conservancy Commissioners**

Founded in 1852 to replace the Tees Navigation Company in managing the improvement works and administration of the River Tees, the Tees Conservancy Commissioners rapidly came to play a central role in the 'prosperity of Middlesbrough, and that of its great industries'.<sup>347</sup> Unlike the privately formed organisations already discussed in this chapter, the Tees Conservancy Commissioners was a public body that represented the wider concerns of commerce, management and improvement of the river from Stockton downriver to the mouth of the Tees, including Middlesbrough. It also possessed greater resources and powers than its predecessors and held a powerful influence over industrial activity on and along the Tees, including the major iron and steel plants of the ironmasters

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<sup>347</sup> NEDG, 5 December 1904

and steel magnates. Focusing on the Commissioners and the role of Middlesbrough's steel magnates within it adds an extra dimension in understanding their wider business associational activities in the town and its hinterland that were nevertheless related to the iron and steel concerns that underpinned their own economic power and prosperity.

The role of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners in the wider story of industry and associated activities in Middlesbrough has until recently been relatively under researched. This can be explained by the fact that until recently the records of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners have not been accessible to researchers and thus little exploration of the dynamics of that organisation in the wider industrial and commercial networks of Middlesbrough has taken place.<sup>348</sup> Excluding Le Guillou's *A History of the River Tees*' brief chapter on Victorian river politics and the conflicts and cooperation between the commissioners and industry, the Commissioners' place in the history of the town and its industrial elite has tended to be as an aside rather than of central focus.<sup>349</sup> Of those histories that have charted the development of Middlesbrough and the manufacturers' role within it, treatment of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners has tended to be limited to lists of the presidents of the institution and its inaugural composition in trade publications linked to the River Tees and Teesside region, with little analysis of the implications of the dynamic of the membership having taken place until now.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> The author is grateful to PD Ports for granting access to the Tees Conservancy Commissioners minute books and newspaper cuttings folders covering the period of this study. Later material forms part of the material catalogued by the British Steel Archive Project.

<sup>349</sup> Le Guillou, M. *A History of the River Tees* (Cleveland, 1978) is in fact the only historical treatment of the Commissioners.

<sup>350</sup> For example see Tees Conservancy Commissioners (TCC), *The River Tees Official Handbook* (London, 1954); TCC, *The River Tees, 1852-1952: The Development of a Modern River* (Newcastle, 1952); Thompson, J.H. *Tees-side Enterprise: Issued under the auspices of the Tees-side Chamber of Commerce and the Tees-side Industrial Development Board* (London, 1949)

The early Board of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners reflected the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate and ironmasters' dominance of Middlesbrough in its early decades, with ironmasters Henry Bolckow, John Vaughan, W.R.I. Hopkins and Isaac Wilson joined by Joseph Pease on the inaugural membership. The deaths of the earlier industrialists did not see the emergence of general managers or amidst the Commissioners as occurred with other organisations. Of the inaugural members of the organisation, into the late nineteenth century Isaac Wilson had served with distinction, with the leading figures remaining active on the Board throughout the 1890s.<sup>351</sup> In the 1900s Sir Hugh Bell not only continued earlier involvement beyond the period of supposed decline in industrialist involvement, but emerged as arguably one of the most influential figures in the organisation's history by presiding over one of the most expansive periods in the Commissioners' existence and overseeing landmarks in the ensuing decades.

By the early twentieth century, Sir Hugh Bell's membership of the Commissioners had evolved since his first appointment as a Commissioner in 1875 when elected by the Payers of the Tees Dues (those with industrial concerns on and along the river). From 1879 he was a representative on the Board on behalf of Middlesbrough Corporation and from 1903 as the Board of Trade member of the Commissioners. In 1903 Sir Joseph Pease stepped down as chairman of Commissioners and was replaced by Hugh Bell in the chair. From the offset Bell's chairmanship saw the steel magnate lead on a number of key schemes in renovating the Tees, including an extensive deepening scheme in 1904 and the landmark Transporter Bridge's construction over the Tees.<sup>352</sup> Certainly the schemes in improving the navigation of the river that allowed his firm's iron and steel to be shipped around the world and in terms of the Bridge provided improved access for his workers on

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<sup>351</sup> *Northern Echo*, 9 September 1891

<sup>352</sup> *NEDG*, 5 December 1904

either side of the Tees undoubtedly served his own economic interests. For example, the crossing of the Tees had been problematic and made for inefficiencies caused by traffic congestion as workers travelling by ferry to Bell Brothers' Port Clarence works on the north bank added to an already congested river.

As a man of significant standing in the locality, regionally and nationally, Bell played a key part in raising the profile of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners in civic and public events. The 1908 Visit of the Iron and Steel Institute to Middlesbrough provides an illustration of the important role played by Sir Hugh Bell in bringing together the river interests, local manufacturing industries and the wider national business networks – Bell that year also serving as President of the Iron and Steel Institute. The Commissioners with Bell as its head, led a delegation of industrialists along the Tees showcasing the iron and steel works of the steel magnates – recorded in great detail in the *Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute* as during visits to the region.<sup>353</sup> At the luncheon held following the excursion on the Tees, the prominence of Sir Hugh Bell as a key, nationally recognisable leader of industry in this period was recognised by Sir William White. The former president of the Institute of Civil Engineers and warship designers, declared how 'so much had been done by Sir Hugh Bell and his colleagues to make that week a happy and memorable one...and that it had been a happy circumstance that Sir Hugh Bell should have been President of the Institute that year'.<sup>354</sup>

The 1911 opening of the Tees Transporter Bridge further underlined the importance of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners in the bridge project that represented the fruition of

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<sup>353</sup> *Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute*, Vol.LXXVII, No.3, 1908, pp.427-460

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid*, p.441

joint action by the municipality and the industrialists.<sup>355</sup> Bell alongside octogenarian ironmaster W.R.I Hopkins - who himself had served on the Commissioners since 1870 – again led an excursion of the Tees for the leading guests of the October 1911 event. They were joined by other members of the Commissioners Board that by 1911 included many of the area's key industrialists such as Sir Thomas Wrightson as a representative of the Payers of the Tees Dues, Charles Head, Wrightson's business partner, director of Dorman Long and a representative of the Shipowners, fellow Dorman Long directors and Tees Dues Payers' Commissioners Francis Samuelson and Arthur Cooper, and Middlesbrough Council representative Charles Dorman.<sup>356</sup> The excursion along the Tees departed after the official opening of the new Transporter Bridge – a scheme that had itself been the subject of debate amongst the Commissioners and had required the approval of the river body before construction could commence.<sup>357</sup> Sir Hugh Bell played the central role as the Tees Conservancy Commissioners' Chairman, with the steel magnate presenting several Ladies and Gentlemen to Prince Arthur of Connaught on board the lead Steamer J.C. Stevenson. These included the members of the Commissioners and their wives including the Hopkins, Wrightson, Samuelson and Constantine families, and notably as the only non-member of the Commissioners, Bell's business partner at Dorman Long and fellow steel magnate Arthur J. Dorman – an apparent and public indication of the influence Bell's

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<sup>355</sup> 'Visit of his Royal Highness Prince Arthur of Connaught to the River Tees, 17th October 1911: Official Programme', MRL, C627.12

<sup>356</sup> Ibid, p.3

<sup>357</sup> The Transporter Bridge scheme proposals as a railway crossing in the early years of the 1900s was initially opposed by the Commissioners. The *North Mail* of 6 February 1906 reported that the opposition on the grounds that the bridge as initially proposed was due to threatened prejudice to the Commissioners' rights and interests. The opposition was withdrawn following amendments to the bridge's height in order to allow for ships with high masts to pass and agreement on reduction in the construction period for the structure.



role in the Commissioners allowed for the promotion of his own business interests and concerns.<sup>358</sup>

Following the royal party's trip along the Tees, the Conservancy Commissioners Offices played host to a luncheon under the direction of Sir Hugh Bell before the party proceeded to the Municipal Buildings for a banquet later that evening. The banquet at the Town Hall, by invitation of the Commissioners, reflected the importance of the organisation in the day's proceedings and its links to the municipality. These links to the municipality and attempts to gain prestige led by Bell were in evidence three years later when Bell's cultural contribution to the Tees Conservancy Commissioners was in evidence in his applying to the Earl Marshal for a Grant of Arms for the Commission in 1914, just as he had done in presenting the Coat of Arms for Middlesbrough Corporation in 1911.<sup>359</sup>

By the outbreak of the First World War, the significant role played by Bell in the organisation was recognised with Sir Thomas Wrightson putting to the Board that a portrait of the Chairman be placed in the Board Room having 'regard to the able and indefatigable manner in which Sir Hugh Bell, Bart., has carried out his duties as Chairman of the Commission since the day of his election in February, 1903'.<sup>360</sup> The move can be seen as mirroring that undertaken by Middlesbrough Council in recognition of his long service and illustrates the steel magnate's long-standing importance in industry. The portrait was duly installed in the Tees Conservancy Commissioners Board Room in late 1915, with its inscription marking the 'long and distinguished services rendered to the Commission, and

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<sup>358</sup> 'Programme of the Visit of their Majesties the King and Queen, Thursday 14th June 1917', p.8, TCCA

<sup>359</sup> Tees Conservancy Commissioners Minutes, 7 September 1914, TCCA

<sup>360</sup> Ibid, 7 December 1914

also to the trade and commerce of the River Tees'.<sup>361</sup> Following the death of Sir Hugh Bell in 1931 the North Riding County Council approached the Tees Conservancy Commission to request permission to copy the painting with view to the replica's installation in Northallerton's County Hall in memorial to the Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding.<sup>362</sup> Approval was granted and the portrait is now installed in the County Hall as testimony of the steel magnate's service and standing elsewhere in the North Riding.

A year after the installation of Bell's portrait at the Commissioners' headquarters, the retirement of W.R.I. Hopkins from the Commissioners in July 1916 on health grounds at the age of 89, meant that Bell was now the longest serving member of the Commissioners.<sup>363</sup> By this point Bell was into his early seventies and might well have considered a similar career path as Hopkins, yet his continued involvement with the Commissioners and in the industries with which it was linked saw the steel magnate to play a central role in arguably the most prestigious event of the organisation when the King and Queen visited Middlesbrough in 1917 and inspected the River Tees and the industries on its banks.<sup>364</sup> Having been received at South Bank by Sir Hugh Bell in his capacity as Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding, the Royal Party inspected Smith Dock and iron and steel works in Middlesbrough. There they were greeted again by Sir Hugh Bell, recorded in the Souvenir Programme in this instance as the 'Chairman of the Tees Commission', the steel magnate then presented to the monarch the Mayor and Mayoress of Thornaby. The group, led by Sir Hugh Bell and John Amos then embarked on one of the Commissioners'

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<sup>361</sup> The Portrait of Sir Hugh Bell is currently displayed in the offices of PD Ports, situated in the Port Authority Buildings constructed as the new offices of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners in the 1890s. A bust of Sir Hugh Bell dated 1902 by the celebrated English sculptor Sydney March also sits in the offices.

<sup>362</sup> Tees Conservancy Commissioners Minutes, 3 April 1933, TCCA

<sup>363</sup> *NEDG*, 4 July 1916

<sup>364</sup> 'Visit of their Majesties the King and Queen, Thursday 14th June 1917', TCCA

tugs, with the Chairman and General Manager pointing out the works on both sides.<sup>365</sup> Following from the Royal Train to Sir Hugh Bell reflected the centrality of Bell in proceedings:

Dear Sir Hugh,

The King was greatly pleased with all the arrangements made for his visit to the Tees to-day, and I am to express His Majesty's thanks through you to those who were responsible for the local programmes.

The trip up the river on the Steam Tug, so kindly lent by the Tees Conservancy Commissioners, was especially pleasant and the King and Queen much enjoyed seeing the important works on both banks of the river.<sup>366</sup>

The Royal Visit of 1917 and the multifaceted roles played by Sir Hugh Bell reflects the key role the ageing manufacturer played in representing Middlesbrough, Teesside and the north riding on a national level. Furthermore, the importance of Bell's role in facilitating the trip on the Tees and the written recognition from the royal party showcased how leadership of business organisations helped reaffirm the power and authority of the industrial elite. This was reinforced when Bell's role in the visit of the monarchs and the wider war effort in the area was recognised in his creation as a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, a trend that Gunn has identified as belonging to a 'series of reciprocal gestures between the monarchy and the bourgeoisie representatives of urban industrial society'.<sup>367</sup> The Tees Conservancy Commissioners congratulated their Chairman at the 3 June 1918

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<sup>365</sup> 'Visit of their Majesties the King and Queen', p.3; 'Newspaper cuttings', publication unknown, 15 June 1917, MRL

<sup>366</sup> 'Clive Wigram to Sir Hugh Bell', 14 June 1917, MRL

<sup>367</sup> Gunn, S. 'Ritual and civic culture in the English industrial city, c.1835-1914' in Morris & Trainor, *Urban Governance*, p.229

Board Meeting, with Bell responding that he 'appreciated the honour as one paid not only to himself but to the Tees Commission and other Bodies he represented'.<sup>368</sup> Whilst Bell's recognition of the importance of the organisations in receiving the award is nothing new, his alignment of the award with his involvement with the Commission serves only to highlight the importance of the association.

The interwar years witness Bell's continued service alongside his compatriots in industry on the Commission. As well as overseeing the business of the organisation, Chairman Bell also officially opened the Commissioner supported Sailor's Home, a charitable initiative at Middlesbrough, whilst he also presided over further visits of notable national figures, including the visit of the President of the Board of Trade for an inspection of the Tees and its works in the mid-1920s.<sup>369</sup> A Complimentary Dinner to Sir Hugh Bell was held under the auspices of the Commissioners on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February 1924 to mark the steel magnate's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, the proceedings of which were recorded extensively in both the minutes of the organisations and the local press. Such an event, attended by commissioners, statutory auditors, professionals attached to the Commissioners and the Chairman's son, Maurice Lowthian Bell, served to raise the profile of the octogenarian Chairman, dubbed 'the Grand Old Man of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners'.<sup>370</sup> The leadership of the Commissioners by Bell could also have done little harm in highlighting the importance of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners throughout the period as a vital business organisation. This was further reflected in the continued involvement alongside

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<sup>368</sup> Tees Conservancy Commissioners Minutes, 3 June 1918, TCCA

<sup>369</sup> *Northern Echo*, 8 April 1919; 'Inspection of the Works of the River Tees by the President of the Board of Trade: Banquet in the Town Hall, Middlesbrough, 18th September 1925', TCCA

<sup>370</sup> 'Report of Proceedings at a Complimentary Dinner to Sir Hugh Bell, Bart, C.B., 11th February 1924', TCC

Bell of leading directors in the steel industry, including Francis Samuelson and Bolckow Vaughan's director George Scoby Smith.<sup>371</sup>

Given the long service and high profile role of Sir Hugh Bell in the Conservancy Commissioners as a proactive, visible chairman, his death in 1931 was met with an extensive tribute to the leader of almost three decades. Bell had not only been an important figurehead for the Commissioners but, as in his multitude of pursuits, active in contributing to the activities of the organisation. The loss of Bell also brought change in the hierarchies of the organisation that would eventually threaten the dominance of capitalists in the leadership of the Commissioners. Although the connection to the deceased magnate's Dorman Long interest was continued when Sir Francis Samuelson, himself in his seventies, succeeded his Dorman Long compatriot as Chairman, although the move proved initially only temporary. The election of the second Labour government in the same year led to a move away from the position having been the traditional preserve of businessmen connected to the Tees with the chairmanship. With Amos having already departed the Secretary role of the Commissioners shortly before Bell's death, the subsequent appointment by the Board of Transport (the successor to the Board of Trade in making the appointments) saw the role of chairman given to local trade union leader R. Wilkinson, with Councillor Tom Meehan of the Transport and General Workers Union becoming the Commissioners' secretary.<sup>372</sup>

The political move represented a temporary shift away from a long held tradition within the organisation that brought the contests between labour representation and elites in late

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid

<sup>372</sup> Le Guillou, *History of the River Tees*, pp.107-108

Victorian municipal elections emerge in the appointment of the Conservancy Commissioners. It is difficult to disagree with Le Guillou's assertion that, despite Wilkinson's experience of the Tees through working on the various wharfs on the river, it is unlikely these appointments would have taken place had any other government been in charge. Furthermore it is unlikely Meehan's subsequent attempts to reform election to the Commissioners would have succeeded and extremely unlikely, had Sir Hugh Bell had lived on, that the steel magnate's role as head of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners would have been challenged.<sup>373</sup> The short lived tenure of the Government meant that the Wilkinson-Meehan leadership was quickly replaced with Samuelson returning to the chairmanship following the change in government, going on to serve in the post for 12 years before eventually retiring in 1943.<sup>374</sup>

To summarise, the Tees Conservancy Commissioners, like the Chamber of Commerce and the Cleveland Ironmasters' Association, provided a useful vehicle for power, influence and participation in Middlesbrough's business networks for its members and in particular its leadership. The networks created through the Commissioners also aided cohesiveness through Middlesbrough's steel magnates' involvement in an organisation that was inextricably linked to but not part of the firms in which the manufacturers were engaged. As an external body, the likes of Wilson, Bell and Samuelson were able to use the Commissioners as a platform for working with other manufacturers in presenting their own interests in the iron and steel industries by petitioning connected industries and in serving in leading roles in civic, royal and commercial events.

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid, p.108

<sup>374</sup> NEDG, 4 January 1946

Significantly, the longitudinal study of the Commissioners reveals the limited changes in organisational structure and with it the stability in the membership of the board. This was embodied in particular by Sir Hugh Bell and W.R.I. Hopkins' long service which amounted to over a century of affiliation and brought with it experience, knowledge and respect. It can be argued that up until the challenges brought about by the death of Sir Hugh Bell, the Tees Conservancy Commissioners embodied a cohort that was an uncontested terrain that meant the organisation allowed for the steel magnates to exercise authority and influence with limited challenge from below. Just as broader municipal representation came to reflect the diversity of Middlesbrough in the late nineteenth century, the Conservancy Commissioners make up began to mirror the evolving democratic processes evident in wider society. Furthermore, the Commissioners' activities and cross-organisational affiliations also serve to highlight the interlinked nature of business organisations and raises the question of whether absence of a member of the industrialist families from the fold of one organisation actually constituted exclusion from its activities.

### **Conclusion: Business Association continuity, change and evolution**

This brief study of employers' associations and industry-specific organisations points towards the second and third generation of industrialists maintaining an active participation in Middlesbrough through involvement, often in leadership roles, of organisations which brought about and consolidated connections to the town, its industries and wider activities and concerns.<sup>375</sup>

The business associations discussed in this chapter witnessed an evolution in their composition, leadership and authority that mirrored the wider developments in the

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<sup>375</sup> Yasumoto, *Victorian Ironopolis*, pp.48-49

Middlesbrough and Cleveland District. Yet in each instance, the associations provided spheres of continued commercial, industrial and urban engagement for the Dorman, Bell and Samuelson families. The varied roles played by the steel magnate families in the business associations suggests that the extent of 'elite withdrawal' and any decline in industrial spirit, bringing with it a lack of affiliation to the town's industrial concerns, has been exaggerated. Those explanations for decline centred upon magnates not holding office due to delegation of responsibility to general managers and professionals is at best overstated in the associations explored here. Although the expansion of firms such as Dorman Long with corporatisation meant the founding fathers were increasingly responsible for larger concerns, this seemingly had little impact on either the engagement of Sirs Bell and Dorman in business associations into the first decades of the twentieth century. Moreover, the fact the younger steel magnate Charles Dorman managed to combine leading roles as a manufacturer, parliamentary candidate, ward councillor, member of various council subcommittees and Dorman Long's representative on the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce concurrently, or at least with little time in between each role, suggests that at least some members of the younger generations took on the mantle of multifaceted roles that their father's had held when their manufacturing firms were not as extensive. In doing the steel magnates of the twentieth century showcased a continued interest and investment in the manufacturing town's business and commercial cultures and industries.

The approach adopted here is not without limitations given the relatively small selection of business organisations explored, and thus generalisations based upon these findings are limited. The results found here might not be replicated across different organisations or firms in Middlesbrough or elsewhere and the application of these trends to industrial elites more widely fails not only to factor in the unique circumstances to each industrial district,



but also loses the importance of the highly individualistic, multifaceted nature of the Middlesbrough steel magnates conveyed here. Nevertheless, through the second and third generation industrialists acting as presidents, chairmen and heads of subcommittees, on some occasions alongside managers, it can be observed that a continued involvement in Middlesbrough's business networks across different types of bodies occurred, often bringing lengthy commitment by the individual that in turn brought prestige for both the organisation and himself. Moreover, in the case of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce and the Tees Conservancy Commissioners, replacement of members of industrial elite families in leading roles by secretaries, managers and union representatives cannot be explained by a chronological phenomenon of declining involvement. There were instances where the succession of a steel magnate by someone of a less prestigious occupation did not necessarily represent a steady decline in that organisation's leadership. Mr Arthur Dorman's appointment to the presidency of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce in the late 1930s followed on from that of a slag works manager. Similarly, owing to the external impact of central government, the Dorman Long director Samuelson succeeded a local trade union leader in the Chair at the Tees Conservancy Commissioners. Instead we see evidence of a fluid elite apparatus that has evolved to deal with working alongside experts, workers' representatives and managers in business organisations and therefore whilst not suggesting that the interwar period provided a highpoint of major manufacturer associational leadership, the evidence here points to continuity and new forms of steel magnate engagement up to and beyond the outbreak of the Second World War. Importantly, in selecting case studies that dealt with the early iron industry, the new steel concern, the wider reaching chamber of commerce and the Tees focused Conservancy Commissioners, we can observe that the extent of reduced industrial elite leadership varied between organisations and can be attributed to factors

spanning election processes, external commitments and wider representation of Middlesbrough's and Teesside's broader industrial dynamic.

Further research utilising the extensive records of the British Steel Collection alongside the records of other business organisations beyond the period of this study will help extend understandings of steel magnates' roles in employer and trade organisations and the implications for elite withdrawal and participation in the manufacturing town during and beyond the Second World War.

## Chapter 6: Company Paternalism and Individual Philanthropy

The term 'philanthropy' is problematic and has boundaries blurred, making it a 'complex and varied phenomenon' with which historians have long grappled in defining amidst conflicting interpretations.<sup>376</sup> In his study of American philanthropy, Bremner has defined the term 'in its broadest sense...[as constituting] the improvement in the quality of human life'.<sup>377</sup> These can range from hospitals, relief of short-term distress, library provision, founding of education funding to someone with prestige serving in honorific positions in organisations.

As evident in the steel magnates' political, business and associational activities described in the preceding chapters, the iron and steel manufacturing firms, their owners and directors played a central role in the everyday life of Middlesbrough as leading employers in Middlesbrough, the flagship industries of the burgeoning Victorian boom and policy shapers in the business associations and political affairs of the town. The manufacturing industry and its proprietors not only provided an economic focal point for the Cleveland District in providing employment directly for workers, but also indirectly supported related industries spanning retailers to railway companies – an important economic and social function made all the more apparent in the debates on the 'knock-on' impact of the recent closure of SSI's Redcar steelworks to the local economy and community.

The reach of the likes of Bolckow Vaughan, Dorman Long and South Durham Steel and Iron Company went further in their contribution to the community, and particularly their workforce, through a plethora of direct patronage of philanthropic and welfare bodies which operated beyond the firm and in the development of company-led initiatives

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<sup>376</sup> Evans, N. 'Urbanisation, Elite Attitudes and Philanthropy in Cardiff', *International Review of Social History*, Vol. XXVII, 1982, p.295; Prochaska, F. 'Philanthropy', in Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, volume 3: Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge, 1990), p.359

<sup>377</sup> Bremner, R. *American Philanthropy* (Chicago, 1960), p.3, cited in Evans 'Urbanisation', p.295.

including the development of leisure facilities, sports clubs, provision for young workers of the firms and convalescent provision for older members. In this chapter, firm-level paternalism, defined by Bennett as when company management 'assumes responsibility for workers above and beyond the basic contractual provision for wages and routine working conditions', will be explored as a sphere providing a continued means of urban engagement in Middlesbrough into the interwar period. Moreover, these overtly altruistic activity will be shown to have, at least offered the potential for, social control,<sup>378</sup> provided opportunities for to modifying workers' behaviour and attitudes outside the workplace as both 'a response to workers' behaviour as well as an initiative aimed at it'.<sup>379</sup> The chapter does not provide an exhaustive list of every element of philanthropic contribution and intervention from the firms, but rather provides a snapshot of *noblesse oblige* across platforms concerned with health conditions and housing, poverty, education and leisure time 'clearly marked off from work, to be pursued elsewhere than in the workplace'.<sup>380</sup> In doing so, the chapter acquiesces with Trainor's suggested that company level philanthropy acted as an extension of Victorian industrial relations that through 'paternalistic services and gestures could reinforce the legitimacy of the employer's economic power and promote more harmonious relations in the workplace'.<sup>381</sup> Whatever the motives and implications for this company level philanthropy, the manifold ways in which firms contributed to the wider spheres of the community undoubtedly had an impact on the lives of thousands of Middlesbrough's inhabitants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As such, this offers a potentially fruitful area for exploring the role of Middlesbrough's steel magnates in the wider community in the guise of company-level

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<sup>378</sup> Bennett, J.W. 'Paternalism' in D.L. Sills, *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 11 (1968) cited in Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.145

<sup>379</sup> Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.145

<sup>380</sup> Bailey, P. *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885* (London, 1987), p.4 cited in Rodrick, A.B. *Self-Help and Civic Culture: Citizenship in Victorian Britain* (Aldershot, 2004), p.14

<sup>381</sup> Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.145

support. In utilising the records of the British Steel Collection, such an approach also allows for a unique understanding to emerge of the roles the second and subsequent generations of manufacturers played in the decision-making processes and mechanisms of company-led support in the community. In exploring the ways in which companies provided wider support, the approach also allows for distinctions to be made between individual patronage of organisations and firm level support, shedding light on the similarities and differences in magnate involvement amidst the blurred boundaries of support of company and capitalist, the Bells and Bell Brothers' and Sir Arthur Dorman and Dorman Long.

Having dealt with company responses to wider philanthropic and outlined some of the iron and steel firm led initiatives, developments which showed a marked growth through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this chapter's focus will then turn attention to the place of the steel magnate and his family as advocates and provocateurs of philanthropic initiative. This will begin by focusing on financial, honorific and hands-on activities within the framework of established institutions such as hospitals and schools. Assessment of involvement in new 'mixed economy' voluntary action with specific reference to the Guild of Help and Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee will follow, before discussion new initiatives directly instigated and or provided by the steel magnate elite families, such as Lady Bell's Winter Gardens 'social experiment', brings this chapter to a close.

### **Company paternalism and welfare**

Given the centrality of Middlesbrough's iron and steel firms in the fortunes of those living in the area, it is hardly surprising that the support of the major companies for welfare and charitable appeals from organisations as varied as convalescent homes and cricket clubs to hospitals and holiday clubs were crucial in an age of limited state involvement in

healthcare, leisure provision and, to a lesser extent, education. Yet until recently, partially explained by the limited access to the local iron and steel firms' records, the extent and mechanisms of company level philanthropy, and indeed that of individual contributions discussed in the next chapter, has only been explored in a small number of works on the town reflecting its place on the peripheries of both urban and business history until the past few decades. In fact, the iron and steel firms themselves exclude the role of the company in the wider philanthropic and welfare developments in Middlesbrough from those publications closest to what might be considered company histories. For example, Judge's history of Dorman Long makes no mention of Dorman Long's contribution to any aspect of philanthropic activity during the period, whilst Willis' history of South Durham Steel and Iron Company and Tighe's history of Tees-side Bridge also reflect the lack of interest in this aspect of the companies' heritage in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>382</sup>

Of the research that has considered the role of the manufacturing firm in the everyday welfare and philanthropy of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Middlesbrough, Stubley's work on churches, welfare and industrial society in Middlesbrough has pointed to the relatively limited contributions of the iron and steel firms to philanthropic initiatives, albeit in doing so only briefly distinguishing between manufacturers and manufacturing firms and making only occasional reference to the companies' contributions.<sup>383</sup> Referring to the case of Bolckow Vaughan in 1905, Stubley points to the firm's geographical spread covering over thirty parishes across Yorkshire and Durham constituting some 60,000 men, women and children who were economically dependent either directly or indirectly on the

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<sup>382</sup> Judge, *Dorman Long*; Willis, *History of South Durham Steel & Iron Co.*; Tighe. T.R. *Tees-side Bridge: The Rise, Fortunes and Dissolution of a Private Company* (1980)

<sup>383</sup> Stubley, P. 'The Churches and the Iron and Steel Industry in Middlesbrough, 1890-1914', unpublished M.A. Thesis, Durham University, 1979

firm, noting that the company's donations for appeals equated to an average expenditure of just four pence per head, per annum.<sup>384</sup>

Elsewhere, Barry Doyle's work on the history of hospitals in Middlesbrough highlights the important role played by the iron and steel firms in establishing hospitals in the area, but rather than emphasising the magnates' contributions, instead highlights the significance of workers' voluntary contributions to the town's hospitals in the twentieth century.<sup>385</sup> Yasumoto's work on the development of hospital provision in the Victorian Ironopolis too has pointed to the importance of the workers' contributions to the town's North Ormesby hospital, citing a *Middlesbrough Times* article from 1860 that moved to play down the need to rely upon 'wealthy neighbours' (presumably the elites) for admission tickets.<sup>386</sup> Turner's introduction to the 1997 republished edition of *At the Works* has, however, outlined the important role played by Bell Brothers in education and leisure provision at Port Clarence which although technically sitting to the north of Middlesbrough on the north bank of the River Tees, was inextricably linked to the town.<sup>387</sup> More recently, Budd's work on the development of Middlesbrough's sporting culture in the Victorian and Edwardian periods has moved to shed more light on the iron and steel companies' role in supporting welfare provision for workers, exploring various ways in which Dorman Long played an active role in the creation of leisure facilities and recreational activities for workers.<sup>388</sup> Buckley's work on Dormanstown has also touched upon the role of Dorman Long in providing recreational

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<sup>384</sup> Stubley, 'The Churches and the Iron and Steel Industry in Middlesbrough', p.58

<sup>385</sup> Doyle, B.M. *A History of Hospital in Middlesbrough* (Middlesbrough, 2003); Doyle, 'Competition and Cooperation in Hospital Provision in Middlesbrough, 1918–1948', *Medical History*, 51 (1997), pp.337-356

<sup>386</sup> *Middlesbrough Times*, 15 September 1860, cited in Yasumoto, *Victorian Ironopolis*, p.158

<sup>387</sup> Turner, 'Introduction', *At the Works* (Teesside Reprint, 1997), p.xii for example points to the development of the Coffee Palace at Port Clarence for workers, whilst also noting the firm's contribution to school fees at the nearby Catholic School.

<sup>388</sup> Budd, 'The Growth of an Urban Sporting Culture'

facilities for their workers' houses in the new industrial village; Boswell's case study of steel firms also touches upon the role of company patronage in the wider community across the three companies.<sup>389</sup> Jones' work in the 1980s also pointed to the role of companies in encouraging and even making participation in sport a condition of employment in facilitating workers leisure and welfare provision in the interwar years.<sup>390</sup> Trainor's study of Black Country elites too has considered the role of leisure and recreation in Bilston, Dudley, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton, arguing that employer involvement served to varying degrees to improve industrial relations.<sup>391</sup>

### **Company responses to philanthropic appeals**

The mainstay in the funding of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Middlesbrough's welfare and philanthropic institutions, as elsewhere, was through a system of donations and subscriptions by both individuals and organisations. Whilst one off donations such as parks (such as that by Bolckow), museums (such as Dorman's donation in memory of his son) and even hospital wings (as with the Cochranes and Samuelson) were amongst the grander, more high profile forms of philanthropic activity that attracted the praise of the press and public celebration; it was the annual subscriptions and donations in response to specific appeals that were most vital in day-to-day operations. The amount of financial support, the longevity of a company's backing and the frequency of contributions was dependent on a number of factors including, most notably for this study, the decisions made by the owners, directors and management of iron and steel firms.

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<sup>389</sup> Buckley, 'Design of the Industrial Village of Dormanstown'; Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, pp.176-177

<sup>390</sup> Jones, S.G. *Sports, politics and the working class: Organised labour and sport in interwar Britain* (Manchester, 1988), pp.62-63

<sup>391</sup> Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, ch.7



Flew, in her work on business and voluntary action, has noted the importance of exploring the financial contributions made to organisations in understanding wider patterns of philanthropy, noting how scrutiny of subscriptions

Can be examined to uncover the different funding streams for an organisation and also to analyse how these funding streams changed over time....They can identify the businesses and people that made donations to the organisation. This, when analysed, uncovers which sector of society gave the most support to a particular organisation... financial records can give a more nuanced picture of an organisation's finances than that given in a public report in a periodical or newspaper.<sup>392</sup>

There are undoubtedly issues with a focus on subscription lists and much depends on the approach of the given company in retaining information on specific subscriptions, with some iron and steel firms either not recording each contribution.<sup>393</sup>

One of the clear patterns that are evident during the period of this study is the contribution of the iron and steel firms to hospital provision in Middlesbrough, continuing the contribution of the earlier firms to the burgeoning hospital developments of the 1850s and 1860s. Across all the firms studied here, financial support was forthcoming for the hospitals that responded to the various accidents and illnesses of the iron and steel workers who worked in this often hazardous environment, described by Lady Florence Bell as an

...undeniable risk, the constant possibility, of accident with which all these men [iron and steel workers] are practically face-to-face...There are few streets, probably, at

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<sup>392</sup> Flew, S 'Money, Money. Money', Voluntary Action History Society Blog, 2011  
<<http://www.vahs.org.uk/2011/10/money-money-money>> [Accessed 12 January 2014]

<sup>393</sup> Warwick, 'Business Archives and Voluntary Action'

the works, or in the town adjoining, where some of the inhabitants have not been at any rate in proximity to one of these [accidents] experiences.<sup>394</sup>

From the 1860s through to the interwar period, the North Riding Infirmary was the main hospital serving the town's men engaged in the iron and steel industries of Middlesbrough, workers. Opened in 1864, the hospital provided additional provision in which the ironmasters had more control than the religious orders and working class organised North Ormesby Cottage Hospital. Situated in close proximity to the nearby ironworks along the Tees, the Infirmary was built with contributions of several hundred pounds by individual industrialists including the Peases, Bolckow, and Samuelson alongside donations from firms. Amongst the larger early company funders were Bolckow, Vaughan and Co., Bell Brothers and Gilkes, Wilson and Co, 'reflecting the influence of the local elite from the time of the infirmary's establishment'.<sup>395</sup> The Cottage Hospital too was a benefactor of annual subscriptions and donations across the period, whilst various hospital special appeals for funding were also met by the various firms. The geographical spread of support for hospitals mirrored patterns observed by Boswell in his study of the United Steel Companies hospital contributions, which reflected the firm's 'geographical spread and a wide range of interests' in supporting Scunthorpe War Memorial Hospital, Workington Infirmary and Rotherham and Sheffield Hospitals.

In the Cleveland District and South Durham, Bolckow Vaughan and the Bells' support of hospitals extended to Eston, Redcar, East Cleveland and Durham reflected interests in those areas, whilst Dorman Long's mining interests in the Durham coalfields were

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<sup>394</sup> Bell, *At the Works*, pp.100-101. Bell's chapter on 'Illness and Accidents' provides details of the types of injuries and accidents citing examples encountered during the previous three years' study.

<sup>395</sup> Yasumoto, *Victorian Ironopolis*, pp.184-186

reflected in their contributions to Durham Voluntary Hospitals.<sup>396</sup> Later in the period with the expansion of Dorman Long as a global bridge builder, contributions would be made to hospitals serving the firms' workmen as far afield as Sydney to cater for those constructing Sydney Harbour Bridge, reflecting the spread of Dorman Long's hospital supported from a local and regional interest to an international one.

Throughout the period with which this thesis is concerned, Bolckow Vaughan, Bell Brothers, Samuelson's and their eventual parent firm Dorman Long supported hospitals with regular payments to the running of the local hospitals, in turn providing for admission tickets to allow access to the hospital, in common with funding in other towns and cities.<sup>397</sup> Moreover, the directors of the firms would agree upon contributing to special appeals, with Bell Brothers making a special donation to the North Riding Infirmary of £100 for an unspecified cause in 1902, whilst in 1921 Bell Brothers contributed £2000 to the North Riding Infirmary's nurses' quarters' extension scheme.<sup>398</sup> The First World War also saw Bell Brothers contribute to medical and treatment linked schemes including the Dennis Bailey Ambulance Fund for the transport of the war wounded as part of wider contributions from the North of England Coal Trade Association.<sup>399</sup> Bell's interests in East Cleveland were reflected in contributions to the Brotton District and Skelton in Cleveland Nursing Associations, as well as through their support for the South Bank, Redcar and Guisborough Self-help Blind Society.<sup>400</sup> With the coming together of Dorman Long's associated firms, the separate contributions were all then brought under the control of

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<sup>396</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, p.176

<sup>397</sup> Bolckow Vaughan Directors' Minute Book, No.13 1904-1908, TA, 13/3/16, p.286; Bell Brothers Minute Book, No.1, 1899-1913, TA, BS.BB/1/2/3; Gorsky, M. et al. *Mutualism and health care: British hospital contributory schemes in the twentieth century* (Manchester, 2006), p.31. Drawing upon Doyle's research on Middlesbrough, it is later noted that Middlesbrough was a notable example by the interwar period where at least 60 per cent of income was regularly made through worker contributions, p.61.

<sup>398</sup> Bell Brothers Minute Book, No.1, 1899-1913, p.154, TA, BS.BB/1/2/3

<sup>399</sup> Bell Brothers Minute Book, No.1, 1899-1913, p.102, TA, BS.BB/1/2/3

<sup>400</sup> Bell Brothers Minute Book, No.2, 1899-1913, p.67; 78; 85; 106, 122 TA, BS.BB/1/2/3

Dorman Long. Whilst the contributions by Bell Brothers to various hospital initiatives is important in extending the reach of the steel magnates' firms in the wider community, and with it bringing recognition of the company's role in the community amongst their workers, it is the board level mechanisms for financial donations that are of interest in terms of understanding the role of steel magnates in philanthropic activity. It was at this level that the role of individuals in the decision making processes becomes apparent and reflects the wider dynamics of power and authority within the firm. In terms of assessing the role of the second and third generations of Bells in this process, it is notable that by 1920 the decision making process for deciding which appeals to support and the amounts to contribute was left in the hands of Maurice Lowthian Bell.<sup>401</sup>

The amalgamation with Dorman Long in 1923 brought with it the liquidation of Bell Brothers as a donor, although Dorman Long continued to maintain these donations and had been contributing significantly to hospital causes in its own right since the late nineteenth century. Amongst those subscriptions recorded in the company's minute books, North Riding Infirmary and the Cottage Hospital received annual contributions of £100 each between November 1896 and February 1897.<sup>402</sup> The Mayor's March 1897 call for contributions to the Diamond Jubilee Fund to be raised on behalf of the medical institutions of the town was also supported by Dorman Long, with the occasion reflecting the prominence of their Chairman, Arthur J Dorman, in deciding on the extent of contributions by the first, Dorman Long's directors having left the decision of contributions to the appeal in his hands voting up to £250 at his discretion.<sup>403</sup> Whilst the giving of relatively small amounts of money by the firm to a mayor-led call for contributions at this basic economic level might seem trivial when considered to the vast international undertakings of the firm, the fact that Dorman himself was left to make this decision reflects the hands-on role of the

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid, p.122

<sup>402</sup> Dorman Long Minute Book, No.1, 1889-1900, p.196, TA, BS.DL/1/2/1

<sup>403</sup> Ibid

steel magnate in the process. Moreover, the Chairman in making the final decision on the amounts can also be seen as Dorman as the head of the firm both taking an interest in the town that housed his works and calls for support of institutions that served his workmen and their families.

Into the twentieth century the same dynamics were played out at directors' meetings in September and October 1901 on the issue of decisions to contribute £50 to the North Ormesby Hospital at the first of the meetings and then at the following month's meeting deciding that a contribution of £100 could be made 'if the Chairman [Arthur J. Dorman] deemed it desirable to do so'.<sup>404</sup> This is significant as a further example of how the individual steel magnates' decisions within the framework of the company structures had direct implications on the financial aid received by a key Middlesbrough hospital. Whilst the delegation of decisions on the allocation of money set aside for charitable purposes had been recorded in the company minutes as back as 1893, the 1901 instance is important as it came at a specific time in Arthur J Dorman's career at Dorman Long during his temporary retirement at the beginning of the century.<sup>405</sup> The delegation of the decision making to Dorman reflects the role of the steel magnate in Dorman Long through philanthropic decision making. Moving forward to the First World War years and the interwar period, the decision processes within the boardrooms of the iron and steel firms relating to company support of medical provision, as with other appeals, also provides an insight into the responsibilities and responses of the later generations of industrialists in supporting calls for subscriptions in the town. At the Bell Brothers' September 1918 directors' meeting, it was resolved that 'the question of contributing to certain charitable Institutions was considered and it was resolved that Mr Maurice Bell and Mr Arthur

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<sup>404</sup> Dorman Long Minute Book, No.2, 1900-1905, p.67, TA, BS.DL/1/2/2

<sup>405</sup> Stubley, 'The Churches and the Iron and Steel Industry in Middlesbrough', pp.42-43

Dorman should settle as to future subscriptions'.<sup>406</sup> Similarly, Dorman Long's support of an appeal for funding by the Durham County Nursing Association in May 1923 saw the directors reach the decision that 'Mr Arthur Dorman and Colonel Maurice Bell...[are] to deal with the matter and give a donation at their discretion of a sum not exceeding £100'.<sup>407</sup>

Delineating the financial support given by the companies in patronising hospitals from that given by individual steel magnates is relatively easy to identify, given that the subscriptions lists recorded in hospital's annual reports demarcate the donations provided by named individuals from those of the iron and steel companies. What is more difficult, however, is the issue of identifying how far personal involvement in the management of hospitals by steel magnates can be seen as part of their role as employers representing the firms that were key funders of the institutions, or as philanthropists in their own right. With this in mind, equating the participation of second and third generations of industrialists in holding positions as officers and vice presidents - which involved chairing meetings, approving expenditure and acting as figureheads for the institutions - in a hospital's management with company level engagement is difficult, although arguably given the close association between manufacturer and the manufacturing firm, this may not have been an important distinction in practice. Moreover, the same overall issue of the extent of urban institutional participation is nevertheless addressed.<sup>408</sup> Assessment of the records of the North Riding Infirmary highlights the important role played by the various steel magnates discussed in this study into the interwar period. The composition of the North Riding Infirmary's Officers in the early decades of the twentieth century effectively read as a 'Who is Who' in the area's iron and steel industries, as shown by the table below. Sir Francis Samuelson

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<sup>406</sup> Bell Brothers Minute Book, No.2, 1915-1923, 90, TA, BS.BB/1/2/4

<sup>407</sup> Dorman Long Minute Book, No.5, 1900-1905, p.203, TA, BS.DL/1/2/5

<sup>408</sup> The same argument could be made for a host of elements of industrialist involvement in voluntary action, such as in categorising Hugh Bell's involvement in the Guild of help as occurring by default owing to his municipal involvement as mayor.

served as a President of the North Riding Infirmary for over three decades as well as a Trustee of the establishment. Carl Bolckow also served in the same role up until his death having been involved with the Infirmary since its establishment, with mortality too ending Sir Hugh Bell and Sir Arthur J Dorman's involvement as Vice Presidents and trustees from the late nineteenth century up to their deaths in 1931.

Individual	1908	1912	1916	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936
C.F.H.Bolckow	P/T	P/T	Deceased	-	-	-	-	-
Sir Hugh Bell	VP/T	VP/T	VP/T	VP /T	VP/T	VP/T	Deceased	-
Sir A.J. Dorman	VP/T	VP/T	VP/T	VP/ T	VP/T	VP/T	Deceased	-
Arthur Dorman					T	T	T	T
Walter Johnson	VP	VP	Deceased	-	-	-	-	-
Francis Samuelson	P/T	P/T	P/T	P/T	P/T	P/T	P/T	P/T

**Figure 10: North Riding Infirmary Annual Reports, 1908-1936 (P = President, VP = Vice President, T = Trustee, D = Deceased)**

The important role played by the industrialists as representatives of the iron and steel firms in the town was reflected in the annual reports of the North Riding Infirmary, with the 1914 Annual Report recording

Sincere regret that your Committee has to record the removal through death of several Governors...who have been closely identified with the welfare of the Infirmary for many years. The death of Mr C.F.H. Bolckow removes one of the Infirmary's original Presidents and Trustees...Major Walter Johnson and Mr R.L. Kirby, each of

whom were Life Governors, and who passed away within a short time of each other, always shewed a kindly interest in the Infirmary's work, and in their death, the Infirmary loses two important links with the firm of Messrs. Bell Bros., Ltd., from whose works so many of the Infirmary's Patients come.<sup>409</sup>

Evidently the 'important links' provided by the direct involvement of industrialists in the organisation cannot be understated by the governors who explicitly reference the connections between the involvement of Walter Johnson and Kirby and the firm whose workers utilised the Infirmary. The years immediately following the Great War heralded yet another severance of a link to the Victorian industrialists, W.R.I Hopkins' death in 1920 marking the passing of the last of those trustees that had founded the hospital over 60 years before. Even though in his later years Hopkins 'by reason of his great age and failing strength...was prevented from coming amongst his colleagues as in his earlier years', his death represented the severing of a direct link to the past.<sup>410</sup> However, in having been replaced by his son W.H. Hustler, the familial link endured, whilst a year later the younger Arthur Dorman joined as a Trustee to further shore up the Dorman family, Dorman Long and new generation representation in the hospital's hierarchies.<sup>411</sup>

The central role played by the financially important steel magnates in public ceremonies such as the opening of new hospital buildings underlines their importance within the organisations and the prestige their affiliation brought, whilst also showing the manufacturers' exercise of ceremonial power. At North Ormesby Hospital the opening of extensions to the Cochrane Memorial Wing in 1924 saw Sir Hugh Bell play a central role in proceedings as the Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding, with the official programme

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<sup>409</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1914, p.11

<sup>410</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1920, p.10

<sup>411</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1921, p.10



produced to mark the occasion chronicling the multiple ways the iron and steel firms, their owners and directors continued to support the organisation.<sup>412</sup> Alongside the religious representatives amongst the patrons of the hospital, Chairman John Amos and Honorary Treasurer Gerald Cochrane, the Government of the Hospital could list key representatives of the iron and steel concerns in the area amongst its membership, including Sir Hugh Bell, Alfred and Oswald Cochrane, Sir Arthur Dorman and Walter William Storr.<sup>413</sup> The role of the companies in supporting the hospital should not be overstated however, Yasumoto noting how workers' contributions were 'notably high' accounting for over 60% of the North Ormesby-based hospital's ordinary income in the late nineteenth century which made it exceptional when compared to other districts.<sup>414</sup> Affirming the dominance of workers' contributions compared to their paymasters' support, Yasumoto has shown how during the period from 1860 up to 1881 at the beginning of the period of this study, Bell Brothers' firm contributions amounted to an average of £14 (23%) compared to the workers' contributions of £35 (77%).<sup>415</sup> By the early twentieth century, the 'hospital was run almost entirely from workers' subscriptions', with North Ormesby Hospital's annual reports acknowledging how the hospital council would contrast workers' contributions with those of 'the owners of works whose subscriptions have not covered the cost of patients sent in by them'.<sup>416</sup>

The expansion of the North Riding Infirmary with the opening of a New Children's Ward in September 1925 also saw the firms heavily represented in the ceremonies. Sir Hugh Bell again took centre stage, this time assisted by Francis Samuelson as the centrality of the

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<sup>412</sup> 'North Ormesby Hospital Souvenir Opening of Extensions to Cochrane Memorial Wing 1924', MRL

<sup>413</sup> Ibid, n.p

<sup>414</sup> Yasumoto, *Victorian Ironopolis*, p.165

<sup>415</sup> Ibid, p.168

<sup>416</sup> Ibid, pp.165-169

iron and steel concerns in the development of the Infirmary was ceremonially marked.<sup>417</sup> Samuelson himself contributed £1,000 towards the Nurses' Home and Children's Ward Extensions Fund, whilst Miss Samuelson officially opened the New Block at the Nurses' Home in October 1926 to affirm the familial tie to proceedings.<sup>418</sup> The response of the management of the North Riding Infirmary to the death of Charles Dorman in 1929 in recording the 'widespread sorrow caused by the untimely and unexpected death of the late Mr Charles Dorman, who had always shown a marked sympathy with the work of the Institution and particularly as it affected the many patients who came from the large industrial undertakings with which he...was so closely connected' further underlines the inextricable links between the involvement of the later generations of manufacturers, their firms and the role of the hospital with the welfare of the given company's workers.<sup>419</sup> Going further, the Annual Report of 1931 decried 'the loss of several of its prominent Governors, including Sir Hugh Bell and Sir Joseph Calvert, both Trustees of the Institution and gentlemen occupying distinguished positions in the town and district'.<sup>420</sup>

Before turning attention away from company centred support of hospitals, it should be noted that even despite the loss of the Victorian ironmasters and steel magnates that provided a link to the foundation or early extensions of the town's hospitals, even amidst increased state involvement in hospital provision the firms remained vital. Francis Samuelson remained as President beyond our period and was the chief contributor of private subscriptions, whilst Dorman Long remained the North Riding Infirmary's chief financial backer.<sup>421</sup> It is also important to look to the women of the industrialist families in understanding the dynamics of the steel magnates' engagement with the manufacturing town. In his study of early twentieth century hospital provision, Doyle has emphasised the

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<sup>417</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1925, p.8

<sup>418</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1925, p.24; 1926, p.8

<sup>419</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1929, p.9

<sup>420</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1931, p.10

<sup>421</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1934, p.8, 21

importance of also looking beyond cash gifts, noting how these 'reduced outgoings, increased assets and improved the experience of patients and staff. Such gifts drew on the full range of potential donors, from the wealthy philanthropist to the village school child, and served to encapsulate the persistent and increasingly democratic 'hospital spirit'. Doyle notes how gifts were forthcoming to patients of the Infirmary with a visit from the mayor and gifts such as cigarettes and chocolate donated by the public following an appeal by the matron.<sup>422</sup> These donations and presentations performed a key role in asserting the presence of the elites, at minimal cost, on the various civic and elite institutions in nineteenth and early twentieth century Middlesbrough in terms of hospital provision and beyond. Once such instance of wider magnate family support was evidenced in the Annual Report of 1915 in which the Infirmary's indebtedness to Mrs Charles Lowthian Bell was recorded, the manufacturer's wife having not only provided financial support for the Operating Theatre block but having also donated undefined, 'numerous helpful gifts'.<sup>423</sup> The case of Mrs Bell also highlights one of the problems in gauging the true extent of the ways in which the families contributed behind the scenes, with the name of the donor having been suppressed at the time and only made public posthumously.<sup>424</sup> Beyond finance, the establishment of the Linen League in 1924 saw Mrs Arthur Dorman accept the role of President and contribute donations to hospital maintenance.<sup>425</sup>

Yet, caution should be applied in assessing the relative contribution of Middlesbrough's Steel Magnate families to medical provision, and in applying trends observed in Middlesbrough nationally. In fact, as Doyle has shown, 'while traditional sources held up

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<sup>422</sup> Doyle, *Politics of Hospital Provision*, pp.125-127

<sup>423</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1915, p.11

<sup>424</sup> Ibid

<sup>425</sup> 'North Riding Infirmary Annual Report', 1924, p.10

in areas with more diverse economies.....workers contributed between two-thirds and three-quarters of funding to institutions in Middlesbrough'.<sup>426</sup>

Beyond company backing of the town's hospitals, the records of the British Steel Collection also reveal the steel magnates' firms also provided support for other externally organised activities and provision in the manufacturing town. The companies played an important role in backing the construction of Middlesbrough Public Library, opened in 1912. Amongst the supporters were Bolckow Vaughan who contributed £100 towards the public appeal in 1908, whilst other firms including Dorman Long and Samuelson's recognised with a plaque in the library as a visible, public memorial of their support. Specific appeals were also supported extensively by the iron and steel firms, with a £1000 donation to the Prince of Wales Distress Fund 'for the relief of distress occasioned by the war' amongst one of the more notable examples of Bolckow Vaughan's generosity.<sup>427</sup> Donations of £25 to the Zeppelin Raid Compensation Fund for damage caused 'by the Zeppelin raid in the Colliery district were also made during the conflict, whilst the firm also subscribed to 'the fund being raised in London for the relief of the Belgian wounded and sick'.<sup>428</sup> War based philanthropic engagement of the steel and iron companies to activities both within and beyond Teesside is particularly evident during and immediately after the First World War beyond Bolckow Vaughan. For instance, in 1915 Bell Brothers gave to The Local Prisoners of War Fund (£5), War Supply Depots (a load of coal), Seamen's Hospital Greenwich (£10) and Durham Light Infantry Band Fund (£10).<sup>429</sup> The following year a £100 subscription to the Salvation Army for their war work and a further £100

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<sup>426</sup> Doyle, B.M. *The Politics of Hospital Provision in Early Twentieth-Century Britain* (London, 2014), p.115

<sup>427</sup> 'Minute Book, Directors No.15 1912-1917', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/15 TA, p.161

<sup>428</sup> 'Minute Book, Directors No.15 1912-1917', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/15 TA, p.167

<sup>429</sup> 'Minute Book No.2 August 1913 – June 1923', Bell Brothers, 16/2/3, TA, 40, 42

subscription to the Durham County Volunteers Training Corps Fund were forthcoming from the firm.<sup>430</sup>

Yet, not all grants were forthcoming initially. In the case of Bolckow Vaughan, unlike their compatriots at Bell Brothers, a financial commitment to Lady Bell's Winter Garden appeal was not initially forthcoming. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors in Manchester on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1906 record a reluctance to donate to Bell's initiative. Having authorised special grants of £250 to the New Baptist Church at South Bank and £100 towards the extensions and alterations of North Ormesby Hospital, the 'appeal of Lady Bell for aid in the promotion of a Winter Garden for the use of the Working men of Middlesbrough was considered but the Board deemed it unnecessary to make a grant for this purpose'.<sup>431</sup> It would be in October 1907 that the issue would be raised. 'The question of a subscription to the Winter Garden for the use and recreation of Workmen at Middlesbrough promoted by Lady Bell was again brought forward by the Secretary, and Mr A.W. Richards also advocated assistance being granted by the Company. It was resolved to contribute the sum of Twenty pounds per annum over a period of three years'.<sup>432</sup>

The links between iron and steel company directors in the provision of educational and civic movements is also evident in the minutes. At a Directors Meeting of 24 April 1907 it was agreed to donate to a memorial fund to the late Sir David Dale, the Bolckow Vaughan Directors expressing 'a strong wish (in which they were in accord with the promoters of the scheme, that the Memorial should take an Educational form in connection with the Armstrong College of Science at Newcastle'.<sup>433</sup> The key point here is that the appeal was

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<sup>430</sup> 'Minute Book No.2', Bell Brothers, 16/2/3, TA, 50, 56

<sup>431</sup> 'Minute Book, Directors No.13 1904-1908', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/13 TA, p224

<sup>432</sup> 'Minute Book, Directors No.13 1904-1908', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/13 TA, p324

<sup>433</sup> 'Minute Book, Directors No.13 1904-1908', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/13 TA, p283

by Sir Hugh Bell and the donation a significant sum of £500. The initial involvement of Bolckow Vaughan in support of the Guild of Help can be traced back to its very formation too. At a Directors' Meeting on 18th March 1909 'the formation of a Guild of Help in Middlesbrough to deal with the destitution and other evils resulting from unemployment' was brought to the attention of the directors.<sup>434</sup> In response to a memorandum from Mr G.S. Smith proposing he be empowered to guarantee up to £200 per annum for three years to the expenses of the Guild, the directors responded to the affirmative.<sup>435</sup> The Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee was also a beneficiary of donations from Bolckow Vaughan. From the offset, the support offered to the organisation was substantial, the Board having granted, in 1918, 'a sum of £250...as a first donation to the funds of the Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee, it being understood that in case of need the Board would be prepared later to consider a further grant'.<sup>436</sup>

The difficulties felt in the mid-1920s in Middlesbrough's manufacturing industries, outlined in Chapter 2, seemingly had a direct impact on the extent of philanthropic support available from the firms, underlined by explicit instruction to reconfigure Bolckow Vaughan donation policy. With the £1,000 voted for the year by the Shareholders for religious and charitable institutions having 'almost been exhausted' by August 1925, the tightening of the Company's purse strings is evident in its instruction 'to pay the more urgent of the annual donations, but not to exceed in total the sum of £100...without further authority from the Board'.<sup>437</sup> Yet, at time of conflict such as the strikes of 1926, there was also seemingly a willingness to provide fire coal to workmen on the understanding that the cost would be paid for by deductions to wages when the strike was at an end. Enquiries into

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<sup>434</sup> 'Minute Book, Directors No.14 1908-1912', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/14 TA, p74

<sup>435</sup> 'Minute Book, Directors No.14 1908-1912', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/14 TA, p74

<sup>436</sup> 'Minute Book, Directors No.16 1917-1921', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/16 TA, p.134

<sup>437</sup> Minute Book, Directors No.17 1922-1925', Bolckow Vaughan Co Ltd, 13/3/17 TA, p.325

the situation failed to address the issues, the Board of Directors requesting that the Managing Director seek interviews with Mr Arthur Dorman and Mr Claude Pease with a view to joint action. The role of Mr Arthur Dorman in relief is also evident in the minute books of Dorman Long recording in another instance that 'the question of contributing to certain charitable Institutions was considered and it was resolved that Mr Maurice Bell and Mr Arthur Dorman should settle as to future subscriptions'. Yet, it would also appear the elder steel magnate's influence and input still held sway. The parentship of Dorman Long is further evident in the response to the Appeal on behalf of the University Colleges of Newcastle upon Tyne. With Sir Hugh Bell in the Chair, 'it was ordered that this be handed to Dorman, Long and Co. Ltd with the recommendation for their consideration that a donation of £2,000 payable at the rate of £400 per annum over the next 5 years, and earmarked for the benefit of Armstrong College, be given collectively by the two companies'.<sup>438</sup>

Sports were also a key area for company support in the twentieth century, with many firms instigating the development of their own provision. In June 1918, Director Mr Arthur Dorman submitted a proposal for 'the purchase of premises for a Club for Boys employed in connection with the Company's Works at the cost of £6150'.<sup>439</sup> The project represents another example of the company's collaboration with government to provide provision, the Welfare Health Section of the Ministry of Labour having in 1919 agreed to allow a sum of £2625 to be written off from excess profits towards the cost of alterations to the building and the costs of equipment, the company proceeded with setting up. The Company subsequently purchased land for a football field.<sup>440</sup> Into the 1920s other firms also actively pursued the provision of social clubs and recreation grounds for their workers despite being a costly investment, Bolckow Vaughan's Managing Director having proposed in June

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<sup>438</sup> Dorman Long Directors Minute Book No.4 1915-1920, p.145, TA, BS.DL/1/2/4

<sup>439</sup> Dorman Long Directors Minute Book No.4 1915-1920, p.145, TA, BS.DL/1/2/4

<sup>440</sup> Dorman Long Directors Minute Book No.4 1915-1920, pp.180, TA, BS.DL/1/2/4

1929 the donation of a building and nearby land for the purposes of a social club and recreational field for workers at the company's South Bank works.

As well as the company led sporting provision and workingmen's clubs, Middlesbrough's steel companies seemingly had their finger on the pulse of technology. In September 1920 Dorman Long were discussing the establishment of a cinema at Dormanstown, an industrial village to the east of Middlesbrough constructed to house workers at Dorman Long's nearby works.<sup>441</sup> In February the company granted Dorman Long's Athletic Club to build a new club building with the company acquiring a bank loan on the club's behalf and agreeing to the lease of land for a nominal fee with the precursor that 'proper safeguards as to the conduct of the club' being in place.<sup>442</sup>

Indeed, beyond the period of this study, the club continued to patronise local and in particular, employee welfare and leisure pursuits, holding sports days and swimming galas 'for the benefit of the company's employees'.<sup>443</sup> Indeed, the company invested substantially in carrying out repairs to Dorman Boys' Club in October 1937. Perhaps the significance of Dorman Long's continued importance as a philanthropic body is most evident in the company's directors' minutes in 1935. At the bequest of the other directors, W.L Johnson was 'requested to draw the attention of the Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee to the high proportion which the company's subscription, both to the Juvenile Organisations Committee and The Joe Walton's Boys' Club, bore to the total list of subscriptions for the year and to express the board's view that, while the company was fully willing to bear its proper part in support of institutions whose value it realized, a

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<sup>441</sup> Dorman Long Directors Minute Book No.4 1915-1920, p.194, TA, BS.DL/1/2/4

<sup>442</sup> Dorman Long Directors Minute Book No.6 1924-1927, pp.82-83, TA, BS.DL/1/2/6

<sup>443</sup> Dorman Long Directors Minute Book 1934-1936, p.324 TA, BS.DL/1/2/9



continuation of these subscriptions at their present level must not be counted upon if more general support was not forthcoming'.<sup>444</sup>

### **Industrialist family philanthropy**

The various steel and iron companies discussed above made a significant financial contribution to various philanthropic, voluntary, religious, cultural, political, economic and social organisations. This constituted both organisations external to the iron and steel firms, and increasingly from the twentieth century, through company-led initiatives such as the Dorman Long United Athletic Club, workingmen's clubs and sports teams. As well as their firms' financial support of schools, colleges, welfare, hospitals, memorials, libraries, employer organisations and social clubs locally, regionally and nationally, the individual manufacturers and their families also played a key role in supporting philanthropic initiatives and setting up their own philanthropic institutions.

Just as the company led contributions outlined in the previous section served to illuminate the spheres in which the industrialists' companies played an active role in supporting the causes, institutions and bodies that underpinned the town's evolving voluntary infrastructure, exploration of the various ways through which Middlesbrough's leading industrial families contributed in late nineteenth and early twentieth century philanthropic action offers the potential for an improved understanding of their associational participation in the urban sphere. In doing so, this section sheds light on the role the steel magnate families played in the lives of the less well off, in relieving hardship and in improving the wider social conditions in Middlesbrough. Moreover, by focusing on the role of the individuals in philanthropic activities in the town across different institutions, it is possible to gain a sense of specific approaches and interests in certain aspects of life in the manufacturing town.

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<sup>444</sup> Ibid, 1935, p.291

Similar studies of elites in industrial districts elsewhere, such as Evans' work on industrial South Wales have emphasised the need to look beyond purely 'material relief' which is evident in many of the examples of company support outlined.<sup>445</sup> Such an approach allows the historian to go beyond the focus on 'charity' that dogged the 'old philanthropy' to the more diverse forms of the 'new philanthropy'; that is 'the form of individual and social benefit, that shall have regard to the circumstances of life and work, and to the more ultimate objects of citizenship'.<sup>446</sup> This is particularly suited to the period with which this thesis is concerned given the rise of 'new philanthropy' during the period of this study.<sup>447</sup> Laybourn has noted that 'by the 1880s and the 1890s there was a greater concern being shown for the poor, children, the unemployed and the ill through a variety of public and private means'.<sup>448</sup> This focus on 'citizenship' and new approaches to philanthropy too provide a useful platform for understanding the role of the individuals in the philanthropic process in Middlesbrough in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, especially when considered amidst the debates on the extent of withdrawal of individuals from the urban sphere. Trainor has also pointed to how focusing on philanthropy provides a means of understanding elites by looking beyond those areas of traditional declining industrialist influence such as law, industrial relations and poor relief.<sup>449</sup> In exploring the personal actions beyond the apparatus of the steel firm, the rest of this chapter looks to the steel magnate and their families as individuals contributing to, leading and perpetuating philanthropic efforts. In emphasising a vibrancy of personal activity in bodies such the Middlesbrough Guild of Help, juvenile organisations and individual-led enterprises challenges notions that the steel magnates held 'a parsimonious attitude towards the local

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<sup>445</sup> Evans, 'Urbanisation', p.295.

<sup>446</sup> 'The Lilian Dorman Girls' Club, Annual Report 1927-1928' (hereafter LDGC), p.6

<sup>447</sup> Trainor, *Black Country Elites* too identified the relevance of focusing on 'voluntary associations explicitly aimed the middle class...treated only in passing', p.284.

<sup>448</sup> Laybourn, 'Introduction' in K. Laybourn, (ed.) *Social Conditions, Status and Community, 1860-c.1920* (Stroud, 1997), p.1

<sup>449</sup> Trainor. 'Urban Governance', p.35

community' and address an area overlooked in some histories of welfare in Middlesbrough,<sup>450</sup> instead reaffirming J.J. Turner's suggestion that the period was one of 'significant new developments...in the field of local charitable effort'<sup>451</sup> and Menzies' emphasis on the centrality of individual initiatives during the First World War.<sup>452</sup>

### **Middlesbrough Guild of Help**

The Guild of Help movement was inaugurated in Bradford in 1904 in an attempt to address the problem of poverty in Edwardian Britain.<sup>453</sup> Central to the Guild's ideology was 'personal service to individuals and families in need' through the 'development of responsible and professional social work...[Based upon] cooperation between agencies'.<sup>454</sup> Part of a wider expansion of Edwardian philanthropy that was developing 'new agencies and reorganizing its resources to help meet the massive and diverse welfare needs of the twentieth century', the Guild of Help emerged 'when the whole question of poverty, and how to deal with it, was testing the minds of Victorian and Edwardian Britons'.<sup>455</sup> This was manifested in the social surveys by the likes of Charles Booth and Lady Florence Bell, the formation of a Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of Distress and the rise of New Liberalism.<sup>456</sup> The Guild of Help movement quickly expanded, with seven Guilds in operation by 1905, 12 in 1906, 25 by 1907, 35 in

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<sup>450</sup> Stubbley, 'The Churches and the Iron and Steel Industry in Middlesbrough', cited in Turner, 'The People's Winter Garden', Middlesbrough', p.31; Lowe, M.I. 'Morals not Money: Welfare in Middlesbrough 1892-1912', unpublished M.A. Thesis, Teesside Polytechnic, 1983, p.4

<sup>451</sup> Turner, 'The People's Winter Garden', p.31

<sup>452</sup> Menzies, *Great War Britain: Middlesbrough*

<sup>453</sup> For an overview of the development of the Guild of Help see Laybourn, K. 'The Guild of Help and the changing face of Edwardian philanthropy', *Urban History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (April 1993); Laybourn, K. *The Guild of Help and the Changing Face of Edwardian Philanthropy: The Guild of Help, Voluntary Work and the State, 1904-1919* (Lampeter, 1994) and K. Laybourn (ed.) *Social Conditions, Status and Community, 1860-c.1920* (Stroud, 1997) esp. chapters 1-3.

<sup>454</sup> Laybourn. 'The Guild of Help', p.44; Moore, M.J. 'Social Work and Social Welfare: The Organization of Philanthropic Resources in Britain, 1900-1914', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 6, No.2 (Spring 1977), p.86

<sup>455</sup> Moore. 'Social Work', p.85; Laybourn, 'The Guild of Help', *Urban History*, p.44

<sup>456</sup> Laybourn, 'The Guild of Help', p.44

1908 and 61 by the beginning of 1910, one of which was the Middlesbrough Guild of Help.<sup>457</sup>

The first meeting of the Middlesbrough Guild of Help was held on 8th March 1909 at the town's Council Chamber, sending a very early sign of the mixed economy approach of the fledgling body. The Guild of Help was developed 'in response to a joint request from the Middlesbrough Church Council and certain leading townspeople'.<sup>458</sup> The Guild's First Annual Report argued that 'it was evident...from both the representative nature of the gathering and from the enthusiasm with which an account of Guild work at Bradford was received, that the people of Middlesbrough felt the need for such an organisation in their town...adapted to the special local conditions of Middlesbrough'.<sup>459</sup> The reference to the need for the Guild to be adapted to suit the conditions in Middlesbrough is relevant in highlighting the importance of the Guild recruiting a membership familiar with the major concerns of the town – namely the iron and steel industry. From the very first annual report, the 6 key approaches underpinning the movement's attempts to improve the life of the poor in the town were set out, and appeared in each subsequent Annual Report, the Guild attempting to redress distress:

- (1) By offering, to all who desire it, the personal sympathy and care of a friend
- (2) By careful enquiry into the causes of individual cases of poverty and suffering, and by patient endeavour to do all that is possible to remove them
- (3) By securing or providing appropriate treatment for each case of distress, wherever possible
- (4) By helping families to restore themselves to independence

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<sup>457</sup> Laybourn, 'Introduction', in Laybourn (ed.), *Social Conditions*, p.12

<sup>458</sup> 'Annual Report 1909-10, Middlesbrough Guild of Help', p.7

<sup>459</sup> 'Annual Report 1909-10, Middlesbrough Guild of Help', p.7

(5) By the promotion of thrift, self-reliance, and of better habits of life

(6) By co-operating with all existing agencies in order to secure co-ordination, so as to prevent waste of money and effort.<sup>460</sup>

The Guild of Help's ideological emphasis on the personal approach was central and can be seen to reflect the social survey and educational ideals that can be found in Lady Bell's *At the Works*. Even though it is almost certain the industrialists themselves would not have engaged in personal, face-to-face visiting of those subject to the work of the Guild (or at least the Guild's Annual Reports have no evidence of this), those that did reported back to its members on individual cases (included in the Annual Reports each year). Thus, this personal element can be seen as serving to inform, amongst others, the steel magnates as the area's major employers of the social reality, and crucially, inspire subscription, acceptance of honorific positions and help gain the support of their family members.

From the very offset, the role of Middlesbrough's steel magnates and their kinship networks in the membership of the Guild took on a number of roles. As with other Guilds of Help across the country, the position of Guild President was occupied by the Mayor, whilst the Vice-Presidents, District Heads and Officers of the Guild included key figures of other organisations in Middlesbrough and 'prominent citizens of the community'.<sup>461</sup> In Middlesbrough these included the Mayor, Mayoress, Ex-Mayor and Mayoress, Chairman of the Board of Guardians and the Chairman of the Local Education Authority. The iron and steel concern was directly represented in Guild management by the presence of the Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding of Yorkshire - Sir Hugh Bell, his wife Lady Bell and the

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<sup>460</sup> 'Annual Reports, Middlesbrough Guild of Help'

<sup>461</sup> Laybourn, 'The Guild of Help', p.54

ironmaster Penry Williams in his role as Member of Parliament for Middlesbrough.<sup>462</sup> In terms of regional and national affiliations, the Guild sent representatives and presented papers at the Annual National Conference of Guilds of Help and was a member of and sent representatives to the Northern Federation of the Guilds of Help,<sup>463</sup> the annual meeting later being held in Middlesbrough.<sup>464</sup> However, the surviving minutes suggest that these duties were as would be expected, fulfilled by officers and workers of the Guild of Help rather than by the leading industrialist families themselves.

Laybourn has pointed to the gendered dynamics at play in the Guild of Help in emphasising a membership consisting of ‘middle-class men, their wives and daughters’ who fulfilled different roles, traits echoed in the contributions made by the men and women of Middlesbrough’s magnate families.<sup>465</sup> Amongst these magnate women were the prominent wives and daughter of the Dorman and Bell families, all of whom were involved in at least one other voluntary enterprise in the town. Yet, to add complexity to the understanding of elite interactions within the Guild, the ways in which the two families engaged with the organisation varied across financial and positional lines. Sir Hugh and Lady Bell provided regular financial support to the Guild of Help, with the surviving Annual Reports of the Guild of Help showing annual subscription contributions of Sir Hugh Bell and Lady Bell to have been around £20 a year.<sup>466</sup> Beyond financial support, Lady Bell and Sir Hugh Bell were constantly represented on the Guild’s board owing to their positions as Vice-Presidents, with Sir Hugh Bell also serving briefly as President owing to his brief, third spell as Mayor of Middlesbrough following Sir Samuel Sadler’s death in 1911. Despite

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<sup>462</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1910, p.2, 1911, p.31. This is consistent with Guilds of Help elsewhere such as those at Bolton, Bradford and Halifax.

<sup>463</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1910, p.9

<sup>464</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1915, p.117, 1917, p.140

<sup>465</sup> Laybourn, *Guild of Help*, p.51

<sup>466</sup> Middlesbrough Guild of Help, Annual Reports, various, 1909-1931

holding offices in the Guild of Help, this seemed to preclude any hands-on involvement in the day-to-day running of the Middlesbrough Guild of Help. The surviving minute books, which exist as faint photocopies covering the period 1910 to 1919, do however suggest that neither Sir Hugh nor Lady Bell attended many meetings of the Guild. In fact the only meeting that Sir Hugh Bell seemingly attended during this period was the Special (Public) Meeting of 29 May 1912, organised in order for the Archbishop of York to address the Middlesbrough Guild of Help during his visit to the town. It is significant that correspondence from Sir Hugh Bell, confirming his attendance at the Special Meeting, was deemed noteworthy enough to record in the minutes of the Guild and to return an expression of thanks to him for his promise to attend the event at the town's Wesley Hall.<sup>467</sup> Clearly, Bell was not expected to attend meetings of the Guild as a rule and it can be seen as owing to the steel magnate's role as a national industrial figure and civic leader that his presence was deemed of such vital importance. The legitimising, honorific capital the presence of a leading figures such as Bell afforded the Guild of Help is clear in the extensive newspaper coverage that charted the event in the local press. The speeches of Sir Hugh Bell and Archbishop of York at the meeting were reproduced practically verbatim in the *North Eastern Daily Gazette*.<sup>468</sup>

Despite the fact the surviving minutes suggest that Lady Bell played a limited direct role in the activities of the Guild on a practical level, this did not prevent the playwright and wife of the town's major industrialist from having her say on matters or providing advice. Correspondence by the Guild from Lady Bell - a letter concerning the 'House to House Enquiry in relation to Crippled Children' suggests she was very much aware of the ground-

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<sup>467</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, p.37 (1911)

<sup>468</sup> *NEDG*, 30 May 1912

level activities of the organisation, or in this case, was not active in.<sup>469</sup> Lady Bell forwarded copies of correspondence with the Central Council for Infant and Child Welfare regarding the possibility of taking a census of crippled children for Middlesbrough by House to House enquiry to the Guild of Help board, despite the measure one the Guild was against undertaking. The minutes do not record whether Bell was in favour of such measures or not and it is possible that Bell was merely relaying information, although more cynically this might be seen as Bell attempting to influence policy beyond and in spite of the Guild's structures and decisions. One of the key points to emerge from the Guild's opposition and subsequent rejection of the practice suggests that for all the financial and personal support the industrialist family elites offered, they did not have a free rein to 'impose upon the poor a set of values they saw [as] essential to the tackling of the social problems of society as they viewed them', as Laybourn has contended.<sup>470</sup> Nevertheless, this should not detract from the fact the Guild of Help, as with other voluntary organisations, provided a platform for elite women (and potentially by proxy, their husbands) to be involved in shaping urban management through engagement with welfare arrangements that brought a number of bodies.

Whilst the honorific significance of the elder Bells to the Guild may not have been matched in terms of prestige by the Dorman representation on the organisation, the involvement of Sir Arthur Dorman's daughter Lilian Dorman reflected an engagement with the Guild that was more personal, active, frequent and diverse than that of the Bells. In fact, Lilian Dorman very much typified the characteristics of women involved in the Guild of Help elsewhere; she was a daughter of one of the town's leading industrialists, unmarried and her involvement with the Guild stemmed from family involvement in its activities as will be

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<sup>469</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1920, p.168

<sup>470</sup> Laybourn, *Guild of Help*, p.61



discussed below.<sup>471</sup> In terms of her involvement with the Guild, Dorman was a member of the Executive Committee within a year of the Guild commencing activity in the town, Miss Dorman having been nominated in May 1910 to replace her outgoing brother Charles Dorman.<sup>472</sup> During her association with the Middlesbrough Guild of Help, Miss Dorman not only served as a member of the Ladies' Committee, but was also active at a regional level through her role as the Guild's nominated representative at the Northern Federation of Guilds Conference which covered the Jarrow, Newcastle, Sunderland and Middlesbrough Guilds of Help.<sup>473</sup> Further reinforcing the iron and steel representation on the organisation, Francis Samuelson, successor to Sir Bernhard Samuelson and a prominent figure in numerous local philanthropic agencies, was elected to the Guild's Executive Council in February 1911, whilst Erasmus Darwin served on the Finance Committee and was appointed Honorary Treasurer in February 1911 until his death during the First World War.<sup>474</sup>

As well as holding offices in the Guild of Help, the manufacturing families also contributed financially to the running of the Guild. Sir Arthur Dorman, Lady Dorman and Charles Dorman all regularly appeared on subscription lists. These subscriptions helped support the Middlesbrough Guild's local activities with numerous associations and departments. Whilst the amounts of individual contributions are much smaller than those of the companies, the significance of this support should not be dismissed. The individual financial support of the Bell family extended beyond the £20 donations Sir Hugh Bell and Lady Bell made to the Administration Fund from the very outset of the Guild, with Mrs

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<sup>471</sup> Laybourn, *Guild of Help*

<sup>472</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1910, p.5

<sup>473</sup> Ibid

<sup>474</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1911, p.23

Charles Lowthian Bell joining the ranks of Bell subscribers in 1913.<sup>475</sup> Similarly, the Dorman family from the 1917 provided a smaller yet nevertheless reliable source of income for the Middlesbrough Guild of Help. Miss Lilian Dorman was the first individual Dorman subscriber, in 1917 donating £2.2.0, a familial involvement that increased in the following year with Mr Charles Dorman's £5 subscription to the Administration Fund marking his continued support of the Guild despite having stepped down to make way for his sister in 1910. Other industrialists also contributed to the Guild's funds, with Francis Samuelson making a £10 subscription to the Benevolent Fund, whilst Mr Erasmus Darwin, Secretary for Bolckow Vaughan and grandson of Charles Darwin, also made an individual donation of £5 to each fund prior to his death during the First World War. It is significant in reflecting the importance of the iron and steel that the Bell, Dorman and Samuelson families were amongst the key financial supporters of the Guild of Help.

A summary of some of the activities in which the Middlesbrough Guild was engaged helps reflect the impact this support had on addressing distress in the town and also suggests some benefits through affiliation for the industrialists as employers. One of the early tasks of the Guild illustrates its desire to 'form a partnership between the private and public bodies'.<sup>476</sup> The Guild of Help assisted the Medical Officer of Health by carrying out activities such as visits of tuberculosis cases in 1910, not uncommon given the pollution brought by the town's iron and steel works coupled with poor sanitary conditions – issues that Guild member Charles Dorman had worked to address during his time as a councillor in the Cannon Ward.<sup>477</sup> This assistance in tackling the health problems of the town later expanded, including the 'organising voluntary workers of the Guild for promoting the

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<sup>475</sup> 'Annual Report 1912-13, Middlesbrough Guild of Help', p.16-17

<sup>476</sup> Laybourn, 'The Guild of Help', p.44

<sup>477</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1910, p.15

welfare of infants and children of school age in close co-operation with the Public Health Authority and the Education Committee'.<sup>478</sup> The Helpers engaged in Voluntary Health Visiting, assisted in hosting the meeting of the Association for Permanent Care of the Feeble-minded, National Health Week and assisted the Town Clerk with the Tuberculosis Exhibition in Middlesbrough.<sup>479</sup>

It quickly becomes apparent that relations with both public and other charitable and voluntary bodies were crucial in the Guild of Help's activities and determined its effectiveness. From early on in its life the Middlesbrough Guild moved quickly to establish links with the much-maligned Charity Organisation Society, sending a representative to the COS' Annual Conference at Leeds in 1910 and made a contribution to the conference costs,<sup>480</sup> and accepted the offer of the London COS to correspond with the Middlesbrough Guild of Help.<sup>481</sup> Analysis of the 'List of Associate Members in connection with the Guild of Help at December 1<sup>st</sup> 1913' further reveals the wider networks of which the Guild of Help (and its members) was a part. In addition to the subscribers, the Schools Medical Officer, Director of Education, Chief Constable and Town Clerk were all Associate Members.<sup>482</sup> At a local level, the Guild's early years also saw geographical expansion to South Bank and Grangetown, approximately 3 miles east of the town's districts but effectively an overspill of its industrial centre.<sup>483</sup>

Given the heavily industrialised, working-class areas in which the Guild operated, occupied by industrial migrant communities exposed to the peaks and troughs of the cyclical nature of heavy industry, it is unsurprising that labour and employment featured prominently in the Guild's psyche and moreover that the steel magnates deemed the Guild of Help an

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<sup>478</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1911, p.21

<sup>479</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1911, pp.20-35

<sup>480</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1910, p.10

<sup>481</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1910, p.12

<sup>482</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1923, p.83

<sup>483</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1914, p.14

organisation worthy of support. The Middlesbrough Guild of Help was proactive in attempting to identify the structural flaws evident in the town, meeting to consider the relationship between chronic poverty and casual labour, and holding meetings with the Mayor on the issue of how to deal with the distress prompted by the lock-out at the shipyards.<sup>484</sup>

Perhaps one of the most revealing undertakings of the Guild in terms of the industrialists' engagement was the role played at times of distress in the iron, steel and related industries in the area. The Guild had influence, power and exclusive access to information from figures of authority during such events. Never was this more evident than during the distress resulting from the Coal Strike of 1912. The Mayor, Councillor W. Harkess, attended the Guild of Help's General Purposes Committee Meeting and 'explained, in confidence...what measures he intended to take for meeting distress, should such distress become acute enough through continuance of the strike'.<sup>485</sup> The Guild in turn voted to 'put the whole personal resources of The Guild of Help at the disposal of the Mayor and set up an Emergency Committee operating in line with the Mayor's Relief Fund. In becoming the Visiting Sub-Committee of The Mayor's Central Relief Committee, the Guild was effectively operating as a sub-contractor or proxy body of the Town Council'.<sup>486</sup> This is significant as in working closely with the Council, the Guild and its affiliates, including the industrialist families, were therefore privy to information that concerned the town's (and their) workforce and thus the ways the Town Council planned to address the issue. This provided the potential for a useful dynamic of access and influence on the Council Chamber even for those who were not serving councillors, aldermen and mayors.

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<sup>484</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1910, p.17

<sup>485</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1912, p.38

<sup>486</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1912, pp.38-40. The General Secretary of the Guild was later invited to join the Town Council General Purposes Committee to deal with distress caused by the outbreak of war in 1914, whilst the Guild again placed the 'whole personal resources of the Guild' at the disposal of the Mayor, (pp.100-101) the Guild dealing with some 1,686 cases during the war up to 1916 (p.120).

Furthermore in approaching and addressing the Guild in confidence, the Mayor as the head of the town's chief municipal body reaffirmed the Guild's importance by placing it at the heart of official response to the strike. In short, the event confirmed that involvement with the Guild provided proxy access to information and power. This point is reinforced in the Guild's response to the closure of Newport Rolling Mills, the Guild holding a Special Emergency Meeting for dealing with the fallout of the unemployment caused.<sup>487</sup>

It is evident from the handful of examples provided above that the Guild of Help and its membership played a key role in addressing distress in Middlesbrough, a view confirmed in the *Daily Gazette's* assessment of the Guild's first 10 years:

During the ten years of its existence it [the Middlesbrough Guild of Help] has dealt with no fewer than 15,102 cases...In 1909 the Guild of Help had a difficult task before it. On many sides the ladies and gentlemen who so generously gave their services were looked upon as being a society of busybodies who were anxious to give their "patronage" to the poor and needy. But the promoters of the new movement built on a solid foundation, and that foundation is as strong to-day as it was ten years ago. Personal service is the keynote of the Guild, and in consequence the sense of civic responsibility has been deepened. Great good has been accomplished, but much still remains to be done.<sup>488</sup>

The patronage of the industrial elites as funders and figurehead presidents and vice-presidents during this period can be seen as important in facilitating the decade of success for the Middlesbrough organisation and it can be argued that has it not been for their

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<sup>487</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1914, p.90

<sup>488</sup> NEDG, 25 May 1919

support the Guild might not have achieved as much success as the *Gazette* believed it had.

Given the vast array of aspects of everyday life in Middlesbrough which the Guild of Help attempted to address, the potential motives for the steel magnate families to be involved in this 'mixed economy' organisation were vast, as were the potential benefits for the Guild of having the town's key employers affiliated to the Guild of Help.

Involvement with the Guild of Help was undoubtedly beneficial to its subscribers, presidents, vice-presidents, district heads and officers otherwise they would not have partaken in its activities, directly or indirectly.<sup>489</sup> High-profile, public events such as the visit of Archbishop Cosmos Lang in 1912 that Sir Hugh Bell presided over, Lowe argues, acted as a 'public pat on the back' for all involved.<sup>490</sup> Certainly, the event provided a platform from which Bell could pontificate about the virtues of the Guild of Help with which he was associated, with the coverage of the event in the *North Eastern Daily Gazette* propelling the steel magnate's endorsement and involvement into the spotlight in an article entitled 'Sir Hugh Bell's Tribute to the Guild of Help'.<sup>491</sup> A 1913 article in the same publication that focused on the Guild's activities in the previous year paid particular attention to Sir Hugh Bell's commendation of the Guild's first four years, the *Gazette* in turn embracing the positive sentiments expressed by Sir Hugh, making reference to the Guild's assistance during the 1912 Coal Strike.<sup>492</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> Evans, 'Urbanisation', p.306 has argued for the importance of the publication of the subscription list and coverage in the *Cardiff Times*, citing numerous examples of individuals been singled out for praise owing to their philanthropic contributions.

<sup>490</sup> Lowe, 'Welfare', p.83

<sup>491</sup> *NEDG*, 30 May 1912

<sup>492</sup> *NEDG*, 30 April 1913

We are only able to speculate as to the extent to which the subscribers and members of the Guild supported the organisation as a means by which to receive public recognition to further their own careers and reinforce their own social standing.<sup>493</sup> However, as Bell's speech came in the midst of the 1912 Coal Strike it would have done much to show that the manufacturer was not only aware of the distress that was ongoing as a result but was also active in supporting an organisation that looked to assist those suffering. What is clearly in evidence, intentional or not, is the fact that the individual's contributions were publicly recognised through their very documentation in circulated subscriber lists, annual reports and in later obituaries or autobiographies. This was important in showcasing the role of the industrialist families such as the Dormans and Bells in supporting the Guild of Help and the various activities associated with it.

Much has been made of the 'social control' potential of philanthropic involvement by employers during this period, with Cushlow's work on the Guild of Help having argued for the organisation in West Yorkshire as having provided a means of control, with Prochaska conversely arguing against the extent of such motives or power.<sup>494</sup> The activities of the Guild here listed confirm the organisation had considerable access to the lower echelons of Middlesbrough society and with it, the potential to instil social control and moral discipline, a point echoed by Cushlow in her study of some 250 casebooks of the Bradford Guild of Help.<sup>495</sup> Indeed, it has been argued this was one of the chief criticisms levelled at the Guild of Help movement by socialist critics, the casebooks of the Bradford Guild recording the 'condescending attitude' towards the poor that in turn shaped the decisions

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<sup>493</sup> Morris, 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites', pp.95-118; Meller, H. *Leisure and the Changing City* (London, 1976), p.75 on the role charitable effort helped reinforce the individual's place in society, citing the case of Mayor Symes in late nineteenth century Bristol. Similarly, Johnston, R. *Clydeside Capital*, pp.96-98 has too identified involvement in charitable causes was both a 'stepping stone' and important to 'the network of capitalist influence'.

<sup>494</sup> Prochaska, 'Philanthropy'; Cushlow, F. 'Guilded Help?', K. Laybourn (ed.), *Social Conditions*

<sup>495</sup> Cushlow, 'Guilded Help?', p.30

as to whether to assist individual cases.<sup>496</sup> In the case of Middlesbrough, similar moralising judgements were expressed by Guild supporter Sir Hugh Bell. In a 1914 letter to the Editor of *The Times* following the outbreak of war the previous month, the steel magnate argued many of the 800 applications for relief in the town were 'were of the chronic and not very deserving kind...Others were on the border line. Fully 25 per cent...were beyond question worthy of help'.<sup>497</sup> Bell's comments in the national newspaper reflected how his affiliation to the Middlesbrough Guild of Help provided information on the social condition of the town in which his company's works were situated, and further, shows how such knowledge was used by industrialists in wider spheres of elite society. Referring again to the 1912 troubles, Bell argued that the country might have been 'plunged into turmoil which might have been followed by rebellion' that was averted due 'in no small measure due to the fact that we had made preparation for that which was coming upon us. To those who have taken part in the organisation of the Guild of Help praise is also due'.<sup>498</sup> In acknowledging the Guild's 'excellent work' during the strike, Bell implies not only was the Guild a great source of relief, but also an organisation that potentially helped to diffuse the overthrow of the social strata itself.<sup>499</sup>

Returning to the day-to-day activities of the Guild, be it through visiting homes, observing and assisting in health provision or assisting in mobilizing labour, the Guild had considerable potential to impose the 'class ideals' of the elites.<sup>500</sup> In short, the willingness to affiliate to and support the Guild by the likes of the Sir Hugh Bell, Lady Bell, Miss Dorman and Francis Samuelson might suggest their support for the imposition of the

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<sup>496</sup> Laybourn, 'Guild of Help, *Urban History*, p.53

<sup>497</sup> *The Times*, 27 August 1914

<sup>498</sup> *NEDG*, 30 April 1912

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>500</sup> Gorsky, M. *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.185



Guild's ideals, and consequently provide useful insights into their aspirations and beliefs.<sup>501</sup> Furthermore, it may be suggested that an element of 'social control' can be detected amidst the Guild's operations, whether pursued consciously or not. Yet, it is notable that just four years after Lady Bell's *At the Works* questioned the etiquette and domestic capabilities of Middlesbrough's womenfolk, the Guild set about pursuing a programme of 'Training Home for Domestic Servants, or in some other way to secure that girls after leaving the elementary school might receive some training which would fit them for the better forms of domestic service'.<sup>502</sup>

Just as the example of the training of domestic servants can be seen as a reflection of Lady Bell's interests in the activities of the Guild, Sir Hugh Bell's offer to the Guild in 1911 of lectures by the Secretary of the Industrial Law Committee can be seen as Bell imposing his ideals upon the Guild by attempting to shape the lecture programme of the organisation. A more positive perspective might point to how the lecture offer reflected another of the benefits of industrial elite patronage of the Guild of Help by the steel magnate through his place amongst national economic and political networks having provided access to a leading figure who was knowledgeable in legislation relating to voluntary visits.<sup>503</sup>

Before drawing to close this narrow, positive representation of the Guild and the role of Middlesbrough's steel magnates and their wives and daughters within it, there is a need to offer balance by highlighting some of the criticisms levelled at the organisation. The praise Archbishop Cosmos Lang heaped on the Guild's activities contrasted sharply to the comments bestowed on the Guild's workings by his compatriot, the often outspoken Socialist priest Father Burn of Middlesbrough's All Saints' 'ironmasters' church. Using his

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<sup>501</sup> Gorsky. *Patterns of Philanthropy*, p.191 makes a similar argument for the philanthropists involved in nineteenth century Bristol's voluntary organisations.

<sup>502</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1911, p.34

<sup>503</sup> MGOH M.B 1910-1937, 1911, p.30

*All Saints' Parish Magazine* as a platform to pontificate about the ineffectiveness of the Guild, Burn's perception of the town's Guild of Help had started off positively in praising the establishment of a 'wealthy and excellent organisation', with an 'able and energetic Secretary' into whose able care he planned to direct the 'needy families' of his parish to.<sup>504</sup> Within weeks Burn had switched to the viewpoint that it was 'useless to look to "the Guild of Help" at present, as being either able or willing to give that "first aid" which the cases of dire distress, of which this town is full, absolutely demand', with attempts to seek help 'abortive', seeing the Guild as having closed 'their ears to the bitter cry of those who in many cases, through no fault of their own, are in the greatest need, and even where this cannot be said, the rescue and help of those who have gone astray'.<sup>505</sup> Burn also expressed frustration at how the Guild of Help in attempting to coordinate assistance by bringing together those engaged in voluntary action across the district has led to a number of those who had helped the parish in the past having turning to instead help "the Town Guild of Help" which had declared that it would undertake work in assisting the community but failed in doing so.<sup>506</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, Burn's biographer Thomas Fullerton has contended that the long serving priest had not given 'sufficient consideration to the endless complications of the problem of coping with the enormous evil of unemployment and distress at such a time'.<sup>507</sup>

Despite the criticisms levelled at the Middlesbrough Guild of Help by Father Burn, the organisation played a key role in addressing a variety of spheres of distress in Middlesbrough. Amongst this coming together of various aspects of the manufacturing

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<sup>504</sup> *All Saints' Parish Magazine*, October 1909, No. 163, TA, PR/M (AS) (2) 19

<sup>505</sup> *Ibid*, November 1909, No. 164, TA, PR/M (AS) (2) 19

<sup>506</sup> See also *All Saints' Parish Magazine*, December 1909, No. 165, TA, PR/M (AS) (2) 19 for further criticism of the Guild not serving the needs of the most distressed in the town.

<sup>507</sup> Fullerton, T.G. *Father Burn of Middlesbrough: A Biography* (Bradford, 1927), p.209

town's voluntary sector, both the elder male and female members of Middlesbrough's chief iron and steel families and their offspring mobilised to support this 'new philanthropy' initiative. Given that the elder family members such as Sir Arthur Dorman, Lady Dorman, Sir Hugh Bell and Lady remained affiliated with the Guild of Help well into the interwar period, this suggests a lack of withdrawal from urban engagement. In sharing power and influence with the petite bourgeoisie and professionals – both of which were closely involved in supporting and managing the Middlesbrough Guild of Help – the manufacturing families exhibited a willingness and success in working with the very people advocates of the elite withdrawal thesis have pointed to as instigating voluntary departure from municipal activity. The later generations of the industrialist families held a variety of positions in the organisation and were active in providing financial aid. The case of Lilian Dorman succeeding her brother Charles Dorman in office in the Guild might also point towards a wider familial *noblesse oblige* which the Dorman family was actively keen to maintain. The important role the women of the leading steel families played in the Guild of Help played through formal affiliation, providing suggestions as in the case of Lady Bell, and through their own personal financial contributions is also worthy of note and can be seen as the sharing of noblesse oblige across the family. In terms of what can be gauged from the industrialists' involvement with the Guild, at the very least a concern for distress in the town and an eagerness to take proactive action against it through varying degrees of formal involvement and monetary aid is unquestionable. Public praise such as that bestowed on the Guild by Sir Hugh Bell can be seen as reflecting the steel magnates' perceptions of the important role played by the organisation. A more subtle conclusion can be speculated from analysis of the types of subscription to the Guild. Donations specified for the Administration Fund rather than the Benevolent Fund that had closer ties to giving rather than management of the organisation correspond with both Sir Hugh and

Lady Bell's emphasis on the doing rather than donating ideal of the Guild.<sup>508</sup> By cross-referencing with the membership of other voluntary organisations and philanthropic initiatives such as those discussed below, we are also able to see the emergence of a network of industrialist philanthropists in Middlesbrough. This network had considerable overlap with those that had formed along political, business association and company lines.

In terms of the wider issue of the impact and success of this sphere of urban engagement, it is difficult from the evidence to gauge fully whether the Middlesbrough Guild of Help succeeded in its aim, made all the more difficult by the Guild's perspective that 'no statistics can show the friendships which have been gained or the benefits which have resulted from personal sympathy and care'.<sup>509</sup> If it is difficult to measure the Guild's success, it is nigh on impossible to gauge whether any success was because of or as well as the support of the industrialists. However, the continued financial support and patronage of the Bell, Dorman and Samuelson families would link them to any success that was achieved. The Guild was undoubtedly a central presence at times of distress in the town in its early years of operation, having been linked with dozens of the town's other organisations and authorities. Yet, its continued importance amidst heightened state intervention was a concern from its early years should not be overstated and within the reach of the industrialists' activities through the Guild can be seen to have weakened by the interwar years. Despite Sir Hugh Bell's assertion that the Guild would not become useless by measures such as the Insurance Act, it is clear that by the mid-1920s the Guild itself acknowledged the declining role it played in assisting the distressed poor.<sup>510</sup> The Annual Report for the Guild Year 1926-27 noted the limited role played by the Guild in

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<sup>508</sup> For example, neither Lady Bell nor Sir Hugh Bell subscribed to the Benevolent Fund, whilst Samuelson was one of the few people to donate to both the Administration and Benevolent Funds. 'Middlesbrough Guild of Help, Annual Report 1909-10', p.10, MRL

<sup>510</sup> *NEDG*, 30 May 1912

assisting those facing hardship resulting from the General Strike, it being noted that where in earlier years a 'Mayor's Fund, Soup Kitchens and the like for the distressed poor' would have been mobilised, state provision meant the scope of the Guild had narrowed.<sup>511</sup> Nevertheless, the change in the role of the organisation by this point should not undermine the fact that it was a site of continued industrialist influence throughout the period of this study.

### **Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee**

The activities and organisation of the Middlesbrough Guild of Help illustrates that industrialist philanthropic engagement adopted many guises, presented a range of outcomes, offered varying levels of influence and both stemmed from and reflected elite ideologies and perceived suitable responses to the said 'problem' of the day. Exploration of industrialist interaction with other bodies in the town further highlights the complexity and multiplicity of industrial elite participation in voluntary action and showcases the ways in which power was shared in organisations between numerous individuals of different backgrounds across varied roles. The Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee (MJOC), was established during the First World War and was another of the voluntary, coordinating organisations that emerged in response to concerns for the well-being of the local population, with a particular emphasis on addressing the lack of discipline for young people by means of 'curative social activity', not dissimilar to the boys' brigade and boy scouts movements in which industrialists had also taken interest.<sup>512</sup> Writing in the interwar period in his history of Middlesbrough during the Great War, Robertson describes the Juvenile Organisations' Committee as having helped 'coordinate and extend the work' of

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<sup>511</sup> MGOH, Annual Reports, p.5, 1926-1927, MRL

<sup>512</sup> Robertson, *Middlesbrough's Effort*, p.59

the various affiliated clubs, which included organisations such as the aforementioned Dorman Long Boys' Club and Lilian Dorman's Girls Club.<sup>513</sup>

The MJOC was set up 'to co-ordinate in a Central Committee existing efforts affecting the lives of the young people of Middlesbrough...[attaching] to each young life someone who is willing to be concerned that it should be happy in its work and play, and well-directed in both'.<sup>514</sup> Moreover, it would 'form a centre of intercommunication among Societies, Institutions, Voluntary and Public Bodies, etc.; to act as an advisory board when requested; and to arrange Conferences and other Meetings', drawing representatives from various interest groups.<sup>515</sup> In promoting the 'welfare of existing efforts', supplying statistics and information on associated bodies, considering key questions that affect the interests of youths, and assisting in 'the formation of new organisations', involvement with the organisation acted as a means of accessing, influencing and engaging with the town's major philanthropic bodies.<sup>516</sup> The MJOC also offered the industrialist families opportunities to hold honorific roles, be directly involved in the work of the organisation and to display to various stakeholders their families' contribution to and care for the social apparatus of the manufacturing town.

What is particularly notable from initial investigation of the annual reports of the MJOC is the continued involvement of the Dorman and Bell families, in addition to other industrialists, with Francis Samuelson again featuring prominently in terms of significant financial support. There was a clear long-term commitment to the body both in terms of affiliation and financial support by the industrialists from the early days to the end of the period of this study. A comparison of the Committee Membership and Subscription Lists in the First Annual Report of 1919 and that for 1934, the end date of this study, confirms the

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<sup>513</sup> Ibid, pp.85-86

<sup>514</sup> 'Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee, First Annual Report, 30 April 1919', p.1

<sup>515</sup> Ibid

<sup>516</sup> Ibid

longevity of the industrial elites' involvement. In the late 1910s and 1920s, Sir Hugh and Lady Bell, Sir Arthur and Lady Dorman, Francis Samuelson and Mrs Gjers were all notable figures as Vice-Presidents, with Mr Arthur Dorman acting as the Chairman of the Finance Committee, with Miss Dorman and Arthur Dorman (again) members of the Executive Committee.<sup>517</sup> The importance of these leading local figures' involvement with the organisation was in evidence in the references to the steel magnate families in the records of the organisation and the praise heaped on them for their contribution. For instance, the records praised Sir Arthur Dorman for his opening of the Marske-by-the-Sea Holiday Camp for youths, the venture subsidised by the 'generous gifts in kind' of companies including Cochranes, Dorman Long, Bolckow Vaughan, with Sir Arthur Dorman himself having contributed the sum of £500.<sup>518</sup>

The MJOC reports of 1932 also provide evidence of continued involvement of the industrial elite families following the deaths of Sir Hugh Bell and Sir Arthur Dorman a year earlier. The reports show a subscription £50 from Dorman Long, continued support from Francis Samuelson, Arthur Dorman and Miss Dorman. The successor to Sir Hugh Bell's baronetage - his son Sir Maurice Lowthian Bell - along with his sister Lady Richmond is listed as a subscriber to the Joe Walton Reconstruction Scheme Boys Club to which the MJOC were affiliated.<sup>519</sup>

Assessment of the activities of the MJOC in contrast to the Middlesbrough Guild of Help is useful in highlighting the varying levels of elite importance across given organisations, in turn tentatively providing a potential insight into their interests and leanings. In the case of the MJOC, the extensive, multifaceted nature of the Dorman's involvement surpassed the activities of other industrialist families. This included Lady Dorman and Sir Arthur J.

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<sup>517</sup> 'Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee Annual Reports', various

<sup>518</sup> 'Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee, Second Annual Report', p.10

<sup>519</sup> 'Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee, Seventeenth Annual Report', p.13

Dorman serving as Vice Presidents, Mr Arthur Dorman as Honorary Treasurer, Chairman of the Finance Committee and member of the Executive Committee alongside Mrs Dorman.<sup>520</sup> As well as holding positions of influence in the organisation, the Dorman family, directly and indirectly, contributed a significant amount of financial capital to the organisation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Dorman Long set up one of the three Boys' Clubs (Newport) that the Executive and Financial Committees of the MJOC had proposed in the 1918 draft scheme, with the company also financing the acquisition of premises for a Central (Southfield) Boys' Club.<sup>521</sup> In terms of individual giving, the sums given were often significant. Sir Arthur Dorman donated £300 to the Marske Camp Fund in 1920, his son Charles Dorman donating £50 (making him the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest contributor to the Fund), whilst Miss Dorman donated £5, with further contributions including a £5 donation from Carl Bolckow.<sup>522</sup> Beyond the more formal instances of specific recorded subscriptions and donations, Sir Arthur Dorman and Lady Bell gave gifts and donations to the Committee's Play Centres.<sup>523</sup>

### **Lady Bell's Winter Garden, Middlesbrough**

Concern for the well-being of Middlesbrough's population was not limited exclusively to workers at the firms or the young people of the town. Arguably one of the most outstanding examples of urban philanthropic engagement in Middlesbrough during this period was Lady Bell's establishment of the Winter Garden, a social experiment in the form of a penny entertainment venue that offered an alternative to the plethora of the morally degenerate pubs and beer houses. The Winter Garden project for Bell did much to redress

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<sup>520</sup> MJOC, First Report (1919), pp.3-4; MJOC, Second Report (1920), p.4; MJOC, Sixteenth Report (1934), p.2

<sup>521</sup> MJOC, First Report (1919), pp.8-9. The former club was affiliated to but not under the jurisdiction of the MJOC.

<sup>522</sup> MJOC, Second Report (1920), p.16. The donation was the third largest donation overall, Stewarts (Clothiers) Ltd giving £100, one of many significant sums of £100 given during the period of this study.

<sup>523</sup> MJOC, Sixth Report (1924), p.11



what she saw as the issues with recreation in the town, her *At the Works* survey provides a detailed account of leisure pursuits during this time and laments the lack of facilities in the town, expressing particular alarm at Middlesbrough's gambling and drinking levels and the lack of rational recreation.<sup>524</sup> Citing the local Temperance Society's 'church and public-house census', Bell reported that over 90,000 men, women and children entered a public house or off licence on a given Sunday, the majority of which 'probably belonged to the ironworkers'.<sup>525</sup> In fact, she devoted a whole chapter to 'the evils' of 'drink, betting, and gambling', bemoaning the spending of incomes on the payday Friday in the public house, betting on horse racing and bringing up a generation 'deliberately trained in betting and gambling'.<sup>526</sup>

The Winter Garden provided recreational space away from the public houses and the cold of the streets at which Bell despaired, fulfilling her wish expressed in the 1907 version of *At the Works* that

There should be scattered about the town various places of resort under cover open during the winter at an almost nominal charge, places well warmed and lighted, open to anyone and everyone who chose to pay, where a man might turn in and sit down, have his pipe, and meet, during his free hours, with his fellows, it would, I believe, make an incalculable difference to the welfare of the community. They might be places of a kind to which the women might go too.<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> Bell, *At the Works*, pp.128. For a critique of the survey see Leonard, J.W. 'Lady Bell's Survey of Edwardian Middlesbrough', *Cleveland History*, 29, 1975, pp.9-12. See also Moorsom, N. *The Demon Drink in Mid-Victorian Middlesbrough* (Middlesbrough, 2000)

<sup>525</sup> Bell, *At the Works*, p.132.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid, pp.246-272

<sup>527</sup> Ibid, pp.132-133

The subscription lists and working with like-minded, philanthropic individuals can have done little harm to gaining support for individual philanthropic enterprise. It is not surprising that the subscription lists of Lady Bell's Winter Garden and Lilian Dorman's Club bear a marked resemblance both in terms of individual donors and company patronage. Indeed, we need only turn attention to the activities of Lady Bell herself in setting up the town's Winter Garden to gauge a further strand of elite philanthropic and civilising influence. The Winter Garden offered, at low cost, warmth, music, a library and games for the workmen and (theoretically his family) to escape to rather than retire to the public house commonly associated with many of the town's problems.



**Figure 11: The Winter Garden, Middlesbrough, courtesy of Teesside Archives**

Certainly the significance of the Winter Garden at times of unemployment was not lost upon those interviewed by Nicholas' in her study of the social effects of unemployment on Teesside during the interwar period, the Winter Garden being amongst those

organisations most frequently mentioned by the participants.<sup>528</sup> Partly run by Lady Bell and Lady Dorman, the wives of the two key figures of this research, the Winter Garden can be seen as elites pursuing a civilising mission along the lines of what Thompson describes as 'movements of opinion in the upper and middle classes operating through patronage...to control, regulate, or suppress all manner of things from drink to Saint Monday'.<sup>529</sup>

The Winter Garden catered for thousands of customers per day at its heyday, and even as figures declined as alternative forms of leisure such as the picture house emerged, the Winter Garden still accommodated for significant numbers of the town's population, catering for between 600-900 persons per day in 1922.<sup>530</sup> What is perhaps most significant in terms of the current study is the nature of the financial basis for the Winter Garden. Whilst it may be Florence Bell's name most closely associated with the Winter Garden, the importance of the financial contribution of her husband cannot be overstated, Hugh Bell's £100 a year recorded contribution consistently making up a quarter and at one point a third of annual subscriptions.<sup>531</sup> The Winter Garden projects also narrowed the spatial divide of the elites from the masses by not only bringing the (semi) rural based elites to Middlesbrough, but also in the opening up of country houses and estates to this urban institution. Grey Towers, the home of Sir Arthur Dorman and Lady Dorman, had held events for employers in its grounds on several occasions. The Guild of Help too visited the home, the Mother's Club having been invited by Miss Dorman, with Lady Dorman taking a hands-on role throughout the day.

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<sup>528</sup> Nicholas, *The Social Effects of Unemployment*, p.174

<sup>529</sup> Thompson, F.M.L. 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *Economic History Review*, May 1981, p.200

<sup>530</sup> NEDG, 23 November 1922

<sup>531</sup> Middlesbrough Winter Garden, Annual Reports

SUBSCRIPTIONS.							
			£	s.	d.		£ s. d.
3 years paid.	Anonymous, "H.S."	...	3	0	0	1 year paid.	Hanson, Brown & Co. ...
2 " "	" " "A.M."	...	2	2	0	1 " "	Harkess, William ...
1 " "	" " "B.O."	...	0	2	6	1 " "	Hatfield, Thomas ...
2 " "	" " A well wisher	...	0	5	0	1 " "	Headlam, Rev. Morley ...
1 " "	Bell, Sir Hugh, Bart.	...	100	0	0	1 " "	Hedley, Dr. John & Mrs ...
1 " "	Bell, Miss G. L.	...	5	0	0	1 " "	Henderson, G. J. ...
1 " "	Bell, Maurice L.	...	10	0	0	1 " "	Hinton, Amos ...
1 " "	Bell, H. L.	...	5	0	0	1 " "	Hood, Christopher...
1 " "	Bedford, Miss G. M.	...	2	2	0	1 " "	Jones, Greville ...
1 " "	Benjamin, H.	...	1	1	0	1 " "	Jacks, William & Co. ...
1 " "	Brackenbury, Walter	...	1	1	0	1 " "	Johnson, Walter ...
1 " "	Bruce, W. J.	...	2	2	0	1 " "	Johnson, W. L. ...
1 " "	Byrne, James	...	5	0	0	1 " "	John, Edward T. ...
1 " "	Bolckow, Vaughan & Co. Ltd.	...	20	0	0	1 " "	Kirby, R. L. ...
1 " "	Bowes-Wilson, G. H.	...	1	1	0	1 " "	Knaggs, W. T. ...
1 " "	Constantine, Joseph	...	10	0	0	1 " "	Keel, William ...
1 " "	Cooper, Arthur	...	5	5	0	2 " "	Lofts, J. W. ...
1 " "	Corbett, Felix	...	1	1	0	1 " "	Livingstone, J. & Sons ...
1 " "	Craggs, W. Colborne	...	0	10	6	1 " "	Linthorpe-Dinsdale Smelting Co. Ltd.
1 " "	Dales, Rev. J. W.	...	1	1	0	1 " "	Macfarlane, James ...
1 " "	Dawson, Edward	...	5	0	0	1 " "	McKinlay, A. ...
1 " "	Dent, T. Roddam	...	5	5	0	1 " "	Middleton & Co. Ltd. ...
1 " "	Dickie, Dr. W. S. & Mrs.	...	1	1	0	1 " "	Moody, C. ...
1 " "	Dorman, Charles	...	5	0	0	3 " "	Mossrop, Alfred M. ...
1 " "	Dorman, A. J.	...	25	0	0	1 " "	Morton, Sydney E. ...
1 " "	Dorman, A., Junr.	...	1	1	0	1 " "	Morgan, E. D. ...
3 " "	Dyson, Frederick	...	6	6	0	1 " "	Normanby Iron Works, Ltd. ...
						1 " "	North Eastern Daily Gazette ...

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**Figure 12: Extract of the Subscription List for the Winter Garden in its first year in operation, 1907 (M.R.L)**

It can be argued the Winter Garden represented a means by which the civilising ideals of Bell, and the wider middle classes, were imposed upon the town's working populous that made use of the facility. Beer was banned, gambling prohibited and the Gardens policed by turnstile operators, assistants and visits of the town's constabulary. However, this is too simplistic an argument. As is evidenced by instances of dealing with rule breaking, recorded in the annual reports, the ideals and realities of the Winter Garden were in conflict and the facility was a contested terrain. Moreover, it is worth noting that whilst the number of users consistently exceeded the 10,000 mark, the exact figures were subject to fluctuation owing to external factors, 1912 representing a key period when the appeal of the Moving Picture House, the town possessing eight such facilities, coupled with that

year's strike as factors tempering the attendance figures.<sup>532</sup> Nevertheless, the Winter Garden importance in terms of this study should not be underestimated in the wider corpus of bodies involved with addressing social distress, a point evidenced in its provision of food and shelter for those rendered almost destitute by the 1912 Coal Strike, in total providing some 5,811 meals.<sup>533</sup>

### **The Lilian Dorman Girls' Club**

Following in the footsteps of Hollis' emphasis on the activities in the mechanisms of late Victorian municipal life, Hinton has argued that the later nineteenth century was a period when women were increasingly prominent in philanthropic activity, in doing so compensating for the withdrawal of men from public life through 'a feminization of paternalism' involving the wives, daughters and unmarried sisters of the elite.<sup>534</sup> These patterns of continued engagement beyond the earlier generation, masculine involvement were in evident in the work of the Lilian Dorman Girls' Club.<sup>535</sup> The hierarchy of the club is significant in that Sir Arthur Dorman's daughter, Lilian Dorman, was Club President and Mrs Ennis (wife of Dorman Long Director Lawrence Ennis) and Mrs Gjers from the Gjers family of the Gjers and Mills iron company that founded Ayresome Ironworks in 1870, were both committee members.<sup>536</sup> A hands on approach by Lilian Dorman within the organisation is also evident, the club 'extremely fortunate in having the close and constant attention of its President, whose help is given in so many ways', including paying the

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<sup>532</sup> Middlesbrough Winter Garden, Annual Report 1911-1912, p.6

<sup>533</sup> Middlesbrough Winter Garden, Annual Report 1911-1912, p.8

<sup>534</sup> Hinton, J. *Women, Social Leadership, and the Second World War: Continuities of Class* (Oxford, 2002), p.38

<sup>535</sup> The reports of the club are scarce, the only surviving report being the Annual Report 1927-1928 from which many of the information and conclusions here presented are drawn from.

<sup>536</sup> 'The Lilian Dorman Girls' Club, Annual Report 1927-1928'(hereafter LDGC), MRL, p.ii

salary of the assistant worker out of her own pocket and gifts to sick members and useful domestic articles.<sup>537</sup>

The familial links of the club, as with Lady Bell's Winter Garden, are all too apparent in the surviving Annual Report for 1927-28. The club extended its congratulations to Sir Arthur Dorman on his company's construction of the Tyne Bridge, expressed its gratitude for the 'extra donation of £100 which has saved us [the club] from financial embarrassment' and offered thanks to the 'managers, officials and workers of Dorman, Long, for their great interest and practical help'.<sup>538</sup> Thus, as with Hugh Bell's aforementioned significant contribution to his wife's Winter Garden, the steel magnate's financial muscle was again fundamental in the continued work and even survival of the female-fronted institution. In fact, Dorman family subscriptions and donations made up the majority of donations to the club during the year. Of the £221.6.0 received, Sir Arthur Dorman contributed £110 (the £100 special donation and £10 annual subscription), Miss Dorman £10, Lady Dorman £5, Charles Dorman £5 and Mrs C. Bolckow, daughter of Sir Arthur who married Carl Bolckow in 1900, £5, making the recorded financial contributions of the immediate Dorman family £135, over 60% of the total received.<sup>539</sup>

One of the key points to arise from the surviving report is of the club's Mother's Club to Grey Towers, the Dorman family suburban home some five miles from Middlesbrough's industrial milieu. The 'kind and gracious reception of every member (including babies) by Lady Dorman'<sup>540</sup>, as well as her gifts to the club of china and jumble serve to illustrate the truly familial overtones of the club. More importantly, in inviting the club into their own home and personally interacting with the said visitors, the spatial divide between the

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<sup>537</sup> LDGC, pp.3-5

<sup>538</sup> LDGC, p.3

<sup>539</sup> LDGC, p.7. Other industrialist (or family) contributions included £5 from Francis Samuelson, £2.2.0 from Mrs Bolckow and £1.1.0 from Mrs Giers O.B.E.

<sup>540</sup> LDGC, p.5

philanthropic Dormans and their subjects was eroded, the personal and private boundaries of Middlesbrough's industrial elite significantly blurred.

## **Dorman Museum**

The opening of the Dorman Memorial Museum in 1904 marked arguably the second most notable contribution of an individual in providing cultural and leisure space in the town behind the neighbouring Albert Park donated by Henry Bolckow in 1868. Furthermore the Dorman Memorial Museum was only the second institution to bear the name of a given individual from the town's elites (the first was the Hugh Bell School), and the first that owed its existence to individual donations, albeit following initiatives underway by 1883 with the establishment of a sub-committee to establish a museum. Hill has pointed to how large donations such as that made by Dorman can be explained by a variety of motives that overall reflected 'a way of making a mark on the urban fabric, of leaving one's name attached to a grand and imposing civic building that was moreover a storehouse of knowledge' and this was certainly the case with the Dorman Museum which remains the main museum in Middlesbrough and the major legacy remaining of the Dorman family.<sup>541</sup>

The predecessors to the Dorman Museum had emerged in 1884 in the form of a small building in the town's Zetland Road provided by Sir Lowthian Bell, followed by five rooms donated by the Streets Committee in 1889. It was the donation of a large collection of bird specimens gifted to the inadequate museum space that prompted Arthur J. Dorman in 1901 to offer to the town a natural history museum to house the collection consisting of

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<sup>541</sup> Hill, *English Public Museums*, p.60



some 800 birds.<sup>542</sup> The Dorman Memorial was formally opened with a grand ceremony on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1904, fittingly by Colonel Hoole, Colonel in Chief of the Yorkshire Regiment, in front of thousands of dignitaries and members of the public. However, the event was very much a Dorman family affair, the *Northern Star* recording the presence of the Mayor, Charles Dorman, A.J. Dorman and Mrs Dorman and Miss Dorman, alongside representatives of the Library and Museum Committee led by Alderman Hugh Bell.<sup>543</sup> Before Hoole had opened the museum, A.J. Dorman presented the deeds to his son Charles Dorman in the most incestuous displays of civic ceremony, with business partner Hugh Bell then moving a vote of thanks to the donor for the institution, estimated to have cost the steel magnate between £10,000 and £15,000.<sup>544</sup>



**Figure 13: Donor Arthur J. Dorman, Colonel Hoole and Mayor Charles Dorman at the opening ceremony of the Dorman Museum, July 1904**

<sup>542</sup> *Northern Echo*, 28 June 1934

<sup>543</sup> *Northern Star*, 2 July 1904

<sup>544</sup> *NEDG*, 2 July 1904



The Dorman Museum performed an important function in providing a vital gift to Middlesbrough that represented a physical embodiment of the expansion of cultural provision. Hill, in her study of the culture and class of late Victorian and Edwardian public museums, has noted how 'a large employer could overcome the potential anonymity of his employees by an energetic programme of activities designed to build a relationship between the owner and his workers, as well as encouraging a moral lifestyle among them'.<sup>545</sup> The praise afforded to Dorman on the commissioning of the museum project would suggest the patronage did little to damage the standing of the Dorman Museum. In addressing the crowd the donor presented the museum as having been built for a number of reasons beyond the memory of his son and those servicemen who had died, the *Northern Eastern Daily Gazette* reporting how

There was another reason which had influenced him [Dorman], which was that he thought it a very fitting opportunity to make some return to Middlesbrough for what Middlesbrough had done for him...the museum was not intended solely as an object of interest to big game shooters and lovers of animals.<sup>546</sup>

Arthur J. Dorman's patronage in the donation of the Dorman Memorial Museum was consistent with those patterns elsewhere observed by Hill of many cases where 'it was industrial or commercial wealth that was poured in fairly large amounts into new museums and galleries', pointing to the important and determining role of the support of manufacturers and merchants in the development of museums across the north including Liverpool, Preston and Sheffield.<sup>547</sup> Moreover, the gift of the memorial museum can be seen as exemplifying the practice of 'members of the middle-class male elite...[using] civic institutions as an extension of their own social arena, for mutual appreciation and

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<sup>545</sup> Hill, K. *Class and Culture in English Public Museums, 1850-1914* (Aldershot, 2005), p.25

<sup>546</sup> *NEDG*, 2 July 1904

<sup>547</sup> Hill, *English Public Museums*, p.45

convenience, and to consolidate their own class or group identity'.<sup>548</sup> The father and son act alongside the voting of thanks by Bell Brothers' Hugh Bell could not have embodied these ideals any more than displayed.

As well as reflecting the important, multifaceted role of the Dormans in contributing to the urban fabric of Middlesbrough, the new museum also reflected an aspect of the private leisure activities of George Lockwood Dorman to whose memory (alongside those other members of his regiment who died during service during the Boer War) the grand institution was devoted. The son of Arthur J, Dorman had been 'an aspiring young naturalist and had amassed a valuable collection of shells and ethnographical material from Australia, Africa and specific during his short life'.<sup>549</sup> The early museum collections also reflected the interests of other leading figures in the region, the vast collection of animals Sir Alfred Edward Pease had shot on expedition in Africa in 1900-1901 and his offer to donate these to Middlesbrough's modest town hall based museum acting as a spur to develop the larger institution. Not to be outdone, the Bell family were also represented in a collection of vases, lamps, Arabian tiles and coins gathered by Gertrude Bell donated to the museum by her step-sister Lady Richmond.

Hill has pointed to how large donations such as that made by Dorman can be explained by a variety of motives that overall reflected 'a way of making a mark on the urban fabric, of leaving one's name attached to a grand and imposing civic building that was moreover a storehouse of knowledge'.<sup>550</sup> As the remaining landmark bearing the Dorman name in Middlesbrough today, this theory seems to bear fruit and the museum continues to mark

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<sup>548</sup> Hill, K. "Thoroughly imbued with the spirit of ancient Greece: symbolism and space in Victorian civic culture' in A. Kidd, A. and D. Nichols, (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999), p.106

<sup>549</sup> 'The History of the Dorman Museum', permanent exhibition, Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough

<sup>550</sup> Hill, *English Public Museums*, p.60

its ties with the family, with Sir Philip Dorman today serving as the institution's Life Protector.

### **Middlesbrough Public Library**

The establishment and opening of the Carnegie supported Middlesbrough Public Library in 1912 reflected the role individual industrialists contributions made to wider educational initiatives that were coordinated by the municipality. As already discussed, through co-option of the steel magnate A.J. Dorman onto the Public Library and Museum Committee of 1912, the industrialist interests were formally represented in the organisation of the establishment of the new library in the heart of the town's Victoria Square. Yet individual contributions of local industrialists played an important role in the foundation of the library alongside the grand gesture of £15,000 for the new library made by the Scottish-American steel magnate. Most notably, Sir Hugh Bell was a major benefactor, alongside the shopkeeper Amos Hinton, in supplying the land on which Middlesbrough's newest civilising institution would stand.<sup>551</sup> Subsequent donations by Amos Hinton on Dunning Street ensured that construction of the building was able to go ahead in a move that reflected the prominence, capital and influence of both the shopkeeper and the steel magnate in the successful completion of the scheme, alongside further donations from firms including Bolckow Vaughan, Dorman Long, the North Eastern Steel Company and Sir Bernhard Samuelson.

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<sup>551</sup> Souvenir Guide of the Opening of Middlesbrough Public Library, p.9

## Conclusion: The impact of philanthropy

The role of the steel magnates in philanthropic activity is clearly evident both in the firm level giving mechanisms and through individual zeal. Yet the impact of such charity is difficult to quantify. In his study of the Black Country Trainor has stressed

Conclusions about the overall effect of local philanthropy on social relations must be speculative...as emphasised by some recent historians, its limitations were many and serious. Yet other commentators have noted the possibility that voluntary activities could produce significant emollient effects. Philanthropy can reinforce benign uses of middle-class wealth, reduce points of conflict between middle-class and working-class people, help channel the latter's aspirations as subscribers, and demonstrate the concerns of the upper orders for social problems. It can also provide a way to redistribute income without altering the social structure.<sup>552</sup>

The same conclusions might be made here of Middlesbrough's steel magnates philanthropic pursuits and affiliations, with the impact, reach and positive or negative benefits difficult to gauge with few sources remaining beyond the newspaper reports and surviving annual reports. Yet, it would seem safe to assert that whether the organisations were as successful as the magnates had hoped, in attaching their names to subscription lists and building grand museums in the town, there was a clear visibility of an elite willing to and wanting to be seen as exercising noblesse oblige in the communities made up of their workers and their families.

Moreover, from the case studies focused upon, it is evident that the mechanisms of familial solidarity and arguably nepotism played an important role in the success, and very

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<sup>552</sup> Trainor, *Black Country Elites*, p.351

survival, of those individual initiatives fronted by Lady Bell and Lilian Dorman. Moreover the type of philanthropic activity that emerged to respond to the concerns of the middle-classes can also be seen to have evolved over time, combining the mixed economy of welfare evident in the activities of the Middlesbrough Guild of Help. Towards the end of the period we can also see that actions that might be concerned with addressing issues of poverty and distress have been reduced, although not entirely displaced, reflecting what might reflect the declining power that could be executed through philanthropic networks in shaping day-to-day urban life.

## Chapter 7: The culture and residential patterns of elite engagement

The cultural and private pursuits of Middlesbrough's steel magnates are arguably those areas of the industrial elites' activities that are most overlooked, yet there is much that can be gleaned from these elements of elite engagement and potentially provide a window into the lives of them beyond the town. The role of Middlesbrough's steel magnates in the public culture of the manufacturing town in terms of numerical representation declined in line with their depleted role in the council and in holding public offices. The 1881 Jubilee celebrations provide a useful starting point for gauging the prominence of the manufacturers in the opening years of this study. The unveiling of the statue of Henry Bolckow in the shadow of the Royal Exchange that he had helped found was the first public erection of one of the industrialists and leading figures of the town and symbolised the esteem and mutual respect in which Bolckow was held. Yet, both the jubilee centrepiece tribute and the erection of a statue of Vaughan three years later in 1884, also served as very visible, grand reminders that changes were afoot. The Middlesbrough ironmasters to which the town had looked to as civic and parliamentary leaders, employers and patrons could no longer be called upon for leadership, guidance or support. One of the key issues highlighted in this chapter is that of space and whilst it is concerned with associational and cultural interactions in the urban sphere, the wider concern here is in looking to the allegedly 'gentrified', rural facing lifestyles adopted by the steel magnates in their country residences in order to dismantle ideas that residential withdrawal reflected a declining interest in and reject of, the manufacturing town. In doing so the chapter looks beyond the cultural environment of 'clubland'<sup>553</sup> and instead looks at how far the activities beyond the town reflected 'elite withdrawal'. That is not to say that it is not useful to look to organisations such as the Cleveland Club, Middlesbrough-based

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<sup>553</sup> Gunn, *Public Culture*, 28-29; Doyle, *Urban Politics and Space*, 10

gentleman's club with its '400 members who were mainly manufacturers, merchants and professionals', many of whom lived on the town's outskirts and further afield yet still pursued cultural interests in the heart of Middlesbrough's commercial district.<sup>554</sup> Indeed, their membership and use of the library, bar and billiards room or participation in fundraisers, banquets, testimonials and balls for members is a key arena of public culture in the manufacturing town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>555</sup> In fact, extensive local press coverage of events such as the club's annual ball as well as other aspects of elite urban culture in which the steel magnates continued to engage throughout the period of this study are all illustrations of distinct spheres operating at the heart of urban society.<sup>556</sup>

The decision to look beyond the industrial elites' cultural interactions, connections and patronage in the urban sphere is a result of two key reasons. Firstly, through clearly illustrating the manifold events, initiatives and organisations with which the steel magnates and their families were connected, this thesis has already shown a continued presence in and shaping of the urban arena. Secondly, and most importantly, in looking beyond the town and to the country houses of the steel magnates, the chapter contributes to an area of which assumptions have been made as oppositional to interaction with Middlesbrough have been made. In exploring ways in which these local actors interact across apparent spatial urban-rural dichotomies, the chapter effectively suggests that concerns at, and historical overemphasis on the implications of, changing residential patterns of the steel magnates are misplaced. Moreover, it is shown that these residences beyond the smoke of the manufacturing town in fact played a key role in blurring boundaries between the

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<sup>554</sup> Yasumoto, *Victorian Ironopolis*, p.48; Lillie, *Middlesbrough*, pp.108-109

<sup>555</sup> 'Cleveland Club Subscription Book', TA, U/CLB 5/2; 'Cleveland Club Minute Book No.1', TA, U/CLB 1/1, 299; 'Cleveland Club Minute Book No. 4', TA, U/CLB 1/4, 60; *NEDG*, 7 November 1889; Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society & Politics: The culture of the factory in later Victorian England* (New Brunswick, 1980), p.283

<sup>556</sup> Gunn, *Public Culture*, p.89; *NEDG*, 29 January 1872. For a more detailed discussion of Middlesbrough elite's leisure pursuits see Budd, 'The Growth of an Urban Sporting Culture'.

rural idyll and the Ironopolis, with transport developments and elite-led patronage bridging the geographical spatial divide.

### **Cultural and private pursuits beyond Middlesbrough and its hinterland: Spatial withdrawal and alignment with decline**

It was impossible for Middlesbrough to preserve its mid-Victorian character...there were many signs that the will to control of the ironmasters was being blunted as they followed the pattern of other English businessmen and chose to live in the country rather than the town. Henry Bolckow, who in his early days in Middlesbrough who had lived in Cleveland Street within five minutes' walk of the old market, himself moved to Marton Hall...John Vaughan, who died in 1868, long before the exodus was far advanced lived in Gunnergate Hall.<sup>557</sup>

Practically all the creators of Middlesbrough – Bolckow, Vaughan, Lowthian Bell, and Pease – built country houses in the vicinity but away from the smoke of their blast furnaces, Bell throwing in one for his daughter as well for good measure.<sup>558</sup>

In histories of the manufacturing magnates and the urban middle class more generally, the gentrification of the elite through displacement from the bustling towns and cities has been aligned with the manufacturers departing from the manufacturing towns where their forbearers resided and instead taking up residence beyond the smoke of their factories, foundries and furnaces. In particular, the alignment of desiring and adopting a countryside, rural facing existence has been linked to the decline in elite participation in the towns and cities that underpinned the industrialists' very prosperity. Along with the observations of Briggs and Thompson cited above, Wiener has aligned this phenomenon

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<sup>557</sup> Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, pp.257-258

<sup>558</sup> Thompson, F.M.L. *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain* (London, 1988), p.162



as reflecting the 'decline in the industrial spirit' levelled at the captains of industry during our period.

As in manufacturing towns up and down the length and breadth of Victorian Britain, Middlesbrough's industrialists resided in increasingly impressive residences as their wealth increased as houses became larger and more extravagant as the capitalists accumulated their fortunes. The Bell family could boast of abodes such as the Philip Webb designed New Washington Hall and Rounton Grange, whilst earlier Henry Bolckow had the magnificent Marton Hall mansion constructed several miles from Middlesbrough and his business partner the new country house of Gunnergate Hall.

From the early examples of the founding fathers of the iron industry in Middlesbrough to the steel manufacturers that followed, the country house was very much the tangible symbol of the businessman excelling and at his most grandiose, flamboyant and even excessive. The industrialists' country house was the most visible and symbolic departure from the city with allusion to mimicking the gentry and even castle building as a king of industry. Undoubtedly, the large scale estates and specifically designed residences were impressive, lavish structures far removed even from the larger residences that emerged to the south of Middlesbrough's central manufacturing area along the Tees from the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>559</sup>

Yet as the above quotations from Briggs and Thompson indicate, the connotations, motives, benefits and extent of the changing residential patterns of industrialists from the

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<sup>559</sup> Stephenson, P. *The Grove Hill Aristocracy* (Middlesbrough, 2003)

1860s can be attributed to numerous factors. The alignment of country facing living with an elite no longer concerned with the manufacturing town too is difficult to sustain under closer scrutiny. Whilst Briggs emphasises the negative implications this posed for day-to-day interactions with urban life, Thompson alludes that whilst escaping 'from the smoke of their blast furnaces', these homes still looked to urban life rather than turning their backs on it. The fact that these country and semi-rural homes were built 'in the vicinity' suggests that proximity to the manufacturing town was as important as escaping its pollution for the captains of industry who, it will be shown, had no intention of abandoning the town.

It is important to start this exploration by looking to the new places of residence established by Briggs' Bolckow and Vaughan archetypes, considering what their location and character might tell us about their implications for urban engagement. Having established the shifting residential patterns of Middlesbrough manufacturing's founding fathers, attention then turned chiefly to the estates of the Bell and Dorman families with different origins, political values and economic viewpoints to one another, yet dynasties united in business interests (if not ideals) and philanthropic ventures.

Pursuing the key question of the evolving relationship of steel magnates with Middlesbrough during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the inner and outer-suburban sphere as sites of 'withdrawal' or 'seclusion' from the manufacturing town and paradoxically as fluid, permeable arenas that combined urban and non-urban ideals and activities, the blurred boundaries of the public vs. private dichotomy will be illustrated. It should of course be remembered that despite the time-consuming nature of the multitude of (often overlapping) roles industrialists undertook as councillors, aldermen, JPs, MPs, presidents, chairmen, patrons, directors and employers, the private household and the cultural pursuits outside of these commitments played an important role in, and occupied a lot of time in the lives of Middlesbrough's steel magnates. It is perhaps unsurprising that

amidst building manufacturing empires, representing the town in the House of Commons, gifting to the town its first park or opening its main museum that the importance of what the industrialist did away from this arena seems somewhat insignificant and receives scant attention. Certainly, the impact on the wider population and business world of Arthur Dorman going hunting, Hugh Bell heading to the Cleveland Literary and Philosophical Society to give a talk on visits to Africa, or Bell Brothers' Walter Johnson being followed at the crease by Albert de Lande Long in the Cleveland Club's annual Married versus Single cricket game, is seemingly minimal.<sup>560</sup>

The difficulties in researching the private and semi-private activities of the elite, which by their very nature generate little archival material, or at least little deemed worthy of retaining, is problematic. The fact the sources used for this chapter have included private family collections and scant newspaper cuttings highlights the difficulties historians encounter when attempting to carry out such this type of research. This might explain the lack of work on the private life and cultural pursuits of Middlesbrough's steel magnates beyond the town.<sup>561</sup>

The relative scarcity of work on the private and semi-private areas of the industrialist's life should not be seen as indicative of the unimportance of these arenas. Involvement in rural and urban clubs and societies, holidaying abroad, purchasing extensive libraries and art work housed in large country homes, playing chess with fellow employers and, crucially, identifying the spaces in which these activities occurred can all help inform urban

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<sup>560</sup> *Middlesbrough Weekly Gazette*, 14 July 1877

<sup>561</sup> Huggins, M.J. 'Leisure and Sport in Middlesbrough 1830-1914' in Pollard (ed.) *Middlesbrough*; Budd, C. "Strengthening that bond of sympathy which should exist between employers and men": The relationship between work and sport in Middlesbrough, c.1885-1914', unpublished paper presented at the Social History Society Annual Conference, University of Manchester, April 2011

historians of the industrialist's changing relationship with the town and the homogeneity of the elite.

The process of urban elites moving to the outskirts of the towns and cities that housed their works was by no means a new phenomenon of the nineteenth century. Rather, the practice boomed in mid- Victorian Britain, with research on industrial areas elsewhere having shown that from as early as the eighteenth century urban elites aped and resembled their rural "old" squirearchical counterparts in both substance and style by adopting rural patterns of behaviour.<sup>562</sup> Miskell, in her study of industrial elites in Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport and Swansea, observes a similar trend in south Wales, citing a local directory recording the 'many near villas and stately mansions' in the peripheries of industrial Newport in 1849.<sup>563</sup> Similarly, Gunn and Bell have observed in their study of the middle classes that this process was underway in early nineteenth century Yorkshire, with a number of industrialists' villas surrounding Leeds having been established by the 1830s, with this middle class residential shift having been completed by 1900 as 'part of a great trek outward which was to continue throughout much of the twentieth century'.<sup>564</sup> However, the argument that a change in residence went hand-in-hand with industrialists 'withdrawing from active participation in the urban and industrial scene' as a result of this spatial shift is difficult to quantify and nigh on impossible to prove.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Garrard, 'Urban Elites', p.583; Stone L. & J.C.F. Stone, *An Open Elite?: England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984)

<sup>563</sup> Miskell, L. "Many Neat Villas and Stately Mansions": Elite Residences in Urban South Wales, 1780-1880', in Dunne & Jannsens (eds.), *Living in the City*, p.223

<sup>564</sup> Gunn and Bell, *Middle Classes*, p.27

<sup>565</sup> Garrard, 'Urban Elites', p.583

Jon Lawrence's work on party politics in England has moved to question the validity of historians' 'particular emphasis on patterns of residence – arguing that from the 1880s the flight of the urban middle classes out to the new suburbs, meant that Britain's towns and cities become dominated by increasingly cohesive and homogenous working-class communities'.<sup>566</sup> Lawrence challenges the notion that such removal or absence from the manufacturing core produced communities ripe for the rise of new labour politics at the expense of social and political influence by the middle-class elites, noting that

Since non-residence had not proved an insuperable barrier to social and political influence in the nineteenth century, either for the gentry or the new industrial and commercial elites, it is hard to see why 'physical withdrawal' should be given such explanatory weight in the later period – here their [the historians'] argument needs a greater deal of elaboration.<sup>567</sup>

As Thompson has suggested in *The Rise of Respectable Society*, the 'new wealthy' were 'content with a lesser estate, in the 2,000-10,000 acre range, whose country house and country lifestyle probably had to be sustained by other profits or other investments'.<sup>568</sup> This theory is partially applicable to Middlesbrough's steel magnates, although during the period we do see a marked movement from medium-large 'new' residence to larger properties eschewing the urban and instead facing slightly towards the rural idyll.

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<sup>566</sup> Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, p.29

<sup>567</sup> Ibid, pp.29-30

<sup>568</sup> Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society*, p.160

The early movement out of the town of those two chief industrialists as part of a wider evolution of residential patterns in and beyond Middlesbrough supports these assertions. The early protagonists included Henry Bolckow and John Vaughan, who fit the bill in terms of the acreage of their estates. Bolckow, having lived as neighbour to Vaughan on Cleveland Street in the heart of the town, moved to Marton Hall in 1858, with Vaughan moving to Gunnergate Hall in the 1860s.<sup>569</sup> The fact that owing to business failure and excessive spending on Gunnergate Thomas Vaughan left to live in Whitby would also suggest that the cost of maintenance of such residence was interlinked to business success and extractable capital from it as suggested by Thompson. Middlesbrough's satirical magazine *The Dominie* of July 1876 seemingly depicted a hapless ironmaster, seemingly Thomas Vaughan, looking on to the manufacturing district from the partially completed extensions of Gunnergate Hall.<sup>570</sup> Asking 'When will it pass?', the publication declared

The district is under a cloud. Ironmasters, ironmerchants, workpeople, shopkeepers, - everybody, are under several clouds, and the one universal question is, "when will it pass?"...men of Middlesbrough, you are financially unsound from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, your bills are worthless paper, you have been building villas and carriages on quicksands.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> Sproule, A. *Lost Houses of Britain* (Newton Abbot, 1982); Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.257

<sup>570</sup> *The Dominie*, 29 July 1876

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid*



**Figure 14: “When will it pass?”, *The Dominie*, 29 July 1876**

William Innes Hopkins experienced similar failure as the ‘Tay Bridge Disaster’ in which his company was indicted, was declared bankrupt and departed his Grey Towers home in 1879.<sup>572</sup> The Nunthorpe-based property would go on to be the home of the Dorman family until the death of Sir Arthur Dorman in 1931. In terms of the Bell interest, the acquisition of property in Yorkshire can be seen to be part of the wider shift of Bell interests southwards. Just as Bell Brothers moved its interest southwards to the banks of the Tees, so too did the family from Washington Hall to Rounton, North Yorkshire.

The changing residential patterns touched upon above were part of wider changes in residential patterns occurring as a result of the increasing population in Middlesbrough during our period. Since the town’s early decades the suburbs on the southern periphery

<sup>572</sup> Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p.258; Hadfield, ‘Political and Social Attitudes’, pp.384-385; *NEDG*, 18 September 1876

of the town appealed to many beyond the industrialist elite by offering 'improved standards of health, an absence of urban stress, and an elevation of self-esteem through associations with landed gentry'.<sup>573</sup> As Polley observes

The withdrawal of the middle classes to what was then the outskirts of town, followed by the subsequent urban encroachment of these suburbs, exhibits a recognizable pattern. By the end of the century Middlesbrough boasted four residential suburbs: Southfield Villas from 1852, North Park Road from 1866, Grove Hill from the 1860s and Linthorpe from the 1870s.<sup>574</sup>

### **Residence of the Bell family**

The design and construction of a new country house from 1871-1876 at East Rounton on Isaac Lowthian Bell's 3,000 acre estate in North Yorkshire represented a marked shift towards a more rural idyll than had previously been in evidence amongst the Bells' estates.<sup>575</sup> At a cost of £32,880, funded by selling part of the chemical works at Washington, the project represented a significant outlay culminating in several estate buildings, farmworkers' cottages and a village school, far surpassing the £800 worth of improvements the architect Philip Webb was initially brought in to action.<sup>576</sup> Kirk has described Rounton Grange' as 'a beautiful house of a strength and vigour suited to the North East. It reflected the architectural heritage of the district...based on fourteenth Northern castles'.<sup>577</sup> The four-storey structure, with accompanying palm and green

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<sup>573</sup> Polley, L. 'Housing the Community, 1830-1940' in Pollard (ed.), *Middlesbrough*, p.163

<sup>574</sup> Polley, 'Housing the Community', pp.163-164

<sup>575</sup> Thompson, F.M.L. 'Desirable Properties: the Town and Country Connection in British Society since the late Eighteenth Century', *Historical Research*, Vol. 64, Issue 154, June 1991, p.165

<sup>576</sup> Kirk, *Pioneer of Arts*, pp.118-119

<sup>577</sup> Kirk, 'Philip Webb', TA, U/S 1433



houses for the pursuance of horticulture, illustrate that the trappings of the rural idyll where very much a part of the plan.<sup>578</sup>



**Figure 15: Bell's Rounton Grange, c.1915, *Country Life*,**

**<http://www.therountons.com/festival/gallery/bell/grange/grange.htm>**

As F.M.L Thompson has observed, albeit in referring to the *Rise of Suburbia* but equally as applicable to our industrialists, such a setting meant the household could distance itself 'from the outside world in its own private fortress'.<sup>579</sup> Undoubtedly, escapism from the negative aspects of the urban milieu made the kings and princes of industry retreat to these new castles on the outskirts of their manufacturing empires. However, we should not chase this analogy too much, as access to these homes and relation to the political, economic and philanthropic environments of Middlesbrough was much closer than the fortress concept allows. For instance, Grey Towers served as a venue for voluntary organisation outings, whilst Rounton Grange on numerous occasions doubled up as

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<sup>578</sup> Kirk, *Pioneer of Arts*, pp.120-121. See Miskell, 'Many Neat Villas', p.227 for similar trends amongst Wales' industrial elite.

<sup>579</sup> Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982), p.8 cited in Gunn and Bell, *Middle Classes*, p.29

accommodation and dining venue of dignitaries visiting the town, such as on the occasion of the Liberal John Morley's visit to the area in 1889.<sup>580</sup>

However, this move outwards should not be seen as the triumph of continued involvement in industry combined with the gentrified lifestyle of the very wealthy. Instead, Rounton Grange was furnished 'like the other Bell houses...in a comfortable rather than grand manner', with the 'comfortably dignified' William Morris carpets and walls nevertheless confirming the relative exclusivity of the Bell's private realm.<sup>581</sup> As with Red Barns, Rounton Grange was also well served for connections into Middlesbrough and elsewhere, the estate being a short distance from Trenholme Bar station.<sup>582</sup> Railways too played an important role for Bolckow at Marton Hall, Isaac Wilson at Nunthorpe and for Hopkins and Dorman at Grey Towers.<sup>583</sup> Even those properties that were some distance from Middlesbrough, such as the Bell's Red Barns property to the east at Redcar, was served by the Middlesbrough & Redcar Railway.

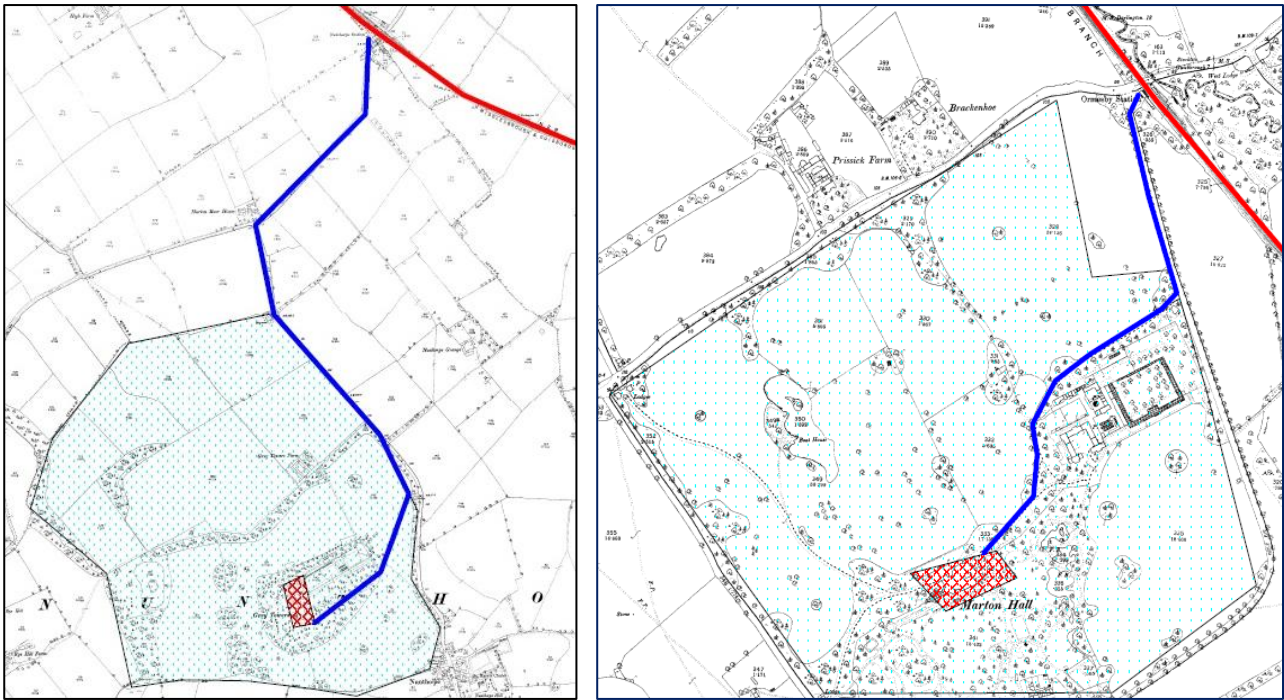
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<sup>580</sup> *NEDG*, 6 November 1889

<sup>581</sup> Kirk, 'Philip Webb', TA, U/S 1433; Kirk, *Pioneer of Arts*, p.124. The use of Morris' firm as decorators was also in evidence amidst Trainor's Black Country elites, the brewing Dobson family employing Morris' firm for their house which had few aspirations for aristocratic grandeur.

<sup>582</sup> 'The Journal of the Iron and Steel Institute', Volume 78, 1908 for instance notes how visitors to the property from the Institute travelled by motor char-a-bancs to the property from the station for a garden party held there for its members in October 1908.

<sup>583</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', pp.100-101



**Figure 16: Sir Arthur Dorman's Grey Towers (left) and Henry and Carl Bolckow's Marton Hall (right) c.1894-95 showing proximity to railway line (bottom) and road route (top right). (Middlesbrough Council)**

With the increasingly contested political terrain of the second half of the nineteenth century and an expansive middle class that headed out to the suburbs, unsurprisingly industrialists sought to reinforce their superiority in a town underpinned by early industrialist rather than aristocratic power. Expenditure and display of superior wealth in buying grand houses served to reaffirm their position at the top of the hierarchy. It is perhaps interesting that Garrard has pointed to the diminishing role of leading families resulting from their 'disappearing from the area', citing the example of the bewailed mayor of Salford who observed that the men 'who formerly dwelt amongst them, and took an interest in the lives of the people, had gone to live in the country', with another example from Bolton noting 'the growing disposition of men of means to leave the town'.<sup>584</sup>

<sup>584</sup> Garrard, 'Urban Elites', p.604

However, whilst the railway is seen as having facilitated this withdrawal that in turn impacted on participation, it can be argued that the benefits of these short-distance transport links rather than depriving Middlesbrough of industrial elites as leaders, had in fact ensured their continued involvement. The shift observed elsewhere of industrialists moving further away from the factories and works because of the smoke and pollution they emitted, can too be observed in Middlesbrough.<sup>585</sup> However, whether this can be seen as new attitudes or merely those long possessed but only manifesting themselves in the physical removal from the town is difficult to prove, particularly given the continued eagerness to affiliate to the town in various business and philanthropic guises. The idea of large employer families living on the outskirts and coming into town was by no means a trait limited to Middlesbrough, with numerous Manchester families residing some 12 miles outside from the city housing their business interests not preventing those engaged in business making the journey on a daily basis.<sup>586</sup>

Culturally, residing on the outskirts of the manufacturing town or industrial city offered the potential for a different lifestyle, affording the occupant of the country house the possibilities of a gentrified lifestyle of having acres of private land at his disposal, with countryside pursuits in close supply. Architecturally, the larger land on offer also allowed for the expansion of the physical and spatial household of the elite. The fluidity of access to and identity of the homes of Middlesbrough's steel magnates too had important residential and cultural connotations for its inhabitants.

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<sup>585</sup> Garrard, 'Urban Elites', p.605; Doyle, 'Industrial Pollution'

<sup>586</sup> Gunn, *Public Culture*, pp.72-73

Distance from Middlesbrough (miles)	% of active ironmasters			
Year	1853	1859	1875	1888
0 -2	57.4	23.7	28	30.18
2 -5 -	0	23.07	22.8	18.86
5-10	0	0	14.03	7.54
10-15	14.28	23.07	7.01	15.09
15 - 20	0	0	0	0
20 - 50	14.28	15.38	10.52	11.32
50+	14.28	15.38	17.54	16.98

**Figure 17: Distance of Ironmasters Residence from Middlesbrough and Council Representation**

However, the impact of this change in residential patterns should not be overemphasised in terms of excluding manufacturers from the urban environment. As Hadfield has shown for the earlier period, residence on the outskirts of Middlesbrough did not necessarily lead to the alienation of the individual from the town. In fact the proximity of many of the industrialist's houses built in the 1850s and 1860s were closely linked to the railway.<sup>587</sup> As Hadfield's statistics on the distance of the residences of the ironmasters present on the Town Council shows, there is little clear impact on urban engagement associated with increased distance from the Town Hall.

### Household culture

We have already seen the centrality that the household sphere played in terms of the industrialist families' conduct of philanthropic affairs in the town, in which the familial network provided both the basis of support and continued engagement into the mid-1930s,

<sup>587</sup> Hadfield, 'Political and Social Attitudes', p.100

as well as acting as one of the physical arenas in which involvement in boys and girls clubs, Sunday schools, the Guild of Help and Juvenile Organisations Committee. The homes of the elite too proved an incubator for the transferring of cultural norms and private pursuits from one generation to another. Moreover, it also often 'represented the focus for important elements of bourgeois sociability including dinners, parties, dancing and reading'.<sup>588</sup> Certainly such houses were connected to the railway infrastructure to facilitate such gatherings and this was an important apparatus in the social interactions of the elites through developing networks and often gaining attention of the local press.

### **Steel Magnates and involvement in the countryside: an extension of urban commitments?**

The Dorman's influence in industrial Middlesbrough was mirrored elsewhere in their patronage and shaping of Grey Towers' nearest villages, centred upon Nunthorpe which developed as an effective suburb of Middlesbrough by the early twentieth century.

The role of the magnate families in Nunthorpe was also evident at the turn of the century with Mrs Dorman opening the new village hall at Newby near Nunthorpe in December 1900. The event also saw her son Arthur Dorman and daughter Lilian Dorman join her on the platform, reflecting the wider familial engagement of the elites. The new hall provided 'some place other than that used for religious purposes where the people could gather together for dances, whist drives, and social evenings' and was set up after villagers 'approached Mr A.J. Dorman, who came to their rescue by giving the grand building in which they were assembled'.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Gunn, *Public Culture*, p.26

<sup>589</sup> NEDG, 17 December 1900

Mrs Dorman reinforced her family's role as patrons in the area, referring to 'the interest she had taken in the welfare of the people in the villages, she said it gave her joy to be of any service in brightening the lives of those around her. She had great pleasure in declaring that beautiful building open'.<sup>590</sup> Clearly, the sense of noblesse oblige in evidence through patronage of charities, institutions and provision in Middlesbrough extended beyond the town to the villagers on the outskirts of Middlesbrough.

Mr Arthur Dorman added to his mother's comments saying how

He was delighted to be there and to see such a fine building placed at the proposal for the purpose of recreation. He hoped that it would be the means of keeping young people together. He appealed to each one to try to make the place go. He gave them a little advice in appealing to them to keep to the villages instead of flying to the town.<sup>591</sup>

Mr Dorman's comments reflect the family's concerns exhibited elsewhere in their support of the Middlesbrough Juvenile Organisations' Committee and through support of Boys' and Girls' Clubs operating within Dorman Long and by Lilian Dorman, whilst his eagerness to discourage a 'flying to the town' points to an industrialist active in the manufacturing town yet keen to bestow the values of a rural existence.

Grey Towers was also used as a platform for supporting charitable and philanthropic causes directly connected to Middlesbrough and the surrounding villages. In August 1909 the Nunthorpe and Newby Schools Sports Day was hosted by the Dormans. A year later the Middlesbrough Medical Charities' Organization's Cyclists' Church Parade visited the estate in what was part of a developing trend in early twentieth century of urban

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<sup>590</sup> Ibid

<sup>591</sup> Ibid

organisations with an emphasis on 'the embrace of rural nostalgia',<sup>592</sup> the advertisement of the event noting how 'by kind permission of A.J. Dorman, Esq. J.P. the beautiful grounds will be open to the public' with a service taking place in the ground.<sup>593</sup>

The Golden Wedding celebrations of Sir Arthur Dorman and Lady Dorman in 1923 provide arguably the most spectacular of examples in connection to Middlesbrough of the blurred boundaries between the rural and the urban and the inextricable links the country houses had with the manufacturing town less than 6 miles away. The vast Golden Wedding celebrations in the grounds of Grey Towers on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1923 represented a coming together of the Dorman's as elite citizens engaging in patronage and mutual gratitude with the iron and steel workers attached to Dorman Long's firms beyond the urban environment of Middlesbrough.<sup>594</sup> With over 14,000 workers and their families from Middlesbrough heading to Grey Towers for a celebration in the grounds of the country house, the occasion reflected the ways in which elite residences acted as a site of patronage, performance, display of power and a space for the extension of industrial relations. The selection of newspaper cuttings, maps, invites, presentation ephemera and photographs held in the Dorman Museum collections provide a valuable insight into the landmark occasion and are worthy of further scrutiny here.

With the Dormans having spent the actual Golden Wedding Anniversary in Jamaica earlier that year, the event at Grey Towers was said to have been inspired by Sir Arthur upon returning from abroad having been 'so much touched by the spontaneity of the employees'

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<sup>592</sup> Dauntton, M. 'Introduction' in Dauntton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Urban Britain*, p.41

<sup>593</sup> Newspaper Cuttings Album, Dorman Museum, Dorman Family Collection

<sup>594</sup> Sir Arthur Dorman and Lady Dorman Golden Wedding, Dorman Museum, Dorman Family Collection



gift that he and Lady Dorman determined to show that they reciprocated the good feeling'.<sup>595</sup>

The gifts and accompanying gilded presentation letter that were presented to Sir Arthur and Lady Dorman reflected the esteem in which they were held:

The Officials, Staffs and Works Employees of the Associated Companies respectfully and most cordially congratulate you on the occasion of your Golden Wedding. As a token of the respect and esteem in which you are held, the accompanying gifts are presented in all sincerity for your gracious acceptance. At all times you have shewn by word and deed the greatest concern for the lives and welfare of all those connected with the Works, and it is with very deep gratitude and satisfaction that this opportunity is taken of testifying to the high appreciation of your many acts of benevolence and kindly consideration. Your thoughtfulness for others, your kindness of heart and never-failing courtesy have contributed much to the brightness and happiness of many lives, and these things are affectionately remembered at this time of celebration.<sup>596</sup>

The subsequent 'Garden Fete' was hailed in the press as a 'monster garden party', arguing only that the large garden party held by the Marquis and Marchioness of Londonderry at Seaham Hall a few years ago came close to the large scale of the Dorman's event.<sup>597</sup> Hundreds of stewards were employed from the works of Dorman Long and the bands of the firm and its allied companies performed for the guests. The grand event could boast refreshment tents, dancing on the bowling green, a fortune teller and

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<sup>595</sup> Golden Wedding, Dorman Museum, Dorman Family Collection

<sup>596</sup> Ibid

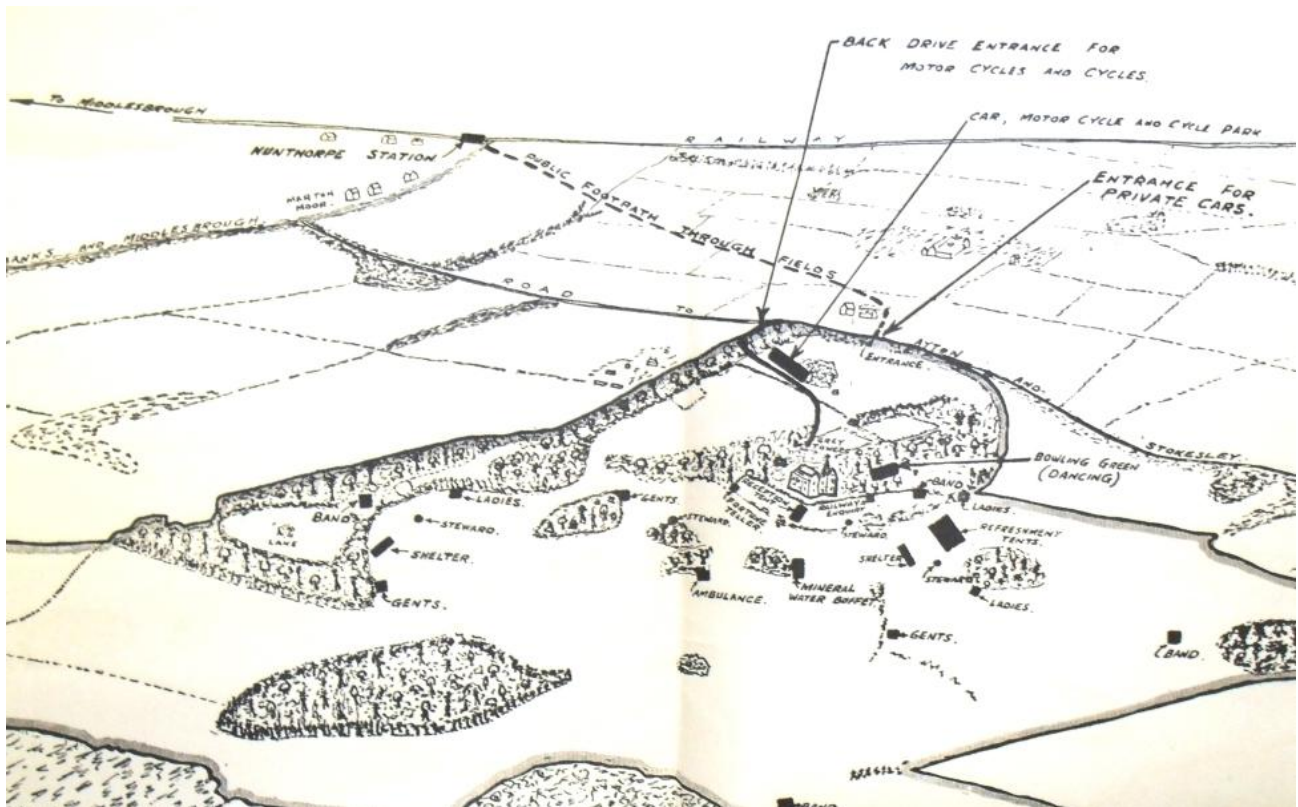
<sup>597</sup> Ibid

performances by the Dorman Long Male Voice Choir, Samuelson Concert Party, Redcar Works Band (composed of employees of Dorman Long) and Middlesbrough Prize Band. The press reported on how guests enjoyed 'the charm of the place, with the hills of Cleveland standing sentinel around,[which] made one forget that Middlesbrough, belching its yellow smoke, was only six miles behind'.<sup>598</sup> The event was said to have been very much a Dorman family affair with the likes of Charles Dorman, Arthur Dorman and Lilian Dorman circulating amongst the guests in a show of unity with the workmen and their families.

The notion of the spatial divide from the urban, industrial environment of the manufacturing town is also negated somewhat in the successful execution of plans to transport 14,000 guests from Middlesbrough to Grey Towers, albeit it was an arduous task that involved special arrangements by the LNER. Eighteen special train services to and from Middlesbrough were organised, with char-a-bancs provided for those less mobile between Nunthorpe Station and Grey Towers. However, it should be noted that this access to and from the town in this instance has been enhanced greatly by special railway provision and access to the estate is determined by the steel magnates.

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<sup>598</sup> Ibid



**Figure 18: Map of Grey Towers showing layout for the Golden Wedding celebration, August 1923<sup>599</sup>**

The Dorman's country house also served as a platform for the manufacturing elites to embrace the rural idyll, with Grey Towers also providing the meeting place of the Cleveland Foxhounds in November 1927, with the gathering chronicled in the local press with the hounds and members of the hunt pictured in front of Dorman's residence.<sup>600</sup> The Cleveland Hunt performed a key role in the social calendar of the area with the Dorman family playing an active role, with Charles Dorman one of the leading figures and having been muted as a successor to the retiring Master in 1921, served as Joint Master.<sup>601</sup> The affinity of urban Teesside towards the elite residence of Grey Towers was in evidence in the local press is reflective of the familiarity of the country house amongst the population of the area. Upon the mansion being put up for sale by auction, one newspaper article

<sup>599</sup> Ibid

<sup>600</sup> NEDG, 10 November 1927

<sup>601</sup> Boswell, *Business Policies in the Making*, ch.7; *Live Stock Journal*, Vol.94 (1921), p.549

leading with the headline 'A mansion in the market' declared 'few Teessiders will have learnt without a spark of regret that Grey Towers, the lovely home of the late Sir Arthur Dorman, is to pass almost immediately under the hammer...His chief delight was that others might see the place with his appreciative vision, and thousands of Tees-siders must have roamed the spacious lawns'.<sup>602</sup> The decline of the houses can be aligned with the dismantling of the structures that the Bells and Dormans had put in place as family dynasties, with the sale of Grey Towers in particular marking a decline in participation in the life of Middlesbrough with Lady Dorman and Lilian Dorman resultantly spending an increased amount of time at London residences.

### **The Dormans and the Nunthorpe Great War Memorial Unveiling**

The arrangements for unveilings and dedications were the responsibility of local elites, who acted through the war memorial committees. Their close association with, and influence on, memorial schemes and the messages they conveyed served to reinforce their centrality to a community. This was particularly evident at the unveilings where they both organised the event and took centre stage. Their influence stretched beyond the large civic ceremonies and can be detected in the smaller community schemes whose approach to unveiling mimicked their larger cousins.<sup>603</sup>

With the ongoing First World War centenary anniversary commemorations, it is interesting to explore the role the elites played in unveiling memorials as a duty that blurred their rural and urban identities. The establishment of the Great War Memorial in Nunthorpe, one of dozens that emerged in the towns and villages surrounding Middlesbrough memorialising the men who lost their lives during the conflict, is a useful indicator of the various facets of

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<sup>602</sup> Newspaper cutting dated 24 March 1931, Newspaper Cuttings Album, Dorman Museum, Dorman Family Collection

<sup>603</sup> Coss, 'First World War Memorials', p.168

the magnate families' interactions and role in patronage in their residential locales. The minutes of the first public meeting and subsequent Committee set up to arrange for a Nunthorpe memorial highlight the fundamental role played by Sir Arthur Dorman in the foundation of the scheme. The steel magnate chaired the first public meeting on the 15 September 1920 in the schoolroom stating that he 'thought all would unite in the feeling that there should be a memorial to the men of Nunthorpe and neighbourhood who had lost their lives in the defence of their country during the Great War and he would therefore propose the following resolution [the same]'.<sup>604</sup> J.J. Burton then proposed a motion that the memorial be in the form of a cross, with Charles Dorman seconding the motion then carried unanimously, before Sir Dorman proposed that the memorial be situated in 'the open space in front of the School, where it would stand out as an example to the children of future generations' with the magnate asserting that he would 'undertake to lay out the ground so that the surroundings are in keeping with the memorial'.<sup>605</sup>

The Committee consisted of a combination of local residents and the industrial family interest with Burton appointed chair and the membership including Charles Dorman alongside Head Teacher J.J. Leyland, Sub Postmaster J.E. Helm, Teacher Walter W. Lord, C.H. Angus, with A.C. Gravely, one time private secretary to Sir Joseph W Pease, as the Memorial Secretary.

The draft appeal for contributions was circulated following a resolution to launch the appeal at a Committee meeting in November 1920.<sup>606</sup> The circular detailed the plans of the Celtic Cross memorial and traced the Dorman's early role in the project, detailing Sir Arthur Dorman as Chair of the public meeting held to establish support for a memorial. On the back page of the document in tradition style, the subscriptions were listed with the

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<sup>604</sup> 'Nunthorpe Great War Memorial Minutes', 15 September 1920, NHGA

<sup>605</sup> Ibid

<sup>606</sup> Ibid, 18 November 1920

Dorman's the leading supporters. Alongside smaller subscriptions by the Angus (£3), Gravely (£5), Helm, Leyland and Lord families (all £1, 1s), the Dorman's are listed as the main financial contributors with Sir Arthur and Lady Dorman promising £50 towards the memories, Mr and Mrs Charles Dorman £25, an amount matched by Mr and Mrs J.J Burton.<sup>607</sup>

Despite the matter of the War Memorial having been delegated to the Committee, the question of the unveiling saw the honorific capital of Sir Arthur Dorman come to the fore with the Chairman having 'asked Sir Arthur Dorman to perform the opening ceremony but that he had expressed the opinion that it should be done by a soldier and he had suggested General Blair DSO who was in command of the force in this district in the latter part of the War and resident at Nunthorpe'.<sup>608</sup> With Blair unable to attend, Sir Arthur Dorman and J.J. Burton interviewed Sir Hugh Bell as Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding to undertake the role, who accepted the duty subject to the unveiling date taking place on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1921. With the date confirmed, all subscribers and every household in Nunthorpe received the printed Order of Service.<sup>609</sup>

Despite Sir Hugh Bell having appeared on the publicity as the man to unveil the Memorial, an accident prevented Bell's attendance and instead Sir Arthur Dorman assumed responsibility at the eleventh hour. The final accounts of the fund show Major and Mrs Bolckow (daughter of Sir Arthur Dorman) as major subscribers contributing £15, with the Dorman's overall donations amounting to a third of the total cost of the memorial, further reinforcing the important role played by the extended networks of industrialist families attached to the area.

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<sup>607</sup> 'Proposed Memorial to the Fallen at Nunthorpe, 1921', NHGA

<sup>608</sup> Ibid, 8 August 1921

<sup>609</sup> Ibid, 16 August 1921

## The Bells and war memorials

Sir Hugh Bell's links to war memorials beyond Middlesbrough differs to that of Sir Arthur Dorman, owing much to his wider county roles as Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding and High Sheriff of Durham, yet the active involvement in memorial schemes serves as a useful, if unusual, indicator of the magnates' activities attached to his rural or countryside facing interactions. Despite the wider demands on his fulfilling of unveiling duties stretching from Northallerton in the South to Washington in County Durham, Bell's activities beyond Middlesbrough can, to an extent, be seen as linked to his industrial as well as county interests.

Coss in her on First World War memorials and commemoration has contended that Sir Hugh Bell used the platform of the unveiling of the Washington War Memorial to deliver a 'politically motivated' speech 'calling for national unity in order to discourage industrial unrest'.<sup>610</sup> Certainly in asking that 'the comradeship which marked 1914 and the succeeding years would not be forgotten, and that they would work together to bring about a better state of feeling in social and industrial life than existed to-day', Bell's speech was laden with wider hopes for the future alongside aims at securing improved industrial relations in one of the mining districts supplying his manufacturing works.<sup>611</sup> In fact, in the June prior to the October 1922 unveiling, Bell was amongst the directors at Brunner

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<sup>610</sup> Coss, D. 'First World War Memorials, Commemoration and Community in North East England, 1918-1939', unpublished PhD thesis, Durham University, 2012, p.184.

<sup>611</sup> *Northern Echo*, 16 October 1922 cited in Coss, 'First World War Memorials', p.184. Another memorial which Bell unveiled was that for Haverton Hill and Port Clarence, situated in the latter amidst the heartland of the community the Bell family built in the shadow of their works on the north bank of the River Tees. The unveiling can be seen as continued involvement and expectation of Sir Hugh Bell's noblesse oblige as employer and patron of the community – given the proximity of Port Clarence to Middlesbrough and its links to the Middlesbrough industries such activity might be considered part of Bell's Middlesbrough industrial concerns rather than a separate concern to the manufacturing town.

Mond's annual meeting at which the 'trouble and expense of the coal stoppage' was aligned with reduced returns.<sup>612</sup>

Bell's county interests in unveiling the Yarm War Memorial reflected his wider role in the hinterland of Middlesbrough demanded by his county commitments, Bell declaring it a 'great pleasure that those who had conduct of the proceedings had been kind enough to invite me in my capacity of Lieutenant of the Riding to take a prominent part in the ceremony'.<sup>613</sup> The community war memorial unveiling and the industrialist families multifaceted connections to the wider scheme serves as a useful indicator of the steel magnate family's contribution in the communities on the peripheries of Middlesbrough during the 1920s.

Whilst the case can be made that had it not been for Blair's unavailability Dorman would not have led the unveiling, the fact that Bell and then Dorman were turned to in the absence of a suitably positioned military official reinforces their continued importance. In fact, it can be argued that as a major steel magnate and Freeman of the Borough, the Nunthorpe unveiling had as much gravitas in terms of associated dignitaries as the unveiling of Middlesbrough's major memorial – the Albert Park Cenotaph, which upon the failure of the Corporation failing to secure the services of Earl Haig instead turned to deputy mayor J.G. Pallister. The affiliation to the local area through industry can also be seen as important and reflective of wider trends both locally and further afield in cognate industries. Coss notes the example of numerous colliery managers, industrialists and their wives performing unveilings through the north east, including Mrs Dorman's unveiling of a memorial cottage at Ferryhill, site of Dorman Long's mining interests, Sir G.B. Hunter's unveiling of the memorial at Willington near his Wallsend shipyard and Mrs Hindson, wife

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<sup>612</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 19 June 1922

<sup>613</sup> 'North Yorkshire War Memorials – Yarm' <<http://www.ww1-yorkshires.org.uk/pdf-files/War%20Dead%20of%20Yarm.pdf>> [Accessed 01/10/2014]



of a Framwellgate Coal Company director, opening the Framwellgate Moor Community Centre.<sup>614</sup>

In the context of debates on elite withdrawal and participation into the interwar years, war memorial unveilings not under the direction of the municipality can be seen as a further extension and of patronage, one reflecting the familial and business networks of the Dorman, Bell and Pease families combining from conception to fruition.

### **Patronage of religious institutions**

The Dorman family played both an important role in establishing religious institutions in Nunthorpe in the early twentieth century. In the opening years of the 1900s, Methodist Sunday services were held in several of the local houses until 1911, when the Congregationalists built a new Church (the two would join together in sharing the building) in Rookwood Road, with Arthur J. Dorman laying the foundation stone on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1911.<sup>615</sup>

Amidst the outbreak of the Great War, Arthur Dorman's Grey Towers residence hosted a Garden Fete in July 1914 to help raise funds for the new church at Nunthorpe, with special hourly buses laid on from Middlesbrough to the Fete, with Dorman himself contributing a further £1,000 towards the cause.<sup>616</sup>

In 1924, Sir Arthur Dorman laid the foundation stone for St Mary's Church, with the church consecrated by the Archbishop of Durham in July 1926.<sup>617</sup> The Dorman's contribution to the church, spanning involvement in church organisation to financial support for its design

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<sup>614</sup> Coss, 'First World War Memorials', p.170

<sup>615</sup> English, S. *History of the Nunthorpe Methodist Church* (Nunthorpe: n.d.), p.1

<sup>616</sup> Menzies, *Great War Britain: Middlesbrough*

<sup>617</sup> Cleveland County Council, *Nunthorpe Parish Map: A Brief History and Local Footpaths* (Cleveland, n.d.)

and construction, is memorialised with a plaque above the belfry door noting 'The bells were erected in memory of the Dorman family'. Lady Dorman also donated panelled choir seating in 1932 in memory of her late husband. The graves in the churchyard too reflect the wider presence of local elite families in the area, with the monumental inscriptions recording memorialisations of Charles F.H. Bolckow (1874-1934) and Frances Mary Bolckow (1877-1935), Alfred Ormesby Cochrane (1850-1941), Charles Dorman (1876-1929) and his wife Audrey Maguerite (1884-1958), the former chairman of the Middlesbrough Chamber of Commerce J.J. Burton (1931) and Sir Arthur Dorman (1848-1931) and Lady Clara Dorman (1853-1933).<sup>618</sup>

The records of Grey Towers Cricket Club, digitised by the Nunthorpe History Group, also shed further light on the leisure activities of the matches played in the grounds. Amongst those on the subscription list of 1898 is Bedford Lockwood Dorman. The Dorman family too instigated the first Mothers' Union in Nunthorpe and this philanthropy should not be overlooked as a form of elite leisure.

In 1903 Dorman was the lead patron in establishing improved education provision in Nunthorpe, funding the new school and schoolhouse as Nunthorpe expanded. The old school, erected in a joint venture by Mr J. Richardson and ironmaster Isaac Wilson in 1855, had proven insufficient for the expanding population of Nunthorpe given its capacity of 35 children.<sup>619</sup>

### **Grey Towers and patronage after Sir Arthur Dorman's death**

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<sup>618</sup> Sampson, A. *The Parish of St Mary's, Nunthorpe: Monumental Inscriptions* (Cleveland, 1988)

<sup>619</sup> Bailey, E. 'The Ironmasters and New Nunthorpe', NHGA

King George V's Silver Jubilee in 1935 reflected a continued presence beyond Sir Arthur Dorman's death in philanthropic and honorific activity in Nunthorpe. The extensive programme of activity recorded in the 'Nunthorpe Celebrations Official Programme' recording Mrs Dorman as the donor of the Jubilee Medals which were presented to all children by Dorman herself on the very Polo Field her deceased brother-in-law Bedford Lockwood Dorman had trained during Cavalry practice over three decades earlier.<sup>620</sup> The widow of Charles Dorman, living at Rye Hill in Nunthorpe, was retrospectively noted for having 'made time to say a word...to we choir girls and boys at St. Mary's Church'.<sup>621</sup>

### **Lord of the Manor or urban industrialist?**

There are only a small number of oral history testimony and recorded memories of Nunthorpe during this study's period, with many pointing to the centrality of Sir Arthur Dorman in village life. George Gent, who resided in the village in the early part of the twentieth century, recalled how

All the people in the villages were employed by Mr Dorman (later to become Sir Arthur Dorman)...as lads we used to go bush-beating for the Dorman's on a Saturday. The area covering about a three mile radius of the village...after the shoot some of us went with the game carts...to Grey Towers where they had a special shed filled with blocks of ice.<sup>622</sup>

Other reminiscences of the Dormans in Nunthorpe in the form of the memories of V Bain-Myers recorded in the Nunthorpe History Group Archives, shed further light on the importance of the family as employers, in shaping the development of the village and

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<sup>620</sup> 'King George V Silver Jubilee Nunthorpe Celebrations: Official Programme, Monday 6th May 1935', Nunthorpe History Group Archive

<sup>621</sup> Purvis, H. 'Nunthorpe in 1933', *Nunthorpe History Group Newsletter (NHGN)*, No.7, July 2013, 6

<sup>622</sup> Gent, G. 'Nunthorpe Village as I remember it during the early part of the 20th Century', NHGA

through philanthropic works.<sup>623</sup> Recalling working on the Crathorne Grange nursery staff of Mr Arthur J. Dorman junior, the youngest of Sir Arthur Dorman's son, Bain-Myers described the friendliness of the Dormans towards her as employers and referred specifically to the Dorman's Golden Wedding Anniversary at Grey Towers as a 'wonderful time. The day was fine and there was much to enjoy – bands and entertainment. I was at Grey Towers with the children all the time, and I knew many people from my home town'.<sup>624</sup> The event thus not only reflected the links to Middlesbrough of the staff at Grey Towers, Crathorne Grange and later Kirklevington Grange, but also through Bain-Myers recognising guests at the event serves to highlight the breaking down of boundaries between the urban and the peripheries.

### **Elites and residence in Middlesbrough**

In the 'Ports of Middlesbrough, Stockton and the Hartlepoons' annual for 1920, the industrialist John F. Wilson contributed an article 'Reminiscences of Tees-side' and in referring to the development too alludes to the residential patterns of the earlier elites in Middlesbrough's early iron industry.<sup>625</sup> In it he gives a sense of the proximity to the works which residence beyond the borough boundaries prevented, reminiscing

Mr Henry Bolckow and Mr John Vaughan lived in two houses in Cleveland Street, opposite what is now the National Provincial and Union Bank. The driving engine at their works had a loud exhaust, like the barking of a dog – hence was known as "Bolckow's Bull Dog." - It was said that if it stopped barking at night, Mr Vaughan

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<sup>623</sup> Bain-Myers, V. 'Elizabeth – Working for the Dormans', *NHGA*

<sup>624</sup> Bain-Myers, 'Working for the Dormans'

<sup>625</sup> 'The Ports of Middlesbrough, Stockton and the Hartlepoons Annual 1920', TA, U.CLC/42

awoke up and trotted off down Cleveland, Durham and Commercial Street, to see what the matter was. Mr Isaac Wilson and Mr Edgar Gilkes lived in Sussex Street...and the principal shops were in and about the Market Place.<sup>626</sup>

Wilson's recollections provide an insight into contemporaneous associations between living and working in proximity to the works and shops of the early period of Middlesbrough's manufacturing boom and in doing so creates a sense of strong ties between manufacturer and manufacture. Proximity to business in this instance allowed the manufacturer to be on hand 24 hours a day to tend to his business interests, immersed in the sounds and sights of the works over which he presided.

Yet, as this chapter has shown, the residential patterns of Middlesbrough's steel magnates in an age of improved communications and transport should not be equated with withdrawal, but rather a reconfiguration of engagement. Moreover, the country residence acted as an extension of the elites' involvement in the towns through philanthropic activity, leisure and the reception of industrialist delegations such as the visit of the Iron and Steel Institute and royalty in the case of the opening of the Transporter Bridge when Prince Arthur of Connaught proceeded from Rounton Grange with Sir Hugh Bell.

Furthermore, as is evident in the multiple identities of the urban manufacturer, county representative and country squire exhibited in this chapter's assessment of Middlesbrough's steel magnates apparent gentrification and pursuit of the rural idyll, there is a need to recognise the co-existence of multiple identities. The adoption of one identity does not equate with the absolute abandonment of one, nor is there any evidence of any preference given to either rural or urban identities by the two chief figures in this study. Further exploration into the role of the country house's links to the urban sphere is likely to

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<sup>626</sup> Ibid

further reveal the dynamics and nuances between competing and complimentary activities exercised in spite, and because of, the manufacturers' country house residence.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

This study has argued that Middlesbrough's steel magnates' declining urban engagement and withdrawal from the manufacturing town has been exaggerated and focused too heavily on the narrow arena of urban government. In reassessing notions of decline it has been argued that through the plethora of institutions and spaces, Middlesbrough's steel magnates continued to engage with, and exercise influence in, the urban sphere. Leading with the Bell and Dorman dynasties' political, municipal, business, philanthropic and cultural activity, the industrial elite by means of the wider spheres of urban governance, continued participating in the life of the town and its habitants into the interwar years.

The focus on urban government centred upon municipal and parliamentary politics found in the early chapters of this thesis point to a continued engagement by Middlesbrough's steel magnates through the Council Chamber, representation in the House of Commons and through the mechanisms of local party associations and networks. Despite the declines in numerical municipal representation observed of Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester by Gunn, the importance of individual zest and active participation exhibited by the likes of Sir Hugh Bell and Charles Dorman and recognised in their mayoralties in the decade before the First World War reflect continued importance.<sup>627</sup> The importance in maintaining a grasp of the visual and symbolic register of civic life through a plethora of aldermanic roles and honorary positions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth manufacturing town also reflected the continued value associated with the participation of the steel magnates by the council and the citizens of Middlesbrough. Other offices that did not entail formal council participation but reflected municipal recognition of expertise, power and interest were still attracting steel magnates into the 1920s, sitting on the periphery between urban government and urban governance. The highest of these

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<sup>627</sup> Gunn, *Public Culture*, p.192

honours was in the Freedom of the Borough that was bestowed on Sir Lowthian Bell, Hugh Bell and Arthur J Dorman during the period of this study in recognition of their services to the town. The fact that Bell and Dorman were co-opted onto library and museum committees and later the Cook bi-centenary committee reflected the cultural capital associated with their affinity.

Beyond the local municipal arena, the party political activities of the Dormans and Bells during the period of this study did not represent absolute decline in the politics of Middlesbrough and instead was in a state of evolution and flux during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Charles Dorman's contesting of the 1910 General Election in Middlesbrough represented continued second generation participation in Middlesbrough's election fold in the twentieth century and underlined the cross-generational representation of the Dorman's in championing the Conservative cause. The Bells through the drive of Sir Hugh Bell's advocacy of free trade and support of the local Liberal Association played a key role within local and national political arenas without gaining election to Parliament beyond Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell in North Durham and the Hartlepoons in the decade previous to the commencement of this study. Yet, it has been highlighted that the steel magnates and their families remained part of the political fold up to and beyond the Second World War. Into the interwar period, the Dorman family alongside the Dixons and Bolckows continued to play an important part in the Conservative electoral machinery ousting an incumbent ironmaster Penry Williams from his seat in Parliament. Penry Williams' subsequent success in regaining his seat as Liberal MP for Middlesbrough underlined the continued participation of the steel magnates in direct electoral activity.

Despite reassessing the municipal and political role of the steel magnates during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, this study offers only a starting point for a greater



understanding of the dynamics of manufacturers' participation and power in these traditional areas of influence. Further studies of the role of industrial elites in other towns and cities, such as the recent work on Nottingham by Hayes offers the potential to continue the recent revisions of elite engagement in civil society undertaken in this current study.<sup>628</sup>

Enhancing the understanding of the dynamics of industrial elite engagement in the manufacturing towns and cities has been achieved by adopting an 'urban governance' approach to reveal the broad, evolving nature of elites, their authority and influence. The wider spheres of urban governance in Middlesbrough have mirrored Trainor's observations of 'the persisting effectiveness of urban elites to 1914' and the 'limits to decline' from the First World War onwards facilitated by 'more extensive adaptation of middle-class urban elites'.<sup>629</sup> In doing so, the alignment of the rise of limited liability companies and rationalisation of manufacturing with assumed decline in the industrial spirit has been challenged extensively. The increased importance of general managers in managing the large-scale manufacturing interests as a sign of the declining role of the second and third generations of industrialists has through continued firm level and associational involvement been shown to be exaggerated.<sup>630</sup> Whilst failing to match the indomitable industrial magnificence of their fathers, Maurice Lowthian Bell, Arthur Dorman, Charles Dorman and Francis Samuelson nevertheless remained a part of the Dorman Long fold and in effect remained part of the legacy of their fathers' entrepreneurial zeal or continued development of manufacturing. Moreover, the operation of Panton and Dorman as works managers and progression to the roles of (what turned out to be temporary) managing

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<sup>628</sup> Hayes, N. 'Counting civil society: deconstructing elite participation in the provincial English city, 1900–1950', *Urban History*, 40, 2 (2013), p.312

<sup>629</sup> Trainor, 'The 'decline' of British urban governance', p.35

<sup>630</sup> Gunn, *Public Culture*, p.192

directors represented a combination of the traditional hereditary appointments working alongside the manager who progressed through the firm. The idea that the limited liability company led to the loosening of ties to the firm whilst initially affirmed in Sir Arthur Dorman's retreat from Dorman Long was quickly rectified in his prompt return. The activities of Charles Dorman as a more influential part of the firm, acting as proxy for his ailing father in the later years of the 1920s, and the younger Arthur Dorman's serving as a Managing Director in the 1930s, point to continued activities in the firm particularly in playing an important role in external relations.

Returning to the elder statesmen of the Dorman Long enterprise, Sir Hugh Bell and Sir Arthur Dorman, there were few signs of a diminishing participation in the management of and their representation of the firms bearing their family names. Bell in particular through his Chairmanship of Bell Brothers, role as Dorman Long director, representation on national bodies, regular presence at board meetings and globe trekking in advocacy of free trade or in inspecting the construction of Sydney Harbour Bridge, exemplifies the importance of understanding business elites as individuals, accounting for exceptional figures such as those two Victorian captains of industry who both remained active in the industrial fold into their eighties and died in harness. This study has not looked beyond the Middlesbrough region for examples of the impact of similarly charismatic industrialists operating in other manufacturing districts, although other studies in adopting a wider approach when studying business networks and their interconnectivity offers the potential for better understanding the dynamics of the late Victorian industrialists' contributions to the early twentieth century steel industry. The renewed interest in manufacturing company records and the individuals at the helm of the firms evident in recent projects offers great potential for making these comparative studies feasible, with Swansea University's 'Steel

Connections' project is a leading example of the beneficial process of bringing together researchers undertaking regional case studies of the industry to gain a better understanding of the business dynamics at play both within the firms and in associational activities beyond the manufacturing plants and company board rooms.<sup>631</sup>

Business associations such as the Chamber of Commerce, employers' associations and cognate organisations were an important part of this evolving nature of elite engagement, serving as sphere for urban, industrial influence, participation and representation. The associational activity fluctuated across organisations dependent upon remit, trade conditions and the longevity of leadership. Thus, linear models of decline in industrial involvement by the magnate families are not reflected when considered across different organisations connected to varied extents to the iron and steel firms on the banks of the River Tees. Business association affiliation spanned longevity of service, such as that in evidence of Sir Hugh Bell's chairmanship of the Tees Conservancy Commissioners from the early 1900s until his death in 1931, to later appointments to leadership positions in the Chamber of Commerce such as that of Mr Arthur Dorman in 1937. There was however a decline in the direct participation of Middlesbrough's steel magnates in the iron and steel association, although once again the appointment of professionals and general managers representing Dorman Long, Bell Brothers and Bolckow Vaughan reflected wider patterns of necessity of delegating duty interspersed with magnate familial representation on occasion for good measure. Thus, whilst late nineteenth century business associations were characterised by continued, direct representation of elderly ironmasters, the early decades of the twentieth century mirrored the evolution of company dynamics in combining an active older generation working alongside the general managers and younger generations of the magnate families.

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<sup>631</sup> 'Steel Connections: Historical Records & New Research on the Steel Industry in Twentieth-Century Britain', <<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Steel%20Connections%20-%20Conference%20programme.pdf>> [Accessed 14 November 2014]

The urban focused nature of the dynamic emergence of philanthropic activity championed by the iron and steel manufacturers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century town must be seen as the most vibrant aspect of urban governance and elite participation during this period. The period was characterised by a multitude of 'new philanthropy' initiatives both in Middlesbrough and across the nation, spanning health, education, poverty relief, religion, culture and leisure provision, all of which reflected patronage and subscription as increasingly important aspects of elite power. Through scrutiny of the newly accessible company records held within the British Steel Collection, new light on the dynamics of company-led welfare provision and charitable support have highlighted the important role of the iron and steel manufacturing firms in supporting key voluntary organisations, charitable initiatives and individual appeals in the manufacturing town. The financial contributions of the firms across a range of causes represents the most comprehensive survey of company subscriptions and donations made to charitable and philanthropic causes of the manufacturing town to date. More importantly, in exploring the various ways in which the industrial elite exercised influence, both in their own firms in the company-level patronage process, and through finance and honorific positions of external bodies such as the Guild of Help, reflect the increasingly complex positions of power illustrated during the period.

At a more mundane level, the important contributions made to the urban fabric through the steel magnates' initiatives including the Clarence Coffee Palace, Dorman Long Athletic Club, Boys' and Girls' Clubs provide an illustration of the wider reach of the manufacturers in the lives of their workers and the citizens of the district. In doing so, there are clear implications in evidence for the important role the philanthropy of the manufacturers played in creating positive industrial relations and helping in return to promote the legitimacy, power and patronage of the manufacturers as heads of the patronising firm. In terms of

addressing Briggs' observations of a disengaged second and third generation of industrialist family members, their centrality in company-level mechanisms of donations to external organisations and in the establishment of the firms' own welfare and leisure provision counters this hypothesis. Through a progression from the Chairman making decisions on company donations to the delegation of this decision making process of how much to give to the younger generations of industrialists such as Mr Arthur Dorman and Maurice Lowthian Bell reflects a continuity of interest in the well-being of the citizens of Middlesbrough.

The support of individual industrialists to voluntary institutions and those providing 'mixed economy' responses to poverty and distress in Middlesbrough also reveals the exercise of influence by the steel magnates in these vital spheres of urban governance across Britain, particularly in the late Victorian and Edwardian years. The Dorman Museum and Lady Bell's Winter Garden are standout examples of how the steel magnates made key financial contributions to institutions that enhanced the urban fabric of Middlesbrough and with it the lives of the workers that contributed to the steel firms' success. The value of looking beyond the traditional arena of local government through the manufacturers' leadership and backing of voluntary institutions fulfilled a vital function in urban society both alongside and separate to the traditional realms of government in addressing the problems of urban society spanning employee well-being, health, hardship and leisure, all of which had direct implications for business success.<sup>632</sup>

The spatial dynamics of steel magnate engagement, particularly the mobilisation of influence facilitated in the country houses and in the surrounding communities, are

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<sup>632</sup> Balderstone, L. 'Semi-Detached Britain? Social networks in the suburban fringe of Leicester and Loughborough, 1950-2005', unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh University, 2009, p.10

revealing in serving as a warning to resist the temptation to delineate urban and rural engagement as dichotomous. Representation of the out-migration of manufacturing employers to county society as a process of rural idyll-laden 'gentrification' oppositional to the steel town has been overemphasised and grossly overlooks the extensive connections to industrial, urban society that these private spheres of magnate life had with the town.

The very fact that the cultural and philanthropic activity of the Bell and Dorman families extended beyond Middlesbrough in the form of institutional excursions, boys and girls group visits and works receptions visiting Grey Towers and Rounton Grange suggests that the rural residential patterns of the elites had few negative impacts on their involvement in the town. The country house, well connected to transport networks to Middlesbrough, allowed the elite to not only continue to perform their duties in the manufacturing town but also to add a new sphere of activity in utilising their private space for public culture, extensions of civic ritual and reception, with the private residence also showcasing the important role of women in philanthropic and cultural activity.<sup>633</sup> That this was achieved whilst embracing the rural idyll, be it in extending gardens or even donning attire akin to that of a country squire, underlines that this country based lifestyle was not at the expense of urban engagement, rather one of the multifaceted spheres of industrial elite performance and participation during our period. Whilst the houses displayed the opulence and success of the steel magnates in turn reaffirming their standing in the urban community and bringing the potential for recognition in the countryside, there appears to be little evidence of a choice between the two ever arising. The Bell and Dorman assessments found here are encouraging in shedding new light on the role of space and connectivity to urban society of this apparent process of 'segregation' and point to the need for further exploration of industrialist's country estate-based interactions with

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<sup>633</sup> Ewen, *What is Urban History?*, p.41

manufacturing towns elsewhere to better understand the complexities of industrial elite participation and patronage.

In focusing chiefly on two steel magnate families this assessment of the elites' economic, cultural and associational activity has pointed towards a biographical approach as a useful mechanism for enabling the agency of such families or individuals to be explored in the context of urban governance. In a sense, this has brought together strands of family history and urban history in exploring the role of these two leading families in urban life. Exploring an individual magnate's education, employment, institutional affiliations, marriage, residence and even death, the wider connections to and agency in and around the late Victorian and early twentieth century manufacturing town have been explored. Such an approach exposes the extensive family ties at play in supporting philanthropic initiatives in particular, but also the trajectories and continuities found in political life, support of cultural institutions and representation of the firm on business organisations. Such an approach has done much to reveal an active, engaged, multifaceted second and third generation cluster of industrialists that were both important in the traditional spheres of urban government in their contributions to municipal and political machinery and also in wider participation in everyday life of the town. Focusing on a small sample of families also better achieves a platform for direct comparison between earlier industrialists and their offspring, in turn exposing the processes of continuity and change from one generation to the next.

The role of Middlesbrough's steel magnates in the culture, business and associational activities of the manufacturing town undoubtedly altered up to the mid-1930s but without any clear, quantifiable detriment, perceived dislocation or loss amongst contemporaries. The municipal and political activities of the steel magnates into the early decades of the

twentieth century through participation in front line involvement are arguably those areas most closely aligned with withdrawal despite the reassessments found in this thesis. Yet overall, elite withdrawal from Middlesbrough has been overemphasised in earlier studies of the steel magnates and through this study's access to newly available historic material coupled with urban's history's emphasis on assessing wider spheres of urban governance has been successfully contended. More work on other aspects of urban engagement and cultural interaction promise to further our understanding of the longevity, substance and variation of urban elite activity in Britain, whilst comparative studies with elites in other regions and countries would be beneficial in order to achieving a greater understanding of urban elites and the mechanisms of urban governance. This exploration of Middlesbrough's steel magnates has, nevertheless, underlined the need to appreciate continuities and evolving dynamics of economic, social, political and cultural elite participation, both by looking to the wider governance of the town and to those activities beyond, but inextricably linked to, the urban environment.



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