

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SMALL
MASTER ECONOMY IN THE BOOT AND SHOE
INDUSTRY 1887-1914 : WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO NORTHAMPTON

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S U M M A R Y

SUMMARY OF THESIS SUBMITTED FOR PhD DEGREEBY KEITH BARRY BROOKER

on

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SMALL MASTER ECONOMY IN
THE BOOT AND SHOE INDUSTRY 1887-1914:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTHAMPTON

The footwear industry is one of the important examples of late industrial transformation in nineteenth century Britain. The aim here is to investigate shoe manufacturers' reactions to this period of structural and organisational change. The thesis is in three parts:

(I) Chapters One-Three explore the character and scope of industrialisation in the industry. The literature on British entrepreneurship, evaluates the shifts in attitude and strategy of dominant groups within each industry; much less attention has been given to the often wide divergence of experience within business communities as a whole. In small master-dominated industries, like shoemaking, there existed a range of business experience - both business success and failure - which has not been the subject of close empirical study. Here, the assumption of an orderly, progressive concentration of capital is challenged. The small shoe masters' role during industrialisation was more complex than the literature allows. Secondly, the chronology and determinants of change are reappraised. And, finally, the size, character and structure of the Northampton footwear business community is studied.

(II) Chapters Four-Six take up this theme of business failure. Little previous systematic, empirical investigation of patterns of failure has been carried out by historians. Thus, initially, general issues of methodology and theory are broached. The data presented, not only allows failure trends to be analysed, but is also used to explore small masters' attitudes and reactions to change. Three facets of failure were isolated. Failure linked to business cycle effects (Chapter Four). The high endemic levels of failure linked to normal

trading pressures with reference particularly to infant firms. Here questions of credit provision, failure causation and small master motivation are examined (Chapter Five), in addition to normal and hiatus failures amongst mature firms (Chapter Six). Lastly, failures linked to industrialisation are investigated (Chapter Six). There are two features: the contraction of the small master base and the failure of old established firms.

(III) As a counterpoint to Section II, Chapters Seven and Eight study those firms that survive to 1914. These included a small, dominant elite group of established firms, whose industrial policies, family business organisation and striving for social acceptance are examined.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.P.P.	British Parliamentary Papers
B.H.R.	Business History Review
B.&S.	Boot and Shoemaker
B.S.T.J.	Boot and Shoe Trades Journal
B.U.S.M.C.	British United Shoe Machinery Company Ltd

ABBREVIATIONS

C.R.O.	Companies Registration Office
D.B.B.	Dictionary of Business Biography
D.D.	Directory of Directors
D.L.B.	Dictionary of Labour Biography
Ec.H.R.	Economic History Review
Gaskell	Gaskell's Northamptonshire Historical Biography and Pictorial
J.E.H.	Journal of Economic History
J.B.B.S.I.	Journal of the British Boot and Shoe Institute
J.N.N.H.S.	Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society
J.R.S.S.	Journal of the Royal Statistic Society
L.T.C.R.	Leather Trades Circular and Review
L.R.O.	Leicestershire Record Office
N.C.M.	Northampton County Magazine
N.D.C.	Northampton Daily Chronicle
N.D.E.	Northampton Daily Echo
N.G.	Northampton Guardian
N.H.	Northampton Herald
N.I.	Northampton Independent
N.M.	Northampton Mercury
N.R.	Northampton Reporter
N.P.L.	Northamptonshire Public Libraries
N.P.&P.	Northamptonshire Past and Present
N.R.O.	Northamptonshire Record Office
N.R.S.	Northamptonshire Record Society
Pike	Pike's Northamptonshire in Twentieth Century (1908)
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
S.L.N.	Shoe and Leather News
S.L.R.	Shoe and Leather Record
S.L.T. Supplement	Shoe and Leather Trades Supplement (1916)
S.M.M.	Shoe Manufacturers' Monthly
S.T.J.	Shoe Trades Journal
V.C.H. Bucks	
V.C.H. Beds	
V.C.H. Essex	Victoria County History of County Named
V.C.H. Leics	
V.C.H. Northants	
V.C.H. Staffs	

C D Wright Industrial Depressions: Being the First Annual Report of U.S. Commissioner of Labor (1886)

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P R E F A C E

In the late nineteenth century, under the pressure of depression and of increased competition, there occurred an increase in the use of machinery and rationalised work system within Britain's artisanal, small master industries. This was not the first time that this sector had experienced the forces of industrialisation, but what was important now was the generality of this movement amongst these industries. An appendix to the Depression of Trade and Industry Royal Commission provides an interesting, though fragmentary, picture of the nature of these changes. There we find a diversity of tantalisingly brief evidence that points to the increased use of standardised parts, sub-divided processes and machinery in a range of light consumer industries.¹ Increasingly what is witnessed is the centralisation of production and the concentration of capital.

Of these light consumer industries, the shoe industry has been selected for study in this thesis for two primary reasons. First, it was the most extensive of these industries both in terms of masters and men employed and of their geographical dispersal through the United Kingdom. And secondly, it was the industry in which the process of industrialisation was taken the furthest. By 1914 the volume production of standardised footwear in factories dominated the industry. Northampton was the oldest and dominant craft centre.

1 Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry 1886 (c4715-I) 2nd Report, Appendix D Part II p6-95. This process was to markedly increase after 1886 and historians have particularly concentrated upon change in the engineering and printing industries. See, for example, J. Child Industrial Relations in the Printing Industry (1967), especially Part IV Chapters X and XI. At p155 he notes: "In the quarter century before the Great War the printing industry was in a turmoil of technical and industrial development. It was nothing less than a profound and general change in both the processes of production and the methods of organisation. Technical changes encouraged a larger scale of production; this in turn led to wider markets and a search for new techniques to speed up or cheapen production still further". It was also a time, of course, of much criticism of British Industry: see, for example, the series of articles in The Times printed during the Autumn of 1901 entitled "The Crisis in the British Industry".

Any study of producers in this period, of course, whether they be located in a small industry or large, must be set against the current debate concerning entrepreneurship. Within that debate, the British shoe industry emerges as an example of entrepreneurial success in terms of its ability to modernise production and meet foreign competition in the growing home and overseas volume markets for footwear.¹ This thesis explores a number of crucial issues surrounding this theme of entrepreneurial achievement that have remained unanswered in past case studies on the industry.² The main point of departure here rests upon the proposition that this preoccupation with the progressive manufacturer, who lies at the centre of successful industrial transition, does not provide an entirely accurate account of the experience of all members of the group. In particular, it effectively masks the sharply contrasting experience of the small shoe master. Far from being homogeneous shoe manufacturers were a strongly heterogeneous and internally stratified entrepreneurial group: the current historical writings focus upon only one element of what was a more complex group. These small shoe masters³ have not been the subject of detailed analysis⁴ and thus we have little

1 See the discussion in Chapter 1 below.

2 It was originally envisaged that this study would investigate the strategies and attitudes of shoe workers toward changing patterns of control in the work-place. Founded upon a consideration of the economics of the industry, these initial questions were gradually superceded for the purposes of this study by a more thorough examination of business activities and attitudes, in view of the limited research that has been undertaken in this area. Some of the material on shoe workers appears in print elsewhere.

3 The phrase small master is used here in a wider sense than is found in S. & B. Webb History of Trade Unionism (1902) p429. The term covers, not merely the sub-contracting sweaters found in Webb, but also a wider range of shoe producers, some of whom traded successfully over time.

4 Indeed, little analysis of any English petite bourgeois small producing group has been undertaken, save the recent syntheses by Dr. G. J. Crossick. Unfortunately G. J. Crossick and H. G. Haupt (Eds) Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in 19th Century Europe (1984) came into the hands of this writer too late to be considered here. However, Crossick's characterisation of the English small producer being a man lacking that traditional, antimodernistic stance toward change commonly found amongst his counterparts in mainland Europe is mirrored in this thesis: for further discussion see Chapter 5.

or no understanding of their attitude to change, nor of his ability to cope with the forces of change. In part, this may well be due to the lack of documentary evidence such men have left behind them. Like many historians before me, I was disappointed by the dearth of business records, but have tried to surmount this by the use of a mosaic of sources drawn from a variety of areas.

This evaluation of the small master here has three important facets:

(i) a study of business failure within the industry.¹ In order to penetrate the world of the shoe master, it has been necessary to go beyond the economic historians normal pre-occupation with successful trading. Indeed, amongst Victorian businessmen generally the obverse experience of failure was as real to them and quantitatively, by far the most common outcome of business endeavour. Insolvency was ever present in the small masters' deliberations and consciousness;²

(ii) a consideration of the motivations of small masters. Did they conform to the fundamental tenet of neo-classical economic analysis, profit maximisation?

1 J. Boswell Rise and Decline of Small Firms (1967) p42. "The picture (why people found businesses) has often been distorted. For one thing the writers have concentrated on the founders who were most successful and particularly on those who initiated businesses which became really large and outstanding. The much larger category of middling founders and those who were less brilliant, let alone the actual failures, has been ignored".

2 As the text below will indicate, there is an awakening amongst some historians as to the importance of the study of business failure. A recent research note by M. S. Moss and J. R. Hume points the way (Business Failure in Scotland 1839-1913: A Research Note Business History (1983) XXV:1 p3-10). They, however, are undertaking a study of Scottish bankruptcies per se. The study of business failure in this thesis differs in at least two respects:

- (i) business failures here include insolvency procedures outside the realm of bankruptcy. A study of bankruptcy alone would not have located the many financially small failures in the shoe industry (see discussion in Chapter 4);
- (ii) failure reports here are used not only to give financial information, but are used as a research tool with which to begin to examine small master weaknesses and strategies and social characteristics.

(iii) a recognition that alternative strategies, different to those of progressive manufacturers, existed which enabled small masters to survive a period of radical industrial change: that the orderly concentration of capital within the industry was never complete. Indeed, through much of the period a close, symbiotic relationship existed between the elite manufacturer and small master.

The discussion that follows, therefore, is tangential to the main thrust of the recent entrepreneurial debate amongst economic historians, though not completely divorced from it. Here, rather than perceiving shoe manufacturers as an amorphous, successful group, the internal divisions and characterisation of the group have been given greater prominence and consideration: the achievement of the progressive manufacturer contrasted with that of the industry's small master base.

Inevitably in the course of a study of this nature many debts of gratitude are incurred. Many have given of their knowledge and time in helping me to understand the shoe industry. Without wishing to link any one of them to the conclusions I have reached, I should like to record my grateful thanks to them.

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Kettering; Mr. S. Trucker, of R. E. Trucker Ltd., Northampton; Mr. N. Travis-Davison, of J. Davison & Son (Leeds) Ltd; Mr. M. J. Willey and Mrs. Hewes of B.S.C. Footwear Supplies Ltd., Northampton; Mr. N. Ziff and Mr. L. M. P. Halliday of Stylo Barratt Ltd., Northampton. Mr. Edwin Green, archivist to the Midland Bank plc and Mr. Grice of the Midland Bank, Woodhill Branch, Northampton, eased my path through the banking records in their care. And Mr. S. Clapham, General Secretary of the National Union of Footwear, Leather & Allied Trades and his H.Q. staff at Earls Barton, Northamptonshire, allowed access to trade union records.

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constant support and helped in innumerable ways, but probably, above all, tolerated a major shift of perspective at a late stage with good heart. My thanks are also extended to the participants at the Conference on the European Petite Bourgeoisie held at Bremen University, West Germany, in 1980, who commented upon a seminar paper that has formed the genesis of Chapters 5 and 6 in this thesis. Some of the comments and criticisms of earlier seminar papers read at the Universities of Birmingham, Hull, Leicester and Warwick, have saved me from errors elsewhere in the text.

In the final preparation of the typescript I was aided by Jennifer Ellis, Barbara Taylor and Ann Claxton, who reduced an often messy manuscript to readable typescript and coped with several revisions with fortitude. My appreciation must also go to Colin Day who prepared the computer graphics and saved me from several errors of computation.

Lastly, my thanks go to Annmarie, Daniel, Benjamin and an assortment of dogs. They all, for too long, have tolerated with good patience the spectre of Victorian shoemakers in their home and their lives.

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHOE INDUSTRY

Two issues predicate this study of industrialisation within the shoe industry. First is the historian's general perception of the British economy in the period 1873-1914. It is overshadowed by one vital dimension: the poor industrial performance of that economy relative both to Britain's own immediate past industrial performance and to that of the emerging industrial economies of her major competitors.¹ A recurring theme in published research findings has been one of declining growth linked to entrepreneurial failure.² Yet this theme is controversial, as these two contrasting conclusions reveal. On the one hand, Hannah & Jeremy have noted that the

.. current wisdom among economic and business historians alleges that beginning in the 1870s there was a failure of entrepreneurial skill and drive, to which must be attached a large share of the blame for Britain's "declining rate of growth of industrial production, the relative deterioration in her international position and her sluggish rise in productivity...",³

whilst, on the other hand Lars Sandberg concludes in a review of the entrepreneurial debate in this period that

... (what) we know about British entrepreneurship and technical change between 1860 and 1914 (is incomplete) .. still, what is known on the subject is far from trivial and, generally speaking, it is unfavourable to the hypothesis of entrepreneurial failure! While some examples of.. failure have been found, and more undoubtedly remain to be found, it is not established that the failure rate was any higher than in other countries, including the United States and Germany, during the same period... much less has it been shown that the British 'entrepreneurial failures' in this period exceeded those in Germany and America by so much that, they can naturally have contributed to Britain's relative economic decline.. Thus, to the question: 'Did entrepreneurial failure, and especially technological backwardness, play a significant role in Britain's relative decline?' the answer must be: 'Probably not'...⁴

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1. See General texts on the period, eg. W. Ashworth. An Economic History of England 1870-1939 (1972) especially chapters 2 & 10. Sidney Pollard The Development of the British Economy 1914-1967 (1970), Chapter One.
 2. For a synthesis of the literature see P.L. Payne "Industrial Entrepreneurship and Management in Great Britain" in P. Mathias and P.L. Payne British Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth Century (1974) p45. Cf. B. Supple "Framework of British Business History" in B. Supple (Ed) Essays in British Business History (1977) p9-30 passim.
 3. L. Hannah & D.J. Jeremy (Eds), Dictionary of Business Biography (1984) Vol. I, Introduction pvii: their quotation is from M.M. Postan The Cambridge Economic History of Europe Vol. VII part I. (1978) Cf. A. Levine Industrial Retardation in Britain 1880-1914 (1967) especially Chapter 5.
 4. Lars Sandberg, "The Entrepreneur and technological change" in R. Floud & D.N. McCloskey The Economic History of Britain since 1700 (1981) Vol. 2. p119.

In recent years the failure line of reasoning has been most forceably put forward in Prof. D.H.Aldcroft's essay published in 1964; a controversial article that condemned the British entrepreneur on the basis of comparison with German and American rivals.¹ These adverse comparisons were taken up by Prof. P.L.Payne in an article which considered the difference in size between the largest British and American firms.² British firms had failed, he argued, to intensify capital in line with the Americans, and the resulting cost differentials had greatly aided American industrial ascendancy. Payne concluded that sociological, not purely economic factors, were substantially responsible for this size differential. He emphasises in particular, the 'dead-hand' of family influence within British firms, and the haemorrhage of ability from industry into landownership, politics and the professions. But, as D.C.Coleman, noted in 1973, redemption was at hand for the British entrepreneur,³ with a number of historians coming to the defence of late 19 century entrepreneurship.

Three lines of defence emerged. First, Prof. C.H.Wilson pointed out that Aldcroft's evidence was highly selective and that the period brought forth many dynamic entrepreneurs. Men such as Beecham, Boot, Courtauld, Lever, Rowntree and a host of others, who extended British economic activity far beyond the limits of the staple industries.⁴ Secondly, Prof. S.B.Saul's article on the development of the British Mechanical Engineering Industry.⁵ emphasised the difference in the character of British and American markets; the pattern of demand, market size and so on. Given this, he purports, any objective comparison of performance is difficult to envisage, for British and American Engineers' responses to production matters would

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1. D.H.Aldcroft "The Entrepreneur and the British Economy: 1870-1914" Ec.H.R. 2nd series (1965) Vol. 18. Note, in 1968 Aldcroft modified his position in his introduction to D.H.Aldcroft (Ed) The Development of British Industry and Foreign Competition: 1875-1914 (1968). In place of his global structures he argues here that the performance in British Industry was more uneven than his earlier view suggests, and that at its best equalled the performance of industry anywhere in the world. Contributors to this suggest that British Industries at the close of the century were efficient and competitive. These include P. Head "Boots and Shoes", which will be discussed at greater length below.
 2. P.L.Payne "The Emergence of the Large-scale Company in Great Britain: 1870-1914" Ec.H.R. 2nd series (1967) Vol. 20.
 3. D.C.Coleman "Gentlemen & Players" Ec.H.R. 2nd series (1973) Vol. 26.
 4. C.H.Wilson "Economy and Society in Late Victorian Britain" Ec.H.R. 2nd series Vol. 18.
 5. S.B.Saul "The Market and the Development of the Mechanical Engineering Industries in Great Britain: 1860-1914" Ec.H.R. (1968) Vol. 20.

not have been similar. And, thirdly, several American scholars have stressed that the difference in costs structures on either side of the Atlantic resulted in British and American entrepreneurs arriving at different conclusions regarding the type of technology to adopt. This research work has questioned the hypothesis of entrepreneurial short-comings and market failure on empirical grounds.¹ In his study of textiles, Lars Sandberg concludes that the criterion of judgement should not be a straight-forward comparison, but an evaluation as to whether an entrepreneur made a sound, economically rational judgement given the state of his firm and the character of the economic environment in which that firm was operating.² Similarly, in an essay investigating the choice of technique adopted in British industries C.K.Harley stressed the criterion for judgement must be whether it was rational for an entrepreneur to adopt a technique, not simply did an entrepreneur purely fail to avail himself of a new technique. He concludes, that whilst British industry was slow in adopting new techniques that were adopted elsewhere, such behaviour was not necessarily irrational. The explanation for this lies in the international character of labour force skills within the world economy: "... British neglect of new machine techniques was associated with an abundance of skilled labour..."³

Much of the research which underpins our perception of entrepreneurial performance in this period has been executed either at industry level or relies upon the valuable insights to be had from the detailed study of individual firms.⁴ Although the "redeemers" of entrepreneurial performance recognise the varied character of entrepreneurship, our perception of the late Victorian Industrialists' reaction to his business environment is substantially founded upon the large canvas; upon bold brush strokes intent upon conveying an overall impression of the form of the dominant shift in attitude-strategy within an industry. Portraits that focus upon statements as to the industry's dominant, successful reaction to prevailing economic

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1. See D.N.McCloskey - L. Sandberg, "From Damnation to Redemption: Judgements on the Late Victorian Entrepreneur" Explorations in Economic History (1971) IX. Cf. D.N.McCloskey "Did Victorian Britain Fail?" Ec.H.R. (1970) 2nd series Vol.23, and Economic Maturity and Entrepreneurial Decline: British Iron & Steel (1973)
 2. L. Sandberg (1) Lancashire in Decline (1974) and (11) American Rings and English Mules: The Role of Economic Rationality" Quarterly Journal of Economics (1969) LXXXIII.
 3. C.K.Harley "Skilled Labour and The Choice of Technique in Edwardian Industry" Explorations in Economic History (1974) 11:4 p413.
 4. Supple, Loc. cit. p.4.

problems. Underlying much historical judgement on this subject is what D. Landes has called the American ideal of the aggressive profit-maximising Entrepreneur who bends markets to his will.¹ But does British Entrepreneurial experience reflect this ideal? This is an important consideration given the importance of small master dominated consumer industries in underscoring British economic activity and growth in our period. Indeed, recent scholarship argues that the British experience reflects entirely different historical and social imperatives, which are essentially antithetical to this ideal². The purely economic rewards of entrepreneurial success have been less significant, both socially and culturally, in Britain than in the United States. Pure economic rewards were treated in an ambivalent way by British society, and has forced British industrialists to sublimate raw commercialism in the pursuit of social acceptance of their achievement. In the often quoted words of Wiener:

As a rule, leaders of commerce and industry in England over the past century have accommodated themselves to an elite culture blended of pre-industrial aristocratic and religious values that inhibited their quest for expansion, productivity and profit..³

Much less attention has been focused upon investigating the variety of tone, of light and shade within the portrait; the kaleidoscope of experience encountered within the business class. This thesis adopts just such a departure. In penetrating in depth, the business community of the Northampton Shoe industry, it will explore both poles of Victorian business experience - success and failure - in an analysis of the important inter-relationship that existed between manufacturers within what has been described as one of the successful industries in late Victorian Britain. In particular, the very different attitudes and business experience that are encountered in the shoe industry during a period of radical change will be examined. The shoe industry was shot through by a small master organisation and culture, yet quite how that organisation and culture reacted in the face of change has never been the subject of close scrutiny. As in the study of many industries in this period an assumption of an orderly, progressive concentration of capital during industrialisation persists.

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1. D. Landes "French Entrepreneurship and Industrial Growth in the 19 Century" in B.E. Supple (Ed) The Experience of Economic Growth (1963) p340-53.
 2. See M. Wiener, English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980 (1981).
 3. Wiener *ibid* p127

However important and valid these current perspectives of the entrepreneur may be, by extending our vision to encompass the wider business community, rather than narrowly concentrating upon the small progressive group of industrialists within an industry, our perception of the character of the Victorian business class can be deepened, made more subtle, as can our understanding of their approaches to industrial change. Such an extension is particularly important in a small master industry like shoemaking, where the manufacturer class is of a particularly heterogeneous nature.

This raises the second issue that predicates this study of industrialisation. It is important to recognise that despite Britain's early development as an industrial nation, no overall decline in small scale production occurred within the economy. On the contrary, such production continued to play an important role throughout the nineteenth century. As J.H. Clapham has observed:

.. Because no single British industry has passed through a complete technical revolution before 1830, the country abounded in ancient types of industrial organisation and in transitional types of every variety..¹

Half a century later, Britain's manufacturing sector still retained a significantly strong small master character, dominated by relatively small units of production and distribution.² Indeed, Charles Wilson in a seminal article on the late nineteenth century British economy, argues that to overlook the importance of the continued role of small production can give a distorted picture as to the very nature of British economic development generally. Of Professor Rostow's puzzlement regarding the lag between Britain's "age of economic maturity" in 1851 and her arrival in the next stage of "high mass consumption" in the nineteen thirties, he comments:

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1. J.H. Clapham Economic History of Modern Britain I (1926) p95. Cf. C.H. Lee "Regional Growth and Structural Change in Victorian Britain" Ec.H.R. 2nd series (1981) XXIV: 3, where it is argued that the importance of these consumer industries has been undervalued: ".. For long run prosperity, therefore, the service/consumer economy must be judged to be clearly superior to the industrial export-orientated economy. Thus we should interpret Victorian Britain in terms of the south-east being the most advanced region in the British economy, and make a commensurate contribution to the development of that national economy..."
 2. A.E. Musson "Industrial Motive power in the United Kingdom 1800-70" Ec.H.R. 2nd series (1976) XXXIX p716. ".. after 1800, the triumph of the factory system" took place much more slowly than has generally been realised; water wheels long continued to be built and used, while most manufacturing operations remained largely unmechanised until after 1870.

The problem is surely of his own making? There is something, it seems, in the doctrine of "high mass consumption" which makes it doctrinally necessary to excommunicate from the ritual such commodities as ready-made clothes and corsets, boots and shoes, newspapers, cheap jam, and patent medicines. The bicycle passes muster but the motor car is better. Most of these products come from relatively small plants. No single plant represented an essay in massive investment or even technological innovation of a radical kind. Hence the economist is apt to be unimpressed by them.¹

Yet, argues Wilson, it was just such an increase in the production of these commodities which was at the heart of British domestic growth in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The confluence of profound industrial change and radically new methods of retailing

..saw great volumes of goods previously supplied (if supplied at all) from the craftsman of village or town move into the factory stage of production. From machine to shop there flowed the branded, packaged, standardised, advertised products newly characteristic of this urbanised, industrialised society that was setting itself new patterns and standards of social life.²

It is not until this comparatively late date in Britain's history, therefore, that the position of the small producer, who had to a greater or lesser extent dominated these consumer industries, began to be challenged by the growth of large, mechanised units of production and the evolution of a sophisticated retail organisation, yet there has been little detailed research conducted on the subject of small commodity producers in English history.³ Of these industries, shoe-making provides an important and significant example for two reasons. First, because of the sheer size of the numbers engaged in this activity.⁴ Secondly, because change affected the shoe industry more completely and profoundly than any other artisan industry. It is the aim here to investigate the nature of this economic challenge and to evaluate the ability of the small producer to respond to the economic problems and pressures by which he was beset in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

1. C. Wilson, loc. cit. pl86 n.2.

2. C. Wilson, *ibid.*, pl91. This view still receives a broad acceptance amongst historians today. For a recent summary of the British model of industrialisation see R. Cameron "A New View of European Industrialisation" Ec.H.R. 2nd series (1985) XXXVIII: 1. At p6 he notes, ".. (in 1851) the course was set towards the 'industry state', but voyage was not half over.."

3. An exception to this is an exploratory article by Dr. G.J. Crossick, "La petite bourgeoisie britannique au XIX^e siècle, "le mouvement social 108 (1979).

4. The 1851 Census enumerated 27400 shoemakers in England and Wales; by 1901 this had fallen to 25200. This large pre-industrial size is reflected in the shoemaking trade of most European countries, and can be attributed to the low productivity of the individual worker, and the low skill level of the craft, which encouraged recruitment.

Mechanisation in the British shoe industry dates from the mid-eighteen fifties. By that time shoe-makers constituted, as they had probably done for some considerable time, one of the most numerous and most geographically dispersed of Britain's artisan groups. Consequently, the shoe industry was still characterised by a small scale of decentralised production still dominated by craft methods. It was composed of two distinct portions. The home market was almost exclusively serviced by a mosaic of independent village shoe makers, with small masters, each employing small numbers of workers, attending to the needs of larger settlements: Modest settlements in any English County could boast of one, and often several sons of St. Crispin.¹ Yet despite this dispersal, a numerically small wholesale manufacturing sector had developed, and a degree of regional specialisation was present by the eighteenth century. The centre of wholesaling activities was situated in the country's largest consumer market, London, with main satellite centres at Northampton, for men's footwear, and Stafford, for women's. In addition smaller regional wholesale centres had developed. Through the nineteenth century, six other major regional centres came into being; Leicester, Leeds, Bristol, Norwich, Rossendale and Northamptonshire. The majority of production in these new centres tended initially to be a medium, and below quality, whilst the traditional centres retained a large proportion of the better grade work. On the eve of mechanisation

1. To take a random example, the agricultural village of Leven, East Yorkshire, situated 6½ miles north east of the County town of Beverley, through most of the 19 century the population of between 700 and 900 persons had the services of 5 shoemakers: in 1823 it was 5 (population 658); in 1840 7 (population 890); in 1859 5 again (population 889). At the end of the century, in 1897 5 shoemakers were still occupied (population 769). (Source: Yorkshire Directories, and Registrar General Census Reports.) See also J.M.Bostall and D.V.Fowkes History of Chesterfield: Vol. 2. Pt. 2; Restoration & Georgian Chesterfield (1984) p53. "..Pigot's Commercial Directory of Derbyshire of 1835 confirms the pattern of industry in the early nineteenth century town. Numerically boot and shoemakers (39) were well and truly dominant, followed by the always ubiquitous butchers (23).. The range of retail trades and workshop industries remained as wide as ever with most trades and crafts represented as you would expect in an important market town: there were 20 tailors, 17 grocers, 14 dressmakers, 11 stone masons, 10 joiners, 8 braziers, and 8 blacksmiths and overall the picture is of a thriving commercial community based on the type of craft, workshop and retail trades that had long dominated the town.." Cf.M.W.Barley Lincolnshire and The Fens (1952) p.171, where, again, the high proportion of master shoemakers in a town is noted. This time the town is Louth, and in the local directory for 1842 33 shoemakers and clogmakers are recorded, as opposed to 28 butchers, 27 cabinet makers and joiners, 14 bricklayers, 9 brewers, 7 booksellers and so on.

Figure 1:1. The Employment Structure & Economic Activity of Northampton 1881-1911 (PTO)

Sector Activity	1881			1891			1901			1911		
	M	F	T %	M	F	T %	M	F	T %	M	F	T %
<u>Primary Sector</u>												
Agriculture	523	6	525 2.2	388	7	395 1.4	582	8	590 1.5	669	23	692 1.5
Mining Qu.	1	0	1 -	16	0	16 0.1	26	0	26 0.1	52	0	52 0.1
	524	6	526 2.2	404	7	411 1.5	608	8	616 1.6	721	23	744 1.6
<u>Secondary Sector</u>												
Building	1226	1	1227 5.1	1310	1	1311 4.5	2522	2	2524 6.4	2304	0	2304 5.0
Manufacture	8981	4647	13628 57.3	11504	5323	16827 58.2	15209	7397	22606 57.2	17095	9655	26750 57.6
	10207	4648	14855 62.4	12814	5324	18138 62.7	17731	7399	25310 63.6	19399	9655	29054 62.6
<u>Tertiary Sector</u>												
Transport	787	5	792 3.3	1248	7	1255 4.4	2265	31	2296 5.8	2441	27	2468 5.3
Dealing	1780	376	2156 9.1	2837	568	2405 8.3	2430	1013	3443 8.7	3090	1654	4744 10.2
Ind. Service	1437	646	2083 8.7	1523	76	1599 5.5	1897	175	2072 5.2	2549	477	3076 6.6
Pub/Prof.Service	782	463	1245 5.2	1042	822	1864 6.4	1518	789	2307 5.8	1982	910	2892 6.2
Domes. Service	99	2028	2127 8.9	235	2991	3226 11.2	400	3279	3679 9.3	543	2926	3469 7.5
	4885	3518	8403 35.2	5885	4464	10349 35.8	8510	5287	13797 34.8	10655	5994	16649 35.8
Total Occup. Population	15616	8172	23788 45.9*	19103	9795	28878 47.7*	26849	12694	39543 47.0*	30775	15672	46442 53.5*
Total Population	51184			84196			61016			86822		

- Notes:
- (i) * = Occup. pop^{n.} as a ^{% of} total pop^{n.}
 % = % of Occup. pop^{n.}
 - (ii) Source, printed decennial census reports 1851-1911
 - (iii) Method derived from W.A.Armstrong's work. "The Social Structure of York 1841-51", unpublished Ph.D thesis University of Birmingham (1967); Stability & Change in an English Country Town: a social study of York 1801-51 (1974), particularly statistical appendices p203 et seq; "The use of information about occupation," in E.A. Wrigley (Ed) Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in use of quantitative methods for study of social data. (1972) p191-310.
 - (iv) the grouping of occupations by sector conform to W.A.Armstrong (1972).

in 1857 wholesale firms produced bespoke and ready-make footwear principally, though not exclusively for Government - chiefly military contracts, for exportation, and for the large London market.

A central aim of this thesis is to re-appraise the established historical perception of this transition in the light of new evidence assembled relating primarily to the principal provincial shoemaking centre of Northampton. As much of this analysis will look closely at the business behaviour of individual firms, and in order to adequately penetrate a business community dominated by small masters, these data bases are necessarily empirically dense. Northampton has been selected, not only because of the long craft tradition of shoemaking within the town, but also because much of its production was concentrated upon making medium and above grades of footwear: that grade which dominated the American export sales. Northampton is an ancient borough and county town situated on rising ground on the left bank of the River Nene, 66 miles north-west of London and 50 miles south east of Birmingham. Much of the town was destroyed by fire in 1675, and it is mainly modern.¹ In common with many Victorian towns, the expansion and development of 19th century Northampton is directly linked to industrial factors: in this case the growth of the staple industry, shoemaking. The degree to which shoe manufacture came to dominate the local economy can be gleaned from Figure 1:i and 1:ii.

In addition to shoe manufacture, this industry gave rise to a number of ancillary and support activities. The town had long supported a leather making and factoring function, and this continued through to the Great War. Some contraction in the production of leather was experienced, however, as a result of growing concentration in the home industry, and the intense competition generated by large, monopolistic American leather trusts.² Merchants providing grandery and sundry supplies to

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1. On the fire see, T. Ireson, Northamptonshire (1954) Ch.5. *passim*. On the town's early history see Ireson, and Helen Camm's history in V.C.H. Vol. III pl - 67.
 2. On the British leather industry generally in the period see R.A.Church "The British Leather Industry and Foreign Competition 1870-1914", Ec.H.R. 2nd series (1971) Vol. 24. Cf. Chapter 4 & 5 below on leather merchants.

Figure 1:ii - Number of Shoe Workers at Northampton
Aged 10 years and over 1851-1911

Census Year		No. Shoe Workers	As % those Employed in Manufacturing	As % Total Occup. Pop ⁿ .
1851	Male	4181	71.7	43.9
	Female	<u>1224</u> (1758 ¹)	31.3 (45.0)	19.6 (28.1)
	Total	5405	55.5	34.3
1861	Male	4516	74.3	41.4
	Female	<u>1744</u> (2010 ¹)	36.1 (41.6)	23.4 (27.0)
	Total	6260	57.4	34.1
1871 ²	Male	4641	70.4	42.8
	Female	<u>852</u> (2860)	17.8 (59.9)	7.7 (25.9)
	Total	5493	48.3	25.1
1881	Male	6988	77.8	44.8
	Female	<u>3473</u>	74.7	42.5
	Total	10461	76.8	44.0
1891	Male	9319	81.0	48.8
	Female	<u>3819</u>	71.7	39.0
	Total	13138	78.1	45.5
1901	Male	11167	73.4	41.6
	Female	<u>4307</u>	58.2	33.9
	Total	15474	68.5	39.1
1911	Male	11005	64.4	35.6
	Female	<u>5956</u>	61.7	38.0
	Total	16961	63.4	36.5

Source:- Registrar General's Printed Decennial Census Reports.

Notes: 1. Shoemakers Wives
2. Aged 20 years and above.

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the industry became prominent; the leading firms were that of Stimpson Bros.^{1.} & Phipps and Son. Last-making flourished, the principal firms being the British-American Last Works,^{2.} and R. Whitton & Co.^{3.} Firms providing packaging to the industry likewise flourished, the most prominent being Horton & Aldridge, cardboard box manufacturers.^{4.} A growing trade in dyes and polishes for leather was undertaken, the most successful firm being William Wren & Co. A family concern, founded by William; by 1909 the firm's products had attained a world-wide reputation.^{5.} As at other centres, several local engineering firms traded from the 1880s, supplying shoe machinery to the industry. the most prominent were: Northampton Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.^{6.} the Northampton Machinery Co. Ltd.^{7.} and Universal Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.^{8.} However, such was the continued demand for handsewn work that L. Richter and Son were still fully occupied in supplying the necessary tools and fittings throughout our period.^{9.}

As figure 1:i and 1:ii testify, the manufacturing base of the town was heavily committed to one staple industry. Manufacturing activity outside this area was

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1. Stimpson Bros. Ltd. founded in 1870 as Watkins & Stimpson. In 1879, Watkins retired and William Stimpson joined his brother Alfred. The latter conducted the machinery business and William the leather, and mercery activities, which were supplied from a large factory and warehouse in Kettering. In 1906, the partnership was incorporated, with an authorised capital of £50000: A. & W. Stimpson were made permanent directors. (S. & L.T. Supplement (1916).
 2. The British-American was founded by C.C. Hardwick and C.H. Busby. The former was a freemason and former president of the Last Manufacturers Association 1939-45. He died, aged 81, in 1960 (N.I. January 1961) p.40.
 3. B.S.T.J. 25 June 1909 p540-41. Operating ten lathes and turning out 2000 pairs of lasts a week. Also made legging trees and supplied large quantities of solid blocks for manufacturing purposes. Founded by Robert, who by 1909 had been joined by his only son Charles R. Whitton.
 4. Formerly Arlidge & Co. of Dengate, was taken over in 1909 by William Henry Horton (1875-1955) Name changed and premises moved in 1913 to Campbell Square. Firm registered as a private company in 1923. (N.I.) 25 March 1955 p4.)
 5. B.S.T.J. 25 June 1909^{pg. 548} Cf. Footwear March 1909 p.109 "...were the first makers of wax polishes and now have the biggest regular output of polishes in tins.." Capacity was estimated at 16000 tins an hour, and the firm had its own tin box factory in Birmingham. By 1909, the firm was run by William's two sons, W.E. & T.D. Wren.
 6. See Chapter Two below.
 7. Founded by J.V. Collier - a son of Simon Collier, manufacturer, in 1906, the company amalgamated with the machinery business carried on by Phipps & Son Guildhall Road: C.W. Phipps became chairman and Collier managing director. A manufacturing firm, it established new types of heeling, lasting and nailing machinery: The International Shoe Machinery was also founded at this time to exploit a new lasting machine patent.
 8. A company formed in the Edwardian period to take over the shoe machinery interests in Northampton of Stimpson Bros & Greenwood & Batley of Leeds. The company acted as selling agents for Greenwood machines. Alfred Stimpson was chairman and the firm was under the daily control of A. Ward, J. Wilson and A. Gent.
 9. B.S.T.J. 25 June 1909 p556.

executed on a mostly small scale purely to meet local or regional needs. This over-commitment had long been a matter for local comment and concern. Thus, in an 1879 guide book it was noted:

.. Northampton is essentially a shoe manufacturing town. The manufacture of boots and shoes is the only staple trade, and when that suffers the whole town is affected. An attempt has recently been made to start the elastic web manufacturer but it failed. Endeavours have also been made to establish iron smelting furnaces in the neighbourhood, but hitherto these have met with small success...

Periodic newspaper reports attest to the continued concern of the town, but following the distress witnessed during the early 1890's depression in trade re-newed debate in the town council in the Spring of 1897 ensued.² Again following the complete rationalisation of the shoe industry in the early Edwardian years, debate was again enjoined to lessen the plight caused by unemployment and short-time working in the staple trade. Much consideration was given to the need to broaden the town's manufacturing base but little was achieved. By 1910, some degree of local concern was voiced about the town's failure to diversify industrial activity, and attract new firms as near neighbours like Coventry and Leicester had done.³ It was this route and not narrow specialisation that was to provide the future secular prosperity of the town in the 20th Century.⁴

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1. Mark & Bradley Northampton Past & Present: A Handy Guide Book (1879) p94
Elastic-sided footwear was then popular, and a strong elastic-web industry had successfully been started at Leicester some years earlier (see V.C.H.Leics iii).
 2. See reports of council meetings in N.M., B.S.T.J. and S.L.R.
 3. This concern is fully recorded in the local press of the period - see, eg, Northampton Independent Cf.M.F.Collins. Changes in land use in the Borough of Northampton during the Past 100 Years (unpublished B. Litt thesis, University of Oxford 1970) pl10 et seq.
 4. An important element of this diversification was the growth of engineering firms, and in the pre-1914 period the foundations of this new departure were being laid. In addition to the shoe machinery firms, engineering foundries serving local needs are to be found, the most prominent being William Butlin's Vulcan Works (agricultural, and later shoe, machinery) and William Allchin & Son (Est.1847) at the Globe Works, Augustine Street, which developed Steam traction engines. With the dawning of the automotive industry, several firms became involved in car production. Grose Ltd. (est.1888) and Dorman Engineering Co. initially made and repaired bicycles and sewing machines, but became involved in automotive products in the late 1890s: the former in the manufacture of components and as agents for Renault cars, the latter as a manufacturer of motorcycles. (Where to Buy in Northampton (1891) and J. Stafford Life in Old Northampton 1975: see also VCH Northants ii and material in N.P.L. from the Northampton Chamber of Commerce). By contrast, the firm of Mullinars (est.1760), that had been one of the leading coach-buildings in the country, switched to car body manufacture, specialising from 1900 in Rolls Royce bodies. In 1910 a monoplane was built at their Bridge Street Works (Stafford, op.cit.p61). A further development which anticipated the shift to engineering was the establishment of Smith, Major & Stevens at the newly built Abbey Works, St. James. A London firm established in 1770, it had begun manufacturing lifts in 1878. The other major evidence of diversification prior to 1914 was the shift into clothing manufacture: the most prominent firm was the Brook Manufacturing Co. founded in 1899 by Londoner Isaac T. Frisby and his son Arthur. (N.I. 11 May 1956 pl0 & 16. February 1951 pl0.)

The only industries executed on anything like a large scale were brewing, foundry work, paper-making flour milling and wood milling.¹ The largest Northampton brewer, and one of the largest UK country brewers, was P. Phipps & Co. Ltd. Founded at Towcester in 1801, the firm moved to Bridge Street Northampton in 1817, where a new brewery was erected in 1865. This was extended in 1872-77 to give a capacity of 600 gallons a day. In 1880 the firm was converted with capital of £½ million under the chairmanship of Pickering Phipps, son of the founder, and prominent local conservative politician.² Next in size was the Northampton Brewery Co. Ltd.: established in 1865, converted in 1887, it was under the control of S.L. Seckham. With a capacity of 2000 barrels a week, by 1891 a chain of tied houses and 30 agencies in 10 counties had been established.³

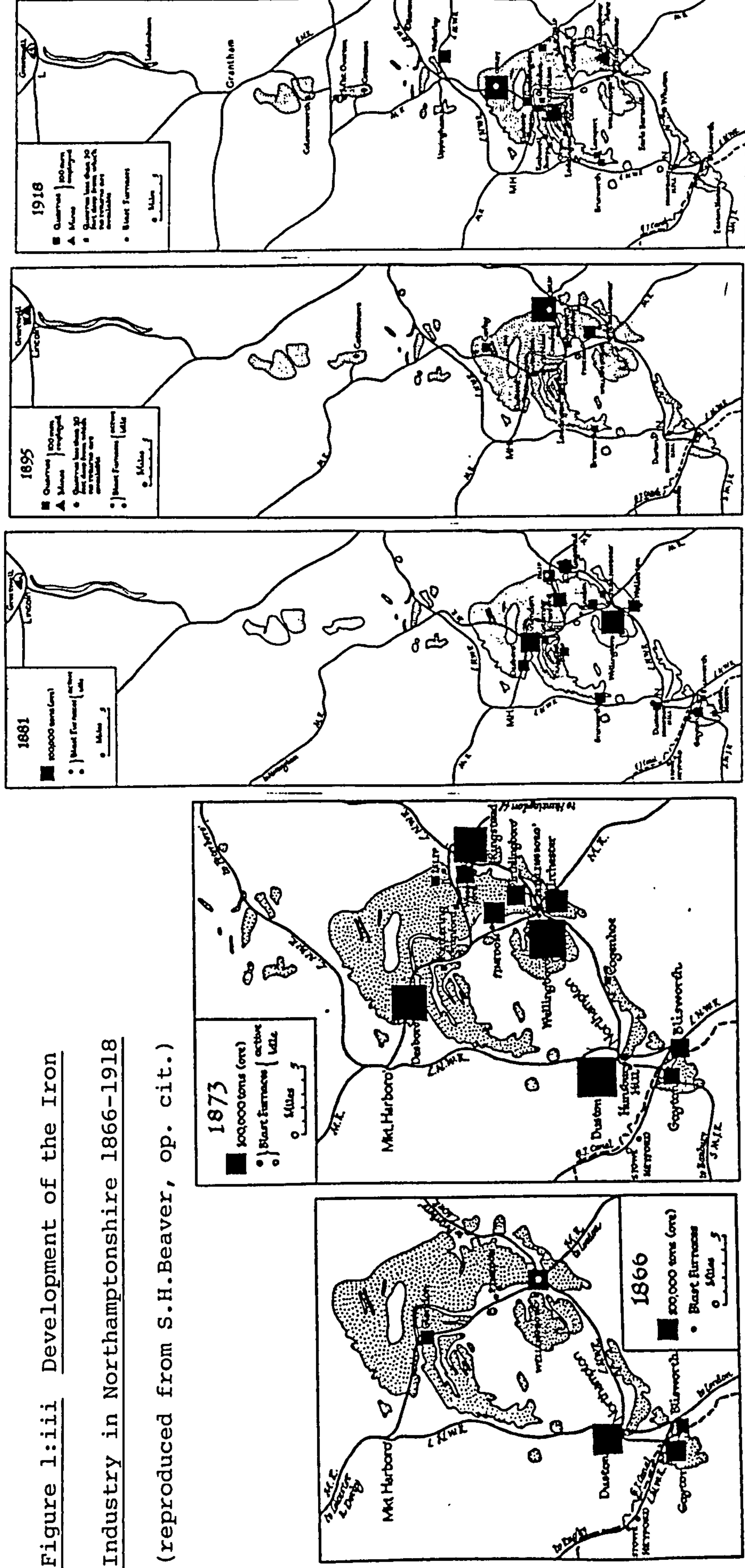
The iron industry at Northampton occupied a minor place in terms of employment, but on to this base considerable light engineering capacity was to be grafted in the 20th century discussed above. This industry was revived in the county in 1852,⁴ after seven centuries, when the first small consignments of iron ore were quarried and transported to Staffordshire. Concomitant with this, the county witnessed the first modern smelting of ore at Wellingborough by William Butlin: a second furnace was fired at Heyford in 1855 and a third by 1866, despite the lack of local coal stocks. Quarrying quickly sprung up along existing lines of railway communication (Fig. 1:iii refers).⁵ The period 1864 -73 witnessed a rapid expansion of ore-

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1. Kellys Northampton Directory (1914) p158 "... The town is also noted for its breweries, including Messrs. P. Phipps & Co. Ltd. (with which is incorporated Ratcliffe & Jeffery Ltd.), the Northampton Brewery Co. Ltd., Abington Park Brewery Co. and Messrs. T. Manning & Co. Ltd., besides another on a smaller scale. There are also extensive iron foundries, saw mills several maltings and flour mills and brick and tile making is also carried on..." Other prominent firms were Bassett-Lowke the world famous model makers, and Birdsall & Son (Est. 1792) bookbinders, who in addition to an extensive commercial business, executed work for Bible Societies, Royalty, Archival Depositories.
 2. Where to Buy in Northampton (1891).
 3. ibid.
 4. S.H.Beaver, "The Development of the Northamptonshire Iron Industry 1851-1930" in L.D.Stamp & S.W.Wooldridge (Eds) London Essays in Geography (1951) p38-58. Cf. Sir Frederick Scopes "The Development of Corby" N.P. & P.Vol. III No. 4. pl25-30 and no. 5. pl75-81.
 5. On the extent of local quarries and locational restraints to on smelting see S.H.Beaver, ibid p34-48.

Figure 1:iii Development of the Iron

Industry in Northamptonshire 1866-1918

(reproduced from S.H.Beaver, op. cit.)



extraction, with quarries around Northampton at Duston & Hunsbury Hill playing a prominent role.^{1.} In the years immediately after this a sharp increase in smelting capacity is observed,^{2.} led by Thomas Butlin & Co. of Wellingborough. From the 1880s, ore extraction quickly became concentrated in the east of the county around Wellingborough, Islip and Glendon, and later still Corby (Figure 1: iii refers). However, ore extraction and smelting at Hunsbury Hill, a mile south of Northampton, continued until January 1921.^{3.} Nevertheless, furnace activity has been noted in the town in the 1880s:

...In the official statistics for 1885 and 1886 we find a record of a "Patent Iron Scrap Forge Works", owned by Mrs. Whitworth, at Northampton. In 1885 there were five puddling furnaces here, only one of which was working. Presumably the concern was a failure, for it is only recorded for these two years, and no other reference to it has been discovered.

A more successful venture was that of Messrs. Stenson & Co. at Northampton, here the local pig iron was successfully puddled, but the industry cannot be said to have been based entirely upon local product, for large quantities of scrap were mixed in with the pigs. Most of this iron went... to Bedford^{4.} and other places for the manufacture of agricultural implements...

Thereafter furnace activity lessened somewhat, but important foundry capacity was maintained in the town throughout the period.

Despite the growth and importance of a narrow manufacturing base, however, the town's traditional role as an administrative and marketing centre of the county was never lost. In terms of employment, this meant that a significant, and expanding tertiary sector was present. As was noted in 1914:

...In addition to those engaged in manufacture, there are large numbers engaged in the work of distribution directly linked with manufacture, in wholesale and retail business, professional work, and occupations connected with transport, building, marketing and general maintenance.^{5.}

This importance as a county town was reflected by the presence of the early shire hall (completed in 1682)^{6.} and the large market square, second only to that of Nottingham in size. In July 1873, a six acre Cattle market in low Meadow on the south of the town was opened. Here twice weekly markets for fat and store stock were held: pens for up to 10500 animals were available.^{7.} In addition, twelve

1. S.H.Beaver, *ibid*, p38-42.

2. S.H.Beaver, *ibid*, p42-46.

3. S.H.Beaver, *ibid*, p54-55.

4. S.H.Beaver, *ibid*, p44-45

5. Kelly's Northants Directory 1914p73.

6. C.A.Markham County Buildings (1885) of N. Pevsner Buildings of Britain: Northamptonshire (1973 - 2nd edition).

7. Kellys, *op cit*. p72.

Figure 1: iv. Population of Northampton and Environs

1851-1911

Area	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Old Borough	26624	32613 (22.5%)	41169 (26.5%)	51881 (26%)	61016 (17.6%)	61164 (0.2%)	58897 (-3.7%)
1901 Additions	3027	3918	5264	7161	12893	23032	27925
Total Population [% = inter-censal change]	29651	36531 (23.2%)	46432 (27.1%)	59042 (27.2%)	73909 (25.2%)	84196 (13.9%)	86822 (3.1%)

Source: Registrar Generals Printed Decennial Census Reports.

annual fairs were held for cheese, sheep, cattle, horses and general provisions. In addition to twice weekly general provisions markets, a thriving and developed retail centre and professional services catered for the needs of both the late Victorian townspeople and those of the County. Culturally and politically, Northampton's position as a county town was reflected by its learned institutions and societies, and the several political clubs: The Northampton Club in George Row served as the gentleman's club for town and county.

As an accompaniment to industrial development, Northampton also experienced significant changes in its urban character and size in the period. Until 1850 population growth was accommodated within the old borough boundary. The Registrar-General noted at the time of the 1851 Census:

The increase in population in the Parish of St. Sepulchre's is ascribed to the great increase in houses, chiefly occupied by shoemakers. (Between 1831-51 the increase of population in All Saints and the other parishes of Northampton is chiefly attributable to an extension of boot and shoe manufacture.¹

However, after that date the town steadily expanded out from its traditional 'D' shaped nucleus in order to accommodate a continued growth in population. Although as early as 1849 it was stated that St. James End, to the West of the River Nene, "... maybe considered the western suburb of the town..."² significant suburban development within parishes adjoining the municipal boundary only dates from the 1870s. Major developments occurred to the East between the Kettering and Billing Roads, as a result of the restrictions caused by the shallow, boggy river valley to the West.³ Thus in order to realistically study the town's development over time it becomes important to include these adjoining 'host' parishes in any demographic statistics concerning urban growth; see Figure 1: iv. Although the entire area of these 'host' parishes was not to be directly

1. Registrar General's Census Report 1851: Population Abstracts, 1851 (1399) XLIII p43.

2. Whallan's Directory of Northamptonshire for 1849.

3. Thomas H. Mawson County Borough of Northampton: Proposals for its Development and Reconstruction (1925) p46-47, "... the obstruction of the river, and the low levels of the river valleys, have prevented extension to the south and west.. some industrial buildings have been erected on isolated parts of the low land... gas works, tanneries, and saw mills... The land is not of high value.. (and) the cost of raising it to a suitable level for building purposes and providing drainage facilities would be probably much greater than the value of the land...."

Figure 1: v. Population of Northampton and Environs 1851-1911:

A breakdown by Civil Parishes

Area	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
<u>Old Borough</u>							
(I) All Saints	8973	9058 1.0	9503 4.9	9314 -2.0	9133 -1.9	7403 -18.9	8053
(II) St. Peters	1272	1216 -4.4	1595 31.2	1665 4.4	1752 5.2	1414 -19.3	
(III) St. Andrews	3267	6411 96.2	8544 33.3	16470 92.8	10625 -35.5	9485 -10.7	
(IV) St. Sepulchres	8156	8614 17.9	12768 32.8	18983 9.5	19300 3.3	17149 -9.8	50844
(V) St. Giles	4956	6314 27.4	8758 38.7	10449 19.3	20206 93.4	25443 25.9	
<u>1901 Additions</u>							
(I) Dallington	714	686 -3.9	1051 +53.2	1610 +53.2	2233 38.7	4852 117.3	5451 12.4
(II) Duston	563	1162 106.4	1640 41.2	2497 +52.3	2963 18.7	3528 19.1	4513 27.9
(III) Kingsthorpe	1586	1906 20.2	2409 26.4	3054 26.8	7697 152.0	14099 83.2	15476 9.8
(IV) Abington	164	164	164	143	121	553 357.0	2485 349.4

Source: Registrar Generals Printed Decennial Census Reports.

influenced by this pattern of growth, and were not, therefore eventually incorporated into the enlarged County Borough, out of statistical necessity their entire populations are included here. As population in the 'rural' portions of these parishes was relatively very small, such an extension does not significantly distort the trend of our analysis. Similarly, by the turn of the century there is evidence of small scale settlement by middle class Northamptonians beyond even the new municipal boundary: yet again this element is sufficiently small not to distort the figures.

Figure 1:iv, therefore, reveals the changing pattern of population growth, and its distribution between the old and new areas of the borough. Between 1851-1911 the aggregate population of Northampton and its immediate environs rose, with the biggest increases occurring in the sixties and seventies. A slowing in growth can be observed in the eighties, with a stabilisation and subsequent contraction in growth taking place in the succeeding two decades. This pattern of growth mirrors the shifting job opportunity trends within the town's footwear industry, which stabilised in the last decade of the century, and began to contract in the Edwardian period as rationalisation began to reduce manning levels.

In contrast to this overall picture of growth, a significant shift in the internal pattern of population distribution can be demonstrated: these trends are clearly shown in Figure 1:v. There occurred a loss of population from the nucleus in favour of the town's inner and, more particularly, the outer suburbs. A similar shift in housing stock concentrations can be demonstrated from census data, which emphasises the changing land use patterns which were evolving. The inner parishes of All Saints and St. Peters situated in the old central area began to lose their residential character as retailing, business and commercial activities became increasingly concentrated in the principal thoroughfares of the town centre. This loss of population whilst still slight in the seventies and eighties gained momentum after 1891. A similar decline, quite dramatic at its inception in the eighties, was also noticeable in the inner suburban area of St. Andrews. This area reveals another facet of land use change in the town,

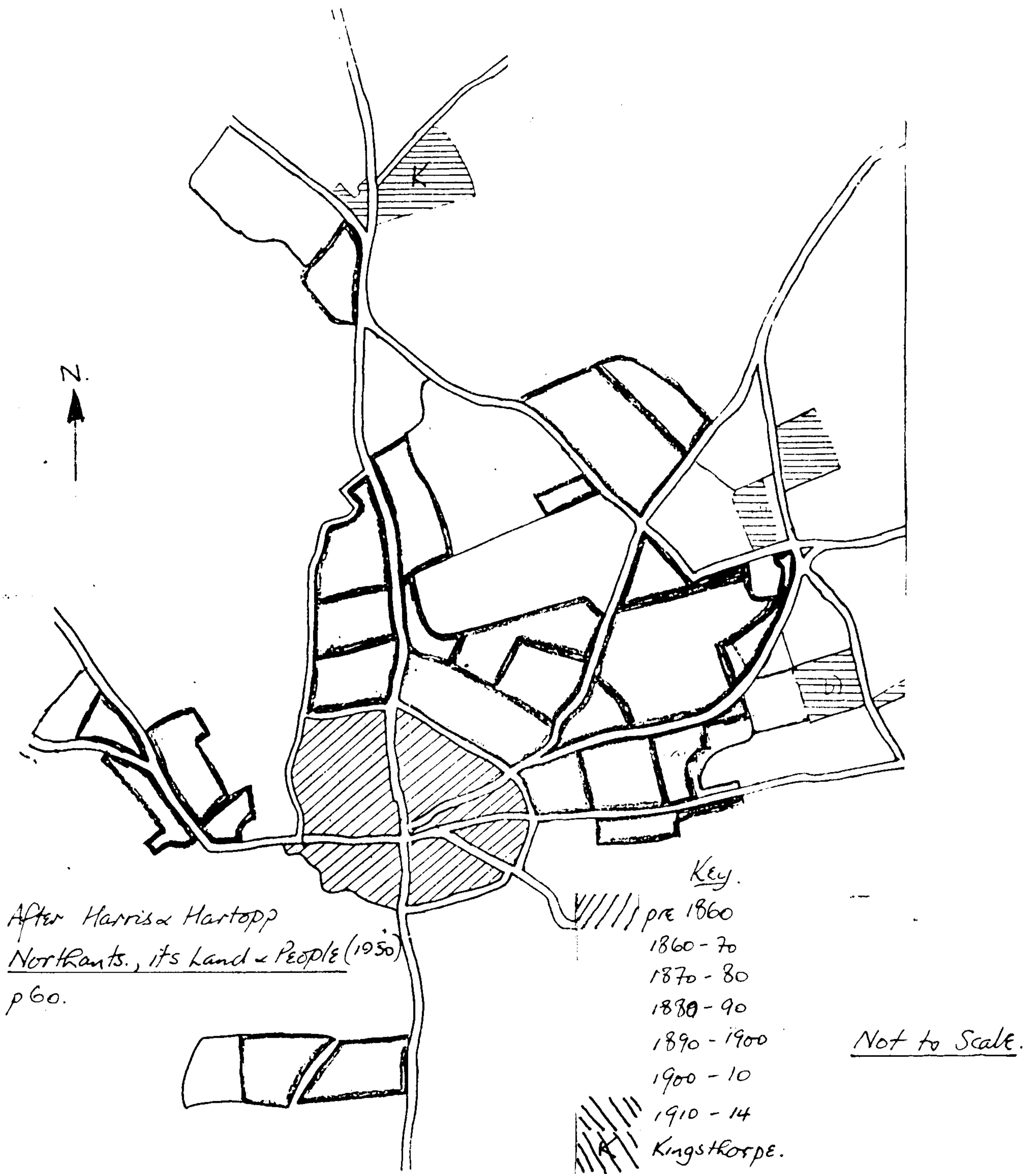


Figure 1:vi Urban Development of Northampton 1860 - 1914.

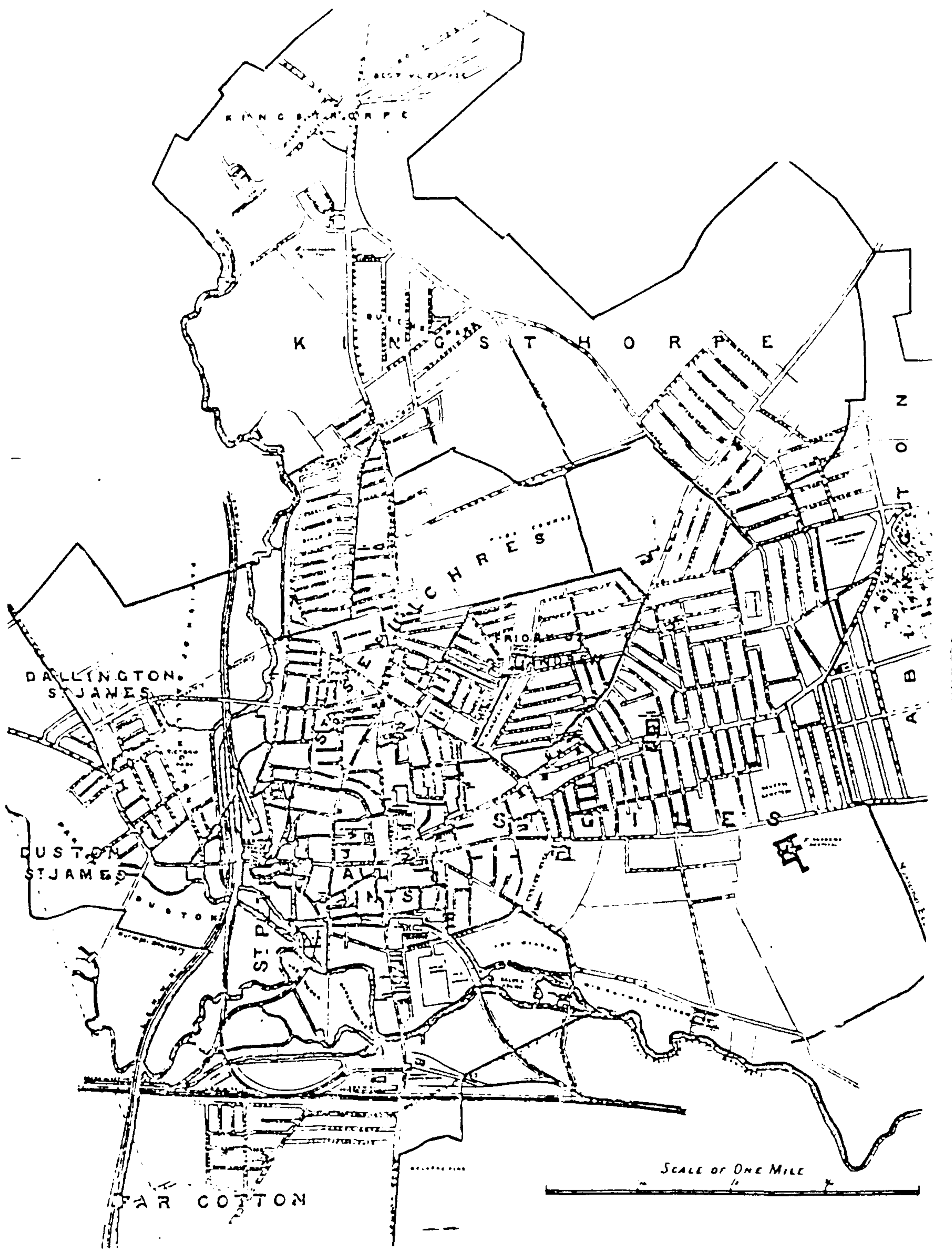


Figure 1:vii Urban Development of Northampton in 1903

the displacement of housing by industrial development.

The two remaining parishes of the old borough show a less well defined shift in population concentrations. This is especially true of St. Sepulchres, which reaches out from the northern part of the town's nucleus to the Northern inner suburbs erected between circa 1860-90. This parish undergoes depopulation during the Edwardian period, a process probably concentrated in that part of the parish in the old nucleus, and was similar in character to the changes noted in All Saints and St. Peters: industrial developments in the inner suburban area of the parish adjacent to the nucleus may have also resulted in some population displacement. In contrast, St. Giles is the only old borough parish which does not lose population. This would appear to be so because urban development from each decade is to be found within its boundary. Thus, whilst some changes in land use in its nucleus area and in Newtown occurs, this was more than compensated by the terraced residential development, which takes place between the Kettering Road and Billing Road areas.

Those parishes adjacent to, and which in 1901 were incorporated into the old borough, however, show a steady accretion of people, as Figure 1:v demonstrates. Here it is significant to note that at the point when the inner-town population begins to sharply increase, there occurs a dramatic increase in outer-suburban area population: first in Kingsthorpe, then in Dallington, and lastly in Abington. These dramatic increases underline not only the growing popularity of the outer suburbs amongst Northamptonians and newcomers alike, but also suggests the presence of a population weighted towards those of child-bearing age compared with those in the more central areas.¹

Despite this outward shift of population from the centre over time, one essential feature of the townscape persisted, and that was the symbiotic relationship between residential and industrial land-use throughout much of the borough. The location of workshops, warehouses, and later footwear factories 'cheek by jowl'

1. It was observed at this time that "... excluding its detached suburbs Northampton now covers rather more than three times the area of the mediaeval borough..." (The Builder LXXIII No. 2829 (1897) p371).

Figure 1: viii. Factory Locations in Central and EastNorthampton 1854, 1884 and 1914

Zone	1854		1884		1914	
	No	%	No.	%	No.	%
I Old Town	70	87.5	36	29.5	13	20.3
II Semilong, St. Andrews, and Newtown	9	11.25	73	59.85	24	37.5
III Post 1880 Northampton, the Eastern Suburb.	1	1.25	13	10.65	27	42.2
Total	80	100.0	122	100.0	64	100.0

with residential development in side streets was a marked feature of each stage of the town's growth. Whilst this feature was most pronounced in the inner-town areas of St. Andrews and Newtown, it persisted in many parts of the outer suburbs of St. Sepulchres, and, to a greater extent, St. Giles: similarly, it can be seen in the Western suburb of St. James. As a result, the locational focus of the town's staple industry tended to shift over time with each successive extension of the built-up area, as detailed below:

- (1) 1860 = Employers premises tended to be located in the nucleus.
- (11) 1860-80 = Employers premises tended to be in the St. Andrews and Newton areas.
- (111) Post 1880 = Employers premises tended to be located in the Eastern and Western suburbs.

This is not to say that any one zone became the exclusive industrial zone at any one time, but rather that during the period of the main development of a zone the bulk of employers premises were to be found there; Figure viii refers.

There was a tendency for new units of production to be located there, and a counter tendency for the number of units in older areas to contract.

Whether residential development preceded factory building or vice versa is ultimately difficult to determine, but there is evidence to suggest that the evolving needs of the industry dictated general growth trends to some extent. Over time, the demand for larger units of production arose, many being built on the one floor principle. In a closely developed urban area where development land was in short supply, the ideal solution was to seek a 'green-field' site. This not only allowed a more systematic and coherent development to be followed on cheaper land, but also avoided the difficulties of urban land purchase negotiation, the need to develop irregular shaped sites, demolition costs, the increasing inadequacy of converting artisan cottages to industrial use, the problems of building regulation details, and so forth. Thus, where Manfield & Sons built a factory on a 'green-field' site at the Eastern boundary, and Branch & Co. a factory in the village of Kingsthorpe both had to provide housing for their workforces. Whilst J. Branch & Co. Ltd. took responsibility for housing construction (the Bective Estate), as Simon Collier Ltd. had done in St. James two decades earlier, Manfield & Sons gave land to, organised and initially financed departmental building societies at the factory to provide housing adjoining the factory. Such develop-

ments confirmed existing,^{and} significantly influenced, future suburban development in their respective suburbs.

This distinctive style of un-zoned urban development did not give rise to the squalor and environmental excesses of many of Britain's Victorian industrial towns. Several contemporaries remarked upon the town's pleasant aspect:

...The main feature of the town is the remarkable cleanliness of its streets the beauty of its situation and the extent of its open parks and playing fields - all admirable features, frequently lacking in manufacturing towns...¹.

Nevertheless, the town presents a rather sombre, dowdy aspect, with little that could be regarded as architecturally noteworthy.² This was particularly as a result of mixed industrial-residential development. T.H.Mawson's inter-war redevelopment plan for the County Borough argued cogently against such "haphazard building development.. which gives the impression of congestion, disorder, and an indifference to property values..."³ It not only resulted in a lack of amenity, light, air and privacy for residents, but was inefficient for industry.

He noted that:

... the principal industries.. require facilities for their maintenance and expansion that were not easy to obtain in the cramped and congested conditions that appertain in some cases. Where works are hedged round by closely packed houses and shops, and only accessible through narrow streets, they must suffer from the inability to expand and experience considerable inconvenience.⁴

Yet despite the sustained arguments favouring the rational, zoned use of space in the town put forward by Mawson, he nevertheless understood the rationale behind such haphazard development. He comments:

... There is a certain amount of convenience attached to this arrangement, the workers homes being in close proximity to the factory, they are able to return for their midday meals. Those interested in present conditions may argue that the cheap house near the factory is worth more because of its proximity to the place of employment, than it would be were it at some distance and enjoying more open surroundings...⁵

1. S.L.R.Supplement 22 July 1927 p.i. cf. S.S.Campion Homeland Book of Northampton (1907) passim.

2. See, eg. the tone of article in the Builder, loc. cit., passim.

3. Mawson loc. cit. p

4. Mawson ibid p47

5. Mawson ibid p54

However, important as the employment linkage¹ was in urban expansion, increasing local attention was being drawn toward a polarisation in the social complexion of the various districts of the town. At the turn of the century, the local medical officer of health said of the town's housing accommodation,

Northampton has no pretensions to be a residential town. It is strictly a manufacturing district, and its population is largely composed of those engaged in the shoemaking industry. Mansions and fine villas in the locality are but few, and the greater portion of dwellings are adapted for artizan tenants...²

Accurate as this description is of the type of housing stock available may have been, it lacks any understanding of the often subtle social demarcations which were emerging between districts in the town. The social character of outer suburban estates under construction from 1890 were quite different from the inner town district of a generation before. There, there was to be found the discrete social grouping of streets within a district common to many pre-industrial European towns. In contrast, these new residential estates were of a more exclusively lower middle, middle class character. In 1898, the local Kelly's

Directory notes

... Kingsley Park, which lies on the East side of the parish and on Kettering Road, and Queen's Park, on the South side, on the Market Harborough Road are now largely built upon and occupied principally by manufacturers and commercial³ people, who have their places of business at Northampton....

The rise in residential development in Abington parish, particularly the area bounding St. Giles, during the Edwardian period is reflected in the dramatic increase in population there, which is tabulated in Figure 1:v. Episcopal

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1. On the concept of employment linkage and its relevance to urban development, see A.M. Warnes (1) "Early separation of Homes from Workplaces and the Urban Structure of Chorley", Trans. Historical Society of Lancs. and Cheshire (1970) Vol. 122; (11) "Residential Patterns in an emerging Industrial Town" Institute of British Geographers Social Patterns in Cities (1973): J.E. Vance (i) Housing the Worker: Determinative and Contingent Ties in Nineteenth Century Birmingham "Economic Geography" (1967) Vol. 43, No. 2; (11) Housing the Worker: The Employment Linkage as a Force in Urban structure "Economic Geography" (1966) Vol 42, No.1.
 2. Northampton Medical Officer of Health Report 1901 p71
 3. Kelly's Northampton Directory pl24.

Visitation Returns made by the Anglican Clergy during the period paint a similar picture.. By the Edwardian period, clerks from the inner-town parishes were pointing to inter-district migration in an attempt to explain dwindling congregations. The importance of such statements for us is that they also offer some broad assessment of the changing inter-district class structure. In 1905 the Vicar of the central parish of All Saints remarked

... Everyone is leaving the town and going further off to live.¹
There is the migration of all the well-to-do out of the parish.

Respectable artisans were likewise caught up in this migratory movement. In 1901, the Vicar of St. Katherine's, a parish situated in the old Eastern sector of the town, which by this date was characterised by old, insanitary dwellings, observed,

... There is certainly a decrease in the congregation of late. This I partly attribute to the decrease in population... The people are drifting to the suburbs and we are having to deal (in this parish) more and more with the dregs (sic) of society.. The better class of the working people migrate to the improved artisan dwellings which are being erected in the suburbs. This leaves us with the residuum of the population which is most difficult to deal with...²

A more recent study of Northampton by M.F.Collins (1970) stresses this evolving social stratification of residential districts, the beginning of which he dates from the generation after 1865. Whereas at this date middle-class residences are located in the prominent and fashionable thoroughfares of the borough, by 1900 there had become established a concentration of middle class residences in those suburbs discussed above.³ Collins views these new estates as imposing

... a social homogeneity upon large areas that had heretofore not existed..⁴

The significance of this development is underpinned, he argues, by the prevailing character of house building generally in the town after 1900:

... both before and after World War One, many houses were middle class.. compared with the chiefly working class character of housing erected during periods of rapid growth in the nineteenth century.⁵

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1. N.R.O./X913 Episcopal Triennial Visitation Returns (Incumbent): All Saints Northampton 1910.
 2. NRO/X911 Episcopal Triennial Visitation Return (Incumbent): St. Katherine's Northampton 1905.
 3. For further discussion on the development of middle class housing in Northampton see Chapter Eight, below.
 4. M.F.Collins op cit. p109.
 5. Collins ibid. p110.

As has been stressed the economic and urban development of Northampton in the 19th and early 20th centuries was founded upon one staple industry: shoemaking. The town's attachment to this industry is legend, and it is possible that shoemaking for other than local needs dated back to the 13th century.¹ This is speculation, but surviving guild and corporation ordinances of the late mediaeval period have been cited by historians as evidence of a regional trade in footwear existing. It is probable that by this time, the local shoemakers guild's monopoly powers had further reinforced Northampton's regional importance as a shoemaking centre.² This early trade in footwear was encouraged by several locational factors. The town's early importance as a market centre, and centre of regional government were significant.³ So also was the local availability of leather. During its early history Prof. C.F.Sargeant has argued⁴ that because of transportation costs there existed a strong locational tie between leather making and shoemaking: shoemakers were the largest customers for leather despite the variety of uses to which it was put. And certainly in Northamptonshire and the Midland area generally, there existed the right confluence of requirements

1. A.Adcock The Northampton Shoe (1931) p13, cf. p15-18. Also J.C.Cox (ED) Records of the Borough of Northampton (1898) Vol. II. But cf. V.C.H. II p317-18, where it is argued that no specialisation of function existed prior to the seventeenth century. B. Muscott states that mediaeval settlements were self-sufficient in footwear, and that the periodic references in local records to shoe production in Northampton relate only to "purchases.. due to the temporary residence of kings.."
2. A.Adcock, op cit, p19-20. Cf. for the regulations controlling the trade in the Liber Custumarum of Northampton, see Cox, op. cit., I p348 et seq.
3. See generally T. Ireson, op cit, chap. 3. passim.
4. C.P. Sargeant "Physical Factors Affecting Localisation of the Boot and Shoe Trade in England", Geography (1938) Vol. 23, p250-58. Cf. P.R.Mounfield. "The Footwear Industry of the East Midlands: (11) Northamptonshire from Mediaeval Times to 1700" East Midlands Geographer (1965). This essay provides a convenient, modern account, based on secondary sources, of the early development of shoemaking in the County up to 1700. Similarly on the post 1700 period see P.R.Mounfield ibid (11) Northamptonshire 1700-1911" East Midlands Geographer. (1966).

for
 tanning.^{1.} Finally, the country enjoyed good communications, and a crucial, central position in England which greatly facilitated the marketing of its staple product. In contrast to the indifferent roads in many parts of Britain, "... those through Northamptonshire were the exception as they were a direct link between London and the North."^{2.} Indeed, long after leather began to be drawn in from further afield, continued good communications and the introduction of new transportation systems were to remain of locational importance to the industry,^{3.} as were the build up, generation by generation, of specialist skills within the local labour force.

The town's trading and occupational specialisation was strengthened in the Tudor period, as a result of local shoemakers quickly adopting the early sixteenth century developments in shoemaking: the introduction of the welted boot. Despite the gradual loss of their formal, local monopoly powers after 1549^{4.}, and the general economic malaise which settled over this and other Midland Towns^{5.} Adcock argues

1. The county was able to supply the raw materials for tanning, viz:- a plentiful supply of hides and skins, a supply of oak bark for tanning liquor, an adequate pure supply of water, and lime, vats, oil and flat ground for tanning pits. Cf. F.M.J. (1965) p293, "... the combination of cattle for hides and skins, and oak bark for tanning was irresistible.." The county was long famed for its fattening of upland cattle in preparation for the London market. See R.J.Colyer, "Some Aspects of Cattle Production in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire..", N.P. & P. V, 1, (1973) p45-54, and references quoted there; also R.J.Colyer, "A Nineteenth Century Welsh Cattle Dealer in Northamptonshire," N.P. & P. V, 2, (1974) p121. The increase in enclosure for pasture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries increased the availability of hides; see W.E.Tate, "Inclosure Movements in Northamptonshire," N.P. & P. I, 2, (1949) p19-33. On the county's forest economy in early modern times, see P.A.J.Pettit, The Royal Forests of Northamptonshire, A Study in Their Economy (1968) N.R.S. Vol. XXIII.
2. F.M.J. *ibid.*
3. On transportation, see relevant sections in V.C.H. The local material on this subject is of value and includes: on roads - A. Cossons, "The Turnpike Roads of Northamptonshire", N.P. & P. I, 3, (1950), 29-37; D.H. Kennett, "The Geography of Coaching in Early Nineteenth Century Northamptonshire," N.P. & P., V, 2, (1974), 107-20; on early attempts to make the River Nève navigable (1640-1723). Cox, *op cit*, II, p542; on canals, Cox, *ibid* 542-43; V.A.Hatley, "Some aspects of Northampton's History 1815-51," N.P. & P. III, 6 (1965/6) p243; V.A.Hatley, "Locks, Lords & Coal.." N.P. & P. VI: 4 (1980-81) p207-19; C.D. Hadfield, Canals of Britain (1959) Vol. 1; J. Boyes & R. Russell The Canals of Eastern England (1971) and on railways, J. Wake, Northampton Vindicated: or Why the Main Line Missed the Town (1935); V.A.Hatley, "Northampton re-Vindicated," N.P. & P. II, 6, (1959) p305-10; N. Marlow, "The Coming of Railways to Northamptonshire," N.P. & P. III, 5, (1964) 203-12.
4. Control of former guild regulations and finances were taken over by town Council, see Cox, *op cit.* II p293-94.
5. See T. Ireson, *op cit*, p76-78, concerning how Northampton fared in this period.

that Northampton's ready adoption of this new technique resulted in prosperity amongst local shoemasters.¹ Moreover W.G.Hoskins has pointed to a marked degree of occupational specialisation existing in the 1524 tax assessment. In this assessment, 390 workers in specified trades were listed, including fifty shoemakers, fifteen tanners, compared with twenty-one bakers, twenty weavers, twenty tailors, and 264 in fifty eight other trades.² However, shoemaking did not grow sufficiently to supplant the declining local woollen industry. It was not until the next century that the trade became established as Northampton's staple, and it was now that the town emerged as Britain's first wholesale footwear production centre. It was a trade founded on military contracts, and is a development which has frequently been re-told in local histories.³

The first contract was placed in 1642⁴ at the time of the Ulster uprising, and for the next two centuries this work was to be the backbone of the Northamptonshire economy; an economy based on the needs of war.⁵ Indeed, it was this stimulus which was to signal the industry's introduction into many towns in the county in the late eighteenth century. It has been noted that,

... The wars on the Continent and in North America in the eighteenth Century, caused a great demand for Boots and shoes, and the trade spread (throughout the County) as far as Market Harborough..⁶

Thus, the first evidence of the wholesale trade in Wellingborough dates from 1767, and in Kettering from 1778.⁷ This spread of the industry through the county resulted from the greatly increased but periodic demand for labour in what, at this time, was a labour intensive activity. Writing of the 1770s, B. Muscott notes:

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1. A. Adcock, op cit. p27-29
 2. W.G.Hoskins, Provincial England (1965) p78. Total population at this time circa 3000.
 3. For Example, see T. Ireson, op cit. Chapter 8; A. Adcock p29-32; V.C.H. ii, 319-20.
 4. The contract was carried out by a consortium of manufacturers led by Thomas Pendleton - see N.C.M. Vol. 3 pl69 et seq on Pendleton.
 5. Several writers on the industry have made this observation, see, for example, F.P.Wootton; "Factory Organisation," in F.Y.Golding (Ed) Boots and Shoes: Their Making, Manufacture and Selling (1935) Vol. 1. p2.
 6. F.M.J. loc. cit. p294.
 7. VCH Northants ii p320.

... There was a great increase in the demand for labour at this time, no doubt owing to the American War and the demand for boots for the Army - Raunds, Long Buckby, Thornby, Kettering, Cold Ashby and Daventry, all wanting shoemakers showed that trade was spreading in to the country.¹

As yet, however, these country areas were merely outwork centres; their development as manufacturing centres was a development of the 19th not the 18th century.² Together then, these locational and trading factors ensured the consolidation of the shoe industry in the eighteenth century. Despite the continued importance of government contract to the Northampton trade until the mid-decades of the nineteenth century, it is the trade in medium to first quality civilian footwear for men which increasingly dominates development. An important market for civilian footwear

1. Ibid.

2. V.C.H. ii p320: P.R.Mounfield has suggested that the emergence of the county shoe centres dates from this time ("The Footwear Industry of the East Midlands: (iii) Northamptonshire, 1700-1911" East Midlands Geographer 3 (1965) p434.) Yet despite the establishment of some shoe firms in towns in the county, the role of those villages and towns was probably no more than that of spill-over centres for Northampton firms when they were inundated with work. They were outworking centres rather than manufacturing centres. Muscott implies that this was the case. Kelly's Directories for Northamptonshire suggest that sustained growth and development of the industry in the county centres dates only from the nineteenth century, and recent essays by R.L.Greenall appear to support such a view (see "The Rise of Industrial Kettering" N.P. & P.V.: 3 (1975), and "The History of Boot and Shoemaking in Long Buckby" N.P. & P. V.: 5 (1979). Indeed in the latter piece he noted, "... people have long had a tendency to exaggerate the antiquity of the boot and shoe trade in the county, especially in places outside Northampton.. In 1889, for instance, it was declared that 'for centuries, the village of Long Buckby has been noted for its shoemakers.' This should have read more correctly 'for half a century...' because the trade really only started to become a major occupation in the village in the eighteen thirties. (p437).) Moreover, Hatley's discussion of late 18 century occupations in the county in Northamptonshire Militia Lists 1777 (1973) pxv et seq gives general support to the view put forward here. Of the sixteen occupations containing over 100 men, shoemaking comes fifth (1164: 5.7%), ahead of which are: Servant (2481: 20.8%) Labourer (2291: 19.2%) Farmer (1332: 11.1%), and Weaving and Framework knitting (1164: 9.7%): Next below shoemakers were Carpenters and joiners (705: 5.9%). The county was an important wool-growing area, and it is the raising of stock and working of the wool that Hatley finds to be the major economic activity. (pxvi & xvii). Whilst of the drift towards shoe-making Hatley concludes that centres within the county had yet to develop a manufacturing base, they were merely outwork centres with the exception of Wellingborough: "... In pre-industrial England the village shoemaker serving his own community was a familiar figure, hence it is not surprising that most of the larger Northamptonshire villages and many of the smaller ones could produce at least one shoemaker among their inhabitants liable for militia service..". However, it was only in the second half of the eighteenth century that villages in the East of the County "... had developed a bias towards the (wholesale) shoe industry... & all these villages subsequently became important centres of shoe manufacturing.. Daventry is revealed by its list not yet to have developed the considerable shoe industry which had become apparent there by 1810." (pxvii-xviii): Cf. R.L.Greenall History of Northamptonshire 1979 p79-81 on Northamptonshire's occupational structure in 18th and early 19th centuries.

with London and for exportation primarily through the port of London had developed as early as the late seventeenth century and grew further in the eighteenth. The development of this trade gave rise to important and abiding links between the shoe industry of Northampton and that of London. Adcock notes that by this latter period one can discuss a differentiation amongst Northampton's shoe masters, as a result of the increasing and insatiable needs for footwear in the capital: a division between retail makers and wholesale manufacturers. Whereas formerly Northampton's shoe masters had made essentially for a bespoke market, turning their hand to the production of ready mades for the London market in times of a slack trading, now, small numbers of masters specialised in wholesale markets exclusively, "... marking an important advance in the industry.."¹. A trend was quickly established whereby Northampton's wholesale makers sent goods overland by carrier on a weekly basis; they following by coach to conduct business personally. The volume of trading was such that a divided labour system emerged in the industry: this became more firmly established in the late 18th century once strict apprenticeship regulations had been eliminated in the county.² The craft-division of labour that resulted was based on the four major processes in shoe production³, viz:-

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| (I) <u>clicking</u> | - the cutting of the upper leather |
| (II) <u>rough stuff cutting</u> | - the preparation of the inner and outer soles, stiffeners etc: collectively known as bottom stuff. |
| (III) <u>closing</u> | - the stitching of the upper leathers. |
| (IV) <u>making</u> | - the other processes in construction; principally lasting, sole attaching and finishing. |

The outwork structure that evolved in the 18th century was to remain in vogue until the eve of mechanisation,⁴ and in modified form in the early stages of industrialis-

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1. Adcock, op. cit.p33. Much of the above on the first establishment of civilian wholesale markets is taken from *ibid.* p31-33.
 2. Apprenticeship, however, never entirely ceased, and several writers on the industry record its use as late as the 1890s. Cf. Chapter 7 below where reference is made to the use of apprenticeship as the basis of training for manufacturers sons.
 3. This division is derived from a study of early textbooks, and draws particularly upon J. Devlin The Shoemaker (1839) J.B.Leno The Art of Boot and Shoemaking (1885) p75 et seq., and E.J. Swaysland Boot and Shoe Manufacture: A Village Industry (1902).
 4. J.H.Clapham (Economic History of Modern Britain I pl68-69) notes that even as late as 1860 it was still far from uncommon to find all these processes being carried out by one man. But D.M.George (London Life in the 18 Century pl96) argues that this numerically large scale survival of true handicrafts man was not really the significant character of the industry even sixty years before. In London and other large centres the market was large enough to make a division of labour economically viable, and with men's and women's footwear forming separate branches of production.

isation was to continue to influence industrial thinking and organisation through to the early 20th century.^{1.} All production was based firmly on hand processing. No machinery or factory working worthy of the name were in use, despite short-lived attempts to mechanise the industry during the high demands experienced for footwear in the Napoleonic Wars. Increasingly in the first half of the 19th century it was becoming commonplace for contemporaries to describe manufacturers premises as factories, but, in fact, the use of the name is a misnomer. These premises performed the mixed function of warehouse, counting house and workshop for key processes: the bulk of production was carried on in shoe workers homes. V.A.Hatley's conclusion of the organisation at Northampton in this period is most apt:

.. The Northampton shoemaker was still an outworker.. and the premises of manufacturers.. were really little more than warehouses in which leather could be stored, cut into shape and distributed to employees, and the finished shoes collected, inspected, packed into hampers and then consigned to purchasers.^{2.}

To locate mechanised factory production at Northampton in the 1860s or indeed elsewhere, as, for example, P.R.Mounfield does is entirely erroneous.^{3.} Indeed, after an exhaustive search of the contemporary literature, the first account of a

1. Between the introduction of the sewing machine in c1857, and the final acceptance of factory based work in the decade after 1895 this basic, craft division of labour became ever more sub-divided. By 1905, a factory-made shoe could pass through the hands of as many as 400 operatives. Inevitably many variations of work systems existed, not all as complex as this. For example, from the Outwork Ledgers of F.W.Pollard & Son (N.R.O.Pollard Papers p262-274) it can be shown that that firm utilised two basic patterns of working in the period 1886-c1900. For special bespoke work, the leather was cut at the factory and then sent to handsewn makers in Long Buckby to be made in their entirety by one man. The finished shoe then returned to the factory shoe room for cleaning and packing. By contrast, Pollards ready-made orders and stock boots passed through seven distinct stages of manufacture: (I) upper and bottom leathers cut in the factory; (II) uppers sent out to a subcontractor to be closed; (III) the work was then lasted by a town outworker or factory worker (IV) bottom stuff was then attached to the lasted upper either by an outworker maker, or by a welt sewer, or by a machine sewer. Alternatively, the work was rivetted by rivetters working in Pollard's premises; (V) the work was then finished by a town outworker; (VI) the work was then passed back to the factory shoe room for cleaning and packing.
2. V.A.Hatley "St. Giles Shoe School J.B.B.S.I. 9. (1961): Similar descriptions are present in the writing of other wholesale centres. Thus for Norwich, see W.L.Sparks The Story of Shoemaking in Norwich (1949); for Leicester, A. Granger "History of the Boot & Shoe Industry in Leicester" J.B.B.S.I. 12: 12 (1965); for Stafford, VCH Staffs ii; and Street, Anon One Hundred Years, The History of Shoes at Street (1925) p6.
3. P.R.Mounfield. "Location of Footwear Manufacturing in England & Wales" (unpublished Ph.D. University of Nottingham 1962) p50.

commercial shoe factory in operation was published in 1874.¹ At a factory² in Ashton-under-Lyne all processes were brought together, with a substantial portion of each process being executed by machine power.

In addition to this original division of labour, the growing reputation of Northampton's wholesale industry gave rise to an increasing geographical division of labour also, that further strengthened Northampton's links with London. The growing sophistication and style of the town's workmanship, the elimination of apprenticeship controls locally, the relatively cheap price of labour when compared with London, and the relatively high productivity of craft-divided labour led to London manufacturers sending increasing quantities of materials into Northamptonshire to be manufactured. This system became known as the "basket work system".³ Muscott dates this development to the late 1770s - early 1780s.⁴

Leathers were cut in London warehouses and sent out to the county to be made-up: similar developments took place in the manufacture of ladies footwear in Stafford. Therefore, if the initial impetus for the development of Northampton's wholesale shoe industry can be attributed to military contracts, growth following in the Napoleonic Wars⁵ was increasingly based on the increasing demand for civilian footwear. Hatley dates the important expansion of this sector of the industry to the half century or so after 1796.

1. Practical Magazine (1874) 4.
2. Under factory and workshop legislation no straight-forward definition of a "Factory" is to be found. In his introduction to Redgrave's Factory Acts, (1924) 13 ed. at pXXVlll-XlX, Cf. Lloyd reveals clearly the legal difficulties in arriving at one definition. However, his summary of the protracted definition given in S149 of the 1901 Act provides the essence of what is usually meant by the word, and the sense in which it will be used in this thesis:
 ... all places where.. manual labour is exercised by way of trade or for purposes of gain ina manufacturing process aided by mechanical power.. (my emphasis).
 Again, of workshops he writes: "Workshops are places which would be non-textile factories if mechanical power were used.."
3. V.A.Hatley & J. Rajczonek Shoemakers in Northamptonshire 1762-1911: A Statistical Survey (1971) pl2 cites scattered evidence of disputes arising as a result of the formers attempt to dilute apprenticeship regulations Cf. VCH Northants ii p324, which cites evidence of several early 19 century clashes in London over wages: "... The trade of Northampton at this time, from the demands of the war and the high wages maintained by the trade unions (in London) was rapidly on the increase.." By contrast, it was stated that London manufacturers were being driven out of the city".. by trade combination for high wages.."
4. V.C.H. Northants ii 318
5. The Napoleonic Wars had seen a significant increase in Northampton's trade. The Hon. Spencer Percival MP for the town (1796-1812), was centrally influential in securing government contracts. (See Footwear 17 March 1904 pl115).

.. (In this period) Northampton ready-mades, mostly for men, gained a firm hold on the home retail market and were exported in large quantities abroad, notably to the Australasian colonies.^{1.}

The town's ability to secure large portions of this demand from 1815-1860 can in part be attributed to improvements in communication^{2.}, but the continued attraction of the town as a manufacturing outpost for London manufacturers was the key to growth. The consolidation of increasingly lucrative civilian markets became progressively more marked after 1860, although Northampton manufacturers were prominent suppliers of goods during the Crimean and Italian conflict of the mid-century, the American Civil Wars, and the Franco-Prussian conflict of the 1870s.^{3.} This consolidation took place in the wake of increased consumer purchasing power at home^{4.} and widening overseas market opportunities, in addition to mounting problems of unreasonable quality control standards in military contracts resulted in Northampton manufacturers substantially withdrawing from these markets after 1860.^{5.} Moreover, the War Office's refusal to introduce machine-made boot specifications at a time when the Northampton trade was moving toward machine-related production further alienated the industry there.

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1. Hatley (1961) op. cit. cf. Mounfield (1967) iii p443-45 on markets. Cf. Hatley (1961) loc. cit. passim.
 2. The Northampton branch of the Grand Junction Canal was opened in 1815. And between 1838 and 1846 Northampton was linked into England's rapidly growing railway network..
 3. After 1860 much of the military contract work was passed to E. Northants centres, and whilst a few Northampton firms were engaged in war production during the South African War, it was only with the advent of the Great War that substantial quantities of military goods were again made in the town. See Appendix II C.3. for an individual firm's shift in production.
 4. J.A.Schmiechen "State Reform and the Local Economy: An aspect of Industrialisation in Late Victorian and Edwardian London" EcH.R. 2ndseries 28 (1975) p415. ".. The percentage of workingman's income spent on clothing increased from 6% in 1845 to 8 - 9% in 1889, and 12% in 1904".
 5. As a result of the controversy and subsequent raising of quality standard for military footwear following the failure of boots in the Crimea War. A 1858 Government Inquiry Report recorded the events. The military trade went to east Northamptonshire the "Army District" and manufacturers there faced similar quality control problems in the early 1890s following the Sudan wars. Again quality controls were made more rigourous, and despite the industry's bidding, the War Office only accepted machine made and 'combination' boots on the eve of the Great War. This resulted in Army District manufacturers entering, not without success, the medium grade civilian markets that Northampton had dominated. See below Chapter 2.

A substantial portion of the literature on the shoe industry in this period is dominated by local studies of centres: the foregoing, introductory vignette of the Northampton shoe industry exemplifies this. Many have been in print for a generation or more.^{1.} Most are general histories of shoemaking, but here and in work of synthesis emphasis has been placed upon: locational aspects^{2.}, the technological history of the industry; the effects of foreign competition upon development and of a progressive, elite group of manufacturers^{role} in that development;^{3.} and the evolution of formal industrial relations.^{4.} In terms of the methodology and argument which is used to explain the industry's modern economic development this penultimate point is of crucial significance. For since the final volume of Sir John Clapham's standard work was first published in 1937, successive historians have sought to establish a direct, substantially monocausal link between industrial transformation and an increasing level of market penetration by foreign, particularly United States (U.S.), industrial competitors on the one hand, and the ability of British shoe manufacturers to respond to the need for change and to worker attitudes to change on the other.

In 1960, Prof. S.B.Saul wrote of the needs to critically re-examine this process^{5.},

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1. Articles that give a useful overview of developments and various centres can be found in: BUSMC^o A Historical Survey of Shoemaking, (being a series of twelve articles on shoe centres) (1932) and P.R.Mounfield The Footwear Industry of the East Midlands (1967). On the traditional centres, readers should consult: For London: P.G.Hall "East London Footwear" East London Papers 5:1 (1962); For Stafford; VCH Staffs iii; Yapp. The Boot and Shoe Industry of Stafford and Stones and its Outworkers; For Northampton: See text above. On the new machine centres, see: For Leeds, G.Rimmer "The Leeds Boot and Shoe Industry in the 19 Century" JBBSI 12:10 (1958); For Leicester: A. Granger op. cit. passim; W.G.Hoskins "Footwear (of Leicestershire)" VCH Leics. iii; "Footwear (of Leicester)" VCH Leics. IV; P. Head Industrial Organisation in Leicester 1844-1914 (unpublished PLD. Univ. of Leicester 1960); Norwich; W.L. Sparks op. cit. passim; C.B.Hawkins Norwich: A Social Study (1906). On the smaller centres, see: For Kendal, J. Somervell After 90 Years: The Evolution of K. Shoes (c1932); For Rossendale, P. Cronkshaw History of the Boot, Shoe and Slipper Industries in Rossendale (unpublished M.A.Univ. Manchester 1945); for Street, G.B.Sutton Shoemakers of Street: A history of C. & P. Clark (unpublished PhD Univ. Nottingham 1959).
 2. e.g. P.R.Mounfield Location of Footwear Manufacture in England and Wales (unpublished PhD thesis, Nottingham University 1962).
 3. E.g. R.A.Church "The Effect of the American Export Invasion on the British Boot & Shoe Industry 1885-1914" J.E.H. XXVIII (1968) p223-54.
 4. A Fox A History of the National Union of Boot & Shoe Operatives 1874-1957. (1957)
 5. S.B.Saul "The American Impact on British Industry 1895-1914" Business History Vol 1:1 (1960).

whilst American scholars have looked anew at the effect of U.S. Trading in this period¹. Nevertheless, the central causal link between changing patterns of trade and industrialisation have remained largely unmoved by subsequent re-evaluations. In 1968, two independent case studies outlining the experience of the British footwear industry were published: one by Prof. R.A.Church,² the other by Dr. P. Head.³ Both essays build upon the proposition put forward by Saul in his earlier essay, where he argued the need to consider "... the impact of intensified American competition upon British industry, underlining the need to re-examine the process of industrial transformation, particularly in the two decades preceding World War I..."⁴ The footwear industry is selected as a case study because a numerically small number of large shoe manufacturers using scale economies mounted "... an effective industrial counterattack..." : yet little is known of the details of what is seen as a trade-led industrial transformation. Church notes:

... In terms of innovation, as distinct from invention, the record of the British Boot and Shoe industry between 1890 and 1914 is an impressive one.. American competition in the footwear markets of the world and the efforts of American machinery makers in this country together helped to force British employers to re-examine customary methods. By contributing to the erosion of entrepreneurial conservatism, by encouraging.. the thorough-going modernisation of industrial technology, by altering the methods of working and promoting more effective labour utilisation the American impact on the British boot and shoe industry was, perhaps more striking.. than any single industry in this period..⁵

Head's conclusion is in a similar vein, though it carries with it an important caveat: "... However, after the first World War exports of boots and shoes declined, they had already done so by the mid-twenties and declined further after the world depression.. Thus, the chronicling of a successful fight back by the industry during

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1. See, e.g. D.E.Novack & M.Simon "Commercial Responses to the American Export Invasion 1871-1914" Explorations in Entrepreneurial History Vol. III: 2 (1966)
 2. R.A.Church op. cit., passim.
 3. P. Head "Boots and Shoes" in D.H.Aldcroft (ed) The Development of British Industry and Foreign Competition (1968) p158-85.
 4. Church *ibid.* p223.
 5. Church *ibid.*, p254. Cf. J.H.Clapham, op. cit., Vol III p182. "... free traders who congratulated their country and themselves on this outstanding instance on the stimulation effect of free competition on a resolute industry were entirely in order.." See also editorial comment The Economist, 3 May 1913, "Victory of British Boots." Cf. E. Brunner "The Origins of Industrial Peace: The Case of the British Boot & Shoe Industry," Oxford Economic Papers 1:2.(1949).

the early years of this century must be qualified by the fact that it was something of a temporary phenomenon..¹.

Church's essay constructs a model of industrialisation which places transition within a short period after 1895, when "...fundamental changes occurred in the British Boot & Shoe Industry both in terms of rapidity and extent.." ². This model is built around three inter-related elements: the radicalising influence of increased U.S. trade on British manufacturers attitudes to production methods; the conservatism of manufacturers; and the anti-machine position of the N.U.B.S.O. and a large sector of the labour force. Just as Clapham had done half a century earlier, both locate the crucial shift of production from outwork workshop to mechanised factory around the need for the British Shoe industry to respond to U.S. market penetration. As Church notes:

...In the absence of data on the introduction of machinery. we may take the rising intensity of Union hostility to mechanisation as one rough index of the course of innovation, that hostility culminating in 1895.. Furthermore, several informed observers pointed to the ten years beginning in 1895 as the period when a sizeable proportion of the industry adapted itself to mechanised factory production. This was the period when the American penetration of British footwear markets reached a peak..³.

Similarly, Head's study reaches much the same ground, for he argues that the import threat was met by,

... increasing output,.. geographical concentration, and changing organisation based upon mechanisation and the specialisation of methods of production.. (The industry) finally adopting, in the years around the turn of the century,⁴ production of footwear by powered machinery inside factories...

Implicit in these views is the position that foreign goods became price competitive in world and home markets when compared against British footwear. This was achieved, in broad terms, by virtue of the scale economies effected in production and distribution, as a result of the efficient use of machines, and the eclipse of small order working by batch production utilising embryonic flow

1. Head, loc. cit. p134.
 2. Church, loc. cit. p223.
 3. Church *ibid*, p238.
 4. Head loc. cit. p160. .

production techniques and instock systems of distribution.¹ By contrast, British shoe manufacturers clung longer to outmoded hand processes, poor machine discipline, and small order working.

In fact, this modern work substantially restates, and thereby reinforces, an orthodoxy that has existed in writings about the shoe industry from the late 1890s. In so doing, the current literature draws upon little of the new, substantive empirical evidence now available to historians.² What can be witnessed from the footnotes is a heavy, often uncritical, reliance upon earlier secondary sources, and in consequence any disparities, false perceptions or omissions in

1. Small order production: At one end of the spectrum was bespoke work, the essential feature of which was the production of single parts, one-off items; i.e. jobbing production. Such production did not necessarily use factories in the most efficient way. It admitted of not standardisation, demand was unpredictable, and it required workforce skilled in a wide range of skills, and equally adaptable, skilled supervision. Such working made the planning or production difficult, and inevitably involved idle time for shoe workers. This was overcome by the outwork system and the presence of a pool of surplus labour to cope with seasonal fluctuations in demand. At the other end of the small order production spectrum, was the ability of pre-1860 manufacturers to execute the production of small batches to customer requirements. At this point, small order production quickly merges into batch production, and this level of production was to persist through to and beyond 1914. However, what also clearly occurs in our period is the production of increasingly large batches, now in factories, with some early steps being taken in best practice factories to introduce batch production using synchronised flow/assembly-line techniques, although the use of conveyors etc. was not introduced until later in the 20 century. Batch production, therefore, was the production of standardised units in small/large lots. It represents a half-way position between jobbing production and mass production. The main distinction between batch and jobbing production lies in the standardised nature of the former. Unlike the varied operations found in bespoke work, the products of batch production are dealt with systematically in lots, only moving on to the next operation, when each lot has been processed in the current operation. Such batches could either be made to fulfil a customer order or be made for stock. Shoe factories were split in different departments, and the batches of shoe processed through each one. Here the emphasis was placed upon production planning, a staff with a narrow skills range, and relatively short production runs. The tendency in many shoe factories was to sub-divide orders into groups of c24 pairs. J. Gouldbown states that the reasoning was "... to keep track of the shoes in process and of the work done by each operator for piecework payments.. Each group passes through the factory from one operation to another to consecutive orders.. the smaller the unit the less shoes there are in process; therefore a smaller quantity of lasts are required; also, small orders can be handled readily and quickly.." ("Principle Types of Shoe Construction.." Coventry Engineering Society Journal (1935) VI No. 4. p132). Work was conveyed on movable racks. Although a general shift away from jobbing production to batch is discernible in the 19 century shoe industry, even progressive firms retained a bespoke function most were prepared to satisfy any size of order.

2. The same evidence and reasoning runs through succeeding generations of enquiries on the industry: eg. compare the conclusions of J. Day & H. Cox (Eds) British Industries Under Free Trade (1903) Chapter 3., with those of A. Fox (1957), P.R. *ownfield locat* restatements of the same themes.

the contemporary literature have tended to be perpetuated and remain today.^{1.} 41

This thesis will re-appraise the process of industrialisation in the industry in the light of evidence not previously made use of. Such an appraisal is overdue on a number of counts, but not least because the orthodox view relies upon monocausal pleading, which is, prima facie, open to question given the complex of the process under discussion. Four main areas of enquiry will be addressed:

- (i) the periodisation of change in the shoe industry
- (ii) the character and effect of shifting trading patterns, and how these interacted with other economic variables.
- (iii) the close interaction and complementary development that existed between production and distribution innovations within the industry.
- (iv) the role of small masters in the process of change, and their relationship with the new evolving patterns of productions.

The first three together constitute a re-statement of our current perception of the modern development of the shoe industry, and will be discussed in the next chapter. The fourth element will then be treated to a more penetrating and exhaustive analysis in the remaining chapters of the thesis.

1. This point was noted in a review, by V.A.Hatley, of P.R.Mounfield The Footwear Industry of the East Midlands (1967): "... Unfortunately Dr. Mounfield makes little use of primary source material.. but sticks resolutely to what other people have written on this subject.." (N.P. & P.IV No. 4. (1968) p193.)

C H A P T E R T W O

STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY

In the last chapter, it was argued that whilst Church & Head's work informs one of the nature of the "U.S. Invasion" in the shoe industry, much less evidence is presented concerning the totality of the industrial transformation of that industry. Nevertheless, by raising a number of critical points, this work does provide a point of departure from which to begin a broader appraisal of structural change within the industry. However, before beginning that task two introductory issues, fundamentally critical of the orthodox view, must be raised.

A central methodological problem of the orthodox case is the inability to adduce sufficient data to support the range of literary evidence drawn upon. Church in particular places an important, largely uncritical, stress upon the viewpoint of John Day, the contemporary editor of the Shoe & Leather Record. Day was well-known as an arch-proponent of U.S. machine methods, and a critic of British Industry's general level of performance in the period, and of the shoe industry in particular. Indeed to some large measure his views reflect the criticism found in the popular press of the day, which was widely rejected in the shoe industry.¹ Certainly, in the preparation of this thesis the writer found it an easy matter to erect arguments, based on a broad study of the trade press, contrary to those put forward by Day. Elements of this material will be found in the text below. However, this countering of qualitative evidence by contrary viewpoints finally does little more than merely establish that contrary viewpoints existed. The point at issue, is the size and timing of change over time, rather than merely an assessment as to its quality. Ultimately, any attempted resolution of the substantive points raised by the orthodox case, must be made by using quantitative data in support of qualitative evidence. At several points, proponents of the orthodox case note that the available quantitative data is poor. This, of course, is a problem not uncommon to many studies of small scale industries² but sufficient data will be presented below to largely dispel such misgivings.

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1. A synthesis of Day's attitudes to change within the industry see J. Day "Boots & Shoes" in Day & M'Gusty Free Trade (1903).
 2. See for example R.A. Church Economic & Social Change in A Midland Town: Victorian Nottingham 1815-1900 (1966) p xv on the failure to discover extant business records concerning the hosiery and lace industries there.

Secondly, any attempt to reassess late 19th Century shoemaking must take account of three theoretical issues. Regard must be paid to the essential small master character of the industry. The current position toward the small shoe master is basically negative. Too great an emphasis has been placed upon the emergence of large units of production, and upon the business activities of the emerging elite. Thus, how this small master base acted upon and reacted to change offers an instructive and necessary corrective to the orthodox position. Equally, a main theoretical base of the orthodox case requires examination. There, entrepreneurial response to change is located with a simple, diagnostic model of conservatism.^{1.} Initially, manufacturers spurn modernity, only to subsequently embrace progressive manufacturing techniques as the economic climate changes. Leaving aside for the moment whether the idea of conservatism can ever validly summarise an industrialist's outlook the use of this viewpoint here not only implies that only one strategy was feasible in the wake of change, but also ignores the fact that small masters using traditional production techniques traded successfully through to 1914. The place of outwork and of small masters in that system have, by implication been wrongly viewed as mere anachronistic survivals, which were progressively superseded by modernity.^{2.}

The final theoretical issue raised by the orthodox case concerns periodisation. Change is viewed as a process that occurred substantially within productive techniques over a very short space of time around the turn of the century. Yet, this thesis will argue that account must be taken of the secular, discontinuous process of change within the industry that was begun in the late 1850s. And if one accepts the notion of a long initial transitional phase lasting from 1857 to 1887, then there is a need to consider agencies of change in addition to prog-

1. R.A. Church (1968) op. cit. p232.

2. Small scale shoe production did not simply and inevitably succumb under the forward thrust of industrialisation. Thus the position towards these organisational features taken by, for example, G.I.H. Lloyd in his study of the Sheffield Cutlery trades do not apply to the shoe industry. See G.I.H. Lloyd The Cutlery Trades: An Historical Essay in the Economics of Small Scale Production (1913), esp. Chapters 1, and 4 to 8. In the preface, Lloyd notes "... it has seemed worthwhile to bring together an historical account of these older (cutlery) trades, and to study in particular those rapidly disappearing features which appear to be survivals from an earlier industrialisation. The main interest of the book is thus retrospective..." (pix).

ressive modes of production. The most important are the mixed systems of hand and machine work organisation, and the move by wholesale manufacturers into the domestic market, using the new retailing techniques. Given this perspective, this transitional phase assumes a much greater historical importance than the orthodox case allows. For transition gives a crucial and expansive role to small masters, which underpinned industrialisation generally. What the current literature does is to locate transition in the last phase of a more complex, secular process. To isolate change within this small compass represents a failure to recognise the totality of the industrialising process in the shoe industry and to ignore the dynamic role of the small master in that process.

The shift from craft industry based on outwork, to one of a centralised machine production, therefore, was a process which took half a century. Inevitably such a long process of change was both complex and discontinuous in character, as

J. Loveday has implied:

.. The Industrial Revolution is generally considered a thing of the past; yet little more than sixty years have elapsed since the first bootmaking machine was introduced, and the transference from the home to the factory has been slow. Indeed there are still factories, though their number grows gradually less, where the uppers and bottom stuff are given to outworkers to be lasted and made into boots by hand in their homes. The boot and shoe industry, is still to some extent, in the process of evolution...¹

That this was so is not seriously open to question but this discontinuity has given rise to contradictory chronologies of change. Church states that change was a post-1895 phenomenon linked to changing patterns of trading. In contrast, Head, whilst arguing the same thesis as Church, suggests that the main period of technical developments was complete by 1875, but that the industry remained organisationally committed to outworking until the 1890s. Finally, Mounfield suggests that early mechanisation gave rise to a progressive move into factories from the 1860s.² In addition to these matters, these accounts of change vary widely in matters of detail.

It is axiomatic to the orthodox view that the period of intense change should coincide with a quickening in the pace of foreign competition, and of employers' ability to proceed with machine production unhampered by trade union opposition. Similarly, it has been useful to undervalue the early years of change, in order to throw more intense light upon the importance of the years which witnessed increasing U.S. penetration of British markets. Yet as it is at present constituted, the orthodox case is a narrowly-based demand analysis concerned with changing patterns of trade. Little attempt has been made by historians to investigate shifting factor prices and domestic conditions of trading after the initial introduction of machinery, in the late fifties. Thus the year 1895 is regarded as a watershed between an old industry substantially tied to customary

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1. J. Loveday, Report of Industrial Fatigue Research Board No. 10 (1920), Medical Research Council, p2.
 2. P.R.Mounfield Location of Footwear Manufacture in England and Wales (Ph.D. University of Nottingham 1962).

methods and an industry dominated by factory-based methods.

However, sufficient evidence is extant to enable one to put forward a prima facie case that questions both the orthodox assumption of a crucial watershed in the industry's move to modernity in 1895, and the notion of the subordination of early developments. There exists a degree of coherence within the whole process which the concept of widespread conservatism within the industry prior to 1895 does not allow for. The case presented below will suggest that there were three main breaks with past practice in the industry, and that within each period there existed a cogent developmental theme, which was crucial in the final shaping of the modern shoe industry:

- (1) 1857-87:- initial commercial application of machinery: the increased opportunities for small masters to enter the industry: a revolution in retail distribution techniques in the industry; growth based on an extensive growth within the industry and the modification of the existing industrial structure.
- (11) 1887-95:- machinery revolution: growth of intensive production methods by best practice firms: commitment made to ending outworking: first indications of declining entrepreneurial entry opportunities.
- (111) post 1895:-organisational revolution accompanied by increasing entrepreneurial barriers of entry:

Each of these phases of change were indelibly linked, with elements begun in one period being further developed and refined in the next. It has been this failure to deal with the totality of industrialisation in the industry, which has ultimately led writers to distort the very pattern of that change. By reviewing the whole process of change and by introducing new evidence it is possible to argue that to offer the major trading problems experienced in the last phase as the basis for the fundamental re-structuring of the industry provides one with an unbalanced and partial account of industrial transformation. That market penetration took place and reacted upon manufacturers decision-making is not under question here, yet as a mono-causal explanation for change, increasing foreign competition fails. It fails to fit the effects of market penetration into what was an economically more complex shift in productive resources, marketing strategies and organisational management. The very foundation upon which such mono-causal pleading stands must be questioned and re-evaluated. The US trade invasion of British markets did not signal British

shoemakers decision to industrialise: as a group they were already committed to that process. Within the fifty year period the crucial watershed in terms of the pace and character of change occurred not in 1895, but a decade earlier following the 1887 strike at Northampton.

Taking up the last point, an historian of the Northampton shoe industry workers of the 1887 strike in the town as the crucial catalyst of change:

... The year 1887.. is the dividing line between the old and the new. Relatively before 1887 there was little machinery in the trade, for the most part shoemaking was a home industry.. this is the date of the modern history of the shoe industry because there have been more advances, more changes, more improvements, greater excellence achieved in the succeeding forty three years than in the previous 400. with the one exception of the introduction in Tudor times of the new method of construction (i.e. welting), all that preceded 1887 was relatively trivial and insignificant..."^{1.}

Should the transition from a handicraft stage to a factory mode of production be properly extended back by nearly a decade? Certainly comments by contemporary observers offers prima facie evidence that the commitment of firms, particularly best practice firms, to mechanisation can be traced back to the impetus given by the 1887 Northampton Strike, as A. Adcock suggests, A Northampton manufacturer writing of the strike thirty years later noted

...Since then the shoe trade has undergone the greatest change it has experienced since it was an industry and I am sure it can never undergo such a change again. It has been a trying and critical time for manufacturers and, although dozens have gone under, I have been fortunate enough to keep my head above water..."^{2.}

Similarly, a retrospect trade press article came to the same conclusion:

... The year 1887 will always be remembered as marking (the beginning of) an epoch in the Northampton boot industry, it being the period of the great lock-out.. the years immediately succeeding were even more charged with importance to the staple industry, for.. they saw the the rapid introduction of modern machinery on such a scale as had not been hitherto dreamed of. The transference of the out-workers to the factories, which came about as a natural sequel, caused quite an epidemic of factory building..."^{3.}

It was both the beginning of extensive machine introduction,

... Nearly all machinery in use in the shoe trade today has been introduced during the last twelve years..."^{4.}

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1. A. Adcock, op. cit. p44-5.
 2. W. Arnold, Autobiography of William Arnold (1915) p79
 3. B.S.T.J., 26 June 1908, p48.
 4. N.M., 5 July 1897 p5.

and of radical organisational change also, as A.E. Marlow noted in 1916,

... Thirty years ago shoemaking in Northampton was just emerging from the domestic stage into that of a highly organised industry..¹

Nor was this change confined to Northampton, but engulfed the entire industry. Thus, a 1901 review of the industry's progress, nationally, over the preceding fifty years noted: "... the greatest progress has been effected within the last ten or fifteen years.." ². The significance of machine introduction after 1887 was quickly apparent to the shoe union, then still called the National Union of Boot and Shoe Rivetters and Finishers. As early as 1888, its President, E. Kell of Leicester, in his Conference Address noted cautiously of the major process of mechanisation already underway in the large centres of the industry:

.... (Whilst) in some of our branches this may not be felt so much, still it's one of those things, which if successful, must ultimately be felt throughout the whole trade; that more machinery will be introduced is a certain fact....

The period of greatest industrial change, therefore, was to occupy the twenty years after 1887. By 1906 contemporary comment firmly suggests that the new order Kell was foretelling twenty years previously was an accomplished fact.

The Board of Trade Wages Enquiry of that year makes the following short, confirmatory assessment:

.... owing to the introduction of machinery, the bulk of boots and shoes are now made by operatives in large factories under a system of sub-divided labour...⁴

Contemporary comment now increasingly emphasised the concentration of capital which had occurred and it stressed that small employers and outwork were features now restricted to the best and commonest classes of work and to repairing. The Machine was now dominant. In his report on the industry G.M. Butnam⁵ included an appendix showing the weekly production of Northampton's fifty leading firms. This offers a clear illustration as to the ascendancy of machine-made work:

1. S. & L. Suppl. 1916.pii.

2. B.S.T.J. 5 January 1901 p.2.

3. N.U.B. & S.R. & F. Report of Eighth Biannual Conference of May 1888 p.2. It is not without significance that one year later the union changed its name to the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, in recognition of the degree to which factory work had begun to affect the main centres of the industry.

4. Board of Trade Enquiry into the earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople of UK in 1906: Part II, Clothing Trades. 1909 (Cd. 4844) lXXX.

5. G.M. Butnam Shoe & Leather Trade in the United Kingdom (1912).

Machine welted work	=	61.8%	of total weekly production.	
Machine sewn work	=	35.7%	" " " "	
Hand sewn work	=	1.2%	" " " "	
Handsewn nursery & turnshoe	=	1.3%	" " " "	1.

A point to stress however, is that despite the small amount of handsewn work which continued to be handled by the larger firms, special handsewn orders and repairs did not cease altogether; as neither did outwork. In 1906-7, Manfield's range of styles still included four hand sewn ones.²

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1. Total firms 116. The bottom 66 firms are those most likely to continue to undertake hand-sewn work. It is certain, therefore, that Butnam's figures are biased towards machine-made footwear.
 2. Manfield Papers: Costings Books 1906-7: Cf. Chapter 7. Section II.

Nevertheless, Marlow's assessment, whilst accurately pinpointing the watershed in the process of change, overstates the case. The industry of 1887 was not in a pure, domestic handicraft state, although outworking was still prevalent. The organisational structure then current had developed piecemeal in response to the industry's technology base and to marketing needs. The developments thereafter were not to occur in an industry as yet untouched by change: organisation by 1887, was in state of transition between that of pure outwork and a pure factory system. To fail to appreciate this is to misunderstand the impact of these early years of change.

A generation of change from 1857 had already led, not only to a marked localisation of production within the industry and to the emergence of two new centres of wholesale production as Chapter One has indicated, but also to an increasingly marked concentration of capital within those centres. At the premier wholesale making centre of Northampton the available evidence suggests that, whilst the small master base was not in retreat until the 1890s, a class of larger, relatively wealthy manufacturers and merchant factors emerged from the mid-century. Building upon the close trading ties which had existed with London from the early 18th century, they developed increasingly strong business links with substantial merchant capitalists there.¹ Thus, by the middle decades Dr. Foster has noted that in Northampton:

... several firms were operating on a fairly large scale and there was considerable concentration of the two thousand Northampton shoe workers covered by the thirty nine returns of employment made by the 1851 Census. 80% were employed by twelve firms employing over one hundred (workers)..²

The total of shoemakers in the town at this time was 7167³. Similarly, at Stafford as early as 1780 William Horton & Co. employed circa 1000⁴, whilst at the new centre of Leicester, the pioneering firm of Thomas Crick & Co. were

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1. An example of this collaboration was the partnership between Richard and George Turner and Henry A.K.Hyde begun in 1859: cf. chap. 6. p , and Chap. 8. p . Conversely a number of London merchants operated manufacturing concerns in Northampton, of whom Ebenezer Homan was the most prominent.
 2. J. Foster. Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution (1974), p284.
 3. 1852-53 (1361) LXXXV Registrar-General's 1851 Census Report.
 4. V.C.H.Staffordshire, Vol. 3. p231.

finding work for a similar number by the early 1860's.^{1.} Even outside the main centres large employers of labour were to be found; for example, at Cookham, Berkshire, W.J.Burrows & Sons established in 1828 were employing circa 1200 by 1850s.^{2.} But all were overshadowed by Turner Bros. & Hyde of Northampton, who by the 1870s were reputed to employ c4000 in the town and surrounding countryside.^{3.}

The initial phase of industrialisation in the generation before 1887, therefore, constitutes a long transitional phase characterised by four main features:

- (a) the partial mechanisation of the industry
- (b) the evolution of a complex, transitional type of industrial structure.
- (c) growth at this time was of an extensive character
- (d) the rapid domination by wholesale manufacturers of the U.K. retail markets for footwear.

Each of these inter-connecting facets of change will be examined below.

(a) The partial mechanisation of the industry

The commercial application of machine methods dates from the 1850s, and during the next thirty years much of the technological base upon which transition depended either became commercially available, or the first principles of a commercially viable machine had been demonstrated and was in the process of development. It was the speed and direction of this inventive process, and the type of machine that evolved which, in large measure, determined the organisational changes within the period.

The single most important machine of this early period was the lockstitch sewing machine,^{4.} which was used to sew the uppers together, i.e. the toecap, vamp, and linings. The basic machine design used in the shoe industry was that which had already come into general use in other branches of the clothing industry.

The first commercially viable machine appeared in the industry at Leicester

1. V.C.H.Leicestershire, Vol. 4. p317, but cf. A. Granger "History of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Leicester" J.B.B.S.I. 12:12 (1965) p472 (where it is stated that by 1863 420 women and 300 men were employed).

2. V.C.H.Berkshire. Vol. 2. p399

3. T. Wright The Romance of the Shoe (1920) p187

4. For the development of this and of other shoe machinery see Appendix VII.

in 1854-55. By this time, the Singer Company was marketing a machine in Britain " ..that would revolutionise the existing method of closing uppers.." ^{1.} Three years later, Mr. Podmore brought the first machine to Northampton ^{2.} From this time up to the mid 1880s change was dominated by the adoption of simple labour intensive machines like the sewing machine: most of these machines required a machine operative supported by several workers performing ancilliary operations, often by hand. ^{3.} Initially arousing much opposition ^{4.} sewing machines quickly came into universal use thereafter for closing processes. Thus, by 1864, some 2000 were said to be in use ^{5.} In succeeding decades many modifications were made and many different designs of machine introduced to perform an increasing number of the sub-divided processes within closing. ^{6.}

In addition, a range of small, relatively inexpensive hand-powered machines were gradually introduced to perform the many ancilliary tasks found in the closing room. Closing was the only process prior to 1887 to become entirely mechanised for most classes of work: some special classes of long-work were still closed entirely by hand and, in addition, sub-divided machine working spawned many ancilliary hand processes.

The technical difficulties associated with the sewing machine to close boot

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1. B.S.T.J. 5 November 1893 p625. At the same time the Thomas machine was being extensively advertised in the Leicester Journal and other Midland newspapers: it is believed that Thomas Crick of Leicester was using the machine by 1854 (B.S.T.J.) ibid " .. The Thomas machine made its (first) appearance in Leicester in 1854.." cf. Granger, loc. cit. p472).
 2. J.H.Thornton "The Iron Seamstress: the Story of Shoe Machinery" S.L.R. 19 November 1959.
 3. In addition to the sewing machine operator, for example, a woman was employed to match the pieces of the upper together (a fitter-up); another to paste them together; and one to tie off the threads after sewing (knot-tier). In addition, others were employed on ancilliary tasks such as decoration and button-holing.
 4. J.H.Thornton op.cit; see also John Ball "Account of the Strike of the Northamptonshire Boot & Shoemakers: 1857, 1858, 1859" in Report of Social Science Association on Trade Societies and Strikes (1860), B. & S. Webb Industrial Democracy (1898) p393-94 and History of Trade Unionism (1902) p210.
 5. R.C. Commission on Childrens Employment 1864 (3414) p168. The vast majority of these were used by outworkers for the Factories and Workshop Returns of 1870 (BPP 1871 (440) LXII) reveal that in Northamptonshire were 24 factories using only 285 sewing machines: the total steam power found there being only 65 h.p. (Note total steam power in the footwear industry in England and Wales was 335 h.p. of which 239 h.p. was concentrated in the major producing areas of Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire.)
 6. For a full treatment of the many varieties of sewing machines and closing room ancilliary machine available see EJC Swaysland Boot & Shoe Design and Manufacture (1905) Chapter VII passim.

tops, its introduction and development, however, were comparatively straight forward compared with the problems encountered in trying to devise a satisfactory machine method of attaching for medium and above grades of footwear.¹ This was the central problem of mechanisation to be encountered in the pre- 1887 period and it was this technical problem, as much as any other, which resulted in the long transitional period in the industry. Moreover, it is this feature which, in large measure, gives rise to the particular and differing character of production in each of the specialist centres of the industry in this transitional phase. At the heart of the problem was the difficulty which was encountered in trying to find a mechanical equivalent of the hand-sewn welted seam which gave welted footwear its acceptable and characteristic pliability, comfort and wearing qualities. The need to move away from hand-sewing over the half century from c1840 was ultimately dictated by the slow productivity, relatively high worker skill levels, and, therefore, inevitable and escalating cost of this traditional method. A variety of new methods were devised, which can be segregated into two broad groups:

(1) Machine attaching techniques for cheap grade work. These methods were increasingly brought into use from the late forties in the face of a growing demand for cheap grade boots for the growing urban working class markets.

(11) Machine-welt - sewing techniques for medium and above grades of work. These methods were initiated in an attempt to imitate the wearing qualities of hand-sewn work. It was, arguably, these developments that had the most dramatic impact upon the Northampton trade, dominated as it was by the making of medium and above grades of welted men's wear.

There were three principal methods: riveting, screwing and pegging. Regarding Northampton's adoption of these new techniques two crucial and interconnected points need to be raised. The town was principally engaged in medium and above grades of production, although commoner grades were also made: no information is extant that reveals what proportions of total production these grades occupied, though clearly the better quality of work predominated. Nevertheless what is clear is that where manufacturers were engaged in low grade work,

1. Clapham op. cit. ii, p91, cf. Thornton loc. cit. passim.

machines suitable to this work were adopted.

As Appendix VII reveals, over time these methods were gradually superseded by the machine-sewn boot, which was superior in wearability and could be produced as cheaply as other types. Only where these other types of attachment were used for a specialist boot market was it still produced by the 1880s: eg, the use of pegging for seaboots. Thus, stitching by machine was the other main direction that sole attaching took in this early period. The single most important advance in the development of machines for making lower grades of work was the Blake Sole Sewer, first patented in 1858: after some initial technical problems, it came into general use in the mid-1860s. Blake, or machine-sewn work entered into direct competition for cheaper classes of work with the methods noted above. The other solution for making better quality work, was machine welting, which in the 1890s was to largely supercede hand-sewn work.

Machine welting was a more sophisticated process when compared with Blake sewn work. The provision of machines to sew welts and bottom boots did not fully solve the problem. Mechanisation of welt-sewing effectively broke down the hand process into a number of divided processes, of which sewing constituted only one, albeit the most important stage of manufacture. The full mechanisation of these processes took much longer to achieve. Nor was it just a matter of providing a machine for each process, in order to obtain a viable, efficient system the productivity and running of each of these machines had as a synchronised system. The system that gained ascendance in the U.K. after 1885 was the American Goodyear Machine Welting System.¹ It is commonly asserted by writers that the introduction of the Goodyear system heralded the death-knell of handsewn work. The welt sewer, the key to the system, has been described as "... the most important single advance in high grade shoe machinery..."².

1. In Britain, Keats Bros. of Stafford developed an unsynchronised machine welting system using their existing No. 7 machine as a sole sewer, the No. 4 as a welter, combined with ancilliary machines and hand work to perform the other processes (for details of these machines see Appendix VIII). This simultaneous development of machine welting on both sides of the Atlantic was apparently executed without collaboration of any kind.

2. Moodys Magazine (1907) p309.

In its early unsynchronised form the welt-sewer became available on the British market from 1874, when the Blake and Goodyear Company Ltd. opened a shop in Northampton, becoming probably the main outlet for such machinery in the Midlands. From this time until the mid 1880s the machine met with only a qualified success, many manufacturers experiencing defects in production, resulting in a reduced quality of work when compared with the hand-sewn article.^{1.} By the mid 1880s however, following further improvements and additions of machinery, this complete system could produce a stitch and finish scarcely distinguishable from handwork. Nevertheless, the Goodyear system did not become universally accepted for a further decade. The reason was both technical and a matter of industrial relations.

A.E.Hodgkin notes that

...The Goodyear welt system of machinery did not come into any general acceptance until after the production of a suitable rough rounding machine which came in 1894..^{2.}

Without this machine, the system remained a mixed machine-hand work system and as such aroused the antagonism of the union, thus restricting its full commercial implementation.^{3.}

Thus, in terms of understanding the differing rates of development in the industry at the different wholesale centres, the foregoing discussion of mechanisation of the attaching process occupies a key place. First, the account highlights that the successful commercial application of attaching machines occurred only in common grades of work: machine-sewn, riveting and so forth. Secondly, in the attaching of better quality grades using welting methods, whilst the originative machines had been developed, they still required further developmental work before being accorded complete commercial acceptance. In particular, the full co-ordination and mechanisation of the welting machine system had not reached maturity by 1887, with broad-based acceptance occurring only in the 1890s. As far as the scant evidence reveals, however, Northampton manufacturers were receptive to machine

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1. The trade press in the early 1880s refers on more than one occasion to the reluctance of Northampton manufacturers to switch to machine production precisely for this reason.
 2. A.E.Hodgkin "Birth and Development of Shoe Machinery" J.B.B.S.I.4 (1949) p42.
 3. On N.U.B.S.O.'s refusal to work mixed machine-handwork, see Fox op. cit. Chapter 14.

production for cheaper grades of work, where such a shift suited their productive needs.¹ Given these problems and the yet incomplete machine finishing systems available to manufacturers, many preferred to maintain established outwork systems of production in the face of the organisational and labour changes necessary for more thorough-going mechanisation.

This meant that where machine sewn work was carried out mechanisation could proceed apace, but where high grade welted work was made the move to mechanised production was greater, when compared against a centre like Northampton that concentrated production upon medium and above grades of welted work. Yet, by contrast, the orthodox case adopts a more direct assessment of mechanisation in the industry.

Neither Head nor Church perceive any technological barrier to machine adaptation by high quality areas like Northampton. Indeed, Head goes as far as to conclude, presumably on the basis of the dates originative invention patents were filed, that:

... In 1875, therefore, the only important processes whose intricacies had not been overcome by the genius of the inventor were lasting and skiving.. But a lasting machine was invented in 1882 and, during ² the nineties, clicking was the last major process to be mechanised.

It is on this foundation that the case of those medium grade areas at the centre of the US trading threat were technically backward, and thus entrepreneurially conservative in their approach to business, is based. R. Church pointedly makes the distinction between the progressiveness of Leicestershire compared with the backwardness of Northamptonshire, in the following way:

.. it was the Northamptonshire manufacturers who were less technically progressive. In the matter of organisation (factory production) the Northamptonshire industry was likewise backward- and the technology in use in the industry did not necessarily require industrial reorganisation - for it was exceptional to find even³ upper closing carried on in a factory in Northamptonshire before 1890..

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1. e.g. see Appendix II C3 Manfield & Sons, and Appendix II C10 Simon Collier Ltd. In view of the continued availability of cheap rural labour these two firms, like others, sent cheap work out to neighbouring villages. Prior to 1887, machine use complemented rather than superceded the prevailing organisational structure, and was particularly used to meet short-orders and seasonal rushes of work. In the case of both firms, as the decade progressed, the move to a greater reliance upon machinery is observable.
 2. P. Head, op. cit., pl64; cf, ibid, "A changing industrial organisation was dependent upon the state of invention.." Cf. R. Church p230: "Lasting and finishing were still completely manual processes in 1880..."
 3. R. Church, op. cit, p231.

This argument is essentially flawed, however, in at least two ways. The pace of mechanisation between the two County towns was fundamentally different entirely as a result of product specialisation and quality differences in the footwear made at the two centres,¹ not because of any a priori difference in progressive attitude or entrepreneurial spirit between the manufacturers of the two towns. It was the delay in the solving of the basic technical problem of how to produce commercially acceptable medium grade welted goods on machines that resulted in the new, low quality producing areas embracing machine production somewhat earlier than the traditional, higher quality centres. In the county areas, differences in mechanisation levels can be firmly linked to customer requirements. Unlike Leicestershire, significant areas of Northamptonshire were engaged in Government contract work, and were tied to hand-methods until the early twentieth century because of War Office reluctance to move to machine made boots.² Any greater a progressive spirit amongst manufacturers in low quality areas, therefore, was more apparent than real in that outwork modes of management, discipline and work practices survived the transition phase in ALL centres of the industry.

(b) The Evolution of a Complex, Transitional Type of Industrial Structure.

Consequently, there was a patch-work evolution of machine and factory, both between centres and within centres, and this constitutes the second facet of change. This gave rise to a complex, transitional type of industrial structure which combined both factory operation with domestic outwork. The result of this late and unequal shift to factory production within the town resulted in a variety of outworking forms persisting. An important effect of technical change was to produce as many new grades of handworking as of machine working: clicking, lasting,

1. R. Church, op. cit, p231.

2. The standard issue, hand-sewn boot was introduced after criticisms of prevailing army footwear in the Crimean War (see brief note in Chapter One above). This standard boot was in turn criticised following the Sudan conflict of the late 1880s. In the early 1890s a combination HS/Standard screw boot underwent tests, exciting much press comment, but did not supercede the hand sewn boot until the Edwardian period (see Keith Brooker, "James Gribble and the Raunds Strike of 1905", N.P. & P. VI: 5 (1981/2)).

and finishing were to remain substantially hand processes until the 1890s.^{1.}

Market expansion was met by the extensive growth of production, in which manual outwork and small master production were as important as factory production. Moreover, this transitional form of industrial organisation persisted even amongst progressive firms. For example, in the 1870s-1880s, in order to cope with expanding trade, Manfield and Sons resorted to financing small, worker-controlled workshop development outside the factory, as opposed to major factory development.^{2.}

This was usually on a small scale as an old employee's reminiscences make clear.^{3.}

Thus, in any discussion of the industry's shift to machine production it is essential to draw a distinction between machine innovation within some form of outwork system and the adoption of machinery within an integrated factory unit functioning under sub-divided work processes and rationalised managerial procedures. Given that labour costs were relatively low compared to other factor costs in the transitional period^{4.} and that shoe workers effectively controlled the workplace any move to the factory tended to be dictated more by technical necessity than other factors. Up to 1887 technical change was dominated by the adoption of simple labour intensive machines. Being hand or treadle powered, they easily fitted into the existing organisational structure of the industry: there was

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1. Indeed, outwork, and with it artisan skills and customs, retained a firm hold on the Northampton industry until the 1890s, as the figures below of numbers of indoor and outdoor workers employed by a random sample of firms in 1891 reveals:

Firm	Indoor Workers	Outdoor Workers
Church & Co.	+300	c600
Manfield & Sons	630	c600
Turner Bros, Hyde & Co.	400	c400
Harris Bros.	150	150
W.J.Marks	50	"Even more out"

Source: Anon, Where to Buy in Northampton (1891)

- The list is instructive because both Church & Co. and Manfields were front rank firms (see Appendix II C.8 and C.3.) Turner Bros. had been the town's premier firm but closed down in 1904. (See Chapter 6 & 8 below). Whilst the last two were second rank firms (see Appendix III N.G.21). On changes in shoemaker work practices see Keith Brooker "Northampton Shoemakers Reaction to Industrialisation: Some Thoughts" N.P. & P. (1980) VL
2. For more details of Manfield's industrial policy in transition, see "M.P. Manfield" D.B.B.IV (1985) & Appendix II C.3.
3. E.W.Burnham, A Century of Shoemaking 1844-1944 (N.P.L. unpublished M.S. c1944) p73-4.
4. R.A.Church "Labour Supply and Innovation. 1800-60 in Boot and Shoe Industry" Business History XII:(1970) passim.

little need for a fixed power source, and with it a centralised work place. Only the heavier leather presses demanded a power source, but at Northampton most were initially hand-powered. This is reflected in power-source statistics collated by the factory inspectors in 1870, when it was calculated that there were only 145 footwear factories in England and Wales with steam power, giving a total energy capacity of 400 h.p.^{1.}

It was only in the 1870s, with the introduction of powered sole-sewing machines and heavier leather presses that some shoe manufacturers began to centralise production. For the first time, shoe machinery required a purpose-built building with re-inforced flooring to withstand the weight and vibration of heavy machinery and accommodation for a power source. At this juncture, J.H.Clapham has argued that it was steam power that was to remain the obvious power source, despite the introduction of the gas engine:

... Though the gas engine was coming into use during the next decade, steam remained the obvious power source; few machines at this stage could be made really automatic: and the new light ones were being experimented with. So only the heaviest and most permanent machines.. were as yet, regularly powered drive..^{2.}

Yet this view fails to take account of the relatively high cost of steam power technology,^{3.} and the rapid and crucial emergence of gas and other internal combustion engines as new and versatile alternatives to the steam engine in this and other light industries located away from coalfields.^{4.}

Although technical considerations largely determined the slow extent of centralisation at this stage in Northampton, manufacturers appear to have centralised handwork operations, either in warehouse factories or in nearby manufacturer-owned workshops, where this was practicable. It is probably true to state that only new grades of handworkers, rural men new to the industry, accepted

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1. B.P.P. 1871 (440) LX11 Return of Factories and Workshops cf. AE Musson (1976) loc. cit. passim.
 2. J.H.Clapham, op. cit., II p95. Contrast this with Mounfield's assessment, which sees gas engines as the obvious power choice and one that was quickly and progressively adopted. (PR Mounfield (1965) loc. cit. p447 & 453.)
 3. Northampton manufacturers did not adopt the expedient of renting power from a steam engine, which served the needs of a number of rented workshops. This method was used to good effect in the silk-ribbon weaving industry of nearby Coventry. (J.M.Prest, The Industrial Revolution in Coventry (1960)) but no evidence is extant as to its use in Northampton.
 4. For a more detailed discussion of the utility of gas engines for shoe manufacturers see Appendix VII.

this policy.^{1.} Indeed, this process of centralisation must also be qualified in another way. It was a process that went furthest amongst best practice firms. A press report on the industry locally in 1886 reveals the truth of this statement, and again shows the mixed systems of hand and machine working necessary for a centre making better grades of footwear in the transition period.^{2.} The article highlights the work of ten of the town's leading manufacturers^{3.} and well illustrates that varying patterns of variety production were very much the norm at this stage amongst all manufacturers.^{4.} All best practice firms are quoted as using the latest machinery to execute the larger bulk orders of standard, stock boots and shoes. This, it was noted of Manfield's:

...in the machine rooms are all the latest sole-sewing machines, while in another room sets of the Cutlan machinery. It is needless to say that all other machinery is of the best construction and is used wherever practicable..^{5.}

Whilst at Tebbutt and Sons factory "... the various appointments are of the most useful character, and machinery of the latest kind is being introduced."^{6.} Equally important, however, was the continued prominence of hand-sewn work and the rising market in specialties. From other sources, the continued importance of traditionally made footwear to these two firms can be attested.^{7.} Indeed, in the case of H.E.Randall and of A. & W. Church & Co. the article stresses the mixed character of production. At the former's factory "... every class of boot

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1. The authorities for this statement are not conclusive. Contemporary Factory plans deposited with the Borough Engineer reveal the presence of lasting, handmaking and riveting rooms (consulted by the author with the kind permission of the Northampton Technical Services Manager). The files of the Boot and Shoe Trades Chronicle for the 1870s further suggests the inflow of hand workers into the factory. Cf. B.S.T.J. 23 October 1886 p300-01. "(At Northampton).. it is the exception, not the rule, for closing to be done on the premises.. Large numbers of riveters and lasters are working in many of the factories, but the finishing is almost entirely done at the homes of workmen, or in shops where the expenses are jointly shared.."
 2. See discussion above at p.56-7 It is instructive to note, that Church (1968) cites this article as proof of Northampton's backwardness.
 3. By contrast, all second rank firms briefly discussed were described as utilising only traditional craft methods.
 4. For an extended discussion of Northampton Shoe manufacturers production strategies see Chapter Seven below.
 5. B.S.T.J. loc. cit. p367.
 6. B.S.T.J. ibid. Cf. Amongst other prominent users of machinery, the trade press prominently featured G.T.Hawkins whose new factory was laid out for machine working using gas engines. (B.S.T.J. 28 August 1886 pl47) and 6 November 1886 p339). Yet again, Hawkins had by no means entirely abandoned handwork nor outworking.
 7. See Appendix II C.3. and C.12.

is manufactured, to assist in which the latest machinery of all kinds has been put down..", but, in addition, Randall employed many hand-sewn men and maintained a last-making department, to meet the growing bespoke trade in his City retail shops.¹ Moreover, he had invented and patented in 1883, the first successful specialty sportswear: The Tenacious tennis shoe. By 1886, 20,000 pairs had been manufactured.² A. & W. Church & Co., however, were regarded as the pioneers of the specialty movement, and at this time by using the latest machinery, a host of hand workers, and an array of patented and trade branded lines, successfully sold a bewildering range of boots and shoes.³ As a result of this energetic exploitation of the market many manufacturers premises had grown in a haphazard fashion, it was noted:

.. Many of the factories seem to have been built room by room, as the necessity⁴ for extension became too pressing to be further disregarded...

The other important organisational feature in transition was the extent to which sub-contracting work was undertaken. The presence of undercapitalised manufacturers tended to encourage the growth and development of a small master sub-contractor class.⁵ The first wave of machinery gave rise to this development.

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1. The journalist notes that this utilisation of hand-sewers and last makers in the factory by Randall was deserving of imitation: Randall also undertook closing at his factory.
 2. Cf. Appendix II C.4.
 3. For a detailed note on this, see Appendix II C.8.
 4. B.S.T.J. 23 October 1886 p301.
 5. As will be argued in Chapter 3 below, industrialisation in the shoe industry initially expanded small master opportunities only to contract them after the early 1890s. In as far as the orthodox case concerns itself with small master matters, Head merely views them plainly as "men of straw", as a drag upon development generally. There is no recognition of this support role that underpinned development in transition. Indeed Head goes as far as to state that there was no middleman function in the British Shoe industry, but this conclusion appears to be based upon his doctoral thesis investigation of Leicester. Leicester differs from other centres in this respect; even that centre utilises sub-contracting middlemen in Leicestershire villages. Cf. the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children: Report 1864 (3414)XX11, p.XViii, where it is noted of small masters ".. In other branches (of industry), on the contrary, as in the boot and shoe trade, the introduction of the machine has unsettled the mode of conducting business, especially by the employment of what are called "Chamber or garret masters", persons who receive the materials from the wholesale houses, and themselves usually employing 4 or 5 persons, but occasionally as many as 30.." The literature on the Norwich shoe industry fully describes the use of such sub-contractors there (see F.W.Wheldon A Norvic Century (1947) p31-32 and C.B.Hawkins Norwich a Social Study (1910). Chapter III passim.)

Adcock notes that

...the absence of real factories led to the establishment of a new branch to the trade, machine closing to the trade.. Small men with a little room and not much capital could start manufacturing without obtaining machines, and literally hundreds in Northampton did so..."¹.

And just as the sewing machine gave rise to the closer to the trade, so similarly the introduction of the Blake Sewer encouraged the development of another species of subcontractor: sewers to the trade.².

(c) Growth of Firms in The Transition Period was of an Extensive Character

Thus, intra firm expansion was effected by increasing the production units in operation; rather than injecting large increments of fixed capital. Everywhere in the industry, extensive growth patterns reinforced and perpetuated outwork operations. From the outset, outworking had underpinned the development of the Northamptonshire wholesale industry. As Chapter One has stressed, there were two elements to this system of production: its organisational structure, and the geographical divisions that developed between different shoe centres within the industry. During the transitional phase, this structure of production was to become more entrenched and complex.

The nature of the early geographical divisions within the wholesale industry were based upon the Basket-work System of production, whereby ready-cut materials were sent into Northamptonshire by London merchants to be made up.³ They took advantage of the lower wage rates that prevailed, and low levels of trade union activity amongst Northampton shoemakers, to which was combined the high skill level of the labour force. In the firm discussed in Chapter One, this system lasted until the 1860s, when a gradual change was signalled as a result of early mechanisation. Thomas Wright notes that the old system was eclipsed, "...because

1. Adcock op. cit. p42.

2. Other sub-contracting functions were to be found in Northampton, principally finishers to the trade.

3. Several strands of evidence point to Manufacturers in other centres getting work made in Northampton. The links between Leicester factors and Northampton sub-contractors were the most usual: eg. S.L.R.17 March 1893 p680c "...Nearly the whole trade of Juggins and Cochin (of Northampton) had been done with large Leicester factors.." Several manufacturers had branch factories, including Derham Brothers of Bristol; S.T.Midgley & Sons of Leeds; Green and Sons of Leicester; J.N.Brown of Birmingham Cf. Footwear Organiser September 1932 where it is noted that in the 1860s a Stafford firm had an agent in Kettering to get men's shoes made up there.

of William Hickson who settled as a manufacturer in Northampton..(&) .. the basket work method gave place to the Exhibition System - the first showplace in London being (Hickson's) warehouse in Smithfield..¹. Within a short period, this innovation gave rise to an increasing trend whereby several London merchants established branch factories in Northampton, where goods were made in their entirety. Several of these London men came to reside in the town, and were soon to become prominent members of the industry there: Ebenezer Homan was to become the most prominent..². The combination of relatively lower wages, high operative skills and lower levels of unionisation when compared with London continued to motivate these men. A fresh wave of such migrations was experienced in the late 1880s and early 1890s..³. One such firm, Samuel Smith & Co. also had a branch factory at Long Buckby and an agent, William Dickens, at Daventry..⁴. In addition to this, local manufacturers continued to undertake sub-contract work for London houses,⁵ and most established a warehouse-showroom from which to conduct their important London business.

In addition to this, production within the County revealed similar geographical divisions. From the earliest days, Northampton manufacturers had used country shoemakers as a surplus, reserve labour force that could be readily expanded and contracted according to seasonal shifts in activity and in times of heavy demand..⁶.

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1. T. Wright The Romance of the Shoe (1920) pl62. Hickson opened a branch factory in Northampton in 1857.
 2. Cf. Chapter 8. p 499 on Homan.
 3. S.L.R. 28 July 1888 p.92 listed those London firms with branch factories in Northampton as being: James Branch, John Branch, J. Dawson & Sons, Davy Bros. (a branch of A. Salomon & Co.), Hickson & Sons, Richard Mountford, E. Parrish & Son, Henry Sharman, Sutbbs & Grimsdell, and S. Smith & Co.
 4. S.L.R. 13 September 1890 p340.
 5. For example, John Maddy. (See Chapter Six below regarding his activities.)
 6. Minute books of County vestries in the 1820s and 1830s reveal the truth of this statement. See J.M.Steiner "The Poor in Rothwell 1750-1840" N.P. & P. IV 3 (1968/69) pl43-44. "The trade of Shoemaking was similarly subject to trade depressions. We hear that Samuel Tebbutt, shoemaker, applies to the parish for a maintenance for himself and family: 'has four children under seven years of age: has been turned off from employ at Northampton along with several hundred other hands..' "(quoted from Rothwell Vestry Minute Book I 29 January 1829). See also S.A.Peyton Kettering Vestry Minutes 1799-1853 N.R.S. Vol. VI (1933) p30-35, where similar cases are heard concerning unemployed outworker shoemakers. This tendency for 19 century light industries to use country outworkers in this way has been explored in studies of the East Midlands hosiery industry see particularly D.M.Smith East Midlands Industrial Area: A Regional Study of Industrial Location (unpublished) PH.D. Univ. Nottingham 1961). For a recent theoretical discussion of centre-periphery relations, see A.L.Friedman Industry Labour: Class Struggle at Work and Monopoly Capitalism (1977) particularly parts III and IV. passim.

Figure 2: i: Shifting Job Opportunities in Northamptonshire/ outside Northampton
in Four Principal Occupational Groups

Occupational Group	MALES			FEMALES		
	1851	1871	1891	1851	1871	1891
Agriculture	26274	23268	17685	2014	313	182
Textiles	539	89	16	10628	6377	741
Shoemaking	10759	15026	25796	2511/3950	4562	10338
Iron Manufacture & Quarries	227	1421	2176	-	-	-
Indoor Domestic Service	763	573	564	9091	11076	11022

Source: Registrar General Printed Censuses 1851-91.

Notes: See overleaf.

Notes: Figure2: i.

- (i) Agriculture = traditional employment sector: jobs declining but remain important.
- (ii) Textiles = old industrial base, which collapses progresses as mechanised factory based industries emerge in West Yorkshire (wool) Nottinghamshire (lace).
- (iii) Shoemaking = rising, dominant job sector.
- (iv) Iron = emerging sector, but provides relatively fewer jobs prior to 1914
- (v) Domestic Service = dominant female job sector.

Just as London merchants experienced, wages in country areas were lower and labour less well organised.^{1.} As the 19th Century shoe industry grew, so the spread of outworking and then manufacturing in country areas moved apace. This consolidation of the industry in East Northamptonshire after 1860 was founded, R.L. Greenall argues, upon increased market demand, the opening of the Leicester-Hitchin railway and the entry of semi-skilled labour permitted by early mechanisation.^{2.} Industrial expansion was also greatly facilitated by favourable labour market conditions in the transitional period. In the generation after 1860 there occurred a general decline of job opportunities in Northamptonshire agriculture as a result of mechanisation, a shift to pastoral farming and the economic depression that hit the industry after c1875: Figure 2:i: refers. Added to this from this time growing urban prosperity began to act as a potent pull-factor.^{4.}

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1. Mounfield (1962) op cit p99-100. Cf. E.J.Swaysland Boot and Shoe Manufacture as a Village Industry (1902) passim.
 2. R.L.Greenall A History of Northamptonshire (1979) pl04-5 Cf. Mounfield loc. cit. p449. As Chapter One, above, notes reference in the earlier literature that place East Northants centres as important manufacturing centres by the late 18 century must be treated with extreme caution (eg. T. Wright op. cit pl49) But Cf. V.C.H. Northants iii p219 which gives a correct interpretation of Kettering's recovery in the 1860s after years of industrial malaise: "...the manufacture of boots and shoes (are)... said to have been introduced by Thomas Gotch about 1790. It was not, however, till about 1857 that this industry developed, and it was greatly increased in 1870 during the Franco-German War. Railway communication which reached the town in 1857 when the Leicester and Hitchin Railway was opened, also helped towards its prosperity.." In fact, this pattern of 19th Century Economic development was common to the Midland region. For example, in Norfolk, at Norwich, the problems encountered by the contraction of the worsted industry there was also subsequently alleviated by the development of a wholesale footwear industry (see A.W.Bayne History of Norwich (1868) p568-605: Cf. the literature on the decline of Norwich's worsted industry including Clapham's Essay in Economic Journal (1910); M.F.Lloyd Prichard's article. Ec.H.R. (1950-51); J.K.Edward's in Yorks. Bulletin (1964); and D.C.Coleman's in Scandinavian Economic History Review. (1962) Whilst in Warwickshire, at Coventry, the loss of the silk ribbon weaving industry was countered by the development of a range of light engineering activities. (see A.R.Presl^r op. cit.)
 3. P.L.R.Horn Agricultural Trade Unionism in Four Midland Counties 1860-1900 (unpublished PhD Univ. Leicester 1968) p2 & 3, where a decline in female job opportunities resulting from 1867 Gangs Act is also noted.
 4. Horn *ibid* p29 "... urban prosperity was growing rapidly; in the vicinity of the large towns there were many opportunities for employment which could be seized upon by dissatisfied agricultural workers. Workers who saw.. prices of consumer goods rising while their own wages failed to keep pace.. "Cf. p152, where she cites evidence of migration from the land to the nearby quarries and boot factories within the county. Cf. Kettering Observer 28November 1884. Of the position in the early 1870s "... Seeing that shoe hands were getting very much larger wages than other mechanics, it is not surprising that large numbers abandoned other callings and became disciples of St. Crispin. Agricultural labourers rushed in from the country round about, and upon payment of a small premium - often not more than a sovereign - they were taught the "art and mysteries" of rivetting, and in a few weeks passed as competent workmen.

Yet despite the apparent decline in labour from the mid-century the agricultural labour market remained overstocked:

.. Nevertheless, the supply of labour, except perhaps at the very busy seasons of the year, still tended to outstrip the demand for it ..^{1.}

This gave rise to poor wage rates^{2.} and whilst current information concerning shoe industry wage rates is very sketchy, given the prevalence of piecework payments, it may be safely assumed that they tended to be in excess of those prevailing on the land,^{3.} A similar fall in job opportunities occurred in those textile industries that formed the core of the county's old industrial base^{4.} In fact many of the rising East Northamptonshire shoe centres had

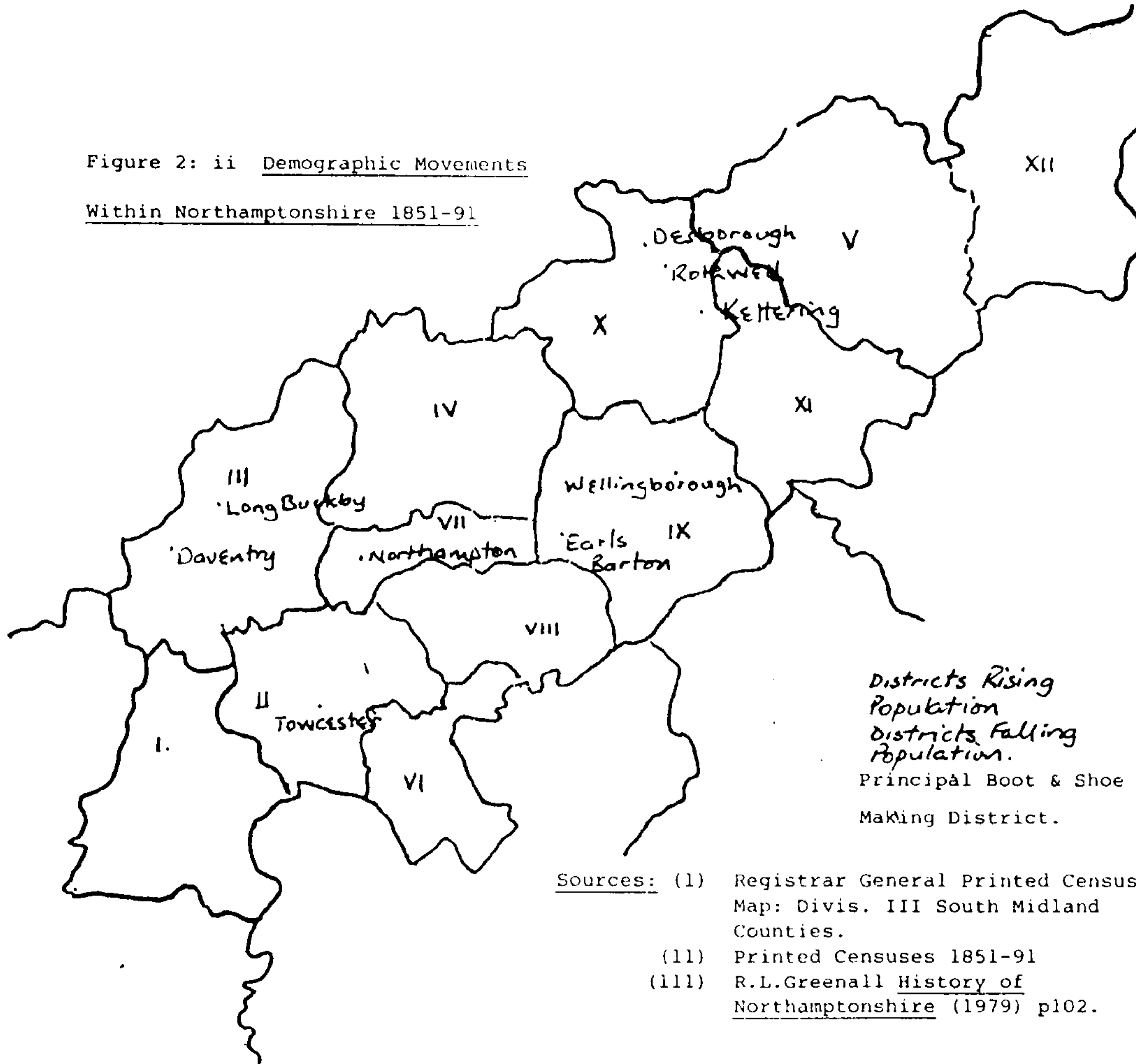
1. Horn *ibid.* p142. This gave rise to the Agricultural Labourers Union attempts to promote scarcity by emigration schemes in Midland Counties in the 1870s. See Horn *ibid* p146-152.
2. Able-bodied agricultural labourers in Northamptonshire received 11/- to 12/- per week in the 1860s, with perquisites adding possibly another 2/- or 3/- (Horn *ibid* p.7.) But Horn's figures appear to be maxima for she states "... A great deal of work was done by the piece in this county.." (p7) In addition to which winter unemployment was commonplace, and perquisites varied greatly" (/8) These structures apply right through to 1900, at which time average wages were 13/- to 14/-, with up to 5/- addition. (p325-29).
3. Although where shoe industry labour was seated, wages might have only reached the level then prevailing in the industry^w (see D. Bythell The Sweated Trades (1978) p117,) of country shoemaker wages were below those prevailing in the main centres - see Kettering Observer 23 January 1885, where it was noted that Kettering Shoemakers "are paid at miserably poor wages compared with such towns as Northampton and Leicester..." Wage rates were fixed here in c1872 and remained in force until the early 1890s.
4. These textile activities can be isolated as the making of worsteds, silk, plush, linen, pillow lace, ribbon weaving and wool combing. In many centres the working of wool was already in decline by the 1790s-1800s: e.g. at Kettering (VCH iii p219; H.A.Randall "The Kettering Worsted Industry of the Eighteenth Century" N.P. & P. iv: 5 & 6 (1970 and 1971). Wool stapling, however, continued and was centred upon Towcester by the 1890s. By contrast silk, plush and ribbon weaving, undertaken largely by Coventry merchants on an outwork basis in Northamptonshire, was in full decline in the 1850s. (An interesting series of occasional articles on the distress and commercial dislocation this caused appears in The Times in 1857-60). Pillow lace making by hand came under threat from machines in the 1860s, from which time a slow decline set in in the County: the handicraft was all but extinct by the 1890s. (Census General Report 1891 p50. recorded the decline in numbers occupied in lace manufacture in the county thus: 1861=8221; 1871=6406; 1881 = 3232; 1891 = 731). (Towcester's old industrial base was wool, silk and lace manufacture: NCM (1928) p301 notes "... In 1848 the inhabitants were chiefly employed in the manufacture of boots, silk and bobbin lace. By 1875 silk manufacture had disappeared and bootmaking.. for Northampton Shoe masters.. increased...").

suffered economic decline and distress for some years prior to the upsurge of footwear manufacture.¹ Along with ironstone quarrying, iron making and foundry work and clothing and corset making, footwear manufacture paved the way for an economic restructuring of the area², which is signalled by a rise in job opportunities particularly suited to former weavers and cloth makers: Figure 2: i: refers.

This shift in Northamptonshire's basic economic structure is particularly reflected in the differing scale of demographic changes within the county: Figure 2: ii refers. The Census Reports between 1851-91 reveal rural depopulation in those Registration Districts unaffected by the evolution of this new industrial base. In those Districts experiencing an increase in population much of this increase was confined to urban centres. Aggregate population figures here mask the gradual shift of the industry away from many of the outworking villages into manufacturing centres. Thus, if Northampton's satellite shoe villages are

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1. Examples: (i) Kettering, see note above. Cf. the local poet John Leatherland's reminiscences of life in the town in 1820-1830 when he worked as a silk weaver, shoemaker, and velvet weaver ("Autobiographical Memoir", in J.A. Leatherland Essays and Poems (1862); (ii) Rothwell, formerly a plush and silk weaving centre founded in the 17 Century. Following a mid-century malaise, boot and shoemaking took off in the 1870s, initially in converted weaving sheds (Anon. Rothwell: Official Guide (1925) p18; H. Page Story of Rothwell (n.a.) p10 and B.S.T.J. 5 December 1891 p623-24; (iii) Burton Latimer when the old economic base of agriculture woollen clothmaking and carpet making collapsed, the village's handsewn shoemakers entered into wholesale production activities (H. Ayres Industrial Activities of Burton Latimer (1925) p9); (iv) Desborough, formerly a silk plush and worsted weaving, and lacemaking provided the main employment. With their decline in the 1850s some 500 were unemployed. See R.M. Sanders & G & J Marlow Desborough Industrial and Provident Co-operative Society Ltd.: Jubilee Souvenir 1863-1913 (m.d.) p15, "... When the weaving trade left Desborough industrial conditions were very bad until the opening of the Midlands Railway in the early 'sixties (sic.) Desborough then rose to a new era of activity, the boot and shoe industry having been established itself. And it is from this period that the town has made such great progress." (v) Finedon, formerly reliant upon lacemaking and agriculture (VCH iii p196). (vi) Wellingborough here also the economic distress caused by the decline of traditional textile trades (lace, silk, worsted) was countered by the expansion of a longer established shoe industry together with a shift of the local economy into ironstone quarrying, ironfoundry work, and clothing manufacture. (VCH. iii, NCM 3 (1930) p317-18; J. & M. Palmer History of Wellingborough (1972) p169-200). (vii) Earls Barton, the decline of a traditional textile sector, and rush mat and chair making was countered by increased shoe manufacture. (J. Palmer. Earls Barton Yesterday and Today (1976). Cf. P.R. Mounfield (1965) loc. cit p438-40 on Northamptonshire's old textile base.
 2. Although footwear production was at the centre of revitalising the local economy of these towns, the local sources cited above all stress that the new industrial base was wider than Chapter One argues was found at Northampton.

Figure 2: ii Demographic Movements
Within Northamptonshire 1851-91



Registration District	Population Movement	% movement 1891 cf. 1851	Comment
I Brackley	-2117	-15.4	Agricultural Area.
II Towcester	- 846	- 6.6	Minor shoe activity declining: wool stapling
III Daventry	-4278	-19.5	declining shoe activity: Agriculture
IV Brixworth	-2585	-17.5	Agriculture: small outwork and quarries
V Oundle	-2774	-17.7	Agricultural Area.
VI Pottersbury	+2960	+30.2	Agricultural Area.
VII Northampton	+45460	+134.3	Boot & Shoe Manufacturing: Foundry
VIII Hardingstone	+1935	+22.3	Northampton suburbs in North: small outwork
IX Wellingborough	+22286	+104.3	Boot & Shoe Manufacturing: Iron works & quarries
X Kettering	+17409	+96.2	Boot & Shoe Manufacturing: Iron works & quarries.
XI Thrapston	+1741	+13.6	Boot & Shoe Manufacturing: Iron works & quarries.
XII Peterborough	+16345	+56.6	Railway/Brick Industry & Agric. Marketing.
Northamptonshire	+70638	+33.2	

scrutinised more closely it is apparent that there is a tendency for population to increase early in the transition period when job opportunities were increasing. This is in contrast to falling populations later as the industry begins to centralise production in the main manufacturing centres: Figure 2: iii reveals the pattern of demographic change in known Northampton satellites. Thirteen parishes where outwork is known to have taken place reveal such a pattern, although in five population is higher in 1911 when compared with 1851, whilst in others the shifts in population are of a relatively smaller order. Of the five parishes where a secular rise in population takes place, three became suburbs of Northampton;¹ whilst Earls Barton developed as a minor shoe manufacturing centre: only Cogenhoe's growth cannot be explained in terms of footwear development. Of the two parishes recording a persistent, secular fall in population, Daventry, an older established manufacturing town outside the main shoemaking belt, failed to maintain its former position in the wake of change.² Yet even in the new industrial district, the essential rural, agricultural character of the county was never entirely eradicated.³ Of the districts

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1. Dallington, Duston and Kingsthorpe. All developed a manufacturing capacity. Cf. Chapter One above, and Eight below.
 2. Pigot's Northamptonshire Directory (1841) cites the three premier shoe centres in the county as, Northampton, Wellingborough and Daventry. (note this is the first edition of Pigot to note the importance of the County's Wholesale Shoe industry. Cf. Pigot's Directory of 1830).
 3. Many documentary descriptions of County shoe centres attest to this: eg. VCH iv 113 on Great Doddington notes, "... owing to its retired situation, the village is less spoiled than others in this part of the county, and retains many of its picturesque 17 century stone houses with thatched or red-tiled roofs.." N.C.M. II (1929) "Finedon gives the impression of arrested growth. It has managed to emerge from a purely agricultural condition, but, except here and there, has not put on an industrial character. The old and the new, country and town, jostle one another..." Manchester Guardian 23 March 1905 p4 on Raunds, "... You must walk (two miles)... from the railway station.. before you come to the houses and boot factories. The buildings are widely scattered, to call so rural a place a town is purely complimentary. Cows stare over the fence on one side of the main street, and crows come foraging in the market place....", B.S.T.J. 5 December 1891, p623 on Rothwell notes, "... The town is very irregularly built. The winding street, with old fashioned pitched causeway. The diversified style of architecture, and the various ruins abounding in the midst all proclaims antiquity.." In addition, antiquarian notes in contemporary newspapers, and from other sources, note that many of the settlements in the shoe belt retained their wake feasts, and many other traditional rural customs that were only broken down in the late 19 Century (See N.P.L. Mss Village Files).

Figure 2iii: Population Movements in Northampton
Satellite Shoe Outwork Parishes - 1851-1911.

Parish	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
(i) <u>rising population</u>							
Dallington	714	686	1051	1610	2233	4852	5451
Duston	563	1162	1640	2497	2963	3528	4513
Kingsthorpe	1586	1906	2409	3054	7697	14099	15476
Earls Barton	1277	1557	1905	2337	2602	2914	2556
Cogenhoe	374	360	367	345	447	467	485
(ii) <u>downward fluctuation</u>							
Abthorpe	500	541	559	460	433	338	324
Astcote	-	enumerated as part of Pattishall Parish -					
Denton	595	578	619	547	487	439	416
Doddington, Great	493	580	626	592	551	508	482
Grendon	558	610	532	542	536	412	416
Hackleton	497	535	475	378	381	327	346
Harpole	778	833	824	829	910	915	870
Houghton, Great	317	365	369	330	303	303	267
Houghton, Little	558	578	575	510	504	433	414
Kislingbury	690	723	669	695	725	649	609
Long Buckby	2341	2500	2493	2548	2267	2147	2467
Pattishall	775	885	965	914	890	860	882
Piddington	559	567	572	508	523	387	377
(iii) <u>falling population</u>							
Daventry	4430	4124	4051	3859	3939	3780	3516
Holcot	508	517	404	377	341	343	289
Towcester	2665	2715	2677	2834	2775	2371	2349

Source: Registrar General's Printed Decennial
Census Reports 1851-1911.

experiencing population growth, only Peterborough was not reliant upon these new manufacturing developments.^{1.} Of the districts losing population, only Daventry and Towcester included within their boundaries shoe centres of any size: of these the main ones were Towcester, Daventry and Long Buckby: only the latter continued to flourish.

As this discussion has implied there were two main types of centre:-

(i) outworking villages: these remained on the periphery of production, providing manufacturing centres with surplus labour.

(ii) small manufacturing centres: some outwork centres, however, began to emerge as manufacturing centres in their own right. In some, like Towcester and Daventry, manufacturing capacity expanded in transition only to contract later in the century. At others, the industry became more firmly established, and was, by the Edwardian period competing vigourously with Northampton in medium grade footwear markets.^{2.}

What can be observed therefore, in the transitional period is that each of these main centres established an extensive network of satellite outworking villages, most, but by no means all, were set within a c5 mile radius of the town.^{3.}

1. T.M.Cunningham "Factors Influencing the Growth of Peterborough 1850-1900" N.P. & P. v: 5 (1977). An essay stresses not only its importance as a rail centres, and regional agricultural market centre, but also as a rising centre for the manufacture of Flatton-type bricks.
2. See below p160-61. This establishment was mirrored by increased levels of urbanisation at those places. The County's press in the 1880s and 1890s chronicles the emergence of these new urban districts in the shoe belt: Kettering, Burton Latimer, Rushden etc. (see particularly the yearly reports on chief settlements in Northampton Mercury; Northampton Herald; Kettering Circular; Kettering Leader; Kettering Observer and Wellingborough News in this period). Streets were improved (eg. at Burton Latimer, K.L. 25 June 1897); housing built (in 1884/5 the Kettering Observer ran a series of articles on Kettering's urban expansion following the modern establishment of the shoe industry); gas and sewage works opened (eg. at Burton Latimer, N.D.R. 2 October 1895); and public buildings and amenities improved (eg. the extension of Working Men's Clubs, W.N. 21 April 1899). Of these centres, Rushden's growth was particularly noted by contemporaries. Thus, N.M. 29 December 1886 p.6. noted, "(prosperity) commenced twenty years ago.. This is seen whether we look at the investment of production, the increase in commerce, the increase in houses, manufacturers, schools and Churches.." By 1890 a branch railway from Irchester had reached the parish and four years later it achieved U.D.C. status (see V.C.H. iv, and W.N. 3 February 1899, a history of Rushden from 1850).
3. In making this assessment a five mile radius measured from the Market Place was adopted. Cf D. Bythell op. cit. p114-5 suggests that in wholesale shoe areas outside the East Midlands outworking was "largely an urban phenomenon". But several sources suggest the manufacturers in other areas did employ rural outworkers: e.g. see R.L.Green Rural Industries of England (1890) p197-8 on Norfolk Cf. Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories 1892 1893-4 (c6978) XV11 p72. Moreover, London manufacturers sent work out to Northamptonshire; Bristol manufacturers to surrounding villages, notably Kingswood, as did their counterparts at Leeds.

Forty parishes lie approximately within such a distance of Northampton, and it was found that concentrations of shoemaking activities are recorded to have occurred in 45% of those parishes: Figure 2:iv refers. Some of these centres were particularly associated with one manufacturer, who became the dominant employer. In this way, Manfield & Sons can be linked to Harpole¹; Simon Collier & Sons to Kissingbury²; and Pollard & Son to Long Buckby.³ Whilst at other places several Northampton firms undertook outwork operations; thus at Towcester, Hornby & West, Cove & West, J. Harrison & Co., and later, Church & Co. all relied heavily upon shoe workers there.⁴ But the centres recorded in Figure 2: v. refer to places where evidence can be adduced of concentrations of outworkers. Undoubtedly some of the remaining 22 parishes contained smaller and scattered numbers of outworkers, but these places can only be traced by a very detailed scrutiny of sources, such as enumerators returns. Happily, the outwork ledgers of one firm, F.W. Pollard & Son, are extant, and these list outworkers, either singularly or a small number, in the following additional parishes: Moulton, Hardinstone, Wood Burcote nr. Towcester, Greens Norton, Roade, Bugbrooke, Whiston, and Brafield on the Green.⁵ In addition, scattered references recorded that Northampton outwork was completed at Kettering in the mid century;⁶ at Higham Ferrers⁷; and more generally throughout the period to 1914 at Daventry and Long Buckby. However, where a firm carried out very extensive operations, the network of outworkers stretched further out into the County. Thus, in the case of Turner Brothers and Hyde, who employed c4000 in the 1870s, outworkers were to be found in neighbouring counties.⁸ Generally, these were places in which

1. Appendix II, C.3.

2. Appendix II, C10.

3. Appendix II C20 Cf. Greenall (1977) loc. cit. passim.

4. Appendix II C15, C25, C8. For Cove and West see Chapter Six below.

5. In fact, within the shoe belt of the county these five mile radii overlap, and thus some villages came under the influence of more than one major centre: eg. Earls Barton was used by both Northampton and Wellingborough; of Great Doddington it was noted in 1898 that shoemakers there made for Wellingborough Northampton, Rushden and Higher Ferrers.

6. See, eg. B.S.T.J. 6 June 1885 p339.

7. SLR 30 June 1893 p1523.

8. Wright op cit. p228-30: Turner's sent work into Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Cf. J.L.Green The Rural Industries of England (1890) p57 "... In the villages around Biddenham (Bedfordshire) adjacent to Northamptonshire the shoe trade has become a considerable industry, and has absorbed very many who were formerly employed in the land..."

Figure 2: iv: Known Concentrations of Outworkers in Country Areas
Employed by Northampton Wholesale Manufacturers 1864-1974.

Parish	Outworkers Concentration	Resident Shoe Agent	Small Master Operations or Factories
(i) <u>Small manufacturing outwork centres</u>			
Daventry	✓	✓	✓
Earls Barton	✓	✓	✓
Long Buckby	✓	✓	✓
Towcester	✓	✓	✓
(ii) <u>Outwork Villages</u>			
Abthorpe	✓	✓	
Astcote	✓	✓	✓
Cogenhoe	✓	✓	
Dallington ^{1.}	✓		✓
Denton ^{1.}	✓	✓	
Duston ¹	✓		
Great Doddington	✓		
Grendon	✓		
Hackleton	✓	✓	✓
Harpole	✓	✓	✓
Houghton, Great	✓	✓	✓
Houghton, Little	✓		
Holcot	✓	✓	
Kingsthorpe ^{1.}	✓		
Kislingbury	✓	✓	✓
Pattishall	✓		
Piddington	✓		✓

Sources: a variety of sources were utilised. The most prominent were:-
 Directories; Northants Notes & Queries; Trade Press, VCH. Northants;
 NPL M.S. Village files.

Notes: 1. These parishes amalgamated in Northampton C.B. in 1901.

commoner grades of work were executed.^{1.} The making of better grades was concentrated within Northampton itself, where outwork patterns of employment also prevailed. Long Buckby provided an exception to this general pattern, and here first quality hand sewn footwear was turned out.^{2.} As has been noted above, as the Century passes the tendency to centralise production increased, and with it the role of these outworking villages declined^{3.}; an event that was marked by falling population in many settlements: Figure 2:iii refers.

The organisation of this work has been little considered by shoe historians and is deserving of more attention. All work was executed by the piece, with shoe workers providing their own tools and incidental materials, known in the industry as grindery: this prevailed in Northampton also. The only machine commonly employed by outworkers working on their own premises was the sewing machine which was generally purchased on an instalment plan from either a machinery company, or the employer. The supply of materials and control of outworkers was effected by four methods within Northamptonshire:

(i) where there were small concentrations of workers in a parish, they tramped into the shoe centre once a week to shop work and collect a fresh stock of materials to be made up;^{4.}

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1. VCH Northants ii 319 "... for many years Northampton manufacturers have had a lower grade boot than could be made in town, manufactured in neighbouring villages by this means.." Cf. S.L.R. 22 March 1890 p386. "... Most of the orders for very common work now find their way into the country districts, where there is a greater quantity of comparatively unskilled labour, and where the standard of wages is not so high as it is in the county town. Northampton firms have of late years ceased to manufacture extensively this class of footwear; and although many gross of common boots are still supplied .. they are either factored, or have been got up by country agents who are engaged for that purpose.
 2. Scattered evidence suggests better quality work was executed in other villages as well; e.g. T. Wright op.cit.p183 a reference to ski boots being made at Cogenhoe and V.C.H. iv p309, a reference to football boots being made at Pattishall.
 3. J.L.Green op cit. p100-02 notes this decline and the increased centralisation of production.
 4. Mrs. Frost Long Buckby Scrap Book (1958-M.S.) (NRO ZA 2/66, X4462) cites oral evidence of outworkers tramping the miles to Northampton and back to fetch and deliver work. cf. Wright op cit p228 "... The village of Turvey Bedfordshire, was at this time (1860s) still a shoemaking centre. Mr. George Wooding, who resides there, tells me that he and his fellow workers made Army boots, and that he often walked to Wellingborough (distant 14 miles) with bags of work.." And at p234 he notes that it was a common sight to see country workers bringing in bags of work on their shoulders.

(ii) where there was a greater concentration, the employer employed a resident shoe agent to dispense work, collect it in, and generally look after his interest locally. The available written evidence points to a wide use of such men¹, but the directory analysis at Figure 2:v. to some extent belies this. To what degree the directory is inaccurate is difficult to forecast, but certainly the 1861 and 1871 Census Enumerators Returns for Northampton reveal numbers of shoe agents in residence, who acted for London merchants, yet who were not recorded in the local directories of the period. Some agents were in the employ of a manufacturer, whilst others acted on a subcontracting basis. Several themselves became manufacturers.²

At least some evidence is available that suggests both country agents and shoe manufacturers exploited this outwork force, by the systematic evasion of the Truck Acts. Ben Jones, for example, notes that shoe agents operated Tommy shops in Northamptonshire villages; At Wollaston this led to the establishment by local shoemakers of the Northamptonshire Productive Boot and Shoe Society.³

(iii) In addition, carriers were utilised to transport materials to outworkers and return the finished boots⁴. It is probable that in places

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1. Wright *ibid*, "... Mr. S.R.Owen of Olney 'gave out' for the Northampton firm, Turner (Bros.) Hyde & Co., bag or Hamper Work, and matters were managed similarly in all the towns and villages round.."
 2. T. Wright *op cit*. p238-32 discussed how agents in the North Buckinghamshire village of Olney turned to manufacturing. This village was extensively used by Turner Bros. of Northampton as well as several other manufacturers including J. Muddiman. The shift to manufacturing started in the 1860s when Turners were inundated with orders for riveted work "... As a result of the rush of work, one of their agents Abram Whitmee brought a Blucher boot in the rough to Olney and persuaded S.R.Owen to take up riveting (230).. The first factories built in Olney were those of S.R.Owen & C.A.Drage.." (p234). By the 1890s several important enterprises were active in the village all run by ex-agents; Hinde & Mann, S. Cowley Ltd., and Thomas Johnson.
 3. Benjamin Jones Cooperative Production Vol II (1894) Chapter XIX *passim*. Of Wollaston he noted at p403 "... The contractors employ persons in this and neighbouring villages to give out the work to be done, and these persons in a great many instances, keep shops for the sale of groceries etc., which groceries the workmen have been under obligation to purchase. This has not only been the cause of much hardship to workmen, but has also hindered, in a very great measure the spread of distributive cooperation in these villages.." Elsewhere Jones approvingly quotes the report of missionary D.R.Foxwell, made in 1867, in the plight of such shoemakers at Raunds and elsewhere.
 4. T. Wright *ibid* p228 "... The carrier John Boswell, used to take work (from Olney) to Northampton three times a week, and return with the pay and more leather.."

Figure 2: v: Northamptonshire Boot & Shoe Agents1864-1914

Centre	1864	1869	1877	1885	1890	1894	1898	1903	1910	1914
Abthorpe			1	1	1	1	1			
Astcote				1	1	1	1	1	1	
Bogeat	1	1	1							
Brackley	1	1								
Burton Latimer	2	2	3	3	2	1	1			
Cogenhoe								1		
Denton					1					
Earls Barton			1	1						
Finedon	1	1								
Hackelton				2	1	1	1			
Harpole					6	9	8	8	5	3
Higham Ferrers			4	2	2	1	1	1		
Holcot									2	
Houghton						1				
Kettering		1								
Kislingbury							1	1		
Northampton				1	1					

Source: Kelly's Northants Directories

where there was no resident shoe agent, he acted for the manufacturer.

(iv) lastly, small sub-contracting manufacturers emerged in large out-working settlements as the transitional period progresses.¹ Again, little is known of their activities beyond some scattered references in the trade press.² This appears to have been a much more common practice in Leicestershire, being adopted from what had been common practice in the hosiery industry.³ There were at least two reasons why large manufacturers used the small subcontracting manufacturers. First, to combat the vagaries in demand in this highly seasonal industry.⁴ Secondly, because small men achieved a cost advantage in certain grades of work.⁵

(d) The Rapid Domination by Wholesale Manufacturers of the UK Retail Market for Footwear

However, arguably the most radical characteristic of the transitional phase occurred not in new machine techniques or in organisational change at the point of production, but in the distribution of footwear from manufacturers to the consumer. The years c1870-1887 witnessed an important restructuring of the relationship between local producer-retailers and wholesale centres: a restructuring based on radically new distribution techniques.⁶ From being a small

1. Sub-contracting manufacturers were also found in Northampton itself. See below Chapters 3 and 5.
2. Such subcontract manufacturing have been located at Astcote, Pattishall and Towcester.
3. See for example P. Head "Putting out in the Leicester Hosiery Industry in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century" Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. XXXVII (1961/62); E.G.Gibson "The Putting-Out System in the English Framework - Knitting Industry" Journal of Economic and Business History II (1929/30); A.J.Pickering The Cradle and Home of the Hosiery Industry (1940).
4. B.S.T.J. 13 December 1903 p322, a Bert Millar of Earls Barton occupied 'a small factory set up to provide work at busy times for Messrs. Forscutt of Wellingborough.
5. L.T.C. 8 January 1886 p3. "... (in Leicestershire) there have grown up during the past year or two a large number of small manufacturers, who turn out a common class of boot at a wonderfully low price and the making of commoner kinds has in a large degree fallen into their hands. This feature has become most prominent during the year just closed, and now many of the larger firms buy largely from these makers instead of making for themselves.." Some subcontractors built up a large trade in this manner, see Footwear Organiser August 1932: In the 1880s, W.H.Cotton & Sons Ltd. of Earl Shilton, "... were making shoes for firms such as John Rowson; Walker, Kempson & Brown (both of Leicester); John Cooper (of London) and William Hickson (of Northampton and London).."
6. Multiple retail outlets; trade marks; agency agreements; commercial travelling; advertising; and later, mail order activities.

wholesale sector, in 1857, producing for Government contracts and the needs of the large Metropolitan market, British wholesalers progressively came to dominate the home market by 1887.¹

To perceive the role of wholesale shoe manufacturer as being substantially that of manufacturing is to fundamentally truncate that role and to misunderstand the role of the manufacturer, in a later Victorian consumer industry. In fact, what one witnesses in the shoe industry is a dual, a complimentary, process of change, not only of productive techniques but of distributive techniques also. Both functions historically resided in the same person, the master shoemaker: this was true of all artisan crafts engaged in producing consumer goods.²

Wholesale manufacturing grew out of this retail-making function in the 18th Century, and the close links between the two functions survived into the next century. From the beginnings of the trade with the London Market, Northampton manufacturers had acted as their own wholesalers. By our period the practice was well established amongst all but the smaller manufacturers, and had become general in the industry nationally. Indeed as early as the 1830s V.A.Hatley notes that Northampton's leading manufacturers were already heavily committed to a retailing function:

... During the 1830s and 1840s several of the Northampton shoe manufacturing firms established their own premises in some of the larger British towns. Messrs. Hallam & Edens, for example by 1840 had wholesale and retail establishments in Manchester, Liverpool, Stockport, Sheffield, Leeds and Nottingham. In 1850 George Moore was operating 'branches' in Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast.

Such vertical integration into distribution took a variety of forms. Most continued the wholesaling and factoring functions already familiar in the

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1. The means whereby the wholesale manufacturer achieved this penetration can be separated into three broad, but not exclusive, groups: wholesale and factoring functions; branding and advertising techniques; and retailing and multiple chain activities. Whilst a detailed consideration of these features will be deferred until the discussion of manufacturer strategies in Chapter Seven, below, it is appropriate to briefly look at these developments here.
 2. The answer to the question why shoe, indeed any, manufacturers wished to do this lies in the commonly held principle that small manufacturers will wish to avoid middleman costs in the distribution chain, thus giving a competitive edge to their products, in what was a very competitive market.
 3. V.A.Hatley "Some aspects of Northampton's History 1815-51" N.P. & P. III:6 (1965/66) p247.

industry.

Principal manufacturers established ware-houses at principal market centres, from which customers needs could be met. Thus C. & E. Lewis had such a facility at Liverpool; S. Colliers Ltd. at Glasgow, and many firms established warehousing facilities in London.¹ These premises not only provided a useful contact point for clients in major markets, but the in-stock system of warehousing common from the 1890s provided a means whereby seasonal fluctuations in factory production could be regulated.²

Many manufacturers used commercial salesmen to sell to independent retailers. From available biographical information it can be determined that an increasing emphasis and importance was placed upon salesmanship. The services of a good traveller were valued, and almost certainly one or more of the principals of a firm directed his energies to this function. As such, the acquisition of salesmanship qualities was increasingly emphasised in training manufacturer's sons, as will be discussed below.³ In addition, the increased status accorded to this function underscores its value, as does the support given by manufacturers to the U.K.C.T.A. branch at Northampton in the 1890s.

In addition to salesmen, use was made of independent selling agents, particularly in overseas trade, where even quite modest firms utilised their services.⁴

Agents are common where small manufacturers wish to be relieved of marketing responsibilities, so that very limited financial assets could be devoted exclusively to production. Retained on a commission basis, they worked closely with the manufacturers often over a long period of time, and would have had the complete responsibility for sales. Some overseas agents in particular carried the risks of credit loss, and were able to exercise considerable discretion over selling prices. It would have been the agent who strongly influenced matters of footwear style and design adopted by the firm. In the shoe industry some agents acted for one principal, but given the small scale of many manufacturing operations, the majority carried a range of manufacturers' products. Shoe manufacturers in a more substantial way of business would have employed manufacturers' agents,

1. See Appendix II c3; C4; and in particular, C24.

2. See Appendix III, C7, J. Marlow and Sons Ltd. and Appendix III NG3.

3. See Chapter 8 below.

4. For example, Pollard & Son had direct representation in Australia.

as has been discussed above.

Factoring services were widely practised in the industry. Many prominent Northampton manufacturers carried on a factoring trade, though not to the extent it was exercised in Leicester.^{1.}

However it was the shoe manufacturers increasing dominance of retailing through multiple trading, branding and advertising, first established in the long transitional phase, that most sharply signals their dominance of footwear distribution. It was these retailing developments, linked to new production techniques, that enabled a relatively small number of wholesale manufacturers at major centres to increasingly dominate the UK footwear industry.^{2.} Multiple shop operations allowed wholesale manufacturers to take advantage of relative scale economies in production. Their shops were thus able to reduce prices by stocking standardised commodities purchased in bulk. Cash trading, as opposed to traditional credit transactions, was introduced, a modest service provided, and the acceptance of small profit margins. All this was linked to shoemen selecting prime sites for their shops. Initially concentrating upon the expanding working class market, by the turn of the century some had spread into the middle class market, once the domain of the bespoke shoe.^{3.} Indeed it can be

1. The trade press tends to suggest that factoring was used less in Northampton but some firms did use it. See Appendix III NG.1. J. Sears & Co. Ltd.
2. Several writers on retailing have noted this, see J.B.Jefferys, Retail Trading in Britain 1805-1950 (1952), p353 where he links the technical revolution in shoe production to the retailing developments: "... changes in the method of production led to equally revolutionary in the system of distribution of footwear..." similarly W.G.hoskins study of footwear in VCH Leics. ii p319 et seq. make the same connection. He noted "... A distinctive feature of the modern boot and shoe industry is its distribution system... The larger manufacturers.. tended to eliminate the less efficient firms, but this process was slow because there was an ever increasing demand and in many cases independent retailers favoured certain manufacturers. In order to overcome the limitations which were placed upon size and expansion by these features of the industry, many of the wealthier manufacturers integrated retail shops of their own.. Increasingly.. variety and fashion in manufacture was promoted by.. (Extensive advertising, a wider range of shoes, and by branding). Cf. H. Levy's Retail Trade Associations: A new Form of Monopolist Organisation (A Report to the Fabian Society) (1942) reminds us that what happened in the shoe industry was part of a wider concentration of capital that was tending towards the restriction of competition. At p60, and elsewhere, Levy notes the importance of the shoe industry in these broader retailing developments for there he notes that by 1940 multiple shoe shops constituted 19% of all multiple shops.
3. For example see Appendix II C3 and C4; Appendix III N.G.1 Cf. with Appendix II C10.

rightly postulated that the retailing developments first initiated by shoe manufacturers in the 1870s and 1880s constitute a major contribution to the retailing revolution in the economy generally during the period.¹ The trend laid down in the 1880s, whereby multiple firm operations expanded steadily at the expense of the retailer, quickened in the last decade, to become one of the most significant developments of the early 20th Century². As Havenhand has recently noted:

... The urban working class were a new and ready market for cheap, often badly made shoes and clothing. In fact the footwear business was amongst the first to see the widespread development of multiple trading in Britain.. according to Jeffereys, by 1870 there were ten firms with more than ten branches, and by 1880 there were eleven more...³

Jeffery's study provides statistical information of this multiple shop boom. In 1880 there had been 1564 multiple shop branches, and of these one third (521) were selling footwear. By 1905, the number of multiples had grown to 15242, and further still by 1914 to 25000. Of these, one sixth (4170) were to be found in the footwear industry.⁴

Two issues underscored this expansion: growing urban population and rising real incomes.⁵ Although much debate still surrounds the extent to which incomes rose from the 1860's.,

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1. P. Mathias Retailing Revolution (1967); J.B.Jeffereys op. cit. G. Havenhand Nation of Shopkeepers (1982): Havenhand notes at p15 "... In the third of a century before the First World War, the revolution in the distributive trades was comparable to the revolution in industry.. New trades had developed, new ways of selling tried, the whole structure of wholesale and retail organisation was transformed. Branded goods were manufactured and advertised by the manufacturer. Resale Price Maintenance was introduced. Hagglng over price gave way to clearly marked goods, and ostentatious display took the place of leisured indifference..."
 2. It was a development that gradually engulfed all areas of retailing. See C. Fulop Competition of Consumers (1964) espec. Chapter 2 passim p173, W.G. McClelland Studies in Retailing (1963) espec. Chapter 2 passim.
 3. Havenhead op cit. p18.
 4. Jeffereys op. cit. p357: Havenhand informs us that by 1914 the revolution was far from complete, but the opening skirmishes had been fought and won, the Bastille of reaction had been stormed, and the turnbril of bankruptcy or amalgamation rumbled for many an inefficient small trader...." (op. cit.p19) Cf. C. Fulop Competition for Consumers (1964) p71 a multiple chain is where "... ten or more shops are in the same ownership, with central direction of a number of branches, as distinct from an aggregation of separate shops.."
 5. Mathias op. cit. p14.

... It seems fairly safe to say that by mid-century a tide of amelioration had already begun to flow. Which by the sixties and seventies was carrying more and more working class families towards levels of comfort and minor luxury, in such matters as housing, clothing, food and amusement, which had never before been remotely possible for people of that sort, in such numbers before.¹ It was neither a very good nor a very rich life but it was probably the first kind of life since the Industrial Revolution which provided a firm lodging₂ for the British working class within industrial societies..

It was a process noted by contemporaries. In the 1880s, Charles Booth described the prosperous regularly employed urban working class as "... more than any other representative of the way we live now.." Their clothes he described as "good and suitable"; "... as nearly as possible in the fashion of the day.."; and, importantly, none of their clothing was, as a rule, second-hand.³

It was this rise in disposable income, and with it effective demand, which, in part, underpinned the development of a consumer industry like footwear. As in other industries, if shoe manufacturers were to respond to this growing demand, it was necessary, not only to accommodate new production methods appropriate to batch, as opposed to small order production, but to develop new methods of distribution also. As Prof. Charles Wilson has commented, by the last third of the 19th century "... the emphasis in British industry was shifting from the problems of production to those of distribution and salesmanship.." ⁴. Although the shoe industry still had to face profound industrial change, the spirit of Wilson's judgement nevertheless equally applies to shoemaking.⁵ Yet, in part also, the adoption of new productive techniques in itself generated a need to find new markets. Indeed, it has been argued that one of the industry's leading multiple chains, Stead and Simpson of Leicester, initiated retailing

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1. W.J.Reader Metal Box (1976) p.2. Cf. C. Wilson op. cit.
 2. Ibid., p4. Cf. P. Mathias op. cit. p12-15: "... Despite all the controversy about movements in the standard of living from the onset of industrialisation in the 18th century to about 1850, there is a general agreement that after this date the benefits of rising national wealth were being shared to some extent by all members of society. Every index of money wages bears witness to the improvement in the cash bargain made by labour, despite the curbing of earning. (in 1875-79, 1884-86, and 1900-05).. the overall evidence suggests an improvement of almost four fifths in 1850-1910 and about a third between 1880 and 1914..."
 3. C. Booth, Life & Labour in London 2nd series Industry Vol.5. (1903) p329-31
 4. C.H.Wilson, The History of Unilever Vol. I p44.
 5. On the shoe manufacturers growing concern with distribution matters, see discussion in Chapter 7 below.

activities simply to effectively absorb increased productive capacity generated by new methods.^{1.}

Thus, new techniques in marketing and distribution should properly be seen, not just as a supportive complement to changes in productive and managerial technique, but as a necessary condition to those developments. Does this suggest a manufacturing class which was conservative and moribund in its entirety as Church and Head would have us believe? No, rather it is failure of the orthodox case to understand this fundamental duality of function and process. It is this which ultimately negates their case that change prior to 1887, at the industry level, was of a conservative, low key character. This crucial element of that duality, is given little prominence by historians of the industry.^{2.} They have tended to view matters of distribution as an essentially subordinate activity to manufacturing.^{3.} Certainly in footwear case studies, distribution and manufacturing are treated as being two largely unconnected activities incidentally carried out by the same person: developments in distribution are dealt with very much at the periphery.^{4.}

Thus a second, crucial element of the transition phase which stands in sharp contrast to the increasing localisation of production, was the progressive domination of the home market by the wholesale manufacturers. The confluence of rising production in wholesale centres and both a widening and deepening base to consumer demand for footwear in the U.K. from circa 1870 gave rise to the gradual decline of local master retail shoemakers, who made and sold footwear in the local market. It will be useful to summarise the pertinent features of that decline.^{5.}

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1. Anon, Stead & Simpson Centenary 1834-1934, p33 cf. Keith Brooker, "Henry Simpson Gee (1842-1924", D.B.B. Vol 2. p516-19.
 2. By contrast, historians in other industries have been quicker to appreciate this link. See, for example, B.W.E.Alford W.D. & H.O. Wills (1973) p107-8; and 128 et seq. on branding in that industry.
 3. The significant exception to this stricture is the work of Dr. G.B.Sutton on C. & J. Clark Ltd. of Somerset: see G.B.Sutton "The Marketing of Ready Made Footwear..." Business History 4 (1964). Similarly, as has been noted above both J.B.Jefferey's study of footwear retailing, W.G.Hoskins essay on the Leicestershire footwear industry allude to this interrelationship between shoe production and shoe retailing.
 4. In Church, op. cit., only one penultimate page is given, in a 31 page essay, to a consideration of distribution. Head's treatment is equally curt, as is its treatment in the single centre studies.
 5. For a more comprehensive treatment based, however, on different evidence, see e.g. J.B.Jefferey's op cit. (1954) Ch. XIV p353 et seq.

The 1851 Census Enumerators Returns show how persistent the small master production unit was in many settlements in England: it was still not uncommon for the apprentice and journeymen to live in with the master's family in the time-honoured way. In terms of craft and cultural affinities, many masters were still bound closely to their employees. As late as 1869 it was noted that many were "... but a shade better off than the men..."¹, and that "... we still retain the genuine cobbler who stitches away at old shoes and talks radical politics..."². The customary and architypical shoemakers, who acted as lawyer, teacher, scribe and political polemicist, to his neighbours, lived on, at least in the popular imagination.³ Of the scale of business, a Leicester manufacturer, John Butcher, noted in later years:

... The number of men employed was limited and the man who could keep employed 10 or 12 hands was considered in a large way of business. It was almost a universal custom for people in the country to be measured for their boots and pay for them once a year.. It was seldom that a shoe-maker employed more than 2 or 3 hands, and these men had to undertake every description of work..⁴

The penetration of the regional and local markets of Britain by wholesale shoe manufacturers began in the early 1870s, although as early as 1868 the trade press contains references to the cheap quality ready made boots being sold by the wholesalers of Leicester and Northampton to retailers.⁵ By the middle of the next decade the permanence of this trend was being recognised, and by 1880 concern was being expressed about the intensity of competition being experienced by local retail shoemakers, and the resultant relative decline in their numbers:

(Figure 2:vi refers)

".. Shoe manufacturing has entered into an entirely new phase during the last few years, and although we find a good many old crispins are biting the dust... we cannot keep them, for events and machinery, and capital will march forward..., and many a village authority both

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1. Saint Crispin, I, 6 February 1869 p71.
 2. Saint Crispin, I, 8 May 1869, p249.
 3. See E.J.Hobsbawm "Political Shoemakers" Past and Present 89 (1980) passim.
 4. B.S.T.J., 28 April 1888, p337.
 5. L.T.C.R. April 1868, p121.

Figure 2: vi.

Employers in Footwear Industry in SelectedCounties of England C 1860- C 1920

	Wholesale-Makers	Repairers	Boot and Shoe Makers
<u>A. Essex</u>			
1874	4		853-1 per 517 persons
1882	3		942-1 per 586 persons
1900	7	29	742-1 per 1432 persons
1917	4	447	933-1 per 984 persons (a)
<u>B. Norfolk</u>			
1865			1279-1 per 334 persons
1879	61		1122-1 per 390 persons
1904	82	25	865-1 per 541 persons
1922	86	260	433-1 per 746 persons
<u>C. Wiltshire</u>			
1855			942-1 per 142 persons
1889	11		470-1 per 410 persons
1903	7	27	331-1 per 797 persons
1920	4	94	213-1 per 1372 persons

Sources: (1) Kellys P.O. Directories for County and Date Listed

(11) Density of retail shoemakers in County from comparison of Directory to nearest Census population figure for county.

Notes: (a) Boundary Change.

for politics and prime boots, has to give way and give up before the modern progress of cheapness combined with badness..^{1.}

As this commentator suggests, one early repercussion of this progress was the loss of shoemakers in small settlements. Increasingly, it would appear only market towns and other large settlements could support members of the craft. Allied to this was a shift and gradual re-definition of their function. Already their manufacturing role was contracting as the ready-made trade gained momentum; retail shoemakers were increasingly becoming footwear retailers:

".. in many instances (amongst small masters) home manufacture is only a pretence, their chief income being derived from profits in machine sewn (ie ready-made) articles..^{2.}

In terms of cost the shoemaker could not match wholesale products, especially the less expensive grades, and so the manufacture of these quickly passed to the wholesaler. The threat did not end there, however, for already most boot uppers were purchased ready made,^{3.} and steadily, as machine made goods improved in quality, their market for bespoke work declined also.^{4.} Moreover, the retail bootmaker progressively lost ground even in those markets where he had previously enjoyed an advantage vis a vis the wholesaler. The prominent example was the making of heavy working boots, where as labour costs escalated for the local master in the wake of a growing scarcity of skilled handsewn men^{5.}, the

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1. L.T.C.R. January 1876, p250, SLN 1 April 1943 p24. ".. the main factor why.. the artisan shoemaker could not survive, in spite of the existence of some 20000 retail outlets, has to be sought in.. technical conditions... boots and shoes can be standardised to fit almost any foot.. The shoe, once machine production had begun, was fit for production in a relatively few sizes.. Through this the small craftsman-retailer could not offset his higher costs of production by pretending to give a far better fitting.." cf. B. & S. 30 March 1878 p23, "..Gradually, but surely, the number of small masters have diminished. Villages of a few hundred in population that used to support two can barely support one; small market towns boasting of a dozen, can at present only maintain half that number.. it's needless to say that the old journeyman stitch hands have in all such places sunk in proportion. In larger sized towns... the decline of numbers is generally observable.."
 2. B & S. 30 March 1878 p23.
 3. B.S.T.J. 14 June 1884.
 4. This applied particularly to the country trade. In cities, particularly London's West End, a specialist bespoke function remained, despite the growing competition of highquality ready-mades.
 5. This was as much a function of low pay as of technical change.

wholesalers reaped the cost advantages of stitching machines. By 1882 it was noted by A.S.Canham,

"... By gentle degrees matters have changed, and now it is possible to get a factory-made navy's boot as good as can be desired..."

It was this development which Canham considered to be the death knell for the retail shoemaker as a shoemaker. He continues,

"... for it is tolerably evident that in a short time not one in a thousand in the trade will know how to put on a bristle, and a real good all round... workman will be almost a curiosity of sufficient interest to be placed in a museum of antiquities.¹"

The manufacturer of heavy working boots, however, did not entirely move into the main centres. A number of regional manufacturers, usually based in the county town or a prominent market town, grew up. It was noted of this trade in 1884 that

... (it) is located.. in several of the southern county and Somersetshire villages which adds thousands (of pairs) to the weekly total, and quaint old-world towns like Cirencester send their products to increase the number. In busy manufacturing towns and quite sleepy villages throughout the Eastern, Midland and Northern Counties, manufacturers of these goods are again constantly to be met with.²

It is interesting to note that this development was often a way for opportunistic retail shoemakers to enter into wholesale manufacturing. This occurred in Colchester, where the trade gave work to several hundred out-workers in surrounding villages. The principal employer was a man named Kavanagh, who had initially done a large slop-trade translating footwear for the London market.³ At the point where the local heavy boot trade was challenged by the wholesale centres it was increasingly advocated in the trade that local masters should accept offers of agencies to sell manufacturers branded goods, instead of standing aloof as a matter of craft principle.

Already this attitude over nearly a decade had led to drapers, grocers and other shopkeepers retailing footwear. Whilst in larger towns and cities, the department store, supplied by Leicester and Northampton wholesalers, and the

1. B.S.T.J. 29 April 1882, p201.

2. B.S.T.J. 26 January 1884, p64.

3. V.C.H. Essex, II, p487-88, cf. B.P.P., CIF Reports 1889, 1890 (c 6060=, xx, pl1 and 1894, 1895 (c 7745), xix, pl88. See also VCH Bucks, iv, p429 regarding Chesham.

Cooperative store had entered the footwear market and were already successfully competing with local retailers.¹ Now, with their making function steadily declining it became imperative, it was argued, that local master shoe-makers should safeguard their retail function.

Nevertheless, of the estimated 21000 retail shoemakers in Great Britain by the mid-eighties, most continued to make at least some goods to order. In 1884 it was stated that "... it is no uncommon thing for a country bootmaker to have special patterns and lasts for at least half of his customers, and.. a ready means of closing his own special work..."² However, within little more than a decade this position had been further, and irreversibly eroded by the further penetration of wholesale manufactured goods into the home market.

1. P. Redfern The New History of the C.W.S. (1938) 161-62; 188-9, 278-82; 335-37; 381-88.
2. B.S.T.J. 14 June 1884.

If the beginning of the transitional phase was heralded by the 1857-59 strike against the introduction of sewing machines, then the breaking up of this intermediate industrial structure was similarly signalled by industrial strife: the 1887 Northampton Strike¹. In the eight years that separated this struggle from the National Lockout of 1895, the industry generally witnessed an intensified pace of mechanisation, resulting in the final eclipse of domestic outwork and of transitional work systems for a centralised factory system. For it was this strike more than any other single event that acts as the catalyst for the final commitment by best practice firms² to factory-based production.³

Our starting point, therefore, must be to establish the existence of significantly increased levels of mechanisation after 1887, when compared with both the post 1895 and earlier transitional periods. Available qualitative evidence reveals that from the late 1880s contemporary observers were aware of this increased pace of industrial change. They perceived it as being of an altogether

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1. On the 1887 strike see: A. Fox op. cit. pl02-04; J.H. Porter (1) "The Northampton Arbitration Board and the Shoe Industry Dispute of 1887" N.P. & P. IV: 3 (1968.)
 2. By contrast the decade 1895-1905 witnessed the mechanisation of average practice forms, and the organisational revolution of the industry. The terms best practice and average practice forms are used in the sense found in W.E.G. Salter Productivity & Technical Change (1966, 2nd edition). Best practice denotes a firm using ".. the most up to date techniques available at (that) date.." (p6) ".. the technique which yields minimum costs in terms of the production function and relative factor prices (at that date...." (p23.)
 3. This slower transition stands in strong contrast to faster adoption of factory working in America which was substantially complete a decade earlier. George Rich writing in Popular Science in 1903 noted: ".. With the introduction of machinery between 1860-70, (shoe shops) passed out of use and largely out of existence..." Similarly, a contributor to the Boston-based Atlantic Monthly argued that as early as 1873 ".. machine has superceded hand labour in almost every manipulation.. the whole work is assembled under one roof, where are conducted all the numerous processes which convert the rough hide into the saleable boot..." But more recent histories of US technology stress that wetting and finishing systems, and lasting machines did not finally come to maturity, and thus command widespread acceptance, only in the late 1880s, early 1890s. (see J.S. Clark History of Manufactures in U.S. (1929) Vol II p468; J.W. Oliver History of American Technology (1956) Chap. 27 passim). These early U.S. factories employed extensive hand labour in conjunction with machinery, known in the industry as team systems. If this view is true, English manufacturers in better quality centres like Northampton, out of necessity, would not have contemplated mechanisation, as indeed they did not at that time.

different character from what had gone before: it was nothing less than a machine revolution.

The ending of the 1887 strike signalled an eight year wave of machine introduction at all main wholesale centres, unprecedented in the industry's history.

In February 1888 it was noted:

"... The recent troubles at Northampton.. have had a very marked effect upon the habits of thoughts adopted by the manufacturers of that town. Hitherto Northampton has not been conspicuous in the matter of mechanised boot manufacture. During the strike we called attention to the efforts which were being made in the town to supplant manual labour by machinery. The most notable departure appears to have been in the way of lasting machinery. The English and American Company, has for some time advocated a good machine,¹ but the Chase lasting machine has now appeared in the UK... And last week, the Northampton Shoe Machinery Company was formed to market it here... (The Chase)... is a machine which would have probably remained unknown in this country for a long time but for the unfortunate trade difficulties here..².

This new wave of machine introduction must be seen against a background of good trading from 1888 through to Autumn 1890: a period of "unparalleled

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1. The McKay - Copeland laster (see Appendix VII) but note B.S.T.J. 12 January 1889 p.v. where it is stated that the machine was first introduced in the USA in 1883, but only became available in the UK and Europe in 1888. Here its acceptance was as rapid as in U.S. An editorial on machinery in September 1889 argued that lasting machinery was already broadly accepted for first class work, and that manufacturers attention was now being drawn to finishing machinery (SLR 21 September 1889 p251). The first Chase machines were used in the spring of 1888, with Copeland machines a little before that.
 2. S.L.R. 4 February 1888 p91. It is important to appreciate that what was to follow was a period of improved machine introduction and as such it affected ALL the wholesale centres. See J.T.Day "Plain Talk on Machine Question" SLR 17 March 1888 p197 where he comments: ".. it is unquestionable that the trade in shoe manufacturing machinery is better now than it has been for a long time past. A feeling has somehow got hold of the shoe trade that further changes in the system of manufacturing are necessary, and that feeling is resulting in the placement of an unusually large quantity of orders for labour economising machines and appliances. A year or two back, machine inventors and producers might talk as they might of the advantages to be gained (from machinery), and talk almost to deaf ears. But today... everyone listens to what is said and no few are re-equipping their works with a view to being ready for whatever maybe in store...."

prosperity.¹ But the years of depressed and difficult trading that followed saw no reversal of this trend. In fact, in depression machine introduction continued at a level not previously experienced;² a fact that further underscores the radical character of change in the years immediately prior to 1895. Thus, a Northampton correspondent noted in late 1893:

".. Rapid strides have been made in the manufacture of welted work which almost every firm of importance now produces. The Goodyear system has been freely utilised in this centre, and it has now reached a stage of excellence once dreamed of but hardly expected...³.

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1. B.S.T.J. 25 May 1889 p428 ".. Our manufacturers appear to be endowed with an increased spirit to embrace everything in the way of machinery. S.L.R. 4 January 1890 p12 ".. 1885 -89 have been years of unparalleled prosperity for (Northampton), large boot factories have been erected in rapid succession, others are being built, others are being contemplated. Trade has increased in ever greater proportion, and today Northampton is the envy of every other shoe manufacturing town in the Kingdom. The Manufacturers have shown an exemplified enterprise in their business, workmen have had more work and better pay..." cf. B.S.T.J. 3 January 1891, p5 ".. 1890 witnessed many factory developments (in Northampton).. and the different machinery companies have had a good year... "Cf. S.L.R. 3 May 1891 p442, 17 May 1890 p614-15, and 31 May 1890 p672-73. When depression hits, it was the effects of overproduction caused by rapid machine introduction that commentators first turned to to explain events. For example, S.L.R. 21 August 1891 p423 ".. Both in Northampton and Leicester.. (but).. particularly in the first named, they have had a long spell of adversity consequent upon causes not easily defined. In Northampton, however, there can be little doubt but that to overproduction may be chiefly attributed the quietude latterly experienced. The growth of that town in the last four years has been enormous. Even during the quietest portion of the past season, there was doubtless, more trade being done than in the busiest time four years ago; it is not, therefore surprising that some of the enlarged capacity has not found full employment. To a lesser extent, the same is true of Leicester..."
 2. Indeed, several reports stress that manufacturers at main centres used the slack time forced on them by depression to lay down new machinery and to reorganise their factories. This, it was argued, would leave them better placed to meet the intensified competition to be found in the industry. E.g. B.S.T.J. 2 January 1893 p8. Northampton correspondent refers to leading manufacturers laying down machinery and building factories ".. in anticipation of improving trade..." Cf. S.L.R. 1 January 1892 p34. S.L.R. 28 October 1892 p1052. In addition to main machine systems, many firms acquired "sub-process" machines, like heelers (S.L.R. 30 December 1892 p1603).
 3. B.S.T.J. 13 December 1892 p696. Cf. B.S.T.J. 3 December 1892 p673, where the introduction of machinery in all centres is likened to an epidemic. What, again, is important to note is the universality of the shift to welted, primarily machine welted, work throughout the country. This was signalled by the growth in incomes and fashion consciousness within the market place. The dominance of Blake-sewn work was now being challenged with the rise of cheap, volume produced welted work. See B.S.T.J. 19 March 1892 p375, that records that the acceptance of the Goodyear system ".. has been crowned by a competition in Northampton.." between handsewn and Goodyear work; the latter won. Cf. B.S.T.J. 21 January 1892 p.1. that refers to the importance of the machinery movement to the industry, and B.S.T.J. June 1892 p794, that refers to the industry's salvation in the hands of machinery.

The new wave was signalled in shoe centres by increased shoe machinery company promotions. At Northampton this mood was reflected by two events. The first was the sales promotions undertaken by U.S. machine Company Directors. In October 1888, John Munyan of the Goodyear and Makay Stitching Machine Company had extensive discussions at Northampton with Midland manufacturers about introducing American welting machine systems into the British market. He was a prominent American leather merchant and treasurer of the Goodyear Company.^{1.} He proposed the floatation of an English subsidiary Company; a proposal which received a guarded, yet enthusiastic response. A trade exhibition of the Company's machines had been held at workshops in Bridge Street Northampton, and all had expressed surprise concerning the low running costs and quality of work produced.^{2.} Munyan offered free machine trials and operative training for interested firms, in addition to discounted shares if the new company were formed. A further visit to Northampton was made by another director, John Hanan a New York shoe manufacturer, in August 1889. The Goodyear Company had already established a permanent English sales depot there in January 1889 under the name International Goodyear Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.^{3.} The first set of welting machinery was supplied locally to Jonathan Robinson & Co. Within months larger premises in a portion of Latimer & Crick & Co's St. Giles Street factory was taken. Major shifts in marketing techniques were adopted: extensive exhibitions and advertising; skilled American technicians installed

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1. Company was founded in 1884 after acquiring rights to some English and American Company U.S. patents for welting machinery in rather dubious circumstances.
 2. B.S.T.J. 18 October 1888 p283 "... Mr Richard Taylor said that recent indications of the public tastes showed that a boot as near as possible to handsewn was the thing wanted. He had had three pairs sewn (on the new machinery) and had seen no more solid work in his life. The work made on the machines would sell as good seconds hand work.." "(i.e. second grade as opposed to sub-standard). This was a theme soon to be frequently taken up by the trade press: e.g. S.L.R. 14 December 1889 p549, where the increased number of welted shoe styles is alluded to (cf. S.L.R. 23rd November 1889 p474. "...on all sides the manufacturers are adopting improved machinery and the increased demand for welted work causes welting machines to be much sought after, the public being convinced that this is the boot and principle of the future). S.L.R. 27 July 1891 p89. The Northampton correspondent noted that Goodyear welts were prominent in the Autumn samples, and commented "... It is ideal for craftsmen to continue to ignore them as they are now producing work equivalent to hand work.."
 3. S.L.R. 6 October 1888 p626. Goodyear open a temporary workshop showroom in Bridge Street.

plant, trained shoe operatives, and offered meticulous maintenance and after-sales services. In February 1892, the Company occupied new purpose-built premises in the Mounts, one of Northampton's main thoroughfares.^{1.} By this time, over 130 welting sets had been sold nationwide and the acceptance of a factory system of manufacture based on Goodyear processes firmly established amongst best practice firms.^{2.} As early as 1889, six sets of machinery had been laid down in the town, and it was noted that leading manufacturers - M.P.Manfield, H.E.Randall, J.H.C. Crockett, and G.T.Hawkins - were "...thoroughly interested in the Goodyear processes..."^{3.} so much so that by 1891, 22 of Northampton's best practice firms had installed the Goodyear system.^{4.} Nevertheless, as is noted elsewhere, the system had yet to achieve a general acceptance.^{5.}

The second event signalling this new-wave of machine introduction was the establishment of the Northampton Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. It was founded by a

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1. B.S.T.J. 28 June 1890 p634 notes that a decision had been taken to build the Mounts premises.
 2. Some initial adverse comment about high royalty payments slowing acceptance had been voiced, e.g. S.L.R. 20 October 1888 p208. Yet this was short-lived because B.S.T.J. 4 January 1890 p11 notes that all of Northampton's principal firms had laid down Goodyear welting sets in 1889. Cf. B.S.T.J. 11 January 1890 p39, where a list of advantages of this system, is topped by the consideration that it was 50% cheaper than hand-sewn work. See also S.L.R. 15 February 1890 p162, which noted "... International Goodyear Welting Company is making rapid headway in this district because: (1) any prejudice that formerly existed was overcome by the quality and quantity of work performed on these machines; (11) "... the increased demand for welted goods has compelled our manufacturers to avail themselves of the facilities afforded by these machines.."; (111) the shortage of labour. Thus, "... should the trade of the town realise the expectation formed at the beginning of the year, it will be necessary, for large firms at any rate, to put down a plant of machinery and to overcome the scarcity of labour at present experienced.."
 3. The preceding information relies, in part, on B.S.T.J. 18 October 1888 p282-83, B.S.T.J. 17 August 1889 p155-56, B.S.T.J. 28 June 1890 p634, and S.L.R. 19 February 1892 p462-63.
 4. Anon. Where to Buy in Northampton (1891) n.p.
 5. At this stage, complete machine welting in all processes had still to be achieved, and this hindered the system's general and universal acceptance in the industry. The use of the system only came into general practice after (1) the introduction of a suitable rough rounding machine, patented in 1894 (see Appendix VII), and (11) the resolution of the labour relations controversy concerning the implementation of mixed hand and machinery work team systems, in 1895 (see note below). From this time, the machine welting system became the accepted method for producing volume, medium quality footwear (see Appendix II C.7. John Marlow & Sons Ltd.)

syndicate of seven of the town's most prominent shoe manufacturers¹: M.P. Manfield², F. Bostock,³ J. Cove, B.E. West⁴, W.H. Turner,⁵ A. Church,⁶ H. Bostock (Stafford)⁷. It was acknowledged on all sides that the company was conceived and largely evolved through the efforts of M.P. Manfield. It was initially formed to market American lasting machinery.⁸ Lasting machines represented one of the last barriers to mechanised production⁹, and now with commercially viable machines available the local press argued that the company's inception came as a direct result of the trading pressures experienced during the three month trade dispute of 1887¹⁰. The company was incorporated on 10 January 1888 with an authorised capital of £50,000,¹¹ following the conclusion of an exclusive agency agreement with the Shoe Lasting Co. of New York.¹² Like many of the shoe machinery companies floated in the period, this one was primarily a marketing as opposed to a manufacturing organisation, although lasting and, eventually, other machines were made by the company at

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1. In addition, a number of the town's best practice firms invested capital in the enterprise.
 2. Of Manfield & Sons. See Appendix II C.3.
 3. Of F. Bostock & Co. See Appendix II C.5.
 4. Of Cove & West. See Chapter Six regarding this firm's trading difficulties.
 5. Of Turner Bros., Hyde & Co. Cf. Chapters Six and Eight.
 6. Of A. & W. Church. See Appendix II C.8.
 7. Of E. Bostock & Co. Ltd. See Appendix II C.5.
 8. S.L.R. 4 February 1888 p118. Northampton correspondent: "... the machine company which has recently been started in the town has taken offices in Deangate. The chief object will be to push (sic) the newly introduced American lasting machine in the town and district..."
 9. See Appendix VII.
 10. N.M. 10 February 1888 p.5. Cf. B.S.T.J. 11 February 1888 p100 which alludes to the impetus given by the strike.
 11. B.T. 31/4025/25654. Memorandum of Association.
 12. B.T. 31 *ibid.* Agreement dated 16 December 1887 concluded between B.E. West (for Syndicate) and the American Company "... to exclusively sell in the U.K. the Chase Lasting Machine.. (&) to bring it into general use in England.." Initially 60 machines, in addition to 10 trial ones, were to be supplied, with the Syndicate paying an initial £10,000, in instalments, to cover both the cost of these machines and the agency rights. The American Company pledged not to sell the Chase in the U.K., and sold the English patent rights to the Northampton Company (No. 1160 & 7187, both of 1887). An American Engineer, A.E. Strickler, took charge of the managership of the Company, the two companies sharing his salary: he resigned in 1901. £1000 of the £10,000 cost was payable immediately, followed by a second payment of £4000 when 10 Lasters and tackers had been disposed of. A third payment of £5000 after 3 months or after 50 machines had been leased or sold, whichever was the sooner. Each syndicate member subscribed £7000 to meet floatation and other costs.

Northampton under U.S. Manufacturing licences.^{1.} The initial machine - the Chase Laster - was heralded as a major advance by contemporaries. Used with a skilled operator a pair of boots could be lasted in two minutes; a daily output of 120 pairs of "best goods" completed in first class condition was feasible given the preparatory hand work was accurately done, and 500 pairs in a 54 hour week.^{2.} The machine was able to easily accommodate differing styles of work which meant it could readily fit in current small order working in British shoe factories.^{3.} But some initial misgivings were expressed about price. This had been set at £65 per machine with a tacker.^{4.} Commenting on this a correspondent noted:

"Upon the question of machine paying, we do not hesitate to say that while a moderate compilation does show a profit, we consider the Company's expectation too great. They propose.. to charge manufacturers £70 a machine to begin with, this being really a premium on lease. Then there is to be a rental of £6 per month; so that the first year's cost is, without any extra expenses £142."^{5.}

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1. Some of the earlier machines were imported from America, but in February 1888, Bradbury & Co. of Oldham, sewing machine manufacturers, were given a manufacturing licence in order to fulfill an order: "... there are yet but two of the machines at work. That, however, is a matter speedily to be remedied, in as much as a considerable order for machines has been placed with Messrs. Bradbury & Co. of Oldham, who will be able to deliver a quantity of them at an early date.." (B.S.T.J. 11 February 1888 p100). The Northampton Company^x did also manufacture under licence from workshop premises in Early[£] Street. These were occupied from 1889 (B.S.T.J. 20 April 1889 p338-39).
 2. Excluding the machine operator, the Chase was worked with a hand team of four: a boy to put in the stiffeners and three lasters for tacking over and putting on soles ready for sewing. (B.S.T.J. *ibid*). "... Any laster of ordinary intelligence can be taught to work it in less than one week.." Cf. B.S.T.J. 25 April 1891 p454. Company tests claimed that the Chase could "easily" last up to 500 pairs a week, and more if ladies footwear was being fabricated.
 3. B.S.T.J. 20 April 1889 p838-39.
 4. B.T. 31 loc. cit. Agreement Schedule 1. 16 December 1887.
 5. B.S.T.J. 11 February 1888 p100. Cf. S.L.R. 14 April 1888 p282. But cf. B.S.T.J. 7 November 1888 p6, where it was noted that "... the improvement effected by the use of one machine is considerable, and sufficient to clear the machine's cost in less than two years.." 17 machines were in commercial use in Northampton by this date. By December 1890, the number stood at well in excess of 50 (Boot and Shoe Recorder December 1890 p32.) It is ultimately difficult to gauge just how many Chase lasters were sold, but clearly it found favour with the industry. For example, B.S.T.J. August 1889 p101 over 20 Northampton firms were operating the Chase. Several manufacturers run more than one (Manfields 3 and Turner Bros. 5). S.L.R. 1 March 1890 p198 "... 30 extra Chases were in operation in Northampton, with more in other centres.."; S.L.R. 14 September 1890 p.v. "... 40 new Chase machines are in operation in Northampton and neighbourhood, B.S.T.J. 25 April 1891 p439. "... During the first quarter of the year the Shoe Machinery Co. put out 10 of their improved lasting machines. This machine is rapidly gaining favour with makers of good work.."

Over the next five years the company extended its product range. Again the emphasis was on seeking to market U.S. machines through sole agency agreements: levelling machines, sluggers, heeling machines and a range of finishing plant was thus introduced.^{1.}

The Company clearly had a profound influence upon the pattern and development of the industry in the Northampton district through into the 1890s. Possibly Manfield's syndicate had the intention of forcing the issue of factory-based production, however no evidence on this issue is available to us.^{2.} Certainly the company's close identification with the town's manufacturing class stands in an interesting contrast to the orthodox assessment of them as a conservatively minded group. But more than this, the company's importance had a national dimension: the best machine of its type, its sales extended beyond the county. With an initial authorised capital of £40,800, save only the giant B.U.S.M. Co., it was the largest of the shoe machine companies formed in the period.^{3.}

Despite the reliance upon U.S. finance and technical skill, the syndicate substantially retained control of the company until 1903: Figure 2: vii refers. The board of directors remained entirely in the hands of the Syndicate. Its first members were Manfield, F. Bostock, H. Bostock, and B.E. West. Bostock died in 1893 to be replaced by Church, and Manfield in 1899 to be replaced by W.H.Turner.

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1. B.S.T.J. 20 August 1892 p226. Cf. S.L.R. 1 August 1891 p117 where it was reported that the company now had sufficient agencies agreements to be able to offer customers a complete set of shoe machinery.
 2. But note Appendix II C.3., where it can be seen that Manfield & Sons had reached the upper limit of industrial development within the transitional industrial structure. The biographies of others in the syndicate reveal firms that were ready for factory production in the true sense of the word, rather than the piecemeal development and expediency that represented the transitional out work structure. Certainly the trade press provides evidence of a "snowball" effect, where the lead of progressive firms in adopting machinery was copied. Eg. B.S.T.J. 19 April 1890 p394, Northampton correspondent notes: "... Lasting and Welt sewing machinery is being put down by many of the manufacturers (in Northants), no doubt in consequence of the success achieved in the hands of other manufacturers." A similar effect occurred with the goodyear machines. E.g. B.S.T.J. 2 August 1890 p102, Northampton correspondent notes "... The adoption of machinery is now becoming more general. The Shoe Machinery Co. are busily engaged in putting down their improved lasting machines, and almost all leading firms have either adopted or intend to take up the Goodyear welting and stitching plant, which is now being worked in this district.." (In addition, the extensive laying down of heeling machines and of early Larabee finishing plant at several factories is alluded to).
 3. B.T. 31 loc. cit. 1st Annual Return 1888; Cf. Figure 2: VII below.

Fig. 2: vii.

PATTERN OF SHAREHOLDING IN NORTHAMPTON SHOE MACHINERY CO. LTD.

1888-1902

SHAREHOLDERS	1888		1893		1898		1902	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The Syndicate	1979	49.2	2716	54.6	2736	54.7	1704	34.0
Other English Holders	48 ¹ .	1.2	322	6.5	409	8.2	2675 ⁵ .	53.5
U.S. Shareholding	2000 ² .	49.6	1937 ³ .	38.9	1855 ⁴ .	37.1	3621	12.5
Total	4027	100.0	4975	100.0	5000	100.0	5000	100.0

Source: BT 31/4025/25654

Notes:

- (1) held by A. Ray, Company Secretary
- (2) 411 held by Shoe Lasting Co.
- (3) 520 held by Shoe Lasting Co.
- (4) 195 held by Shoe Lasting Co.
- (5) 2591 (51.8%) held by B.U.S.M.Co.

N.B. Each share was valued at £10.

In January 1903 the Company was voluntarily wound up¹. as a result of a take-over by B.U.S.M. Co.: British United's F.E.Wheeler acted as liquidator.

As happened in the case of many machinery companies at this time from 1899, British United gradually increased its share-holding prior to a take over bid being made.² As was usual the assets were disposed of and the merged company's markets absorbed.

Another, less successful, machine company of this period was the Ab Intra Boot Making Process Co. Ltd. It was established in July 1887 to market a new patented process for making nailed boots.³ The board of directors included three prominent shoe manufacturers: John Butcher of Leicester, George White of Norwich, & H.E.Randall of Northampton. Randall took an enthusiastic interest in the firm, and under his aegis exhibitions of the Ab Intra process were held in the county.⁴ Nevertheless, despite the active support of a number of leading figures in the shoe and leather industries, no evidence is extant which records the widespread adoption of the process. The company went into voluntary liquidation in late 1890.⁵

So much for the broad sweep of the machine movement in the industry after 1887. The evidence locating the crucial years of change between 1887 and 1895 is not, however, wholly qualitative as the orthodox case would have us believe. In addition, quantitative data is available^b_^, which substantiates the revision of the orthodox case put forward in this chapter: that the decision to mechanise was taken in the late 1880s and not the late 1890s. The activities of the International Goodyear Company and the Northampton Shoe Machinery Company, already discussed, suggests this quickening pace of change in this premier

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1. BT 31 loc. cit. Special Resolution dated 23 January 1903.
 2. The other major strategy was to buy out the company's main suppliers, thus rendering a takeover relatively straight forward.
 3. BT 31/3912/24735. Memorandum of Association Clause 3. The patents, filed in August 1886, were held by Michael Lion, a London Shoe Manufacturer and Frederick and J.E.Cutlan, Wellingborough Engineers.
 4. B.S.T.J. 6 October 1888 p262, describes a Northampton exhibition cf. local press reports in that Autumn. Cf. S.L.R. 15 December 1888 p457. Randall took a keen interest in new development at this time. See Appendix II C.4.
 5. BT 31. *ibid.* Extra Ordinary General Meeting 4 November 1890. Final winding up dated 12 December 1892.

shoe centre. But in addition to this, evidence concentrating on two aspects of the industrialisation process- the rate of machine introduction and the rate of industrial building - can be utilised to more accurately assess industrial development in Northampton. Each will be treated in turn.

Turning first to machine introduction, it is possible to determine its level over time within the industry nationally and at Northampton in a number of contrasting ways. Primarily, we must rely upon the extant official company papers and published reports of machinery company commercial activity in this country. However, evidence is also available from shoe firm records on this issue.

Until 1867 machinery sales¹ in Great Britain were handled by commission agents and salesmen. In December of that year the conversion of the premier U.S. Company selling machines in the U.K. marked the beginning of a more co-ordinated sales and marketing policy.² The company had a patent monopoly on sales of the revolutionary Blake Sewing machine and was actively using this advantage to promote and sell other shoe machinery lines. Registration took place on 31 December 1867; the company was limited by guarantee. The first managing director was Richard Baylis, a London leather factor and two London bankers B.R.Keith and G.W.Belding. Within a year the latter two were replaced, two London boot manufacturers, Ebenezer Pocock (Chairman), and John Hy Glew. Several provincial manufacturers were associated with the company including M.P.Manfield of Northampton and H.S. Gee of Leicester. In 1870 Charles F. Gardener joined the board as had Frederick East, a Southwark leather dresser, by 1882: both men were ultimately to sit on the B.U.S.M.Co. board. With the rise to prominence of the Goodyear welt sewing process in the early seventies, the Blake Co. progressively acquired the English patent rights to these machines, in order to secure monopoly marketing rights. In

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1. The term shoe machinery here excludes sewing machines used for closing uppers. The leading firms were the Singer Co., Wheeler & Wilson Co. (both of USA), and Bradbury and Co. of Oldham.
 2. This paragraph draws upon remaining company registration details: BT 31/1380/3837.

May 1876, the two key English patents.¹ were acquired from Henry B. & Charles Goodyear, the beneficial owners, in consideration for £750000 of Blake stock. The company name was changed to the Blake & Goodyear Boot & Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. The Goodyear's London agent, H.J. Johnson, joined the board.² This sales strategy of acquiring patent monopoly marketing rights was also used regarding machinery for other shoemaking processes. For example, UK Patents No. 1662, dated 8 May 1873 and no. 2958 dated 9 September 1873, issued to John Lanham, were acquired by the Company from Pocock.³ Similarly, in 1877, Holmes patents were acquired from his widow Mrs. M.H.E. Holmes of Boston U.S.A. in return for an allotment of 500 shares to her.⁴ A year earlier, the Mills Boot and Shoe Sewing Machine Company Ltd., (in liquidation) was purchased for £20,000; partly a strategy to eliminate competition, but primarily a means of acquiring five originative Mills patents concerning turnshoe sewing.⁵ Finally, by 1892, the company had also acquired all of the main patents relating to W.R.Lake's work in developing a lasting machine⁶: Ultimately marketed as the "Copeland Laster".

Despite this impressive dominance of the British market, which yielded high returns to the company by the late seventies⁷, English engineers were not entirely squeezed out. A number of small engineers were able to trade

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1. (a) No. 996 4 April 1872, a special fourteen year UK licence to "... make use exercise and vend an invention communicated to him (H.J. Johnson) from abroad by Charles Goodyear.. for improvements in machines.. for sewing boots and shoes.
(b) No. 3280 18 September 1875, similarly worded. In 1876, a further two Goodyear patents passed to the Company: No. 1564 of 13 April 1876, and No. 867 1 March 1876 (BT31/3026/17125).
 2. B.T. 31 *ibid*, Special Resolution dated 23 May 1876.
 3. B.T. 31, *ibid*, Deed of Covenant dated 1 September 1874.
 4. B.T. 31, *ibid*. Agreement between Mrs Holmes and the Company, dated 30 October 1877. On Holmes, see Appendix VII:
 5. B.T. 31/3026/17125 Sale Agreement: Blake Patent List dated 18 August 1882: No. 1160 of 17/3/76; No. 4279 of 9/12/75; no. 937 of 8/4/71; No. 1237 of 30/4/70, No. 2899 of 28/10/71.
 6. B.T. 31 *passim*:- No. 1491 of 23/5/70; No. 1818 of 14/6/69; no. 2378 of 29/7/68; No. 1823 of 14/6/69; No. 1091 of 19/3/79; No. 3346 of 14/7/82.
 7. B.S.T.J. 10 June 1882 p286 *cf.* Ure *Op. cit.* p118. High profits were based upon use of a patent monopoly and the leasing of machinery.

locally at each of the shoe centres,^{1.} and Clapham has noted that some did important improvements and modification work on shoe machines, as is noted in Appendix VII.^{2.} In addition, several firms carried out a national trade, including Pearson & Co. of Leeds, Merry & Bennion of Leicester, and largest of all, the collaborative ventures between the Keats Brothers of Stafford, and Greenwood and Batley of Leeds.^{3.} Chief amongst their collaborative ventures was the Keats Lockstitch Machine Co., a partnership founded to primarily exploit the welt-sewing and fairstitch inventions of J. & A. Keats, J.W. Ramsden, and I. & A. Greenwood.^{4.}

By the early eighties something of a hiatus had overtaken shoe machinery sales. For whilst the market for machinery operated on making lower grades of footwear, which had been so successfully marketed from the mid-1860s, had become saturated, the welting, lasting and other second generation machines then being developed still needed improving before they were to gain wide user acceptance. Thus C.F.Gardiner considered that the initial large sales of the Blake in Britain were at an end and that, although a valuable trade in spare parts remained, the majority of future sales for sole sewing machinery lay with welt sewing machines.^{5.} But that lay a little way in the future, and in the meantime machinery firms were experiencing falling profit margins and intense

1. B.S.T.J. 3 April 1881 p349

2. Clapham II op. cit p97 Cf. Appendix VII.

3. Their collaborative work is noted elsewhere in this thesis. An early description of it appears in the Practical Magazine May 1874.

4. By 1882, the principal partners were John Batley and Arthur Greenwood.

5. B.S.T.J. 10 June 1882 p268, "... G.F.Gardiner said that they did not rely on the Blake machine that had done its duty. There was still a good profit on 'parts'..."

competition in a contracting market.¹ In order to avoid damaging competition in what was a sluggish market, the two leading firms negotiated a rather controversial merger of interests,² which revealed a conflict of interest between British and U.S.A. interests. Whilst the English board favoured merger³, U.S. shareholders were initially hostile.⁴ The company's A.G.M. in May 1882 finally decided a compromise merger plan.⁵ The problem stemmed from the differing interest of a syndicate of U.S. shareholders, and the English directorate and principal English shareholders many of whom were leading shoe manufacturers. The Americans claimed financial irregularities in the Company's operation as part of an asset-stripping strategy. These were ultimately dispelled by a committee of inquiry,⁶ composed of five prominent shoemakers with manufacturing interest in Northampton. Thus, in June a majority of shareholders voted in favour of a merger.⁷ The new company was known as the English and American Boot and Shoe and General Machinery Co. Ltd.⁸ and was incorporated on 26 July 1882, with an authorised capital of £160000. The registered office was at 1 Worship Street, Finsbury, London. Amongst the subscribers was M.P. Manfield, who had played a prominent role in the merger negotiations.⁹ The sale agreement valued the two companies at £30293¹⁰: shares to that value were allotted in satis-

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1. The Blake Co. in particular had experienced a decline in profits and declared dividends following the decision to end the monopolistic royalty system of payment on machine leases. No figures are extant as to this fall in profits, although in B.S.T.J. 1 July 1882 p4, gross profit for 1881 was reported at £11730. 3s. 8d., with net profits of £1658. 3s. 4d. and a dividend of 3d per share.
 2. B.S.T.J. 4 February 1882 p52; 18 March 1882 p126; 27 May 1882 p245; 30 September 1882 p176-78; 10 June 1882 p268-69.
 3. B.S.T.J. 4 February 1882 p52.
 4. B.S.T.J. 18 March 1882 p126.
 5. B.S.T.J. 27 May 1882 p245.
 6. B.S.T.J. 10 June 1882 p268.
 7. ibid: 49827 voted for the merger, 8858 against.
 8. In February 1885 the name was changed to the simpler English & American Machine Co. Ltd. (BT 31/3026/17125, Resolution dated 21 February 1885).
 9. See B.S.T.J. 27 May 1882 p245: other prominent shoe industry men were J. Flatau of London and Northampton, H.S. Gee of Leicester and E. Pocock of London.
 10. B.T. 31 ibid: Keats Lockstitch Machine Co. £5000; Blake and Goodyear Boot and Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. £25293. In consideration for the sale, the two companies received preference shares in the new company.

faction. prominent amongst the property that passed to the new company were the existing 33 patents held by the old companies, which have been briefly discussed above: 16 were held by the Blake Co. and 17 by the Keats. The first directors were E. Pocock, F. East, and C.F.Gardiner,^{1.} from the Blake board, and J. Batley & A. Greenwood, ex-partners at Keats.^{2.} The English and American Co. was the biggest company of its type in Britain^{3.} and shows well the problems of machinery companies in the depressed shoe machinery markets of this decade.^{4.} An initial strategy, one used to such good effect by the Blake Co. a decade before, was the acquisition of the patent rights of a competitors machines in order to narrow competition. Thus in February 1883 the company made an agreement with M.H.Pearson of Leeds, soon to amalgamate with C. Bennion of Leicester^{5.}, to acquire all his patents and his interest in sole-sewing machines, primarily the PearsonSole Sewer and Pearson Fairstitch Machine. In return, Pearson received 3500 shares in the Company and £500 in cash.^{6.} Later in the year a similar agreement was concluded with Herman C. Gros, a machine manufacturer of East London, for a consideration of £300 cash and the allotment of 1500 shares in the company.^{7.} Nevertheless given the depressed state of the shoe industry, activity in machinery markets remained poor, and this led to a second strategy: product diversification. Thus in 1885, an unsuccessful attempt was made to shift into the making and marketing of hat making machinery.^{8.}

At this point, there was a reversal of the companies fortunes in the wake of an increased level of shoe machinery adoption within the industry. The Order

1. An American citizen who came to England in 1867 to safeguard and represent American interest in the old Blake: a role which continued now.
2. John Bailey was Chairman, and he and Greenwood were the largest British Shareholders (39% of ordinary stock) cf. East & Gardiner were the largest U.S. (48%).
3. B.S.T.J. 29 July 1882 p58: in 1899 it was taken over by B.U.S.M.Co. and was voluntarily wound up in late 1901.
4. A loss on trading was returned between 1883-86. (see Fig. 2: ix below)
5. In 1899 this firm - Pearson and Benion of Leicester - was to become the nucleus of the giant British United Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. (B.U.S.C.Co.)
6. B.T. 31, *ibid*, Agreement to Assign Patents between M.H.Pearson and the Company dated 6/2/83.
7. B.T. 31, *ibid*, Agreement to Assign Patents between H.C.Gros & The Company dated 5/6/83.
8. B.S.T.J. 19 February 1887 pl62 and 19 February 1885 pl54.

Books of the English and American's principal U.K. supplier^{1.} - Greenwood & Batley of Leeds^{2.} - are extant. The level of orders placed with Greenwoods is shown in Figure 2: viii below.

Figure 2: viii

Greenwood & Batley Ltd., Engineers, LeedsOrders Taken for Shoe Machinery 1867-1911

Time Period	No. of Machines Ordered	Total for 15 Year Period	Mean Average per year
1867 - 1871	46	530	35.3
1872 - 1876	58		
1877 - 1881	426		
1882 - 1886	376	826	55.1
1887 - 1891	237		
1892 - 1896	213		
1897 - 1901	86	605	40.3
1902 - 1906	137		
1907 - 1911	382		

Source: Leeds City Library and Archives: Greenwood & Batley Ltd.
 (1) Shoe Machinery Order Books 1862-1914. (36 vols):
 (11) Sectional Order Book: Boot Machinery 1910-15.

Notes: (1) Greenwood & Keats, and the Blake Co. merged in 1882: B.U.S.M.Co. took over English & American in 1901
 (11) Greenwood's first orders dated from 1865 and in the initial first two years 75 orders were placed.

Prior to 1882, machines were marketed through a number of partnerships that subsisted with Greenwoods and Keats Brothers. The high number of orders in the last five years of this first period reflects the general acceptance accorded to stitching machines then being produced for the welted trade.^{3.} Following the 1882 merger, machines were marketed through English & American.

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- Clearly other U.K. suppliers existed and importations from U.S.A. were made, but no information is extant. Consequently, the following data has to be used with some caution, although it probably is accurate to note that the data does adequately show the trend of orders.
 - On Greenwood & Batley see R.C.Floud, The Metal Working Machine Tool Industry in England 1850-1914, with Special Reference to Greenwood & Batley Ltd. (unpublished D. Phil Oxford 1970) and The Machine Tool Industry 1870-1914 (1976). Cf. Industries of Yorkshire, Part I 1888 p166; Century's Progress: Yorkshire Industry and Commerce (1893) p157; and Electrical Handbook: Pt. II Leeds & District (1906) p103-08. I record my thanks to Prof. R. Floud, who informed me of this archive.
 - The trade press reports on the 1882 merger discussed above exhaustively deal with this topic.

The level of orders taken in the first five years is probably a reflection of anticipated demand levels following the merger. After the B.U.S.M.Co. takeover in 1901, Greenwood initially sold machines through local agents, until 1909, when an agreement with the International Shoe Machinery Co. of Northampton was entered into.¹ The high number of orders placed in that year, accounting for just under 75% of all orders in that five year period, were to stock the new Northampton depot. The interesting conclusion that can be drawn is that machine sales generally run at a higher level prior to 1896 than after it: the mean average annual sales in the fifteen years after 1895 were 40.3, compared with a figure of 55.1 in the years 1882-96. However, certain difficulties of interpretation do exist. First, no information is to hand to help determine how many other suppliers English and American used, beyond the general assessment that an increased percentage of sales after 1887 comprised of U.S. machines. Certainly as time passed from that date U.S. machine imports increased.² Secondly, the productive capacity of individual machines is known to have risen in the period, and this may, in part, account for lower sales. There is no ready way of determining to what extent the fall off in order is a reflection of these two factors. Nevertheless, it would appear that the trend of new machine orders shown above were running at a higher level prior to 1896 than after it, thus accentuating the argument above that stressed the importance of the years 1887-95 for machine introduction. The other factor that is reinforced here, is the high level of orders taken by Greenwoods in depression. Thus in the years 1877-81 70% of pre 1882 orders were placed; and in the period 1891-93, 50% of orders placed in 1887 - 96 were taken. Given these difficulties of interpretation, possibly a more telling barometer of increased machine sales generally was the rise in net profits that were recorded by the English and American Company from 1887 through to 1890, at which point an apparent return to the pattern of the previous decade is

1. B.S.T.J. 26 June 1909 p549-50.

2. No published returns of shoe machinery exported from the USA is available until the very end of the Century.

observable: Fig 2: ix. refers. Yet this fresh reversal cannot be viewed as an indicator of a slowing pace of change in the shoe industry; in fact, quite the reverse is the case. The annual reports of these years specifically noted that profits but poorly reflected the very buoyant level^{of} trading then done.^{1.} The company faced internal costs problems,^{2.} that were gradually eradicated by 1895. From this time, the level of gross profits was sufficient to issue a dividend on preference shares of 1/- in 1895 and 1896, and 1/2d thereafter to 1899. Of more lasting effect, however, was the increased level of competition from other machine makers. Small profits in later years, therefore, also reflects the proliferation of new shoe machinery companies,

Fig. 2: ix.

ANNUAL GROSS PROFITS RETURNED BY ENGLISH & AMERICAN
SHOE MACHINERY CO. LTD. 1882-1899.

Date	Gross Profit	Profit expressed as % capital employed	Date	Gross Profit	Profit expressed as % capital employed
1882			1891	"Profit very small"	
1883	undisclosed loss		1892		
1884	on trading made		1893	£2085	1.5%
1885			1894	£2219	1.6%
1886	£7840	5.7%	1895	£2402	1.8%
1887	£10058	7.3%	1896	£2822	2.1%
1888	£9262	6.7%	1897	£3079	2.2%
1889	£12764	9.3%	1898	£3475	2.5%
1890	£16064	11.1%	1899	- £1955	-1.4%

Sources: (1) B.S.T.J. - published annual reports and accounts
(11) B.T. 31/3026/17125

1. S.L.R. 20 March 1891, p685; B.S.T.J. 23 March 1891 p311; B.S.T.J. 9 April 1892 p492.
2. The problems the company faced were threefold: (1) high freight charges incurred in shipping machinery from U.S.A. (B.S.T.J. 18 February 1888 p128), which was overcome by increasing English production under licence; (11) the high costs of after sales and servicing (B.S.T.J. 9 April 1892 p492); (111) the undercapitalisation of the company, which was only solved, after much debate, by a debenture issue in late 1894/early 1895 (B.S.T.J. 17 April 1897 p483).

that had been attracted into the industry as a result of the general intensity of machine adoption, the profitability of existing machinery companies, the expiration of patent rights and the availability of agency agreements.¹

Indeed, this increased level of entry by new machinery firms further underscores the importance of the years 1887-95 for machine adoption in the shoe industry. Incomplete information is available as to the number of new firm starts, but registration of new companies probably offers a valid indicator Fig 2: x sets out a list of 28 of the more prominent shoe machinery company incorporations from 1867 to 1914. Of these 32% occur in the crucial nine years 1887-95 compared with 22% in the twenty years prior to that and 46% in the fifteen years after 1895.

Most of these new companies did not rely primarily upon originative and improvement work, but moved into the expanding area of manufacturing under licence and marketing under agency agreements.² Such agreements were readily concluded with U.S. Machinery firms eager to penetrate the expanding British market. This is underlined by the fact that many of these companies traded for only a short period and on a small scale. Of equal note is the widespread participation of leading shoe manufacturers in the activities of these companies, which presumably mirrors the shoe industry absorption in modern methods of manufacture.

1. For example the 1890 Annual Report noted that competitors were prepared to give extended credit terms (S.L.R. 20 March 1891, p685). Four years later, it was noted that "... it does seem, however, considering the enormous turnover of the company, that a much larger profit ought to be earned, and these poor results can only be attributed to keen competition which is carried on by rival machinery companies. Orders for machines are taken at a bare % on the original cost, and large sums are expended in setting up and starting such machinery clearly the only one to profit by this kind of business is the manufacturers, and he, too, has his tale of woe, for when he gets the machine his men refuse to let him use it to advantage.." (B.S.T.J. 6 April 1895 p419).
2. Both the Northampton Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. and the Union Boot and Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. of Leicester very sharply reveal this trait; the latter was wholly reliant upon such trading. A notable exception to this observation is the Leicester firm of Livingston and Doughty, which pioneered and enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the bottom filling market, using a composite material that replaced cork and leather filling. The Company manufactured both filler and the machine that applied it. The first Northampton company to use its "Besto" filler was G.M.Tebbutt & Sons Ltd. in 1907 (Correspondence between author and G.H. Livingston).

Figure 2: x. BRITISH SHOE MACHINERY COMPANY INCORPORATIONS 1867-1919

Date of Incorporation	Name of Firm	Initial Capitalisation	Location
1867	Blake Sole Sewing Machine Co. Ltd.	-	London
1876	British Boot & Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.	-	London
1878	Gros. Ltd.	11260	London
1882	English & American Machinery Co. Ltd.	30993	London
1883	Northants & Leics. Boot Machinery Co. Ltd.	20720	Leicester Northampton
1886	Boot Heeling Co. Ltd.	4500	London
1887	Ab Intra Co. Ltd.	47712	London
1887	Flexible Boot & Shoe Riveting Co. Ltd.	14245	Manchester
1887	Union Boot & Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.	40000	Leicester
1888	Northampton Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.	48000	Northampton
1889	Gore Machinery Co. Ltd.	13000	Stockport
1891	Cutlan's Patent Boot Machinery Co. Ltd.	1100	London
1894	Cutlan's Patent Sew-Round Machine Co. Ltd.	360	London
1894	Gimsons Ltd.	8092	Manchester
1895	Keats Bros. Ltd.	10280	Stafford
1896	Vose & Co. Ltd.	17500	London
1897	Cutlan Lasting Machinery Co. Ltd.	7000	W'borough
1899	British United Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.	291000	Leicester
1900?	International Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.	-	Northampton
1901	Phoenix Boot Machinery Co. Ltd.	1500	Street
1902	Northampton Machinery Co. Ltd.	-	Northampton
1902	Standard Engineering Co. Ltd.	10000	Leicester
1902	Standard Rotary Co. Ltd.	25000	Rushden
1904	Livingston & Doughty & Co. Ltd.	4209	Leicester
1906	Jackson & Pochin Ltd.	10436	Leicester
1906	Owen Robinson Ltd.	12727	Kettering
1909	Keats & Bexon Ltd.	-	Stafford
1909	Universal Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.	12523	Northampton
1915	Keats Bros. (Stafford) Ltd.	2016	Stafford
1919	Gimson Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.	-	Leicester

Source: (i) Dept. of Trade, Companies House, London & Cardiff

(ii) P.R.O. Kew, BT31 series.

Notes: (iii) Initial Capitalisation in £

If the size of the later B.U.S.M. Co. is set aside, the three largest companies were the English & American, the Northampton Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd.^{1.} and the Union Boot & Shoe Machinery Co. Ltd. Of these the last two, probably English & American's closest rival was the Union Company. This Leicester based company was incorporated in January 1887.^{2.} The floatation was supervised by a London merchant, Edward B. Seaver, with Midlands shoe manufacturers comprising a majority of shareholders, who dominated the board.^{3.} In conception and membership it closely resembled the Northampton Company. Initially formed to manufacture and market, under licence, a new screwing machine of the U.S. Empler-Adams Corporation, design difficulties were encountered.^{4.} As a result share capital was reduced and fresh agency business successfully established.^{5.} By 1892, the last of several manufacturing licences and agencies were concluded with U.S. companies.^{6.} In June of that year, the Union Company purchased the British business of two of these American Companies: The Rockingham Machine Company and the Campbell Machine Company.^{7.} Although the available information is incomplete, the Union Company's profitability in the 1890s reveals the same high levels of trading activity in the early years

1. On this company, see the discussion above.
2. BT 31/3798/23779. First Annual Return 24 May 1887 records a called-up capital of £18033.
3. The board comprised the following shoe manufacturers: H.S.Gee & E. Wood of Leicester; J. Flatan & W. Hickson of Northampton and London. In 1891 another prominent Leicester man, Samuel Lennard, was elected to the board (S.L.R. 5 June 1891 p1328). A year later Mr. Ward of Stead & Simpson Leicester, also joined the board (B.S.T.J. 4 June 1892 p721).
4. B.S.T.J. 2 June 1888 p538: cf. B.S.T.J. 15 October 1890 p511.
5. From £50000 to £28175 in 1888 (B.T. 31 ibid; special resolution 11 December 1889. By 1897 share capital had risen to £39571 (Annual Return).
6. S.L.R. 7 October 1892 p878 gives a concise appraisal of the range of U.S. machines and components the Union Co. traded in. Commenting on the company's difficulties in 1887, the report notes, "... it was about this time that the demand was first made for American machinery, and the company being quick to perceive the drift of the time, appointed agents to act for them in the United States, by which arrangements they were able to secure a constant supply of almost everything that had been tested and proved successful (there), and the result was that the company continued to expand month after month..."
7. B.S.T.J. 4 June 1892 p721. Purchase price £11263 cf. B.T. 31 ibid. Sale Agreement dated 21 June 1892. 20 patents were transferred to Union. From this date American shareholders and directors joined the company.

of the decade as the English & American Company.¹ Like other prominent English shoe machine companies, this was absorbed in to the B.U.S.M.Co. Empire.² Local shoe firm records also provide evidence of the nature of machine introduction, which enables us to look more closely at the best and average practice firms approach to change at shoe centres in the period: A. & W. Church & Co. was an elite, best practice firm, whilst F.W.Pollard & Sons was a second rank, average practice firm.³ Unfortunately, the survival rate of this type of archive is lamentably slight, for of the 643 local manufacturing firms, only these two have left behind records of sufficient detail which permit anything approaching a detailed analysis.⁴

At c 1887, both firms were engaged in variety production, although differences in production technique and marketing structure were already present, for the two operated in different, though overlapping, areas of the footwear market. It was this, along with their differing scale of production, that determined their approach to change. A. & W. Church, pioneers of the specialities market, manufactured a wide range of different qualities and types of footwear.⁵

1.	Date	£ Profit	Profit expressed as a % of Capital Employed	Declared Dividend (%)
	1890	1331.12.2	18.9	10
	1891	1679.10.6	19.5	21
	1895	537.16.7	2.3	no dividend
	1896	610.10.3	2.6	5
	1897	1281.11.1	5.4	5

Source: (1) published reports in B.S.T.J. and S.L.R.
(11) BT 31/3708/23779

2. This takeover was achieved in the following fashion: In March 1899, the existing company was voluntarily wound up and reconstituted (BT31 ibid. Special Resolution 29 March 1899).: final winding up 5 September 1899. The new company was registered in April 1899, with B.U.S.M.Co. holding 89% of the shares. The new Union Company's registered office was transferred to the B.U.Leicester office in November 1900, and it was voluntarily wound up in October 1901 (BT 31/8443/61452).
3. For discussion on elite and second rank Northampton firms, see Chapter Seven, section I. Interestingly, at the time of writing both firms are still in existence. Church retains its own identity and operates from different premises in the town, whilst Pollard has been absorbed, although the re-constituted company operates from the 1886 Pollard factory.
4. Although support for the tentative conclusions drawn in this section of the thesis can be found in the shoe firm biographies recorded in Appendices II, III, & IV. On marketing strategies of shoe firms in the period, see Chapter Seven, Section II below.
5. See Appendix II . . . C.8.

The firm already utilised machinery for lower grade work, but retained a mixed system of hand and machine production, and still used outworkers in large numbers.^{1.} Within a generation that dependency on handwork and outworkers had gone,^{2.} and, although their reputation for speciality production remained, there had occurred a marked shift to volume batch production.^{3.} By contrast, Pollard's mode of production was markedly different. In 1887 no machinery was used. The firm ran a transitional hand-work operation based on high quality hand-sewn footwear. Such machine-sewn goods as were produced, were sewn by sub-contractors; W.T.Markie being the main contractor. All machine closing was similarly done by closers and sub-contractors on their own premises, as was some of the firms finishing in the 1890s.^{4.} A fluctuating labour force of 80/100 hand sewers was employed in Long Buckby and other satellite villages.^{5.} A little under that number again were employed in the town, either at home or in Pollards factory. As is related in the firm's biography,^{6.} production was only gradually rationalised under pressure of rising costs and falling sales in the Edwardian period,^{7.}

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1. Anon Where to Buy in Northampton (1891) (np), lists + 300 indoor workers and c600 outside, making Church's one of the largest employers in the town. By 1914, this number had fallen to c350, as a result of machine working (see below Fig 7: ii).
 2. However, this dependency never entirely disappeared. A few outworkers making hand-sewn goods were retained, and through the 20 century numbers of outworkers have ebbed and flowed according to need. See A.E.Chapman and G. Homer Church's Famous English Shoes 1873-1973 (1973), p xv and xx where reference to Church's use of outworkers in the 1960s is referred to cf. discussion on outwork below.
 3. Church & Co. Archive, Edwardian Sales Catalogues confirm this. Besides the standardised volume range, they also produced: dress and court shoes, slippers; a full range of country boots; a range of sporting shoes; leggings and rubber goods.
 4. Most of these closers to the trade were concentrated in the same street - St. Michaels Road - as Pollard's factory.
 5. Pollard Papers, Outwork Ledgers and Indoor Wage Books 1886-1893: By 1914 this number of employees had fallen to 107 (see below Fig. 7. iii; Cf. Pollard Papers, Pollard Factory Address Book 1917).
 6. Appendix II C.20.
 7. From scattered references in the Pollard Papers it is possible to sketch the organisational evolution of the firm. From the mid 1870s hand workers were brought into the warehouse. From 1900, the outwork ledgers show the numbers so employed dramatically falling, with only a handful surviving by the Great War. An interesting reference to the firm's use of outworkers is made in S.L.N. 29 April 1920 p287. H.J.Baltrop (of R.E.Trucker Ltd.) applied to the court for re-possession of a dwelling house rented to Pollards as a shoe workshop: "... it was said that the shop was used for operatives over 60 years of age who were unable to take their place in the teams in the ordinary factory; and that if Messrs. Pollard had to give up the workshop these men would have to be discharged. The judge ordered the workshop to be given up..."

as the quickly rising dominance of machine welted methods eroded the market for the hand produced product. Pollard's final decision to substantially centralise production using machine methods came in 1908. In this year, £586 was expended on machinery¹; the first machine welted boots were offered for sale by the firm²; whilst the Production Ledger entries for that year show that lasters and finishers were switched to day work in March, country finishing of footwear ceased in May, and the last outdoor closer was laid off in October.³ Despite this, the firm retained a greater reliance upon hand-sewn work than did Church's, reflecting a commitment to this shrinking though still viable sector of the market⁴: the firm had built up a reputation in this class of work and retained the skills to produce this product. This reliance upon traditional

1. N.R.O. Pollard Papers, Pol. 275 Plant Ledger 1900-14.
2. Ibid., Pol. 10 Sales Catalogue Autumn 1908. But, cf. Pol. 53, a fully-fledged machine making room was not operational until 1913. Note, W.T. Markie's trade sewer, account remained upon to 1914, but was increasingly only used during seasonal rushes of work.
3. Ibid. Pol. 53. Production Ledger. Four styles of ladies shoes, and an in stock system were also inaugurated in this year. (ibid. Pol 13). Cf. Appendix II C19, W.B.Stevens & Co. and Appendix III. N.G. 20 Eales and Sons, where, by using fire insurance evidence, it has been possible to outline the mechanisation of two other average practice firms.
4. Ibid. Pol. 10 & 11. Pollard's Edwardian Sales Catalogues reveal this dependence, viz:-

Year	Type and Number of Styles.				
	Hand Sewn		Machine Welted Mens	Machine Sewn	
	Men's	Youths		Mens	Youths
July 1906	41	4	-	64	18
Spring 1907	45	5	-	60	17
Autumn 1907	33	4	-	23	17
Autumn 1908	33	5	5	27	28
Spring 1909	53	6	23	34	26

In addition, bespoke orders were still taken, and these were made up in four grades: machine welts could be used if preferred. (ibid Pol. 13). But it should be noted that terms of volume production relied heavily upon machine made "regular" lines, though many had a large element of hand work incorporated in them (a vogue developed for hand lasting and high quality finishing remained as hand processes - Appendix vii): in 1892, 88.5% of production was regular lines; 7.5% bespoke and 4.0% special lines; by 1902 the figures were 86.4%, 8.6%, 5%; and by 1912, 85.4%, 10.8%, 3.8%. Traditionally middle class customers had shown a preference for bespoke and special styles, as compared to stock or regular lines. In the 1890s J.G.Sears True Form Company at Northampton had pioneered the penetration of this sector of the market by producing machine welted stock shoes of sufficient quality. He, in addition, extended the distribution techniques which twenty years previously had been used by wholesalers to penetrate working class markets (see Appendix III N.G.1.)

methods is also reflected in their contrasting approaches to marketing. Whilst A. & W. Church used trade-marking and other modern techniques, Pollard's relied more centrally on product quality and a reputation in the market, slowly established over the years.^{1.}

In terms of the discussion on machine introduction, this contrasting approach to change is markedly shown in the two firms' utilisation of machinery, and the timing and rate of its introduction. A. & W. Church's records reveal a sustained and expanding commitment to machine usage in the period: Fig. 2: xi refers. In order to maintain its position in the market, the company became committed to an on-going pattern of spending on machinery. What is observed here is a pattern of change in techniques propounded in W.E.G. Salter's mid-20 Century study of British industry. Like other best practice firms, from c1887 A. & W. Church was beset by "... a continuous flow of (technical) disturbances..."^{2.} that quickly gave rise to growth in depth as opposed to the patterns of extensive growth that had characterised the transitional period. Observable also, are certain well-defined peaks of spending on machinery by the company during depressions in trading. Thus in 1893-96, £5550, 26.5% of all machine investment in the period, was expended; in 1904-05, £2005, (9.6%) was expended; and in 1907-08, £2814, (13.4%). Other peaks of spending occurred in 1888 and 1912.^{3.} When reference is made to Pollard's very different pattern of spending on machine equipment (Fig 2:xii refers), Salter's other basic feature of technical change is observable. That Pollard should face a radical change in production a decade or so later echoes Salter's argument of the inevitable gap between best and average practice in an industry: the inevitable distance in time between the progressive firm's acceptance of new techniques, and its

1. See discussion at chapter 2 section II above.

2. Salter op. cit. p5. The static, classical approach to technical change, implicitly accepted in the orthodox view of change in the shoe industry, of a 'once over' change in techniques is rejected by Salter. He argues that "... the notion of an independent "once over" change must be rejected, and in its place must be substituted concepts of continuous disturbance. Instead of a given change in technical knowledge, we must think of a rate of improvement..." The Static, "once-over" analysis is only appropriate if change is sufficiently great to completely displace all pre-existing techniques, and clearly this is not the case in the shoe industry (see discussion on shoe technology in Chapter Two (above & Appendix VII)).

3. In 1888, £905 (4.3% of total) was spent, which represents post-strike expenditure: Alfred Church was a member of the Northampton Shoe Machinery Company's Syndicate. In 1912, £1061 (5.1% of total) was spent.

Figure 2: xi: A. & W. CHURCH & CO., NORTHAMPTON. ANNUAL ADDITIONSTO MACHINERY 1886¹ - 1913.

Year	Value Existing Machinery ²	Value Additions	Five Year Average
1886	953	231	
1887	997	280	
1888	1149	905	
1889	1771	402	
1890	1989	107	£385
1891	1837	127	
1892	1767	83	
1893	1665	1003	
1894	2440	2081	
1895	4000	1316	£922
1896	4458	1150	
1897	4995	688	
1898	5023	461	
1899	4886	449	
1900	4690	836	£717
1901	4733	455	
1902	4671	842	
1903	5009	393	
1904	5134	1335	
1905	6175	670	£739
1906	6061	537	
1907	5738	1912	
1908	6685	902	
1909	6628	508	
1910	6288	870	£946
1911	6442	529	
1912	6716	1061	
1913	7004	362	
1914	6651	482	£608 ³

Source: CHURCH (FOOTWEAR) Plc. NORTHAMPTON Archive;
private ledger machinery a/c 1886-1925.

- Notes: (1) 1886 first year for which figures available
(2) Value adjusted by 10% for depreciation and
for older machinery sold.
(3) 4 year period

general adoption by the generality of firms. Within an industry different firms face different costs profiles thus ensuring a slow adjustment to change at the level of the industry in the application of new capital equipment systems. No firm simply seeks to maximise labour productivity per se by prescriptively adopting the latest technique. Rather, such an adaptation takes place as adverse shifts in costs and market demand it: for Salter there exists therefore, a close, fundamental interrelationship between new techniques and changes in factor prices. The shift to new technology takes place ultimately to protect an organisations profitability, and to enable it to achieve its aims and objectives.¹ In each case here it can be suggested that the differing timing and approach to new, modern work systems is a reaction to falling profit levels; a position exacerbated by competitors' use of new technology. (Figures 2: xiii and xiv refer).

Thus whereas A. & W. Church was the vanguard of British shoe machine innovation, Pollard lagged behind. Church's commitment to volume batch production, signalled by a downturn in the firm's profitability,² suggests the determination of that

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1. This course suggests that a smooth transition within an industry is unlikely. At any one time a range of processes could have been profitably employed. As Salter notes, "... The range of techniques in existence is defined by the condition that plants are not scrapped until their operating costs per unit of output equal price; or by the condition that the replacement will not be profitable until their operating costs are equal to the total costs of a new plant. It can be shown that these two conditions imply the same scrapping date...." (p65).
 2. In this section two basic accounting ratios are used to assess the performance of the sample firms. First is profitability (here a return on average investment figure (R.O.I.) an expression of the successful use of the basic resources of the business: a low figure indicates a less efficient use of these resources when compared with a high figure. It is a measure of overall managerial performance and is often referred to as the primary ratio. A declining R.O.I. figure denotes a weakening position since it means that the firm's assets are realising less and less in terms of its profits. Such a decline indicates either that costs were rising or that sales were declining or not growing at a rate commensurate with the growth of the firm's assets. During periods when a firm makes a heavy capital investment in new processes and equipment, as is the case here, this will be reflected by a decline in this ratio in the short-run, however. By analysing Church's profit and loss accounts against tentative sales figures for the 1890s it was found that rising costs were operating to depress profitability, with shifts in sales featuring as a secondary element. Such analysis was not possible for Pollard & Co. The second accounting ratio used was profit margin: the profit sales ratio. Here, a low percentage figure reflects high costs or heavy competition depressing sales prices. If more information were available, this ratio could begin to offer more information as to each firms market share.

Figure 2: xii : F.W. POLLARD & SONS NORTHAMPTON.SHOE MACHINE PURCHASES 1872-1914

PERIOD	VALUE PURCHASES
1872-89	no purchases
1890	£100
1891	£100
1893	£ 54
1894-1903	no information
1904-06	no purchases
1907	£ 90
1908	£568
1909	£ 68
1910	£ 16
1911	£ 12
1912-14	no purchases

Source: NRO, Pollard Papers, Pol 26/49 & Pol 275:
Company Ledgers 1869-1914.

Figure 2: xiii

A. & W. CHURCH & CO. NORTHAMPTON.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE 1886-1914

YEAR	A. & W. CHURCH & CO.				H.E.RANDALL LTD.	
	RETURN ON INVESTMENT		PROFIT MARGIN		RETURN ON INVESTMENT	
	Ann.	Syr Aver:	Ann.	Syr Aver.	Annual	5 year Aver.
1886	18.5					
1887	13.6					
1888	22.2					
1889	5.1					
1890	15.1	14.9				
1891	11.5					
1892	13.8					
1893	11.4					
1894	7.2					
1895	9.1	10.6				
1896	2.5				8.6	
1897	4.5				N/A	
1898	5.5				10.8	
1899	7.0				11.6	
1900	2.6	4.4			N/A	10.3
1901	8.2				14.0	
1902	3.3				N/A	
1903	5.5				17.7	
1904	-1.0				17.0	
1905	4.7	4.1	18.8		N/A	16.2
1906	6.9		19.8		14.3	
1907	9.9		19.6		15.0	
1908	8.9		19.2		N/A	
1909	8.8		18.7		11.2	13.5
1910	7.5	8.4	17.1	18.9	N/A	
1911	7.6		17.1		4.6	
1912	8.9		17.4		6.5	
1913	0.1		14.5		N/A	
1914	9.2	6.5	15.2	16.1	9.8	7.0

Sources: (1) CHURCH (FOOTWEAR) PLC. NORTHAMPTON ARCHIVE: Private Ledger, balance sheets, profit & loss accounts, merchandise accounts 1886-1914.
 (11) H.E.RANDALL LTD: published annual reports in B.S.T.J.; & C.R.O. No. 47878.
 (111) All figures are percentages.

firm to retain a premier position in the Northampton industry. That this decision did not enable the firm to revert to the high profit levels of the pre-1890 period should not be seen as a qualifying factor in that success. For this feature was widely experienced by elite firms in the industry, given the greater levels of competition which prevailed, and the deepening of capital that accompanied change.¹ Pollard's lag in shifting to full factory production confirms its average practice complexion, but also underlines that firm's different strategy to change. In the period 1887-95 there was a surge in the hand-sewn market², and given Pollard's reputation in this field and the secular peak in its trading coming at this time after many years of indifferent trade,³ there exists a certain rationality in the firm retaining transitional methods. Only a downturn in trading, as machine welted production generally gained ascendancy, forced this firm to change its production methods. Although Pollard's rationalisation programme halted falling sales, ensuring survival, and the retention of its prominent place in high quality markets, clearly A. & W. Church's more thorough-going utilisation of latest techniques is reflected in this firm's ability to stabilise its elite position, and obtain a more efficient use of capital deployed. (Figures 2: xiii and xiv). Although the necessary background information is not available to fully analyse the two firms profit margin figures in the Edwardian years, a comparison of these figures suggests that A. & W. Church enjoyed a healthy trading position in the immediate post-change period, whilst Pollard's market share declined, although clearly this firm's rationalisation programme was able to stem the decline in trading and restore profit margins to some measure.⁴ (Figures 2: xiii and xiv).

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1. This general fall in profitability when compared with pre-factory production was frequently alluded to in the Edwardian trade press.
 2. See below Chapter Two, section VI. Such was the strength of this demand that handsewn firms undertook relatively high cost capital developments in new premises. For example SLR 27 November 1891, Charles Smith, handsewn manufacturer, took possession of a new factory. Cf. B.S.T.J. 16 July 1892, p68, Eyre Brothers who did a very large handsewn trade, occupied a new factory in Henry Street,
 3. Figure 2: xiv reveals the extent of this weak trading. The real resurgence of the firm dates from Frederick's assumption of control in his father's Edmund's later years. Consummate success dated from the latter's death.
 4. These conclusions find a broad support in the analysis in Chapter Six below, concerning the effects of modernisation on shoe firms.

Figure 2: xiv

F.W. POLLARD & SON, NORTHAMPTON
ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE 1870-1914

(I) PROFIT MARGINS - 1901 - 1913

YEAR	ANNUAL PERCENTAGE	FIVE YEAR AVERAGE
1901	4.6	
1902	1.8	
1903	1.7	
1904	0.4	
1905	1.4	2.0
1906	1.2	
1907	1.0	
1908	0.3	
1909	1.5	
1910	2.5	1.3
1911	2.5	
1912	1.1	
1913	2.4	2.0

Source: N.R.O. Pollard Papers: Pol 53-54. Production Data Accounts 1897-1930.

(II) YEARLY PATTERN OF SALES - 1892-1913

YEAR	VOLUME (pairs)	VALUE £	YEAR	VOLUME (pairs)	VALUE £	YEAR	VOLUME (pairs)	VALUE £
1892	72710		1899	75040	39897	1906	51475	28407
1893	72684		1900	75517	42683	1907	53574	28367
1894	72264		1901	75876	41660	1908	50868	28021
1895	69310		1902	70983	38313	1909	52398	27680
1896	74196		1903	65585	34786	1910	50797	26580
1897	75989	41849	1904	59521	31211	1911	50868	26881
1898	74363	39384	1905	55162	29959	1912	52562	28712
						1913	54304	29170

Source* N.R.O. Pollard Papers: Pol. 53-54, Pol 234-48, Sales Day Book 1900-13; Pol 24 Foreign Sales Ledger; & Pol 148-62, Special & Bespoke Order Book 1902-16.

Notes: (a) Pol. 49 states that 1889 (at that time) was a peak year at 72000 pairs.

(III) RETURN ON INVESTMENT 1879-1914

YEAR	RETURN ON INVESTMENT	
	ANNUAL %	5 YEAR AVERAGE
1870	- 10.7	
1871	- 1.4	
1872	- 12.4	
1873	- 0.1	
1874	- 0.9	
1875	- 5.4	- 6.2
1876	14.3	
1877	9.0	
1878	6.6	
1879	- 3.6	
1880	2.7	5.8
1881	12.3	
1882	4.7	
1883	0.9	
1884	- 5.6	
1885	12.0	
1886	- 13.0	
1887	11.6	
1888	21.2	
1889	15.5	
1890	19.8	

Source: N.R.O. Pollard Papers: Pol. 26-49. Stock-taking and Capital Accounts 1869-93, and Pol. 53 Production Data Ledger.

Here it is interesting to briefly contrast Pollard's & Church's profitability with that of H.E.Randall Ltd. (Figure 2: xiii). Randall's was one of only six Northampton firms to operate a multiple chain: the rest, including Pollard & Church, were 'pure' wholesale manufacturers. As is made clear elsewhere, this company's superior financial performance in the Edwardian period is a reflection of a shift in strategy by Randall's from a reliance upon manufacturing to retailing; and in particular to the sale of imported American footwear in its chain shops.¹ Again, this Company's response to further new techniques and rationalisation in the late 1900s, can be seen as a direct response to fluctuating profitability.²

This line of argument again raises an important stricture upon the orthodox case; that of entrepreneurial conservatism. These extant records reveal a pattern of individual decision-making at the level of the firm that Salter and others regard as a completely reasoned and rational reaction to change. These writers' stress that the true criterion for judgement must be whether it was economically rational for the entrepreneur to adopt a new technique; not did the entrepreneur simply fail to avail himself of that new technique.³ This study of two firms suggests that there existed adequate reasons why a firm should not slavishly follow technology, but seek to retain alternative patterns of production according to the dictates of individual patterns of profitability. This diverse pattern of change probably has more relevance to this industry's transition, than an heroic view.⁴ Implicitly following classical thought, the orthodox case concerning industrialisation in the shoe industry view the adoption of new techniques as, a priori, a correct procedure: to dissent is to be labelled conservative. Both Head & Church stress the concept of entrepreneurial conservatism as a block to change. Yet this, albeit possibly unrepresentative study of two Northampton firms, suggests that there can be no orderly shift throughout a business community in response to change.

1. Cf. Appendix II C.4. and Chapter Seven, section II.

2. B.S.T.J. 15 March 1912. p532.

3. See, for example, Sandberg loc. cit. passim, & Hartley loc. cit. passim.

4. Given the variegated nature of shoe markets and the heterogeneous character of shoe manufacturers, this theme will be further explored below: particularly in Chapters 3 & 7.

The second data base which enables us to more accurately assess the rate and timing of industrial development in Northampton concerns the pace of industrial building. If we can accept that the spread of factory buildings and factory extensions, as opposed to shoe warehouses,^{1.} can be used as an indicator of the industry's tendency to centralise production and adopt new techniques, then the rate at which building plans were deposited with the local authority for planning permission purposes in the period, provides a further important indicator as to the pace of change at Northampton: Figure 2: xv refers. This table summarises building investment decisions made by shoemanufacturers and building speculators between 1860 and 1914. It provides important, primary information regarding the date at which the crucial decision to build was taken.^{2.} Several important analytical points arise from this table.

First, if the summary of building plan submissions is broken down into the three phases of industrialisation in the industry, it can be noted that, whilst applications in the period 1860-1914 averaged 6.9 per annum, they were running at an average of only 4.6 during the transitional period.^{3.} This rate rose

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1. The warehouse in the shoe industry was the central industrial building of the outwork era. In addition to being used as a store for raw materials and finished goods, it housed the manufacturers indoor workers, his office facilities and outworking depot. The use of the word manufactory or factory, though used prior to the 1870s, really only gains wide currency in that decade, and was used by contemporaries to describe a building housing machinery and former outwork hand processes. Inevitably, the function of the two was blurred, but contemporaries did differentiate between the function of the two types of building. Therefore, it is reasonable to use factory building and factory extensions as indicators of industrial change.
 2. Of course, no inference can be drawn as to factory sizes, output levels and so forth. There would have been a significant difference between the factories of different periods. Warehouses and early factories tended to occupy building plots the size of one or two terraced houses, compared with factories such as Barratts (1913) which occupied some four acres. (See Appendix II N.G.10). Indeed many early buildings used by the industry were simply converted dwelling houses (eg. Appendix II C3, C2, C7 and C.20), (Appendix III N.G.27). Local rating valuations and manuscript factory plans were investigated to help provide some indication of the growth of factory sizes over time, but these have not been utilised here because of problems of comparability.
Note: the statistics used in this section refer to industrial premises planned rather than built. By matching this data with information from the local Medical Officer of Health's Annual Reports on buildings erected, c88% of premises planned were actually built.
 3. Despite the overall low level of applications prior to 1887, the high level of factory applications in the 1870s should be noted. This mirrors the introduction of steam-driven presses and sole-sewing machines in these years, (cf. Appendix VII).

Figure 2: xv: Summary of Deposited Plans for New Industrial Buildings & Extensions for the Footwear Industry and Filed with the Responsible Local Authority in Northampton 1860-1914

Year	a	b	c	d	e	f	Year	a	b	c	d	e	f
1860	1			1			1887	2	4	2	8		
1861	3			3			1888		2	5	7		
1862							1889		5	2	7		
1863	5			5			1890	5		8	13		
1864	4			4			1891	4		4	8		
1865	3			3			1892		1	9	10		
1866							1893		6	11	17		
1867	4		2	6			1894		3	11	14		
1868	1	1		2			1895			7	7		
1869		2	1	3			1887-95	11	21	59	91	24.6	10.1
1870	3	2		5									
1871	1	2		3			1896		6	5	11		
1872		7	1	8			1897			7	7		
1873	1	1	1	3			1898			2	2		
1874	1	4		5			1899		5	3	8		
1875	1	9		10			1900		1	1	2		
1876		7	2	9			1901		2	5	7		
1877		8	1	9			1902		4	5	9		
1878		2	2	4			1903		1	4	5		
1879	1	1	2	4			1904			3	3		
1880	1	2	1	4			1905			4	4		
1881	2	3	3	8			1896-05	0	19	39	58	15.7	5.8
1882	6		6				1906		2	3	5		
1883		2	1	3			1907		1	8	9		
1884		3	2	5			1908			6	6		
1885		3	2	5			1909			14	14		
1886		3	2	5			1910			9	9		
1860-86	32	68	29	123	33.2	4.6	1911		2	18	20		
							1912		1	10	11		
							1913		1	9	10		
							1914			14	14		
							1906-14		7	91	98	26.5	10.9
							1860-1914 ⁴³	115	212	370	100.0	6.9	

Source: N.P.L. Register of Northampton Building Plans 1860-1914, in 3 volumes:

Vol I: comprising applications made to

(1) Northampton Improvement Commissioners 1860-72

(11) Northampton Urban Sanitary authority 1873-87.

Vol.II: comprising applications made to Northampton Urban Sanitary Authority 1888-1901

Vol.III: comprising applications made to Northampton County Borough Engineers Dept. 1902-14.

- Notes:
- (1) (a) = shoe warehouse; (b) shoe factory; (c) additions to (e) total Shoe Manufacturers business premises; (d) total applications; applications in sub-period expressed as a percentage of all applications 1860-1914; (f) Annual Average of Applications in sub-period.
 - (2) Although many shoe workshops for closers and others were erected, applications for these could not be separated from the generality of workshop applications and so have been omitted.
 - (3) (c) excludes all applications made to fit fire sprinklers, fire escapes, sanitary facilities etc. that were required by the Factory & Workshops Acts of 1890 & 1901.

sharply to 10.1 a year in the short, important period of rapid machine introduction - 1887-1895 - followed by a fall to 5.8 applications in the decade of greatest organisational change to 1905, before again increasing to 10.9 a year in the years before the Great War. Fully 40% of building applications were received in the pivotal years 1887-1905, with 61% of applications in this period of greatest change in the industry occurring in 1887-95; the years of the machine revolution. By comparison, 33% of applications were lodged during the transitional period, and 27% in the period 1906-1914.

Indeed, the evidence found in the trade press fully supports this. During the years 1887-95 much more press coverage was given to factory developments than at any other time prior to 1914. There was a marked increase in feature articles on new factories, a development which presumably mirrors the increased interest in such matters. Two issues were central to forcing factory building and extensions on the industry at this time. The machinery being introduced used sub-divided labour systems and as such could only be deployed in a factory. Factory developments, therefore, were a necessary adjunct to new technology.¹ This raised problems in the town, for traditionally manufactory factories had been built in crowded mixed industrial-residential areas.² Here there was often insufficient land on which to erect extensions and new, larger premises.³ This was particularly true of those factories being built on

1. Very many reports on Northampton in the trade press at this time allude to this. See, for example, B.S.T.J. 18 February 1888 p118 "... In some cases additional premises have been taken and new buildings erected, while machinery is being purchased very freely..." There follows a report of four factory extensions. Cf. SLR 19 May 1888 p393, SLR 2 June 1888 p432, B.S.T.J. 7 July 1888 p11, SLR 16 November 1889 p445, B.S.T.J. 21 June 1890 p608, SLR 13 September 1890 p288, SLR 1 January 1892 p34, B.S.T.J. 15 July 1892 p143, B.S.T.J. 30 September 1893 p376, B.S.T.J. 28 October 1893, p485, B.S.T.J. 2 December 1893, p614.
2. See description of the town in Chapter One above; Cf. Appendix II C.3.
3. S.L.R. 8 February 1890 p202. At this time the town's leading architect - Charles Dorman - had plans in hand for six new factories, but was finding it difficult to locate suitable sites. Cf. This report also notes that "... it is a significant fact that although new streets of houses are rapidly being built, it is extremely difficult to find sufficient house room for the artisan population..." In some measure this was overcome by the conversion of dwelling houses, and the fortuitous purchase and re-development of adjacent sites (e.g. Appendix II C.2. and C.8); multi-site occupation (e.g. Appendix II C.1. and C24, and Appendix III N.G.1); some manufacturers had purchased adjacent land at the time of building the original factory with a view to future extensions (eg. Appendix II C20).

the one floor principle, and led increasingly to industrial development on green-field sites at the edge of the town.^{1.} In other shoe centres, this lack of development land served to retard machine introduction.^{2.}

At the centre of these trade reports was the hope that increased industrial development signalled ongoing trade prosperity. In 1890 a local correspondent noted:

... Never before in the trade history of the town have building operations been carried out so extensively, and this augurs well for future prosperity, as the energy that causes larger factories to be built must still continue to be exercised to keep those factories going with increased orders...^{3.}

This was not immediately to be the case however. Yet, as has been noted above this process of change proceeded unabated through the severe depression of the early 1890s. In the trough of depression in 1892, several reports noted that many firms were in the throes of re-organisation, in anticipation of a revival of trade. At this time there is much evidence of new industrial developments at Northampton and other shoe centres,^{4.} for example:

...During the next few months there will be several changes in the location of firms here who are entering larger premises in order to keep pace with the times and to obtain every available facility for successful boot manufacturing..^{5.}

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1. Eg. Appendix II, C.1. and C.3.; Appendix III N.G.2., N.G.4., and N.G.10.
 2. SLR 30 March 1889 p350. In London "... the paucity of factory accommodation has militated severely against the introduction of machinery.." It was this factor, and the keen opposition of London Shoemakers to machine working, mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, which had led to the migration of London firms to Northampton.
 3. B.S.T.J. 4 January 1890 p.4. (+12) Cf. S.L.R. 6 September 1890 p208, "... New factories and warehouses are springing up on all sides. There should be a great future for the shoe trade of Northampton if present anticipations are to be justified.."
 4. B.S.T.J. 8 October 1892 p426 and 15 October 1892 p457 discuss the reorganisation of Leicester factories being then carried out in the teeth of depression.
 5. B.S.T.J. 23 April 1892 p531, Northampton Correspondent. Cf. B.S.T.J. 2 January 1892 p8-9 when the extending and building of new factories by leading manufacturers is discussed: "... in anticipation of (improving trade), and partly to remove the inconvenience experience in systematising effectually in consequence of the limited area some of our large firms have already, either new structures or substantial additions to existing factories are nearly complete, and other removals and extensions are in contemplation. The principal question of the hour is the development of machinery..." Cf. B.S.T.J. 17 September 1892 p339 the Northampton correspondent noted: "To be thankful for small mercies might induce manufacturers to welcome the opportunity for alterations in plant etc. and experimenting in production methods, in preparation for the inevitable spell of good trade which follows a period of depression..."

Secondly, the type of industrial building can be seen to change over time.^{1.} Building applications for warehouses, the buildings most closely linked to the outwork structure, were greatest in transition: 40% of all warehouse applications were made in the 1860s; followed by 19% in the next decade, 11% in the 1880s and 12% in the early 1890s. By contrast, the highest level of new factory building occurs in the 1870s, when 44^{2.} applications were received, with 30% of these being concentrated in the years 1874-78. As has been noted above, powered machinery was first extensively used in this decade. Such a concentration of factory building never occurs again, for in later periods, as the number of industrial buildings generally available to the industry increases, so greater opportunities existed to rent or buy existing vacant property, or to change a building's use, or to re-model existing premises.^{3.} Also in transition it is possible to detect in the Registers 70 applications to build shoe industry workshops, mainly for closing (22). It was found difficult, however, to consistently collect this data from the Registers, as often no indication of use was given: this particularly applies to the post-1887 era^{4.}, although workshop^{were} concentrated in transition. Consequently these figures have been omitted from the above table. Moving now to the building of factory extensions, what is observed is a much higher level of applications after 1881 than before. In all 212 extension plans were submitted from 1860 to 1914, of which 10.8% (23) were made in transition; 46.3% (98) in the period of greatest change, 1887-1905; and the remaining 42.9% (91) in the years before the Great War. The two heaviest concentrations of activity occurred in 1890-94 & 1911-14.^{5.} Those in the former period reflect the need to enlarge premises as work was progressively

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1. All applications are allotted to the category appropriate at the time of building. Quite clearly a building's function changed over time: most commonly, warehouses were converted to factory use. No adequate quantitative summary of use-change over time is feasible.
 2. This represents a figure of 38% of all factory applications submitted 1860-1914.
 3. Consequently, an important feature of the post 1887 era was the sharp increase in factory extension applications.
 4. Only 21 such applications were found in 1887-95, and a further 19 in 1896-1905.
 5. 62 applications in 1890-94 (representing 67% of all applications made 1887-95); and 55 in 1911-14 (representing 56% of all applications made 1906-14).

centralised,^{1.} whilst those in the latter the late Edwardian boom in trade. Lastly, it is instructive to compare this date against what is known about levels of building activity in the country generally and of the relationship between this activity and cyclical shifts within the British economy. From the literature on this issue,^{2.} it can be concluded that there existed an alternation between levels of foreign investment and domestic building investment, with cycles of building activity moving in a twenty year cycle.^{3.} It should also be noted that industrial/commercial building followed foreign investment trends more nearly than residential building.^{4.} In the late 19th Century it has been argued that there were two major periods of building activity in the late 1870s and late 1890s^{5.} The Northampton building register data confirms, in broad terms, to this conclusion. In particular there exists an exact correlation between the higher levels of submitted Northampton plans in 1875-77, and the high levels of gross domestic fixed capital formation in the building industry between 1874-78 recorded by Feinstein. Turning now to the 1890s building boom it becomes

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1. This tendency was noted by contemporaries. For example, B.S.T.J. 23 October 1886 p. "many of the factories seem to have been built room by room as the necessity for extensions became too pressing to be further disregarded.." Another feature of piecemeal development noted at several points in this thesis was the tendency for manufacturers to convert dwelling houses to industrial use. American visitors were particularly struck by this feature, as was noted at B.S.T.J. 27 August 1889 p155, where an American's comments were noted: "...English manufacturers are not only fifty years behind the American in appliances and methods of performing work, but the largest manufacturers have actually no factories, or nothing that we would consider a factory in any sense. They have establishments which resemble dwelling houses in many instances..."
 2. J. Parry Lewis (1) Building Cycles and Britain's Growth (1965); (ii) "Indices of House-Building in Manchester Conurbation, South Wales and Great Britain 1851-1913"; Scottish Journal of Political Economy (1961): Brinley Thomas "Wales and The Atlantic Economy" Scottish Journal of Political Economy (1959) E.W.Cooney "Long Waves in Building in the British Economy of 19th Century" Ec.H.R. (1960): S.B.Saul "House Building in England 1890 & 1914" Ec.H.R. (1962).
 3. J. Parry Lewis (1965) op. cit. Chapter One, passim.
 4. It should be noted that much of the available literature on this subject deals almost exclusively with residential building.
 5. C.J.Parry Lewis (1965) op. cit. p202-05 where the latter building cycle is charted from the upturn in activity in 1887/88, through the peak in 1894/97, to the downswing in "the first years of the new century, the result of a rise in the price of short money." Cf. E. Sigsworth and J. Blackman "The Home Boom of the 1890s" Yorkshire Bulletin (1965), where importance of falling interest rates in the early 1890s is noted. Cf. also C.H.Feinstein National Income, Expenditure and Output of the U.K. 1855-1965 (1972) p.T85-6 Table 39, which shows the two building cycles of the late 19 century peaking in 1876-78 for non-domestic building (1874/78 for domestic) and 1900-04 (1898-1903) Feinstein's measure is gross domestic fixed capital formation.

apparent that the high level of submitted plans at Northampton suggests a boom in the local building industry which pre-dates that occurring nationally.

Although Saul has argued that building activity generally is based on national economic variables,¹ the importance of regional and local factors has also been observed.² Clearly, such local influences, in the form of high rates of machine introduction and the decision of local employers and the trade union in 1893 to end outworking, are at work in this instance. Similarly, the third peak of local applications after 1910, occurring as it does when building activity nationally was quiet, has more to do with bouyant trading in the shoe industry, than national variables.

Linked to this issue is the extent to which building speculation played a role in industrial building decisions. Clearly some Northampton builders - notably Martin & Hawtin - built speculatively in the wake of the change that swept the industry. Possibly as many as 70% of factory applications between 1887-1900 were of this character.³

1. S.B.Saul loc. cit, passim.

2. See in particular J. Parry Lewis (1965) Chapter 4 passim and (1961) loc. cit. passim. Cf. C.G.Powell An Economic History of the British Building Industry 1815-1979 (1981) p.2., "... various national factors like... the rate of interest, peace or war, and so forth clearly affected building everywhere: but in the last resort the demand for a building is a function of local conditions.." (cf. ibid p42).

3. This figure holds true if we accept what a speculative venture was. The criterion used here was where the owner of the property to be built was a builder or another outside the shoe industry.

IV

The decision of shoe manufacturers to embrace mechanisation, therefore, pre-dates the sharp rise in foreign competition met with in the late 1890s. This, a priori, suggests that it is not possible to establish a mono-causal link between the shift to factory production and major shifts in trading patterns, as the orthodox case does. What factors, then, did cause the modernisation of the British shoe industry between 1887 and 1905? Two avenues of detailed revision of the orthodox case will be advanced in order to explain the more complex scenario of change put forward in this thesis. From the preceding discussion concerning best and average practice firms' reaction to change, it is suggested that a close interaction exists between technical change and factor cost movements. Thus, it is proposed to investigate shifts in shoe production costs in the period. But, first the role of trade and foreign competition needs to be clarified; what follows is a re-examination of trading patterns, which will concentrate more closely upon shifts in market share within world regions than does the orthodox case.

The orthodox case puts forward a comparatively simple challenge-response demand model. A mechanism through which the British shoe industry is viewed as modernising in direct response to changes in US trading patterns. It is,

Head suggests:

... A story of successful endeavour by one industry at a time of increasing foreign competition... Before the nineties the trade had been steady but remained comparatively unchallenged by foreign competitors; during the nineties it had been considerably affected by increasing competition, particularly from the U.S...¹

It views the U.S. trade in footwear in the period as a two-stage penetration

1. Head op. cit. p. 158. But note the comments below of the repeated waves of overseas competition British boot manufacturers faced from mid-century. The increased competition experienced in the 1890s gave rise to sustained adverse contemporary comment of the performance of British industry, of course. Representative of this concern is found in (1) articles in The Times during 1901/2: "The Crisis in British Industry"; (11) E.E. Williams Made in Germany (1896); (111) F.A. McKenzie The American Invader: Their Plans, Tactics and Progress (1901).

of British markets. In the early nineties, British overseas markets were increasingly disrupted by growing levels of competition. This was followed after mid-decade by the penetration of European markets, and most significantly, the British domestic market. Head's treatment of this former aspect is more substantial than Church's. He states:

...The industry had not, in the early nineties, yet begun to encounter much competition in Europe from American manufacturers. But the Americans were already competing effectively in many of the traditional overseas markets of British manufacturers, particularly the British Possessions, to the extent that they were taking the lion's share of an increased demand. The Massachusetts industry had for many years been supplying boots and shoes to the Southern States, California and the West and also to South America, the West Indies, and Australia. Now they were expanding these markets at the expense of British Manufacturers..¹.

Following this came the central invasion of home markets:

... It was not long before U.S. Manufacturers turned greater attention to Europe and the British home market. Certain insignificant quantities of the American product had for many years been imported, but it was about 1896 that the real invasion began. So successful was it that only eight years later could it be said, dramatically, that the U.S. industry had spread throughout the world..².

The central data base used in the orthodox case is official overseas trading statistics. Given the centrality of shifts in world trading patterns in footwear to the orthodox case, it is important to critically consider that data here. In both matters of methodology and analysis, the utilisation of this data is open to question. Turning to the former issue first, three points of criticism emerge.

A basic flaw in Church's & Head's treatment of overseas trade is that they rely exclusively upon British trade figures. In neither essay is any thorough attempt made to systematically compare British statistics with those of her main competitors. It is simply and implicitly assumed that a shift in British figures is a reaction to the trading shifts of other trading nations. As will be demonstrated below, reliance upon such an implicit assumption is misplaced,

1. Head, *ibid*, p169.

2. Head, *ibid*, p171. Speculation as to a possible increase in U.S. imports had exercised the trade press from 1890, see for example B.S.T.J. 11 July 1891, p29/30. "A Probable Invasion".

where, for example, a new domestic footwear industry is developed in an overseas market. It is inadequate that any claim for Britain's improved ability to trade in foreign and home markets as a result of the lessons learnt from U.S. market penetration, merely rests upon one portion of the available data. By introducing trade statistics from other countries, and by comparing it, new insights as to evolving regional patterns of world trading can be put forward. Moreover the raw data is substantially allowed to "speak for itself". The methodology is simple: official British Government trading figures for leather footwear were extracted from annual reports,¹ tabulated and utilised to establish shifts in foreign trading patterns in footwear. Head presents his data in five year periods from 1875, measuring annual averages by quantity², whilst Church simply transposes the Annual Returns after 1884 into a tabular format, again by quantity.³ In addition all the data in the essays under discussion is expressed in terms of quantity: dozens of pairs. As a comparative measure this tends to distort the true scale of trade overtime, because the value of shoes traded tended to increase. Thus the total product of 1875 and that of 1914 are not directly equitable in terms of the quantity traded. A better basis for measurement is that of value, and this will be used below. In order to avoid any distortions brought about by inflation all figures below have been corrected using the technique suggested by R.C.Floud.⁴ A standard monetary measure has also been used in order that a comparison between the trade of Britain and her main rivals could be undertaken: no common quantity measure appears in the official trade figures of the countries investigated. Here, in as far as it is possible, all currency conversion calculations have taken account of the secular shifts in exchange rates.⁵

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1. B.P.P. Annual Statement of Trade of U.K. 1872-82, and Accounts Relating to the Trade and Navigation of U.K. 1883-1914.
 2. Head op. cit. p.167. Note, Head does draw up his data to illustrate and stress the point that there was an increasingly favourable balance of trade in British footwear, with an adverse balance being recorded between 1895-1904.
 3. Church (1968) loc. cit. p224-25. Also included are some official British figures of U.S. exports to Britain, and of British Exports to U.S. after 1909.
 4. R.C.Floud. An Introduction to Quantitative Methods for historians (1973). Chapter 6.
 5. In doing this the conversion tables in R.L. Bidwell, Currency Conversion Tables: A Hundred Years of Change. (1970) were utilised.

Now turning to matters of orthodox interpretation of that data, stress must first be placed upon the fact that the impact, in aggregate, of increasing levels of particularly U.S. trading, is not fundamentally in dispute here,¹ but rather some of the conclusions that are drawn from that observation. Does the straight-forward challenge - response argument, which must ultimately depend upon a broader comparative study of trading patterns, fully explain the nature and evolution of those patterns in these years?² The limitations of the current analysis need to be challenged on two fronts:

- (1) in overseas trade, the entry of others and the rise in local shoe industries led to a realignment of spheres of trade. The influence of U.S. Export penetration did not simply push all before them: a straight forward challenge - response argument is too unsubtle an approach
- (11) in domestic trade, medium quality centres like Northampton faced not only overseas but home-based competition as well.

Concentrating upon the first element initially, if a closer analysis of regional

1. Between 1890 and 1903 imports of footwear in the U.K. rose by 109% (B.S.T.J. 30 October 1903 p735). Certainly in terms of aggregate shifts in overseas trading, the British performance conforms to the thesis that a dramatic improvement took place in the face of challenge. A dramatic turnabout in British exporting performance is observed: where in the 1890s U.S. manufacturers traded strongly, by the Edwardian period their British counterparts were in a position to mount a successful invasion of the European market (see below). In fact, when the British experience is compared with that of U.S. and France, the extent of the turnaround is placed into a fresh perspective (Fig 2: xvi refers). If one looks more closely at the record, it can be seen that, in aggregate terms, U.S. foreign trade grew without faltering between 1894-1908. In this 15 year period, the mean annual growth rate was 6.61%, compared with only 1.87% in the U.K. industry. In the previous 15 year period (1880-1894) growth rates stood at 2.17% and 4.5% respectively. Yet after c1908, improvements in British productivity and efficiency are marked by her improved overseas trading figures, both against her main rivals and her own immediate past performance (Fig 2: xvi refers). It is also of interest to compare U.K. export performance against France, which in the 19 Century had traditionally traded much more strongly than the U.K. However, by 1914, Britain traded more strongly than both France and U.S. in overseas markets. The French shoe trade suffered markedly as a result of increased competition. B.S.T.J. 25 September 1908 p488-89, where a proposed increase in trade duties was reported. Here it was noted that in the period 1885-1906 French shoe imports had risen from 2223000 francs to 8818000 francs, whilst exports declined from 71099000 francs to 13307000 francs (cf. Figure 2: xvi). It is likewise clear from contemporary comment that the possibility of U.S. importations had a significant psychological effect upon British shoe manufacturers trading outlook and investment decisions.
2. Of course, trade is subject to constant and inevitable adjustments and re-alignments. These problems were part of an economy-wide secular trend that was altering the pattern of trading, and which is well-known to economic historians.

patterns of world trade in footwear is undertaken, it becomes clear that Britain's competitors did not simply sweep all before them; taking "the lion's share" to use Head's phrase. A more subtle realignment of trading patterns is observed, based upon geographical proximity and of changing spheres of political and commercial influence of the leading world trading nations. It is important to immediately note the use of the plural: Britain's competitors. Nor was this a new phenomenon; British trade in footwear had been under threat successively for many years. For whilst the U.S. was very much part of this challenge, the increasing presence of the U.S. in export markets in the early 1890s did not present a fresh and new challenge to the British shoe industry's ability to trade in overseas markets, but was perceived by contemporaries as yet another stage in what had been a mounting and complex challenge, the origins of which can properly be traced back to at least the 1870s.¹ Increasingly, in the 1880s,

1. W.R.Fox-Bourne Great Industries of Britain (1876?) Vol. III p79. "...our manufacturers now have to face an import trade hardly dreamt of until a few years ago, and threatening them with serious competition, even in the home markets..."

British Imports Boots & Shoes

1887 44229 doz. pairs: valued at £138394

1876 109906 doz. pairs: valued at £328540

"of that quantity more than 3/4 came from France and 1/8 from Germany.. the great manufacturing firms of Northampton, Leicester, Norwich and elsewhere allege, with some appearance of the truth, that the damage now being done to their trade is only the beginning of a far worse state of things..."

Eschewing protection, Fox Bourne argues the need for British shoe manufacturers to become cost competitive. Cf. Boot & Shoemaker 16 March 1878 p2 "... other nations are fast supplanting us in the markets of the world, and our own immediate neighbours, instead of being supplied by us, are importing boots into this country. Nations that owe their origin to us, - Colonies... alike raise barriers that virtually close their (shoe) markets against us. Other nations with which we are supposed to exist on the most friendly terms, are not content to see our importations diminish year by year, but raise up fresh barriers, by which they at least hope and possibly will eventually, entirely exclude us from their markets... the malaise of the British boot and shoe industry is to the profit of the French industry..." It was argued that the reason for this was not any lack of British enterprise, but to cheaper foreign goods, high tariff barriers, and high British domestic taxes. At the article's end the writer added a warning the industry had not heeded, even as late as 1897; it was this, "... it will be as well to state, that with improved productive power arising from the employment of improved machinery, its not sufficient to keep our exports up to the sum total of former years.. in order to maintain their position as foreign traders, boot and shoe manufacturers should largely increase their exports. Cf. E.P.Thompson & E. Yeo The Unknown Mayhew: Selections from the Morning Chronicle 1849-50 (1971) p274-90 "The Boot and Shoemakers. Letter XXXll, 4 February 1850, reveals an even earlier French challenge. The latter part of this letter (from p286) deals in extens o with the increased threat to the British shoe industry from imported, low cost French footwear.

trade press comment was to take on an increasingly beleaguered appearance. For example, in July 1887 it was noted:

....The worst feature of the times is shown in the trade returns for June... The import of foreign made shoes is steadily maintained... (&) it must be confessed that the rapid development of imported foreign boots and shoes continues to give cause for serious apprehension...¹.

French trade was still keen², but by the end of the decade, German competition was causing fresh alarm, as the same report noted:

....The Germans are sending us better goods than formerly, and many more of them. It is very difficult to account for this sudden revival in the sale of foreign boots... One probable reason is the shift to a lighter boot...³.

In addition to imports into England, the German shoe industry was having an

1. S.L.R. 16 July 1887 p55.

Year	Imports into UK in 1st 6 months	
	Volume (doz. pairs)	Value (£)
1884	34345	96774
1885	34303	112750
1886	29984	88719
1887	50188	132756

These figures represent a 67% increase in quantity, and a 72% increase in value.

2. S.L.R. 6 August 1887 p143 "... In 1885 the export boot trade of France was so large as to pale the export trade from England into comparative insignificance. The total value of the French export was £2917298..." (cf. Britain's of £1627331). Her three biggest customers in 1885 were Britain, £507610 (17.4% of total); Algeria £95941 (17% of total); and Brazil £350076 (12% of total). The article carried the following trade comparison table

Country	English Trade	French Trade
Egypt	£13217	£75849
Brazil	140582	350076
Argentina	47523	239218
Belgium	11777	123361
Total	213099	993504

Cf. S.L.R. 25 February 1888 p191 and S.L.R. 2 March 1889 p243 again record the superiority of French trade, although the latter piece discussed the inaccuracies of French trade figures.

3. S.L.R. 16 July 1887 p55. Cf. S.L.R. 28 January 1888 p95 "... the import of foreign made boots and shoes brought into England has increased during the past year... it is notorious that German agents in London are selling larger quantities of goods... than ever before.."

impact in wider world markets, notably Australia.¹ By 1891, it was observed:

...In our Colonies the wary German is ever present with his imitations.. while the skilful and mechanical American is guessing and calculating pretty accurately how he can take some of our trade from us... The competition amongst our own countrymen is, too, becoming sharper and profits are narrowed down...².

The fears felt by British shoe manufacturers regarding an American invasion, first rumoured in 1890 must necessarily be viewed against this wider trading background. In these early days of conjecture regarding U.S. trading intentions the present threat of German competition was a more immediate threat.³

Any attempt to provide a detailed account of shifting trade patterns is restricted by three crucial methodological problems. Initially, in the following discussion it has been difficult to access patterns of re-export trading, particularly, for example, between Brazil and the rest of South America. Therefore, it is assumed here that only direct trading takes place between the country of origin and the recipient. Next, it would be desirable to include in such a comparative study Britain's main European competitors. This, however, is fraught with difficulty. The presentation of contemporary French and German trade statistics is such as to make any comparison with U.K. and U.S. figures possible only with difficulty, and so they have been dispensed with here.⁴ Of the remaining

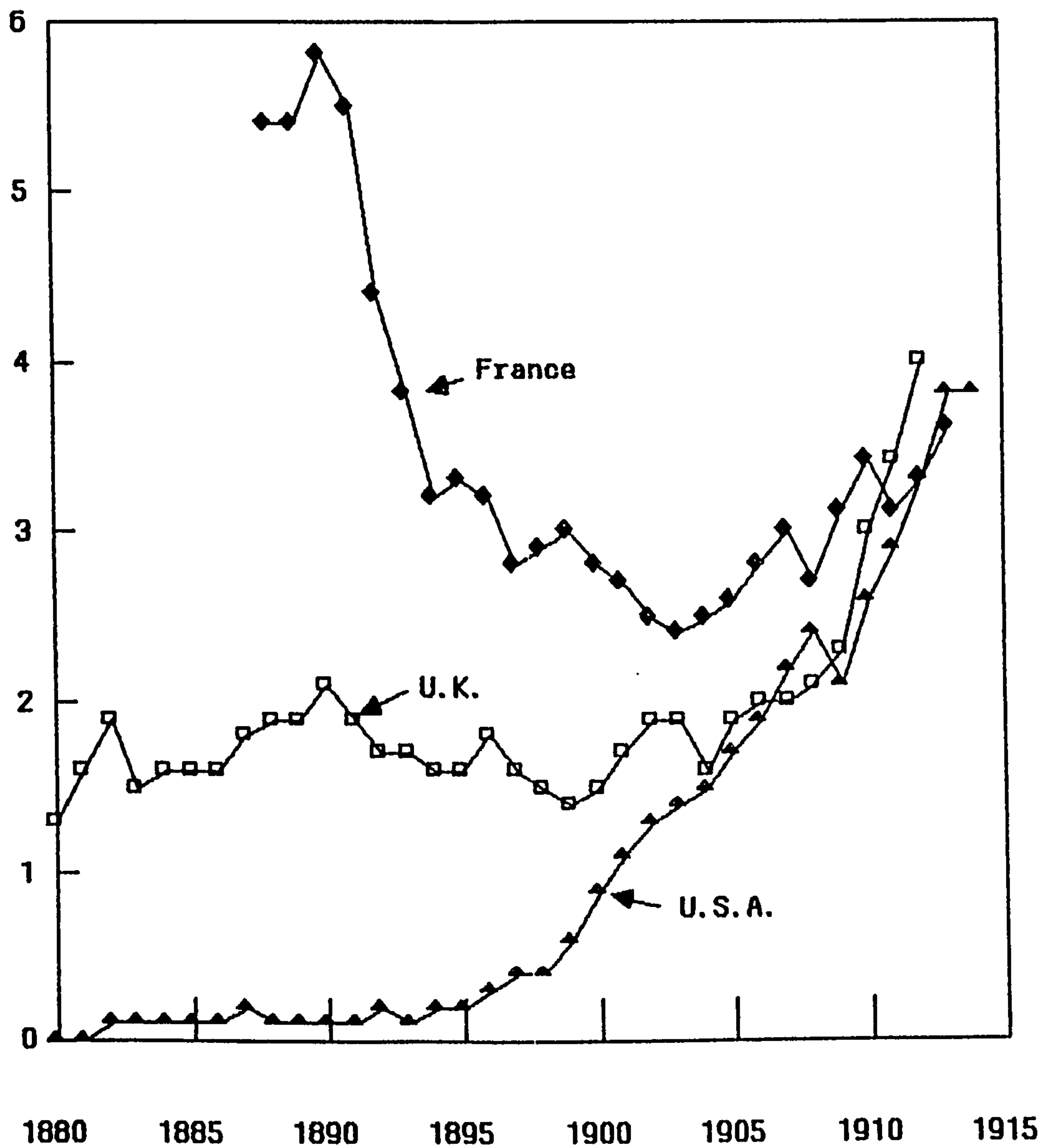
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1. B.S.T.J. 16 April 1887 p301, but note S.L.R. 16 March 1889 p218 on the Australian trade: "... Within the last few years competition for trade with our foreign rivals has largely increased, and notwithstanding the advantages of many of these competitors have by way of cheaper labour and materials, English manufacturers have maintained and increased their position, and continues to take the lion's share of business to be done.." (the result of long-established trade links and better quality products).
 2. B.S.T.J. 17 January 1891 p48. Cf. S.L.R. 13 September 1890 p257-58, where an article on competition noted "... there are yet many markets fast developing which are not worked to nearly their full capacity, and which are being eagerly sought after by our plodding German competitors..." By careful attention to these markets, and by the application of mechanical appliances to our trade, and systematising our modes of manufacture, our competitive powers may be raised to a far higher standard.."
 3. Early trading activity signalling U.S. intentions can be found in the activities of an American Boot and Shoe Syndicate, that marketed U.S. footwear from a London showroom in South Place, E.C. from June 1893. In the first 18 months many last and style adjustments had to be made before the U.S. product begun to find acceptability in U.K. markets. See B.S.T.J. 2 December 1893 p593 and 23 December 1893 p691. A report in S.L.R. 16 November 1894 p1083 still envisages large U.S. sales as being some way off.
 4. Giffen was a Board of Trade statistician in the 1880s and on several occasions he roundly condemned the reliability of French trading figures.

Figure 2:xvi

Yearly Value of Export Trade in Leather Boots and Shoes — U.K., U.S.A., and France*

(* France = all leather goods)

£ million Sterling



Sources:

- (a) B.P.P. Annual Accounts Trade and Navigation of U.K. 1885-1914
- (b) Annuaire Statistique de la France 1878-1914
- (c) Annual Report, Chief of Bureau of Statistics on Internal and Foreign Commerce and Navigation of U.S.A. 1876-1913

European producers of footwear only the Austro-Hungarian Empire exported footwear in any significant quantities. Unfortunately, the writer faced problems of access to the requisite source material; so again this country's data is not available here. Despite these limitations, what one is left with is a crucial comparison with this country's main competitor after 1890, the U.S.A.

Finally problems of comparability between the U.K. and U.S. trade data exists. Essentially, problems of presentation, they are not insurmountable but they should properly be mentioned. Of the two series the U.S. figures are much more geographically complete. The figures are presented in two main ways: first, nation by nation and secondly, summarised in six world regional groupings. By contrast, the U.K. series is less detailed; being simply published after 1880 in six world regional groups. There is no attempt to give an annual nation by nation breakdown of trade as the American series does. The groupings in the two series do not coincide. The U.K. groups reflect where trade was strongest; the British Empire. The Empire is segregated into four groups, whilst Brazil comprises a fifth, and a residual "others" category a sixth group. Over time this categorisation changes to reflect shifting British trading patterns. The most significant being the substitution of Brazil by France after 1907; a reflection of increased European trading by the British in footwear in the late Edwardian period.

For our purposes, therefore the British groups have been taken as a basis for comparison, and the national data regarding U.S. trading matched and aggregated in order to conform to the British groups. It is assumed here that there exists a logical and geographically conventional composition to the British grouping. Certain discrepancies arise: the U.S. figures for British West Indies does not include Bermuda, and after 1894, U.S. figures relating to British South African trade are in fact those for the whole of Africa south of the Sahara. Therefore, by a careful matching of the U.S. data to the six British Groups, it has been possible to compare the trends in trading performance of the nations footwear industries in the various world regions over time. Given problems of exact matching, these conclusions are not always statistically precise, but do adequately reflect trading trends and structure to be of utility.

Figure 2: xvii U.K. Footwear Exports: % of Total Trade by World Regions, at 5 Yearly Intervals. 1885-1910.

Year	British South Africa	British East Indies	British West Indies	Brazil	Australia	Other
1885	15.9	5.5	5.0	8.6	52.6	12.4
1890	27.2	5.4	7.4	11.7	37.8	10.4
1895	32.7	4.6	7.1 ^{2.}	12.3	28.9	14.4
1900	41.5	8.0	5.3	2.7	25.7	16.8
1905	52.6	10.3	2.9	0.4	13.5	20.3
1910	35.6	9.8 ^{1.}	2.6	0.4 ^{3.}	11.7 ^{4.}	39.9

Source: B.P.P. Accounts Relating to Trade & Navigation of U.K. 1885-1910.

Notes: (1) peak = 1912, £463716 (11.7%)
 (2) peak = 1894 £144201 (8.9%)
 (3) 1907 = last year of official record (seperately)
 (4) 1912 = £535990 (13.5%)

Figure 2: xviii U.S. Footwear Exports: % of total trade by World Regions at 5 Yearly Intervals. 1890-1910.

Year	North America	South America	Europe	Oceania	Africa	Asia
1890	73.5	4.1	3.3	18.1	0.3	0.7
1895	64.9	4.7	12.0	16.1	2.1	0.2
1900	34.0	2.4	28.0	3.2	3.0	0.5
1905	52.6	4.0	30.7	8.3	3.4	1.0
1910	58.8	5.4	27.7	5.9	1.7	0.4

Source: Annual Report, Chief of Bureau of Statistics, U.S.A. 1890- 1913.

£. million.

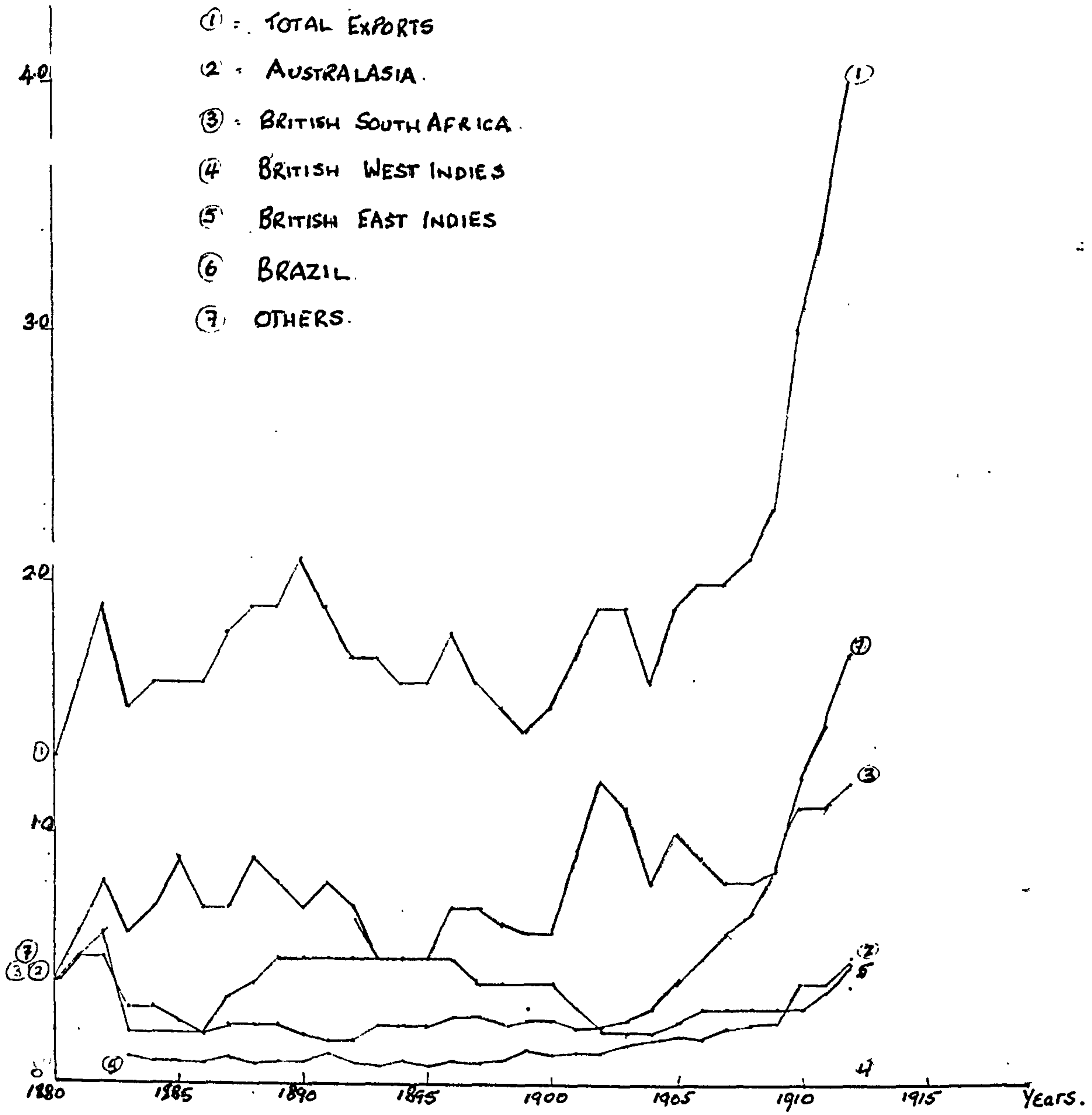


Figure 2:xvix U.K. Export Trade in Leather Boots and Shoes in £m with Empire and the Rest of World.

The dominant characteristic of UK footwear exports was the degree to which there existed a reliance upon trade with the Empire: Figures 2: XV/X & refer. The very official categorisation in presenting trade statistics highlights the importance of imperial trade in boots and shoes. It was only after 1906 that the reliance of such overseas trading began to fall, although it was to remain dominant in absolute terms. Total exports of footwear to the Empire fall below 75% of all exports for the first time in 1906, and fell away progressively to a figure of 53% in 1914. It was only after 1906 that exporters began to foster trade with "other countries" Trading in this category increased from 16.8% in 1900 to over 40% by 1914. These are the years that witness the development of trade in machine welted work with the U.S. and Europe, of which more will be discussed later. This shift in trading patterns suggests a broadening of trading patterns over time. By contrast, the basic character of U.S. footwear trade can be split into three parts. First, trade in established markets with geographic neighbours in North and South America, which was consolidated and increased in our period. Trade with North America was of first importance, and was composed of the important Canadian market,¹ and offshore islands in the Carribean. However, in terms of the percentage of total trade these areas generated, there was a relative decline as the U.S. industry traded increasingly stronger and more widely in other world regions: Figure 2: refers. Secondly, major new markets in Europe and Oceania were exploited in the late 1880s and more particularly in the 1890s. Whilst the value of trade done with Oceania peaked in 1890, being then 18.1% of total, the value of European trade continued to increase. From being 3.3% of total exports in 1890 trade with Europe peaked in 1903 at 40.1%, to fall back a little thereafter². Finally, the U.S. footwear industry traded

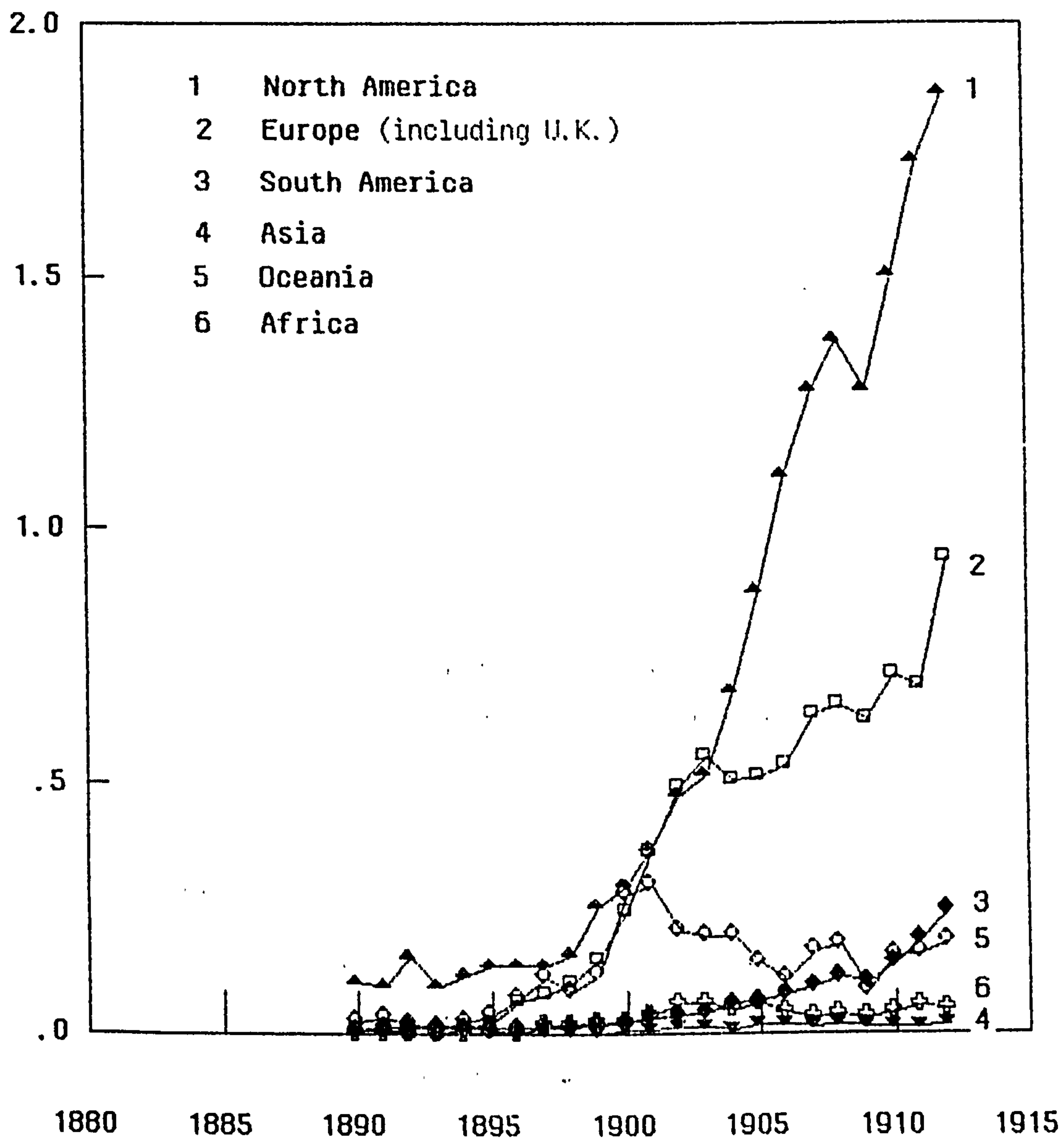
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1. In the period, trading here was to some degree adversely affected by the development of a home industry. This was a market Britain long since hoped to perform well in. See comment below.
 2. Note for a brief period, between 1901-03, the European markets were of prime importance to the U.S. industry:

U.S. Trade with Europe and North America Expressed
as a % of Total U.S. Trade

Area	1901	1902	1903
Europe	34.8	38.7	40.1
N. America	32.5	37.1	37.5

Figure 2:xxi Breakdown of U.S.A.
Boot and Shoe Exports

£ million Sterling



Source:

(a) Annual Report, Chief of Bureau of Statistics on Internal and Foreign
Commerce and Navigation of U. S. A. 1876-1913

much less strongly with Africa and Asia, although inroads were made into the Japanese market.

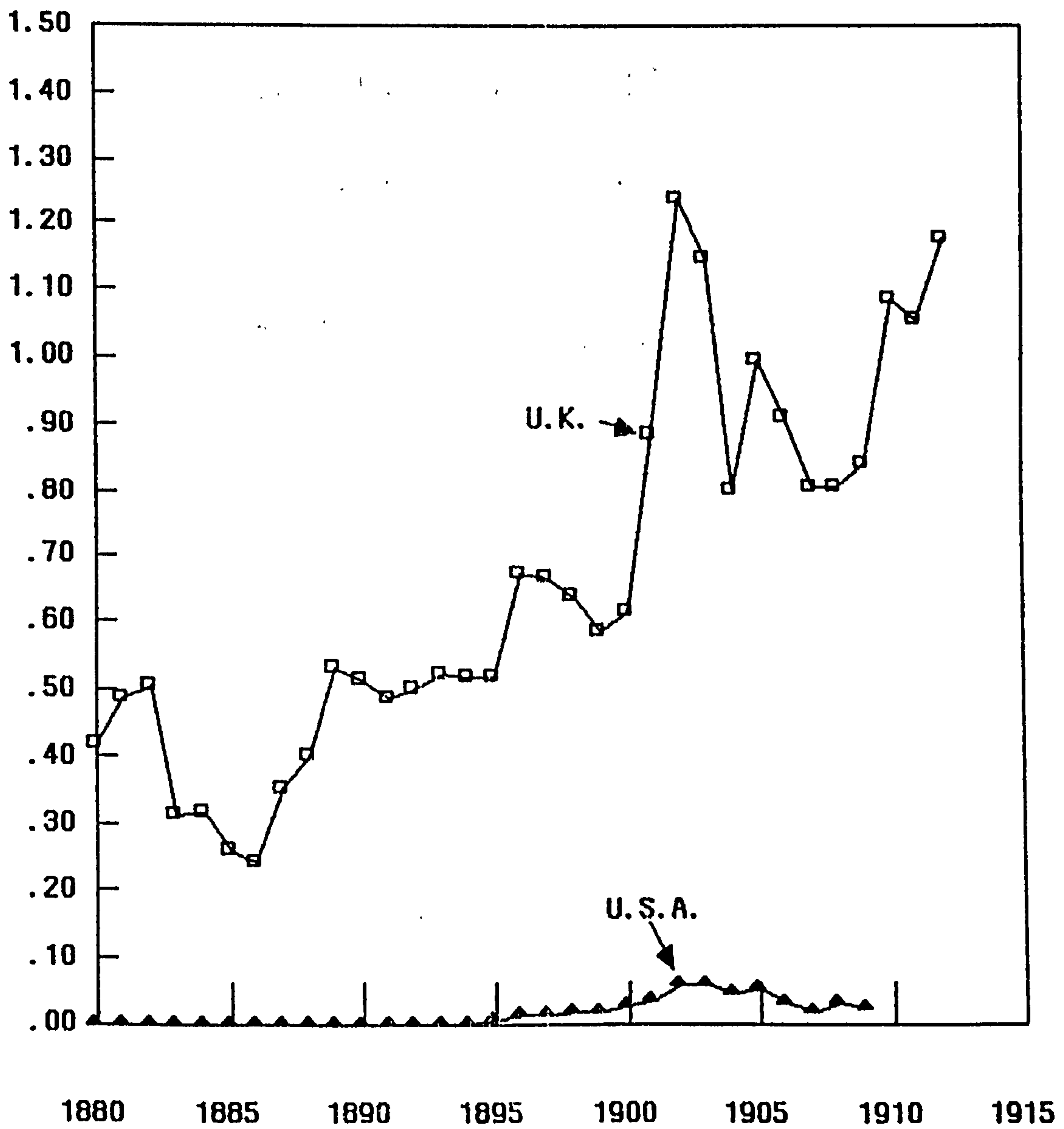
If one now analyses UK/US performance in the latter three main world trading areas, it becomes clear that Head's vision of the U.S. stepping in to take the lion's share of the increasing world trade in footwear is a generalisation that does not bear close scrutiny at regional level. A number of points can be advanced. It is inferred that the crucial penetration of British overseas markets occurred in the early 1890s. This is not in fact strictly correct. As the summary export graphs at Figures 2: XV, X & XXI reveal, a crucial initial penetration of some world regional markets gave way, after mid decade, to an uneven pattern of advance and retreat in the several markets. If any generalisation can be validly made, it would be to suggest the crucial period of penetration occurred in the ten year period after 1895. Again, too little stress is placed upon the British shoe industry's ability not only to counter this penetration but also of the general recovery and advance of the British in overseas markets after 1905, particularly of trade into Europe, and in some measure, into the U.S. itself. Secondly, those areas in which the U.S. traded relatively weakly - Africa and Asia - can together be regarded as major British boot and shoe export markets in the period; markets in which she traded with increasing vigour, despite the development of a well-established local shoe industry concentrated particularly around Capetown.¹ By no means can the US shoe industry be regarded as having achieved any significant levels of importation into these countries. Indeed, British South Africa emerged by 1905 as Britain's major overseas market, and one which provided shipping manufacturers in Northampton with a crucial trading outlet for their goods. Pre-eminent amongst these firms was Simon Collier Ltd. the world's largest supplier of goods to that area. The U.S. shoe industry had minor successes in African markets in the 1890s, but prevailing light, fashionable boot styles found little favour in this market. By contrast the greater solidity of the British boot achieved greater consumer acceptability; a fact often alluded to in the contemporary press.

1. B.S.T.J. 8 February 1901 p245 Cf. Appendix II C.10, where the post Great War problems of import controls foster local industry the harsh effect upon sectors of the British industry are briefly discussed.

Figure 2:xxii

**Comparison of U.K. and U.S.A. Export Trade
in Boots and Shoes to British South Africa**

£ million Sterling



Sources:

- (a) B.P.P. Annual Accounts Trade and Navigation of U.K. 1885-1914
- (b) Annual Report, Chief of Bureau of Statistics on Internal and Foreign Commerce and Navigation of U.S.A. 1876-1913

Thirdly, it can be observed from the accompanying trade data that the US traded most strongly in those regions nearest to it: North and South America. For reasons of geographical proximity and political influence - what will be called here, regional advantage - the U.S. shoe industry was able to penetrate, hold and extend markets which had formerly been held by France and Britain. Progressively in these countries, British shoe imports collapsed in the face of U.S. & German expansion. When Head alludes to the domination by competitors of British export markets, it is to these countries he is principally addressing himself. By contrast, much of Britain's trade with the U.S. itself was curtailed by the 1870s only to be revitalised in the Edwardian period.¹ Likewise, here markets in Canada had been lost to a combination of US penetration and the growth of a home-based industry.² From the late 1890s, other British markets in this region began to be lost. Published trade data reveals this most strikingly in the case of the British West Indies and Guiana. Here, British footwear trade lost ground as a direct result of increased U.S. trading in the area. British imports in 1883 had stood at £106391 (representing 6.9% of all British footwear exports by value), and reached a peak of £144201 in 1894 (8.9% by value). Thereafter, the value of exports to these colonies began to decline to a low of £55143 (2.9%) in 1905. After a sharp recovery to £102286 in 1907, British imports into these colonies fell back to £78974 (2%) in 1912.

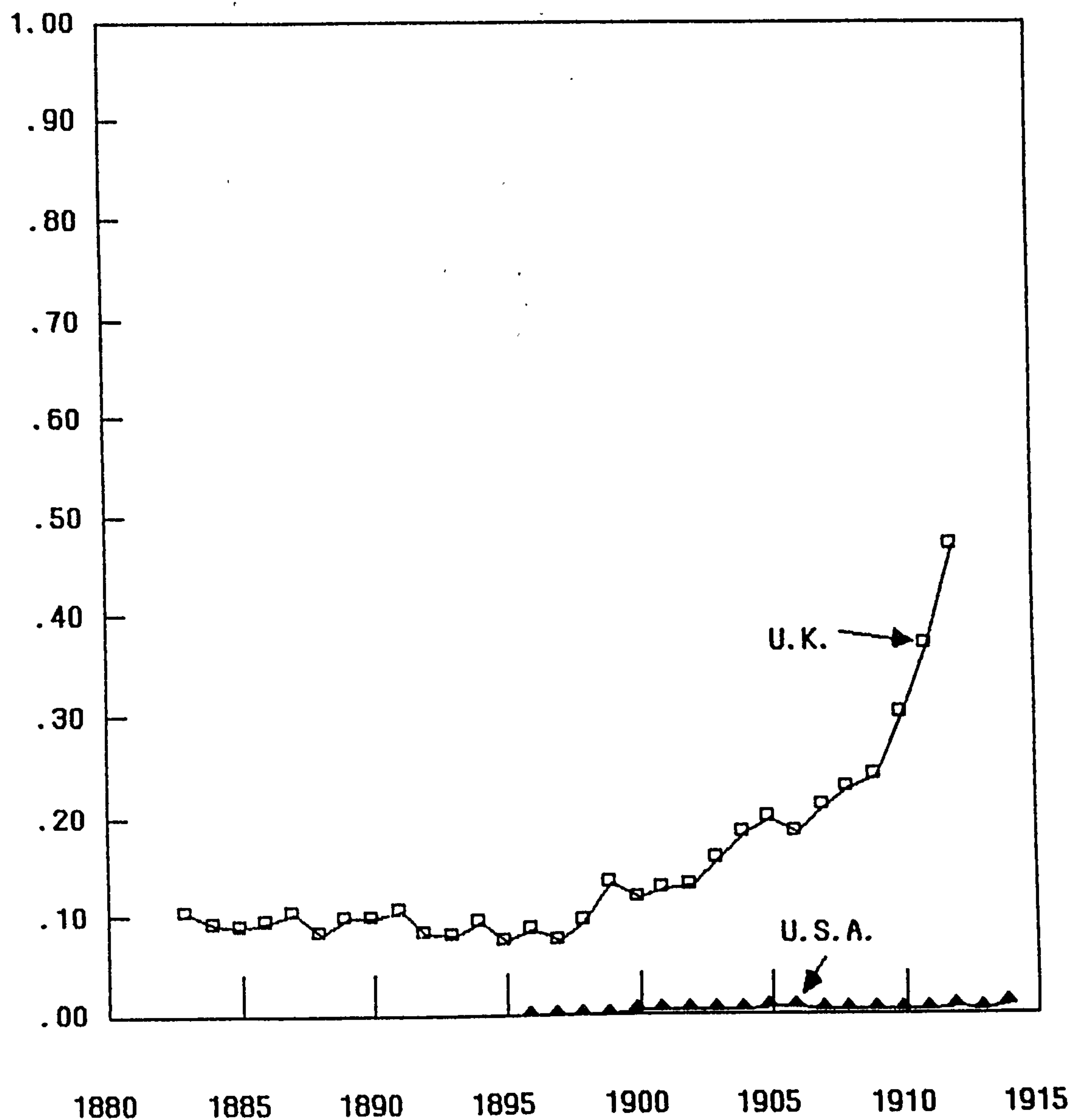
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1. John Marlow & Sons Ltd., Northampton, pioneered this trade: see Appendix II C.7.
 2. G. Kealy "Artisans Respond to Industrialism: Shoemakers, Shoe Factories and The Knights of St. Crispin in Toronto" Canadian Historical Association: Historical Papers June 1973, passim. But by the early 1890s, Germany was able to significantly increase her trade with Canada at a time when Canadian shoe industry was increasing its market share. - See B.S.T.J. 30 January 1887 p. 220.

Importer	Canadian Imports of Footwear	
	1893	1895
UK	18894	14019
Germany	15372	28988
USA	239077	194532
Others	11553	9346
Total	284996	246885

Figure 2:xxiii

Comparison of U.K. and U.S.A. Export Trade in Boots and Shoes to British East Indies

£ million Sterling



Sources:

- (a) B.P.P. Annual Accounts Trade and Navigation of U.K. 1885-1914
- (b) Annual Report, Chief of Bureau of Statistics on Internal and Foreign Commerce and Navigation of U.S.A. 1876-1913

Britain's Brazilian trade fell away more completely and dramatically. The only non-empire country whose trade was enumerated in British published returns, Britain's footwear trade with Brazil increased in the 1880s to a peak of £234425 by value in 1890 (representing 11.5% of all British footwear exports by value). From this date a sustained, secular decline began, the result of increasing tariffs imposed by the Brazilian Government to help foster a local shoe industry, and of increased trading by German merchants, who were aided by the sizeable expatriate German community there.¹ By 1907, the last occasion that Brazilian trade was separately enumerated, the trade was worth only £8413 (0.4% of total by value). By contrast, the U.S. shoe industry maintained exports into Brazil at a very low level through the 1890s, only significantly expanding trade after 1902. By 1914, a trade which had only been valued at £521 in 1901, was valued at £92854. Thus, unlike the British Caribbean trade, British decline in this market was not initially signalled by U.S. competition, but other competitive forces to which the orthodox case has given less emphasis. That is to say, the growth of a home based industry developed behind a tariff wall, and the presence of competition generated: by Germany.

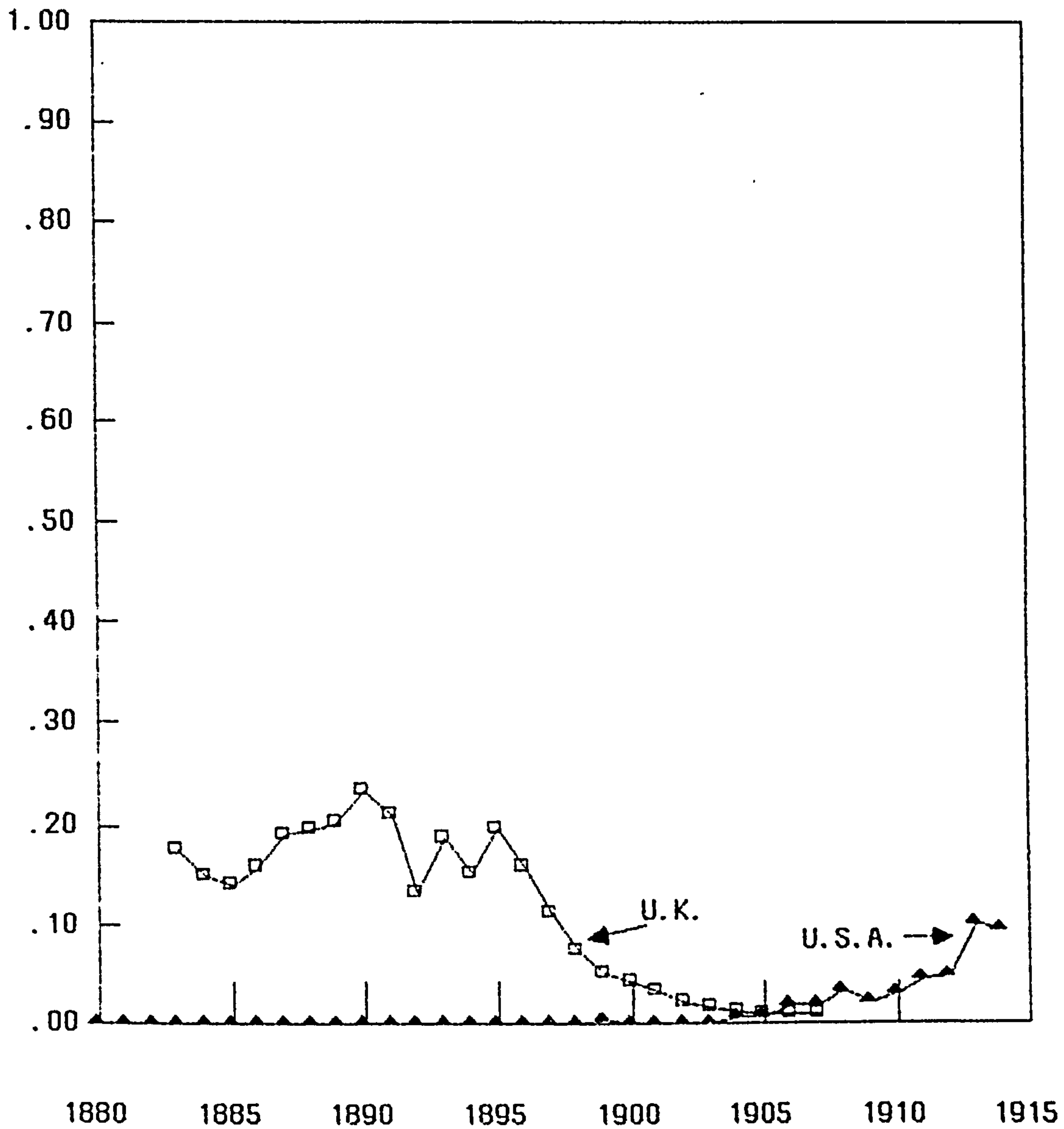
Third, the last region, Europe and Oceania, can be regarded as disputed trading territory: the regions in which the greatest competition for market share took place. Like Brazil, this area again reveals the interaction of competitive forces, rather than simply a stylised duel for market share between Britain and the U.S. Within that region known to the U.S. Department of Commerce as Oceania, the

1. B.S.T.J. 25 September 1899 p322 "... Mr. Consul Staniforth, in a report to the F.O. on the trade of Rio Grande do Sul, points out that the commerce there was once exclusively in the hands of British merchants, but that now it may be monopolised by German firms... a reason for this is the number of German emigrants, whole districts in the southern provinces of Brazil being entirely populated by Germans..." Consul also points to the fact that the high finish and quality of British goods tends to make them expensive in a country with relatively low living standards; by contrast the Germans were trading in goods more geared to this market. yet the Consul does stress that this had not led to a rout of British commercial interest in the region. But note that earlier in the decade fears were also expressed about increased U.S. trade to this area. S.L.R. 4 April 1891 p363. Where it is commented that currently the bulk of footwear imports into South America were either British or French. However, fears were entertained that this position might soon be reversed as the U.S. was about to launch a trade expedition to increase market share.

Figure 2:xxiv

Comparison of U.K. and U.S.A. Export Trade in Boots and Shoes to Brazil

million Sterling



Sources:

- (a) B.P.P. Annual Accounts Trade and Navigation of U.K. 1885-1914
- (b) Annual Report, Chief of Bureau of Statistics on Internal and Foreign Commerce and Navigation of U.S.A. 1876-1913

most important British market was Australasia. With a 52.6% share of all British footwear exports in 1885, this was then the country's largest export market. Trade with the antipodes, however, was to reach a peak in 1888 that was never again to be equalled prior to the Great War. In 1888, imports from the UK reached £879916. Thereafter, a secular decline set in, countered by only temporary reversals in 1894, in 1896 and finally in 1900. This decline, however, was reversed from the 1903 low in trading of £210049, and by 1912 U.K. trade in footwear with the region stood at £535990 (13% of all U.K. footwear exports), a level of trading not bettered since 1892.

It is instructive to investigate Australian trade more closely, not just because it represents a major British market under threat, but also because it is utilised by Head to exemplify the entry into British overseas by the U.S. shoe industry. He rightly suggests that U.S. trading interests gained a toehold in Australian, as they did in other British-dominated markets. By using data taken from the Report on Trade of the British Empire & Foreign Competition (1894) for the period 1884-94 Head suggests that U.S. penetration in that period can be linked to falling British exports: that such incursions in British overseas markets were a precursor to the home market invasion.¹ In the absence of post 1894 trading figures in Head's account, is the reader meant to imply that Head regards the U.S. challenge as complete by 1894? If so, from other available evidence it can be assuredly stated that this was not the case. Head's summary of trading reveals only the initial phase of that penetration. The substantial U.S. challenge in Australian markets came only in the decade AFTER 1894 and AFTER nearly a decade of decline in British trading performance in Australasian markets.² (Figure 2:XXV refers). As has been observed in other world regions, the U.S. challenge not only persisted and grew after 1895, thus heightening fears contemporary Englishmen felt for increased imports at home, but this challenge did not in every case initiate a secular decline in British trading activity.

1. Head, op. cit. p

2. British exports of footwear to Australia peaked in 1888 at £879916, and had fallen to £457590 by 1895.

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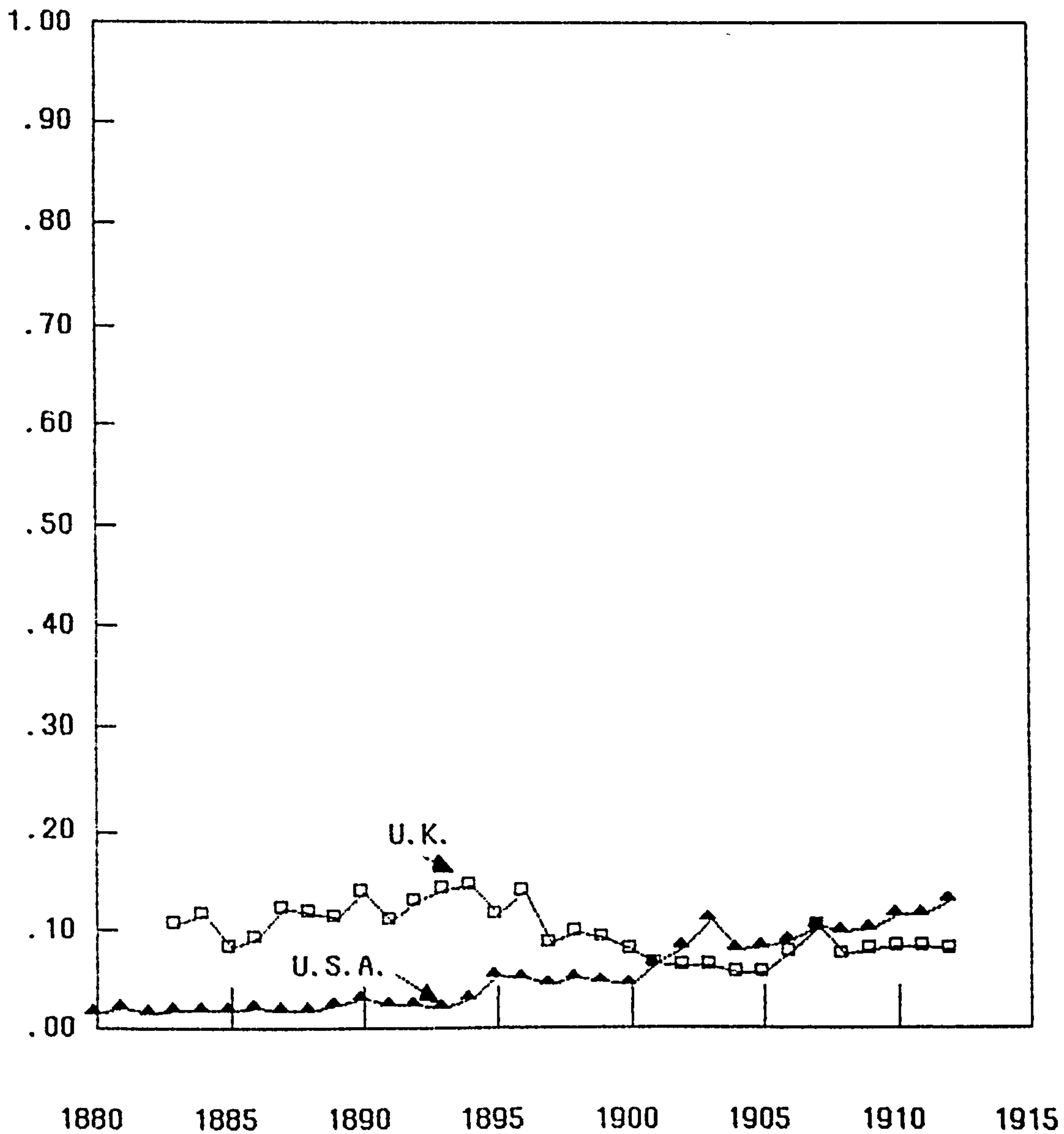
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Figure 2:xxv

Comparison of U.K. and U.S.A. Export Trade in Boots and Shoes to British West Indies and Guiana

£ million Sterling



Sources:

- (a) B.P.P. Annual Accounts Trade and Navigation of U.K. 1885-1914
- (b) Annual Report, Chief of Bureau of Statistics on Internal and Foreign Commerce and Navigation of U.S.A. 1876-1913

Moreover, a closer scrutiny as to the character of that U.S. challenge reveals that U.S. imports into Australian markets were not wholly responsible for British decline there. In the period 1884-94, U.S. imports were particularly concentrated in the light and fancy footwear sectors of those markets, whereas British exports were predominately concentrated in the heavier, common grades of working boot and in medium grade men's footwear. Thus, this initial U.S. penetration was proportionately more damaging to the French trade in the region, which had traditionally concentrated in light goods. To fully account for British decline, therefore, we must look to other factors not stressed in Head's analysis. More important than the U.S. presence, was the increased trade taken by the Germans in those sectors of the market formerly dominated by Britain. In the period, German trade with Australia in common grades of footwear rose from \$97000 in 1895 to \$110000 in 1897.¹ The second factor challenging Britain in the

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1. B.S.T.J. 15 October 1898 p545-46, stresses that whilst Britain held her dominant position, it was challenged not only by the U.S.A., but also by Australia's southern hemisphere neighbours.

Country	Value in \$		
	1895	1896	1897
United Kingdom	1221000	1342000	879000
United States	37500	207600	225200
Germany	97000	108000	110000
France	9500	7000	9400
Austria	19000	11500	66000
Australia (a)	91250	214230	275200
S/hemisphere neighbours	5505	8225	7030
Other	6700	6660	2850

(a) excludes New South Wales

By 1909, a strong reversal is apparent

Australasian Imports Boots and Shoes

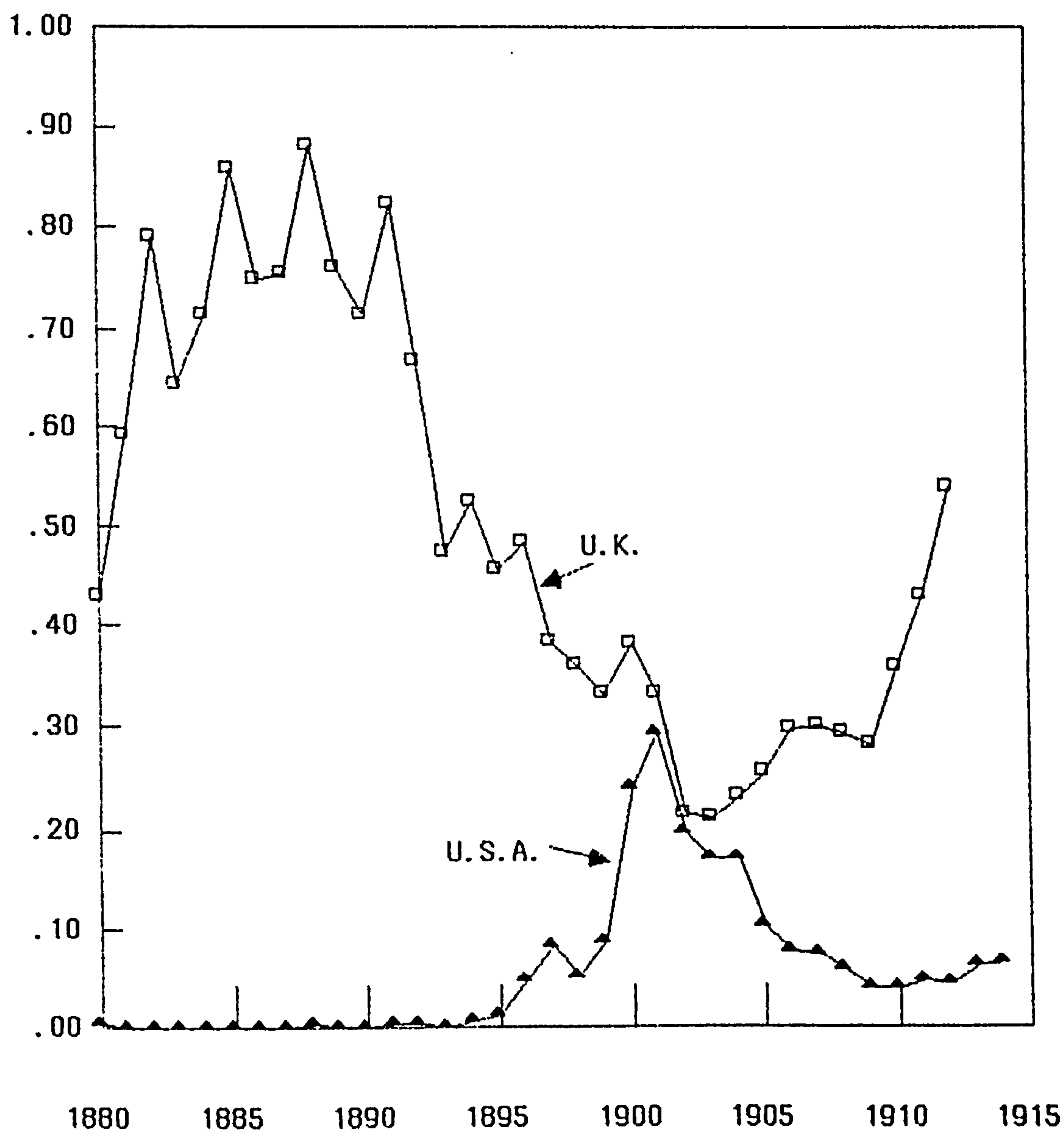
	Values in £			
	1904	1905	1906	1907
United Kingdom	135852	181782	198995	202146
United States	83884	56150	41864	28938
Canada	11112	8416	7786	3745
Australia	10598	15235	23264	30385
Others	3608	4421	2960	4997

Source: B.S.T.J. 2 April 1909 p29.

Figure 2:xxvi

Comparison of U.K. and U.S.A. Export Trade in Boots and Shoes to Australasia

£ million Sterling



Sources:

(a) B.P.P. Annual Accounts Trade and Navigation of U.K. 1885-1914

(b) Annual Report, Chief of Bureau of Statistics on Internal and Foreign Commerce and Navigation of U.S.A. 1876-1913

period was the growth and development of local shoe manufacturing capacity in Australia itself.¹ As was the case in Brazil, the prime cause of the initial British losses in market share was the rise, behind a tariff wall, of a local shoe industry founded upon modern machine techniques.² It is against this background of nearly a decade of dwindling trade that the increased imports of U.S. footwear begins from 1895. The crucial point is that the growing U.S. challenge was not made into a strong British market, but one that had already been weakened and undermined, and therefore vulnerable to further loss through competition. What occurs in this market stands in sharp contrast with the British South African market, where British footwear manufacturers were in a far stronger trading position, and were thus more easily able to face a counter competition (again that

1. B.S.T.J. 2 May 1896 p579/80: "A word of warning to manufacturers in Great Britain "by an Australian Manufacturer.
2. This challenge, in full flow by c1886, had been isolated for particular comment some years previously, see Fox-Bourne op. cit. p77, where he notes that the check in Empire trade in boots and shoes had been caused by local infant industries being developed behind high tariff walls. In Canada, New Zealand, and Australia he noted that ".. there is evidence of the growth of nature industry.. manufacturing enterprise.. is following in the wake of pastoral and agricultural progress..". Despite heavy increases in population New Zealand imports of British boots and shoes, for example, had fallen from £177531 in 1862 to £125491 in 1876; similarly, in Victoria, the figures were £767683 to £200040.

competition was both local and foreign.^{1.}) In South Africa, the issue was much more one of "did British manufacturers fail fully to exploit changes in demand", whereas in Australia, the very foundation of British trade in shoes, ~~was~~ was for a short period in question, whilst in Brazil, British market share was decimated. The principal grades of British footwear going to Australia were heavy working boots and medium grade men's wear. Increased Australian production had already eroded much of this heavy trade, and after 1895, U.S. imports, formerly concentrated in ladies light goods, now gained ground in men's medium grades, which further eroded British market share in the short run. Unlike the comfortable margin of superiority still enjoyed in 1894 by Britain, by 1901-02 her very position in that market was in doubt. After this date, unlike in Brazil, there occurred a successful resurgence of British trading interests, concomitant with a decline in U.S. imports.

1. B.S.T.J. 8 February 1901 p245-46, where it is argued British footwear when compared with that of foreign manufacture is "... clumsy and plain. They are adapted more to the fickle and exacting climates of this country than to the wants of Australia. They give ample, indeed more than complete satisfaction in wear, but they lack style.. the American shoe manufacturer.. can make a stylish boot out of far less leather.. (whereas) the English boot is an honest boot but it is not what buyers want.." This marketing flow similarly results in a temporary check in British trading into South Africa.

Imports of Boots & Shoes into South Africa

	by Value in £			
Country	1897	1898	1899	1900
U.K.		655619	593174	614898
U.S.	181 (i)	16891		19440
Germany	24528 (ii)	21505	42580	
Switzerland		2608	4074	
Austria		70	40	
France				c5000 (iii)
Belgium				c5000 (iii)

Notes: (i) figure for 1893

(ii) mainly low grade goods

(iii) the article refers to "considerable" imports from Belgium and France, but trade figures "inaccessible."

South African Consuls claimed the British were behind in style and packaging and that South Africans increasingly favoured light U.S. Styles. Cf. B.S.T.J. 30 July 1898 p124, where a fall in British share of the Australian market the result of a lack of British Enterprise and the marketing "of the wrong product: "... (they) are admittedly durable and of first class value, but they are deficient in regard to lightness, cleanliness and general appearance.. They are too heavy and bulky. But cf. SLR 23 June 1900 p836 where it is stated that the evidence suggests both Australia and South Africa are returning to favour U.K. footwear because it was more solid in construction and more durable when compared with "flimsy" American goods!

The questioning of this ability to exploit changes in market conditions should properly be located within the vociferous criticism levelled by contemporaries in the late 1890s: at the British shoe industry's insensitivity to the needs of foreign markets.¹ Such criticism is particularly found in British Consul trade reports. In the late 1890s there occurred a flurry of such reports following criticism that British consuls were inactive. However, a partial search of diplomatic reports a decade earlier found many of the criticisms below were already being levied.² A good example of this type of report was that made by a Consul stationed in Brazil.³ He argued that goods unsuitable to that market were frequently produced; a report repeated by many Consuls.⁴ In a detailed resume it was stated that shoe manufacturers had failed or refused:-

- (I) to take up a new pattern or design on a small order;
- (II) to make qualities other than they had been accustomed to;
- (III) to make low quality goods with " a finish and get-up such as they think might only belong to a higher class..."

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1. Similar criticism was concurrently being levelled at shoemen's slow adaptation to rising imports from America. For example, B.S.T.J. 16 June 1900 p805, "... Are they, we ask going to endeavour to arrest this importation by the only possible way it can be arrested, that is by the incorporation of those saleable qualities of neatness, style and finish of U.S. goods, with the well-known durability of British productions? There has been some attempt to do this; but no organisation or sustained effort has yet been made.."
 2. Reports of H.M. Diplomatic and Consular Representatives Abroad on Trade & Subjects of General Interest, 1886-95 (LSE).
 3. B.S.T.J. 26 November 1898 p739-40.
 4. See, for example B.S.T.J. 16 August 1900 pl79-80, an editorial entitled "The Wail of the Consuls", that summarised their criticism. Yet in spite of criticisms of the British shoe industry's performance and efficiency, increasing comment was raised within the industry concerning the hostile trading environment within which the industry had to operate. Most manufacturers were free traders (William Hickson's (manufacturer of London and Northampton) evidence to the Tariff Commission in 1905) and they expressed concern of increased foreign protectionism, and of dumping policies (eg 1897 trade report p401-02 regarding U.S. action cf. B.S.T.J. 12 February 1904 p281-82. Moreover, in some parts of the world the U.S., in particular had been adept at concluding trade treaties; for example in Japan, where, in 1899, the following Import trade in footwear was noted:

U.S.	\$ 11578
Germany	\$ 6628
Britain	\$ 4186
Rest	\$ 167

(B.S.T.J. 23 June 1900 p850).

Criticism of the lack of trading intelligence from British Consuls was constant (B.S.T.J. 16 August 1900 p773 cf. B.S.T.J. 23 January 1892 pl21). Hostility to the costs to the producer of the increasing level of safety and employment legislation in the 1890s (B.S.T.J. 16 August *ibid*); and of high domestic freight charges and tax levels. (B.S.T.J. 17 March 1900 p894). Similarly, concern was expressed about the trading costs of poor industrial relations in the industry (B.S.T.J. 16 August *ibid*).

- (IV) to send samples prepared in a sufficiently attractive form;
- (V) and generally attend to the minutiae which might appear to them unimportant, but which might be very important as affecting the sale of goods..."

As the trade paper noted,

..What is true of South America, is unfortunately, true of many other places. The rage today is for cheapness. Its the first consideration in rich countries as in poor ones.. There is no use. to plead durability.. He only has the money to buy the cheap (and fashionable) one.. It is better, writes a resident traveller, when competing in a foreign country, to send out an article at a rather lesser price and of lower quality than the one competed with, rather than an article of distinctly better quality, but a fractionally higher price, provided always that care is taken that the finish and get up are made thoroughly attractive. The Germans, he says make a common article look well, whilst Englishmen make a common article look exactly like it is...¹.

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1. Several government reports of the day reveal that this was a problem that assailed British industry generally. The Report on Trade of the British Empire & Foreign Trade (1897), is one such report. Here are to be found a number of issues critical of British foreign trading:- (1) foreign competitors, particularly Germans, increased market share by selling low cost imitations of many better quality British products. In many Empire markets, low cost rather than quality and wear was of importance (Cf. B.S.T.J. 22 October 1898 p556, and 12 April 1912 p39/40 where it is noted that British shoe manufacturers were reluctant to exploit cheap grade footwear markets. In the latter case this gave rise to an increase in imports of common grade work from Germany and Belgium into the UK); (11) foreign competitors were able to produce cheaper goods with better finish and style; (111) British manufacturers took less trouble than competitors in providing goods best suited to foreign markets: too often English domestic goods were simply exported. By comparison, competitors took much care in marketing and were prepared to meet customer requirements. As a Newfoundland witness noted, "... The reputation of the British manufacturer is that he makes what he chooses and if his colonial customers reject it, he takes no further trouble..", (IV) British packaging and general marketing approach was generally regarded as weak. (The failure of the shoe industry to adequately respond to market needs was often stressed: eg. B.S.T.J. 16 June 1900 p805-06.) And the position regarding trade with non-Empire countries was judged to be similar. A year after the above report, many of these points in addition to others were raised by a Foreign Office report of Consular trade despatches (B.S.T.J. 22 October 1898 p556). The summary was as follows:
- (i) the disinclination of British traders:
 - (a) to supply a cheaper class of goods
 - (b) to be content with a small order first
 - (c) to study a customers wishes
 - (d) to adopt the metric system
 - (e) to grant credit facilities
 - (ii) The scarcity and quality of British Commercial travellers when compared with rivals.
 - (iii) The inferiority of British packaging.
 - (iv) The high cost of British shipping freight rates
 - (v) Poor industrial relations standing in the way of order delivery dates
 - (vi) The relative lack of technical, commercial and modern languages education in Britain.

The suggestion that emerges from these reports is that whilst British footwear was renowned for its durability and quality, its style was dated; in an expanding market British shoe manufacturers were not making as much headway as they might. Indeed, it was this issue of not meeting the increasing world demand for cheap, fashionable, yet well-finished footwear that drew considerable comment.^{1.}

Ultimately this can be viewed as a failure of diversification, which allowed competitors to establish themselves in the growth sectors of markets. The heavier, good quality shoe still had a market, and, indeed, British firms met with a resurgence of interest in their product in Australian and South African markets.^{2.} Britain's shoe manufacturers were producing footwear of a design and quality that still sold, but they gave little consideration, and saw little reason, in capitalising upon that position by moving into the expanding market for cheap, fashion grades of footwear.^{3.} Certainly little initial concession was given in adopting new styles and shapes^{4.}, but in the Edwardian period American last designs and marketing styles were copied with good effect.^{5.}

The extent of the industry's consequent success can be gauged by the increasing strength with which British manufacturers traded with Europe, Canada and U.S.A. after mid decade. Yet much of this trade was done in the better grades of welted footwear; little attention was paid to the booming cheaper grade markets. Nevertheless, the extent to which the industry was able to penetrate Europe,

1. For example, B.S.T.J. 2 October 1897 p437, "... The finish of the goods which the foreign producer puts on the market is much greater than that of British goods. Finish is independent of quality, and the foreigner has the art of giving a good finish to a low class commodity, while the British producer keeps "finish" for better class goods only, and usually considers the cheaper article good enough if it is rough.." British manufacturers put quality before finish, unlike the Germans, of whom it was said their "... goods of a cheap class are superior to anything conceived by a British house.." The question of finish is really part of the questioning of suiting goods to the market, and here it is generally admitted that the foreigner is much more active and enterprising than his British competitor.."
2. B.S.T.J. 23 June 1900 p836, noted above; Cf. B.S.T.J. 15 October 1898, p545-46.
3. B.S.T.J. 22 October 1898 p556 and 12 April 1912 p39-40, noted above.
4. B.S.T.J. 8 February 1900 p246, where it was noted that British shoe manufacturers had not improved style sufficiently, and were reluctant to adopt half sizes. Together with poor packaging these features served to hinder sales.
5. A leading figure in this resurgence was A.E.Marlow, whose success is recorded in Appendix III N.G.2.

previously never a strong trading area,^{1.} and U.S. and Canada, markets in which the industry had traded only with difficulty for some considerable time passed,^{2.} serves to display the bouyancy of these years.

Finally in this section on trading patterns, it is pertinent to note the position of the domestic market. Several brief points are of importance here.

Despite the importance of export sales to Northampton firms, and those of other leading wholesale centres, only a relatively small proportion of total pairage found its way overseas.^{3.} Clearly the restructuring of the domestic market in

1. B.S.T.J. 12 January 1913 p61 records Britain's successful penetration of European markets:

Year	U.K. Exports to France and Italy			
	France		Italy	
	Dozen Pairs	Value (£)	Dozen Pairs	Value (£)
1907	26084	172513		
1908	32105	199054	177955	21520
1909	43267	260888	305692	49718
1910	51344	314377	498016	147525
1911	48000	307972	614107	235252
1912	58340	384290		

Cf. B.S.T.J. 11 August p214, noted that Britains increasingly successful penetration of Europe must be viewed against continued U.S. trading pressure.

2. B.S.T.J. 2 December 1912 p438-39 notes the increased customer acceptance of fashionable, quality-built British shoes in North America.

Imports of U.K. shoes into Canada

Country	Value in £		
	1980	1909	1910
France	7498	7754	8877
Germany	9046	4093	4487
U.S.	34394	33828	41833
Britain	50642	43652	74256

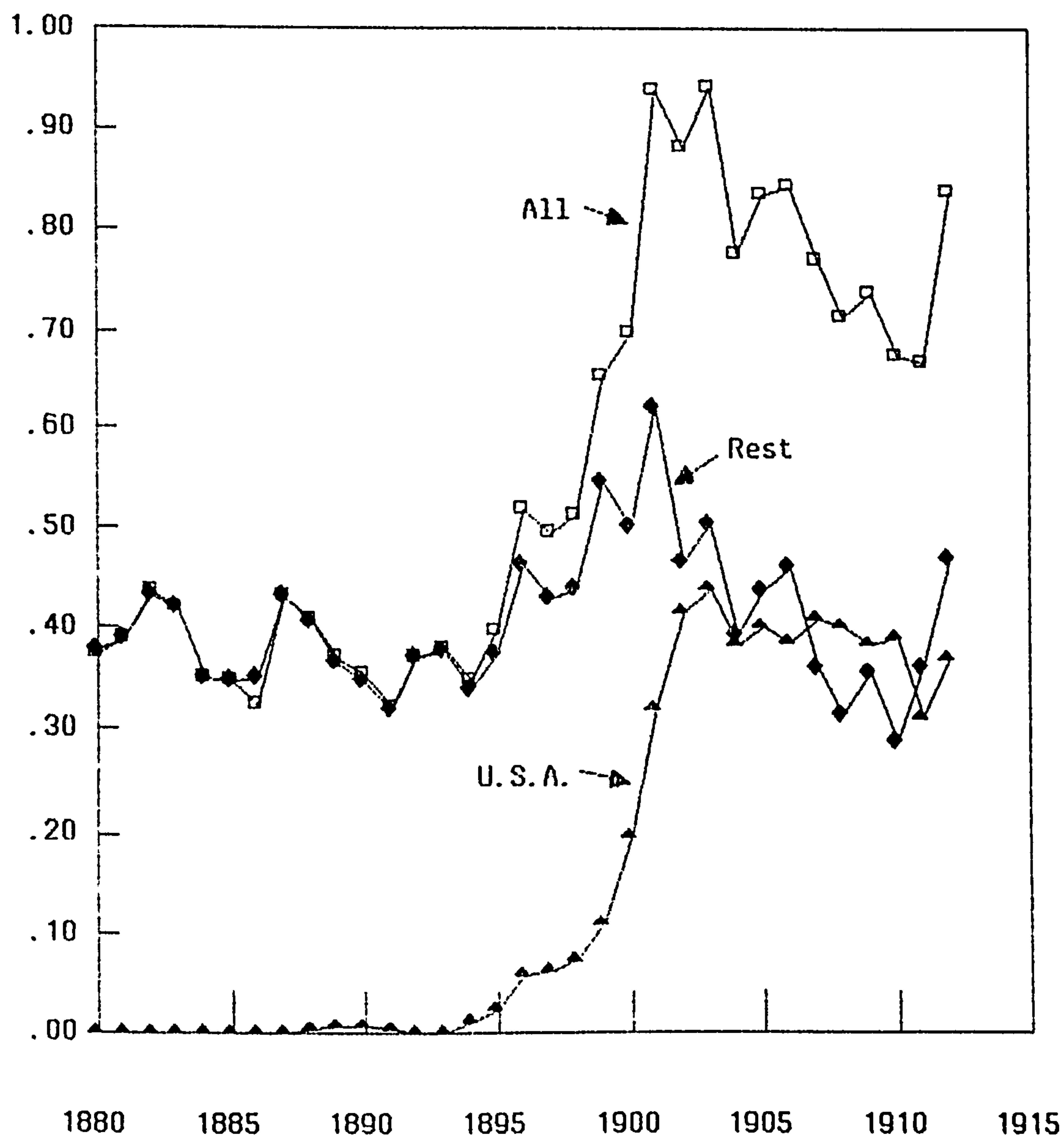
Cf. Appendix II C.7. J. Marlow & Sons Ltd. experience of North American trading.

3. Any attempt to measure total output of the British shoe industry is fraught with almost insurmountable problems. No government records of the total production of the industry were taken. The Censuses of Production were begun only in 1907. W.G.Hoffman British Industry 1700-1950⁽¹⁹⁵⁵⁾ p86 notes, "...The leather goods industry had a small export trade, which amounted to about 3% of its output in the middle of the 19 century. This proportion rose to 8% by about 1870, but fell again to no more than about 5% by the end of the century. This was obviously another industry largely restricted to the home market..." This assessment, of course, applies to all leather goods, of which footwear was easily the largest constituent.

Figure 2:xxvii

Annual Imports of Leather Boots and Shoes into Britain by Value, 1880-1914

£ million Sterling



Source:

(a) B.P.P. Annual Accounts Trade and Navigation of U.K. 1885-1914

which the wholesale manufacturing sector played such a dominant role was of major importance to the development of the sector, as the discussions on the transition period has asserted. Clearly also the extent of the U.S. penetration into British markets was a threat to Britain's main wholesale centres. Here it is interesting to briefly review the data in Fig 2: ~~XXY~~ If imports are measured by value, rather than by pairage, it can be seen that high levels of U.S. imports were maintained through to 1910, not 1904 as Church suggests. Clear also, is the fact that imports from Continental Europe, which had declined from a peak in 1901, begun a sharp resurgence after 1910. By 1912, the trade press, whilst noting the medium grade imports had been stemmed, ^{stressed that} a little had been achieved in slowing the imports of cheaper grades of footwear.

But the threat of competition came not only from foreigners. Overtime, there was a general rise in the quality of footwear demanded by the consumer: the marked shift from machine sewn to machine welted production in the 1890s is symbolic of this. As a result of this, what can be increasingly observed over time is the shift of low grade centres of the industry in England into medium-grade work. That is to say, an increasing number of centres began to compete with medium grade Northampton made goods. In the late 1880s, Leeds rapidly mechanised and began to compete in Northampton's markets.¹ In particular, Leeds sales to colonies once supplied by Northampton was noted². Northampton also faced increased competition from country centres.³ Similarly, in ladies footwear Leicester was increasingly matching the quality once only associated with Stafford and London. In the Edwardian period Northamptonshire's monopoly of Government

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1. B.S.T.J. 10 March 1888 p356, and 30 March 1889 p350. Cf. SLR 18 July 1891 p60, reported that welting machines being laid down in Leeds, enabling manufacturers there to produce lighter qualities of men's wear. This could not be done by hand, because the available labour was insufficiently skilled. Northamptonians were employed to instruct Leeds men how to operate the machines. SLR 8 August 1891 p140. Leeds adopting machinery so that it can better compete with ladies manufacture in other centres.
 2. B.S.T.J. 27 April 1889 p347. This trade had developed from 1885.
 3. B.S.T.J. 6 February 1892 p207. Earls Barton made speciality boots but it was noted that "... a number of styles are approaching first class Northampton work..", N.M. 22 March 1895 p5. Rushden footwear "... in its style of manufacture resembles Kettering & Northampton.. (with) welted boots forming a considerable proportion of the whole output...", B.S.T.J. 25 June 1898 p861 "... Kettering's production is up to Northampton standards.."

contract work was increasingly challenged by Leeds and Kingswood. And in turn, Kingswood edged Leeds out of the heavy nailed boot market: this was largely done by Kingswood manufacturers retaining low paid hand labour.¹

1. Select Committee Report to Consider the Application of the National Insurance Act to Outworkers 1912-1913 (C'd. 6178 & 6179) (Cd. 6231) xiii. Evidence can also be found here of the extent to which Kingswood challenge Northamptonshire in heavy boot markets. These incursions had been achieved over a long period of years, in fact B.S.T.J.16 January 1886 p39 the Northampton correspondent noted: "... The nailed trade has almost disappeared from some parts of this district, owing to the very close competition of Bristol houses..", B.S.T.J.14 February 1902 p263, where it was noticed that Northants and Northampton orders are passing to Bristol and Leeds.

If the interaction between trade and technical change is open to question as a mono-causal explanation the next stage of this analysis must be to explore those other causal factors that help to explain the shoe industry's push to modernity; namely, to examine the relationship between shifts in new techniques and shifts in factor costs. As will be argued below, this is not to deny that contemporary trading pressures were not important in framing shoe manufacturers decisions. Rather, it is a recognition that trading pressures were just one facet of a more complex chain of causation. In actuality a number of factors coalesced in the period of change after 1887 that forced firstly best practice and later average practice firms to shift to intensive growth patterns, as opposed to simply duplicating techniques of production as had happened in the long period of transition.

At the centre of this process were the rapid strides that were made in the state of technology between 1887 and 1895. The machines and machine systems that were developed and improved, with which to manufacture medium grade footwear, reached maturity in this post 1887 period. Not only were their machines more expensive to purchase, but also required specially prepared workplaces to accommodate them, and power sources to operate them. Technically, these years were marked by three inter-related elements.

First, the development of commercially acceptable machines in the major processes still dominated by hand work: lasting, welting, finishing. For the first time the prospect of centralising the production of medium grade work became a practical reality, made the more insistent by virtue of the weight of these powered machines. Secondly, the introduction of improved, second generation machinery. Increased speed of operation was the hall-mark of these machines: modifications were made, operating cycles were shortened, and so forth. In step with this an increasing number of minor, sub-processes were mechanised. This factor, linked to the general ascendance of welted production meant that change affected all centres. For the first time the industry was assailed by what Salter has argued is an important feature of modern capitalist production: the continuous disturbance of the productive process by new methods. Increasingly, there was the

need for manufacturers to constantly appraise their methods. The era of slower, more stable change that to some large measure had dominated the transitional period was gone forever. And thirdly, there was the increased utilisation of synchronised machine systems.¹ Many major processes, for example finishing, were composed of a range of individual sub-processes. To efficiently mechanise these areas of production it was necessary to co-ordinate the running of a range of machines, in order to achieve an effective flow of production.

In organisational terms, these crucial technical developments, and the economic factors that led to their rapid take up, resulted in the final ascendancy of factory production, though never the ultimate demise of outworking. This new wave of machine introduction set in motion by the 1887 strike resulted in "...thousands of tons of machinery..."² being absorbed into the existing transitional organisational structure of the industry between the end of that strike and the onset of depression in 1890-91. Initially, commentators assumed that the widespread use of new machinery would inevitably bring organ-

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1. Often, these machine systems were composed of several machines, of which only one might be commercially new. See SLR 25 May 1889 p139 "...machine welting is undoubtedly the system of the near future for making best goods...." But there is no novelty in the Goodyear process, some machines that go to make up the system have been running for a long time.
 2. B.S.T.J. 17 January 1891 p48. Many reports allude to the increased levels of machinery introduction between 1887-95. For example, B.S.T.J. 8 July 1893 p31 notes, "the revolution that is gradually taking place in connection with the boot and shoe industry by the rapid substitution of machinery for hand production.."; whilst in an assessment of the increased arbitration work necessary as a result of rising machine introduction, a leading manufacturer, Henry Wooding, noted, "...The work of the Association during the first eight years was comparatively light; but since the unfortunate strike (of 1887).. Mr Manfield and myself, and the rest of the committee have had a great deal of work to do in view of the introduction of machinery.." (S.L.R. 21 April 1893 p 983).

isational change in its wake.¹ This was not to be. The onset of depression found manufacturers trying to square the use of new and improved machinery with old working practices and conditions. Consequently few achieved the anticipated cost savings achieved by competitors.² Clearly improvement in productivity and costs achieved by both foreign and home competitors ultimately prompted growing numbers of best practice firms to replicate the new systems of production. Just as French and German trading threats in the 1870s and 1880s had evoked a reaction amongst British manufacturers, so the concern expressed about growing U.S. commercial activities and intention, which developed from 1890, caused a

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1. B.S.T.J. 17 March 1888 p197. This article stresses that a new order of machine introduction was underway; one that would see the end of handwork, and, replacing it, the systematic use of machinery in all processes (cf. SLR 30 March 1889 p259, which sees the period as a watershed between hand and machine-based production). The assumption is present that manufacturers would, as a matter of course, use these new machine systems in the most efficient way: "...The system that will answer.. involves the use in each department of machinery that will effectually perform some important work, the boots operated upon coming instantly into the hands of workmen employed under a perfect system of divided labour, and who will get goods out of hand immediately after the machine has done its part. The use of separate machines for trivial or minor operations will be avoided as far as possible, thus doing away with running hither and thither. We believe with the rest that machinery will be more used than ever it has been, but to be used successfully all faith in its economy because of its being a machine, must be discarded. To buy an elephant that it might pick up pins with its trunk would be foolish indeed, but there have been acts almost as absurd committed in the not very remote past by machine users..."
 2. Little detailed empirical data is available concerning the increased productivity that was available from centralised production. The few insights that have been recorded, however, clearly suggest that the potential savings were substantial. See, for example, D.A.Wells Recent Economic Changes and Their Effect in the Production and Distribution of Wealth (1890) p50-51 "...The manufacture of boots and shoes offers some very wonderful facts (regarding labour displacement). In one large and long established manufactory the proprietors testify that it would require 500 persons, working by hand processes, to make as many women's boots and shoes as 100 persons now make with the aid of machinery - a displacement of 80%. Another firm, engaged in the manufacture of children's shoes, states that the introduction of new machinery... has displaced circa six times the amount of hand labour required, and that the cost of production has been reduced by half. On another grade of goods, the facts collected by agents .. show that one man can now do the work which twenty years ago required ten men. Cf. F.W.Norcross Boot and Shoe Manufacture (1888) n.p. "... In 1845 the boot and shoemakers of Massachusetts made an average production.. of 1.52 pairs of boots for each working day. In 1885, each employee in the state made an average of 4.2 pairs, while at the present time in Lynn and Haverhill the daily average of each person is 7 pairs per day, showing an increase in production in 40 years of 400%..." Cf. the productivity data in C.D.Wright Industrial Depressions: Being the First Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Labour (1886).

reaction amongst best practice firms:^{1.} it is important to note that this reaction emanates from this earlier date, rather than simply at the point where physical trade from the U.S. began to increase after 1895 as the orthodox case suggests. This realisation marks the end of an initial phase of what may be termed uncritical machine introduction; what followed was a second phase in the push to modernity: the revolution in organisational techniques.^{2.} By 1891, the commitment to machine production had been identified by best practice firms. What depressed trading conditions did was to reveal the need to make the necessary organisational changes that were an inevitable precursor of efficient machine production. These final changes, however, had to substantially wait until after 1895. It is important, therefore, to view the final centralisation of production as a two stage process:

- (1) the need to shift from outworking was signalled by the introduction of new, improved machinery: a process which proceeded at the dictate of technical and other economic variables;
- (11) in addition to this, a drive to attain efficient machine usage, by the thorough-going reorganisation of work practices and methods at the workplace. This was achieved only after the resolution of a major labour relations conflict within the industry.

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1. SLR 25 July 1891 p89, where it is argued that U.S. methods of work were superior to those prevailing in British factories: "... It is not enough to simply lay down machinery..." In trading terms it was alleged that this gave the American manufacturer a considerable price advantage in the market place: "... The cost of labour per pair in the manufacture of medium and below qualities of footwear is considerably less than half the cost of similar goods in England. The fear was that U.S. Manufacturers would seek, as indeed they did, to increase their overseas trade in footwear to offload surplus production. SLR 11 July 1891 p29-30. "...U.S. boot manufacturers are suffering severely from overproduction. Their very perfect system of manufacture, and an intelligent use of machinery has enabled them to produce goods so rapidly that their increased presence in overseas markets cannot long be delayed..."
 2. SLR 2 April 1890 pl25-26. An article which stresses that whilst American on costs are higher than those in Europe, nevertheless the price of footwear to the consumer was cheaper. This was because of the scale economies U.S. shoe manufacturers achieved by using well organised batch flow techniques and finely sub-divided m/c work processes. Each operative was asked to do one narrow task and worked under close managerial supervision. Exactly the reverse was current British practice. It was noted: "... the American manufacturer is before anything else a master hand at organisation. Everything in his factory is adapted to one end - that of getting the work through at a high rate of speed... What our own countrymen now need to consider is whether they cannot review some hitherto impregnable beliefs as to processes... Let them make trial of some of the methods by which success is attained by others... and when the competition arrives it may be met with confidence... 1890 witnessed a great movement towards the complete adoption of the factory system in the manufacture of boots and shoes in England, and rapidly changing conditions.. render it incumbent upon manufacturers to reorganise their factories upon what might be conveniently referred to as the American plan.."

Yet intimately tied to these forces of competition that were pressing rationalisation upon shoe firms, were increasing factors costs. Increasingly in the period after 1887 factor prices moved against shoe manufacturers as a group, making this radical change in production techniques imperative if they were to retain their place in the market. Little detailed empirical evidence at the level of the firm concerning costs has survived, although both the papers of Church and Co. and Pollard & Co., discussed above, suggest that firms were reactive to falling profit levels in our period. Nevertheless, the more general evidence set out below concerning rising wage rate levels and leather prices at the level of the industry, suggests that British shoe manufacturers needed to obtain the increased productivity and lower production costs offered by modern centralised techniques in part to offset rising factor costs.

The cost of labour in shoe making constituted a large proportion of total production costs: at least 42% according to one report.¹ It is clear that great volatility existed in the demand for shoes, not only between seasons but at different points in the trade cycle. A consumer product, shoes were particularly sensitive to movements in the level of trade generally within the economy. One of the first products to be hit by depression, demand was usually slow to recover in the subsequent upswing in trading.² Moreover, intense price competition from the many small masters frequently kept the final price

1. For an interesting contemporary empirical study of shoe manufacturing costs, see C.D.Wright Industrial Depressions, Being the First Report of U.S. Commissioner of Labour (1886) p80-97, 220-21, and 143-45. What is more British labour costs were higher than those in the U.S.A., and were identified as being higher than those of European shoe manufacturers. (SLR 2 August 1890 p126).

2. Cf. Chapter Four, below, on the effects of trade depression on shoe trading.

for shoes at near cost or even at below-cost levels.¹ Given this, and in view of widespread out-work, the adoption of complex, piecework wage statements and weak union organisation, employers, particularly in the period before 1887, readily adjusted labour costs to maintain sales in what were often rapidly shifting market conditions.

A number of inter-related strategems were utilised, all of which tended to reduce the cost of labour in the short-term. These included the dilution of labour; the cutting of wage-rates accompanying the introduction of new machines; and the shifting of the location of manufacturing areas.² However, the most common device used was the unilateral reduction of agreed wage rates by a manufacturer, and the arbitrary re-classification of grades of work.³ Piece-work wage statements were complex. They were composed of two main elements, viz:- ground work, payments covering basic construction routines; and extras, a variegated and complex list of payments made for the inclusion of embellishments, refinements to a pair of shoes. The other significant feature of wage statements was they covered anything up to eight or nine categories, or classes of work from first quality down to a cheap basic grade. Each grade required a declining level of skill and time to make, and provided the foundation of the gradated system of

1. For the effects of such trading on business mortality see Chapters 3 & 5 below. This prevalence of undercutting price, particularly by small masters new to the industry and eagerly seeking markets, is properly part of the wider issue of escalating costs and the laxity of credit provision within the industry. Again, this practice of underselling appears to have been a longstanding trait in the industry. It is one of the themes Henry Mayhew developed in his letters to the Morning Chronicle at mid-century. See E.P. Thompson & E. Yeo The Unknown Mayhew, p288-90. Letter XXXII 4 February 1850: "... But a greater evil than all is the competition among the masters; almost everyone, excepting the most respectable of them, is trying to force a trade by underselling the others. This, of course, masters may do in two ways - either by the reduction of their own profits or by cutting down the wages of the working men..." Indeed, this theme of wage suppression permeates this and his following letter (Letter XXXIII p290-336). Here Mayhew clearly establishes that it was the prevailing outworking system that enabled this to be achieved.
2. This was most easily done by sending work to surrounding villages to be made up. Relatively isolated and poorly unionised, village outworkers enhanced the manufacturers ability to depress wage levels. Manufacturers put out work normally done in the factory, or imported cheap labour (see, for example, N.U.O.B.S.R. & F. Monthly Report June 1880 p.7.) Thus, it was in large measure irrelevant that workers at main centres of the industry were able to agree wage statements with employers. It was only in the early 1890s, that the union was able to establish arbitration machinery to police statements and unionise the villages.
3. For example N.U.O.B.S.R. & F. Monthly Report July 1880 p.7.

payment made to the shoe-maker. Such a complex payments system within an out-working system provided a fertile bed for disputes; extensive scope for employers to use this complexity as a vehicle by which to introduce wage cuts.

A significant proportion of trade union activity in the industry prior to 1890 was aimed at overcoming the regular reductions in wages which were made by employers during low seasons and depression: it was the single most important source of conflict between capital and labour. The extent to which wage reductions were resorted to as a means of cutting costs at such times is revealed by the early Quarterly Reports of the National Union of Operative Boot and Shoe Rivetters and Finishers (N.U.O.S.B.R. & F.)

Quarterly Reports in the early years were dominated by wage reduction disputes at all centres, and the first Annual Address by the General Secretary made this subject his central theme.¹ In addition to disputes at centres such as Leicester, Newcastle, Northampton, Nottingham and Stafford, the two biggest at this time occurred at Manchester - a seventeen week lock-out concerning a 20/30% wage reduction - and at Dundee - a sixteen week strike of 112 shoemakers costing the union £600/700.² In both cases the union was successful. The almost endemic cutting of wages in low seasons was ever present, but the full effect of wage reductions upon the industry during trade depression had a profound effect upon both trading and wage levels in the decade after 1876. Depressed conditions initially persisted from mid-1876 to the end of 1880, and are characterised by the union's inability to counter the techniques used by employers to cut wages. In July 1876, the General Secretary noted:

...The general commercial depression in the country has resulted in employers in boot and shoemaking to reduce wages. The present condition of affairs is serious with many disputes verging on strikes...³

At Barnsley, a manufacturer's reduction resulted in the closing of the branch.⁴

It is at this time that the first Northampton reduction disputes were extensively reported. One of the first involved a manufacturer named Fowke, who attempted

1. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. 3rd Quarterly Report, January 1875, p.3.
 2. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. 1st Quarterly Report, June 1874 p3, 9.
 3. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F., 9th Quarterly Report, July 1876, p.3.
 4. Ibid, pl2.

to introduce a new classification system for grades of work. "This", the branch secretary concluded, "... simply amounted to a reduction, as by this means he was giving out work that was formerly best to be finished as seconds.¹ Six months later, reductions at Messrs. Flatau, London and Northampton, caused a strike at the main factory. The Northampton branch successfully blocked all work moved from there to Northampton.² Despite being wealthy manufacturers, Flatau's had earned a reputation for paying the worst rates in the trade.³ Their approach to industrial relations was unremittingly harsh: in a dispute in December 1880, forty shoemakers were dismissed for taking part in a strike against further reductions.⁴ By February 1877, it was noted at Northampton that many reduction attempts had taken place:

...The quarter just ending has been one of the most eventful we have experienced. Our trade seems to be in a worst position than other trades. Some of our best members have been obliged to sell and pledge almost everything they possess to obtain the necessaries of life..⁵

Matters were aggravated in the town, it was argued, because large number of unemployed shoemakers were attracted there in the hope of work,⁶ the labour market was chronically overstocked. Despite some late season respite, the depression in the industry deepened in the ensuing two winters, giving rise to reduction disputes in all major centres, as well as some secondary centres. At Northampton, reductions of up to 20% were imposed; at Kidderminster of between 10 & 30; whilst at Norwich there was a general move to get more work made up outside factories where lower rates prevailed. At Leicester, a similar move, repeated in the eighties, to get work executed in lower paid country areas was under way.⁷ An

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1. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F., 8th Quarterly Report, May 1876, p13.
 2. N.U.O.S.B.R.&F. 10th Quarterly Report, November 1876, p10 & 11.
 3. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report January 1881 p8, "...This shop pays the worst price in the trade, but owing to the ready way in which the work is fitted and given out, men have just been about able to earn a livelihood.
 4. Ibid.
 5. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F., 11th Quarterly Report, February 1877 p12.
 6. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. 12th Quarterly Report May 1877 p11.
 7. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report September 1883, p4, it was reported that the CWS factory Leicester, was adopting this strategy: "... there has been for some time considerable dissatisfaction existing in consequence of large quantities of work being sent away from the manufactory in Leicester to villages adjacent, and by the obnoxious system of "middle men" (agents), made at considerably lower prices than called for by the Leicester Statement.

even more notable development. was the ability of local manufacturers associations, where such bodies existed, to impose uniform centre reductions; for example, 20% at Hull and Croydon, whilst the Glasgow Employers Association enforced an overall wage reduction equivalent to 4/6d in the £. Employers at Dublin and Leeds were able to take similar action. At Leeds this reduction was made on the "...dis-asterous statement forced on the men at their defeat in 1873 (strike), which was considered below other districts doing a similar class of work..."¹. The Leicester Manufacturers Association was able to unilaterally impose a new Uniform Statement which amounted to "a great reduction on the present wages paid..", and introduced charges for grindery and workshop accommodation.² No other town would be able to maintain its position in a competitive market against such starvation wages, it was widely argued. For example Birmingham Employers complained the new statement would ruin trade generally by undercutting other centres. And it was such ruinous and severe competition pursued by many manufacturers in an attempt to trade in depression which exacerbated the effects of that depression. As did the prevailing system of long credit, and the presence of many small, marginal producers in the industry. The sum of the parts added up what amounted to the pursuit of reckless trading:

... a depression born out.of... an unnatural corrupt and demoralising system of overproduction, and illegitimate trading.. (pursued in an)... feverish anxiety to obtain exorbitant profits and quick return..³.

At this early stage the Union's ability to resist such wage reductions was limited.

The Northampton branch secretary summed up the position in 1878 in the words,

...Trade is in a fearful depressed condition...Our members who are in work are obliged to submit to reductions, which if there was any trade at all we could not put up with, but it is of no use fighting under the present state of things, and we are compelled to submit quietly for a time. Our local funds are very low...⁴.

The first indications that meaningful attempts were being made to overcome wage

1. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report, February 1878, p.3.

2. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report, April 1878, p4. Cf. *ibid*, October 1878 p5.

3. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report, January 1879, p.4.

4. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report, January 1878, p10.

reductions emerges in the years 1881-84.¹ A brief improvement in trade union organisation and membership as trade briefly recovered,² enabled the local branch to take the first concerted steps to end arbitrary wage reductions: an attempt was made to establish a Uniform Wage Statement for the town, with arbitration machinery to compel its maintenance.³ These early efforts substantially failed, due to the continued dominance and strength of manufacturers. In fact, throughout this slowly mounting union challenge, manufacturers retained the ability to implement reductions. By this time, they had achieved a great flexibility in pricing labour, and the evidence suggests that manufacturers were seeking the respite from depression to permanently lower the level of wages, the better to offset rising raw material prices, prevailing unsettled trading

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1. Contrast this with Leicester, where the branch had adopted printed shop wage statements as an initial step towards commonly accepted wage rates in the town as early as 1876 (N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. 6th Quarterly Report October 1875) p.10.) See note above on the 1878 Uniform Statement.
 2. A recruitment drive was undertaken in the town: "... We have had shops meetings on Turner Bros. Manfields, Bostocks and others, and the men own it is time to put a stop to the continual reductions that are being made in Northampton.. (N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report March 1881, p.8.). In 1881, union membership at Northampton rose from 205 to 791 and by the end of 1882 it stood at 1060. From there it fell back to 910 in December 1883 and further to 670 a year later. From then membership fluctuated at this level, rising shortly before the 1887 strike to 1100. This mood was present at other centres too. The General Secretary wrote of a growth in strength: "whilst we have no desire to become strong for merely aggressive purposes, we certainly desire, and must have too, the power to defend ourselves when assailed and this power can only be effectively wielded when force of numbers is at our back..." (ibid. October 1881 p.4., cf. ibid July 1881 p.5. regarding the London campaign to abolish shop and gas rent).
 3. The local branch clearly understood the importance of better organisation and substantial levels of membership as the precursor to modifying this strength. The need to develop a broad-based appeal amongst the town's shoemakers was quickly recognised. A local official noted in 1875, "... so long as there remains so many.. outside the pall of the trade union, the employers will take every opportunity of offering reductions.. (which) are heartless and pitiless actions by employers, who, knowing that so many are outside the union take advantage of our disorganised state to force a lessening of wages..." (N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. 4th Quarterly Report, April 1875 p.4.) Despite an increase in branch membership in the town, the presence of low-wage, un-unionised country outworkers ultimately weakened the branch's ability to maintain wage levels. (See, for example, N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report December 1882 p.8. Trade was reported depressed and work scarce "... The members of our branch think in the event of a dispute arising, that they are heavily handicapped in the race of life, being in the centre of the greatest boot and shoe district in England. The employers tell their men if they do not like the wage offered they can send the work into the country and get it done. Seeing this, we think some steps should be taken by us in the constant struggle of capital and labour..." Such organisation was not achieved until the early 1890s - see Fox op. cit. Chapter, 9, passim).

conditions, and the cut-throat competition that continued to be generated by small masters. In early 1880, for example it was noted:

....As is usual at this time of the year disputes have been plentiful, leading to opinion that employers are aware of the coming prosperity, which would prevent any serious reduction being offered during its continuance, and so have resolved to make the best use of the present slackness to attempt (permanent) reductions, or, as they are more frequently called, revisions, which we have by experience found to be synonymous terms....¹.

In 1881-82, increased pressure was placed upon the branch by the rank and file to stem such activities.² Following these events discussions aimed at establishing the necessary machinery to end arbitrary wage reductions were held between the two sides of industry through 1883.³ Yet even as these negotiations got underway, trade was already weakening, and with it the Union's strength, as depression quickly enabled manufacturers to perpetuate the old regime of wage reductions.⁴ By January 1884, negotiations were reported as being still in progress⁵, but petered out after this. From this through to late 1886

1. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report January 1880 p.4. Cf. *ibid.* January 1881 p.3. "*..The new year, as usual, brought with it a very strong desire on the part of employers to use the slack season for the purpose of endeavouring to reduce the wages of workmen...*"
2. Representative of such actions were the disputes at Messrs.Laycock & Co. A direct wage cut was imposed in February 1881, following a strike and a loss of jobs. (N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report, February 1881 p.7. Cf. *ibid.* May p.6. and November p.7 & 8, where it was reported that at Leicester and Leeds increased efforts were made to permanently replace piecework with unregulated day work.) A further direct cut was made by the firm in September 1882, which led to a general undermining of wages in the town. (N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report October 1882 p3-5 and p.9.) This prompted a general confrontation in the town between employer and shoe workers.
3. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Reports April 1882 p10, and October 1882, p.8.
4. The N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Reports allude to this: January 1883 p10 comments a worsening of trade and with the recurrence of reduction disputes; February 1883 p10. reports the small order working and reductions were in vogue. Minor reduction disputes were encountered at many firms; April 1883 p10, the season collapsed and "*.. as may be expected disputes have been numerous..*" In the previous last two months the union had been "*severely taxed*" in protecting members against direct and indirect wage reductions. Nevertheless, the improvement in organisation after 1880 did ensure that the wholesale reductions of previous decades was avoided. Cf. June 1883, p. 3. and September 1883 p.7.
5. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report January 1884 p.9.

depressed trading saw a partial return to conditions of a decade before,^{1.} despite the reintroduction of arbitration in 1885.^{2.}

Improved trade conditions in 1887 again signalled a resumption of the union's struggle for better pay. This time their action led to the major dispute of September-December already alluded to, which finally led to both the establishment of a Uniform Statement and the setting up of the necessary arbitration machinery to monitor its operation. From early 1888, although wage reductions in low seasons and in depression only gradually faded,^{3.} the union was progressively able to prevent the wholesale deductions once so common in the industry. This eradication of wage cuts, in addition to the general advance of wage statement rates,^{4.} led to a stiffening of the price of labour in our period. Early evidence of this upward trend is provided by this trade press comment:

...Referring to the Northampton statement compiled after the dispute in 1887, it appears that it resulted in the average wage being considerably increased. In 1891 this statement was again revised, and several additions made thereto, in each case showing an increase in wages. There is no evidence from these wages statements that any reduction whatever has been made in wages in the last five years, but in many qualities (of work) the price now being paid for making and finishing is considerably higher when compared with 1887.^{5.}

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1. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Report January 1885 p.3. work scarce and poor trade gave rise to an "...inexhaustable crop of disputes.." Cf. p.9, at Northampton employers reduced wages and the Branch organised a campaign against it, using Bradlaugh's help: further reports on this topic appeared in each Monthly Report in that year, and in addition to reductions local manufacturers increased their use of boy labour, day labour and the team system. By December 1885, it was noted "...trade deplorably depressed...", "...the actions of the employers are most unreasonable, tyrannical and arbitrary.." Similar reports continued through 1886 and early 1887, and can be cited as the root cause of the local branch's determined co-ordinated effort to push wages up in 1887; an effort that led directly to the 1887 strike.
 2. N.U.O.S.B.R. & F. Monthly Reports April and June 1885. Arbitration procedures re-introduced to protect the shop statements the branch had negotiated.
 3. N.U.B.S.O. Monthly Reports through the depression years of the early 1890s still carried news of reduction disputes, but clear evidence emerges of an overall reduction in their number, and of the union experiencing greater success.
 4. SLR 28 October 1892 p1051.
 5. This upward trend of pay over time, the greater uniformity of wage rates within centres, and the union's ability to counter reductions, led many manufacturers to argue that these factors increasingly tended to fatten the labour market, imposing a burden on production costs. Wage rate increased at Northampton 1893 to 1913 were as follows:

Grade	1893	1900	1909	1919
Clicker	26/-	28/-	30/-	30/-
Pressmen	22/-	25/-	26/- - 28/-	27/- - 28/-
Laster	28/-	28/-	29/-	30/-
Finisher	28/-	28/-	29/-	30/-

Source: NUBSO Monthly Reports and Board of Trade Standard Wage Returns.

Of course this stiffening in manufacturers' wages bills provided a crucial lever in their decision to mechanise after 1887. Yet the union's ability to stabilise and advance wage rates in the period was only one aspect giving rise to this stiffening in labour costs. For what the industry progressively faced after 1887 was a growing scarcity of skilled, efficient labour, which added further pressure to already escalating labour costs. As a result of thirty years of gradual change in the transitional period, the number of men who were able to make a boot right through by hand had diminished.¹ In contrast to this, however, these years witnessed a marked swing towards welted, as opposed to machine-sewn, footwear. Initially short run expedients were resorted to: overtime was worked;² ageing and other marginal workers were pressed into service during heavy seasonal rushes; the combination boot was introduced.³ Nevertheless, each annual seasonal rush of work continued to bring the same death of skilled hand-sewn men. Very quickly it was accepted that the only and inevitable direction for the industry to go was to introduce machine welting for the

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1. In addition to this, many of the specialist hand process skills were fast disappearing. For example, SLR 10 May 1890 p585, the Northampton correspondent noted that "... long boot hand closers are a dying breed..." This paucity of handstitchmen was one that was felt through the industry, both in large and small centres alike. See, for example, Chief Inspector of Factories Annual Report 1887, 1888 (c. 5328) XXVI p.65, in Inspector Beadon's discussion of boot and shoe manufacture in Hampshire and Dorset.
 2. B.S.T.J. 1 December 1888 p418, the Northampton correspondent noted, "... Unfortunately... there is an increasing scarcity of hand-sewn makers, and it is only by the persistent straining of labour available that orders are completed with anything like despatch..." Cf. B.S.T.J. 17 May 1890 p491 and B.S.T.J. 24 May 1890 p516.
 3. A boot that was substantially fabricated by machine but which had the welt sewn in by hand. Hand finishing was also used. Although relatively quickly eclipsed as a volume boot, high quality combination boots were being produced in some firms product ranges in place of bespoke right through our period. For example, A. & W. Church & Co. Papers Sales Catalogue 1913 (n.p.) "...Owing to the scarcity of hand labour and the increasing difficulties of making bespoke boots, we feel that this 22/6d grade (of Man's boot) will fill a great want..." The boot was hand lasted and finished, with the welts sewn in by hand, whilst the rest of the stitching was done by machine.

the volume goods trade.^{1.} Despite this, as is recorded elsewhere, high quality hand work was never finally eclipsed in our period.

In the face of this situation, handstitch men enjoyed a brief Indian summer of prosperity.^{2.} The local branch of the Amalgamated Cordwainers union rekindled its membership and was significantly successful in raising wage levels between 1888 and 1890.^{3.} However, this response to market conditions quickly escalated the cost of best quality goods to a point that simply speeded-up the introduction of machinery. Wage rises in 1888 and 1889 had priced handstitchmen out of the market. The cheaper machine welted and combination boots had gained a ready acceptance amongst customers. From this point welting machinery quickly entered the industry.^{4.}

1. Many trade reports at this time allude to the paucity of efficient hand labour, which led to machine introduction. For example, (1) B.S.T.J. 4 August 1888 p80, the Northampton correspondent noted, "... The demand for combination goods has of late materially increased, and a difficulty has been experienced in finding suitable hands to do the work. Consequently manufacturers have been compelled to adopt other modes of manufacture, and are pushing machine welted goods, which are considered by experts to be equal to hand-sewn boots for durability and comfort...", (11) B.S.T.J. 17 August 1889 p145, "...The continued demand for handsewn goods, and the decrease in labour available for this class of work has for some time past brought the question of the employment of machinery to fill up the deficiency prominently before manufacturers of this country.."; (111) SLR 17 May 1890 p487 and 492, where the current dearth of labour was contrasted with the surplus which had prevailed prior to the 1887 strike; (IV) SLR 15 February 1890 p230, the Northampton correspondent noted that "...the demand for the best class of goods, made by Northampton houses.. is still maintained and the output is only limited by the paucity of labour..The difficulty of obtaining sufficient labour for the best class of (goods) will not be much longer an obstacle. The machinery now used by the principal factories for sewing in the welts and stitching on the outer soles, bids fair to take the place of hand-sewn labour.." The report concluded that work completed by Goodyear machinery was equal to the best hand-sewn. Work done using a skilful operator was "perfect... and possesses all the characteristics of hand-sewn boots - solidity, lightness and pliability.." (It should be noted here, however, that doubts were raised that handsewn methods were not the most advantageous for volume production, as uniform production could by no means be guaranteed: B.S.T.J. 11 January 1890 p33).
2. It was not uncommon for firms to advertise for large numbers of handstitchmen. For example B.S.T.J. 14 September 1889 p233, "... one of Northampton's firms, Stickland & Mason, are advertising for fifty hand sewn makers, so rapidly is their business expanding.
3. The first wage claim was put forward by men working for Turner Brothers, Hyde & Co. during the 1887 strike: see N.M. 26 November 1887 p.6.
4. SLR 8 March 1890 p238 "... in all principal factories welting machines are running, the lasting for which is either done by machine or hand.." Unemployment amongst handstitched men was reported.

But this shortage of skilled, efficient labour went deeper than this. Firms also experienced shortages of modern process workers, particularly lasters and finishers,^{1.} and of machinists too.^{2.} Here also the solution lay in the early adoption of available machinery. As with the death of hand-sewn men this was a relatively quick turn around on the pre 1887 situation; stickiness in the labour market had been manifest from earlier in the decade. Two main causes were proffered to explain this situation. First, the introduction of a uniform statement and a relatively stable labour relations climate (the result of the re-establishment of an Arbitration Board) following the 1887 stoppage had attracted manufacturers from other districts, particularly London, who mopped up the town's surplus labour, thus aggravating the situation. Secondly, this dearth was attributed to the poor, informal methods of training that prevailed in the industry: the apprenticeship had long since largely ceased to function, whilst technical education only slowly developed in the 1890s.^{3.} This confluence of factors within the labour market naturally enough tended to promote machine usage and the inward migration of workers from other centres.^{4.}

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1. B.S.T.J. 2 November 1889 p397, the Northampton correspondent noted, "... the scarcity of suitable labour and the increased volume of trade during the year has drawn the attention of manufacturers toward machinery to overcome the difficulties experienced. Lasting and heeling machines have been adopted with success and, in two instances, finishing plant has been worked for some time, and these are about to be augmented by two others. H.E.Randall and another firm have decided to put down a set of machines.. Six of Bridges heeling machines are being worked.."
 2. B.S.T.J. 18 October 1890, p493, the Northampton correspondent noted, "...There is a difficulty felt in obtaining good reliable hands for the machine room, either as fitters or machinists. Years ago most of the manufacturers gave out their machine work to be done, and brought from the homes of those who seem to have done very well out of the profit of the labour employed. Under the necessity of keen competition, the major part of this work is now completed on the premises, the advantages of such being the opportunity of having every branch under one's eye and the knowledge of the materials used for the machines. Notwithstanding the comfort and regulation of a well conducted establishment, however, there are many girls who prefer occasional employment without supervision to a constant situation where discipline is enforced..." Cf. B.S.T.J. 10 September 1892 p311 notes that a lack of machine labour to operate machinery was hindering machine introduction.
 3. SLR 17 May 1890 p487, as in other years there was a shortage of first, second and third class labour in Northampton. In order to execute orders manufacturers had to resort to the use of inefficient and old workers. Workers tended to use the situation to bid up wages, and "...take all manner of liberties. The whole position seems to point to one issue - a great employment of machinery and also an increased importation of foreign-made footwear.
 4. Ibid. p485, the Northampton correspondent noted "...Business here continues very good and the difficulty in obtaining the necessary workmen is intensified..." He reports the inflow of Stafford lasters into the town.

In addition to the upward pressure on wages the shoe industry also experienced a similar upward movement in leather prices.¹ It was found upon close examination that established leather price indices - Sauerback's & Hoffman's - were constructed using a narrow range of heavy gauge, cheaper leathers that were not subject to large secular movements in price when compared with those leathers of finer quality. As such, given the mix of heavy and finer grade leathers used in footwear production, they do not adequately reflect the true increase in leather prices faced by the industry. The shoe industry used a wider range of leathers, from heavy ox hide for sole leather, to much finer calf leathers for upper linings: no account has been taken here of the use made of more exotic leathers like Kangaroo, crocodile etc. Upon a close examination of the weekly prices for leathers recorded in the trade press, it has been found that the heavier sole leather used show less volatility in price movement when compared with the lighter upper leathers. The price rise recorded amongst finer grades of leather was much greater than either Sauerback or Hoffman allow. Thus, whilst the price of heavy grades rose by a factor of two in the years 1889-1913, that of finer leather escalated by a factor of three for light Bulls to a factor of six for light calf skins.

Thus, using the weekly leather price lists published in the B.S.T.J. as a data base, a new leather index has been compiled, which more closely reflects the leather mix used by shoe manufacturers than the more general leather indices already available. The results of that study are tabulated in Fig 2: XXVIII below.² Whilst shoe leather prices show some turbulence around a falling trend

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1. Certainly in the 1880s and early 1890s, rising leather prices caused problems because shoe manufacturers could obtain easy credit, and they often priced goods fine. (SLR 27 September p309-10 discusses this issue). On the effect of tax credit in the industry see Chapter Five below.
 2. The index is based upon the aggregate movement of a range of seven leathers specifically used in shoemaking. The data is taken from the B.S.T.J., where the first regular, reliable publication of price tables dates from January 1889. Thereafter, publication is maintained, based on prices from provincial leather merchants although the location varies over time: all prices quoted are maximum prices paid for first quality English materials. Unfortunately, unaccountable gaps in publication - either complete or partial occurred in 1894-96 and 1909-11. Data collection: the price on the last week of each month was recorded and these averaged out to give an annual average price for each leather. These were further averaged, to give a single aggregate average shoe leather price for each year. Index Analysis: standard index analysis was utilised, using 1889, as a base year. No weights were applied to any one group of leathers and no account has been taken of inflation: all quoted prices are current prices: R.G.D. Allan Statistics for Economists (1956) Chap VI.

from 1889 to 1893, a consistently upward movement of prices generally can be observed from 1893. Around the turn of the century, a brief levelling out is noted, with prices resuming their upward path in the Edwardian period: an increase that gathers pace from c1910. Thus, with 1889 being taken as the base year, annual average shoe leather prices had advanced by 18½% within four years. Thereafter the index climbs steadily, being 66.7% above the base year by 1899; 77.8% in the next five year period, although here a discontinuous advance in price is noted; 103.7% above the base year by 1908; and 203.7% above by 1913.

In general terms, it can be postulated that these leather prices move in the direction of U.K. prices generally in the period.¹ However, the upward pressure experienced from c1893 resulted not just from a general rise in prices within the economy. The British shoe industry was subjected to artificially high raw material prices from this time as a result of the pricing policies of U.S. Leather cartels. At the heart of this problem lay the progressive penetration of British leather markets by American leather producing trusts: principally the United States Leather Company. This company was incorporated in America in 1893.² An amalgamation of 100 tanneries it controlled circa 75% of US tanned leather. It was formed to counteract the effects of the glut of hides coming onto the markets in the agricultural depression of 1892-95. Initially this was achieved by the buying and holding of huge stocks of hides. This tactic first stemmed the price fall, a fall of 5% only being recorded in 1893, and then progressively advanced the price for hides after a renewed intervention by the conglomerate in late 1894. Thus from July 1894 to March 1895 prices rose by 10% and rose a further 40% by September 1895. However independent U.S. tanning companies responded to this domination of the market place by the USLCo. by selling at below U.S.L. Co. prices and in counter-response that Co. suspended all production in

1. See for example, Mathias (1974) op. cit.p395. et seq.

2. H.W.Leudler Concentration of Control in American Industry (1931) p246. "...The leader in leather products is the United States Leather Co. In 1893 this company was formed for the purpose of combining the principal tanning plants making sole leather in the United States... In 1900 the company purchased a large group of tanneries in the West. Five years later it was absorbed by the Central Leather Co. which combined several other concerns.." It supplied 30% of U.S. sole leather.

Fig. 2: XXVIII: AVERAGE PRICES PAID FOR PRINCIPAL SHOE LEATHERS
& SHOE LEATHER INDEX 1889-1913

YEAR	AVERAGE ANNUAL LEATHER PRICES								SHOE LEATHER INDEX
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	
1889	4.6	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7	100.
1890	4.6	3.3	3.2	3.2	2.7	4.1	4.1	3.6	133.3
1891	3.9	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.7	3.9	3.8	3.4	125.4
1892	3.5	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.4	3.5	2.5	3.0	111.1
1893	3.8	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.3	3.5	5.1	3.2	118.5
1894									
1895									
1896									
1897	4.1	3.3	3.3	3.4	2.9	3.9	5.5	3.8	140.7
1898	4.2	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.1	5.1	5.9	4.2	155.6
1899	4.6	4.4	3.9	3.9	3.4	5.7	5.7	4.5	166.7
1900	4.5	4.3	4.0	4.0	3.2	5.4	5.5	4.4	163.0
1901	4.3	4.3	3.9	3.9	2.9	5.0	6.2	4.4	163.0
1902	4.5	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.2	5.6	6.5	4.5	166.7
1903	4.5	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.4	5.7	6.7	4.8	174.1
1904	4.7	4.4	4.3	4.2	3.5	6.3	6.5	4.8	177.8
1905	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.4	3.6	6.6	6.9	5.1	188.9
1906	5.2	5.6	5.5	5.2	4.2	7.4	8.2	5.9	218.5
1907	5.2	5.5	5.3	5.2	4.5	6.4	7.3	5.6	207.4
1908	5.2	5.2	5.4	5.3	4.1	6.1	7.3	5.5	203.7
1909									
1910									
1911									
1912	6.9	6.7	6.8	6.2	6.2	5.4	9.5	11.7	218.5
1913	7.4	7.1	7.3	7.3	6.0	9.8	12.5	8.2	303.7

Source: B.S.T.J.

- Notes: (a) Ox Hide 93-lbs up.
 (b) Ox Hide 53-lbs & under.
 (c) Light Cows
 (d) Heavy Cows
 (e) Bulls
 (f) Calf over 16-lbs
 (g) Calf under 9-lbs
 (h) Annual Average Composite Shoe Leather price.

Prices are all in old pennies.

December 1895 in a renewed bid to reimpose an upward shift in prices.^{1.}

Periodically over a five year period, the trade press reported, with growing disquiet, the price ring activities of the American tanning oligopolies, that were progressively able to impose a high, monopoly price structure on the British hide market to the detriment of both local leather merchants and shoe manufacturers. The ability of the U.S.L.Co to affect English leather prices rested primarily upon the level of U.S. leather imports into the country. By 1898 it was reported that circa 78% of US sole leather exports and circa 82% of upper leather were aimed at the British market.^{2.} Given that this represents a significant proportion of all leather used in the English shoe industry, then the pricing activities of the American leather men had marked effect in the market place. Moreover, this domination of the market had encouraged the utilisation of monopoly practices. Price fixing, and the holding of abnormally high levels of stock to create artificial scarcity have already been alluded to. In addition by March 1897, the position of the U.S.L.Co. was so firm that they imposed upon British merchants an agreement to force them to sell U.S.L. leather at a high price, so as to give a fixed level of profit.^{3.}

These market manipulations had strong repercussions upon the English shoe industry, as was noted in late 1895:

...Since (1893) the great rise in leather has unquestionably subjected shoe manufacturers to heavy losses in business, and it is now depressed mainly by the fact that, with leather above its cost of seven years ago, consumers quite generally refuse to purchase boots and shoes, because they believe that leather as well as hides must go down materially....^{4.}

At this date, the cost of leather represented circa 40% of the cost of footwear.

Given levels of consumer resistance to higher footwear prices, through much

1. This paragraph draws upon B.S.T.J. 7 December 1895 p588-89.

2. B.S.T.J. 29 May 1898 p769 and 4 May 1898 p768.

3. B.S.T.J. 13 March 1897 p375. The fixed profit level gave 1/4d per lb higher than current profit levels. Widespread criticism of such activities was freely expressed in this country, eg. B.S.T.J. 11 September 1897 p344 "... (it) shows how a combination of dealers can disturb the natural balance of commodities, if not permanently sufficiently long to cause irredeemable loss and incalculable harm to commerce. It is one of these unholy combinations that has for the last few years been disturbing the hide and leather trade, and for ought we know may itself yet have to eat of the worst of its own quixotic and mischievous antics...."

4. B.S.T.J. 7 December 1895 p589.

of 1896-99 the trade press recorded, with renewed alarm, attempts to "talk up" the prices of leather. It was widely held that the price of boots could not realistically be linked to the price of leather: "...Leather may go up or it may come down but the one thing unalterable is the price of boots..."¹. Unstable leather prices were problematic for the industry, because in order to retain market share, the individual shoe manufacturers needed to charge a steady price for his products. Product differentiation was slight, styles and quality similar, thus "... the contest is.. mainly one of price, to which all other considerations are subordinate..."². In any event, given the leather content of a single pair, it was difficult to cost on to final retail price variations in raw material price in the short run:

...A small increase of, say, 1d per pound on the price of one or two materials forming part of a boot, whilst representing a very large sum in aggregate, means so little on a pair that it is impossible to get it..³.

Under these trading conditions, it was widely believed that producers had to either weather high prices, or adjust production to reflect the changing price of raw materials, or buy large stocks of raw materials at favourable prices as opportunity dictated.

By September 1897, the editor of the Boot and Shoe Trades Journal spoke out vehemently against the artificial boom in hide prices. All talk of a hide scarcity, he claimed, was totally spurious. In Britain, where hide prices had risen "in sympathy", the position, since "the unwarrantable and mischievous boom of 1895..." was unequalled since 1860.⁴ There now existed no correlation between hide and leather prices, because English shoe manufacturers could tolerate further price increases only with difficulty. Consequently, British leather merchants, in contrast to 1895-96, now had to absorb at least part of any price increases themselves. It would be difficult, however, to further increase the price of

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1. B.S.T.J. 25 September 1897 p401. Cf. B.S.T.J. 5 February 1898 p218, where it was noted that shoe manufacturers were unable to pass on such price increases, except for special and large contract orders.
 2. Ibid, p402.
 3. Ibid, it was reported here that shoemakers had attempted to fix prices of footwear in 1895 to stem rising trends of selling at low prices, or below cost.
 4. B.S.T.J. 25 September 1897 p402.

leather given the high ruling prices, the editor suggested, but cautioned that future rises were inevitable. By comparison, the British hide and leather market was more ordered, leather competitively priced, and generally of a better quality. Given this, the editorial called for:- (1) the removal of middle man dealings in leather, and (11) for shoe manufacturers and tanners to unite in a voluntary limitation upon imported hides to stabilise the position:

...unless the peaceful order of trade is to be perpetually disturbed by booms and rumours of boom, by rings and corners, and every other caprice of the American leather jugglers, the British manufacturers will have to come nearer the British tanner, and work harmoniously with him for their mutual benefit. With the English tanning industry restricted as it is, to such comparatively small proportions, and boot manufacturers so dependable on other countries leather.. the Americans must ever be the dictators of the situation, able at all times to control the markets, inflate them at will, or depress them....¹.

In this way, British producers could stabilize the position, by thwarting the artificial U.S. hide boom. Nevertheless, little action was taken by British interest, and successive spring seasons brought renewed advances in U.S.L.Co. hide prices. Similarly, renewed calls were made in the press for English leather interests to take concerted action to loosen the American giants grip on the market:

...The perpetual disturbances in hide supply over the last few years have done incalculable harm to business, making trade in it difficult and restrictive; investing it with a worry and anxiety totally unnecessary.. But until tanners have the moral courage to face the problem of hide supply and attack the organised inflation of raw materials there will be little chance of the English leather trade refounding itself on a firm basis, or of releasing itself from the control of foreign speculators...².

In reality, British tanners had preferred to watch hide prices drift upward in the hope that leather prices would follow, but in this they had only been partly successful. Partly prompted by false hopes of gain, the tanners were now engaged in a process of "talking up prices", "and appear anxious to seize upon the first available pretext to inflate values..."³, as the sustained pressure on hide prices since 1893 had left them with little or no margin on leather sales.

1. B.S.T.J. 29 January 1898 p183
 2. B.S.T.J. 5 February 1898 p218.
 3. Ibid p217.

A leather market thus destabilised by monopoly pricing and an artificial scarcity of hides continued to prey upon shoe industry thinking in the ensuing years.^{1.} However, there is also evidence to suggest that in the wake of sustained high prices the industry was beginning to exercise greater economy in raw material use. In part, slackening demand for leather was caused by moderate trading in the late nineties,^{2.} and the advance in demand in the Edwardian years brought with it a general price advance.^{3.} However, comment was passed on the shoe industry's economy in the use of leather: for example, it was noted in 1899 that "... boot and shoe manufacturing uses less leather and exercises economy and uses substitutes..."^{4.} Moreover, in 1899 current market manipulations were complicated further by the emergence of another U.S. leather syndicate, the American Hide and Leather Company.^{5.}

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1. B.S.T.J. 18 February 1899, p25, noted that leather values were currently agitating the minds of all shoe manufacturers.. (who are)... fearing that the tanner will demand more money for his leather.. At the moment the tanner know he cannot advance prices..."
 2. Ibid.
 3. B.S.T.J. 11 August 1905 p214 noted upper buff hides had advanced a record three-fold in price from 1893 (4d to 12¹/₄d). "... the high rate ruling are a matter of manipulation by the packers..." Cf. B.S.T.J. 26 January 1906 p115 records an advance in prices by U.S. leather men.
 4. B.S.T.J. 7 October 1899 p451.
 5. B.S.T.J. 23 September 1899 p400. The new company was a combination of 25 American manufacturers of upper leathers registered on 28 August 1899, with an authorised capital of \$35 millions. Issued capital was \$28 millions, in addition to an issue of \$10 million in 6% bonds. Cf. H.W.Leudler op. cit. p247. "... Of almost equal prominence (with the United States Leather Co.) is the American Hide & Leather Co. formed in 1899 by the direct and indirect merger of 23 cos..." It produced c75% of upper leather in U.S.A.

VI

This general rise in manufacturing costs was in itself sufficient reason to precipitate a final shift away from outwork. Several factors had served to perpetuate outwork forms in shoemaking. The articles made were small, easily transportable, and the methods of fabrication easily fitted into outwork patterns of production, in addition to which the strongly seasonal character of the industry demanded a labour force size that could be easily contracted and expanded. The most economic way of doing this was by the retention of outwork.¹ Manufacturers and merchants faced little regulatory control by legislation, and were able to exert control over wage rates. On the other hand the system had disadvantages. The story is an old one by the late 19th Century, commented upon by many historians: the adjustments of transition had already been faced by many British industries. Herbert Heaton has aptly summed up these disadvantages in the following way:

....this congregation of labour was essential in some industries because of the nature of the work.. it was also becoming desirable in traditionally domestic occupations if output was to be increased greatly or quality improved. An employer could save time by bringing in labour rather than putting out material, train men to new kinds of skilled work, use greater division of labour, impose discipline, enforce regular hours, prevent embezzlement, and get his goods produced in a steadier stream. The putting-out system was neither a good technical school nor a satisfactory police system. There were obstacles, such as the cost of buildings, equipment, and supervision, and labour might be hostile; but these difficulties were being surmounted in some degree even before machinery and power added their economies to those already enjoyed by centralised production..2.

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1. It is interesting to contrast this with the problems facing manufacturers once the commitment to factory working had been taken. Heavier capital outlays and a more permanent work force found them attempting to spread production more evenly through the year. Short-time working had to be resorted to, but in addition the introduction of in-stock systems became more common, as did attempts to stimulate demand (increased levels of fashion consciousness in shoe design date from this time, as do the introduction of shoe sales at retail outlets).
 2. H. Heaton Economic History of Europe p552-53. Cf. Bythell op. cit. p155 "..outwork had many serious drawbacks for both the capitalist and the workers who were involved in it. A manufacturer who relied on outwork, for example oft had only slight control over the quality of the work made for him; he was liable to incur extra costs because the workers might embezzle some of his materials; and he could never be sure of keeping up regular production schedules or of meeting delivery dates..."

Although Heaton was primarily concerned with early 19th Century industrial experience, his conclusions apply equally well to our deliberations here. In an industry subject to sharp seasonal fluctuations, whilst a shoe manufacturer's fixed capital outlay and wages bill were low, he was prepared to tolerate these inherent disadvantages of outwork. However, as competition intensified and costs rose, so the need to eliminate these disadvantages likewise increased. By the 1890s this story of transition is clearly an old one, but despite this manufacturers faced a major confrontation with shoe workers who feared a loss of control over the work process.

The evidence is slight, but it appears that questions of poor quality work were not of major concern to Northampton manufacturers. A system of fines for poor workmanship remained in widespread use amongst firms in the town until the passing of the 1896 Truck Act. The need for strict quality control when outwork was collected was appreciated and several biographical sketches record that when new outworkers work was first submitted, some pairs were virtually taken apart to ensure that materials and workmanship were adequate. However, what manufacturers were quick to appreciate was that machine production brought a uniformity of quality not attainable with handwork. On the other hand, as has been noted, by the late 1880s, the supply of workers with the right kind of skills began to give cause for concern. Training had remained in the hands of shoe workers, who substantially controlled the workplace. As competition intensified so the desire of manufacturers to assume full control of production grew.

Of course this does presume that all manufacturers were seized of the need for fundamental organisational change as opposed to simply fitting machinery into the existing structure. Increased trade comment was drawn towards this issue

from 1890¹. In part this was due to some manufacturers assuming that machine introduction would inevitably enable them to simply cut labour costs by diluting labour.² But it went deeper than this. Some manufacturers were apparently ill-advised as to the most appropriate machines to use,³ and made attempts to absorb

1. For example, SLR 2 May 1891 p460. In an editorial, Are You Progressive Compared with the USA?, it was noted that the British system of shoe manufacture was "antiquated" when compared with America's, which had advanced rapidly in the past eighteen months: "...probably the trade revolution in this country has never advanced at the pace it is going today. But has our progress (in organisation) been such as would be to an absentee of eighteen months a matter of astonishment? We think not. Our advance has been slow and lathargic, and the sooner we wake up to a sense of this the better.." Later in May 1891, J.T.Day, the Editor, began a series of articles under the title, The American System of Shoe Manufacture. In the first of this series he noted, late 1890 witnessed "...a great movement toward a complete adoption of the factory system in the manufacture of boots and shoes in England.. rapidly changing conditions of trade render it incumbent upon manufacturers to reorganise factories upon what may be conveniently referred to as the American plan.."
2. For example SLR 28 November 1891 p590. The Leicester correspondent criticises the English insistence in using unskilled juvenile labour on machinery was a false cost saving. This propensity had been recognised by Munyan on his 1888 trip, and gave rise to his insistent demand that his Company would train operatives to use machinery. Cf. B.S.T.J. 11 October 1888 p277-78, where editorial comment under the title Homely Truths for Machinery Users, calls the use of unskilled, diluted labour as one of the English shoe manufacturers interminable problems. It was noted, "...If you want machinery to pay, you must work it by means of smart, capable, intelligent labour... thoroughly trained.. machines operated by shoddy labour will produce shoddy work..." Yet, the editorial entones, an essential feature of English machine company marketing was to stress that machines were capable of operation by a youth or woman.
3. For example B.S.T.J. 13 June 1891, where the complaints of Northampton manufacturers concerning the unsuccessful introduction of machines are noted. The causes: the wrong type of machine was purchased, or the machine's use was poorly managed. SLR 21 November 1891, p558, where it was recorded that although English manufacturers looked to machinery to improve efficiency, they were confused as to which to use. Cf. SLR 6 October 1888 p259; an article that criticises manufacturers failure to fully consider a machine's utility. Clearly manufacturers were faced with difficult investment decisions as the machinery market expanded, and conflicting claims were made by rival machine companies. See for example, B.S.T.J. 20 October 1888 p298, where the Northampton correspondent states Munyan's claims for the Goodyear machine: "...the chief question for solution in the matter is whether there is sufficient advantage in this machine over others to qualify manufacturers burdening themselves to pay the royalty that is asked for upward of fifteen years. Unquestionably, there is at present time a strong desire on the part of manufacturers to be acquainted with all machinery that is offered to the trade. It may, therefore, be useful in view of the fact that much machinery is at present lying on one side in Northampton to remind manufacturers that they should use every art to buy only machines which have been proved to be successful or if untried to secure them only on conditions of approval.."

them into current modes of production.¹ The lesson that machine working demanded a new working environment was more slowly realised by such manufacturers.

By contrast, the realisation of a need for organisational change was present amongst best practice firms,² but their inability to control the workplace, in order that change might be effected, delayed the efficient utilisation of modern machine production throughout the industry until after 1895. The rising cost and sophistication of manufacture pointed to the need for the manufacturer to take ^{greater} control of work-flow and productivity than the prevailing outwork system allowed. The fundamental organisational changes precipitated by these basic economic issues caused a major schism between master and man between 1890 and 1895.³ Established work customs and practice came to be seen as incompatible with modern trading conditions. For many years manufacturers had railed against

1. S.L.R. 15 March 1890 p261, an editorial on the Use and Abuse of Machinery noted that many were buying modern machinery only to fit them into an "antiquated system" of manufacture. This editorial also forcefully made the point that many still regarded machine purchases as experimental, and refused to appreciate the need for skilled operatives, choosing instead unskilled workers who produced low grade work. Such an approach had tended to militate against machine introduction in the short term. Cf. B.S.T.J. 6 October 1888 p259, for an early critique of manufacturers who failed to utilise machinery properly.
2. S.L.R. 22 May 1891 p1200. "...1890 witnessed a great movement towards the complete adoption of the factory system in the manufacture of boots and shoes in England and rapidly changing conditions of trade render it incumbent upon manufacturers to reorganise their factories upon what might be conveniently referred to as the American plan.." Cf. S.L.R. 1 February 1890 p183, where a prominent manufacturer commented on a wage increase in the following way: "... It is to be regretted that there is this continuous tinkering with the wage statement from time to time, which creates a feeling of unrest and disquietude, and would be an advantage all round were the existing system of labour Americanised, and the team system brought into more active operation, and the hands placed on day work. Cf. B.S.T.J. 26 November 1892 p637. Editorial comment entitled, "The Advantages of Factories.."
3. Few of the earlier secondary sources on the industry view the conflict of these years in terms of changing patterns of control: rather, the union's opposition to machinery is stressed. An exception, however, is Adcock op. cit. p45. et seq.

worker control.^{1.} Yet as long as new machine operations were merely grafted on to the existing transitional outwork structure, these old, entrenched patterns of control persisted. Once the commitment to centralised production was conceded,^{2.} this stable state was disturbed. Clearly, by 1890 attitudes were hardening on both sides of industry, as the operation of new and improved machinery became compromised by the retention of an organisation structure rooted in

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1. Particularly in times of trade revival and seasonal rush, trade reports record that difficulty was experienced in keeping pieceworkers steadily at work: they were more used to a rhythm of work determined by a pattern of social distractions and associations. For example, B.S.T.J. 23 May 1885 p304, "..the short period before Whitsuntide is one of great rush.. Of course, this being the case, the difficulty is to get the work done. The work people know they can have it when wanted, yet do just what they like, and no more. There seems no control over (pieceworkers), as to how much they shall do, or how long they shall work. They appear to have every licence to do as they like, while on the other hand..(day workers) must expect summary dismissal if they are not at their work regularly and turn out so much a week...The manufacturers ought to have this opportunity of making up for the slackness which is sure to prevail after the holidays and his employees ought to make up for the loss of earnings during that quiet time, but it is a fact that, in the majority of cases, the workmen have no idea of the future!" Again, in the Spring season of 1890 trade was poor, but trade correspondents at Leicester and Northampton comment on pieceworkers taking "all manner of liberties" at a time of overflowing order and labour shortages (see B.S.T.J. 17 June 1886 p493 Cf. discussion in Brooker (1980) loc. cit. p153-55. Increasingly, unsuccessful attempts were made by manufacturers to exert more control. For example, SLR 24 August 1889 p238 "..I hear that the Manufacturers Association will shortly have under consideration a question connected with Bank Holidays. Under existing conditions, these periods of relaxation are a source of considerable worry and annoyance to houses with a well arranged plant and staff. At present all the factories have closed for two or three days, and many of them for the whole week. In those which open on Wednesday or Thursday, work is resumed in a half hearted and perfunctory manner, and one portion of the staff will be absent and the other present. It frequently happens at such times, that the closer will be waiting for clicker, the laster for the closer, and the finisher for the laster, and general disorganisation prevails. To remedy this state of affairs, the advisability of a general 'shut up' for the entire week will, I believe, be submitted to the Association.." In this period, Northampton manufacturers tried to switch both Militia training and the local race meeting away from the busy spring period.
 2. An important aspect of the new, improved machines for lasting, welting, and finishing introduced in the late 1880s was that it was now possible to realistically introduce sub-divided team-work. Such production, of necessity, required factory operation (SLR 6 October 1888 p262). American patterns of team working were first successfully operated at Northampton in 1889 by Manfield & Sons in relation with machine lasting. (SLR 21 September 1889 cf. B.S.T.J. 7 May 1892 p589).

working. Employers experienced none of the anticipated increases in productivity,^{1.} whilst employees became increasingly militant in the protection of customary work practices.^{2.} Although some improvements were achieved,^{3.} what prevented a general change was the qualified acceptance amongst shoeworkers towards these changes.^{4.} This is not the place to look in detail at this conflict, which has received extensive treatment elsewhere.^{5.} Some of its important features, however, are important to our discussion here. Having expended much to establish uniform wage statements in main centres, and a build up of membership and industrial strength generally, the union's main official concern was to protect wage levels and

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1. Manufacturers now looked to attaining mastery of the workplace, See B.S.T.J. 28 June 1890 p629-30, where an editorial entitled "Moving with the Times" argued that the end of outwork was imperative if manufacturers were to take control of the workplace. Here it is argued that centralised production would bring: (1) a steadier pace of work; (11) a greater uniformity of work; and (111) a saving in the costs of production. Cf. S.L.R. 13 June 1891 p609. "...It is this opposition to machine working which is now exercising the minds of machine users. The question asked is how shall this antagonism of labour to machinery be overcome?... It has been with the trade for years, but with transition in sight it is a problem which must be answered..."
 2. Like other centres, Northampton was racked by a growing number of small, increasingly militant, strikes against change.. The first of these occurred in the summer of 1890 (See SLR 11 July 1890 p28, and SLR 26 July 1890 p79).
 3. Best practice firms clearly desired change, as an American commentator revealed in 1890 further developments in the town amongst the more progressive firms were thwarted because of union opposition (Boot and Shoe Recorder December 1890 p39). Nevertheless in January 1890, Stubbs and Grimsdell new factory became the first to fully centralise all production. (B.S.T.J. 11 January 1890 p46). Two years later, Manfield & Sons became the first firm nationally to introduce the American system of shoe manufacture in a purpose-built, single storey factory: when opened, the SLR noted that manufacturers were watching anxiously to see if Manfield's could solve the problem of implementing new work practices: "... A great interest attaches to this labour on its trial. There is not a single process for which machinery has been invented and worked with anything like success but the machine is here found. There are several firms who use machinery very largely, but the experiment has never been tried on the same scale as is now attempted in Messrs. Manfield's works.." (SLR 26 August 1892). Cf. SLR 22 May 1891 p1200 quoted above.
p497
 4. This was not simply a crude, anti-machine stance by the workforce, but rather a broader-based conflict concerning new working conditions. Just as they had mastery in the workshop, so they expected that mastery in the workshop to prevail in the factory. See SLR 26 May 1888 p515. At the Biannual N.U.B.S.O. conference, the union's leader, William Inskip, spoke of the machine introduction, per se, was inevitable, the union should oppose, not the machine, but the new system of work that accompanied it. Cf. SLR 4 August 1888 p159. At a meeting in Northampton concerning machine introduction, Inskip again stressed that the union did not simply oppose machinery, but the change in working conditions that resulted.
 5. Fox Op. cit. sections IV and V passim.

members jobs. Priority was therefore given to opposing wage reductions resulting from machine introduction, the indiscriminate use of the team worksystem, and the attempts that were made to dilute labour. But, in addition, there was considerable rank and file reaction at this and other centres to the loss of control over the work process.¹ Although the union's history throws less light on this aspect of the conflict, it nevertheless is of central importance to this discussion.² Indeed, at Northampton as at other centres, one of the potent issues that reveals the fundamental significance of industrial change for the shoe worker

1. Brooker (1980) loc. cit. p154.

2. The extent to which official union policy was out of step with rank and file reaction is strikingly shown by the union's indoor working campaign, by which agreements were entered into at main centres to phase-out outwork: at Northampton agreement was reached in 1893. This reflects the growing social pressure that was placed upon the industry to eradicate the sweated conditions caused by sub-contracting. The union saw this as an opportunity to enhance working and social conditions, but to many workers it represented a significant and undesirable loosening of their control over the workplace (Brooker 1980) loc. cit. p155-56). Clearly, this campaign further precipitated change, for manufacturers inevitably saw it as an opportunity to speed the process of change to the factory. See for example, (1) SLR 6 September 1890 p296, "The Workshop Movement in Northampton": "... the movement is not by any means one of hostility to the employers, but rather it is intended to consolidate the settlement arrived (in 1887) And further it may be said to be another throb of the pulse of the progressive evolution toward a more highly organised state of factory labour.. (This) may not be the intention of the men to achieve, but such will be the inevitable effect...", (11) SLR 30 December 1892 p1600, "... If the question of Indoor Workshops is pressed it will lead to the introduction of all kinds of labour-saving machinery, as there is no possibility of finding inside room for all workers employed by many firms. The available space will inevitably be used for machines which, in willing hands, will do the work hither to done by hand... and fewer hands will be necessary.. finishing machinery. has been little used in Northampton but the signs are not wanting that this latest move on the part of the union will have this effect.."; (111) SLR 2 December 1892 p1340, where it is noted that many manufacturers regretted the local Manufacturers Association's acquiescence to this union demand. The writer, however applauded the Association's pragmatism for "... the hardship, if any, will fall more heavily upon the men.. for their habits have been formed in home labour, and their homes built to provide for that condition of things. It is in some respects very fortunate for employers that the movement originated with the union. Had it been initiated by the employers it would undoubtedly have provoked a serious strike.. A similar pattern of things is noted at other centres; for example SLR 7 June 1890 p691 "Effects of Indoor Workshops in London".

was the increase in unofficial strike action in these years.^{1.} The degree to which they and the union were able to impede the process of change prior to 1895 is clearly shown by two documents issued by manufacturers. The first was published by the Manufacturers National Federation some months before the 1895 National Strike. To become known as the seven commandments, it amounts to an ultimatum demanding that manufacturers should have the right to assume full control of their work premises.^{2.} This direct challenge led to the 1895 strike.^{3.} The second document was issued in the wake of the union's defeat in that strike. Formulated by the Northampton Manufacturers Association in order to consolidate their position, it comprises a set of strict factory rules that were enforced at Association factories: they

1. These strikes began in the late 1880s and centred upon two issues: (1) the increased powers given to foremen (an early example, was the month long dispute at Simon Colliers in 1890; SLR 18 October 1890 p423); and (11) the attempts made by manufacturers to restrict social association at work in order to improve workflow and productivity. The latter are epitomised by locking-in disputes: manufacturers sought to lock men in during work hours to prevent unrestrained access and egress. The earliest recorded dispute of this nature occurred at A. Stanton & Co. in 1887 (N.M. 17 July 1887 p.5.) Cf. SLR 13 September 1890 p262 where the prevalence of such disputes was remarked upon. At Leicester, such was the regularity of these disputes that in 1891 the local arbitration board decided to police unofficial strike action, resolving to fine or suspend strikers from the union. (SLR 8 August 1891 pl38). Such disputes continued through to 1914 (see Brooker (1980) loc. cit pl59). An altogether different reaction to modernity by some shoe-makers is shown by the spread of co-operative production societies in the industry (K. Brooker Changes in Workshop Control and Industrial Relations in the Victorian Shoe Industry 1977, unpublished seminar paper, p.26. et seq.)
2. The demands made were: (1) That there shall be no advance or reduction of the present minimum rate of wages or piecework statements or alteration of the hours of labour.. within two years of 31 December 1894...; (2) That every employer is entitled (a) to the fullest control over the management of his factory, and to make such regulations as he deems necessary for time keeping and good order (b) to pay either the recognised piece or day rates (c) to introduce machinery at any time without notice; (3) That the present is not an opportune time for the introduction of piece-work in connection with lasting and finishing machinery. That whenever such time arrives the wage list shall be based on the average wages earned on day, and the time fairly occupied in each operation; (4) That there shall be no interference with the output either from machine or hand-labour by the union or its officials, and instructions shall not be given by them to restrict the amount of work to be performed by workmen in connection there with (5) That every employer is entitled to have his work, or any part of it, made in any town or place, provided he pays (a) the recognised rate of wages.. or (b) such wages as may be fixed by mutual arrangement with his workpeople; (6) That each employer has the sole right to determine what workmen he shall employ; (7) That the statement of the secretary of an (Employers) Association or of a branch of the Union shall be accepted on either side as proof of membership for Federation purposes..."
3. For an account of the strike, see Fox op. cit. Chapter 22

amount to a statement of the manufacturers assumption of full control over production.¹ This was followed up by the formulation of a joint policy in the town towards recruitment in order to stifle the activities of militant trade unionists². The local Association viewed this as the logical culmination of a long effort to attain mastery of the factory. From this base, the overdue organisational changes were pursued.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that outwork was never completely eclipsed in the industry. To view this rigidly as the passing of an antiquated system is not entirely a true reflection of the industry's organisation. As is noted at several points in this thesis, firms were more flexible than this. So, many retain a small outwork force for specialist work, whilst others were prepared to

1. B.S.T.J. 21 April 1895 p499. Northampton Association factory rules.

"This factory is open to Unionists and Non-Unionists without distinction. Coercion of interference of any kind between workmen is not permitted. Any breach of this rule must be immediately reported to the firm. The posting up of any notices except with the sanction of the employer is forbidden. Shop meetings must not be held in any part of the premises, nor collection of money made for any purpose whatever, except with the permission of the firm. The doors will be locked for half an hour after opening time, then opened to let in late comers, after which they will continue locked for the remainder of the morning or afternoon, as the case may be. Operatives are to confine themselves to their own department of the factory and no one will be admitted to any part of the factory except the actual employees. Any other person is to apply first at the office or counting-house, and should any person or persons not on actual employ of the firm be found on the premises without permission, he or they will be required to leave forthwith.

"Operatives are required to proceed quietly with their work, and to complete same with reasonable despatch. Any pieceworker leaving work undone for more than 24 hours will be liable to have such work taken away. Should a pieceworker be kept waiting for more than an hour, he may request permission from the foreman to leave the factory, and may not re-enter except at the times before specified. All operatives on weekly wages are required to give, and they will receive, one full week's notice to leave, to expire on the ordinary pay-day, except in cases where the manufacturer and operatives have mutually agreed to waive the practice of giving and taking notice. Operatives are strictly forbidden to take any of their employer's goods or any work, whether made or unmade, off the premises, without permission or any parcel without a pass from the foreman of his department. Should any man desire to raise any question as to the quality of work or to claim any extra, he is to follow the arbitration rules strictly. Swearing, using obscene language, singing, shouting, or unnecessary noise; sending out for beer or other intoxicating drink; throwing leather or other articles at each other, and writing or drawing upon the walls or doors of the factory, are forbidden. Smoking is strictly forbidden in any part of the premises, and no light may be struck until the smoker is clear of the factory."

2. Brooker (1980) *ibid.*

expand and contract their outwork function according to the dictates of supply or demand.^{1.}

Thus, to use, as Church does, the growing conflict between trade union and employer in the early 1890s as an index of the manufacturers inability to introduce machinery is quite wrong.^{2.} The orthodox line here is plain: the years prior to 1895 were marked by a business community that was not reactive to change. The extent to which this over-simplifies the position as has already been alluded to in the above discussion of change in the transitional period. Church argues that in the absence of any data concerning machine introduction "... the rising intensity of Union hostility to machinery.." made is that from c1890, the increasingly bitter confrontation concerning new work practices and patterns of control is in fact a chronicle of the latter's inability to substantially introduce machinery. Leaving aside the issue whether N.U.B.S.O. was ever simply and starkly opposed to machine introduction per se, if a close examination is made of available sources

1. This progressive assessment can be found in several accounts of outworking. See, for example, Bythell op. cit. p156, "...Yet with all these imperfections for both sides, what has emerged from this study.. has been the amazing persistence - even vitality - of this antique system in the nineteenth century. Over the century, undoubtedly, the long term history of outwork is one of gradual retreat, so that by 1900 its role was extremely limited; but the very gradualness of its decay, and its capacity to go on cropping up again... shows that it had some inherent advantages too. (Cf. Lloyd's assessment of the cutlery trade noted above). But note Marshall's stricture in his Principle of Economics (1910 6th Edition) that the manufacturer will shift factory and outwork operation according to the financial advantages that presented themselves, he notes, "...There is a continual contest between the factory and the domestic system, now one gaining and now the other: for instance just at present the growing use of sewing machines worked by steam power is strengthening the position of the factories in the boot trade.. On the other hand the hosiery trade is being tempted back to the dwelling house by recent improvement in hand knitting machines..." (p295-96). The work of Kropotkin mirrors this conclusion, see, for example, "The Small Industries of Britain" Nineteenth Century 48 (1900) p256 passim; as does that of Gonner. Thus in the 1890s, during the move to factory production, low wage costs continued to attract Northampton manufacturers to send some grades of work to outlying villages (SLR 19 October 1894 p856). This persisted well into the 20 Century, when a shortage of closers resulted in an extension of outwork. See description of A. & W. Church & Co. above.
2. Church (1968) loc. cit. p323 Indeed contemporaries firmly argued against such a thesis. For example B.S.T.J. 19 August 1893 p207, where the Northampton correspondent firmly argued that union hostility had not prevented machine introduction. He added that such introduction had not always brought the expected returns but argued that this was due to the output capacities being exaggerated by shoe machinery companies.

reviewed above, it is clear that from the late 1880s the pace of industrial change is of an altogether different character than formerly experienced in the shoe industry.¹ What that hostility does signify is the attempt by manufacturers to reduce the shoeworkers control over the workplace by overthrowing old work practices and customs inconsistent with machine working. What is quite clear from the evidence is that the union's opposition did not prevent machine introduction, but its productive, synchronised use.

Consequently, although the crucial decision both to mechanise and to use full factory production had been made by best practice firms, many problems remained in the decade after 1895. This decade witnessed the mechanisation of average practice firms and the critical changes in work practices; delayed until employers had gained control of the workplace following the national stoppage of 1895. Manufacturers were now able to fully exploit the new technology by systematising and rationalising work practices to suit modern machine working. Whereas in 1895 S. Hunter, the American treasurer of the Goodyear Shoe machinery Company, was still critical of the British industry:

...I am now more than ever convinced that it is time for English manufacturers to look into their processes and organisation with a view to their adoption.²;

by 1905 E.J.Swaysland was able to report that:

...The present system of factory management may be safely considered to have come into general use about 1895; before that time supervision was not very rigid, the accounts were loosely kept and most of the data upon which prices were

1. A useful summary of the position of best practice firms at Northampton in relation to machinery prior to 1895 can be had from William Hickson's evidence before the Royal Commission on Labour (Royal Commission on Labour: Minutes of Evidence before Group C. Vol II, 1892 (c 6795 - VI) XXXVI Pt. II Qq 15813 to 15901. Evidence heard on 23 February 1892). Hickson was a senior partner in a leading Northampton shoe firm. He informed the Commission that despite opposition, machinery was being introduced as an indispensable aid to attaining efficient, low cost production. It was an important factor in the shoe industry, which he viewed as being then in a state of transition. He noted, "...We ourselves in our manufactory are in a state of transition. That is to say, we are gradually putting up machines which are superceding hand labour.. We have not got them all in place yet, but we are getting them by degrees.." (Q15837) "... we are now gradually producing by machine, work as good as can be done by hand.."
2. B.S.T.J. 5 May 1895 p402

based were matters of memory or opinion; the higher margin of profit common to that time no longer exists:- and therefore more exacting methods of supervision and keeping accounts have been adopted...¹.

Thus, machine introduction on a scale sufficient to precipitate structural change in shoemaking pre-dates the time scale of the orthodox case by almost a decade.

1. Swaysland (1905) op. cit. p 231 (This period of rationalisation witnesses a shake out of small masters and inefficient, old-established firms, which is explored in Chapters 3 & 6 below). Cf. SLR 20 September 1895, p627 records Swaysland's assessment of the position in 1895, after a visit to the U.S.A. He writes of the "... perfectly organised system in every American factory.. The American system is a system of sub-division in the extreme and everything that can be done on a machine is done.. I have come back from American convinced that the sub-division of labour which prevails there must come here (or otherwise) America will beat us in foreign markets unless we hurry up and adopt their methods.."

VII

This chapter on structural change has argued that established thinking about the process of industrialisation in the shoe industry needs to be reappraised.

At the centre of the evaluation is the contention that the periodisation of change is more complex than the orthodox case allows. There are three stages in this long, discontinuous process of change between 1857 and 1905, with each stage revealing a cogent developmental theme crucial to the final shape of the modern wholesale manufacturing shoe industry. It has been argued that the vital watershed in this process occurred not in 1895 but in 1887. Moreover, it is quite wrong to regard the pace of change, especially in better quality areas like Northampton, prior to this date as being slow or backward. The long transitional phase is of more significance than the orthodox view allows, for the revolution in retailing techniques which established the dominance of the wholesale sector in domestic shoe markets, were of greater importance than the initial, partial mechanisation of the industry. Throughout this phase, extensive growth patterns and mixed organisational system of production provided increased opportunities for small masters to enter the industry, and ensured the maintenance of outwork.

It is against this more complex periodisation that the orthodox explanation of modernisation must be assessed. This orthodoxy argues that change was signalled by major shifts in trading caused by a heavy penetration of U.S. footwear into world markets: shifts in trade that effectively overcame both entrepreneurial conservatism and worker hostility. The re-appraisal of these events has modified that view in a number of important ways, however. First, it has been established that the quantum leap in machine usage occurred nearly a decade before the heavy penetration of the world's markets by America. Secondly, worker hostility was unable to stem the introduction of machines into the industry, although their efficient use and the necessary organisational changes within the workshop were delayed until after the shoe manufacturers had wrested control of the workplace from the shoe-workers in 1895. Thirdly, if this staging of change is indeed correct, then the orthodox reliance upon trade

penetration as a mono-causal factor is inadequate. Clearly, shifting trading patterns were of no little importance, but the causation of change is more complex than this. For in addition, it has been argued above that important shifts in supply factors had an important role to play; both rises in raw material and labour costs, the decline of craft skill amongst the workforce, and a social shift in attitudes toward outworking.

And, fourthly, the orthodox characterisation of shoe manufacturers and of shoe manufacturers thinking has been challenged. Clearly, there were differences of approach and here Salter's conceptualisation of entrepreneurial groups being segregated as best practice and average practice firms in order to begin to explain the lags in machine adoption has to be utilised. Clear also, from the small amount of persuasive evidence that is available, is the conclusion that the pace and character of change was based, not on an entrepreneur's degree of innate reticence to change, but on the more pragmatic dictates of individual patterns of profitability and the pattern of trading opportunities that faced the shoe manufacturer. The orthodox case views change in the industry as proceeding from a small group of large, progressive manufacturers, whilst the industry's diverse, small master base is monolithically viewed as having an essentially negative role: they are men of straw.

It must now be the task of this thesis to turn the focus on this wide diversity of membership within this manufacturing group. Although the centralisation of production was taken further in this industry than any other craft-based industry in the thirty years before the Great War, its small master base was never eradicated. The position of small masters and of small scale production in industrialisation was equal in importance to the role played by progressive, best practice firms, but has never been the subject of close analysis. Therefore, it is now important to begin to question the role of the small master during industrialisation.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SIZE, CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF THE
NORTHAMPTON FOOTWEAR BUSINESS COMMUNITY

At the centre of the orthodox view on the role of the U.S. invasion in the industrialising process within the footwear industry is a central theme that modern methods progressively eclipsed existing modes of production and traditional attitudes of thought: that increased levels of market competition instilled in a new generation of English shoe manufacturers an increased awareness of the need for a larger and more efficient scale of operation and distribution. As a result, attitudes about production techniques, marketing, product design and so on, were realigned. Both Church and Head independently conclude that the display of business skill and ability shown by small numbers of progressive shoe manufacturers represents one of the most successful 'turnabouts' in the fortunes of a British industry in the years prior to the Great War. A success which was founded upon relative scale economies and an increased concentration of capital. On the basis of such a conclusion, one is but one step away from accepting the interests of progressive manufacturers and with it a dominant, contemporary economic orthodoxy, as being synonymous with the interests of the business community in the shoe industry as a whole.

However, any analysis of industrialisation within this trade that gives a centrality to the role of a business elite in that process, provides only a partial insight. Indeed, such a narrow perception of change raises as many problems as it purports to solve. It loses sight of a central axiomatic point: the footwear industry developed from and retained a small master base. Like many nineteenth century small industries, that of shoemaking was peopled by a complex, heterogeneous manufacturing group, which was underpinned by small-scale production. Its businessmen were characterised by considerable diversity and breadth: differing individual wealth levels, varying skills and skill levels and contrasting attitudes and ideologies. As one journalist noted of the

Northampton manufacturing class in 1887:

... shoe manufacturers are to be found in nearly every street and all sorts of conditions, from the swell who turns out in his carriage down to the industrious manufacturers of 2s 9d bluchers ...¹

Such a widely cast group inevitably utilised a variety of business strategies and adopted a range of ideological positions. These played an important role in the evolving, modern structure of the industry and gave rise to a close interaction springing up between the large manufacturer and small master.

Above all, shoemaking was an industry characterised by a high turnover of membership, which penetrated and had an effect upon every facet of the industry's activities. However, because the orthodox view assumes the response of the numerically small oligarchical sub-group to be the group response, small master attitudes to change and the close working relationship that existed between large and small firms, dimensions crucial and fundamental to our understanding of the entire business community's reaction to change, are necessarily missing. What strategies were small masters able to adopt and to what extent did they survive the new industrial regime? A recognition of this omission must be the starting point of any discussion about boot manufacturers' attitudes and strategies toward change. And it is precisely this lack of a sense of the industry's variety and diversity, coupled with an implicit acceptance of the orderly concentration of capital and rising dominance of scale economies within the industry that, ultimately, must undermine the orthodox view, necessitating a re-evaluation.

This is not to totally deny the presence of a progressive elite group that exerted considerable influence upon the industry.² Rather, what is brought into

1 S.L.T. 19 March 1887 p7. A 2s 9d blucher was a cheap, common grade boot.

2 Indeed at a later point in this thesis an elite group of firms is isolated, its industrial strategies examined and its social impact upon Northampton examined (see Chapters 7 and 8 below). The group represents between 6 - 8% of all firms trading in our period. This elite was present and influential by 1887 and although there was a shift in membership to some extent, their hold over the industry was reinforced in the period. Nevertheless, the small master group was never totally eclipsed.

question here is the concept, suggested by the current literature, of an orderly, progressive characterisation to change.

I

As a first step towards understanding the character and nature of this heterogeneous manufacturing class and of the group's economic reactions and strategies toward change, it is the central task of this chapter to reach an understanding of the basic dynamic structure of Northampton's shoe business community: the internal changes in membership and function of the firms which occurred and the changes in the structure and size of firms taking place over time. And above all, to begin to understand the symbiotic relationship which existed between small masters and the emerging elite.

To achieve this, the historian is faced with a major methodological problem: how to adequately study movements and trends in membership pattern of an industry's business class. Business historians have consistently argued that longevity and turnover studies should be a necessary prelude to our understanding of the nineteenth century business community. A foundation without which any other accretion of knowledge lacks direction and form. Amongst others, Professor P. L. Payne has made the call for just such an extension of our basic knowledge about the firm: for example, concerning the age structure of firms, the nature of family control and so forth.¹ As Professor R. A. Church noted in 1980, without such basic information our task is in jeopardy from the very outset:

... Unfortunately, we know little about the longevity of firms and even less about the differential survival rates and comparative profitability of large and small firms, which makes the implied differences in structure and profitability of business before and after circa 1830 difficult to identify ...²

1 P. L. Payne, British Entrepreneur in the Nineteenth Century (1974) cf E. M. Sigsworth and J. M. Blackman op cit. For information on family control in Northampton firms, see Chapters 5 to 7 below.

2 R. A. Church "Problems and Perspectives", in R. A. Church (Ed) Dynamics of Victorian Business (1980) p40.

Yet, to date, little has been achieved by way of detailed empirical investigation in Britain. Much of what is known relies upon impressions, truisms, or generalisations extrapolated from information gleaned from histories of industries and of individual firms. The complexity and difficulty in generating such information renders the answering of such basic questions an empirically formidable task, but if this study was to avoid such pitfalls what was required was a set of data bases from which to proceed. Placing questions of profitability temporarily aside, the initial requirement was for a data base which would reveal, not just membership size at a point in time, but also how the rate and pattern of turnover of firms shifted in response to changes in the industry. The only readily accessible, comprehensive and comparable source which enables one to isolate lists of businessmen over time is the local trade directory. From this, tentative conclusions as to the pattern of business opportunity within the Northampton shoe industry can be drawn.

The utilisation of local trade directories here aims to provide as complete a picture of the changing size and structure of the footwear business group in Northampton - or, possibly, any English manufacturing town - than has previously been the case. It achieves this in two ways.

First, previous writers on the industry have tended to concentrate upon the size and composition of just the wholesale manufacturing group, for were they not the main architects of change?¹ It will, however, be progressively argued here that such an interpretation is too narrow and functional. Instead, the size and composition of the entire 'industry group' must be considered. The wholesale manufacturers were but one, although arguably the most important, of three broad sub-groups within the industry, viz:-

¹ Anon "History of Shoemaking in Northampton" Footwear Organiser August 1932 cf V.C.H. Northamptonshire ii p320.

- (i) wholesale manufacturers.
- (ii) retail shoemakers.
- (iii) a wholesale ancillary group of sub-contractors and component manufacturers.

Secondly, the study seeks to reveal and measure, in as far as this is possible, the constantly shifting internal structure of the industry group. In as far as directories have been utilised before, little attempt has been made to extend this beyond a simple exercise in chronological head-counting of firms.¹ Such conclusions merely reveal the movement in the group's aggregate membership size at fixed points in time, revealing nothing about the other equally important matters discussed above. By way of extension, this study will use directory evidence to address three areas of enquiry:

- (i) explain the relationship which exists between changing industrial structure and the shifting size of sub-groups, which go to make up the Northampton footwear manufacturing class during the secular period of change.
- (ii) to isolate these sub-groups and in as far as it is possible, determine and plot the size of membership over time, including entry and exit rates to the sub-group.
- (iii) to begin to account for the shifting membership patterns and trends both within and across those sub-groups.

Throughout the study the unit of measurement will be the firm.

A detailed discussion of the techniques used in the study can be found in Appendix I,² but a short explanation is appropriate. In essence, the technique is one of comparing the lists of firms found in each Northampton trade directory published between 1840 and 1914. At an early stage it was anticipated that a

1 Ibid.

2 See below, p 582

detailed study of the type undertaken by McGarry¹ in the U.S.A. might be feasible. McGarry was concerned with high turnover rates and business failure amongst shopkeepers in Buffalo, U.S.A. , and was able to plot shifts in group composition using annually published and carefully prepared trade directories. By contrast, Northampton directories in our period were less regularly published; published by different publishers: and questions have been raised concerning the accuracy of the data provided. Thus, no such detailed statistical analysis was possible. However, such is the importance of an understanding of shifting group composition to this thesis, a modified methodology was devised to overcome these deficiencies. In order to ensure continuity was^{as} complete a coverage as possible, it was necessary to modify, amend and supplement directory information. Supplemental evidence was drawn from a range of sources and extensively utilised.² Indeed, in the course of the study firms were found that were never cited in a trade directory.

Thus, what is arrived at for analytical purposes can be described as a Corrected Directory Analysis (C.D.A.) As stated above, this goes beyond discreet firm counting, very much the norm in British studies, to provide evidence of longevity and of the turnover rate amongst firms (the trend figure). Such an extension of current practice is crucial when studying a small master industry, of course, as any industry characterised by a large proportion of small producers will experience a high level of turnover: a rapid change in membership. Many writers have attested to such high, endemic mortality, but there has been no major examination of this phenomenon.

II

Initially, then, attention must be focused upon the changing number of firms which existed in the Northampton shoe industry as a whole: the industry group. Figure 3iA plots the total number of business units between 1840-1914.

1 E. D. McGarry Mortality in the Retail Trade (1930)

2 Ibid p583cites the sources.

From the graph, two interrelated shifts in the size of the town's shoe community over time can be observed.

(a) A secular shift in group size.

This is attributable to shifts in business opportunities and confidence resulting from long term changes in trading conditions and the changing state of technology, productive techniques and marketing within the industry. Recalling the periodisation which has been used to explain change in the industry, this secular movement in the number of firms in operation can readily be set against and related to those changes.

The overall picture which emerges is one of a 757.4% increase in the number of firms in operation in 1893 (50.5) as compared with 1840 (67). In the 20 years after 1893, a sharp contraction in group size is observed: the number of firms in 1914 stood at 227, 55% below the 1893 figure.

In the period 1840-1914, two clear breaks in trend occur. The first can be observed between the 1858-61 directory lists, when machinery was first introduced into the trade. Prior to this, early group membership totals reveal quite modest levels of increase, mirroring the lower levels of economic activity then prevailing. At this time, Northampton manufacturers faced strong market resistance to their products.¹ After 1858, however, new technology and rising demand completely re-aligned business opportunities. By 1864, the number of shoe firms in the town had reached a point 36.7% above the corresponding total of 1858. From this time, the secular trend is upwards, though discontinuously so: a discontinuity clearly linked to short-run trade cycle effects.² This trend

1 A. Adcock op cit p39. In the period after the Napoleonic wars quality standards fell in the town to a point where many shops in London and elsewhere displayed the legend 'no Northampton goods sold here'.

2 See E.I. Altman, Corporate Bankruptcy in America (1971) p14-15. Here Altman looks at the scope and magnitude of business failure over time. By reference to U.S. entry-exit data he suggests that the number of new entries will exceed discontinuances. He concludes "(The U.S. data) strongly suggests that failure rate experience cannot be explained by long term secular trends, but more likely by cyclical forces and other macroeconomic factors". (p15).

conforms to the prevailing extensive growth character of the industry at this time. Underpinned by low capital requirements, a large proportion of hand labour and out working, these characteristics lay at the heart of expanding business opportunities. Increasing numbers of small producers were attracted into the industry's ranks, particularly, though never exclusively, in subcontracting and component manufacturing functions, which trace their origin to machine introduction.¹

After 1893, however, this secular trend is reversed; expansive opportunity was replaced by a narrowing of opportunity and of shake-out, more particularly within the wholesale sector in the wake of the more intensive use of capital and of increasing scale economies achieved in production. Between the 1893 and 1900 lists, the number of firms in operation fell by 64%. A reflection, in part, of the short-run exit of marginal producers who had entered the industry in the early 90's depression, but more significantly, the result of a major shift in manufacturing techniques after mid-decade. The resultant contraction in the number of firms particularly and adversely affected the ability of small manufacturers to remain in business. This, however, was not merely a straight forward contraction in numbers. There is evidence of new firms and of a slowing down in the number of exits under the influence of short-run improvements in trading conditions in the late 90's and mid 1900's.

(b) Short-run fluctuations in group size.

Indeed, this last observation raises the important question of the short-run fluctuations in the numbers of firms, which are observable in Figure 3:i. For, if the shift in technological and economic structure of the industry provides the *raison d'etre* for secular movements in membership, it does not explain the short-run fluctuations in group size between lists: more particularly

¹ V.C.H. Northamptonshire ii 319 cf Chapter Two p61, above.

between 1877-79 and 1885-86 and again in the early 90's. Noting these short-run fluctuations the general observation which can be put forward is the extent to which they conform to movements in the trade cycle. The graph reveals this inter-play between the state of the economy and fluctuations in group size.¹

A consumer industry, footwear production and with it business confidence and opportunities were particularly sensitive to economic fluctuations. Movements in disposable income in the market place, resulting from trade depression were quickly reactive upon the demand for footwear. Thus, in the boom of the early 70's, an expansion in the number of manufacturers is noted, only to be followed by a contraction quickly thereafter as infant firms fail. Similarly, a contraction in numbers is observed during the mid 60's cotton famine years. Clearly here, new entrants' expectations were, at least in part, shaped by the state of the market, just as levels of business failure were. This trend, however, is not wholly consistent, for in the early 90's a growth in manufacturers numbers occurred in time of depression. To the same extent the immediate past experience in the late 80's up turn in trade could be said to be encouraging entry: a lag effect. But, equally another factor could be at work. That is to say, the entry of small men, who were trying to beat the effects of unemployment in time of depression.

As has been noted above, the industry group can be segregated into three sub-groups. The largest was wholesale manufacturing. As a direct result of their numerical dominance, it can be observed from Figure 3:ii that their pattern of membership substantially determined the pattern of the industry group as a whole. Thus, much that has been argued for the entire group applies equally to this sub-group. The same influences of secular change within the industry and

¹ When the contemporary trade literature on the shoe industry and N.U.B.S.O. Monthly Reports (state of trade) were contrasted with the trade cycle analysis in W. W. Rostow British Economy in the 19 Century (1941) it was found that trading fluctuations in the industry conformed closely with the broader fluctuations in economic activity within the British economy. cf Chapter 4 p270, footnote 2 below.

the short-run ebb and flow of the economy generally, were felt by the sub-group. Of course, this led, initially, to an expansion in the number of wholesale manufacturing firms followed by a contraction.

Concomitant with and part of the extensive growth phase was the emergence of new types of business opportunity in the wholesale sector, especially for small masters.¹ The changing needs of the industry spawned a range of specialist, subcontracting and component manufacturing functions: collectively, the wholesale ancillary sub-group. In calculating the number of business units, the largest single function undertaken by the sub-group, closing, has been segregated from the remainder, called the residual element. In turn, closing has been divided into closers to the trade (subcontractors) and independent upper manufacturers. Thus in Figure 3:ii, this second sub-group appears in three parts. Closers and the residual element, broadly conform to the general pattern. As the graph reveals, however, the number of closing units peaked in 1884.² Closing firms also reveal a high degree of short run volatility, which mirrors the ease of entry and low capital requirements that were required in order to commence trading. Residual firms were particularly active between 1889 and 1906 at the time of peak machine introduction in the trade, when, in addition to sewers to the trade who form the backbone of this element, finishers to the trade and other specialists became active. It is much more difficult to write with confidence about upper manufacturers, for of all in the sub-group, their numbers are small and the least reliable making generalisations difficult. Of all in this second sub-group,

1 cf Chapter 2 p261, and below at p233 *et seq.*

2 If two contemporary articles on the state of the town's staple industry are compared (B.S.T.J. 23 October 1886 p324 and Boot and Shoe Recorder 9 December 1891 p15-9) in the period 1886-91 a significant increase in best practice firms undertaking closing on their own premises is revealed. This can be attributed to the considerable social pressure that was occasioned by the increased awareness of the sweated conditions then prevailing in many outwork trades, amongst which closing was included.

however, it may be stated that the trend towards modernity which swept the industry in the 90's radically changed their ability to remain in business and in consequence, the number of active firms had fallen from 149 in 1893 to 22 in 1914, a contraction of 85%.

The third group consists of master retail shoemakers. As has been examined elsewhere, such men came under threat throughout the country from the 1870's as wholesale manufacturers successfully sought to take control of local home markets. As a result, many master shoemakers left the industry nationally,¹ and of those who remained, a high proportion increasingly relied upon retailing goods supplied from the industry's main wholesale centres, or upon repairing footwear. In particular, what Figure 2:vi (Wiltshire/Norfolk) has suggested is that the membership of the master shoemaker sub-group in Northampton be expected to fall in our period, but, as Figure 3:iii reveals such was not entirely the case.

¹ Successive census reports point to the shedding of local shoemaker in village and town throughout the country, whilst numbers in the wholesale centres rose, as, indeed, did the number of centres. Thus in 1871, it was noted: "shoemakers are diffused all over the country. (There are) 197,465 shoemakers who have as a group actually fallen off in numbers from 211,223 of 10 years ago. Sewing machines have increased the power of work in this branch of industry, so the numbers of workmen have declined as the increased (consumer) demand does not yet call more into existence". (B.P.P. General Report 1871 Census, 1873 (c. 872 - I) Volume LXXI part II pl ii). By the 1891 census a growth in numbers nationally was recorded, from 224,059 in 1881 to 248,789 in 1891. It was noted: "This growth, though smaller than in other trades of the list, is nevertheless notable, for the number of shoemakers had fallen in each of the two preceding decennia. That fall was doubtlessly attributable to the substitution of machinery for hand work. The substitution once made, the number of hands would naturally again begin to rise, with the growth of population. The chief seats of the manufacture of machine made boots are Northamptonshire and Leicestershire; in these two counties the makers increased no less than 62.2% in the decennium (against 11% nationally), having, moreover, increased 34% in the interval between 1861 and 1871 and 41% in the interval 1871-1881. (B.P.P. General Report 1891 Census 1893-94 (c. 7,222) Volume CVI p53). However, this growth masks a continued fall in numbers in all but the wholesale centres, as the detailed occupation tables demonstrate. This is matched by a fall in the numbers of master shoemakers listed in commercial directories throughout the country (cf Chapter 2 Figure 2: vi, p86).

At first sight it may be considered that such matters are of little relevance to our deliberations here. After all, every town had a number of master shoemakers, who had traditionally made and retailed footwear for local markets and in this respect Northampton was no different. Why then should they be included in this study?¹

From the evidence that is available to us, it is apparent that an intimate interaction existed between these two sectors of the town's staple economic activity. Upon detailed C.D.A. investigation, it is clear that there exists a degree of simultaneous membership of more than one sub-group by the same firm and of transference between sub-groups, which has not been previously stressed nor realised. In order to show this, a study of the transfers and dual listings between sub-groups in each directory has been compiled. Of the wholesale manufacturers listed between 1840-1914, 22% (243) appear in other sub-group lists, with the majority, 16% (176) appearing in the retail shoemaker lists.² In effect, a grey area exists where members, more correctly, small master members, of the wholesale and retail sectors in practice merge. That is to say, in terms of their business and production methods, the scale of capital employed, their social position in the local community, they are scarcely separable.³ At this point, any attempt to differentiate between such firms is to a degree arbitrary; in many respects a misnomer.

To some extent the size and character of this common ground between sub-groups is charted in this transference/dual listing study, but what degree of

1 Clearly, not all were engaged in shoemaking activities directly and thus the chain-stores operating in the town and those known to have been independent retailers only, have been omitted from all calculations here.

2 Of the remaining 67 cases, 15 appear in the closers' lists; 39 in the upper manufacturers; and 13 in the remainder of the residual group.

3 Throughout our period, despite the introduction of modern techniques, it would have been possible for these men to technically fulfil a marginal role.

coverage does this study give us? A person's dual listing in the directory must ultimately have turned upon the choice of the manufacturer, or the intuition of the compiler. A complication is apparent here: one is reliant upon a firm initially appearing in a list. Certainly in the area of upper manufacturing, the number of dual listings recorded are an underestimate, because from written sources it becomes clear that wholesale manufacturers often also undertook upper manufacturing as a secondary activity, but this was infrequently recorded in directory lists. Given the numbers of shoe firms in existence in the period, detailed, exhaustive investigation would be required in any attempt to verify function. Yet is such research necessary? For one of the central characteristics of firms in this common ground was that their function was fluid, to a degree indeterminate, often shifting within a short time period. Two interesting, yet speculative points arise. One concerns itself with the notion that transference signifies business flexibility. The ability to move between functions could have provided a strategy for survival. Thus an initial period in the retail shoemakers' ranks could provide a new entrant with experience before entering the more hazardous field of wholesale manufacturing.¹ Similarly, retailing could provide a place of retreat for a manufacturer unable to compete in wholesale manufacturing.² The other point: is it possible that retailers provided manufacturers with surplus capacity during seasonal rushes, or to make up a special order? Speculation aside, what can be determined is that an almost separate group emerges from this common ground: the "retail manufacturer".

In our period, many wholesale manufacturers carried on retailing activities in towns outside Northampton as a means of providing outlets for their production. As is discussed elsewhere, amongst larger manufacturers, like Manfield & Sears,

1 But note the cautionary tale of William Fleming & Company below: Chapter 5 p 335

2 Example: Although not of our period, the most prominent 19 century example is that of Joel Edens. A leading mid-century manufacturer, he was recorded in local directories as such from 1840 to 1874: initially in partnership with one Jee, he also formed a brief partnership with Clarke in the early 1850's. After 1874 to 1879 he is listed as a retail shoemaker.

sophisticated chain-store operations were developed. On this scale, such activity constitutes the forward vertical integration of a firm's activities to the point of sale and constitutes a major feature in the growth of the industry in our period. This trend on a more simple level, was also common, however, amongst the small master manufacturers, many of whom had just one, possibly two, retail outlets, many located in London.¹ At this level, such activity more nearly mirrors the close historic links which existed between production and distribution in shoemaking. Certainly in past generations, this link had been much closer, with retail shoemakers also providing the footwear for wholesale markets. In fact, wholesale manufacturing had developed directly out of the local retail maker class in seventeenth and eighteenth century Northampton. One is informed by one historian of the town that in the eighteenth century, the difference between a shoemaker making for his own retail shop and the shoemaker making wholesale goods for shoe sellers is hard to maintain. With insufficient orders to keep him perpetually engaged on retail making, the retail shoemaker made goods wholesale for sellers, particularly in slack times. A consequent merging of function was common in order that a master might make an adequate living. As Adcock notes:

... The century was far advanced before it was possible to pick out a shoe manufacturer who had not also his own (local) retail shop ...²

Indeed, this mixing of function commonly survived until the mid nineteenth

1 For example: H. C. Hancock & Company run an undisclosed number of retail shops at the time of a suspension of trade. (B.S.T.J. 27 February 1897 p325): Risdale Brothers traded at Overstone Road, Northampton and as the British Boot Company at 40 Oxford Street, London. Their assets at the time of their bankruptcy were £1,088 13s 7d. (B.S.T.J. 26 September 1902 p440 cf 15 August 1902 p187 and 17 October 1902 p527). J. & J. Brown had factories at Northampton and Heckleton and a retail shop at Brighton. (B.S.T.J. 15 February 1901 p261). cf William Hickson & Company Ltd., whose history is discussed below, Chapter 6 p 385 *et seq*,

2 A. Adcock, op cit p35.

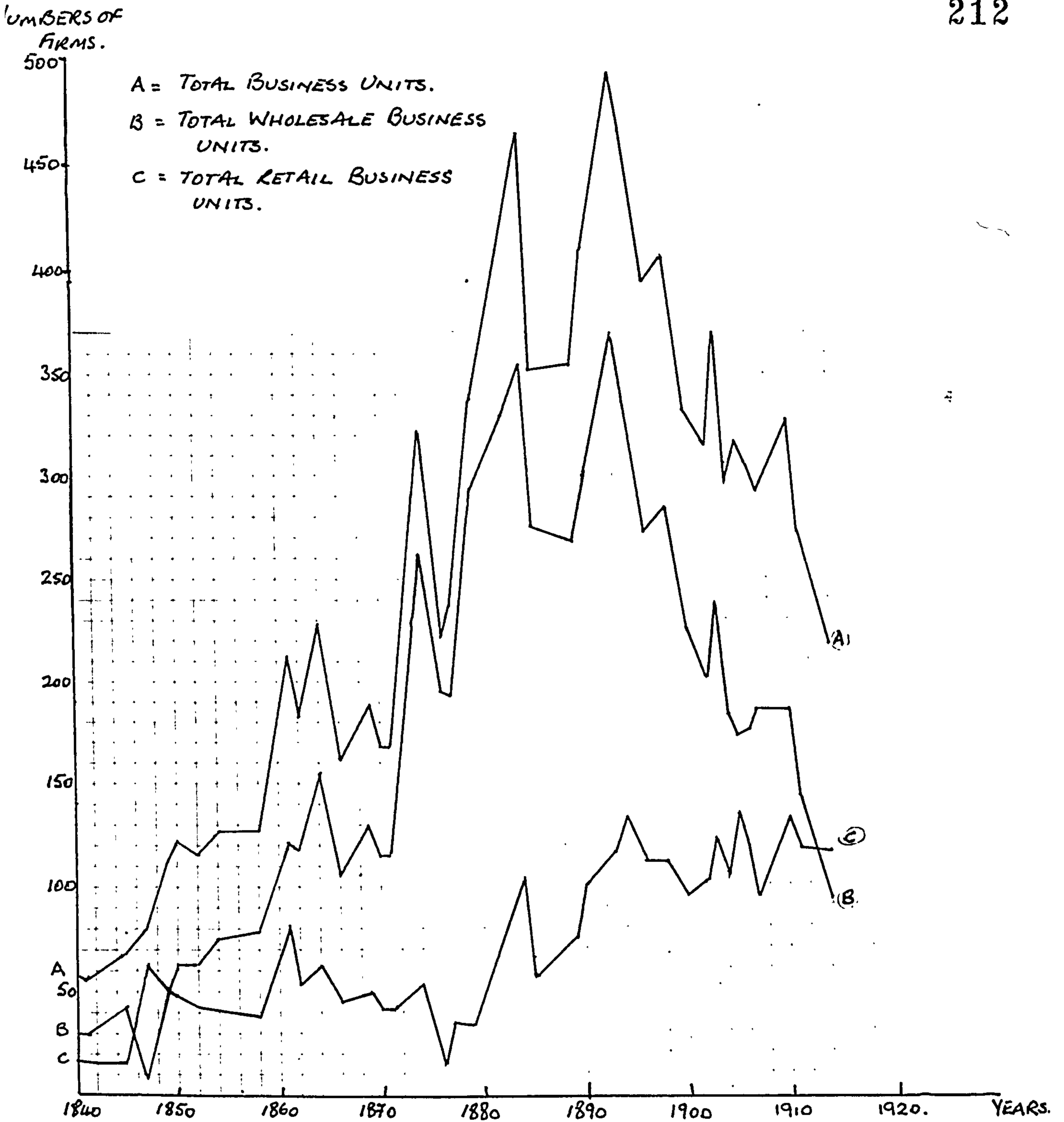


Figure 3:i Numbers of Business Units in Northampton Footwear Industry Recorded in Trade Directories (corrected) 1840 -1914

century and beyond. To take just one random example;¹ the firm of Bearn & Jeffs is listed in trade directories between 1847 and 1858 as a wholesale manufacturing concern, with the 1850-58 directories giving a dual-listing as both retailer and manufacturer. Other evidence suggests that the firm was essentially of a retail manufacturing character. Fortunately a lithograph survives of this firm's premises in the Parade, Northampton; its date circa 1851.² It shows what is essentially a retail outlet, with people window shopping outside. Prominently displayed on a wall is the legend: "Wholesale and Retail Boot and Shoe Warehouse"; presumably the warehouse and workshop facilities were to the rear and on the upper floors of the building. In the early 60's, the partnership was dissolved and Bearn continued to trade as a manufacturer, according to contemporary directories, at Inkerman Terrace until circa 1864. William Jeffs continued to trade as a retail shoemaker at the Parade and later Princess Street until 1884. His obituary notes:

... He was one of the best known retailers in the district and 40 years since was in partnership with Mr. Bearn (and) at a later period, as a bespoke bootmaker retiring 20 years ago ...³

It is surely this character of trading which explains the presence of manufacturers in the 1881 Census Enumerators Returns as employing just one or two men.⁴

Certainly a study of transfer and dual listings in directories clearly reveals that something of this characteristic mixing of function survived into and through our period. Of the 176 wholesale firms appearing in retail lists, 32% (56) are

1 Others include James Betts 1840-84 and D. Chubb 1849-66, both of whom are mixed listed.

2 J. Stafford, Life in Old Northampton (1975) p70.

3 B.S.T.J. 31 March 1905 p593: he died on 31 May 1905 aged 83, at 11 Abington Grove, effects valued at £140 12s 4d gross.

4 P.R.O. R.G. 11/1547-54: Census Enumerators Returns.

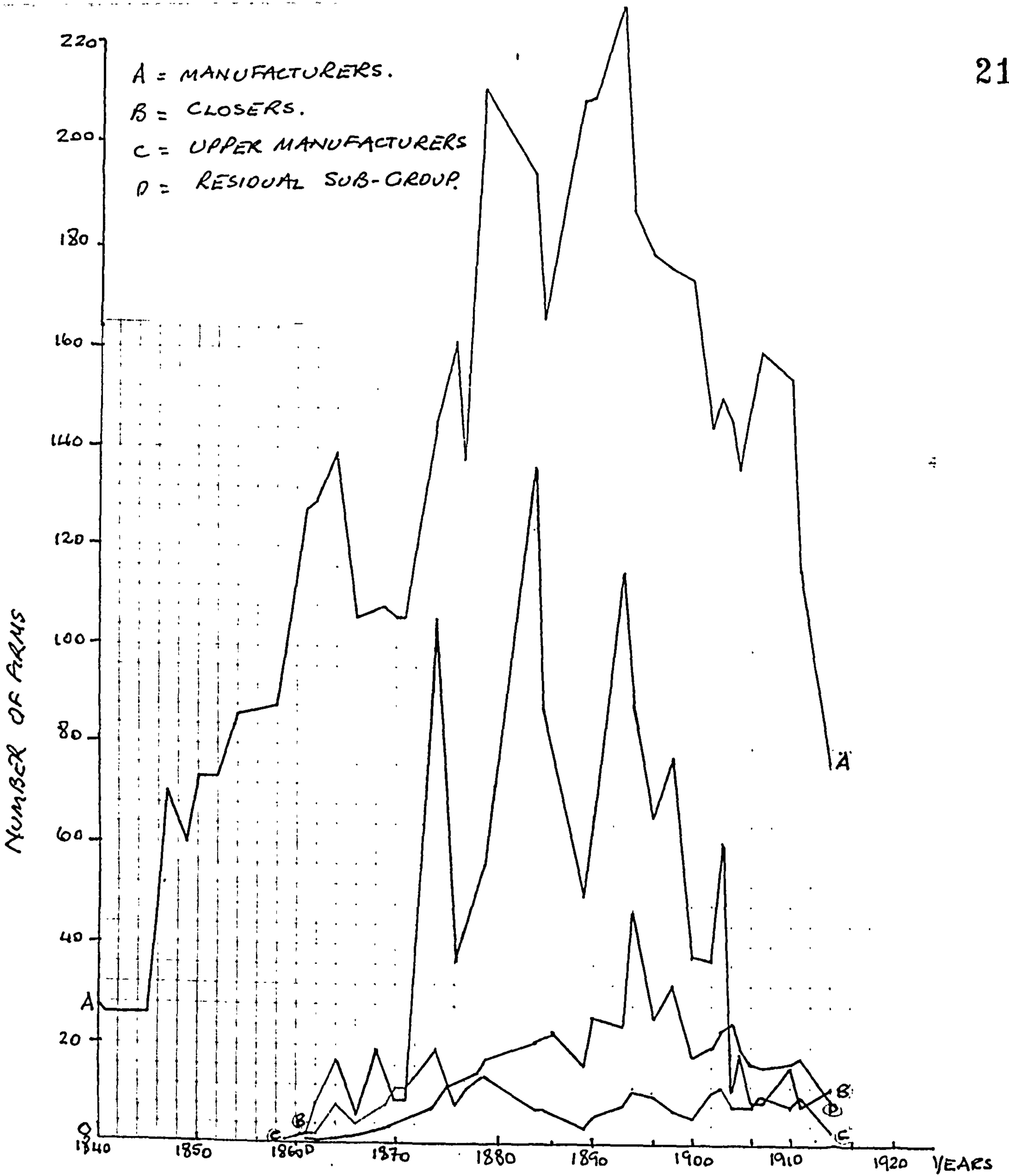


Figure 3:ii Number of Wholesale Footwear Firms at Northampton in Specific Years, 1840-1914.

clearly dual listed, whilst the rest are transfers. In many cases the divide between these two classifications is fine and further accentuates the greyness of this middle ground. From statements made by such small masters at creditors' meetings, it can be argued that a mixing of function continued to provide them with a range of options by which to more fully use their available resources, thereby providing a basis for survival, just as it had done in the eighteenth century.

Many firms in the study reveal the volatile nature of the small master class generally. They trade for a short while, either appearing as dual listed in one or two directories, or else alternating between the wholesale and retail lists in successive directories. Thus, Edward Dunmore (1884-85), William Davis (1893) and Boot Brokers (1907) all briefly appear as dual listed before quickly sinking back into obscurity: not even a business failure report in a trade paper marks their passing. Another random example reveals a more complex business life. G. T. Morris appears in directories between 1905 and 1914: he is a retailer in 1905; wholesaler in 1906; dual listed 1907-10; wholesale in 1911 and finally retail in 1914.

Yet, if the business life of many of these firms necessarily remains clouded in mystery, more is known about those firms that survive longer. Inevitably, where historical evidence is extant it tends to concern firms that traded on a more substantial scale over a longer period.¹ There is no precise way of determining their typicality although it can probably be written of them that rather than being marginal concerns, they were able to successfully employ mixed function trading as a survival strategy over time. One such example is that of Elijah Irons & Company Ltd. In local directories Irons is listed as a manufacturer in the 1870's at Bird's Piece and from 1885 to 1904 as a retail shoemaker at

¹ Significantly, although business failure reports include summaries upon firms which had only been in business a matter of months, none of the infant mixed function firms are included. Can this be taken as negative evidence of their small size and inconsequential trading? (One of the aims of a failure report was to acquaint the trade at large with details of insolvents.)

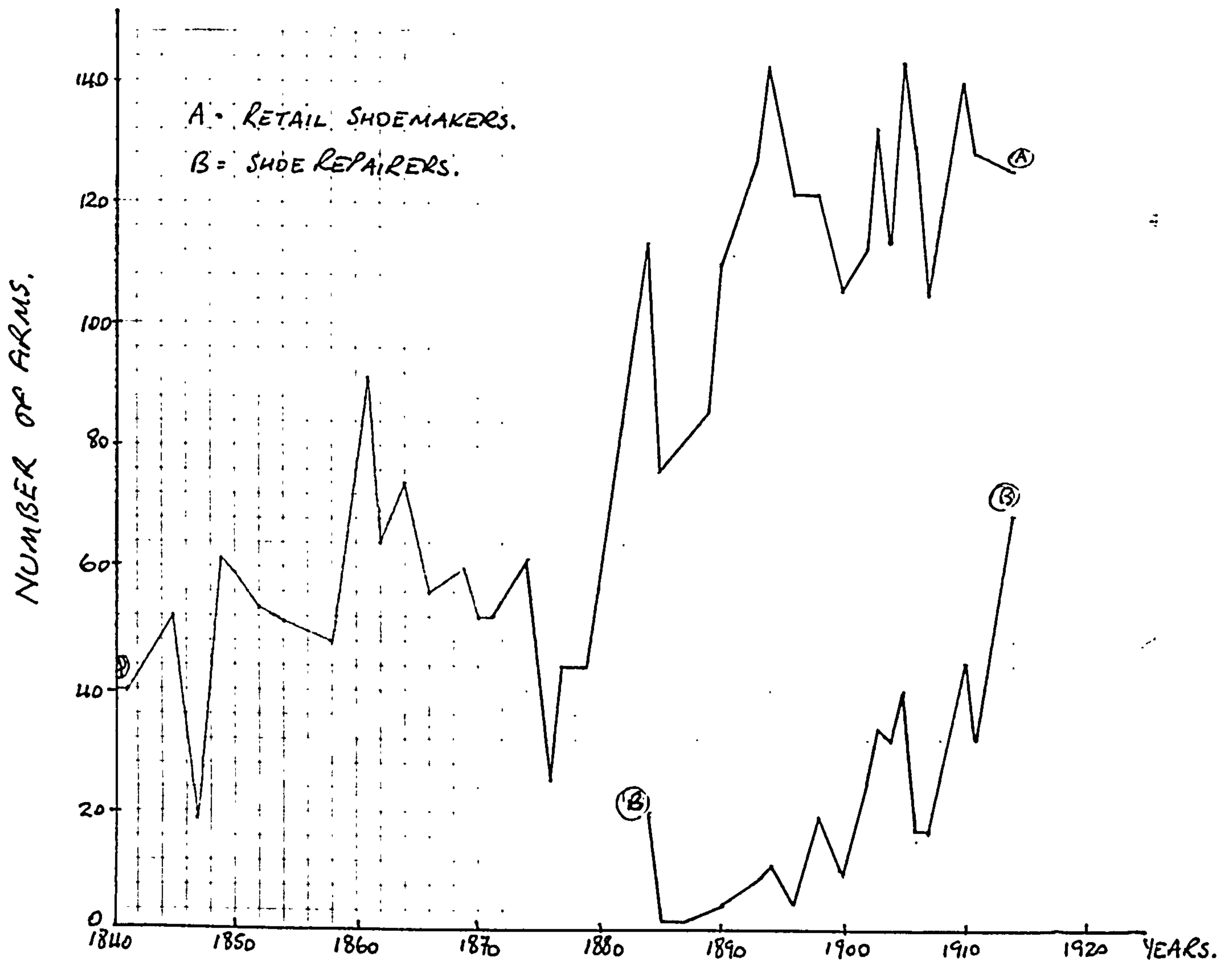


Figure 3:iii Number of Retail Footwear Makers Firms at Northampton in Specific Years, 1840-1914.

Bridge Street, where he traded under the style of the 'Boot Market'. Later premises in Gold Street, in the town's retailing district, were taken. On the 6 December 1899 the firm was converted, with an authorised capital of £10,000. Irons was described in the Memorandum of Association as a boot manufacturer and dealer. The conversion took place "to carry on the business of a boot and shoe manufacturer". The directors were Irons and Alfred Irons Tear.¹ Conversion possibly resulted from the need to secure loans, for in 1902 debenture stock stood at £2,700, whilst share capital consisted of seven subscribing shares and 5,000 shares held by Irons, allotted to him in satisfaction of the sale agreement made upon conversion.² Possibly Irons was a partner from 1895 in the manufacturing firm of Cooley & Irons, which failed in 1899.³

The company of Frederick Thomas Tebbutt provides one with a second example of this type of mixed function trading. Tebbutt commenced manufacturing in the early 1890's, initially in partnership with one Law, then for a short period as a sole trader and ultimately with Frederick William Osborne. Production was carried on at a succession of factories and by 1902 a capital of £3,464 had been accumulated on a turnover then calculated at £21,560.⁴ In addition, retail shoemaking was undertaken at 6-7 George Row, Northampton under the style F. T. Tebbutt. This aspect of his business activities successfully traded through our period.⁵ Unlike E. Irons & Company Ltd., the evidence clearly points to the

1 B.S.T.J. 30 December 1899 p850. The P.R.O. Companies file has been destroyed: Note: Tear's father, Alfred, has been a manufacturer at Grey Street from 1880 until his stoppage in 1898, when liabilities were assessed at £1,475 2s 6d, assets £807 15s 6d (B.S.T.J. 7 May 1898 p629-30). A. I. Tear then ran the business, with father as manager, until trading was suspended in 1901; liabilities £846 12s 7d, assets £42. (B.S.T.J. 26 April 1901 p555).

2 B.S.T.J. 12 September 1902 p385.

3 B.S.T.J. 25 November 1899 p695 cf B.S.T.J. 13 January 1900 p44-45.

4 B.S.T.J. 21 September 1906 p457.

5 Kelly's Northamptonshire Directories. Note, both a brief biographical remembrance (J. D. Goldham 'Early Northamptonshire Cricket' N.P. & P. (1956) II No. 3 p156) and an obituary (S.T.J. 19 August 1934) remember Tebbutt as a retail shoemaker.

two functions being carried on separately. Tebbutt's manufacturing activities however, struggled through a series of stoppages in the Edwardian years before final failure. The first stoppage occurred in September 1906, with liabilities being assessed at £8,793 15s 3d against net assets of £4,073 18s 1d. The stoppage was signalled by losses totalling £1,023 made on a retail shop at Brighton. This loss finally destabilized what had been a period of poor financial management. A loss on trading of £1,195 had been made in the years 1902-06 and bad debts of £1,812 incurred. Matters of valuation had caused further loss; with losses of £1,055 on machine depreciation and a difference in the cost and current value on the partnership's two factories of £2,277 being recorded.¹ A composition was agreed with creditors and trading resumed only to be again suspended in October 1910.

Following the composition, a major change in policy was decided and large, modern premises in Countess Road acquired with a view to producing machine made goods. The debtors stated that they "felt it absolutely necessary - having such a large factory - to increase turnover and accordingly they purchased, in 1908, the assets of Knightly & Adams for the sum of £1,000".² The resultant capacity, however, was too large for the trade carried on. Indeed, turnover fell and the hoped for injection of trade from the purchase of Knightly's goodwill and order books never realised its full potential. In consequence, the factory was sold in late 1908 and after a delay, production was transferred to smaller premises in March 1909: this interruption alone cost £1,000. Thereafter, atrophy set in and upon suspension liabilities were valued at £9,902 0s 10d against assets of £3,646 12s 0d. Again a composition was agreed. In the wake of the subsequent, serious depletion of capital, a private limited company purchased the partnership

1 B.S.T.J. 21 September 1906 loc cit.

2 B.S.T.J. 14 October 1910 p49. Note, Knightly & Adams had ceased to trade following failure.

assets in March 1911, in the hope of revitalizing the business. Incorporated with an authorised capital of £5,000, the partnership was purchased for £1,000, allotted as shares to Tebbutt & Osborne, who became directors. Their co-directors were prominent local shoe manufacturers, Edward Lewis, Daniel A. Berry and T. E. Blacklee, who, in addition to James Manfield, provided share capital of £3,357.¹ Lewis, Manfield & Berry became co-guarantors for the payment of the composition: Lewis, a friend of Osborne's, took a close personal interest in the company. It is to be presumed that such prominent shoe manufacturers became involved with the company at this stage as a result of the Tebbutt family's position within the elite group of manufacturers.² Certainly the connection of such men enabled the company to receive ready credit amongst suppliers.³ Nevertheless, despite a surplus of £267 1s 8d,⁴ the company went into voluntary liquidation in little over a year and the business was sold as a going concern.⁵

Many of these mixed function firms, however, did not attain the size reached by F. T. Tebbutt; most being concentrated in the small, hand-sewn area of activity which survived the transformation of the industry. Over a sustained period, this mixing of function would appear to be a strategy adopted by small masters to ensure survival. Both G. H. Kendall & Company⁶ and Isaac Bonham,⁷ sustained such a policy over a long period. Hand-sewn manufacturers operating

1 BT 31/13547/114665.

2 On the Tebbutt family see Appendix II C.12.

3 B.S.T.J. 7 June 1912 p417.

4 Liabilities £3,286 15s 2d: assets £3,553 16s 10d.

5 B.S.T.J. Ibid p417-18 cf BT31 Ibid.

6 G. H. Kendall & Company (formerly C.E. Kendall), retail shoemakers 1854-1914, initially at Drapery and later in Market Square also: wholesale manufacturer 1849-1914 with a factory in Bull Head Lane from 1904. See Appendix II C25.

7 Isaac Bonham of 33 St. Giles Street, listed as a hand-sewn manufacturer 1861-96 and a retail shoemaker 1855-1911 (from 1902, proprietor J. Bonham).

from small retail premises, they probably made small quantities of special goods. In 1884 wholesale manufacturers list circa 20% of manufacturers carried on a mixed function. And certainly in the latter portion of the 1914 Directory List, there is still clear evidence of this duality, which attests to its success as a survival strategy.¹

What then, was the relationship between this type of mixed function activity and the town's wholesale manufacturing capacity generally? First, it is possible that this mixing of function is merely incidental to any broader trends. That it simply existed as a survival strategy employed by an individual at the level of the firm: that firms moved between the two functions as fortune dictated. But, secondly, it is also clear that some of these retail manufacturers who sustained this dual role over a period fulfilled a marginal role in the wholesale manufacturing sector, by providing an overspill capacity in this highly seasonal industry. That there was, in effect, a symbiotic relationship between the two centred upon the need to cope with seasonal fluctuations and bottle-necks in production. Such a role would have been of particular utility in the busy spring season and where, as happened prior to the late 90's, short dated orders were common. Certainly prior to circa 1887, the scale and character of the larger retail/manufacturer operations would have enabled them to fulfil such a role. Even in the Edwardian period rush orders and special goods could be executed. For larger manufacturers such a capacity would have its attractions, because these marginal producers could easily be brought into production and then as easily discarded. Without the necessary conclusive proof to support such a contention must, at our present state of knowledge, remain in the realms of speculation. Despite that, as a class these retail manufacturers were economically and socially the equals of small wholesale manufacturers, many of whom merely

¹ See, for example, Eales & Son, J. J. McMain, C. Tompkins, Joseph Jelley & Company, I.L.P. Cooperative Boot Society and the Pioneer Cooperative Boot Society; - Appendices III and IV.

acted as sub-contract manufacturers. It is entirely feasible that the former firms did likewise.

The other strategem which emerges is that of entry into wholesaling via retailing and sub-contracting and the retreat from manufacturing of established firms. The most prominent examples of the former are C. & E. Lewis,¹ W. Barratt & Company Ltd.,² H. E. Randall Ltd.,³ R. Fisher & Company⁴ and William Hollis.⁵ Examples of the latter feature are Bridgewater & Company,⁶ Joel Edens,⁷ and William Broom.⁸ Certainly at the margin there existed a fluidity of movement of firms between sub-groups. One event prompting^a change^{of} policy strategy was where a son succeeded to his father's firm. For example, Mason & Son were essentially retail makers, trading between 1840 and 1904. The father moved briefly into wholesale manufacturing in the mid 1850's. The son succeeded in the late 1870's and in turn unsuccessfully operated as a manufacturer in the late 1880's.⁹

Finally, the whole question of transference by firms from one type of sub-group activity to another within the industry and the carrying out of dual

1 Appendix II C.1.

2 Appendix III N.G.10.

3 Appendix II C.4.

4 Appendix II C.24.

5 William Hollis & Son traded from 1845 to 1898: failure reported B.S.T.J. 22 January 1898 p103, liabilities £2,509 11s 9d and assets £1,080 8s 4d. Founder was William G. Hollis (1828-1903). One time prominent public figure; founder of local manufacturers' association in 1879, prominent in local volunteer force. One of early officials of the Northamptonshire Cricket (hon. secretary) of Sheep Street, Northampton. He died on 12 February 1903 at St. Andrew's Hospital. Effects £10. (B.S.T.J. 20 February 1903 p326, N.P. & P. (1956) II No.3 p134) cf Chapter 6 p392, below.

6 As a sequel to poor trading performance as a manufacturer, the Company traded as Weatcott & Bridgewater 1874-1903 and as Bridgewater & Company to 1907.

7 As a sequel to retiring from the industry.

8 As a survival strategy cf Rufus Bazeley, 14 Parade. Recorded as a manufacturer from 1905-1907 and as a retail shoemaker to 1914 cf John Rogers; Wood & Son; William Wade & K. Tebbutt.

9 This attempt ended in a temporary suspension of trading: liabilities £1,376 12s 9d; assets £239 5s 7d. (S.L.R. 4 October 1890 p419).

functions raises a final characteristic. This degree of fluidity strongly suggests that at crucial points in a firm's life - its foundation, at the time of insolvency, at the death of a partner and so on - a broad level of choice was available to and exercised by principals. Given the balance which existed between the external factors - the state of the market, factor price levels etcetera and the internal state of the company, - the principals moved into that sub-group activity that offered them the best short run returns on their capital, the greatest goal satisfaction and the best chance of survival. Of course, the sets of variables operating here are as numerous as the numbers of firms, but if reference is made to Figures 3:i and ii, it is apparent that a contrary flow exists between sub-group membership over time, which lends support to such a speculation. This is particularly sharply revealed in the membership patterns of retail and wholesale businesses in Figure 3:i. Thus, at the outset of the development of the modern wholesale trade from 1859-76, including the boom in activity in the early 70's, membership totals in the retail sector fluctuate downwards, whilst in the wholesale sector the trend is up: a reflection of the expanding business opportunities then present in that sector. Whilst, after 1893 the sustained fall in wholesale sector membership, a function of capital concentration and increased competition, ^{membership} in the retail sector is sustained. Similar, short-run disparities in sub-group membership can also be detected, for example when retail and residual sub-group size is measured against that of wholesale sub-group in the period 1879-84. Further evidence of these contrary flows of membership size, are to be found in the turnover analysis discussed next.

The majority of members of the industry shared the same small master/artisanal traditions and values centred upon the workshop, nonconformity and liberal politics. Likewise, their scale of business activity was compatible with membership of any sub-group. Only the very small amongst them - for example closers - could not enjoy this level of 'choice'. And for the larger, elite manufacturers, such traditions and values were incompatible with their desire to thrust out of that milieu.

III

Until now the analysis has been of a static character. The need finally, however, is to penetrate beneath this information as to the changing number of business units at different points in time and begin to add a dynamic element to our analysis concerning the movements in size of the sub-groups. This can be achieved in two ways, viz:-

(i) an analysis of the internal shifts in sub-group membership in the wholesale sector.

(ii) a consideration of firm size and of changes in firm size over time.

To take the former point first, beyond a preliminary level of analysis of membership totals at a point in time, lies a more exhaustive study of turnover levels. This begins to isolate two important considerations. First, the underlying trend of the 'real' numbers of firms which traded in the wholesale manufacturing sub-groups: Figure 3:iv refers. Overall, between 1840 and 1914, 1,123 wholesale manufacturing and 712 wholesale ancillary firms were in business in Northampton. Secondly, turnover analysis itself, reveals the rapidity with which membership within the Northampton business community changes. The data has been collated in Figure 3:iv: v: vi and vii and from it the following features can be isolated:

(a) The secular expansion of business opportunity to 1893 followed by a contraction is again observable. Linked to this are high levels of exit relative to entry after this date, that is particularly observable in Figure 3:v.

(b) Again, a short-run fluctuation of entry levels is observable, that appears to be influenced by and linked to the trade cycle. Here the extent of high exits linked to high entry rates in time of depression is clearly displayed.

(c) Indeed, this introduces a new element; the rapidity of turnover amongst firms. The configuration of high entry rates matched to high exits, in particular, is suggestive of a high mortality of infant firms. In this regard the wholesale ancillary sub-group appear to be more volatile. The constant endemic levels of mortality over time give prima facie support to this notion.

Figure 3:iv: The Internal Structure of the Shoemaking
Community at Northampton 1840 - 1914

PERIOD	ENTRY				EXIT						ENTRY		EXIT	
	I		II		I		II		III		III			
	No	Ann Av	No	Ann Av	No	Ann Av	No	Ann Av	No	Ann Av	No	Ann Av		
1840	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
1841-47	57	11.4	-	-	28	5.6	-	-	74	10.6	52	7.4		
1848-54	84	16.8	-	-	74	14.8	-	-	95	13.6	64	9.1		
	141	14.1	-	-	102	10.2	-	-	169	12.1	116	8.3		
1855-59	34	6.8	1	-	20	4.0	-	-	14	2.8	17	3.4		
1860-64	118	23.6	34	6.8	106	21.2	7	1.4	99	19.8	73	14.6		
1865-69	35	7.0	24	4.8	43	8.6	20	4.0	37	7.4	51	10.2		
1870-74	93	18.6	117	23.4	61	12.2	22	4.4	39	7.8	37	7.4		
1875-79	142	28.4	36	7.2	148	29.6	90	18.0	37	7.4	53	10.6		
1880-84	88	17.6	110	22.0	50	10.0	36	7.2	81	16.2	14	2.8		
	510	17.0	322	10.7	428	14.3	174	5.8	307	10.2	245	8.2		
1885-89	114	22.8	58	11.6	71	14.2	158	31.6	61	12.2	86	17.2		
1890-94	131	26.2	179	35.8	153	30.6	99	19.8	149	29.8	116	23.2		
1895-99	62	12.4	63	12.6	74	14.8	93	18.6	69	13.8	87	17.4		
1900-04	67	13.4	53	10.6	85	17.0	120	24.0	93	18.6	100	20.0		
1905-09	46	9.2	13	2.6	43	8.6	26	5.2	74	14.8	77	15.4		
1910-14	25	5.0	24	4.3	91	18.2	35	7.0	87	17.4	72	14.4		
	445	14.8	390	13.0	517	17.2	530	17.7	533	17.8	538	17.9		

Notes:- I = wholesale manufacturers' sub-group

II = wholesale ancillary sub-group

III = retail shoemakers' sub-group

Figure 3:v Ratio of Entries to Exits of Firms in (I) Wholesale Manufacturers, (II) Wholesale Ancillary Sub-Groups and (III) Retail Sub-Group

Period	Wholesale Manufacturers	Wholesale Ancillary	Retail
1841-47	1:0.5	-	1:0.7
1848-54	1:0.9	-	1:0.7
1855-59	1:0.6	-	1:1.2
1860-64	1:0.9	1:0.2	1:0.7
1865-69	1:1.2	1:0.8	1:1.7
1870-74	1:0.7	1:0.2	1:0.9
1875-79	1:1.1	1:3	1:1.4
1880-84	1:0.6	1:0.3	1:0.2
1885-89	1:0.6	1:2.7	1:1.4
1890-94	1:1.2	1:0.6	1:0.8
1895-99	1:1.2	1:1.5	1:1.3
1900-04	1:1.3	1:2.3	1:1.1
1905-09	1:1.0	1:2	1:1.0
1910-14	1:3.7	1:0.3	1:0.8

The problems of new firms has been alluded to in modern American economic literature and their problems considered. For example, based on an analysis of modern American data, Altman has recently concluded that:

... the majority of those firms which fail do so within the first five years of their existence. Approximately one third in the first three years, 53% in the first five years and over 77% in the first ten ...¹

This period of infancy, he notes may be always regarded as a troubled time, yet if firms survive into maturity then the likelihood of failure recedes as the

¹ Altman op. cit. , p21. The figures relate to 1969 but he stresses that failure rates have been stable at least from the 1930's.

firm grows older:

... One of the most outstanding and seemingly irrevocable failure statistics is the high propensity on the part of young firms to fail. The longer a company survives, other things being equal, the smaller becomes the probability of failure ...¹

This high frequency and vulnerability of new entrants was first suggested by inter-war studies undertaken in the U.S.A.² In summarising that work, Kurt Mayer has concluded:

... The statistics of business mortality are both incomplete and inadequate, but one fact emerges from all investigations - the high rate of infant mortality. The figures vary from industry to industry and from trade to trade, but on a gross average it appears that at least 30% of the newly established enterprises do not reach their first birthday and that another 14% are discontinued during the second year ...³

As has been found amongst Northampton shoe firms, the comings and goings of small firms was a phenomenon of both depression and boom years. As Heilman has commented:

... The prevalence of high mortality rates in the small net asset class is probably the most significant fact revealed in the data. These enterprises are short-lived in all types of business, in all industries and at all times. The death rate is undoubtedly heavier in times of depression and the replacement rate lighter, but this is not a phenomenon only of bad times,

- 1 Ibid cf "Introduction" in S. Bruchey (Editor) Small Business in American Life (1980) p21. "A numerical preponderance of small firms has characterised the entire course of American history. But the relative stability of these overall proportions has concealed restless motion beneath the surface as small enterprises have come to life, all too quickly died and been replaced by others. Today, as yesterday, failure rates are relatively high, especially in the early years of life". And, as R.I. Robinson notes, "A rather large fraction of small businesses, even though they survive, provide their proprietors with only a skimpy living". (R. I. Robinson, "The Financing of Small Business in the U.S.", in S. Bruchey (Editor) Ibid p182).
- 2 E. D. McGarry, Mortality in the Retail Trade (1930); R. G. & A. R. Hutchinson and M. Newcomer, "A Study in Business Mortality: Length of Life of Business Enterprises in Poughkeepsie, New York 1843-1936". A.Ec.R. Volume 28 (1938) p497-514; E. A. Heilman, "Mortality of Business Firms in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth 1926-30", Bulletin of the Employment Stabilisation Research Institute Volume II No.1 (1933) p7-31.
- 3 Kurt Mayer "Small Business as a Social Institution", Social Research Volume 14 (1947) p337: cf Chapter 4 p 284below.

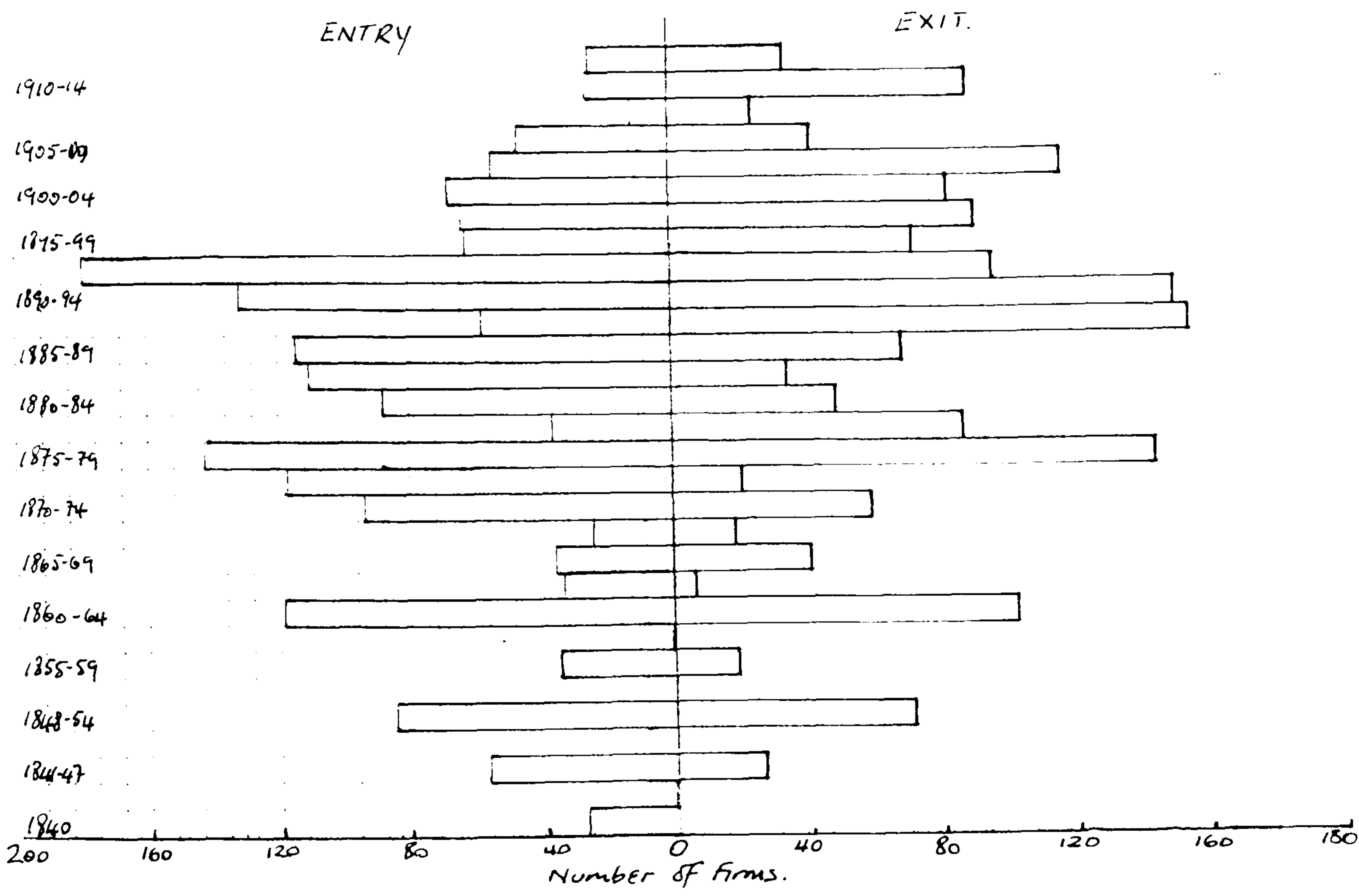


Figure 3:vi Entry and Exits of Boot and Shoe Firms in Five Year Periods: Wholesale Manufacturers and Sub-Contractors, 1840-1914.

Key: Wholesale Manufacturers
Sub-Contractors.

for mortality is heavy in the relatively normal and prosperous period. This constant stream of deaths and replacements seems to be directly associated with small capital and the ease with which these small enterprises can be started and abandoned. The multiplication of enterprises, results inevitably in the failure of a large number of establishments, usually the ones most inadequately equipped with capital or handicapped by poor location, or those whose proprietors are poorly fitted by natural abilities or experience to survive the competition that they only intensify ...¹

Recent British writings on small firms would appear to give support both to the findings of the Northampton C.D.A. and the general direction of the American literature reviewed briefly above. First, in a study of selected British small firms, Professor Jonathan Boswell stresses the inherent problems met with by firms in his sample during infancy. He concludes, "...Business infancy, roughly the first five years of a firm's existence, seems to be a distinctive period. The field study tentatively suggested that its normal features include shoe-string starting points, high risks, poor premises, little spending on fixed capital and great personal sacrifice..."² Secondly, the results of Lloyd-Jones and Le Roux's research on firm size in the early 19th century cotton industry, reveal important parallels with the shoe industry. Their 1980 essay³ lays stress upon the need to correct the traditionally held belief about the cotton industry that there occurred an orderly movement towards concentration. Rather, the role of the medium sized and small firm was more important to that industry's development, was more important than the literature allows and moreover, the 'giant' firms of the 1830's and 1840's were already well established prior to the major developments in the industry after 1815: As will be shown in Chapter Seven below, such a conclusion can substantially be put forward for the shoe industry.

1 Heilman loc cit p15.

2 J. Boswell The Rise and Decline of Small Firms (1976) p75. The firms in this sample were of course survivors; firms that successfully negotiated infancy to reach maturity.

3 R. Lloyd-Jones and A.A. Le Roux "The Size of Firms In the Cotton Industry: Manchester 1815-41", E.C.H.R. 2nd ser xxxiii (1980) p72-82 cf V.A.C. Gattrell, "Labour, Power and the Size of Firms in Lancashire Cotton in the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century", E.C.H.R. 2nd ser xxx (1977) p95-199.

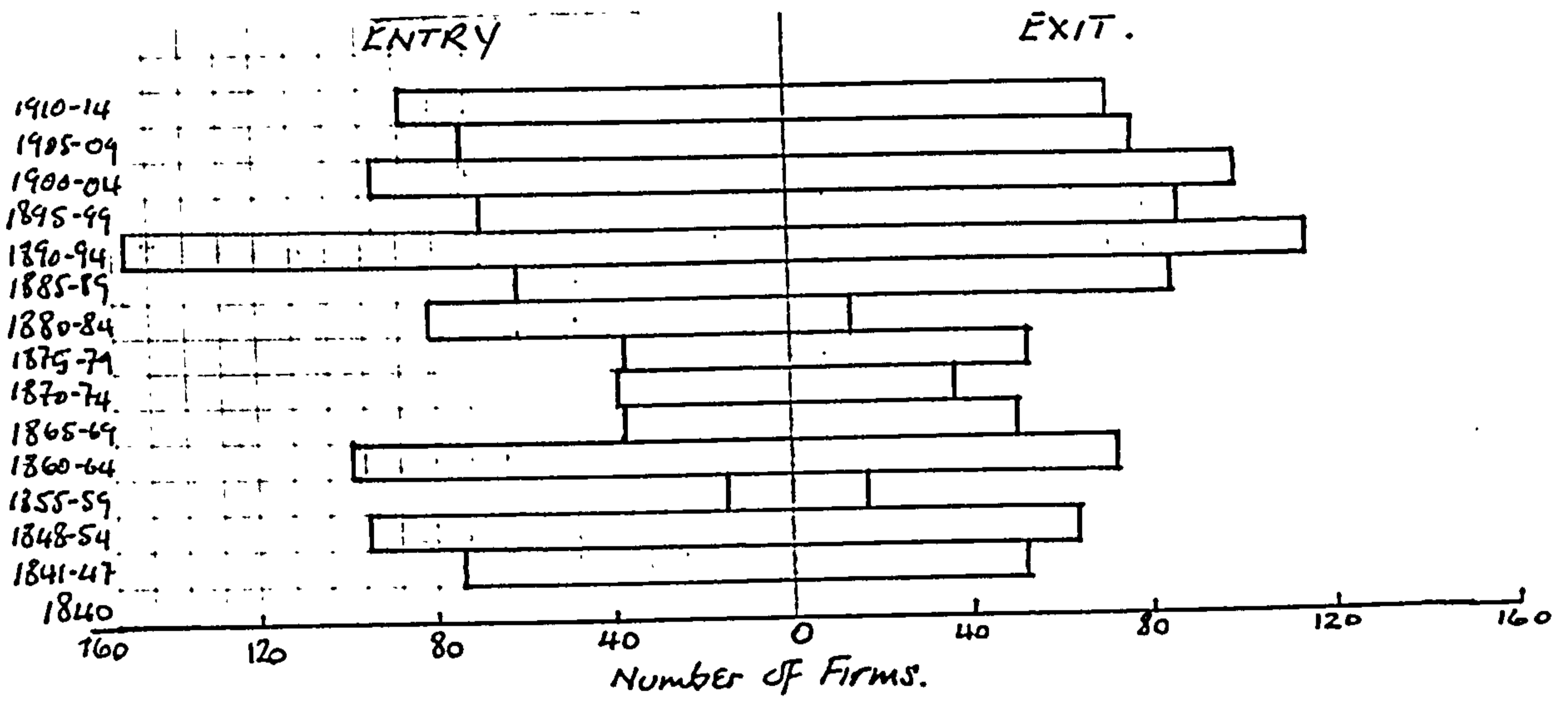


Figure 3:vii Entry and Exits of Boot and Shoe Firms in Five Year Periods: Boot and Retail Makers, 1840-1914.

In a second essay, two years later,¹ in placing this research into a theoretical context, Lloyd-Jones and Le Roux provide some further insights that are of use in the present discussion. In rightly rejecting current theories of the firm as inappropriate to the pre-1914 business world, the question is posed as to whether Marshall's theory of the firm accords to empirical investigation. In particular, their criticism of his 'trees of the forest' analogy, can equally well be applied to the shoe industry. Marshall's organic industrial growth pattern "stipulates an initial growth process of development from youth to maturity and then a period of decay and ultimate death".² This concept has, however, been fundamentally challenged by Steindl's work, which stresses a high turnover of infant firms as a result of business risks,³ of just the sort found in the shoe industry. And this challenge is sustained by Lloyd-Jones and Le Roux (1982): that is to say Marshall's assumption of continuous growth of firms, with new large firms being supplied from the ranks of the smaller ones to replace those that stagnate and decay. Indeed, their conclusion is mirrored by the shoe industry under discussion here:

... Firms did not grow by the laborious marshallian route, starting small and gradually growing to maturity to replace the decaying giants in the long run. The lesson from the cotton industry is that small firms died in large numbers ...⁴

Nor were the growth-inducing powers of limited liability, which the essay under discussion states separates the experience of early century firms from those of the late century, applied to sufficient cases within the shoe industry to have any effect: "the small 'trees of the forest' were killed off in epidemic

1 R. Lloyd-Jones and A.A. Le Roux, "Marshall and the Birth and Death of Firms: the Growth and Size Distribution of Firms in the Early Nineteenth Century Cotton Industry" Business History xxiv (1982) p141-55.

2 Ibid p142.

3 J. Steindl, "Small and Big Business: Economic Problems of the Size of Firms" (1945).

4 Lloyd-Jones and Le Roux loc cit p148.

proportions".¹

Thus, the position and reaction of the business community in the Northampton shoe industry and particularly the small masters' position, in the face of change was more complex than any simple absolute contraction in the number of firms able to survive and to trade successfully. As has been stressed above, it was only in the last 10 years of a protracted process of change that such an absolute contraction in the number of firms took place, in contrast to the secular expansion of business opportunities in the previous 40 years. This expansion - contraction model of change experienced by the small master during industrialisation was ultimately to destabilize the position of the small master group, but never entirely that of individual small masters. Thus, despite a decline in their numbers after the mid 1890's and despite the underlying volatile and transitory character of the small master, not a few were able to trade successfully over time.² In these first stages of mechanisation, the relatively unsophisticated machine assisted hand technology was absorbed into the existing outwork structure of the industry: hand work remained as important as the machine work that was ultimately to supersede it. Organisationally, there was a long fluid transitional phase, during which time increased consumer demand and the continued labour intensive character of the industry led not only to a considerable extension in the numbers of small masters, but also to new categories of small master roles: roles that were created by the very process of technical change itself. Thus, despite change, the small master not only

1 Ibid p150.

2 See for example Appendix II C.23, Rowland Fisher & Company and C.25 G. H. Kendal & Son.

continued to have a role, but that role was increasingly re-defined. This shift in role was not simply part of an orchestrated rear-guard defence against the inevitable decline of small mastership, but was central to the development of and underpinned expansion in the industry generally.¹

As a condition of expanded opportunity and despite change, therefore, the small master continued to have a role that can be strategically viewed as one of support to the larger wholesale manufacturer. Rather than being an independent manufacturer, although independent small master firms did survive industrial transition,² the small man was increasingly likely to be the producer of a specialist component or product and increasingly likely to be a sub-contractor.

1 See Chapter 2 passim. There were a number of reasons for such a development during this transitional phase:

- (i) the low level of technology and fixed capital required to start in business.
- (ii) Northampton's manufacturers were often undercapitalised and the use of component makers working on a sub-contract basis effectively overcame this problem.
- (iii) the increasing use of divided labour made one process operations viable.
- (iv) component makers provided excess capacity at times of heavy seasonal demand. This was especially important in closing, which remained a technological bottle-neck in the period;

See B.S.T.J. 13 December 1903 p322 a Bert Miller of New Barton, Northamptonshire occupied a small factory set up to provide work at busy times for Messrs. Forscutt of Wellingborough.

(v) Because small men achieved a cost advantage in certain grades of work; See L.T.C. 8 January 1886 p3. "(in Leicestershire) there have grown up during the past year or two a large number of small manufacturers, who turn out a common class of boot at a wonderfully low price and the making of commoner kinds has in a large degree fallen into their hands. This feature has become most prominent during the year just closed and now many of the larger firms buy largely from these makers instead of making for themselves". There is evidence to suggest that some manufacturers, for example Manfield & Son of Northampton, gave capital assistance to these small men.

2 See for example Appendix II C.16 to C.25.

The work of J. H. Soltow on small businesses in the New England metal fabricating and machinery making industries provides an interesting parallel.¹ There he notes that some small firms elected to operate on the fringes of an industry dominated by an oligopolistic 'leading core', while others "have functioned as satellites, serving as a distributor of the products of one large corporation or as a supplier to a single large customer in a modern version of the putting-out system". Whilst there is no parallel of the ~~former~~^{latter} in the English shoe industry, the former practice, here known as factoring, was widely practised. At best, however, Soltow found that small owner managers had "little sense of independent entrepreneurship in these situations because of low incomes, instability of operations and/or sharing with a large firm some of the decision making functions, with respect to pricing and even investment." More promising than these alternatives was the strategy of acquiring "a strong market position as a small firm by adapting to a niche in the market which afforded some degree of isolation from complete and direct competition with other firms both large and small". Of the 80 firms he investigated, some produced specialist articles whose narrow demand effectively barred entry to large men, whilst others specialised in a specific process, for which a reputation had been earned.

IV

In contrast to the data above concerning internal shifts in sub-group membership, as will be shown below, any adequate appreciation of the size of the many and diverse small master firms^{is difficult. Some} had fewer than circa 30 employees, whilst small 'mechanised factory' firms had less than circa 100.²

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- 1 J. H. Soltow "Origins of Small Business: Metal Fabricators and Machinery Makers in New England 1890-1957". American Philosophical Society (1965) and "Origins of Small Business and the Relationship between Large and Small Firms", S. Bruchey, *ibid* p192 et seq. cf H. G. Vatter "The Position of Small Business in the Structure of American Manufacturing 1870-1970", S. Bruchey *op cit* p142 et seq.
- 2 Important within this range is P. Sargant Florence Investment Location and Size of Plant (1962): cf A. L. Stinchcombe "Bureaucratic and Craft Administration of Production: A Comparative Study" Administrative Science Quarterly *iv* (1959), where it is argued that a shift in workshop relations sets in when the number employed rises above 30. The personal character which characterises relations between employer and employed steadily gives way to more formalised modes of contact. Linked to this is the increase in managerial specialisation discussed below.

This categorisation will be used here in favour of that commonly used by historians, who commonly see a crucial break at the point where employers engaged more than 50 employees.¹ Indeed, at a number of points in the shoe industry's technical literature it is stated that the smallest machine factory unit that can be efficiently operated is one with an output of circa 3,000 pairs a week, employing circa 100 people.² In addition, mention will be made below to the artisan as an independent small master. These men had varying degrees of dependence on merchants or their agents under the outwork system and in some European countries special artisan laws have given to this type of production the force of law.³

However, no single index of size is really satisfactory, although it is important to stress the upward shift in size of the small firm under the influence of industrialising forces.⁴ Given this, it is more instructive to

- 1 A division adopted from the factory and workshop legislation definition of a factory.
- 2 See example G. P. Grant, "The Advantages of a Small Firm" B.B.S.I.J. 5, (1955) p395, "A small firm, if it is to have any chance of efficiency, must be at least above the minimum size below which efficiency is impossible. This means that output must be big enough to employ a whole production team on full time work throughout the year. For example, reasonable balance can be obtained in a factory, with an output of about 3,000 pairs a week. A factory of this size would employ about 80 work people". However, spare utility workers are required, so Grant concludes "a total employed force of 100 people will be taken as being the smallest size at which mechanised shoe production is likely to be efficient". 50 years previously E. J. Swaysland's seminal Shoe Manufacture and Design (1905) suggested exactly similarly figures: see Chapter 7 p423below.
- 3 In France, for example, an artisan was one who carried on a manual trade for which he had professional qualifications, directed his enterprise on his own account, habitually taking part personally in the work and besides family members and apprentices, had no more than five journeymen. See Commissariat Général du Plan d'Équipement et de la Productivité, Rapport de la Commission de l'Artisanat, July 1961 p9 (mimeographed).
- 4 At first sight it might be supposed that a shift from labour to capital intensity would reduce average firm sizes. This however, was not the case, as a result of the threshold of economic viability which tended to increase the labour used.

stress the functional characteristics of small shoe firms rather than the arbitrary size boundary between large and small, although this line of enquiry will be pursued below. Using a functional approach, it is possible to define small businesses in the industry as those "small enough to be operated with no more than one layer of supervision between owners and workers".¹ This type of definition implies not only that there was relatively little specialisation in management with no formal lines of authority existing amongst staff, but also that a close personal contact existed amongst staff.² Again, however, under the impetus of change a major difference in the small firm mode of production and management style as between 1887 and 1905 must be observed. In 1887, the small master relied heavily upon putting-out, whereas by 1905 the industry was substantially factory-based. This gave rise to an increase in the managerial function in small firms, as the latter required a greater degree of administration. The relegation of craftsmanship in most areas of shoemaking led to the rise of the manager; efficiency was dependent upon managerial, not artisan, skills. Under the non-factory system of manufacture, the artisan was the master of the industry, the prime mover in the enterprise, the active centre of the productive act. In manufacture carried on by factory methods, he surrendered that role to the organisation. And, quite clearly, once mechanisation penetrated average practice shoe firms, it is wrong to differentiate modern firms from small firms: small firms were able to mechanise successfully. It has been commonplace for historians of the British shoe industry to stress the small size of footwear enterprises by reference to this characterisation:

1 This style of definition derives from a variety of sources, though notably from I. Tichenor "Master Printers Organise: The Typothetae of the City of New York 1865-1906" in S. Bruchey op cit pl69 et seq. However, other elements of her typology regarding trading in local markets and of personal customer contact are of less relevance to small shoemasters of this study.

2 In addition to these characteristics it must also be argued that small firms faced handicaps in raising capital and credit. This important area will be dealt with fully in Chapter 5 passim.

stressing particularly the presence of the owner working at the bench with his employees. For example, Head concludes, "in Britain during the period up to the 90's, small workshops, often partnerships with partners working in their own backyard remained typical of the organisation of the industry".¹ In such workshops the delegation of management functions amongst subordinates was minimal. Owners tended to personally supervise all aspects of the firms work.²

Two contrasting biographical sketches by East Midlands shoe manufacturers can be used to set the parameters of a small manufacturer class thus defined. First, William Arnold's recollections of his early days as a manufacturer in Northampton emphasises a dependence upon outwork and the continued role of the manufacturer himself as a workman, as important strategies in overcoming undercapitalisation. Arnold recalls:

... We knew that £94 would not go far and we knew therefore that it was necessary to proceed in a very small way - as a sort of overtime employment for us. A man we knew, named Smith, who worked at Mr. Manfields was to do the pattern cutting and clicking for us. Uncle was to cut the sole leathers, I was to do the riveting. The finishing we could give out to work people. The other partner, Mr. Flint, was to do the books and his wife the closing or stitching of uppers. It all seemed very simple and we took a little place in Duke Street to start in, one room up some steps ...³

The infant enterprise could not support the partners, so their wages as outworkers employed by Manfield & Sons continued to supply their income. That firm, however, refused any further outwork when it was discovered that they had commenced as manufacturers.⁴ The ensuing financial hardship meant that the partners could only draw £1 a week in salary in the first two years, thereafter

1 P. Head op cit pl67.

2 See examples of this in business failure reports quoted in Chapter 5 passim.

3 W. Arnold, The Recollections of William Arnold (1915) p60. Given that only one person was employed on each of four processes no more than five finishers would have been required.

4 Although M. P. Manfield is known to have assisted new entrants (see Appendix II C.3) like many firms it found that outworkers only too readily copied last designs and used materials given out to them as a basis on which to start on their own account.

rising to £1 5s Od.¹ Nevertheless, modest progress was made and after two years a 'factory' was rented. Arnold notes:

... Slowly, very slowly, business improved. After about two years and obtaining more customers, we removed our factory from the one room, Duke Street, to a (dwelling) house in Military Road which had been made into a shoe factory ...²

By contrast, secondly, George Thorpe's remembers the business life in an established small manufacturing firm in Edwardian Leicester:

... That was the era of comparatively small factories - capacity around 1,000 pairs per week - although there were many much smaller. For it was quite common for a clicker to set up on his own; continue to do his own cutting; have the uppers machined in nearby homes; last them and attach the outer soles in the factory; the sewing would be done by J. T. Cox, sewer to the trade and the actual finishing and warehousing completed in the factory.

Probably the whole week's output would be delivered on Friday to a local 'multiple' or 'factor', where the cheque in payment would be picked up and banked against the operatives' wages on the Saturday. It was a very hand-to-mouth existence for such establishments and any rejection and return of goods on account of not being up to sample, could and often did, easily spell disaster ...³

Again, personal supervision and outwork appears as central pivots of the business strategy of small firms, as is the support role. The degree of dependency on large wholesale, multiple and factoring firms places these firms, in effect, in a sub-contracting role.⁴ Again, one notices the same tone of insecurity which pervades Arnold's assessment. Whereas Arnold's infant firm represents the lower end of the small master spectrum, Thorpe's firm would have occupied the opposite end.

Of course, such small masters should be differentiated from marginal producers in the industry. In shoemaking, one finds a variety of such persons.

1 Ibid p43-5. Arnold was a good worker, who claims to have earned £1 2s 6d in one day and as much as £5/£6 in one week.

2 Ibid p61.

3 Leicestershire Record Office, Box 49A: George Thorpe, Reminiscences of the Shoe Trade in North Evington 50 years ago (unpublished manuscript 1960).

4 Example B.S.T.J. 6 February 1897 p187, failure report of George Webster noted that he "formerly carried on business at Astcote working for larger Northampton firms". cf B.S.T.J. 2 December 1899 p727, the failure report of R. G. Pope, who had a London retail shop, but secured the bulk of his work on a sub-contract basis.

Journeymen sub-contractors, who employed one or two boys and elicited the help of the family.¹ Embryonic manufacturers; journeymen who were employed by day and who tried their hand at manufacturing at night.² Unemployed or under employed journeymen, who went into production in a small way merely to supplement the household budget in periods of short time working and trade depression. Such men drifted in and out of the small producers' ranks as want dictated.³ And lastly, there were those transitory figures for whom a small scale of operation was but part of a defined progression to a larger scale of operation.⁴

It should be noted, however, that at this level, where the role of the small producer and marginal producer merges, it is often difficult to differentiate between the two. And at this point, another historically important functional characteristic is apparent; the evils of exploitation and of sweating.⁵ In late Victorian Britain there was a growing awareness as to the extent and degradation caused in this way.⁶ Within the shoe industry, the

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- 1 P.R.O. MH 12/8796, Clerk to Northampton Guardians to L.G.B., 19 August 1889, on the use of cheap indentured labour and their families by finishers: cf G. J. Battle "Workshops - The Old and the New" S.L.R. 25 January 1895 pl77-80 on the use of reformatory school labour. Also B.S.T.J. 2 July 1892 pl2.
 - 2 William Arnold, whose autobiography is quoted above, started in this way. Several other examples occur in the failure reports and are to be found in Chapter 5 below.
 - 3 In the 1890's the N.U.B.S.O. Monthly Report makes several allusions to this practice. Whilst a generation earlier, Henry Mayhew wrote of it: "There are also some men who cannot get work from the manufacturers and who will get a bit of leather and make two or three pairs of boots and sell them then and there for ready money. This practice prevails to a great extent throughout the town and causes great injury to the regular trade; for the manufacturers are always ready to buy them, because it saves them the trouble of giving out work and they can get them done cheaper too that way. Sometimes they get two or three men to help them to make the boots, so make up the boots and shoes at lower prices than the regular employer can get them made for".
 4. The best example is A. E. Marlow: Appendix III N.G.2.
 - 5 For the best recent general account of sweating in the footwear industry see Duncan Bythell The Sweated Trades (1978) Chapter 3 pl06-117.
 - 6 See generally B.P.P. S.C. of House of Lords on sweated industries.

cf for detailed investigation of sweated conditions in London's boot trade see S.L.R. 3 March 1888 p312 et seq and subsequent weeks.

chamber master system - a sweated system - provided manufacturers with the services of a small master to perform just one process. In every way a product of the transitional phase and of outwork, it was to be found in its most exploitive form in London, Manchester and Leeds, where the most glaring abuse was that perpetuated against aliens of recent immigration.¹ In the early 90's the London trade was mainly in the hands of 300/400 small and medium sized employers, in addition to which there were a further 200 Jewish chamber masters. A trade report of 1894 noted that, whilst elsewhere there was a tendency for production to centralise, in the capital there was a growing proliferation of small workshops, controlled by a group of producers whose status hovered between that of the manufacturer and chamber master.² This growth had taken place despite an agreement made in 1891 between the employers' association and the trade union, to prohibit outdoor labour in the industry.³ The report stresses one central reason for this growth of small masters in London "(was) the development of the factor system which gives an impulse to the multiplication of small masters, whose workshops are not in all cases any more sanitary than those of outworkers proper".⁴ By the early 90's, Jewish small masters had come to dominate the production of certain of the commonest qualities of footwear, notably the 'sew-round' and slipper trades. The report noted:

... In the London 'sew-round' and slipper trade we have, therefore, a good example of an industry divided into two almost 'non-competing' sections. In one is found the skilled English workman making for one market, in the other the low skilled foreign Jew supplying another. Neither the workers nor the markets appear to any great extent to overlap or to affect each other. Both branches of the trade have grown rapidly during the same period ...⁵

1 These immigrants were East European Jews. The 1891 census enumerated 248,789 shoemakers nationwide. Of these, 2,609 were European Jews: 1,763 (68%) were to be found in London.

2 S.L.R. 20 July 1894 p134 et seq and 27 July 1894 p198 et seq. "Alien Immigration and the Shoe Trade".

3 N.U.B.S.O. Monthly Report March 1891. Northampton followed in 1893: London had agreed in 1890.

4 S.L.R. 20 July 1894 p137.

5 S.L.R. 27 July 1894 p199.

There was a parallel domination of similar grades of work particularly slipper making, in the Leeds footwear industry. Here exploitation and degradation appear to have reached the lowest point. Joseph Buckman, the historian of Leeds Jewry, remarks:

... As in tailoring, the manufacture of slippers offered the immigrant an opportunity to set up shop with the minimum of capital as an outworker for a large English house, or as a manufacturer for sale by hawking to retail shops or market traders. The required equipment was limited ...¹

Whilst the size of workshop varied, with an example of small factories employing 90 hands being present, Buckman finds the small shop to be most common: the average size being between 20 to 30 hands.² As in London, the Jewish slipper maker here made a quality of product which English workers refused to entertain.

Of conditions in the trade, Buckman notes:

... Jewish slipper shops were chiefly bedrooms. In other cases they were garrets with ceilings consisting of the sloping roof slates. Over crowding was to be found everywhere. Work was begun at 6 a.m. and, to get on with their work they dispensed with meal times and left at 12 p.m. All the shops had a special 'quick hand' who was 'a marvel' capable of earning 24s per week but the ordinary hand earned 13s/15s. The master was no better off, being ground down by the wholesale buyer. Payment was half in cash and half in leather. Prices were already low but 5% was deducted from the money portion for the 'privilege' of retaining the custom ...³

As one Jewish slipper maker told a contemporary reporter, "there is no such thing as pleasure for me, I go from bed to my seat (of work) to my bed, though now and again I may get, say, an hour over my paper".⁴

Outside these three main cities, chamber masters were most populous in the shoe industry at Norwich. The Chief Inspector of factories stated in 1892 that

1 J. Buckman, The Economic and Social History of Alien Immigrants to Leeds 1880-1914, unpublished PhD University of Strathclyde (1968) p348 cf Bill Williams Manchester Jewry (1977), for the situation in that city.

2 Buckman, Ibid p349.

3 Buckman, Ibid p354.

4 R. H. Sherard, "The White Slaves of England, The Slipper Makers of Leeds" Pearson's Magazine 1896 Vol. 2 p264.

... (in Norwich) it is estimated that twice as many as work in factories are employed as outworkers in their own homes by large factory owners and by the class known as garret masters, in many cases in insanitary rooms, for longer hours than are worked in factories and at a lower rate of wages ...¹

The Inspector had first reported on these sweated conditions 20 years before:

... The shoe trade of Norwich is also extended to the houses of workers; numbers of men called garret masters employ their own families and a few others, from 2/12 in number. The habits of these persons are very sad; the 'sweating' system obtains amongst them and I am told, that so keen is the desire of these petty masters for employment wherein they can be free, that work is taken in by them at ruinous prices ...²

The sweating amongst immigrant shoe workers was high lighted at this time, but this does not mean that it was not to be found in the more progressive centres of the industry: that is to say at Leicester and Northampton. Though never known by the name chamber or garret master, the Northampton industry witnessed the growth of just such a new class of small sweating master, following the division of labour made possible by the sewing machine. In Northampton, just as was to be found in the industry nationally at this time, the development and growth of modern shoemaking was intimately linked to such exploitation. This new small master group was heavily, but never exclusively, concentrated in one process, the closing of uppers. The masters, many of whom were women, were known as closers to the trade. At the heart of this exploitation was the keen competition that existed amongst closers for orders:

... The competition for machine closing is terribly keen and if the sweating system would be seen in the boot trade of Northampton it may be found fully developed in the numerous small machine closing shops attached to the dwelling houses. In very limited and in a stifling atmosphere, hundreds of women and girls may be seen working at high pressure (from 12 hours a day). They are badly paid and it's veritable slavery for wives, mothers and daughters ...³

1 B.P.P. Report of C.I.F. for 1892 1893-94 (c.6,978) xviii p72 cf F. W. Wheldon A Norvic Century (1947) p28 cf C. B. Hawkins Norwich: A Social Study 1906 which suggests much of the exploitative character of the outwork system and the attendant poor environmental and social condition still prevailed in the Norwich industry in the early 1890's.

2 Quoted from 1872 Factory Inspectors' Reports by M. P. Cairns History of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in the Boot and Shoe Industry (unpublished DPhil thesis Oxford 1953) p99.

3 S.L.R. 22 February 1890 p259 cf S.L.R. 18 October 1890 p493.

A year earlier the town's factory inspector had similarly condemned conditions in the small workshops where "the boot closer employs 20/50 females in a stuffy little den, built over a back kitchen and scullery. Closers' workshops, of which there are over 150, are generally over-crowded, badly ventilated and in winter warmed by only having the gas alight".¹ These workshops tended to be concentrated in the St. Andrew's district of the town and many are to be seen in St. Michael's Road.² However, surviving Enumerators' Returns suggest that the factory inspector's figure regarding workforce size is too high. In 1871, 26 closers to the trade gave information regarding the numbers of persons employed. 176 were thus employed, giving an average of 6.8 workers per master closer.³ Ten years later, 27 closers were recorded as employing 230, an average of 8.5 per master closer.⁴ Little other evidence is available to us, although very few business failure reports are extant: one closer in 1895 had realisable

1 Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Factories, year ending 31/10/86, 1889 (c.5,697) xviii p83-4 cf Report 31/10/90 1890-91 (c.6,330) xix p20-22. cf Local Medical Officer of Health Reports (M.O.H.) in this period which reveal bad housing conditions amongst the poorer class of outworking shoemaker; those who tended to turn to small masters for employment. Example P.R.O. MH12(8793)33736/84 Northampton M.O.H. Report 1883 p5. "Shoemaking in Northampton is not always worked at in well regulated manufactories, but mostly in the workman's own domicile and the home workshop, at which he toils for long hours, in a constrained posture, is as a rule badly ventilated, badly lighted, badly heated, often damp and too often over-crowded, so that a state of unwholesomeness always prevails". This coupled to poor habits of health, led to "constitutional deterioration, followed often by consumption and other organic diseases". On p12 one such house was described: "It consists of three small rooms, none of which measure over six feet (high), the floors were rotten, the ceilings tumbling down and no proper place for keeping food otherwise than the coal cellar. It was filthy throughout and overcrowded. I must not omit to say that one of the three rooms is used as a workshop, in addition to its being occupied by some members of the family as a sleeping room". Again in P.R.O. MH12/8795/25567/89. Northampton M.O.H. Report 1889 at p21. "There are houses standing in the older courts so palpably insanitary that not only are they in every respect unfitted for human beings to live in, it's in these haunts, of the poorest of the poor, that physical life, if not subjected to actual devastation, is irreparably damaged. Misery and abject wretchedness reign supreme.

2 M. F. Collins BPhil thesis op cit p80: cf M.S. information held at Northampton museum; Northampton Corporation Deposited Building Plans and personal surveys old closing room in St. Michael's Road (measured c. 18' x c. 6' x c. 7'). Accessed through backyard and exterior staircase.

3 P.R.O. RG 10/1481-84.

4 P.R.O. RG 11/1547-54.

assets of £5.¹

Indeed, evidence of sweating in closing stretches back at least a generation from this time. Whereas the closer workshops of the 1880's employed women and juvenile girls, those of the mid-century, before the introduction of the sewing machine, employed a large proportion of children. In a short account of teaching in shoe work briefly undertaken by a local church school, to combat sweating, V. A. Hatley notes that already the process of closing had been taken over by 'independent masters'. They were working artisans:

... These men were outworkers who had achieved a slightly higher status in the industry than ordinary shoemakers. Their premises were usually the front parlours of terraced houses in one of the shoemaking districts of the town. They employed mostly children from seven years old ...²

¹ B.S.T.J. 3 March 1895 p302: In all, only ten failure reports were published in the period and basic details of these are appended:

Date	Name	Liabilities	Assets
5/5/88	S. Salter	£ 177	£ 62
27/7/89	Collins Bros	300	97
7/12/89	Vigor & Son	456	130
24/3/93	T. Clark	452	261
29/7/99	E. J. Smith	360	12
24/1/02	J. S. Francis	1266	724
8/9/05	E. Wills*	165	94
15/9/05	J. J. Gilbert	1362	880
5/8/10	J. K. Morgan	180	28

* Is a closer, the rest upper manufacturers. Although closers to the trade tended to operate at the scale of the small workshop, a small class of upper manufacturers came into being to satisfy the trade that developed for good quality ready-made uppers. Wellingborough became particularly noted for this trade and some firms there conducted business on a large scale; example the Wellingborough Boot & Shoe Co. Ltd., which did a vast trade in ready made uppers and employed 700 in this branch alone. At Northampton, typical of this group was the firm of Peach & Knightly. Founded by Edward Peach (1836-1892) who lived at Billing Road and left personal effects of £2287 4s 1d at his death.

² V. A. Hatley, "St. Giles Shoe School" B.B.S.I.J. (1961) V p619.

These children were trained for six months and then worked in cramped, unhealthy conditions for 10/14 hours a day, at a weekly wage of between 1s 0d and 2s 6d.¹

Henry Mayhew, in a visit to the town in 1850, vividly describes life in these workshops:

... the poor little creatures go to work, many of them as early as four years old. They are so afraid of being late that they'll jump out of bed at four or five o'clock and run to look at the church clock. They give the poor little children very little wages, although they get through a deal of light kind of work in the day; and as they give them so little for their work, they are able to compete with other men, who won't have anything to do with the factory plan, but who work single-handed...²

Hatley's account of the workshops describes scenes common to any sweated work: often parents encouraged such employment and school inspectors noted the high levels of absenteeism that prevailed in the town. Indeed, he concludes that "for conditions of misery and squalor it is unlikely that the cotton mills of Lancashire ever rivalled the closing rooms of Northampton".³ However, from the advent of shoe machinery, several writers have suggested that sweating receded in all shoe centres other than London,⁴ although the evidence adduced above

1 But cf P. Razzell and R. W. Wainwright (Editors) Selections from the Morning Chronicle: The Victorian Working Class (1973), "Letter XLV, The Boot and Shoemakers of Northampton", p77 "The children do not receive anything for the first six months; after that period they received from 1s 0d/2s 0d per week and gradually rise to 8s 0d. One young man informed me that he was eight years at work before he got as high as 7s 6d per week and he was then 17 years of age. cf South Midland Free Press 25 September 1858, where it was stated that prior to the advent of closing masters, wages had been good, "but as child labour was introduced, they fell in proportion and it is this practice that has been the bane of the business called closing".

2 Razzell & Wainwright, Ibid p77 cf "The Cheap Boot & Shoe System" Northampton Herald 27 April 1850.

3 Hatley loc cit p619.

4 See M. P. Cairns History of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in the Boot and Shoe Industry (unpublished DPhil Oxford 1953) p 93-95 and 99-110 and V. A. Hatley loc cit p624: both rely upon the evidence of the Royal Commission on Employment of Children 1864-67 and for later in the century Cairns relies upon Factory Inspectors' Reports and the 1889 Sweating Commission Report.

would tend to refute such a conclusion. Certainly, several strands of evidence tell of its continuance at Northampton, through to the 1890's.

Sweated conditions were not confined to closing after 1860, but were practiced by other small masters in the industry. In 1869, Richard Rowe's report on the town's staple trade implied that conditions on middleman manufacturers (sub-contractors) premises were similar to those prevalent in closers' workshops.¹ Mayhew noted that, again, this practice pre-dated machine introduction:

... A practice, which during the last few years has sprung up in connection with the boot and shoe trade of Northampton, is very generally complained of by numerous class of artisans employed in that trade. In this case, it is not the large capitalists of whom they complain, but persons of their own condition, who, by their petty and oppressive conduct, prove the truth of the adage that "servants make bad masters". It appears that a somewhat numerous class amongst the shoemakers, who either from drunken and disorderly habits, or from inability properly to perform their work, have been refused employment at the principal manufacturers of the town, have set up for themselves as small masters and encouraged by the less respectable of the manufacturers and boot vendors of Northampton and London, they have introduced into the town, all the mischiefs and injustice of the sweating system which exists in connection with the shop sellers of the metropolis ...²

In addition to this, sweating was practised into the 1890's by the artisan, who employed one or two boys and his family.³

By contrast many sub-contracting activities were on a more secure basis than those of closers to the trade. Sub-contracting in the trade took two

- 1 Richard Row, "Toiling and Moiling: vi The Northampton Shoemaker", Good Words 1 November 1869 p . "What I may call a middleman manufacturer, one who takes work from the large manufacturers and employs boys and girls to do it - Although he employs some 70 hands, the middleman wears an apron and carries work backwards and forwards in a basket on his shoulder". Here paste boys earned 3s 0d/4s 0d; knot tiers 1s 6d/3s 0d; fitters (juvenile girls) 7s 0d/12s 0d; and women machinists 9s 0d/18s 0d. Normal hours of work were from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. with regular overtime during seasonal rushes of work.
- 2 Razzell & Wainwright op cit Letter XLVI p79 in which appears a consideration of the undercutting in price carried out by these small masters.
- 3 Keith Brooker, "The Northampton Shoemakers' Reaction to Industrialisation: Some Thoughts" N.P. & P. vi No.3 (1980) p156.

main forms, viz:- small manufacturers who undertook the entire production of orders for larger manufacturers and the garret or chamber-master system: small masters, who completed just one process for the manufacturer.

The former system was particularly common in Leicester where the utilisation of sub-contractor manufacturers was adopted from prevailing hosiery industry practice in the city.¹ In this way, small masters in the city and more particularly the county found lucrative trade. There were at least two reasons why large manufacturers used this form of sub-contracting. First, because small men were able to achieve a cost advantage in certain grades of work. In 1886 it was noted that:

... (in Leicestershire) there have grown up during the past year or two a large number of small manufacturers, who turn out a common class of boot at a wonderfully low price and the making of commonest kinds has in a large degree fallen into their hands. This feature has become most prominent during the year just closed and now many of the larger firms buy largely from these makers instead of making for themselves ...²

Some sub-contractors built up a substantial trade in this manner. For example, in the 1880's W. H. Cotton & Sons Ltd. of Earl Shilton, "were making shoes for firms such as John Rowson, Walker Kempson & Brown (both of Leicester), John Cooper and William Hickson (both of London and Northampton)".³ Secondly, sub-contracting was utilised to combat the vagaries in demand in this highly seasonal trade. Thus, a small master, Bert Miller, of New Barton, Northamptonshire, occupied a small factory, set up to provide work at busy times for Messrs. Forscutt of Wellingborough.⁴ Evidence of the presence of such sub-contractor manufacturers in the Northampton trade is also available. Both business failure reports and obituaries tell of the practice.⁵ Thus, it was stated of Alfred

1 P. Head. Industrial Organisation in Leicester 1844-1914 (unpub. PhD University of Leicester 1960) especially Chapters 4-6.

2 L.T.C. 8 January 1886 p3.

3 Footwear Organiser August 1932 and the other examples quoted there.

4 B.S.T.J. 13 December 1903 p322.

5 Although factoring was probably more prevalent in Leicester than in Northampton.

Dunkley at the time of his suicide "he was a small manufacturer who only manufactured in small quantities for one or two houses".¹ Furthermore, the multi-million pound merger between Sears of Northampton and Freeman, Hardy & Willis of Leicester, in 1929, reveals not only the continued reliance of large manufacturers upon small until into the inter-war period, but also the extent to which sub-contracting had become entrenched in the trade.

... Something more tangible is now to hand regarding the future of Freeman, Hardy & Willis. What concerns local manufacturers most is, will the buying policy at Freemans continue as heretofore, or will the policy ruling at Northampton be adopted here (Leicester). It was customary for Freemans to place their orders pretty generally to all who cared to cater, sample and price being satisfactory. Sears, as is known, place the 'real bulk orders' with the houses they favour, practically taking the entire output, so that if a manufacturer was a member of the very select small number who of the 'band of hope', as it is humorously termed here, he could invariably report 'very busy indeed'. This is why so many are anxious as to the future buying policy of these two successful and progressive multiple shoe factoring concerns ...²

As was stated at the beginning of this section, given the unsatisfactory nature of the statistical data concerning firm size, the functional characteristics of small shoe firms have been explored in order to learn something about the scale and character of operations prevailing in the industry. Nevertheless, statistical analysis of firm size and not assessments based on functional characteristics have tended to dominate the literature on this issue and so some review of the statistical data here would be apposite.

Any statistical determination of firm size is fraught with difficulty given the inconsistency of the data over time. There are no readily available sets of comparative figures and it is all too easy to become immersed in a welter of contradictory and partial evidence that lead to very generalised and unstratified conclusions. What the historical record offers here, as in other small master

1 B.S.T.J. 6 November 1903 p763: Dunkley, aged 38, of 44 Wellington Street, left an estate of £573 11s 3d gross (Probate Calendar). cf p above.

2 S.L.N. 3 January 1929 p24-25, Leicester correspondent. On the merger see S.L.N. Ibid p38 and relevant C.R.O. files.

industries, are occasional beacons in what is otherwise a sea of uncertainty.

National data as to unit workforce sizes found in the shoe industry is sparse, widely scattered over time, and only loosely comparable, as Figure 3 viii shows. This does, however, fulfill the expectations of the literary evidence; that is to say, that there was a domination of small employers in the industry at mid-century, a position which shifted over time to give an employment structure dominated by medium sized firms, with small employers of labour becoming very much such a significant minority.

At this point, the fragmentary nature of the data hinders any detailed regional analysis. The most abundant source is that of an 'aggregate average' variety, which advances our knowledge of unit size in a qualified way.¹ The two dominant centres of Leicester and Northampton conform most clearly to the national pattern. Thus at Northampton, there was a significant move to larger units of production and by using scattered statistical data a fragmentary picture of this shift can be shown.

First, attention can be paid to the scattered references of numbers employed included in the manuscript enumerators' returns of 1851, 1871 and 1881, which have been collated in Figure 3:ix. Care must be exercised in evaluating these figures because of the random character of the sample. The enumerator entered the figure of those employed by an employer only if an employer proffered the information. Moreover, in the 1871 and 1881 returns considerable reservations must be expressed as to the accuracy of these figures, as some gave only information relating to those permanently employed on their premises:

1 cf from 1904 the trade press carried a monthly analysis of the numbers employed in each main centre, the aggregate total of wages earned and the movements in these figures over the previous month and year. Periodically, information was also included as to how many employers in each centre made returns. On these occasions it would be possible to calculate a crude average of workers employed per firm.

Figure 3:viii Size Distribution of Shoe Manufacturing Plants
in England and Wales: 1851 and 1930

No. of Employees	1851			No. of Employees	1930	
	No.	%			No.	%
No men	7311	41.4		-	-	-
1-2	6016	34.1		-	-	-
3-9	3644	20.6		-	-	-
10-19	444	2.5		10-50	507	48
20-49	181	1.0				
50-99	38	0.2		50-99	222	21
100+	31	0.2		100+	328	31
Total (a)	17665	100.00		Total (b)	1057	100.00

Sources: (i) Census of 1851, ages and occupations, after P. Mathias The First Industrial Nation (1969) p261.

(ii) Census of Productions, 1930, Part I, p408, after H. C. Hillman, "Size of firms in Boot and Shoe Industry," Economic Journal XLIX (1939) p276.

Notes: (a) Total for 1851 relates to masters making returns and includes employers in both the retail and wholesale sectors.

(b) Total for 1930 relates to the number of plants. It should be noted that 'plants' and 'firms' not necessarily synonymous, Hillman loc cit p276 notes: "First hand inquiries made in the industry show that of the plants with less than 300 employees, 32 belonged to 16 firms, each owning two plants. Of the 37 plants with more than 500 employees, control lay with 25 firms. In all other size groups 'returns' correspond to firms. Thus, although the census classification may somewhat under-state the importance of firms with over 300 and particularly those with over 750 employees, it seems that size structure of firms does not differ appreciably from the size structure of plants".

in addition, of course, an unspecified number of outworkers would have been engaged. Indeed, some of the returns stated 'employed on the premises', whilst in several more cases, particularly in the 1881 census, this phrase was not inserted but the figure recorded almost certainly relates to indoor workers. For example, in 1871 Manfield & Sons employed a total of 688, but only 251 in 1881, although other evidence suggests that the latter figure should be much higher.¹ Similarly, in 1861 F. Bostock 'partially employed' 735, but only 320 in 1881, yet again other evidence indicates a growth in numbers employed in these years.² Obviously in the face of such strictures, it would be unwise to make any firm comparison, but several trends relating to size are apparent. In any one census there were more small masters than larger men.³ Clearly the presence of the large unit was established by mid-century before the transitional phase and moreover, over time the average size of the large establishment was rising. By comparison, small and medium sized firms remained relatively static in terms of the numbers each employed. Early in the industrialising process many more shoe workers found employment with large employers, although of course, in the period covered by Figure 3:ix, a majority would have operated as outworkers either at home or in small workshops away from their employers' premises. Consequently, although there were many more small masters than large manufacturers in transition, the figures suggest that already the large manufacturer must have played a dominant role in the industry.

1 See Appendix II C.3.

2 See Appendix II C.5.

3 A variety of sources for this and other centres suggests that comparatively small firms survive well into the new industrial era. Thus, in 1950 in Leicestershire "of 57 firms in the county, no fewer than (sic) 38 employed less than 100 workers, 6 employed 250/1,000 workers and one employed over 1,000". (V.C.H. Leicestershire, iii p35). cf Mounfield (1960), where he quotes the 1948 Census of Production, which states that of 1,423 footwear manufacturing establishments, one third had less than ten employees and only 13 had over 750.

Figure 3:ix SIZE OF FIRMS IN NORTHAMPTON SHOE INDUSTRY

Category	Firm Size	Employers			Employees			Employers			Employees					
		No.	% Total	No.	% Total	Aver	No.	% Total	No.	% Total	Aver	No.	% Total	Aver		
		(a)	(b)	1851 (c)	(d)	(e)	(a)	(b)	1871 (c)	(d)	(e)	(a)	(b)	1881 (c)	(d)	(e)
Other Shoe Industry Employers	-30	4	13.8	38	2.3	9.5	29	60.4	190	11.7	6.6	32	37.7	273	5.7	8.5
Wholesale Manufacturers	-30	13	44.8	156	9.4	12.0	12	25.0	188	11.6	15.7	24	28.2	208	4.3	8.7
	-100	4	13.8	249	15.0	62.3	3	6.3	200	12.2	66.7	19	22.4	1038 (1)	21.5	54.6
	+100	8	27.6	1213	73.3	151.6	4	8.3	1048 (2)	64.5	262.0	10	11.7	3298	68.5	329.8
	Total	29		1656		57.1	48		1626		33.9	(3) 84		4812		57.3

Source: Census Enumerators' M.S.S. Returns for Northampton; PRO 1851, HO107/1740+0 1744; 1871, RG10/1481 to 1484; and 1881 RGL1 1547/1554

- Notes: (1) In this group, one employer (Turner Brothers & Hyde) employed 1500. This removed the average would fall from 329.8 to 199.8.
(2) In this group, one employer (Manfield & Sons) employed 688. This removed the average would fall from 262 to 120.
(3) Boot and Shoemaker 17 July 1880 "In Northampton, many firms are of such gigantic size that one or two of them would swallow up scores of the so-called manufacturers in some of (the other shoe centres)".

Secondly, some approximation of unit size can be gleaned for 1891 and 1911, based on a combination of published census figures, trade directory information and trade press records. Thus, for 1891, we know that ten leading employers employed at least 4,300 persons, an average of 430 each; whilst the remaining 410 employers, in all branches of the industry, employed the remaining 8,856, giving a crude average of 21.6 persons per firm.¹ Again, in 1911 seven leading firms employed 5,350, an average of 764.3: the remaining 220 other employers employed 11,616, a crude average of 52.8.²

By contrast, those centres that were slower to adopt change, principally London and Stafford, appear to have retained a proportionately higher percentage of small owners: here the opposition, by both employer and employed, to factory based machine working was at its most vigorous.³

London at this time was still dominated by a proliferation of small trades. Charles Booth estimated that in the late 1880's these sources of work gave employment to some 8,500 persons in East London alone. These occupations by no means represent the survival of a medieval craft structure, for as Walter Besant noted in 1903, East London "is now especially a city of the newer wants, the modern crafts, the recent inventions and applications".⁴ Even amongst the traditional crafts, sub-divided processes and machines had made some impact.

- 1 cf B.S.T.J. 28 July 1900 p93. "The Manufacturers' Association at Kettering comprises 39 manufacturers who employ an aggregate of 4,750 employees: an average of 122 hands". B.S.T.J. 20 January 1905 p101 on employment in the U.K. Boot Industry. In December 1904, 568 firms employed 71,120, an average of 125.5 hands: a year later they employed 69,165, an average of 121.8.
- 2 Contrast this, with the occasional information on workforce size recorded in Figures 7:ii and 7:iii below.
- 3 Example: B.S.T.J. 10 February 1905 p271-72, "Antiquated London", an editorial criticism of the London industry's refusal and inability to revise outdated handicraft wage statements and work practices, which hindered progressive manufacturers' plans to introduce new work routines, footwear styles and so forth. Similar press and trade union comment is critical of Stafford's inability to throw off established craft attitudes (see also V.C.H. Staffs ii)
- 4 Walter Besant, East London (1903) p22.

Of shoemaking he noted:

... We are now very far from the days when a shoemaker sat down with leather and his awl and worked away until he had completed the whole shoe, perfect in all parts. The modern system leaves no room for pride in work at all; every man is part of a machine; the shoe grows without the workers knowledge ...¹

Two data sources offer an indication as to the extent of the survival of the small unit in the capital's shoe trade. In 1890, a trade journal published the results of a sample survey.² The 47 firms included - the basis for inclusion is unclear - employed a total of 397 workers. The following breakdown was given:

One firm employed 50 workers

One firm employed 25 workers

Three firms employed 20 workers

One firm employed 19 workers

Two firms employed 15 workers

39 firms employed 213 workers (average of five and a half each)

By the inter-war period, despite a movement toward factory based work in the 1890's London "still produces footwear of the cheapest kind, made under conditions little better than those of Charles Booth's day".³ In 1920, utilising unpublished and subsequently destroyed government data, A. L. Bowley concluded that 80 shoe firms employed less than 20 people, six between 21-49 and 15 over 50.⁴ The large employer of labour in London's boot trade would certainly appear to have been very much the exception. It was recorded in 1912 that J. Franklin of London employed 500 "out of the largest in the metropolis", whilst A. & W. Flatau's new factory in Tottenham was heralded as quite unusual: it employed

1 Besant Ibid p27.

2 B.S.T.J. 12 April 1890 p382.

3 Footwear Organiser July 1932.

4 A. L. Bowley "The Survival of Small Firms" Economica (1920) pl13-15 cf Footwear Organiser Ibid, published the following table in 1932 based on National Insurance figures: Two firms employed over 500; three over 200; 16 over 100; 146 under 50 and a further 300 operated 'on a small scale'.

1,200.¹

Yet, given the ultimately speculative and unsatisfactory nature of such conclusions, possibly an alternative method of isolating the extent of small master production in Northampton would serve better: that is, by shifting the emphasis away from work-force size and toward the size of net assets held by a firm. This type of data can be systematically extracted from business failure reports concerning the town's shoe firms: Figure 3:x refers. This does offer a more precise impression of the size of business unit in the industry. As a point of comparison, it is interesting to contrast this information with that tabulated in Chapter Seven concerning the asset size of limited companies formed in the period.

V

In confronting the question of the size and character of the shoe industry, therefore, the wide heterogeneous nature of participants must be recognised. Two areas of conclusion need to be highlighted.

First, is that the business community is composed not only of the dominant wholesale manufacturers, but of sub-contractors, ancillary component manufacturers and of retail shoemakers as well. Clearly not all retailers were involved in wholesaling activities, but to completely ignore this sub-group is to lose sight of an important dimension in the industry's development. A close link existed between these sub-groups both in relation to the support role provided by small masters and the shifts in common membership between the sub-groups. In broad terms, secular business opportunities expanded through transition and began to contract as the industry experienced the final push through to modernity.²

1 B.S.T.J. 12 July 1912 p44 cf B.S.T.J. 19 January 1912 states J. Franklin of London employed 500, "one of the largest employers in the metropolis".

2 B.S.T.J. 22 November 1912 p419, comments on a general decline in the numbers of manufacturers at main centres and stresses this had occurred as a result of industrialisation and took not be taken as "proof of any decadence within the industry".

	<u>Numbers of Manufacturers</u>	
	1892	1912
London	circa 400	circa 200
Northampton	circa 200	circa 100
Leicester	circa 300	circa 170

Figure 3:x Declared Realisable Assets of Northampton Footwear Firms
At Time of Business Failure 1885 - 1912

Time	£0-499	500-999	1000-1999	2000-2999	3000-3999	4000-4999	5000-5999	+6000
1885-1912 (276)	127 46%	59 20.7%	41 15.2%	19 6.7%	12 4.5%	5 1.9%	1 0.4%	12 3.7%
1885-95 (135)	67 49.6%	32 23.7%	17 12.6%	10 7.4%	4 3.0%	2 1.5%	1 0.7%	2 1.5%
1896-1912 (141)	60 43.4%	27 17.4%	24 17.3%	9 6.5%	8 5.8%	3 2.2%	0 0.0	10 7.2%

(I) ALL FIRMS

Time	£0.99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499
1885-1912 (127)	44 15.9%	25 9.1%	29 10.5%	18 6.5%	11 4.0%
1885-95 (67)	17 12.6%	14 10.4%	18 13.3%	10 7.4%	8 5.9%
1895-1912 (60)	27 19.2%	11 7.9%	11 7.9%	8 5.9%	3 2.3%

(II) FIRMS WITH ASSETS BETWEEN £0 - 499

Source: Weekly Financial Reports in Boot and Shoe Trades Journal and Shoe and Leather Record 1885 - 1912.

Secondly, both evidence on functional features and firm size lay stress upon the industry's small master character. And linked to this is the volatile nature of the business community that has been observed. Clearly this instability and the small master's role in the industrialising process is more complex than the current literature allows and is deserving of more detailed investigation. At one level, the small master group is worth serious consideration in its own right quite simply because it is present and because there existed a tradition of small scale production within the industry. But, after 1887 one is not merely witnessing the final disappearance of volatile, traditional small handicraft firms: small firms were not here just a negative force standing against industrial progress. Some were able to successfully exploit specialist areas of the market, remaining as independent manufacturers. Moreover, the long initial transitional phase of change was underpinned by the emergence of new classes of small master sub-contractors and component manufacturers, who were vital to the development of the industrial elite. It is crucial to appreciate that a symbiotic and mutually dependent relationship existed between the small master and larger manufacturers until the inter-war period. At this, the second level, small masters were very much part of the whole process of change and their presence in the industry reacts upon and tempers, in part determines, the larger manufacturer's strategy to change.

Therefore, if one accepts that small masters played a positive role during industrialisation, then the third level of analysis concerning an investigation of the internal structure needs to be extended. Methodologically this presents a problem,¹ that, as the next chapters will reveal, will be met by utilising business failure data; limited company papers; bank records and miscellaneous information concerning individual firms. Such a study is important because as

1 What is required is a relatively standardised, long-run data base, which can be applied in a uniform, comparative fashion to a large number of often obscure business units.

has been shown, the shoe industry, both nationally and in Northampton, had traditionally been characterised by a high turnover of firms and this remained a central feature of the industry during change.¹ Any evaluation of shoe manufacturers as a successful entrepreneurial group, therefore, must surely be modified. In actuality there emerges a strongly contrasting story of often notable individual success, tempered by the much more common experience of a short, frequently precarious business life terminated by insolvency; in addition to the demise of employers unable to accommodate structural change. A study of business failure, therefore, becomes an essential and integral element in any investigation of this industry, typified as it was by a volatile and strongly differentiated entrepreneur class. And it is not merely the case that the study of failure becomes valid in its own right,² because so many shoe masters experienced insolvency. More importantly, it is pertinent to question the extent and ways in which the presence of a high failure rate in the industry inhibited its over-all development: in the Northampton insolvency study, below, it will be argued that the business methods of potential insolvents, not only undermined business confidence generally, but also affected over-all profitability in the industry by the adoption of practices, such as selling below cost and the reckless provision and use of credit. By this means,

1 Some speculative evidence and opinion exists attesting that the same was true of other nineteenth century industries. See P. L. Cottrell, Industrial Finance 1830-1914 (1980) p254, "there is evidence for a few industries which points to a high mortality" and the sources cited there: cf E. M. Sigsworth and J. M. Blackman, "The Woollen and Worsted Industries" in D. H. Aldcroft (Editor) The Development of British Industry and Foreign Competition (1968). Most certainly, nineteenth century trades reveal at least as much failure as success. This article records that the number of firms in the woollen textile industry contracted sharply. High rates of turnover are observed and in part, these are the result of the demise of small handicraft firms. In the absence of a detailed examination, any definitive conclusion is avoided, but business failure was put forward as a principal factor. R. A. Church (1980) attests to this regarding the shoe industry, as does Felkin for the hosiery industry, but no historian has systematically examined the question.

2 This is the first such British Study of business failure.

one can both view entrepreneurial performance in depth and begin to offer a more balanced appraisal of progress within the industry. This area of the work will also provide the basis for a corrective to the current, dominant ideology of progress which pervades historical scholarship.¹ Successful enterprise, however that is to be perceived, was, of course, crucial to the development of the nineteenth century British economy. But failure was as much a part of business experience as success. Indeed, in quantitative terms, it was the common experience of the Victorian businessman.

¹ See S. Pollard's critical treatment in his The Idea of Progress, passim.

CHAPTER FOURATTITUDES AND STRATEGIES OF NORTHAMPTONWHOLESALE MANUFACTURERS TOWARD CHANGE - PART ISETTING THE SCENE

The period of central concern to this thesis is one of profound change in both the economic and organisational structure of the footwear industry. This change was perceived by contemporaries as being a great challenge to those owners of capital who controlled the shoe firms of Northampton, and, indeed, those of other centres as well. This chapter will begin to examine the reactions of members of the industry's principal sub-group to change. What strategies did manufacturers adopt to cope with change? What abilities and vitality did manufacturers display in solving the problems generated by change?

At the onset, however, it should be noted that the decision to concentrate upon wholesale manufacturers is at once a recognition of their central role in this process, and also a response to a methodological problem. In common with other historical studies of small scale industries, it was found here that very sparse detailed evidence was available concerning small masters in all but the wholesale manufacturing sub-group. This does not negate the importance of the points put forward in the last chapter concerning the trading relationships between sub-groups; rather it is a pragmatic response to the present state of knowledge.¹

1. In part a function of time restrictions and diminishing returns which prevailed, given the broad scope of this thesis generally. But it was also a question of the problems, which grew more acute in the late 1970s, of access to and the escalating cost of consulting business, genealogical and other data in the custody of Central Government and other depositories. It is instructive to note that Dr Erickson, in British Industrialists: Steel and Hosiery 1850-1950⁽¹⁹⁵⁹⁾, writes of similar problems existing some twenty-five years ago. On this question generally, see Keith Brooker, "Some Approaches to the Study of Small Scale Industries Prior to 1914", Business Archives (1981) NS Vol 4 No. 3 pp 7-17.

Figure 4:i - ENTRY/EXIT CONFIGURATION FOR NORTHAMPTON WHOLESALE MANUFACTURERS 1884 - 1914

Period of Entry	No. of Entrants		Exit as Infants		NUMBER OF EXITS IN THE PERIOD								Present in 1914	
	No.	(i)	No.	(ii)	1885/89	1890/94	1895/99	1900/04	1905/09	1910/14	No.		(iv)	
											(iii)	(iii)		
Present in 1884	195	30.3	50	25.7	83 (50)	34	12	16	5	22	25	12.8	32.9	
1885/89	117	18.2	70	59.8	38 (38)	43 (32)	10	7	0	8	10	8.5	13.2	
1890/94	131	20.4	85	64.9		76 (76)	23 (9)	10	3	10	9	6.9	11.8	
1895/99	62	9.6	35	56.5			29 (29)	15 (6)	1	9	7	11.3	9.2	
1900/04	67	10.4	37	55.2				37 (37)	3	18	9	13.4	11.8	
1905/09	46	7.2	31	67.4					31 (31)	9	6	13.0	7.9	
1910/14	25	3.9	15	60.0						15 (15)	10	40.0	13.2	
1884/1914	643	100	323	50.2	121 (88= 72.2%)	153 (108= 70.6%)	74 (38= 51.4%)	85 (43= 50.6%)	43 (31= 72.1%)	91 (15= 16.5%)	76		100	

Notes: (i) % of entrants in period 1884-1914
(ii) % of entrants in that period of entry
(iii) % of entrants in that entry period
(iv) % of those trading in 1914

* Total exits represented as a % of total entrants.
Bracketed figures (), represent the level of infant exit in that period

I

If one is to understand the internal nature and character of 19th century business communities, it must be recognised that failure in business represents a real and crucial counterpoint to success. Yet, whilst the latter has remained constantly at the centre of modern historical analysis, dominated as it is by the twin tenets of growth and progress, the former has tended to be acknowledged, but less often subjected to extended discussion. A recent, exploratory article underlines such an observation:

It is customary to look at economic and business history from the viewpoint of successful business ...Certainly their experiences paint part of the picture of industrial and economic development, and there is a good chance that at least some source material may have survived for such businesses. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, financial failure (temporary or permanent) became a common feature of trade, industry and banking affecting tens of thousands of businesses, large and small, and the course of history is littered with the relics of those who tried and failed. They, too, played a crucial role in economic, commercial and industrial development, and it would not seem unreasonable to expect to learn a great deal from their experiences. By analysing the reasons for failure, it may be possible to elicit some at least of the pre-requisites of success as well as discovering more about the general processes involved in the growth and decline of firms and industries ...

Thus, whilst this and other work cited by Mariner recognises the important counterpoint provided by business failure in business life and economic development generally, little work has been undertaken that explores the trading problems of either individual firms², or industries³, or regions. The shoe industry has already been identified as one in which high levels of failure occur, and it is therefore entirely apposite, even inevitable, that a discussion of business failure should lie somewhere at the heart of any analysis of shoe manufacturers' attitudes and abilities. Any discussion of entrepreneurial reactions to change, therefore, must start with a recognition of the shifting and heterogenous nature of the sub-group's

1. S. Mariner, "English Bankruptcy Records and Statistics before 1850", ECHR (1980) XXXIII 3 p.351.

2. For an exception, see M. Moss and E. Green A Business of National Importance. The Royal Mail Shipping Group 1902-37 (1982).

3. For an exception see, M.S. Moss and V.R. Hume The Making of Scotch Whisky: A History of the Scotch Whisky Distilling Industry (1981) which gives total figures for failures in the industry.

membership profile. The quantitative study in the last chapter analysed changing secular and short-run membership patterns. It was noted there that the period after 1884 witnessed a continuance of the secular rise in the number of firms trading; that trend was reversed after 1893. At least 533 wholesale manufacturing firms entered the industry in these years, in addition to the 110 already present in 1884: a total of 643 firms. 195 were present in the amended directory list of 1884, in contrast to 76 a generation later, in 1914; a reduction of 39%. In all, 567 wholesale firms ceased trading. As a first stage in understanding the characterisation of this shifting group, it will be useful to analyse these shifts in group membership more closely. To isolate firms and methodically assign them to either one of these two categories is, of course, only partly possible. Indeed, to labouriously attempt to assign each of the 567 firms is both statistically unnecessary and methodologically impossible when studying the group dynamically over a thirty year period. Instead, it is proposed to look in more detail at the trends in turnover and group characteristics of the constituency before proceeding further.

Fig. 4:ii Exit Configuration by Approximated Age of Wholesale Manufacturing Firms 1884-1914

Years after first Direc ^y Entry: in 5 yr periods	No. of Exits	As a % of Total Exits
0-5	323	57.0
6-10	113	19.9
11-15	51	9.0
16-20	35	6.2
21-25	15	2.6
26-30	30	5.3
Total Exits 1884-1914	567	100.0

For this purpose, a more detailed tabulation of firms in the post 1884 period is required, and has been prepared as Fig.4:i, above. This table underscores what has been written about the changing and contrasting character of the sub-group. In particular, overlying this feature one can see the more general effects of the trade cycle in Figure 4:i, as is shown

by the fluctuating contraction in entry rates, with entry rising in depression. In the decade to 1894, 443 firms traded as wholesale manufacturers for all or part of that time, and of these 61.8% (274) failed. In the next decade to 1904 entries fell to 129, whilst exits, at 159, were running at 123.3% of this former figure. In the remaining years, this decline intensified, for whilst entries had contracted yet further, to 71, exits had moved even further ahead, and were running at 188.7% (134) of this figure. The prima facie evidence suggesting a "shake-out" of firms in the sub-group would thus appear to be strengthened. By contrast, similar evidence points strongly to an increased level of exclusivity amongst successful, surviving members of the sub-group. When the entry configuration of surviving manufacturers is measured at key points in the industrialising process - Figure 4:iii refers - a marked percentage increase in the number of firms surviving for a period in excess of fifteen years is observed, whilst at the same time the proportion of recent entrants in the list declines.

Fig. 4:iii Entry Configuration of Wholesale Manufacturing Firms
at 1854; 1884; 1914

Period of Entry Prior to Year of List	No. of Firms in:-					
	(a) 1854 List		(b) 1884 List		(c) 1914 List	
0-5 years	45	51.8%	84	43.1%	10	13.2%
6-10 years	25	28.7%	39	20.0%	6	7.9%
11-15 years	5	5.7%	28	14.3%	9	11.8%
15 years	12	13.8%	44	22.6%	51	67.1%
Total Firms	87	100.0%	195	100.0%	76	100.0%

25% of established firms present in 1884 survive to 1914, to be joined by a further 42 founded between 1870 and 1894. In all, just over 67% of firms present in 1914 pre-date the period of "shake-out".

The other major feature of our period is the high initial mortality of firms in infancy. Figure 4:i discloses that 567 firms leave the list and of these 323 (57%) did so within the first five years following foundation. This high level of infant failure is more sharply collated in Fig. 4:ii. As has already been discussed in Chapter 3, this is a trend characteristic of the industry

through the nineteenth century, though it is one which ebbs in our period in the face of the radical changes which affect the industry. Thus, whereas in the 1884 list 44% of firms were infants, by 1914 the same was true for only 13.2% of the list.

Indeed, if attention is confined to firms exclusively of the period, that is to say the 395 that enter and exit between the 1885 and 1913 lists¹, this feature of early exit is further underscored. The trends discernable in figure 4:iv have already been emphasised above, but one important point requires added stress here. Using information from business failure data it can be argued that these firms are almost entirely of a small master complexion. As such, figures concerning entry and exit from these lists represents the small master experience of the period. Regarding entry there occurs a marked decline in entry between the pre and post 1895 periods, again suggesting both a decline and the possible existence of increased barriers to entry. Similarly, when exits and entries are compared, the number of the former increases against the latter:

1885-94	228 enter - 157 exit
1895-04	112 enter - 131 exit
1905-14	55 enter - 107 exit

The conformity with the patterns shown in the full period are, of course, marked.

Fig. 4:iv Exit Configuration by Approximated Age of Wholesale Manufacturing Firms 1885-1913

Years after first Direc ^y Entry: in 5 yr periods	No. of Exits	As a % of Total Exits
0-5	168	50.3
6-10	93	27.9
11-15	36	10.8
16-20	17	5.3
21-25	13	3.9
26-30	6	1.8
Total Exits 1885-1913	333	100.0

1. Includes 61 firms located in business failure reports which do not appear in directory listings.

It would, however, be erroneous to view the proceeding pages merely as an account of an inevitable shake-out of firms in the face of change, for it is also as much a study of the shifting qualities and strategies required by this diverse group in order to continue trading in the face of change. For those who did remain in business beyond the infant years, such profound change resulted in the rationalisation of their organisation and of their attitude to it. In order to survive successfully they had to adopt new techniques, develop new business and management methods and accept new ideas and ways of thinking. Yet clearly these strategies for survival were not centred wholly around progressive, modernistic solutions. As has been stressed, the long transitional phase had both encouraged and relied upon an expanding small master base, which was axiomatic to and at the centre of growth in the shoe industry. Through much of the industrialising process, the growing success of what was to become a progressive, oligarchical group of firms, relied as much upon the extensive growth of established methods of production, and the adaptation of these more traditional notions, as on the new: as much on outwork and sub-contract work carried on by small masters, as on the machine and the factory¹. In the face of change, many small masters in the sub-contract sub-groups faced the inevitable extinction of their role and function in the industry, whereas small wholesale manufacturers faced at least the possibility of alternative survival strategies to counteract the shift to large batch production and scale economies. These strategies can be grouped into two areas: the retention of quality handsewn work, and the adoption of

1. Northampton factories of the early 1890s were still designed to cope with an outwork function. In 1892, Manfield & Sons were the first local firm to entirely abandon direct outwork, but not sub-contract work. As has been noted, sub-contracting survived into the inter-war period.

machine production¹. More will be said of these options shortly. And so, the effects of this contraction in the number of firms trading and the narrowing of business opportunity within the industry must be set against a threefold typology of firms. At one extreme was an elite group of successful firms, at the other, an economically unstable number of infant firms, whose composition changed with remarkable rapidity. The centre ground was held by a diverse group of small to medium-sized firms which merged into either extreme. In reality, a fourth group of ailing firms prominent in the generation prior to 1884 could be isolated: firms which could not change in the face of change, they represented by the eighteen-nineties, old values of manufacturing and business conduct: see Chapter Six, below.

Two contrasting, yet inter-related, features pervade our period of study. The contraction of the large, small producer base, set against the progressive emergence of an industrial elite of relatively large-scale manufacturing concerns. The period witnesses, therefore, the success of some firms, but the failure of many to achieve their objectives and goals. This broad distinction between men of substance and those of straw can be found in the contemporary literature, and has been repeated by some present-day historians.²

1. As R. Church suggests, the leasing policy of the B.U.S.M.Co. enabled small producers to lay down modern machine systems and yet remain price competitive in the market place vis a vis larger producers. However, it should be noted that B.U. did not initiate the machine leasing system in the shoe industry, as is often implied in the literature, it merely made it more efficient and profitable. That position must go to the Blake Sole Sewing Machine Co. Ltd., established in 1867, and its successor the English & American Machinery Co. Ltd. (1882) which continued the system. Thus it can be safely stated that the benefits accruing to small firms from leasing arrangements after 1900 apply equally well prior to that date. Cf. H.C. Hillman "Size of Firms in Boot and Shoe Industry", Economic Journal (1939) 49. p.293. After 1900 "Firms of less than 500 employees which are primarily engaged in variety manufacturing may be just as efficient as the 25 large scale firms which produce almost exclusively standardised lines of shoes ..." On B.U.S.M.Co.'s monopoly, see Anon. pamphlet Growth of a Monopoly - History of Shoe Machinery Monopoly 1899-1918 (1920?) (L.R.O. Box 49A).
2. See, e.g. B.P.P. Report of R.C. on Labour, 1893 (C6795-VI), XXXVI, Minutes of Evidence, Group C, Vol.II BPP Report on Factories & Workshops 1876 (c1746.) Qu. 7125-6, 7140, 7142, 7180, which discussed the putting-out of work to workshops in private houses that often occupied small rooms. Cf. P. Head, op.cit. p.169 "It was the larger manufacturers who first adopted factory production; others were very often men of straw, seeking to establish themselves in the industry, for whom putting-out and its comparatively small capital requirements was in ideal means of starting business ..."

Yet, although recognised in the literature, no attempt has been made to examine and analyse this distinction, either economically or socially.

This, in part, will be our task here and in the next chapters.

Underpinning any discussion as to the reactions of the majority of firms within this typology must figure a sustained consideration as to their inability to overcome trading problems, however, these may be formulated.

For, of the 643 manufacturing firms listed between 1884 and 1914, only 76 (11.8%) remained by the latter date, and in all 567 (88.2%) ceased trading.

Such an observation raises a range of questions: what form and character did this failure take?; what patterns of personal skill and qualities amongst manufacturers can one isolate, which contributed to failure?; what macro-factors affected mortality in the industry?; how does a high turnover rate affect the industry overall? By raising these issues it is hoped, not only to place the high level of turnover into a sharper perspective, but also the ultimate, absolute decline of the industry's small master class.

In part, this permanent reduction was a stark measure of the wholesale subgroup's inability to survive change which swept the industry, although, given the degree of concentration experienced in the industry, some level of shake-out was imposed, external to the firm. At another level, it must be recognised that running through this period, and indeed throughout the nineteenth century was an high endemic level of 'normal' business mortality. As will be demonstrated below, a significant proportion of such mortality occurred amongst infant firms; those that fail within the first five years of trading. The small master base itself was not fundamentally under threat until after 1893, but individually many small manufacturers, sub-contractors, retail-manufacturers had always found it difficult to survive: now small masters as a group found it increasingly difficult to continue trading. But to these must be added mature firms that ceased trading, a priori, as a result of business atrophy, induced by a variety of causes.

The second area of discussion, an assessment of the successful, dominant firms represents the opposite pole, and will be dealt with in Chapter Seven.

Inevitably, the utilisation of such a stark categorisation is to an extent artificial, having a tendency to simplify and schematise what was a complex inter-relationship between firms of differing type and characteristics. It is static, and fails to take account of the ebb and flow movement between and at the poles. It also obscures the secular, dynamic element inherent in many firms: for at various stages in a firm's life, it could embrace both ends of these poles (as well as differing points in between).¹ These cautionary points observed, however, it is nevertheless proposed to adopt this straightforward segregation; not least for the sake of clarity in presenting the data.

Moreover, there exists a ready temptation to match the small master entirely with failure, the larger firm with success. This configuration can, of course, be entirely correct. A level of small master failure did exist, and, similarly, some large manufacturers within the elite group were significantly successful. But these stereotypes must not entirely dominate one's judgement, for the converse was also true: some large manufacturers failed, whilst the small master base was never to be entirely eclipsed. Properly constituted, the ensuing discussion is concerned with the attitudes and strategies which gave the potential for success and those which made failure more likely. This and the next two chapters, therefore, are concerned with business failure. That many small men failed to survive also means the discussion will inevitably centre substantially, although not exclusively, with small masters. The basic analytical tool that will be utilised to assist in this aim will be the business failure report.

1. Thus, in the period 1887-1914, some firms had suffered a contraction in their scale of operation (see Appendix II, C15 Hornby & West, and C22 Comfortable Boot Co. Ltd.); whilst others had experienced a significant increase (Appendix III N.G.1. Sears & Co. Ltd., and N.G.10 W. Barratt & Co. Ltd.)

II

The Northampton failure sample is a data base comprising 305 reports of individual business failures occurring in the town's staple industry between 1885-1912: Figure 4:vi, below, compares these recorded cases of failure with the total of directory exits which have been charted in the period.

Fig. 4:vi Recorded Business Failures Compared Against Directory Data 1885-1914

Period	(a) Directory Analysis		(b) Recorded Business Failures	(b) expressed as % of (a)(2)
	(1) Entries	(2) Exits		
1885-94	443	274	136	49.6
1895-1904	129	159	112	70.4
1905-14	71	134	57	42.5
1885-1914	643	567	305	53.8%

This shortfall in the failure data base does not necessarily imply that many failures were too insignificant to record, or that the trade press financial intelligence was unreliable. Rather, this absence of reports can be accounted for by a variety of possible reasons:

- (i) Some firms are known simply to have moved activities to a location outside Northampton.
- (ii) Some firms are known to have voluntarily ceased trading as solvent concerns (e.g. upon retirement of the principal(s)), or been absorbed by other companies
- (iii) An unspecified number of firms made private arrangements, notice of which was not published in the trade press.
- (iv) For some, non-recording is a reflection of the very short life-span and localised trading of many infant concerns: circumstances that made the publication nationally of the failure unnecessary.
- (v) Some firms merely sub-contracted to factors or larger manufacturers, and so the details of the failure was of direct pecuniary interest to those firms, and of no wider trade interest. Thus no published report was made.

The business failure report is an historical source of much potential, the utility of which historians have been generally tardy in recognising. The reports can be used in three ways: to assist the historian's understanding of trade cycle movements; to provide aggregate financial analysis of failure; and to investigate the causes of failure and to provide information as to the character of insolvent debtors.

Most commonly, business failure data has been used by historians and contemporaries alike as a barometer reading of the state of trade in the short run, and the vigour of the economy generally.¹ Indeed, it has been argued by contemporaries that given the sensitivity of consumer markets to cyclical movements, the shoe industry was particularly prone to trading pressures and failure in depression.² Thus, despite the generally high

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1. Best known are, T.S. Ashton Economic Fluctuations in England 1700-1800; for the 19th Century, R.C.O. Matthews, A Study in Trade Cycle History: Economic Fluctuations in Great Britain 1833-42; A.D. Gayer, W.W. Rostow and A.J. Schwartz The Growth and Fluctuation of the British Economy, 1790-1850, and W.W. Rostow British Economy of the 19th Century. These, except the last, deal with earlier periods, as does S. Marriner op.cit., passim. On the regional variations in failure rates within an industry during depression see: P.J. Perry "Where was the Great Agricultural Depression? A Geography of Agricultural Bankruptcy in Late Victorian England & Wales", A.H.R. (1972) Vol. 20 p.30-45 passim.
 2. Anon "Miscellanea No. IV: Statistics of Bankruptcies in England & Wales 1885-94", Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Vol. LVIII (1895) p.528-30, where it was recorded that 1476 (% of all) bankruptcies in England & Wales were gazetted from the shoe industry, the fifth worst figure after grocers, the licensed trade, farmers and builders. The contributor noted that "The table exemplifies the correspondence the number of bankruptcies and the fluctuations of trade ..." Cf. the several editorial comments in the N.U.B.S.O. Monthly Reports that deal with this subject: October 1893, June 1894, July 1896, and again in February 1903, March 1905 and April 1906. Cf. E.A.G. Robinson, The Structure of Competitive Industry (1931) p.88: "...if we are to understand how firms are affected by the existence of the cycle and its attendant risks, we must first understand what will be its effect upon price. When a trade depression occurs, it takes the form of a more or less simultaneous, but by no means equal decline in the demand for almost all goods. Those goods which we have to buy and consume continuously, food, tobacco, newspapers ..., show the least decline. Those goods whose purchase we can temporarily at least defer, clothes, furniture and boots, show a greater decline ... Those goods which are required to increase the production of other goods ... show the greatest decline..."

endemic failure rates of mortality observed in the Northampton failure data it is possible to observe the effect of successive boom and depression upon entry and exit rates, and this has been fully discussed in the corrected Directory Analysis study in Chapter Three. High entry/exit patterns in time of depression and immediately after were in part a reflection of the increased entry of unstable, marginal firms, but, of course, less efficient, high-cost firms were also increasingly placed at risk.

Yet the effect of depression upon local business communities is not simply observable as an increase in the numerical levels of failure, but also, and possibly more importantly, reveals a qualitative shift in the underlying causes and characterisations of failure. Many economists have noted that depression acts as a purgative upon a business community, ridding it of marginal firms that sap the vitality of more substantial enterprises, thus leaving the business community arguably more competitive and efficient. For example, Altman noted

... Most concerned individuals view the unsuccessful business venture as a negative economic event both to the principals of the unfortunate entity and to society generally.

On the other hand, there are arguments for the direct and indirect benefits of corporate failure. Schumpeter argued for business failure's cleansing effect on competition and innovation¹. Economic theorists and public servants alike often cite the competitive environment for its weeding out of inefficient and poorly managed entities in order to perpetuate a healthy, vibrant economy. The so-called competitive equilibrium² is achieved through the continual entrance and exit of firms ...

Trading in depression, therefore, sharpened competition and called forth a need for increased efficiency generally. Under such conditions, economically vulnerable mature firms began to fail, in addition to endemic failure amongst infant firms. The state of trade generally determined the threshold at which

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1. Schumpeter's theory of innovation incorporates within it a concept of "creative destruction", by which temporary spurts of business failure eroding slackening entrepreneurial activity. The shake-out of firms in the shoe industry after 1895 is of this character, in Schumpeterian terms.
 2. Altman op. cit. p.1.

failure occurred. Firms that were able to survive under boom conditions, despite high costs and poor returns on capital employed, found that in depression their low levels of efficiency became a potential source of weakness.

Ultimately, the extent to which one can agree with a "purgative effect of depressions" theory is, however, open to question. E.A.G. Robinson, for example, suggests an important stricture needs to be placed upon this idea. He argues that

...The firm which is likely to be selected for us by the natural selection of competition during a depression is not necessarily the most efficient firm. Much play has been made by some writers with the salutary effects of competition and the selective process of the trade depression. This view is based upon a moral interpretation of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest ... The process of the survival of the fittest does not imply the best survive. It implies only that those survive who do survive; because they survive, we suppose them to have been the fittest to survive ...

For Robinson, the problem of industrial survival was not quite this clear-cut. Firms, not necessarily the most efficient firms, that could generate reserves in boom could use these funds to survive depression. Given this shift in argument, he reasons

...We are no longer saying that the firm which could be in the future the most efficient will survive; we are saying that the firm whose length of life, and whose policy in declaring dividends in the past has been best adapted to the circumstances, will survive.²

Indeed, Robinson sees a way in which best-practice firms, committed to high expenditure on machinery in the past boom, will have fewest reserves with which to ride out depression, thus making them "...one of the first, and not the last, to become insolvent..."³ This view appears to ignore the scale advantages enjoyed by such firms, which would surely give them the

1. E.A.G. Robinson op.cit. (1968 edition) p.83.

2. E.A.G. Robinson, *ibid*, (1968 edition) p.84.

3. *ibid* Cf. the failure of Arthur Stanton & Co. Ltd. and J. Harrison Ltd., discussed below.

ability to undercut rivals, thus securing a greater share of a depressed market. Nevertheless, it does, rightly, stress that no simple relationship can necessarily exist between inefficiency and failure in depression. In addition to this, Robinson further insists that weaker firms will more quickly seek the assistance of banks. Given that the banks' funds are limited, this may result in the inability of more efficient firms to obtain bank funding at a later point in the depression:

... As the banks' funds become tied up, the later applicants, who are, in fact, the stronger, find assistance more difficult to obtain ... (Existing customers are unlikely to be overturned as) ... the indebtedness of a firm to a bank measures the bank's interest in its survival...

Thus depression brought in its train a higher level of failures when set against entry rates (Figure 4:i), and, in part, this has been linked to the increased entry of marginal firms during these periods. In addition to this, another important consideration was that a domino effect² was generated, whereby the suspension of one firm began a chain reaction of associated failures, reverberating through a local business community. This feature can be clearly isolated in the Northampton shoe industry in the 1891-95 depression, and again in the cyclical depression following the South African

1. *ibid.* p.85.

2. A domino effect is where the failure of one firm leads directly to the suspension of others. A simple example of this occurred in May, 1885, when the firm of V.T. & F. Warren suspended trading owing £4044 against assets of £2003 as a result of a loss in trading on London retail shops and heavy expenses incurred in trading overseas (India and South Africa). Its largest creditor was Warren & Sons, for £600, whose failure was announced within two weeks: liabilities £4967-11-4, assets £3083-6-11 (SLR 30 May 1885 p.32 : 13 June 1885 p.359 and 30 June 1885 p.373). Such failures are at once a recognition of the centrality of credit to the conducting of business, and the financial reliance many firms owed to one or two organisations, and the degree to which solvency rested upon an inter-related web of credit and the trading decisions of those organisations. In the Northampton example cited here, both firms secured a composition and recommenced only to be pulled up again within a year, as was so often the case. On this second occasion Warren & Sons suspended trading first with liabilities of £2156 against assets of £787. J.T. & F. Warren, whose fortunes were closely linked to the other, quickly succumbed, as the firm had been manufacturing speculatively for six months previously (liabilities £3031 and assets £573). (BSJ 31 July 1886 p.78; 14 August 1886 p.115; SLR 24 July 1886 p.61 & 180). These were two family firms: Warren & Sons being run by a mother & son partnership, whilst J.T. & F. Warren was run by her sons (nephews?).

War. Attendant upon this, was a growing unease and loss of trading confidence amongst Northampton shoe manufacturers and their suppliers.

Local trade correspondent columns in the trade press fully catalogue the trepidation and nervousness in manufacturers' ranks during these times.

In 1891/2, during the early phase of depression, several reports stressed the importance and effect of the associated failures which stemmed from a failure. The stoppage of Messrs. Neepe, Denton & Co., Northampton leather merchants, in March 1891, is a case in point:

...(It) was, undoubtedly, the heaviest blow the Northampton trade has suffered for years. It was revealed in the course of investigations which followed that they had been in the habit of financing shoe manufacturers in the most reckless fashion, and if the manufacturers in the town had been canvassed there would have been few expressions of sympathy, as they had supported firms which were utterly rotten, for the sake of keeping afloat, by the free use of accommodation bills. Of course, when the drawers fell out of sight the (in some cases unfortunate, and in others culpable) acceptors went down like ninepins and many are of the opinion that the influence of this firm has had more to do with the bad year's trading than any other cause taken singly...¹

Again, in July 1892, a Northampton leather merchant's stoppage damaged trading confidence. Messrs. Mortimer & Co. had done a lot of risky business and in some cases had kept small manufacturers going. As a result, other leather houses viewed any customer of Mortimer's with caution for some time. And as a local Correspondent noted:

...Unfortunately, when distrust once commences, it effects or applies to both strong and weak (firms), when there is the least connection with its source, and just now there are rumours afloat which in some instances may be well founded, but which in others are manifestly absurd. The next few weeks will show what reliance is to be placed on the stories now prevalent...²

At such times, with rumours freshly circulating and credit facilities readily adjusted, these seeds of doubt served to further congest trading. The result: the confidence-sapping view of commentators, in looking for a crop of failures, served to act very much as a self-fulfilling prophecy.³ However, probably the

1. S.L.R. 1 January 1892 p.34.

2. S.L.R. 15 July 1892 p.143.

3. See S.L.R. 27 July 1894 p.184, where the Northampton correspondent mentions rumours of a crop of failures, and writes on the problem of "fertile imagination of irresponsible babblers...who spend their time speculating upon the next failure..."

most significant example of a domino failure chain being set in motion where a major supplier failed was the stoppage of Brice & Co. Ltd. in 1897. Formerly a very successful partnership between two leather merchants, Robert Brice and George Henry Frecknall, the firm was converted in 1892. This company was registered on January 14, 1892, with a nominal capital of £50,000, divided into 2,500 5% cumulative preference and 2,500 ordinary shares. The consideration of the sale was £18,300, satisfied by an allotment of ordinary shares to Brice and Frecknall. The company's nominal capital was twice increased; in 1894 to £75000 and in 1896 to £100,000. The company employed

Fig. 4:vii Take up in Shares of Brice & Co. Ltd. 1892-1896

	Take Up		Cash Received	
	Preference	Ordinary	Cash Paid	Considered as Paid
1892	1294	421	3252	18300
1893	1761	2365	20820	18300
1894	2500	2500	29020	18300
1895	3035	2984	56506	18300
1896	3750	3750	64236	18300

Source: BT 31/5238/35600, Annual Returns.¹

circa 100, and had attracted 150 shareholders by 1896: it was one of Northampton's premier leather companies. Share value had steadily increased since conversion, and the company's credit and reputation were good.²

Then suddenly the collapse came. It was reported on 30 January 1897, in the following way:

...The totally unexpected stoppage of this apparently thriving concern has been the main topic of conversation in trade circles during the past week ... The stoppage is one of the most serious experienced in the trade for many years, and the downfall cannot fail to bring in its train a number of smaller concerns depending upon this firm for credit and support...³

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1. Largest holders of voting stock were Brice with 1014 ordinary and 52 preference shares, and Frecknall with 712 ordinary and 50 preference: in addition, both families held shares.
 2. Details of company rely on BT31/5238/35600.
 3. BSTJ 30 January 1897 p. 120.

Initially, liabilities were assessed at £250,000. The stoppage immediately unsettled the industry, and many rumours began to circulate. Within days it was noted:

...The worst business in connection with the stoppage of Brice & Co. is the rumours of so many small firms coming to grief. These rumours do very great injury to the trade. Even large firms are talked about; and in this connection, Messrs. Hinde & Mann offer a reward of £20, and ¹ emphatically deny that they are financially interested in the stoppage..

The winding up procedure was commenced in January² and the realisation of assets began in October³. The collapse of a series of shoe manufacturers indebted to Brices began in February, 1897⁴; however, difficulties experienced in realising assets⁵ meant that these associated failures continued into 1898⁶. By that time, the extent of Brice's destabilising trading policy had been revealed. Many small shoe manufacturers had been provided with extensive credit, with

1. BSTJ 6 February 1897 p.228.
2. BSTJ 30 January 1897 p.158-60.
3. BSTJ 16 October 1897 p.523
4. e.g. (i) BSTJ 20 February 1897 p.296: Harry Mason, liabilities £14791-14-1 against assets of £3714-12-9 "...He had had large transactions with Brice & Co. Ltd. They were entered as partly secured creditors...In 1892 he owed Brice & Co. £1000, and he had assigned to them book debts...Two years ago he owed Brice & Co. £2000 or £3000; and he had been reducing the amount by about £100 per month..."
 - (ii) BSTJ 27 February 1897 p.325: H.C. Hancock, liabilities £4795-9-9 against assets £1769-14-10. It was noted, "... The above firm, being absolutely unable to continue in business in consequence of being so heavily indebted to Messrs. Brice & Co., in liquidation, has executed an assignment..."
 - (iii) BSTJ 3 April 1897 p.481: William Claridge, liabilities £3591-12-0 against assets of £2194-13-6. Brice & Co. were the largest creditors (£1353) and their stoppage caused this one.
5. BSTJ 30 Oct. 1897 p. 643-44, where it was reported that delays were experienced in selling company property at auction. At this stage, although the company had ceased to trade, attempts to buy were being made by a syndicate.
6. e.g. (i) BSTJ 23 April 1898 p.571: E.J. Lloyd, liabilities £1063-15-1 against assets of £777-18-10 "... A large debt was owed to Brice & Co. and being paid off at £25 a month: £434 was still outstanding..."
 - (ii) BSTJ 25 November 1899 p.695: Cooley & Irons, liabilities of £1835-12-8 against assets of £343-9-4. Brice & Co. Ltd. was owed £900, and the stoppage of that company was named as the main cause of this failure.

the firms concerned virtually continuing to trade under the auspices of Brice & Co. Upon their failure, Brice insisted upon a private arrangement, and sought to keep affairs quiet. The stoppage of George Pittam forcefully brought this trading style to light, the Shoe & Leather Record being particularly critical, speculated as to just how many firms were really under the control of the leather company¹.

However, it was not just suppliers, or indeed other manufacturers, who initiated domino failure patterns. The stoppage of provincial shoe retailers, with the attendant loss of markets, could be equally problematic. Thus, the stoppage of Imeson's of Middlesborough resulted in a number of stoppages amongst manufacturers at the main wholesale centres. It was noted:

...The news of the collapse of Imesons...has fallen amongst us like a bombshell, and its possible effects are being anticipated with a good deal of anxiety...This failure is by far the most important amongst the shoe dealers for many years, and coming, as it does, so soon after that of Watts of Liverpool, and Andersons of Birkenhead, our manufacturers are beginning to feel that they have had about enough of this sort of thing...²

Indeed, at the time the repercussions in the English shoe centres of a Scottish retailer's failure evoked the following press comment:

...A Scotch failure is reported which has hit one or two local firms rather heavily...This kind of thing is becoming common...³

1. SLR 28 April 1898.

2. SLR 2 December 1892 p. 1342, the Leicester correspondent. Cf., the Northampton correspondent noted "...the failure... will affect several Northampton firms..." Cf. a retrospective article at the year end, when the Northampton correspondent noted the prevalent problem of competition and selling below costing in the retailing sector: "...and in the past few years (the failure of North of England shoe dealers)...has taken a lot of money out of manufacturers' hands in this district..."

3. SLR 28 October 1892 p. 1052.

III

This, then is very much a standard utilisation of business failure and related data by historians. Yet, as has already been observed, business failure was endemic in the shoe industry, and so it can be argued, a priori, that the rate and character of failure amongst infant - and ultimately mature - firms was, at least in part, independent of trade cycle movements. This traditional analysis can be extended by using the Northampton business failure data to reveal much more about small masters, their business strategies, and their approaches to change. In order to gain access to this new level of analysis, the remainder of this, and the following two chapters, will examine the business failure reports that form the core of the failure data: a resource that has not previously been systematically explored by British historians over time.

These reports were part of a legal process of debt recovery from the private and public examination of insolvent debtors that underpinned 19th Century commercial life. Just as the judicious trading on credit has long been a fundamental axiom of good business practice, so there has existed the need for some means of legal redress against defaulting debtors. Originally based upon the Law Merchant and of a harsh, punitive character, it was by 1800 considered by the business world to be an unnecessarily rigid constraint in view of the ever increasing role played by credit facilities during this initial period of industrialisation. As a result, the 19th Century witnessed a series of statutes which gradually broadened the methods and scope of redress.

The beginnings of bankruptcy law in this century was signalled by the Bankruptcy Act of 1824, which took bankruptcy actions out of criminal jurisdiction entirely. Notions of criminality had come to be regarded as placing too rigid a constraint upon commercial dealings, and of even curbing activity within the economy. Progressively, two important principles were laid down. First, bankruptcy now became primarily a civil action for the recovery of a debt, with criminal sanctions being reserved for gross improprieties, or the non-payment of civil debts. Secondly, there emerged a clear distinction

between insolvency resulting from acts considered reasonably beyond the control of the insolvent debtor, in contrast to those acts resulting from recklessness, fraud or dishonesty: the latter attracted the penalty of suspending a bankrupt's discharge. In matters of administering the law, proceedings were both simplified and speeded up by resting powers in county courts and District Registrars in Bankruptcy outside London: District Bankruptcy Court Act 1842, County Courts Act 1846 and Bankruptcy Act 1847. Of the several amendments to the law, two Acts have a bearing on the present discussion. The Bankruptcy Act of 1869 introduced provisions requiring the publication of bankruptcy petition details. Under the Act, no-one was allowed to file his own bankruptcy petition, hence the importance of the much-used alternative procedure of liquidation by arrangement. This latter procedure was more easily entered into, and because it lay largely outside the control of the Courts was often abused by creditors. As a result, the 1883 Act was passed², which allowed insolvent debtors to file their own petition. The stages and procedure of bankruptcy were clarified; this Act becoming the basis of failure law in our period. These stages were the filing of a petition, the creditors' meeting, a public examination of the insolvent debtors' business affairs, and a division of his available assets amongst creditors.³

These changes proved to be more in keeping with changing commercial needs and practices, and by the end of the century three principal methods of redress had evolved, viz:-

(i) bankruptcy

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1. Recovery of civil debts from solvent debtors came under the auspices of the Debtors Act of 1869 and 1878.
 2. The Act came into force in 1885, hence the dating of the Northampton sample from this date.
 3. The above two paragraphs draw on "Bankruptcy", Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th Edition (1911) Vol. 3 p.321 et seq; I.F. Fletcher Law of Bankruptcy Chapter One; and Halsbury's Statutes of England 3rd edition, Vol.3.

(ii) deed of arrangement

(iii) composition, or scheme of arrangement

Of the three, bankruptcy not only has the longest lineage, but is also, arguably, the best known process to which a debtor was subjected. It may be defined as

"a legal process ... whereby a person who is unable to discharge his financial liabilities is declared insolvent, subjected to certain disabilities, and deprived of his property in order to ensure a more just and equitable distribution of such assets as he has amongst his various creditors"¹

The aim of such a legal process was threefold: to share out assets amongst the creditors; to relieve the bankrupt of further liability regarding that portion of his debts not met by the distribution, if he were not guilty of any improprieties; and to enable the bankrupt to make a fresh start in business.

Although the harsh criminal disabilities attaching to bankruptcy were gradually mitigated and a clear distinction established between insolvency resulting from acts considered to be reasonably beyond the control of the debtor, and those resulting from recklessness, fraud and dishonesty, the often disruptive cessation of the debtor's business activities remained.

To surmount this obstacle, in appropriate cases, other modes of debt recovery were introduced. They enabled the debtor to meet his debts yet continue trading: a situation which was often in the best interests of all parties.

The principle form was that of the deed of arrangement, "a mutual arrangement come to between the debtor and his creditors to satisfy his outstanding debts"²

Not infrequently the creditors formed a committee of management to control the business during the period of debt settlement, which could make alterations in the conduct of the concern. In contrast a composition, or scheme of arrangement, was much narrower in its scope. Sanctioned by a court, it was merely an agreement to pay a portion of the debt:

"A composition is a sum of money agreed to be paid by the debtor and accepted by the creditor in full or partial satisfaction of the debts due to them"³.

1. Fridman, Hicks & Johnson Bankruptcy Law & Practice (1970) p.1.

2. T.L. Worsfold, Bankruptcy Law & Practice (1953) p.72.

3. Ibid. p.73.

These two solutions are of particular importance in relation to small industries, where a proceeding in bankruptcy was not always the most appropriate mode of debt recovery purely on financial grounds. They had the advantage of giving more control over procedure and were as a result not only more convenient and flexible, but much less costly. No restrictions were placed on a creditor's right to pursue his claim, whereas a bankruptcy petition could only be initiated by a creditor who was owed a sum in excess of £50. Moreover, bankruptcies involving concerns with total assets of under £300, whilst being the subject of modified procedural rules aimed at reducing legal costs, did in reality rapidly reach a point at which such a proceeding became too costly in relation to the sums involved. In effect there was a cut-off point at which a manufacturer was considered financially too insignificant to warrant the attention of the court of bankruptcy. Of course, this cut-off point was not constant, for the decision to institute bankruptcy proceedings turned not only on financial considerations, but on a comparison of the advantages of all the remedies in a particular case.

In addition, the agreement of a private arrangement was not infrequent. By its very nature, little or no record exists of such agreements. Similarly, only the briefest reports appear for the most modest of concerns, for example those with virtually no assets or a weekly turnover sometimes as low as £5. Beyond informing one of the failure, the report casts all other knowledge of such concerns into the realms of speculation.

As has been noted from the evidence of directories and the supporting sources, it can be stated that 567 wholesale firms ceased trading in our period. Of this number, reports relating to failure have been traced concerning 305 of these firms. This represents an unstratified sample of 49%.¹

Such reports are to be found in a number of sources, the most convenient for the modern researcher being the financial pages of the contemporary trade press.²

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1. For a detailed breakdown, see Figure 4:vi above. These discrepancies between known directory exits & extant failure reports in the hosiery and lace industries are commented upon in William Felkin, A History of the Machine Wrought Hosiery & Lace Manufactures (1867).
 2. In this study the Boot and Shoe Trades Journal and the Shoe and Leather Record have been utilised.

Despite being extracted from journals such as Kemps Mercantile Gazette or the London Gazette, the author nevertheless found this the most convenient source to use, not least because a simultaneous search of their other contents can be made. Moreover, the trade press reports offer a consistent and concise record of all the categories of failure over time; an important consideration in view of the above comments regarding the frequency of deeds of arrangement amongst small industries. Whereas the legal records specifically concerning bankruptcy, to be found either at the local District Court or County Record Office and at the Public Record Office, provide an important supplement regarding that category of redress, they are of course restricted to that remedy alone.¹

In essence an insolvency report existed to inform the trade of a failure, in addition to providing an economic barometer of trade activity and, possibly, to educate by highlighting bad business practices. It chronicled, in varying degrees of detail, the economic and trading position of the manufacturer at the time of his business failure and offered a retrospective summary as to how and why this position had been reached. The data most usually available include a statement of the assets and liabilities at the time of failure, the longevity of the firm, its capital on commencement and, less frequently, the annual turnover, capital growth, and profit and loss position over time. In addition, the cause(s) of failure are reported. Beyond this, reports often - in the case of the Northampton footwear reports over 60% - provided a commentary concerning the development of the concern, which can offer an insight into the basis for a manufacturer's decision, both positive and negative, on a variety of issues. This ranges over such matters as his general level of business acumen, his attitude and strategy towards changes in technology, marketing and workplace organisation, as well as information on aspects as diverse as

1. The P.R.O. holds selective files of documents and correspondence (1883-1902) from the Bankruptcy Dept. of the Board of Trade: BT37 to 40 refers. BT39 is an alphabetical register of debtors who made a deed of arrangement between 1883-1902. Cf. bankruptcy papers held at N.R.O.

changes in partnership structure, labour relations, and his origins and former occupation. These commentaries are most complete regarding bankruptcies, where a summary of the public examination of the bankrupt is usually appended. Similarly, the reports concerning the bankrupt's application to court for his discharge from bankruptcy can illuminate the area of fraudulent and negligent behaviour. In cases where such behaviour was suspected, a precis of the evidence and penalty imposed is included. In arrangement and composition reports the questioning of such behaviour is less certain, but where it is broached it forms part of the commentary.

Using these reports as a data base, therefore, it is possible to pursue two main avenues of enquiry. It can be used to explore the world of the many small master concerns found in the industry during a period of rapid change. Although insolvency reports isolate one incident or point of reference in a person's life, by virtue of the degree of public disclosure that was normally deemed desirable, and given the frequent dearth of alternative source material regarding small businessmen, it often constitutes the only detailed evaluation of an individual's business activities. Reports of this type, therefore, yield interesting information about individual manufacturers, going some way to eradicating the void which surrounds the activities of many firms. More important, however, is the application of such data, systematically collected over time, in executing various types of aggregate analysis, which will then begin to extend our knowledge about the changing structure of the industry and of its entrepreneurs.

Of central concern to this study of failure will be just such an analysis of the causes of insolvency, that will be discussed in the next chapter. Given that only just over 40% of firms could expect to reach maturity,¹ a variety of questions need to be addressed to this business failure data base. What

1. As both the longitudinal and longevity studies in Chapter 3 have strongly suggested, high endemic failure rates existed amongst infant shoe firms. This is further underscored by the information on longevity extracted from the failure data base. The results, taken from 136 reports, are set out here:

1. (contd. from previous page)

(A) Longevity of Northampton Firms at Time of Failure 1885-1914

Length of Time	Number	As a % of total sample
0 to 5 years	81	59.6
5 to 10 years	21	15.4
10 to 15 years	19	14.0
15 to 20 years	5	3.7
20 to 25 years	3	2.2
25 to 30 years	5	3.7
Over 30 years	2	1.4

(B) The first five years can be broken down thus:

Length of Time	Number	As a % of infant firms	As a % of total sample
Under 1 year	24	29.6	17.7
13 to 24 months	27	33.3	19.9
25 to 36 months	12	14.9	8.8
37 to 38 months	7	8.7	5.1
49 to 60 months	11	13.5	8.1

(Source: weekly financial reports in BSTJ and SLR)

The importance of these tables is marked by the much greater accuracy with which one can isolate the longevity factor. Rather than reconstructing an approximate age of a firm from the sources in Appendix One, it is possible here to isolate age more directly and accurately. One finds that approaching one third of infants in the sample fail within the first year, and fully another third in the second.

Figure 4: viii

The Primary and Contributory Causes of Business Failure Amongst Northampton
Manufacturers in Footwear Industry 1885-1913

	1885-95		1896-1913		1895-1913	
	a	b	a	b	a	b
'External'						
<u>1 Business too small</u>						
a) insufficient turnover	1	0	1	3	2	3
b) want of capital	0	1	11	1	11	2
	(0)	(1.5)	(9.8)	(1.2)	(5.9)	(1.3)
<u>2 Changes in General business activity</u>						
a) fall off in trade	0	0	9	3	9	3
	(0)	(0)	(8.0)	(3.5)	(4.8)	(2.0)
b) competition	3	2	11	7	14	9
	(4.0)	(2.9)	(9.8)	(8.2)	(7.5)	(6.0)
<u>3 Miscellaneous</u>						
a) Fire	1	0	4	0	5	0
b) Strike	1	1	1	0	2	1
c) Demise	1	0	1	0	2	0
d) Suspension of a Debtor	1	0	1	2	2	2
e) 'Genuine Failure'	0	0	1	0	1	0
Group sub-total =	8	4	41	18	48	20
	(10.5%)	(5.9%)	(36.6%)	(21.2%)	(25.7%)	(13.3%)
'Internal'						
<u>1 Bad Debts</u>						
	20	11	15	11	35	22
	(26.3)	(16.2)	(13.4)	(12.9)	(18.7)	(14.7)
<u>2 Loss in Trading</u>						
	11	5	7	7	18	12
	(14.5)	(7.4)	(6.3)	(8.2)	(9.6)	(8.0)
<u>3 Failure of Business Technique</u>						
a) failure to keep records (complete/partial)	23	9	15	10	38	19
	(22.4)	(13.2)	(13.4)	(11.8)	(17.1)	(12.7)
b) poor costing	2	1	1	1	3	2
c) inadequate profit - excess costs/overheads	5	12	11	16	16	28
	(6.6)	(17.6)	(9.8)	(18.8)	(8.6)	(18.7)
d) excessive credit	0	1	0	0	0	1
e) borrowed capital	0	1	2	0	2	1
f) depreciation on fixed capital	0	0	5	5	5	5
Group sub-total =	61	40	56	50	117	90
	(72.4%)	(58.8%)	(50%)	(58.8%)	(59.4%)	(60%)
<u>4 Errors of Judgement</u>						
a) illiterate	1	1	0	1	1	2
b) poor management	2	0	0	2	2	2
c) over extension leading loss of capital	1	1	4	3	5	4
d) no experience of shoe trade	3	1	0	0	3	1
e) (knowingly) selling below cost	3	13	4	7	7	20
	(4.0)	(19.1)	(3.6)	(8.2)	(3.7)	(13.3)
f) 'irregular' bill transactions	1	3	0	1	1	4
g) knowingly insdvent	1	0	6	3	7	3
h) recklessness	1	3	1	1	2	4
Group sub-total =	13	22	15	17	28	40
	(17.1%)	(32.4%)	(13.4%)	(20%)	(15%)	(26.7%)
Total =	82	68	112	85	193	150

Notes

a) = primary cause b) = contributory cause

Source:- weekly Commercial Intelligence Reports of BSTJ 1885-1913

induced new entrants to continue to set up in business, and why did they have such a propensity to fail? Can one ascribe such a high failure rate over time to a lack of business acumen? Was it merely a lack of those personal skills and qualities which a small producer was able to bring to his business, which shaped the response to changing industrial and marketing conditions? How did change affect the customary, endemic rate of business failure?

By raising these issues one can begin to place the decline in the numbers of small producers in the industry during industrialisation into a sharper perspective. Consequently, an analysis of the causes of business failure amongst manufacturers at Northampton has been prepared and is tabulated as Figure 4:vii¹. This provides a point of departure from which to discuss these issues. The table suggests a pattern of business failure that is composed of these broad features:

- (i) a low level of response to changing business skills.
- (ii) a low level of response to changing industrial structure and organisation.
- (iii) a low level of response to the pressures of competition and trading.

This table lists the causes which either the Receiver in Bankruptcy or Chairman of a creditors' meeting perceived as being at the heart of the failure. The causes have been nominally segregated into two lists: external and internal. The former relate to causes affected by the state of the industry over which the individual manufacturer had little control, whilst the latter relate more to personal matters of business acumen and his skills mix, which he may be able to influence. The further tabulation of these causes as primary or contributory does not necessarily imply any gradation

1. Construction of this table relies, in part, upon R. Brough, "Business Failure in England & Wales", Business Ratios (1970) p.8-11 and E.A. Heilman, "Mortality of Business Firms in Minneapolis, St. Paul & Duluth 1926-1930", Bulletin of the Employment Stabilisation Research Institute, Vol. II No. 1 (1933) p.7-29 .

in importance. Invariably a variety of causes lead to failure, whilst in some reports two or three reasons are given with little or no indication being offered as to ranking. As a general rule it has been assumed that the reason which was either discussed first or given greater prominence is the primary cause. Nevertheless, the reduction of these causes of failure to a manageable tabular form is open to question on a number of counts, which should be taken account of.

First, one must be alert to the essential character of failure. It is a legal not an economic remedy, and as such is a measure, a record, of a creditor's action in pursuit of his claim. The readiness with which creditors pursued their claim or resisted from doing so, depended upon their confidence in the manufacturer, and the state of trade generally. Thus, firms could continue in business although technically insolvent, and even economically moribund, if their creditors did not press the claim. For an accountant, the dividing line between solvency and insolvency is clear-cut - a comparatively straightforward relationship between assets and liabilities - but ultimately a firm's continued existence relied heavily upon the confidence that creditors placed in the firm.¹ Thus, a creditor's treatment of a debtor varied according to the former's perception of the viability of the business and of the principal.²

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1. In reading failure reports over a period, it is readily noted that many small firms are allowed to trade over time at a loss - e.g. Wheeler, Hull & Co., BSTJ 11 December 1908 p.457.
 2. Contrast the failures at Appendix III NG10 (W. Barratt & Co. Ltd.) and Appendix III NG6 (A. & W. Arnold), where the insolvent debtors were perceived as essentially sound businessmen worthy of support, with that of James Gordon. Gordon commenced trading in February 1889 in partnership with Samuel Gibbs. The partnership was dissolved in May 1890, and by the time he ceased trading in late 1891, his liabilities had reached £5188-9-6 against assets of £401-1-8 (SLR 2 Oct. 1891 p.804). Creditors expressed dismay at his conduct of the business and his inability to reduce high levels of bad debts; including over £1000 of dubious bills dealings. It was noted that "several creditors expressed their surprise and indignation at the miserable state of affairs, and said that up to only a week ago the debtor had assured them that he would be able to pull through his difficulties; and pay everybody in full. One gentleman said it was no good asking the debtor to come into the room, as he was in a regular muddle, and the creditors knew more about the business than he could tell them. The debtor was a most sanguine man, and had from the outset undertaken to do impossibilities..." The creditors meeting insisted that he be adjudicated bankrupt. (SLR 31 July 1892 p.286; cf. SLR 1 January 1892 p.28; 24 July 1891 p.214; and 2 October 1891 p.804).

Secondly, one must also be concerned with a question of interpretation. How is one to measure failure; how is one to regard it; what does it signify? There are two broad avenues of approach. Either it signifies an inability of failed manufacturers to survive, or it is a recognition that amongst at least some small masters, their economic goals and value systems run contrary to the character of the change that was underway. It is either an evocation of orthodox economic norms, or a recognition of unorthodox ones.

Thirdly, the complex and interconnected web of action and decision made by an individual manufacturer which led to failure tends to be glossed over.¹ The causes ascribed to a failure by the Receiver or Chairman relate very much to the immediate circumstances of the stoppage. Beyond recording these causes, Figure 4:vii provides little assistance in penetrating and understanding the mix of events and decisions that led to failure. In particular, this tabulation does not lend weight to certain practices considered by contemporaries to have been common commercial practice in the industry. Indeed, together these practices form part of an almost unconsciously accepted matrix of unsound business practice. Ideally, any study of business failure should include an analysis of both the immediate and ultimate causes of failure. Such an analysis involves an intensive study of all the circumstances resulting in failure: to execute this, it might be necessary to go back five or ten years. For, as it has been noted regarding inter-war failure studies in America:

...It is rarely true that a business fails for one cause only, yet it appears to be common procedure to assign to each failure a single specific cause. A long-established business may pursue a downward

1. See, e.g. (i) SLR 14 December 1889 p.676 (cf. BSTJ 14 December 1889 p.561 and 21 December 1889 p.582; SLR 18 January 1890 p.98; SLR 26 April 1890 p.521), the failure of Robinson & Wiggins. They had commenced in 1887 with a capital of £200, partly borrowed. When trading ceased liabilities stood at £2070-15-5 and assets £508-5-11. The cause of failure was an interconnected matrix of causes. Although books of account had been kept, the accounts had never been properly balanced. There had been errors in costing, and so only a 2½% gross profit margin had been added to the cost of production. On sales of £6984, this yielded a gross profit of only £144 which was inadequate to give a net profit. Bad debts to a total of £263 had been incurred. Cf. (ii) BSTJ 27 June 1913 p.527, the failure of De Cairos Brothers, where a similar web of inadequate financial management was encountered.

career for years before actually going through bankruptcy, and a whole series of factors may have been operating to cause its downfall...¹

On a smaller scale, the same holds true for infant firms. In as far as it has been possible in the ensuing two chapters, the discussion of individual failures attempts to adopt this more penetrating position.

Lastly, is the question of the different opinions that can be held about a failure. No two individuals agree on causation, and this is especially true of infant firms. The opinions of creditors and proprietors differ. To the extent that it has been possible, however, a careful comparison of these differing opinions and study of the business practices, products and policies of each failure represented by Figure 4:vii will be made in the next two chapters.

Despite these difficulties, it is nevertheless considered that this analysis does offer a sufficiently pertinent insight as to the trends of business failure to be of utility in the process of extending our overall understanding of the business community of the Northampton shoe industry during a period of crucial and sustained industrial change.

1. E.A. Heilman, op.cit. p.21

CHAPTER FIVEATTITUDES AND STRATEGIES OF NORTHAMPTONWHOLESALE MANUFACTURERS TOWARD CHANGE - PART IITRADING PRESSURES AND THE SMALL MASTER

At the centre of any evaluation of the small master's ability to deal with the shifting business pressures present within the industry after 1887, are two themes. His reaction to the changing external trading environment, which is summed up by the increased scale, intensity and growing complexity of production, distribution and trading competition generally.¹ And also his ability to structure his organisation and policy so as to respond to normal trading pressures. Of the range of problems arrayed against the small master, three elements may be singled out as being particularly problematic: (i) matters of credit; (ii) matters of competition and establishing a market; and (iii) questions of personal business skill and knowledge. These problems will confront the infant firm at any period, but were made more complex and formidable in this period, as a result of the pressure of industrialisation within the industry.

1. See Chapter Six, *passim*.

I

Credit problems and matters of finance generally were particularly acute, and it is to these issues that the chapter will first turn. Any such discussion must take as its starting point the realisation that the shoe industry was dominated by a high proportion of under capitalised manufacturers. Moreover, there existed a higher level of ongoing, circulating capital requirements, when compared against fixed capital needs. Consequently, a central financial problem for small producers was that of cash flow: the provision of adequate short and medium term credit often became crucial to an infant firm's survival. The marked seasonality of trading in the industry served only to make this problem more acute.

Given this, a theme to be taken up towards the end of the chapter, is that small masters had no apparent and positive strategy, simply because they were overwhelmed by short-run problems common to most infant concerns: problems which, during a period of rapid technological and organisational change, were made more acute still. Financial matters particularly taxed infant firms, although it will become clear from the available evidence that cash flow difficulties assailed firms regardless of the time for which they had been trading; all that significantly changed in maturity was the firms ability - potentially - to cope with such difficulties more easily.¹

The credit sources available in the industrial sector can be segregated into two main categories:

(i) Public sources external to the firm. Primarily, the use of the joint-stock form, and of the banking system.

and (ii) Private internal sources, where capital is either generated within the firm, or else from amongst a network of kinship, business and

1. An element here was the ability of an old-established manufacturer, if his reputation was good, to obtain more credit from suppliers than a younger and less well-known concern. A striking example of this is shown by the failure of William Hasdell. In business for many years, trade was suspended in March, 1892. Although in difficulties for some time, he was still able to obtain credit. His trade liabilities amounted to £1432, in addition to a secured overdraft at the Northants Union Bank of C£2,500. By sharp contrast, his assets were estimated at only £200 (S.L.R. 25 March 1892, p.754).

friendship ties.

In what is the latest evaluation of industrial finance in Victorian Britain, P.L. Cottrell informs us that,

... a considerable proportion of manufacturing concerns during the nineteenth century relied upon private and internal sources of finance. Few firms took advantage of the liberalisation of company law in order to raise capital externally, while banks, especially from the late 1880s, were generally very reluctant either to supply working capital on a continuous basis or more particularly to support investment in plant and machinery for any length of time...

Indeed, the degree to which English industrialists relied upon self-generated capital through the medium of retained profits has for some time past been axiomatic to any historical discussion on industrial finance.² But, equally, historians have understood the importance to industrial concerns of intra-industry credit sources but have consistently found it difficult to empirically penetrate these sources of finance. In terms of credit sources

... this meant some form of trade credit, or the admission of a new partner, or a loan on mortgage, or profits generated by the concern. Unfortunately, it is precisely for these areas of finance that little evidence is at present available and therefore the picture that can be established is partial and, with regard to profits, highly conjectural..

Fortunately, published failure reports provide an interesting insight into the problem of credit facilities within the shoe industry. The basic information available is to be found in the creditors' lists appended to the report. By using this, in conjunction with the commentary, it is possible to construct an aggregate picture of the providers of capital in the industry, and thus go some way to overcoming the sparse evidence found by historians elsewhere. An analysis of the creditor lists in this sample reveals that credit and capital sources can be located in three groups: (a) trade credit; (b) banks and private cash creditors; and (c) a range of other less prominent sources. It was found that whilst the first two groups of sources were systematically utilised by the sample, the third group was used in a much more idiosyncratic way. Each will be discussed in turn.

1. P.L. Cottrell op.cit. p.248

2. Eg. J.D. Gould Economic Growth in History (1972) Chapter 3 passim. Much of the literature concerns the pre-1850 period - the work of Prof. S. Pollard & Prof. S.D. Chapman. See below Chap.7, p.464 on role of retained profits in successful shoe firms.

3. P.L. Cottrell ibid.

(a) The utilisation of trade credit

The provision of trade credit was a major and universal financial element in the web of short-term credit facilities found in the shoe industry.¹

By our period, from the little information to hand, the bulk of sales by credit transactions^{were} simply book debts, as opposed to the trade bill of exchange. From the evidence provided by creditors lists in the failure data it is possible to conclude that this advantageous method of making payments to suppliers was as inevitable as it was universal.

As is still customary today, commercial invoice transactions were conducted on credit terms. Two options confronted the debtor. First, a sliding scale of discounts operated if the payment of goods or materials was made within a set settlement period. Payments made before the end of this period attracted a percentage discount on the full invoice price: a recognition of prompt settlement. Secondly, payments made after the end of the settlement period were paid at the full nett price. Here the possibility of a discount had been foregone in favour of simply delaying payment on the invoice: its loss represented an interest payment incurred for late settlement. The provider of such credit was invariably the merchant or dealer, who held an important place in the financial dealings of most 19th century industries. In the case of footwear, leather merchants and dealers. Such a role represents an important supplement to short term bank loans, discussed below.

In qualitative terms, despite its universality, trade credit offered assistance to the infant firm in providing a credit base not readily available from institutional sources at this early stage. Lavington has noted its use in the cotton industry: "...in the Lancashire cotton industry... trade credit

1. This would appear to be a conclusion that is general throughout British industry. For example, Compton & Bott British Industry (1940) p.183 notes, "...Trade credits are very commonly and extensively used...In their passage from soil to consumer goods pass through the hands of a series of owners creating as they pass a train of debts, a series of trade credits: Cf. P.L. Cottrell op.cit. p.249

Other historians have likewise noted that the use of trade credit accompanied the great majority of transactions: e.g. A. J. Topham The Credit Structure of the West Riding Wool Textile Industry in the 19th Century, unpublished University of Leeds M.A. Thesis (1953) and A.H. John, Industrial Development of South Wales p.49: and on the subject generally F. Lavington op.cit., Chapter XLIII p. 263-73.

is important in enabling men to begin in a small way ..."¹. The creditors lists in the Northampton sample amply bear this out. As the infants' credit-worthiness became established, the ongoing character of the credit provided by a firm's suppliers tended to become a medium term loan in the form of goods...

Gauging the relative quantitative importance of the role of trade credit in the shoe industry is, however, more difficult. Nevertheless, given the generality of such credit in the economic system, it is clear that general conclusions of others gives some assistance here in providing a broader picture as to the utility of trade credit. A number of points arise. First, although it was used in every sphere of shoe business activities as a matter of course, the volume of such credit is unknown. Secondly, the type of credit available in terms of timespan, allowable discounts, and the conditions which applied in individual instances, were infinitely variable. The length of the settlement and these other issues were amended in line with prevailing trade customs and the state of the economy, but, as importantly, by reference to the credit-rating of the individual manufacturer.² Whilst it is very difficult to generalise regarding such variables, even within the same industry, as Compton and Bott have implied, in the pre-1914 period:

... the provision of trade credit ... provided industrialists with equipment and raw materials and distributors with finished goods,³ on terms which have simplified the financial problems of many of them ...

Nevertheless, the ultimate extent of this source's importance has been questioned, in general terms, by several writers. To draw upon Compton & Bott once more, they observe

... With the quick changes which are made in processing and the need, in particular, of new industrial plant, many firms have felt the acute

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1. F. Lavington The English Capital Market (2nd Ed. 1929) p. 267.
 2. Compton & Bott op. cit. p.184:"...usually it is the merchant or dealer who offers credit terms, because they are in a relatively favourable position to form an opinion on the character and circumstances of a purchaser in a way which would not be acceptable to banks without security. The result of this practice is that at various stages of production and distribution goods are sold before the owners pay for the raw materials of their businesses. Industry and trade have thus developed arrangements for their own use..."
 3. *ibid.* p. 134.

need of additional liquid capital. Trade credit is not sufficient to meet this need. What is needed is some form of medium term finance by which loans could be paid off ...in a period of one to five years. The banks have not regarded the financing of industrial equipment ... as one of their functions¹, and the problem has only been partly solved by the development of new financial undertakings and by some suppliers arranging such accommodation for their customers ...²

By contrast, Lavington's stricture is more direct: "... so long as its volume and methods of use remain constant, trade credit from the present point of view, is of no great significant ..."³

All attempts to be able to determine the trade credit terms prevailing in the shoe industry were found to be fraught with difficulty. For whilst Topham's study of the West Riding wool textile industry was able to draw upon newspapers and other contemporary evidence in order to establish the general prevailing credit terms, this was found not to be possible in the case of the Northampton industry. In no instance did a business failure report give any information regarding credit terms, but merely gave extraneous evidence of the ready provision of credit. Furthermore, extant business records of leather merchants yielded no positive clues as to the prevailing trade credit custom and practice in the shoe industry.⁴ Lavington, however, does offer some general insight into prevailing trade credit terms. The pre-war practice, he argues, was one of buying leather by means of three to six month bills. This practice gave rise to considerable speculative price fluctuations, as the volume of trade credit was subject to variation. He notes:

... Prior to the war, it was apparently a common practice for leather merchants to give five or six months credit, generally in the form of bills. Producers of leather and shoes have since then

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1. But note the role played by the Leicestershire Banking Co., & the Northamptonshire Union Banking Co.
 2. Compton & Bott p.184.
 3. F. Lavington, op.cit. p.270.
 4. N.R.O. (i) Pettit & Son, Leather Manufacturers & Merchants, ZA 2270-71; (ii) G. Michel & Co., Leather Merchants Boxes S327-46 ; also, Cumbria Record Office, William Sutton Ltd., of Scotsby, Tanners & Leather Merchants, records of the Northampton Agency, DB/33/1 to 15.

greatly increased their financial stability, and the system of trade credit has vastly improved. 2½ per cent discount for payment in thirty days (rarely longer) are now the general terms.

Furthermore, failure reports suggest a prevalence of deleterious long credit being present in shoe manufacture, as it was in other 19th century industries. As will be argued below the industry was assailed by easy credit, that is to say, long credit; and that leather merchants were the key trade creditors. Topham briefly reviews a parallel trading situation in the woollen industry:

...woollen merchants paid at sales times (for the fleeces) ... and bore the cost of holding them until the manufacturer required them ... Big merchants built up a financial₂ strength that enabled them to give high credit to (the) purchaser....

1. Lavington op.cit. p.270 & 294. At p.266 he notes the role of war in shortening trade credit in industry: "...the heavy demand, the influence of state control, and the financial prosperity of many trades seem to have reinforced these tendencies to short rate credit, a strong instance being seen in the changed conditions of the Boot trade..." Lavington also argues here that a general shortening of credit occurred in the Edwardian era, but whether the shoe industry was caught up in this process is, at present, less clear. "...There is a good deal of evidence showing that the period of trade credit was shortening prior to the war. Improved communications are no doubt largely responsible for this. The old custom of buying heavily two or three times a year is now obsolete, and clever traders now buy from hand to mouth, weekly or even daily..." Evidence from banking records, discussed below, concerning periodic bulk leather purchases stands in contrast to such an assessment, however.

2. A. J. Topham op.cit. p. 49.

(b) The Role of Banks and Private Cash Creditors

Beyond the use of trade credit, the consistently most important capital source was that of the bank and the private cash creditor. The analysis of the creditor lists reveals that the use of sources in this group to have been systematically used by insolvent firms. Thus:

- (i) 49% of insolvent debtors owed money to banks
- (ii) 20% of insolvent debtors owed money to private cash creditors
- (iii) 31% of insolvent debtors owed money to both of these sources

This analysis offers at least prima facie evidence on which to question whether Cottrell's assessment regarding the role of capital from public sources is wholly applicable to the shoe industry. Certainly, his stricture regarding the adoption of limited company status rings true in the Northampton industry.¹ Of all firms trading in our period only 7% (46) sought incorporated status and of these only three offered shares to the public. In fact, as is stressed elsewhere, many incorporations were made primarily for "family reasons", to settle matters of private income, succession, inheritance, rather than financial considerations.² Rather it is his assessment of the banks' role which must be brought tentatively into question. Although it is now accepted by historians that banks engaged, as a matter of course, in providing finance to industry, the character and depth of the service provided is still open to question and investigation. The Northampton failure data begins to provide a profile of that role. Fortunately, these impressions can be supported and expanded upon by recourse to banking records. A range of Northamptonshire branch records have been made available to the

1. Cottrell op.cit. Chapter Six passim. At p.162-63 he notes, "...One of the main reasons for the faster growth in the annual number of new company registrations was the substantial increase in the number of private company formations, concerns which wished to limit their liability rather than raise funds from the public. Between a third and a fifth of all companies registered in 1890 were private and by 1914 the proportion had increased to nearly four fifths ... the growing spread in the use of limited liability during the thirty years before the First World War was essentially due to private partnerships turning themselves quietly into private limited companies.

2. For a discussion of the Northampton Limited Companies see Chapter Seven, below.

writer.¹ From this source an instructive insight can be had as to the facilities made available to shoe manufacturers in Northampton and the county, and the banks' attitude to capital provision to the industry. Of course, it should be realised from the outset that the positioning of a discussion on the role of the banking system in the shoe industry is not meant to imply the banks' role was one of financing failure. Rather, it again underscores the fact that business failure was a pervasive feature, permeating all trading activities within the industry generally.

From creditors' lists of failed and suspended companies it becomes apparent that the banking system's primary role was one of providing temporary credit finance to overcome short-run cash-flow difficulties, which enabled a firm's trading operations to continue. Beyond this general statement, it is difficult to glean any systematic information about either the nature of the credit or why, specifically, it was given. Branch Managers' Reference Books, however, are of more utility, and from them a picture of the role of the London City and Midland Bank's branch at Northampton in financing local shoe manufacturers can be gleaned.² Two methods of providing credit were in use at this branch in the 1890s. The discounting of bills was still undertaken,³

1. The writer is indebted to the Manager of the Midland Bank PLC, Woodhill Branch, Northampton for access to records in his custody, and to Mr Edwin Green, Archivist at the Midland Bank PLC for permitting him to study and refer to the following archives:

- (i) London City & Midland Bank Ltd., Woodhill Branch, Northampton:
 - (A) Branch Managers' Reference Books 1890-1914.
 - (B) Security Ledgers 1890-1914.
 - (C) Letter Books 1910-1914.
 - (ii) Leicester Building Co. Ltd., Northampton Branch: Overdraft and Security Ledger c1890-c1898 (K49)
 - (iii) Leicester Banking Co. Ltd., Kettering Branch: Overdraft and Security Ledger c1880-1900 (K47)
 - (iv) Leicester Banking Co. Ltd., Wellingbrough Branch: Overdraft and Security Ledger c1889-1900 (K51)
 - (v) London City & Midland Bank Ltd.: Reference Books for Leicester/Sheffield Region (covers Northants)
 - Book I 1904-09 (Acc 26/11). Book II 1909-16 (Acc 26/12)
2. London City & Midland Bank, Woodhill Branch, Northampton, Managers' Reference Books I & II 1890-1914: hereinafter referred to as Northampton Managers Books.
3. It was a facility being used more methodically and widely at this branch than possibly Cottrell's account would lead one to believe.

although this facility was steadily losing ground and giving way to the provision of overdraft facilities on current account. By the end of the decade, the shift to overdraft provision was most marked, with the use of discounting having become more restricted to larger manufacturers.¹

All bank branches in the town appear to have provided overdraft and discount facilities to risk-worthy small masters, with the local Northamptonshire Union Bank emerging as particularly prepared to accept such business. Indeed, in the wake of increasing competition for business between branches in the town - a trend observable elsewhere in the country in the wake of amalgamations and extensions of branch networks - shoe manufacturers were able, on occasion to gain very advantageous terms.² Certainly, it is of interest to note from business failure data the extent and breadth of the role of banks in financing the industry. Fully 80% of insolvent debtors owed money to a bank.

1. Conclusion derived from Midland Bank Archive sources quoted above. This broadly accords to A.J. Topham's summation concerning bank credit in the period: "...In the last quarter of the century, the outstanding features are the growth in branch banking, of banking amalgamations, and the decline of the inland bill of exchange. Due to the decline of re-discounting and the growth of the deposit habit which enabled firms to pay each other by cheque, there was a reduction in the volume of bills. The bank loan or advance replaced the discounting of bills as the most important aid which banks gave to industry. ...By 1900 the decay of the internal bill system was recognised and the cheque system firmly established... (A.J. Topham op.cit. p.37). Cf. P.L. Cottrell op.cit. p.201 "... of the most immediate importance to industrial clients, the banks' greater liquidity led to a change in the way that they accommodated borrowing customers, discounting being replaced by overdrafts. Overdrafts allowed bank clients to take more advantage of discounts in settling their debts and led to the cheque finally replacing the bill of exchange..."
2. e.g. Manager's Book I Folio 101, 11 February 1890 where the manager noted: "...'Xs' account at present with N(orthants) U(nion) B(ank) who allow overdraft of £2000 secured by a second charge on premises. He occasionally exceeds the limit but it is never refused. He said that if I could grant him a further £4000 overdraft so as to enable him to pay cash for everything he would transfer his account." After negotiation, the account was transferred on the basis of the above, plus interest rate advantageous to the manufacturer. Cf. *ibid.*, Book II folio 501 26 November 1902, where a leading manufacturer in the town transferred his account securing the account was "regarded as a coup", and very advantageous terms were in consequence provided, including overdraft facilities (secured) up to £60,000 and personal loan facilities up to £10,000.

But more than this, the crucial point to emerge from failure reports is how far down the small master scale bank services penetrated. That is to say, some of the smallest and most inconsequential of insolvent debtors had dealings with a bank, as the following examples, taken at random, testify:

Date	Name of Firm	Liabilities	Assets	Debt to Bank
27/10/88	Jelley, Baker & Co.	£209.0.6	£185.11.11	£17.0.0
3/8/89	Collins Bros.	300.1.6	96.16.9	100.0.0
21/10/91	J.T. Farrell	200.0.0	N/A	99.0.0
10/10/06	Knightley & Adams	610.12.8	78.12.8	100.0.0
5/8/10	J.K. Morgan	180.0.0	28.0.0	100.0.0
6/1/97	J. Brovett	191.7.2	162.15.1	107.0.0

Source: Northampton business failure data base

The Northampton Manager's Books yield up similar evidence. The support of small masters of this size was obviously attended with risk for a bank gives the volatile nature of shoe manufacturers generally. Thus a set of principles emerges from these books, that outlines the bank's attitudes to, and guidelines for dealing with this group. First, the branch was only prepared to do business with solvent firms. For example in 1890 an overdraft facility of £100, running for one month and thereafter fixed at £50, in addition to an agreement to discount £100 of good trade bills was provided for a small master. His capital then stood at £130; production was at 200 pairs a week, and his wage bill at £20/30.¹ At the same time, a second small master had a recorded overdraft of £80: his capital stood at £100 and production at 80/100 pairs a week.² In reaching such decisions some assessment as to their viability and business acumen was made. Only solvent firms considered to be "solid" would be assisted. Thus in 1891/92, a small master partnership was allowed an occasional overdraft facility of £100 to £200. The principals were regarded by the Bank as "...respectable recently established ... capital not large, but felt to be good risk for the smaller amount..."³. In another instance

1. Northampton Managers Book I folio 133.

2. *ibid.* Book I folio 161.

3. *ibid.* Book I folio 343.

a firm with a capital of £500 was set an overdraft limit of £500 on the basis that they were doing a safe business with London shippers ...¹

Quite clearly, this potential was measured on a relative, rather than any absolute monetary scale. In 1892, the Woodhill branch manager recorded

.....S.W. said that he wanted to dissolve the partnership with his father, but this would make him short of capital, would we lend him £10 for six months...²

This was provisionally agreed, subject to an adequate surety being found. It was noted that this manufacturer was "... very hard working, making his own way, ... he has only about £50, but I think he will soon be in a good position..."³

Some assurance as to the firm's stability was, therefore, crucial, and so, secondly, firms with little growth potential were rarely, if ever, entertained. Thus where, in 1891, a young manufacturer purchased his failed father's estate with the financial help of a friend, the branch declined to provide discounting facilities, although a small overdraft was run on the security of a £200 life assurance policy (surrender value of £20), and the account was closed. The firm was described as "a small affair" and credit to the extent of £60 was described by a referee as "excessive"⁴ Again, in 1893 a potential customer wished to transfer his account but was not entertained, although, in this instance, the balance sheet revealed a credit balance of £618. Losses of £4/500 had been made the previous year on Scottish trading; returns were "only c£5000"; and accounts owing had reached £1,200. The customer wanted an overdraft of £3000, secured against property valued at £3,200. The branch manager noted, "...told him balance sheet unsatisfactory and hardly solvent...Noaction..."⁵ Lastly, if the potential customer's

1. *ibid.* Book I folio 141: the manager's judgement in this case was well founded, as by 1896 both capital and overdraft facility had risen to £2000 - "...respectable and energetic people..."

2. *ibid.* Book I folio 397, 14 March 1892.

3. Overdraft sanctioned on 17 May 1892. Cf. 25 October 1898, when a limit was sanctioned. Cf. Book II folio 417 6 September 1902, asked for an extra £20 (secured by guarantee) to stock a public house he was about to run in addition to his manufacturing activities. ("... he found his shoe trade rather bad just now..." To combine licensed trade and shoemaking.)

4. *ibid.* Book I folio 34/67 11 November 1891. Capital £57.19.0

5. *ibid.* Book I folio 596 4 September 1893.

character did not meet with approval, the bank declined the business. Thus in 1904 Head Office in refusing discount facilities with a small firm referred to the principals as "the same as artisans". The account was closed in 1905.¹

A third guide-line sought to provide a ready capital assessment between viable and non-viable firms. The Bank regarded that a capital of c£200 as representing a bench-mark; the threshold of potential viability in terms of offering overdraft² and discount facilities. Thus, where a firm with a capital of £280 was permitted discount facilities up to £150 by the branch manager, Head Office noted its dislike of "...discounts of these small firms ...(which are) generally rubbish (sic)...the account should be worked on a 10% margin..."³ On another occasion, a manufacturer with a capital of c£130, making c200 pairs a week (wages £20/30) was being offered both discount facilities up to £450 and an overdraft up to £100. Although a "...respectable hardworking man of small means", who relied on friends for credit, Head Office intervened: "...this man is a trumpery...(who) ought to have a credit balance of at least £65 to meet any liability on his bills..."⁴ This benchmark appears to have been particularly operated with regard to new firms. In fact, given the growing intensive use of capital in the 1890s as mechanised factory working became the norm, increasing evidence appears in the Manager's Book that new, undercapitalised customers about to start in business were advised against such a step.⁵

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1. *ibid.* Book II folio 291 December 1904.
 2. *ibid.* Book I folio 381 of new manufacturer wishing to open account in 1891 it was stated by a referee "...absurd man beginning with so small a capital - don't care about the business - if anything goes wrong you are in for a bad debt..."
 3. *ibid.* Book I folio 326. Cf folio 95, where it is noted that a firm must not be overdrawn without security as "£200 is too small a capital..."
 4. *ibid.* Book I folio 133 and 299. Cf a reference on this customer from a Leeds bank: "respectable and industrious but short of capital, and often has difficulty in making arrangements..." On occasion, the bank recommended that the applicant should turn to family or friends to fund their activities (eg. Book I folio 482 26 November 1892).
 5. *ibid.* Book I folio 464 16 September 1892. (starting capital £100; manager noted "...told him that it was impossible to trade with so small a capital..." cf. folio 381.

Thus, in late 1892, when a family partnership applied for an account, the branch manager "...advised him in the present state of trade to think the matter well over - said he was going to keep his (present situation... - might eventually put more capital into the business and give up his whole time to it - but should feel their way first..."¹ In this instance, as was so often the case, the account was accepted upon the strict understanding that it was kept in credit, and that no overdraft or discounting facilities would be offered.² However, small undercapitalised firms were not always accepted as customers, and when they were Head Office closely monitored the working of the account. Nevertheless, some flexibility of response is observable. Clearly banking decisions were not made on the basis of such a functional selection process. Small masters were offered credit facilities and this depended upon the bank's assessment as to the medium term trading prospects of the customer, their business ability, and the state of the trade generally. Thus, in the case of the family partnership, quoted above, after eight months' trading, whilst the bank would not entertain a permanent overdraft, temporary accommodation for a specified purpose was allowed:

...they had a good foundation laid, and were confident of doing well. They asked for a limit of £30, which I said they couldn't have, but of £20/30 was wanted, temporarily on occasion I would let them have it...

On another occasion, a new entrant with a capital of £100 was granted overdraft facilities of up to £150 within two months of commencement.⁴

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1. *ibid.* Book I folio 482 26 November 1892: Note, the customer's family in this instance were considered a good risk, with trade connections.
 2. *ibid.* Book I folio 464 "...told him that account must be kept in credit and could not take bills..." folio 293 28 August 1891 'X' "...opens account on understanding no bills to be discounted and account to be kept in cash..." Cf. Book I folio 346/7 firm with capital of £58 refused an overdraft.
 3. *ibid.* Book I folio 482 9 July 1893.
 4. *ibid.* Book I folio 281 15 August 1891.

Where modest overdrafts or discounts were permitted, the firm had to reveal some level of potential, or was asked to provide a guarantor or surety. Thus in September 1891, a man with £50/100 capital available to him secured an overdraft with his mother-in-law standing guarantor¹; elsewhere a silent partner fulfilled this function.² Another manufacturer, described as a "respectable little man ...", was able to secure a loan of £150 for two months on his wife's security, and some years later an overdraft of £15 on the guarantee from a brother.³ On occasion customers were asked to secure temporary overdrafts. This could take the form, for example, of lodging the title deeds of property⁴, or life policies,⁵ or an assignment of book debts: "... consented to pay on account making account c£36 overdrawn - have taken assignment of an amount c£60 due to a London firm..."⁶ In cases where the overdraft went over the agreed limit, the guarantor was usually asked to pay the excess to bring it back within the limit: this could occur repeatedly over a period of years.⁷

1. *ibid.* Book I folio 31, Cf. folios 69, 161, 217 and 293

2. *ibid.* Book I folio 150 24 April 1892.

3. *ibid.* Book I folio 57 19 January 1891, and 13 February 1900 where it was noted "...having purchased a parcel of leather cheap ... wanted slight accommodation to assist him to pay for it - all well sold but money not in - ask H(ead) O(ffice) for a limit of £15 on the Guarantee of £30 from brother - granted..." Cf *ibid.* Book I folio 69 where it is noted of a customer who had been steadily losing money that his reduced capital of £200 was now "...hardly sufficient for them..." The required overdraft of £50, therefore, had to be guaranteed by his father.

4. *ibid.* Book I folio 109 5 March 1890.

5. *ibid.* Book I folio 150 22 April 1892.

6. *ibid.* Book I folio 95. A number of business failures highlight the practice of debts assignments, and contemporaries were critical that the practice unduly shrinks the asset base in favour of a small number of creditors. Take, eg., the failure of Alfred Vernon, who started in the industry in 1878. He suspended trading in 1886, with liabilities of £3316 against assets of £694. A composition was accepted and trading resumed (BSTJ 17 July 1886 p.46). A final stoppage, however, came in 1889, the result of longstanding problems of high production costs and bad debts. Liabilities were assessed at £2361.3.10; assets £663.14.5. In July 1887, Vernon had assigned book debts valued at c£600 to his father in return for a loan of £200 (SLR 20 April 1889 p.337 and 27 April 1889 p.355).

7. see, eg., *ibid.* Book folio 25-6; 217; 312-22.

If discounts were allowed, although this was less likely, it became usual, as has been noted above, for the current account to be worked on a 10% margin to guard against loss: on occasion, a suspense account was used for this purpose.¹ Certainly, business failure reports confirm that many small masters engaged in risky and questionable bills transactions, which contributed to their failure. The evidence of these reports also reveals that leather sellers, moneylenders and other local businessmen were prepared to act as bill discounters. Prominent amongst these men was Thomas Dyer, moneylender and father of Edward, shoe manufacturer²; and Thomas Cottingham. Cottingham was a leather seller and manufacturer.³ In 1895 it was noted he was "... a gentleman who combines the business of a dealer in boots and leather with that of a bill discounter..."⁴ Ironically, after having appeared as a creditor in so many failures, he himself failed in 1906. From the reference books it is possible to isolate some of the more important short-run cash-flow problems encountered by manufacturers, and the extent to which the bank was prepared to assist. The basis of observable banking practice current at the Woodhill Branch, was to utilise the overdraft facility as a temporary expedient provided for a measurable period of time, often of very short duration. It was usually made available to meet a recognised trading problem. Regardless of whether it was a small master doing a "hand to mouth" trade based on small orders, or whether it was a larger man operating an in-stock system, the provision of an overdraft on current account became a crucial financial element in operating the firm.

The following short-run financial problems are given particular prominence

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1. See eg. *ibid.* Book I folio 381; cf folio 299 1891/92 where the manager had allowed discounts on an account of £450 and an overdraft of £80 - "...now doing well...respectable hardworking, small means, relies on credit from friends. On 12 March 1892, H.O. write: "... this man is a trumpery and ought to have a credit balance of at least £65 to meet any liability on bills..."
 2. Initially in partnership in 1891: sole tradership 1894 and failed in that year, his father being a creditor for £2000 (BSTJ 27 July 1894 and 21 September 1894).
 3. 1876-1906 trading at St. Giles Tce and later at Alfred Street.
 4. SLR 7 June 1895 p.1323.

in the Northampton banking records:

(1) It was common for firms, especially small masters, to experience a slow inflow of remittances. Here, a short-run overdraft facility, often only for seven or ten days, would greatly assist the firm. Not a few Midland Bank customers at Northampton were assisted in this way. For example, during early 1892 a customer's debts of £200 were "behind hand.. so 'X' will require an overdraft larger than expected, if it comes in as expected they will be £100 in credit in February..." Again in April, credits of £185 were met by the bank on the understanding sums owed to the customer were due at the end of the week. Again, in May the bank "...agreed to pay credits making the account £170, to be reduced to £30 by the end of the week..."¹ Indeed, the Bank made temporary, short term provision of this character for this firm between 1891-1901. Another customer faced with similar problems was able to call upon the Bank's assistance. The manager noted:

...(the customer) said he was sorry to have slightly exceeded his limit but found it so difficult to get money in just now - ought to have £600 in during the next fortnight - said he was doing well and was worth c£1200 - to give one of his deeds as security.²

Such delays were especially met during the busy spring season. Smaller manufacturers who do a good trade, keeping within overdraft limits, were often quoted as requiring added accommodation at this time, as trading reached its annual high point. For instance, it was noted of one firm in February 1903: "...The business is not a large one, but steady and only deal with good people and as a rule keep within £400 limit but want a little extra in spring..."³ Similar delays were also met by manufacturers who did an export trade. These inevitable delays often resulted in difficult cash-flow problems, and again, the banks role in providing covering credit can be seen as crucial to firm's - particularly a small firm's - ability to continue trading. In April 1890 it was noted of a manufacturer, "...he occasionally wanted to

1. *ibid.* Book I folio 343, 21 January 1892.

2. *ibid.* Book I folio 365, 1 October 1892; cf folio 503 and 508.

3. *ibid.* Book II folio 446, 25 February 1903.

4. eg. *ibid.* Book I folios 147; 150; 257.

overdraw until he could obtain the money for shipping orders sent off..."¹ 307
whilst another exporter was allowed "...a one week overdraft, whilst awaiting
money from South Africa..."².

(2) It was also common for firms to require added credit in order to take
advantage of favourable leather markets, and attractively priced lots of
leather. Thus, in 1891 the high overdraft of a customer was explained by
his "...purchasing a special lot of Scotch goods for cash..."³

(3) Increasingly in the 1890s, the shoe industry adopted the system of
dating-on of orders⁴, leaving aside any trading advantages accruing to such
a practice, it did unnecessarily tie up capital. To overcome this, firms
turned to overdraft facilities to maintain cash flow under such circumstances.
For example, in explaining an excessive overdraft, a manufacturer observed
"... have been busy this year but a lot of goods sold dated on - says will
get down to limit this month and hopes not to transgress again..."⁵

(4) Lastly, a range of miscellaneous items can be conveniently grouped
together. Ultimately, the possible reasons for requiring support are wide
indeed. Thus, several manufacturers asked for an overdraft to pay operating
costs, usually wages. The facility was usually allowed if the firm had

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1. *ibid.* Book I folio 141-4 10 April 1890 where it was noted of a client
"... he did not as a rule require any overdraft, but requires £15/1600
discount accommodation; he occasionally wanted an overdraft until he
obtained the money for shipping orders sent off: his returns were £6000
and his capital c£400..."
 2. *ibid.* Book I folio 257, 22 January 1892; Cf Book II folio 98, Cf Book I
folio 105. 2 September 1899, "account c£200 in excess, mainly owing to
delay in shipping orders - goods at the docks - delay owing to heavy
shipment of Government stock from the Cape..."
 3. *ibid.* Book I folio 207. Cf. Book I folio 668 and Book II folio 89.
 4. A. J. Topham, *op.cit.* p. 199-200, where he suggests that similar long
credit systems assailed the wool textile, Birmingham iron, and the
hosiery trades earlier in the century. He notes "...Turning to Birmingham
and the hosiery trade, we again find parallels with the woollen and
worsted trades. The custom had grown up of anticipating seasons and
dating on...we are driven to the practice of the London houses...to begin
to sell our winter hosiery, which a retailer does not require until
October or November, in the month of May. These goods are dated as 1st
September, and drawn for at 4 months on the 1st November. The effect of
this is that manufacturers are obliged/at least 2 months earlier than is
really necessary..."
to prepare them
 5. *ibid.* Book I folio 365 30 April 1894.

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payments in the pipeline. Another manufacturer was given assistance following a factory fire.² A further random example is of the manufacturer who was granted an overdraft facility because capital was temporarily tied up in a civil action he had initiated to recover funds lost via a dishonoured bill.³ A manufacturer might also seek bank credit if large, unfinished stocks were currently held in the warehouse.⁴ Finally, where a partner had retired taking out his capital share, the bank was asked for financial assistance.⁵ As has been noted, the overdraft arrangements briefly reviewed above were provided on a short-term, temporary basis: provided to meet a particular situation. Indeed, there is now a broad-based acceptance amongst historians that Banks did primarily fund industry in just this way

...While neither contemporaries nor historians have seriously questioned the supply of short term credit generated by the banking system, considerable criticism has been made of commercial banks' apparent unwillingness either to provide medium or long term loans to industrial companies or to act as intermediaries in the capital market...

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1. *ibid.* Book I folio 245; Cf Book I folio 381.
 2. *ibid.* Book II folio 98 16 May 1898; a special advance of £1000, secured against an assignment of the outstanding insurance monies, was sanctioned.
 3. *ibid.* Book I folio 257.
 4. *ibid.* Book II folio 668 6 June 1907.
 5. *ibid.* Book I folio 307.
 6. P.L. Cottrell *op.cit.* p.210. Cf M. Compton and E. H. Bott *op.cit.* p.162 "...Thus in the provision of credit...certain gaps exist. While the business of commercial banks must necessarily be in the main to provide short-term loans, their aloofness from the direct consideration and investigation of industrial problems have probably limited their usefulness. Moreover, there is a distinct need for the provision of intermediate credit, that is to say credit for a period of 1 to 5 years, for which none of the old credit houses have catered for to any degree. Long term credit for relatively small firms...has been another problem...Finally, as the Report on Finance and Industry (1931) remarks, "closer connection between British Industry and the City of London would benefit both..." The City has tended to regard its function as one isolated from the problems of industry...": But, particularly in relation to intermediate credit, it is instructive to contrast this view with the discussion of the Leicestershire Banking Co's treatment of Northants. shoe manufacturers which is recorded below.

A question mark hangs over the extent of the banking systems long-term provision of funds to the manufacturing sector. The current state of historical knowledge regarding this issue can be best summed up by Cottrell's assessment:

...banks, especially from the late 1880s, were generally very reluctant either to supply working capital on a continuous basis or more particularly to support investment in plant and machinery for any length of time...

Clearly it is important to explore this area in relation to the shoe industry, but the fact of the paramount need for working capital in this industry should not be lost sight of. In making such provision, regardless of the banking system's record in relation to long term financing, banks were of immense benefit to shoe firms in our period.

Certainly, the Woodhill Branch records provide little direct evidence of long term² loans for fixed capital projects.³ However, three points need to be made. First, that the provision of short-term overdrafts released company funds for long term projects instead of tying funds up in meeting cash flow needs.⁴ Indeed, at several points, Head Office commented adversely upon this practice.⁵ Secondly, the Reference Books yield evidence that the

1. P.L. Cottrell op.cit. p. 248

2. i.e. loans for a fixed period in excess of one year.

3. eg. ibid. Book I folios 245 and 480, capital loans to new companies; folios 209 and 365, overdraft sanctioned, repayable 2/3 years, for fixed capital purpose (factory extensions and machinery purchases).

4. ibid. Book II folio 250, 22 October 1903, where manager informed Head Office that a firm's account "...was working high (because) they have spent £800 in enlarging their factory...the solicitors have promised to let them have a further £3/400 on the deeds, but the money is not yet paid...doing well..." Subsequently, this arrangement did not materialise and in consequence the account was continually worked high through 1904-06.

5. Eg. ibid. Book I folio 351, where Head Office comments that the bank should not be allowed to call upon to provide short-term aid to a company to buy low priced leather ahead of need when that company had elected to utilise considerable funds during the previous year in building and equipping a factory extension.

overdraft was used by customers to fund capital projects. Some manufacturers did not wish to tie up money for a long period to fund a loan, and sought merely to extend their overdraft to help finance the project.¹ Indeed, thirdly, more fixed capital loans applications were refused than entertained. In making the refusal, however, advice to seek named alternative sources was often given, which possibly suggests that, in point of fact, no shortage of loanable long term funds existed in the area.² Thus, the branch's reluctance to sanction loans was not finally damaging to the development of the Northampton shoe industry.

By contrast, the Woodhill Branch's record regarding the provision of working capital on a continuous basis, although of a somewhat ambivalent character, was more positive. For whilst ongoing overdraft facilities were available to customers, with provision for their review and renewal in appropriate cases³, there would appear to have been a reluctance on the part of the Bank to allow permanent funding from the Bank's coffers and this supports Cottrell's contention concerning the banking system's reluctance to fund permanent overdraft provision in the period.⁴ Nevertheless, clear exceptions to this position were made for the branch's more prominent customers.⁵ The information gleaned regarding several customers clearly points to the central

1. eg. *ibid.* Book I folio 53 (rise in overdraft limit to assist funding of factory enlargement) and Book II folio 261 (rise in overdraft limit in preference to extending mortgage).
2. See section (c) below: Cf *ibid.* Book II folios 89 and 261.
3. A number of examples appear in the Reference Books: eg. Book II folio 375, an overdraft sanctioned for one year in 1904, and subsequently renewed 1905-08.
4. P. L. Cottrell *op.cit.* p.210 et seq.
5. Cf. *ibid.* Book I folio 95, provides oblique evidence of the possibility of permanent credit arrangements. The manager noted on 2 June 1891 "... two or more working partners taken in and their united capital is now £5/600 - I don't think they will require to overdraw permanently. Cf *ibid.* Book II folio 397 provides an example of a renewable overdraft facility being provided for a manufacturer from September 1902 to April 1908: *ibid.* Book I folio 207 6 April 1891 it was noted "...man doing well, never higher than £140 overdraft and fixed at this" At 29 September 1903 limit of £140 was still in force and renewed annually through to 1909.

financial role in the development and growth of these firms. For example, one customer opened an account in September 1890 at a point where he was re-establishing his business following a temporary suspension: the man was worth £400. Within six months an overdraft limit of £550 was sanctioned to assist the new and growing export activity.¹ Through the decade and into the Edwardian years an overdraft was used to help overcome trading difficulties, particularly the inevitable delays met in receiving remittances due or outstanding. Thus, in January 1893, it was noted "...they might be a little short for the next three weeks as they had nearly £1000 of shipping orders to get off and would not get their money until the fifteenth or twentieth of February...".² Again, in 1897, "...an application to raise the overdraft limit to £2500 for three months (was made because) a large order for Transvaal of c£1000 being cancelled, locking up money...".³ In June 1899, the manager noted this customer's account was in excess "...chiefly owing the delay in shipping order - would shortly be reduced...".⁴ As the firm grew, so the overdraft arrangement was increased to meet the firm's growing credit needs. Thus the overdraft of £550 in 1891 was raised to £2000 by September 1896⁵, and to £3000 by July 1898.⁶ By this date summaries of correspondence between the branch and head office, which appears in the reference books, reveals that increasing concern was felt regarding the credit being granted to this customer. After 1898-99, as a result of increasing difficulties in getting foreign payments, the account was increasingly being worked in excess, although a growing and potentially lucrative trade was being done. By May 1900, Head Office noted

1. *ibid.* Book I folio 147.

2. *ibid.* Book I folio 150 19 January 1893

3. *ibid.* Book I folio 420 4 August 1897: Cf 7 August 1897 "...has a big Australian order for £2000 and would not draw a penny until it was all completed (c. first week of October).

4. *ibid.* Book II folio 105 8 June 1899. Cf Book II folio 250 "...excess due to non-arrival of cheques from abroad".

5. *ibid.* Book I folio 420.

6. *ibid.* Book II folio 105.

...(We) do not like this account and should like you to worry it away to another Bank...too much of our money is tied up and (we) wish you (the manager) to get rid of the security...¹

The manager disagreed with this approach, and correspondence passed between the two until August, when the account was £2000 over the £3000 limit. Reluctantly, Head Office then allowed the manager to work the account in a way that reduced the overdraft to its limit by mid 1901². But in July of that year, the bankruptcy of one of the firm's debtors, caused fresh pressure on the overdraft. And so matters went on for a number of years, with Head Office tolerating the account, but becoming displeased when it worked to excess³, whilst the branch manager quietly worked to maintain the account. Similar tension can be discerned in the accounts of established firms that relied upon the continued help of the Bank in the form of on-going overdraft facilities. One such established firm opened an account at the branch in September 1894 on better terms than had been received at the Northants. Union.⁴ The firm was given an overdraft facility of £4/5000 at 4% as long as bank rate remained under that rate. Between that time and July 1898 the overdraft steadily rose in the wake of expanding business: an increase to £8000 was sanctioned in June 1897, and to £10000 in July 1897. At this time, there began a ten year dialogue between head office, the branch and the account holder, concerning the running of the account.

The firm required the credit to help fund their growth. The covert theme running through the folios is that of the firm using its own money to fund fixed capital projects, whilst relying heavily upon the overdraft facility to finance their short term credit needs. One element strongly suggested by the reference books was the need to keep heavy stocks of manufactured goods and uncut leather, presumably the result of the switch to in-stocking

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1. *ibid.* Book II folio 250 23 May 1900.
 2. *ibid.* Book II folio 250 8 June 1901. H.O. to Branch "...very dissatisfied with the way you allow this account to work..."
 3. *ibid.* Book II *op.cit.* 28 January 1904. H.O. called upon the manager to return cheques, held him personally responsible for the account's continued working.
 4. The firm's capital stood at £20000 in 1894 and rose to c£74000 fifteen years later. The following account relies upon Northampton Managers Book I folio 597 *et seq.*, and 668 and Book II folio 385 *et seq.*

and dating forward in the industry generally. But in addition to the demands of ordinary commercial transactions, in the early Edwardian period, an increase in overdraft was sanctioned to help the firm cope with the financial adjustments made necessary by the death of one of the partners. In order to retain the facility, the firm insisted that the Northants.

Union would be prepared to meet their requirements.

By contrast, the head office showed continued concern that the overdraft should not be used on an ongoing basis to fund the firm's activities. Thus, a careful scrutiny of the balance sheets was undertaken when a rise in the limit was to be sanctioned; and criticism of the position was enjoined when the account was worked in excess. Concern was expressed about the tendency of the firm "...to use the full amount of our money..."¹, and questions as to the stability of the firm were regularly put to the branch manager. An instruction to the branch manager in 1900 is typical of this concern:

...they must reduce the overdraft to £15000 at once or close the account...(we) had let them have too much money in proportion to their capital and business done...carry out our instructions² and if the business goes no responsibility will rest with you...

In the event, the firm offered a partial reduction, and "a prominent Northampton merchant" guaranteed the account. Yet, despite the concern of Head Office about the permanent, ongoing character of overdraft, the facility took on just that character. The limit was annually reviewed, and a new limit set according to need.

Essentially, the facility was used in these years to fund the holding of heavy manufacturer stocks, to counter slow remittances, and to enable the purchase of leather ahead. At its height the facility reached £20000 in 1900, to fall to £4000 in 1904, only to fluctuate thereafter between £5/10000. The position of the branch manager was, however, more ambiguous: As a banker, he expressed concern that the firm should work the account to the margin. For example, in December 1899, he noted in a memorandum to head office

1. *ibid.* Book One folio 598 October 1898.

2. *ibid.* Book One folio 668'20 February 1900.

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...the account is in excess and I think it too bad of them to trespass so much now money is so dear and our treatment so lenient ... (that they) should ask to allow us to charge borrowing rate when 5% or over... but I could not offend them...

Yet, at the same time this memorandum shows that he was as concerned to maintain an important, prestigious account.² Indeed in 1900 he took the unusual step of sanctioning an increase in overdraft limit to a high of £20,000 without head office clearance. Head Office reacted with considerable indignation, sending a strongly worded private letter, and suggesting the closing of the account if the overdraft were not quickly reduced.

But if the Woodhill Branch records provide little direct evidence of long term loans for fixed capital projects, and reveal a little reluctance on the part of this Bank to allow permanent overdraft funding, the Leicestershire Banking Co's records relating to its Northamptonshire shoe centre branches offer an interesting comparison. Just why this bank's policy should be apparently more accommodating is not entirely clear. However, it is possibly pertinent to note here that two prominent Leicester shoe manufacturers held influential posts on the Leicestershire's Board.³

At the Leicestershire's principal Northamptonshire branches, the sanctioning of long-run and short-run overdraft funding on a continuing basis for shoe manufacturers appears sufficiently frequently to suggest that Bank policy was more positively disposed to such financial assistance for its footwear customers. With regard to overdraft facilities to help a manufacturer cope with the

1. *ibid.* Book 1 folio 668 December 1899.

2. This is a constant theme in the Reference Books; eg. Book I folio 599 where head office wished to seek more security, the branch manager cautioned, "...I do not think it would be wise to press for other deeds, as Mr is rather touchy and seemed to imply if we were not quite satisfied he could put the accommodation elsewhere - I know they could..."

3. Henry Simpson Gee, director and chairman of the Leicestershire Banking Co. 1878-1900, and director of London City and Midland Bank 1900-24 (*DBB* Vol. II p.516-19); and Edward Wood, director and vice chairman (*DBB* Vol V forthcoming). At several points in K49 it is noted that Wood introduced or recommended a shoe manufacturer as a bank customer.

contingencies met with in ordinary short-run commercial transactions, a clear pattern emerges. Larger manufacturers were allowed a fluctuating overdraft facility renewable annually, whilst smaller men were given a fixed sum by way of overdraft to meet a narrowly defined contingency for a matter of months. Regarding the annually renewable overdrafts, many were continued for several years together, whilst a portion of customers secured such overdrafts for the currency of the branch ledgers, which in the case of the Kettering Branch was c15 years.¹

Thus, in branch overdraft and security ledgers are to be found overdrafts granted for a range of specified reasons. Some were quoted as being "...for business purposes...",² whilst others named the covering of specified eventualities.

These included, for example:-

- (a) to help firms heavily stocked³
- (b) "...to pay off weak trade creditors to save discounts"⁴
- (c) to offer assistance where "...large orders are dated forward to the next Spring season..."
- (d) to counteract the immediate financial effects of "...bad trade last

1. See K47 folio 23 where a fluctuating overdraft arranged March 1888 at £200 had risen to £3700 by February 1897.

2. Northampton Branch Ledger K49 folio 237/43 where in February 1893 a £7000 overdraft was granted "...for seasonal business purposes..."; also K49 folio 387 "...for business purposes occasionally..."; cf Kettering Branch ledger K47 folio 88, where, in May 1888, a fluctuating overdraft annually renewable and for business purposes was granted which by March 1896 had a limit of £1000. In 1895, the Bank Inspector noted that "capital small and accommodation vital...", an indication of the crucial importance of the overdraft in keeping small masters trading effectively without undue cash flow crisis; cf K47 folio 95; cf Wellingborough Branch ledger K51 folios 133, 205 and 208.

3. K49 folio ; cf K47 folio 23: "...through having purchased heavily in leather...", and folio 105 "...Heavy purchases in leather to secure themselves against a rising market. Also K47 folio 394, where leather is purchased ahead of needs "in anticipation of a rise in price..."; cf K47 folio 177 and 261, where heavy leather purchases were made "...to enable them to execute the extra large orders they have in hand..."; cf K51 folio 446.

4. K49 folio 196-97.

5. K49 folio 239 and 488; cf K47 folio 26, 408 and 464.

year... the bad debts having swept away his profits. ."1

(e) "...having lent some £2/300 to a friend, he requires extra accommodation for the time being ."2

(f) "to allow a firm to cope with slow customer remittances ."3

(g) to cope with "...their crisis in the boot trade ."4

(h) ". .to pay out his partner and conduct the business on his own account..."5

In addition to these specific reasons for granting an overdraft, three other common features regarding short term credit can be isolated from the Leicestershire Banking Co Ledgers. First, most customers were readily allowed seasonal additions to their overdraft facility lasting two or three months, to allow them to trade untrammelled by cash-flow worries associated with the busy Spring season in the industry. Secondly, it would appear that the Bank was prepared to provide financial underpinning, in the form of an on-going overdraft, to a firm that was experiencing a very rapid period of growth. For example, a Wellingborough firm was given just such a facility from 1892 through to at least 1897. It was noted

1. K47 folio 2. In this instance the fluctuating overdraft was first granted in 1892 and was renewed throughout the decade. In effect here, the bank was funding a prolonged bad period of trading then being experienced by this firm. In February, 1894, it was decided "...the future profits to be applied to reduce the overdraft..." From 1895, the overdraft was reduced in line with improved trading. But, cf K47 folio 258 where in November 1896 after ten years assistance by the bank it was finally noted the customer "...makes no headway...". Also K51 folio 402, where a weak firm was supported by a small £100 overdraft for eight years, throughout which time the manager was instructed to exercise the greatest caution in working the account. In 1898, the Bank Inspector noted "...one partner drinks and I consider the firm weak...(they) are on their last legs. ."
2. K47 folio 162.
3. K47 folio 177 and 470; cf K51 folio 384. Here an overdraft was first arranged in 1894 "...in connection with his increased home and colonial trade " Through to 1897 it was used to cope with slow remittances, when it was noted that "...to enable customer to carry out his Government contracts which are very large and for which he does not begin to receive payments until after March..."; cf K51 folio 490.
4. K47 folio 216, 13 April 1895. The crisis was the major national strike of that year: cf K47 folio 432, 22 March 1895 where a £2500 overdraft limit was imposed for one year because "...they have been purchasing very largely in anticipation of the strike and require an extra advance to enable them to pay cash as usual..."
5. K51 folio 40, cf folio 141, 143 and 278.

in the ledger that "...additional accommodation is required in consequence of their business growing so rapidly..."¹ Thirdly, the ledgers reveal that many firms experienced a confluence of financial pressures, that made bank assistance the more valuable. For example, a firm's fluctuating overdraft was renewed for a fourth consecutive year because

...(the facility) is required owing to his having to date his large orders forward and at the same time he has been buying his leather for cash on short bills in order to get his discount..."²

Yet over and above the overdraft facilities provided to help a manufacturer cope with the contingencies met with in ordinary short-run commercial transactions, the Leicestershire Banking Co. ledgers also reveal a definite and consistent policy of providing funds over a longer period to help Northamptonshire shoe manufacturers at Northampton, Kettering and Wellingborough finance fixed capital projects. Of course, as has already been observed, an overdraft could be of indirect assistance. Thus, where a firm was starved of short-term funds because a manufacturer has channelled his available funds into a capital project, the bank's provision of credit was of inestimable use.³

Beyond this, direct assistance with capital projects was provided to some 70% of shoe manufacturing account holders⁴ in the period. This was achieved by either running an overdraft on an on-going basis, or by providing a medium-term loan. In the former case, this type of facility can be distinguished from an on-going overdraft for short-term credit purposes, by the use in the branch ledgers of the phrase "...an overdraft to help develop the business..."⁵ as opposed to "...for business purposes", as relates to the former. Fortunately, sufficient detail is provided in some of the accounts to detail the kinds of purposes for

1. K51 folio 239.

2. K49 folio 488; cf K47 folio 177.

3. The banking records studied frequently gave recognition to this: eg. K47 folios 47; 70; 101; 120; and 216.

4. 110 shoe firm accounts appear in the ledgers K47, K49 and K51.

5. For example, K49 folio 83 "...a loan of £10,000 at 4% to develop the business secured on property deeds. .": cf K51 folio 113, where a £200 fluctuating overdraft was granted "...to develop the business..."

which the advance was made. Three areas of medium and long term capital needs were met.

First, to enable property purchases to be made,¹ to build new premises,² and for factory and warehouse developments to take place.³ This funding was most commonly achieved by offering a fluctuating facility that was to run for a specified number of years,⁴ but equally, evidence of extensions being made appear,⁵ as does evidence of re-negotiations of overdrafts to deal with new developments and contingencies.⁶ The overdraft was either specifically raised for the project in hand,⁷ or an additional limit negotiated to an existing overdraft.⁸ On other occasions, the terms of the overdraft

1. For example, K47 folio 170, a £500 fluctuating overdraft sanction to enable land purchase and the building of a factory.
2. For example, K47 folio 223, an additional £1000 to enable the building of a small factory.
3. For example, K47 folio 167, a £1000 fluctuating overdraft agreed "...In consequence of their increased business they are building a larger factory and will require the overdraft to enable them to finish paying the contractors..."
4. For example, K47 folio 278, £4500 for two years "...to enable pay (a retiring partner) the amount of his interest in the firm; also to pay for building a new wing to the factory and for putting down new machinery..." (cost £450)
5. For example, K47 folio 120 where a fluctuating overdraft of £3000, first sanctioned in 1884, was renewed again in February 1893 "...to cover the cost of erecting a new factory costing £3000..."
6. For example, K47 folio 17, a £400 fluctuating overdraft "...required to enable him to erect a factory..." This was sanctioned in January 1891, and the limit was increased to £1000 in February 1893 for factory improvements (?); a provision that ran until November 1897, when a new facility was arranged for £1600 "...to pay for property adjacent to the factory..." Cf. K47 folio 144, where a £2000 fluctuating overdraft was sanctioned in January 1892 "...for the purchase of the old partnership premises..." Seventeen months later, an additional £300 was agreed: "...requires the assistance in consequence of his trade increasing, having been obliged to enlarge his factory..." Then again, in April 1896, a further £600, because he "...has just completed an addition to his factory for finishing, machinery and requires an additional advance to pay the builder..."
7. For example K49 folio 272, where £400 was granted "...to pay for improvements to a shop front...": cf K51 folio 578 an overdraft of £1000 sanctioned to enable a factory to be built. Also K47 folio 261 and 105.
8. For example, K47 folio 411, an additional £400 "...to purchase the factory (value £450) he's renting to enable him to make the necessary enlargement in consequence of increased business...": cf K51 folio 239 an additional £2000 "...to buy a factory and enlarge it..." cf K51 folio 248.

covered both fixed and circulating capital needs.¹ In addition to overdrafts, all three branches provided loans, and some customers had loan accounts upon which to draw.²

Secondly, overdraft facilities were made to assist manufacturers in the purchase of plant and machinery.³

Lastly, the Bank's financial assistance was sought at important developmental points in a firm's history. For instance, at the point where a business was begun,⁴ again, to provide capital on succession,⁵ and, finally, to assist in the takeover of another company.⁶

1. For example, K47 folio 21 where the customer had a £800 fluctuating overdraft and was given an additional £2500 "...to pay for a new wing to his factory and to meet one or two large payments as well..."
2. For example, (i) K49 folio 494, an £1800 loan "...to off the mortgage on a property..." (cf K47 folio 26): (ii) K47 folio 85, a 6 year £1000 loan to fund building a new factory: (iii) K47 folio 450, a £1200 loan for fifteen months to "enlarge retail shops...": (iv) K47 folio 432 a two loan of £600 and folio 435 a three year £2000 loan, both to acquire and alter factories; (v) K51 folio 249 a £1300 "...loan at 4% gradually to be repaid...to pay for a larger warehouse, which he has been obliged to purchase through his business grown beyond the capacity of the present one..."
3. For example, (i) K49 folio 239, in 1896 a £5/6000 fluctuating overdraft granted "...to pay for plant and machinery...": (ii) K47 folio 70, a £250 fluctuating overdraft "...to put down some machinery...": (iii) K47 folio 104, a £500 fluctuating overdraft "...to pay for machinery...": (iv) K47 folio 362, a £200 fluctuating overdraft "... in consequence of putting down some machinery...": (v) K51 folio 208 a £400 temporary additional overdraft "...to pay for new machinery...": and (vi) a £200 additional facility "...to purchase new machinery..."
4. For example, K51 folio 577, where a £250 guaranteed loan was sanctioned as the customer was "...starting business with his uncle and he requires a loan to enable him to put £225 into the business. (Note within fifteen months a £700 overdraft was allowed "to pay out his partner and trade on his own ...") Also, K51 folio 586, where a £100 fluctuating, guaranteed overdraft was sanctioned "...to assist him in commencing business with the little money he has saved while managing a factory..." (the account and business was closed sixteen months later): Cf K51 folio 492 and K47 folio 362.
5. For example, K47 folio 173, a £200 fluctuating overdraft "...to carry on the business lately conducted by his father...": Cf K47 folio 258.
6. For example K51 folio 384, an overdraft for £3000 "...requires his advance to enable him to purchase (a) business...for £8000". The balance was to be paid in instalments over ten years. Also K51 folio 405, "... is taking over the business of his late brother...which will cost c£3000...": Cf K47 folio 406.

The extent to which other banks provided financial help of this character to the industry is not entirely clear. However, some evidence, mainly drawn from Company Registration files, does begin to suggest that other banks did support investment initiatives made by manufacturers. For example, William Barratt's building expansion programme of 1913/14 that was partly funded by two Northamptonshire Union Bank mortgages.¹ Again, following the retirement of a partner Capital and Counties Bank funded a shortfall in capital in the firm of Major Howe & Co. Ltd. from 1890 to 1898. The company then converted to provide the Bank with security for the loans. This loan was converted into debentures, which "were held until the firm's voluntary liquidation in 1903".² The report of G.L. Michel's affairs reveal similar ongoing assistance from the bank. Michel was a leather merchant of 40 years standing who commenced manufacturing in 1886. This diversification turned the company into a loss-maker and turnover began to decline from £6000 in 1887 to merely £216 in 1892. It was noted, "...His banking account showed previously to 1888 that he usually had a balance of £1300 to £1400, but that in the years that followed his overdraft had increased, which now stood at £8794.17.0..."³ Whether this indebtedness relates entirely to circulating capital problems, or whether fixed capital projects were funded in this way is unclear by merely referring to the creditors' lists. In any event, this would be difficult to determine in practice simply because it was not uncommon for short term credit to be applied to long term investment. In such cases, it was hoped the added profit accruing from the project in short run would enable the overdraft to be paid off.

In addition to funding from the banking system and trade credit, 51% of failure reports reveal the presence of one or more private cash creditors

1. See Appendix III NG10.

2. BSTJ 23 October 1903 p.637 cf p.399, below.

3. SLR 29 July 1892 p.267. His banker was Northants. Union Bank. In addition, he had family borrowings of £800.

(p.c.c.s)¹ They were an important, informal source of funding. Their role was to act as an important supplementary source to financial provision already being made by commercial sources.. Some provided funds to meet short run needs when money was tight, whilst others provided major capital injections into a firm. P.c.c.s. can be categorised into two types: those who tended to assist the firm's financial stability, and those who tended to contribute to the firm's financial destabilisation.

Of the former kind, some p.c.c.s were business associates or relatives who made a cash advance that was subject to normal commercial practices: that is to say, for a fixed period and subject to a repayment schedule and interest payments. It is to be presumed that the normal checks as to the manufacturer's credit worthiness were made, although clearly in some instances he was already fully extended in the formal money markets, thus making him an increased risk. An example of this type of borrowing occurred in the case of J. Sharman & Co. When Joseph Sharman retired in 1901, his firm was taken over by an employee John Henry Sharman. Joseph left money in the firm and made several loans to enable the purchase of machinery. Within six years, the firm failed as a result of falling turnover, a loss in trade of £140 being made in 1907. The assets of the firm were assessed at £638.12.6d, against liabilities of £1134.7.11. Of these liabilities, Joseph Sharman was owed £711.² It is interesting to contrast this failure with that of A.S. Warren, where borrowed capital and insufficient turnover were isolated as the causes of failure. Warren took his father's business in 1901, without any capital of his own. Between that date and the time of his failure, his family had provided £143. Upon the suspension of trading

1. The importance of private and semi-private (see below at section (c)) sources has been stressed in the past by a number of writers. See eg. M. Compton and E.H. Bott, British Industry (1940) p.180. "...A recent book, dealing in detail with the capital market...by Dr Edwin Frey, special attention is given to methods of financing industry; part to methods of financing small as well as large businesses. Dr Frey stresses the importance of private and semi-private sources, from which industry still draws funds, for example, via solicitors and private individuals..."

2. BSTJ 18 October 1907 p.95.

liabilities were put at £209.18.1 and assets £67.10.0. The Northants.

Union Bank were creditors for £30.¹

In the majority of cases, however, the p.c.c.s were friends or relatives of the manufacturer, who often lent money, not within the parameters of normal commercial practice, but simply as a result of friendship and kinship ties. They made loans, not with a view to personal gain, and often in the knowledge that repayment was unlikely. Frequently, failure reports record these payments being made as part of a futile rear-guard fight against almost inevitable failure. Within this category are cash payments to enable the settlement of wages, rent, rates and so forth. Such loans were not made within the ambit of normal commercial prudence, and as such the manufacturer would have been unlikely to secure funds from formal sources. Consequently, this type of informal funding may be regarded as tending to foster the presence of a financially unstable element within the manufacturers' ranks. In terms of the individual manufacturer already under pressure, his ability to secure funding of this character tended merely to artificially prolong his business and invariably ensured that his final suspension was more damaging to his creditors. A case in point is the experience of Henry Mason. He had commenced trading in 1888 with a capital of £100. Regularly kept balance sheets showed that he had never made a profit, and that by 1892 his trading debit was £2849. He had not filed a petition earlier because "...he owed much to personal friends and they had not pressed him..."² In addition, at this time, the firm did business with Brice and Co., leather merchants, who had allowed extensive credit. By 1895 the figure stood at £3000, at which time Mason began to repay the debt at £100 per month: at the time of failure, it was reduced to £1525. It was Brice's failure³, that forced Mason's suspension. His liabilities stood at £11,828.2.0, against assets of £3714.12.9. At his public examination, "...the registrar said it was most extraordinary how such people could get credit. Starting with

1. BSTJ 5 April 1907 p.4.

2. BSTJ 20 February 1897 p.29.

3. Cf Chapter Four on Brice's failure.

£100 the debtor managed to get into a deficiency of £8000..."¹ The failure of F.T. & W. Langley a year later similarly proves how informal personal loans could prop up an ailing firm. Langley's had been "more or less insolvent" since its commencement in 1890. However, a relative named Sturgess had lent money several times, and this had kept the firm going. In all, £733 was lent, and a bank overdraft of £921 guaranteed. Poor books of account were maintained, and stock-taking had never been carried out. Final liabilities were put at £2614.2.3, with assets of only £595.3.4². A final example is that of Henry Gorbald, an old established retailer and manufacturer. A once successful firm, with a turnover of £30,000 had witnessed his trade falling away through the Edwardian period: a loss of £1829 was recorded in the last eight months of trading. It was noted that the firm had failed to rationalise its operations in the wake of contracting trade, but instead had relied upon high levels of informal borrowings to meet high running costs. These informal borrowings stood at £7563.18.0 (49% of all liabilities) by 1911 when trading was suspended: total liabilities amounted to £15,367 against assets of £4162.³

(c) Other Capital Sources

In addition to those sources already discussed, the business failure sample reveals that a range of other, less prominent capital sources were utilised by shoe firms.⁴ These were:

(i) Building Society Mortgages

Northampton had two flourishing building societies in the period, that had risen to prominence as a result of the successful attempts to increase the number of franchise-holding freeholders amongst working class Northamptonians.

1. BSTJ loc.cit. p.29.

2. BSTJ 2 April 1898 p.480.

3. BSTJ 17 March 1911 p.448.

4. Several writers have stressed the importance of such sources. Particularly on hire purchase see Compton & Bott op.cit. p.183 & Chap. VIII passim.

These societies also provided commercial mortgages for the purchase of industrial premises.¹ In addition, several reports reveal that new entrants raised starting capital by mortgaging their house.²

(ii) Friendly Society funds³

(iii) Solicitors

Solicitors were still an important source of funds as several failure reports revealed.⁴ The bank records of the Woodhill Branch of the London City and Midland provide us with further evidence of the importance of this source. A memorandum in the Manager's Reference Book informs that where a small firm had purchased a factory for £1175 and wished to carry out £1500 of improvements, the manager declined to loan the money and suggested that the firm borrowed from solicitors. On 18 June 1895, a second application was refused, as their capital was too small: "...I advised them to get it through a solicitor's..." Correspondence in August and September reveals that a mortgage had been obtained in this way, but the bank refused an £800 bridging loan.⁵

(iv) Charitable Trusts

Several firms in the sample secured £100 loans from the trustees of Sir Thomas White's Charity, with which to start in business.⁶ Kelly's Directory informs us that "...Sir Thomas White, Lord Mayor of London in 1553, by deed in 1566, gave certain estates for the benefit of this and various other (Midland) towns, in order to provide sums to be lent as free loans to young men engaged in trade..."⁷

1. For example, SLR 9 September 1892 p.644, William Thompson held a Northampton Freehold Land Society, mortgage as did A.I.Tear to the value of £247 (BSTJ 7 May 1898 p.629) Cf BSTJ 3 March 1905 p.391, Ingram & Co. held a £1567 building society mortgage.

2. eg. BSTJ 17 November 1900 p.670, G.H. Baker & Co.

3. eg. BSTJ 23 September 1899 p.398, W.F.J. White & Co.

4. eg. BSTJ 9 December 1890 p.721, cf. SLR 5 May 1883 p.368, and SLR 10 July 1893 p.89.

5. Northampton Managers Book I folio 467 June/September 1895 Cf Book II folio 250, 20 October 1903, regarding a solicitor's mortgage.

6. eg. BSTJ 17 August 1889 p.150, Austen Knight; SLR 15 July 1892 p.153, T.E. Branson. Cf. Appendix II C2, Crockett & Jones; and Northampton Managers Book I folio 21/24.

7. Kelly's Northants. Directory 1914 p.159.

(v) Loan Clubs and Money Lenders

Small firm failures on occasion reveal that in an attempt to maintain business such expedients were employed. Thus, in 1888, for example, John Ward & Co. creditors included a local loans club. The debt owed was £17; his total liabilities were £140.4.7 against assets of £31.9.5.¹ A decade later, the failure of I.E. Tipler presents a similar picture: a small master whose capital was too small for him to secure the assistance of a bank. Tipler had traded for three years, and failed owing £287.15.15, with assets of £37.14.2. Rising costs had forced him into the hands of three moneylenders, whose high interest rates had hastened his downfall.²

(vi) Pawnbrokers

Again, the refuge of small masters.³ The practice here was to buy uncut leather on credit and then pawn it, made up or not, in order to obtain cash with which to meet commitments.⁴

(vii) The Financing of Machine and Plant Purchases

Beyond a cash payment, from either retained profit or a loan, three methods are revealed by failure reports. The first was machine-leasing. This theme has been dealt with^{at} a number of points in preceding discussion. As has already been noted, this method prevailed amongst the leading shoe machinery manufacturers, and has been widely acknowledged as a means whereby small manufacturers could afford to mechanise competitively. However, it should be noted that Lavington quoted the Board of Trade Committee on the Engineering Trades, with approval in arguing that, whilst leasing policies

1. SLR 17 November 1888 p.497.

2. BSTJ 12 March 1898 p.379.

3. eg. SLR 25 August 1894 p.302, where a small master had pawned unpaid for leather on a regular basis.

4. The Mackenzie Report of 1908, op.cit., discusses the prevalence of this practice amongst small traders: see Minutes of Evidence, Q798-901; 3073-5; 5999; and 6238.

aided the industry's development, it had the effect of restricting the field of operations of small manufacturers.¹ A second option was a hire purchase arrangement. Despite the widespread leasing of machinery in the industry, a Non-Royalty movement was founded by some manufacturers which sold machines on hire purchase. Similarly, closing machines had always been available on hire purchase system.² In addition to these arrangements, the failure data reveals an interesting variant where a new entrant without capital purchases a firm from a manufacturer leaving the industry on hire purchase.³ And thirdly, in an industry noted for its high failure, the distinct possibility existed to purchase, at very competitive rates, bankrupt stock and machines. Similarly, a thriving trade in second-hand machinery was done, with some engineering firms making a speciality of this trade.

(viii) The Taking of a Partner

The taking of a partner, who will provide an injection of capital, is very much a textbook solution to credit problems. Again, by using local banking records, the prevalence of this stratagem can be highlighted. Thus, in 1890/91, a small master "...who had now worked up a good connection..." stated he was looking for a partner to solve his limited capital problems.

1. F. Lavington op.cit. p.266 (Board of Trade Committee of the Engineering Trades (Cd. 9073) p.32: "...the leasing of machines has contributed in no small way to the development of the boot trade in the Midlands...". The Committee clearly disapproved of the scheme, and pointed out that "...the manufacturer, who most frequently starts as a very small man without capital, is all his business life tied hand and foot to the machinery company...")
2. Several references to hire purchase transactions appear in banking records, eg. Managers Book I folio 87.
3. See BSTJ 15 October 1898 p.526. The failure of W.T. Rogers. He commenced trading on 16 March 1898 by acquiring the business of Mr Brooks "on the H.P. system" as he had not capital.

He was worth £100, and making 80 to 100 pairs a week.¹ At the same time, another small master entered into a partnership with a relative, who was to finance the purchase of a factory.²

1. Managers Book I folio 161, cf Book I folio 95 which illustrates the degree to which a firm's capital could be enhanced in this way. In June 1890, two men start in partnership worth £50/100. Within nine months, a brother joined the firm bringing an extra £200 and by June 1891 a fourth partner had entered, when the capital stood at £5/600.

2. *ibid.* Book I folio 31/2.

II

Yet it was not the presence of credit per se, nor entirely the inexperience of many infant firms in handling matters of credit which attracted adverse contemporary comment and concern, but rather the extent to which credit was made available to financially unstable manufacturers, and the ease with which it was made available.¹ Such provision was, of course, individually damaging to creditors, but the matter did not end there, for the collective effect of numbers of insolvencies threatened the very financial stability of all manufacturers within the industry, more particularly in the eighties. The trade press reported fully and deliberated upon what was viewed as a lax and injurious credit system, which hindered more stable manufacturers, unfairly bolstered up 'weak' manufacturers and acted as a brake on the industry's development generally. This criticism is well summarised in the following report by a Kettering trade correspondent in 1897:

....The most discussed topic in local trade circles this week has been the stoppage of Mr Arthur George Spence, who, in 1894, left the finisher's bench to become a manufacturer, and has now failed with a deficiency of some £2000. During the three or four years he has been in business he has had two partners in turn, during two short periods he has worked on his own account...The failure has not been so much of a surprise, and the only wonder is that he was allowed to go on so long before he was pulled up. Outside the shoe trade I wonder where a man with £100 capital and no previous experience of working on his own account could get credit to the extent of £3000 (sic)...²

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1. A. J. Topham op.cit. p.200, suggests that such a situation was common in the woollen, Birmingham small metals, and hosiery trades, leading to many failures. He comments: "...It is frequently a subject of comment at the Bankruptcy Courts throughout this country, that credit is too easy and too cheap..." And of the iron trade, Topham notes "(It) is a very noticeable instance of too much credit - the whole of the purchases of the iron master, indeed all his payments save wages, are in 4 and 6 month bills, thus enabling many of (sic) notorious insolvency to pursue a reckless course, involving ruin to capitalists and artisans alike..."
 2. S & L.R. 8 October 1897, p.977. Cf in the case of John Mallard, the Registrar succinctly noted: "...I'm afraid credit in this particular trade is much too easy to get...It is easier to get credit than to sell goods..."

To some degree, however, such a judgement is flawed for the industrial elite which emerged in the industry came from this same small master base, and because of this it needed to be nurtured. As will be demonstrated below, the same critics praised and lauded the tenacity of the successful manufacturer from humble origins, who took financial risks: there was a fine division which parted success and what was then perceived as good financial judgement on the one hand, and failure and what was then perceived as the provision of excessive credit on the other. Nevertheless, in all too many cases, it was found that the principals of infant firms resorted to all manner of short term expedients to finance the business. When John Mallard failed in 1890, the official receiver noted that yet again here was a case of a manufacturer "...continually robbing Peter to pay Paul..."¹ As part of this type of strategy, and in a vain attempt to fund his activities, Mallard raised money on his household furniture in the following manner:

....He was hard up 18 months ago and disposed of his household furniture, buying it back on hire purchase system. By this means he raised £50. He did this because he was pressed for money...²

In fact, he had little knowledge of the workings of business finance, and this led him further into debt. First, he had paid out £119.10.0 to debtors from a previous insolvency, despite the fact that his liability to pay was excused by the statute of limitations. He had paid merely because his old debtors had asked him to do so. It had not occurred to him that he was protected in this way. Secondly, he had incurred debts because of his ignorance of what an accommodation bill was:

...He did not know what an accommodation bill really meant, but some one asked him to get a bill discounted at his bank, and he did so, although he did not get a farthing by the transaction...³

1. SLR, 17 May 1890 p.610.

2. SLR *ibid*: In addition he resorted to selling boots 15% below cost. 7/6d. boots were sold at 5/9d.

3. SLR *ibid*.

At the point where an infant firm like Mallard's was struggling it became common, it was argued, for raw material suppliers, bankers and others to readily provide excessive credit. Indeed, on one occasion a debtor plaintively intoned:

...I did not ask for any goods, on the contrary, they came to me and almost assaulted me, because I would not give them an order...¹

Several examples appear in the Northampton failure sample. One such case was that of George Sturges and Co., which well illustrates the blend of easy credit and weak business skills. Sturges commenced manufacturing in 1879 without capital and by the time of his suspension had accumulated liabilities to the extent of £3335.10.5, whilst his nett assets were only £334.0.4. As a failure report curtly noted:

...Great disappointment and no little indignation was expressed at this statement of affairs...²

At his bankruptcy hearing, Sturges attributed his downfall to ill health, bad debts and increasing competition. In addition, money had been lost in two retail shop ventures: one in Manchester, the other in London. The Registrar was critical of the fact that incomplete books of account had been kept for the previous three years.³ Another case in point was that of William Jackson, who commenced trading in 1884. Trading was suspended in 1889, when liabilities were assessed at £3050 against assets of £840. Jackson, an illiterate, suggested that "...leather merchants had been too easy on credit...."⁴ A composition of 6/- in the £ was accepted and Jackson's wife took ownership of the firm, trading as H. Jackson & Co. until its failure in 1891.⁵

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1. SLR 12 April 1890 p.461 cf SLR 27 April 1889.
 2. BSTJ 5 May 1888, p.352. Cf the case of James Gordon in 1891 detailed below and that of Bond & Co.
 3. BSTJ 9 June 1888, p.459
 4. SLR 27 April 1889, p.444.
 5. SLR 14 August 1891, p.370: Trading suspended with liabilities at £1009.15.10 and assets of £236.0.3d.

The significant point which emerges is that often within a very short span of months insolvent companies could build up such an adverse balance that there was really little hope of credit^{0/8} ever recovering their debt from the usually very slender asset base. From the many examples which could be cited just four have been selected. In just three months' trading, Thomas P. Strougler accumulated liabilities of £2245 against assets of £776.¹ In early 1891, when M.S. Brockett was declared bankrupt, his wife purchased the company and he managed it. Within seven months the firm had failed with accumulated liabilities of £1086.7.5; assets £52.12.0.² A loss of similar proportions was incurred by Howard J. Hooper. An ex-leather commercial salesman, he commenced manufacturing in February 1888, with a capital of £70; his savings. His first stoppage occurred within thirteen months, when he executed an assignment of all his effects to a trustee for the benefit of his creditors. A dividend of 4/- in the £ was paid on liabilities of £1700. One month later - April 1889 - he re-commenced manufacturing with capital of £30 borrowed from his wife, under the name of Cleave & Co. He was declared bankrupt in October 1890, his liabilities, incurred from September 1889, £1270.3.2; assets £213.19.5. In addition to the ease with which he got credit, his account books failed to disclose his business transactions and true financial position. At the bankruptcy hearing Hooper stated that bad debts had accumulated in addition to "...losses arising through carrying on business owing principally to bad management on the part of my late manager..."³ The most conspicuous loss of this nature was that incurred by John Maddy in 1889-90. He had been in the trade for twenty years prior to his commencement as a manufacturer in October 1889.⁴ His initial capital was £425, of

1. SLR 3 February 1892 p.311-12: Strougler had an interest in several shoe firms and, formerly, a farm.
2. SLR 11 September 1891, p.617.
3. SLR 11 October 1890 p.451; 18 October 1890 p.486; 1 November 1890, p.555
4. But note NUBSO Monthly Report May 1887 p.5 which states John Maddy makes up work for J. Branch of London (an agency role? or sub-contractor?).

which £300 was borrowed: a further £350 was borrowed at a later date. A disastrous fire in September 1890, which found him inadequately insured, initiated problems. Maddy's answer was to take undue risks in an attempt to return to profitability. His account books showed that "...since the fire he had been trading at a ruinous loss, and apparently in a most reckless manner".¹ When he ceased trading in January 1891, total liabilities stood at £6016.9.3, against assets of £2524.2.2, with "...practically the whole of his indebtedness (being) incurred in one year..."² In shoe industry terms, such a level of indebtedness was high for the period, and much excitement was caused by these events: "...the Court was crowded, mainly by persons connected with the shoe trade, and the liveliest interest was manifested in the proceedings..."³; the Northampton Mercury dubbed him "The Northampton Plunger". Following bankruptcy, Maddy resumed his old avocation as a shoe factory manager, and was latterly a private secretary to an M.P. He died in March 1903.⁴

Of course, the provision of credit was axiomatic to good commercial practice: the constant concern of traders was to minimise the difficulties and abuses arising from the system. If easy credit was one important part of the problem, intertwining this provision was the inexperience of many manufacturers in commercial matters and practices. It was this availability of ample and excessive credit in the hands of inexperienced businessmen, with an over-zealous urge for survival, which provided such a potent blend for mischief and so hampered development in the industry. As a trade correspondent noted in 1886:

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1. SLR 23 January 1891, p.219. In the last three months of trading, his losses were over £700, with 60% of his turnover going to wages.
 2. BSTJ 18 April 1891 p.428. Cf SLR 17 April 1891 p.610.
 3. BSTJ *ibid.*
 4. BSTJ 3 April 1903 p.558. Cf SLR 29 July 1892 p.267, had been manager for James Branch (qu), and for G. L. Michel 1886/7 at £200 p.a.

...There are undoubtedly a large number of people who, during the last few years, have crept into the trade and who, from experience, actually don't know¹ how to stock a boot properly, or..calculate the costing of goods...

As a result of the primacy given to short-run credit requirements, it was the way in which the problems generated by these requirements were handled which lies at the heart of high business mortality and the matrix of unsound business practice found in the shoe industry. Underscoring any such conclusion must be an acknowledgement also of the extensive undercapitalisation of many shoe manufacturers, for although few directly attributed their immediate downfall to this cause, it nevertheless remained an indelible constituent of the matrix.² Linked to this was the ease with which new men could enter the industry, for certainly up to the mid-nineties low barriers to entry and the low-level of technology required to begin manufacturing operated as positive inducements to new entrants.³ Information on levels of starting capital drawn from failure reports help to place undercapitalisation into perspective (Fig. 5:ii refers).

1. BSTJ 16 October 1886, p.275.

2. This was also noted in Heilman's inter-war study of Minneapolis, where it was stated that amongst small businesses the most frequent cause of failure was a lack of capital. Moreover, Heilman noted that this lack was usually indicative of other problems, for if a firm was viable it would obtain the necessary funding. (Heilman op.cit. p.23). Elsewhere, he comments upon the close relationship between the amount of capital invested in a firm and the probability of survival: "...The conclusion to be reached from this examination of the 5 year death rates is that investment is the decisive factor in determining the ability of business enterprises to survive...The firms with substantial amounts of capital survive the longest, and those types of business...with large investments have the lowest mortality rates..." (ibid. p.11).

3. A proportion of entrants were marginal and bound to die: the marginality factor rises in time of depression.

Capital Level (£)	Number	%	
NIL	16	13.6	
1-99	21	17.8	
100-199	33	28.0	
200-299	19	16.2	75.6
300-399	6	5.0	
400-499	9	7.6	
500-599	4	3.4	16.0
600-999	4	3.4	
1000-2000	6	5.0	8.4

Fig. 5:ii

Starting capitals drawn from Northampton Business Failure Sample.¹

However, the over extension of credit and extensive undercapitalisation of firms were not the only financially destabilising features in our period. For high endemic failure rates brought with them a significant level of capital deformation within the Northampton shoe industry. Substantial amounts of capital were lost to the industry. In money terms, the levels of direct deformation at the time of failure can be assessed by calculating the capital lost to a firm at the time of failure. Figure 5:iii analyses the declared liabilities and assets of all failures in the period in this way.²

Period	No. Failures	Liabilities		Assets		Deformation	
		Total (£)	Mean (£)	Total	Mean	Total	Mean
1885-1894	123	309869	2519	126567	1029	183302	1490
1895-1904	107	245575	2295	109176	1020	136399	1275
1905-1913	39	203934	5229	101461	2602	102473	2627
Total	269	759378	2823	337204	1254	422174	1569

Fig. 5:iii Capital Deformation in Firms Recording a Business Failure in the Northampton Shoe Industry 1885-1913

Source: Northampton Business Failure Sample.

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1. In the failure reports, 118 insolvent company principals gave details. Limited companies were excluded from the table.
 2. In this context declared liabilities are the total of unsecured and secured liabilities, and declared assets are assets net of statutory preference payments (taxes, rates, wages etc.)

Here it is found that the deformation, represented by liabilities left unsettled, reached £422174 in the period. This is a conservative estimate in terms of overall capital deformation in the period and takes no account of unrecorded failures, the retirement of solvent concerns and capital withdrawn in other ways. Of course, in order to set deformation into a sharper perspective, further study would be required. What was the level of capital formation in the industry and how does it compare with rates of capital deformation? What effects did prevailing levels of failure have upon investment decisions? Figure 5:iii, however, takes no account of remaindered assets that were re-invested into the industry.

In addition to the level of capital deformation, some authors have suggested that wider social interests are affected by failure. Heilman summarises the position:

...since mercantile creditors and bankers suffer a considerable share of these losses and employees lose wages and suffer from disruption of employment. Moreover, wholesalers and manufacturers lose stable outlets for their products, consumers are poorly served, competitors suffer severely from the competition of unwise ventures and their haphazard business methods, and substantial amounts of useful capital are dissipated...

Interesting as many of these social interests are, it will be the role of this discussion to pass now to a consideration of the characterisation of failures in the shoe industry, and to the "haphazard business methods" found there.

FIGURE 5iv DECLARED LIABILITIES OF NORTHAMPTON FOOTWEAR FIRMS

AT THE TIME OF BUSINESS FAILURE 1885-1912

Period	£0-499		500-999		1000-1999		2000-2999		3000-3999		4000-4999		5000-5999		over 6000		Total
	No	a b	No	a b	No	a b	No	a b	No	a b	No	a b	No	a b	No	a b	
1885-1894	32	48.5	17	48.6	29	50.0	19	51.4	14	51.9	5	41.7	4		10		130 (48.3)
1895-1904	27	40.9	16	45.7	21	36.2	15	40.5	8	29.6	5	41.7	4		4		100 (37.2)
1905-1912	7	10.6	2	5.7	8	13.8	3	8.1	5	18.5	2	16.6	3		9		39 (14.5)
1885-1912	66		35		58		37		27		12		11		23		269
		24.5		13.0		21.6		13.8		10.0		4.4		4.1		8.6	

Source: Financial Reports of Shoe and Leather Review and Boot and Shoe Trades Journal

Notes: (a) Expressed as % of business failure liabilities in that liability range

(b) Expressed as % of total business failure liabilities

III

It is against this background of short-run credit problems and high mortality, particularly amongst infant firms, that a widespread absence of the necessary financial stability and experience in modern business practices amongst shoe manufacturers takes on a crucial significance. And it is at this point that business failure reports provide a unique insight into management methods and motivations.

Certainly when discussing the state of trade generally writers of the period tend to accept, however critically, the high degree of turnover of infant firms as sufficiently "normal" not to warrant serious discussion. Pervading the literature prior to 1895 is the notion that, for the more able workman, the passage from work at the bench to being a small master, after possibly a period as a foreman or manager was still part of a natural - if declining - even an inevitable progression. Small commodity production, like shoemaking, offered the entrant a possibility of starting business with a minimum of experience and capital. Consequently, such production "...attracts a perpetual stream of new entrants, so that competition is always sufficiently fierce to keep all but the most fortunate, skilful and well equipped...just on the edge of bankruptcy..."¹ As the discussion below will demonstrate, this is an assessment not unfitted to the late 19 Century shoe industry.

Many of these new men were clickers or foremen, aristocrats of the industry.

As a retrospective article in 1911 noted:

...it is within the recollection of many when each Christmas a number of foremen and clickers ...having been careful and prudent, joined their little savings together and embarked on the perilous waters of shoe manufacturing...

And disaster faced many as is illustrated by the case of George Langley, a boot manufacturer. In many respects, Langley's brief business life typifies the experience of many small, unsuccessful firms in the industry, not only

1. J. Strachey, What Are We To Do? (1938) p.23

2. BSTJ 26 May 1911 p.282.

at Northampton, but other shoe manufacturing centres also. A working man, he commenced in October 1892, working in the evenings only with a capital of £96 borrowed from three people. In January 1893, he went full-time as a manufacturer, a venture which failed by July of that year. The failure report reveals the size of his operation: purchases £318.16.8d; wages £191, including £1 per week for himself; total sales, £476. He made a gross profit of 4½d, and, after deducting expenses, the business returned a net loss of £82.19.5.¹

Some small masters lasted longer than George Langley, but must have faced considerable anxiety, and certainly experienced little in the way of material comfort and well-being. James Garrett, for example, carried on a wholesaling business for ten years from 1884, executing mainly sub-contract orders for larger manufacturers. In 1889, he had experienced financial difficulties, but the chief creditor allowed him to continue trading. His last three years as a manufacturer were punctuated by two stoppages. The first, in 1891, resulted from bad debts and the purchase of unsuitable machinery which was disposed of at the loss of £100.² His creditors accepted a composition of 4/6d in £, and Garrett resumed manufacturing by August 1892. A small factory was taken in Bearward Street and a retail shop in Abington Street. Within a year trading was again suspended, the result of bad debts and discounted bills transactions. In that year, sales amounted to £1830, purchases £927, and wages £664; an undisclosed loss on trading was made. The shop had lost £50. The firm was wound up.³ And yet through much of his life as a manufacturer, Garrett "...had been very economical in his living and personal expenditure..."⁴: he drew 15/- per week.

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1. S & L.R. 7 July 1893 p.309. Cf SLR 16 January 1897. A former clicker, F. Frisby, fails after being in business "a very short while". His capital was £30, and failure ensued because his "trade was too small": no books of account were kept. Four children and his wife assisted him.
 2. S.L.R., 27 March 1891, p.736.
 3. S.L.R., 18 August 1893, p.354.
 4. BSTJ, 19 August 1893, p.214.

Information regarding the material rewards of these small masters drawn from the ranks of journeymen shoemakers is scant but revealing. From directory searches it is clear that few moved from the working class neighbourhoods they had lived in as a workman. In terms of the income they drew from the business, occasional references made in failure reports regarding salaries is useful, though given the size of the sample is not totally reliable. Mention is made of this in 56 reports between 1890 and 1912. Exactly half the sample (28) drew a salary of under £2. Of these, one drew 37/-; another 32/-; whilst 20 had a recorded salary of 30/-. At 35.7% of the total number this is the largest single element and could feasibly be accounted for by the fact that for much of the period spanned by the sample, a clicker's weekly rate was precisely that sum. Looking at lower drawings, six manufacturers allowed themselves sums below 25/-: two of these falling below £1. It is difficult to make a direct parallel with shop operatives pay levels generally because of grade differentials and the fact that through the period covered by this sample wage rates rose. Nevertheless, it can be tentatively asserted that a large proportion of shoe operatives' wage would fall within the range 22/- to 32/-. Above this, supervisory grades incomes peaked at circa 70/-. In the range 40/- up to this level lie 19 salaries; 33.8% of the sample, with a significant concentration - 19.6% of total at the £2 per week level. Of firms above the 70/- level - 9 or 16% of total - one is increasingly dealing with larger organisations, although not exclusively so. One at least - Henry Allen - traded for only five months before his business ceased. He merely drew too much from the business.¹

From the reports it is possible to isolate a number of dominant traits common to the sample, which together suggest that shoe manufacturers either failed to perceive the importance of, or refused to recognise, or completely lacked,

1. SLR 21 June 1893, p.83: liabilities £760.3.8 against assets of £108.0.6d.

or were weak in executing skills crucial to the adequate running of their enterprises. In many respects what emerges is the time honoured problem of the capable artisan or foreman induced into business because he has competent artisanal or supervisory skills, only to find that he lacks the necessary business skills to trade with complete success. Of course, infant shoe firms had production problems and labour management difficulties, but as causes of failure these are significantly fewer in number when measured against financial and administrative skill problems. Thus one finds in Figure 4:vii only 15% of primary causes and 26.7% of secondary relate to poor judgement of this former character.

It is when one studies this facet of failure that the full extent of the irregular methods of accounting and costing adopted by many individual firms becomes apparent, and, the insidious and damaging character of the matrix of failure begins to become clear. An example of what is meant by this arises from the bankruptcy case of John Mallard in 1890 which has been discussed above. From the report it becomes apparent that at no time during the two years of his business life was he aware of his insolvency because of his inability to execute and understand standard commercial practices. When questioned he stated, rather plaintively, that "...his reason for not looking into the books was because he found as soon as he got into figures his mind got muddled..."¹ Of the case, the Registrar in Bankruptcy acutely observed:

...(too many)...men go into business who have not sufficient capacity to conduct their affairs properly. It would be far better if they were not so venturesome with other people's money, but contented themselves with their humble calling instead of attempting to conduct a business they did not understand...²

To some extent what follows outlines the risks and difficulties facing any infant firm in establishing custom, the control of credit to customers, and so forth. Indeed, a grey area exists between inevitable infant firm problems

1. SLR 17 March 1890, p.610.

2. SLR *ibid.*

and bad business practice. Some risks in early business life have to be taken in order to establish the firm, but what constantly protrudes in this study is the extent to which shoe manufacturers resorted to unacceptable business practices in order to achieve this end.

The law of the period recognised numerous malpractices perpetrated by insolvent debtors in the conduct of their affairs, which contributed to the losses sustained by their creditors.¹ The most common of these malpractices was the failure to keep books of account, and adequate records of transactions undertaken. In the Northampton sample 57 firms were found deficient on this count, and it is quite possible that this practice was even more common than this figure suggests. Indeed, this fundamental omission pervaded, not only the Victorian shoe industry generally, but the economy as a whole.² Through much of the period, this was given as a prominent cause of failure in the annual reports published by the Inspector General in Bankruptcy. In 1895, the Shoe and Leather Record noted:

...(of) ignorance of book-keeping, it might have been thought that the increased education of the people would reduce this cause of failure, but it seems to loom as large as ever in the returns. There are not wanting people who say that the plea of insolvent debtors that they do not know how to keep books is more often than not a false plea. Instances are continually reported in our own columns where it is impossible to believe that the debtor's non-production of books arose from incompetence to keep them. It is sometimes convenient not to produce books, and the time seems to have arrived when this very omission should be treated with severity than is provided by the present law...

This issue was closely investigated by the Mackenzie Committee, and "...a considerable body of evidence of a weighty character has been tendered... in favour of making a bankrupt trader who has inexcusably failed to keep

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1. They are summarised in Bankruptcy Act 1890 S.8.
 2. See Mackenzie Committee, 1908 (Cd. 4088) Vol.I Report, para 28. The four most prominent malpractices listed by witnesses were: (a) failure by the debtor to keep any books or any proper or adequate books of account in his business; (b) trading with knowledge of insolvency; (c) gambling and speculation leading to, or contributing to, the debtor's insolvency or bankruptcy; (d) failure properly to account for any substantial deficiency of assets.
 3. SLR 30 August 1895 p.400. Cf. Annual Reports of Inspector General in Bankruptcy, in which this issue is returned to with an alarming regularity.

any books of account...liable to (summary) prosecution and imprisonment..."¹

The Committee went on to recommend this course of action, although for bankrupts alone where liquidated debts exceeded £200.² Nevertheless, in the Northampton failure reports, whilst the rogue is present, the balance of cases suggest that such malpractice resulted, occasionally, from illiteracy, but more often from the insolvent's lack of education³ and commercial knowledge, or from his disinclination to attend to such business procedures. Of course, where poor books were kept it was impossible for a manufacturer accurately to cost or to know, with certainty, his financial situation. Thus the failure to keep books usually became part of a more complex causation of a failure. Upon failure accountants frequently found it impossible to present a full and accurate set of accounts to the creditors. In the case of Bond & Co., creditors were informed:

...unfortunately, he (the accountant) had found it impossible to get out a trading account, as the books were in a very primitive state, and no ledger account had been kept...⁴

A further element revealed was poor financial management. Common components in this area included bad debts, and high levels of book debts. Although to some extent slow paying customers were an inevitable difficulty, when present in large numbers it gives rise to suggestions of weak management on the

1. Mackenzie Committee Vol. I, op.cit., para. 36: cf para 33 "In much of the evidence before us complaints have been made as regards insolvent debtors who have failed to keep any books of account..., and against whom other delinquencies...referred to are reported, such as trading with knowledge of insolvency..." And "...that the offences are of a serious character by which grave injury to creditors is caused...": See also Minutes of Evidence Vol II1908 (Cd 4069) eg. Q238-70; Q3122-9; Q4302-6, 4363-76; Appendix p.356-9 and 377-82.
2. Mackenzie Committee Vol. I, ibid. para. 48.
3. Cf William Arnold's autobiography, where reference is made on several occasions to his rudimentary education. During the firm's early days he travelled, and it is written that he had to commit orders to memory, whilst pretending to write down customers' instructions, lest they should lack confidence in him (p.88).
4. SLR 7 June 1895, p.1323.

part of the manufacturer. Such was the case in the matter of William Vigor & Son. The firm failed after two years trading owing debts of £455.19.4 as a result of not using "...sufficient business caution." regarding customer credit. At the suspension book debts were valued at £183.10.9, but only expected to produce £63.13.9: previously, bad debts to the extent of £450 had been written off. The assets of the company were £129.13.9, although Vigor had entered business with £200.¹ In another instance, Harris Brothers trading was "...suspended by heavy losses due to bad debts..."² A surplus on trading of £167 in 1891 had been turned into a loss of £572 eighteen months later. Liabilities stood at £5436.10.9, and assets £1553.19.8. Trading was resumed only to be further suspended four years later; again as a result of bad debts.³ A further example of this problem is provided by Francis William Gibbs, son of Joseph, "one of the old school..."⁴ Francis had received a thorough practical training from his father, but in matters of customer credit his talents were less than good. He commenced trading on his own account in 1884 with a capital of £992, but by 1894 the incursion of heavy, bad debts had shrunk that capital to £200. One company owed c£2500 for a period of three years. From 1896 "...he knew himself to be insolvent but continued in hope of improvement..."⁵ The firm was wound up in May 1897. Where high levels of book debts threatened to suspend trading, manufacturers, on occasion, resorted to the practice of assigning these debts to a solicitor or other local businessman, in order to fund continued trading. Already in an unstable state, the threatened failure often occurred shortly after in many instances. Thus, the assignment of debts, whilst being a completely

1. BSTJ 7 December 1889, p.530.

2. SLR 10 February 1893, p.366.

3. BSTJ 27 February 1897, p.321: Liabilities £3230.3.2, assets £311.4.6.

4. Joseph Gibbs (1843-1893) "...from small beginnings to an extensive manufactory..." Resided at Cliftonville and died there on 19th March, 1893. Effects £14020 (SLR 24 March 1893, p.742).

5. BSTJ loc.cit. p.322. Note, Gibbs two principal managers Thomas Britten and James Giles (cashier), went into partnership as manufacturers for a short while.

legal procedure in itself, simultaneously served in these cases, both to escalate the firm's liabilities, enable a further period of loss-making trading and de-value any composition which might be agreed.

A further sign of poor financial management was the extent to which insolvent firms used borrowed capital to both begin and sustain trading; this coming particularly from members of their family and from associates: that is to say from informal sources. Not governed by the same strict commercial criteria and scrutiny met with in the formal money markets, such assistance often served merely to prolong unprofitable trading. This practice resulted in either an overcommitment of scarce financial resources to meeting interest payments, or ultimately led to the insolvent's inability to pay back the principal sum within the agreed time. As has been stated, cash creditors of this character, often unsecured, frequently escalated the liabilities owing upon failure. Linked to this was the practice of utilising short term loans to finance long term capital projects in the anticipation that the resulting increase in revenue would be sufficient to meet the repayments.

Yet, above all, possibly the most pervasive weakness arose from a failure to adopt accepted accounting practice. A most common feature was a failure to take account of asset depreciation. One such example was the case of H. Laycock, trading as John Laycock and Sons: a firm established in circa 1876. Trading was suspended in July 1904, when liabilities stood at £6185.2.0, against net assets of £3410.17.2. The creditors' meeting was convened by the Northamptonshire Union Bank - who were owed £4327 partly secured - when it became apparent that annual accounts had failed to take account of depreciation of the freehold factory, plant, machinery and stock to the extent of £4000: this accounted for the deficiency.¹ In this case, an arrangement was reached and the firm resumed trading, but with confidence and goodwill damaged a further trading loss of £300 was made within twelve months of the re-start: a second, and final, creditors meeting was called in August 1905.²

1. BSTJ 29 July 1904, p.163.

2. BSTJ 25 August 1905, p.281: liabilities £1960.8.4, assets £847.13.3.

A further example of this type of practice was where a foreman did not follow standard accounting practice in stock-taking over a number of years. This occurred in the failure of J & J Brown in 1900, where the value of machinery was included in stock-taking. This gave the partners an artificial idea of their true trading position, which only came to light when slack trade, heavy losses in starting a branch factory, and a rise in bad debts caused the partners to look more closely at their position. It was then found that the undetected error gave rise, together with the other causes, "...to a tremendous loss on trade in the last year..." of £5034.10.7. In fact "...the debtors had carried on business for years at a loss..."¹

A final interconnecting area of bad practice arose from the difficulty firms experienced in either establishing markets, or in finding new markets to replace those lost. As new production methods and organisation, branding and multiple chain activities developed, small manufacturers found this a particular and exacting problem. It is interesting here to contrast the response of successful small manufacturers with those who failed. The former sought to improve the quality of their product; to establish customer recognition and acceptance of their own brands; to establish speciality lines.² The latter, however, resorted to short-term expedients to secure sales: expedients which reflect wholly unacceptable business practice. At the centre of bad practice here was the widespread custom of selling goods at a loss. At the time of suspension, 27 firms in the failure sample gave "knowingly selling under cost" as a reason for the stoppage. Yet, from trade press comment, it is apparent that this, in fact, was a very much more common, short-term survival technique to secure trade, utilised by many firms, infant and mature, in the industry. In the late nineties, for example, it was resorted to in the wave of over-production which followed machine introduction:

1. SLR 1 December 1900, p.726-27.

2. Appendix II and III passim.

...The year has seen a general stagnation of trade and a rise in bankruptcy caused by...the sale of goods at less productive prices. This, again, was not the result of an oversight, want of knowledge, of errors in calculation, but of a deliberate and systematic practice of disposing of boots and shoes at prices which could not yield a living profit or even make both ends meet...

Often, "knowingly selling below cost" was a phrase used in failure reports to signify unscrupulous business behaviour, but this was not always entirely the case. On occasion it amounted to a calculated risk entered into in order to guide a firm through a "rough patch", which creditors had some sympathy with. In 1905, Booth & Co. suspended trading when the local authority pressed for the payment of rates owing. Liabilities stood at £5387.4.7, and assets at £2379.2.5. The debtors admitted to knowingly selling goods at a loss, yet a composition of 7/6 in the £ was accepted and the debtors permitted to resume trading. In fact, the chairman regarded them as honest and hardworking men who had fallen prey to circumstance.² First, in 1900 a partner, York, had died, and his share of capital had to be paid out.³ This clearly caused problems of undercapitalisation. Secondly, there had been a considerable fluctuation in profitability,⁴ viz:-

Year	Profit/Loss	Capital	Year	Profit/Loss	Capital
	£	£		£	£
1895	+425	N/A	1900	-629	627
1896	-45	821	1901	+ 47	767
1897	+959	1699	1902	+ 70	965
1898	+312	1892	1903	-197	847
1899	+232	2090	1904	-457	431

Thirdly, compounding this, competition had been intense, and key orders lost. The report notes:

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1. BSTJ 12 November 1898 p.677, cf Chapter 2, passim, particularly on its damaging use in the 1880s by uncapitalised small masters.
 2. BSTJ 15 September 1905 p.441: "...Mr Palmer...(Booth's accountant)... said the statement was a surprising and unfortunate one..."
 3. £800 was paid to York's executors.
 4. BSTJ 22 September 1905, p.466: Of these fluctuations, the chairman of the meeting noted "...seeing the figures...I can only wonder if the experience of this house is exceptional or whether other firms have had, during the past ten years, such fluctuating balance sheets..."

...The December 1904 Balance Sheet shows a gross profit of £7... 347
The debtor accounted for this by knowingly having sold goods at a loss, and by being cut out by several large firms of manufacturers... It should be explained that the firm lost a large trade they were doing with one wholesale house, amounting to something like £10,000 p.a. (sic)...Prices were then cut down to a low figure. Booth knew he could not get a profit, but thought it better to keep the factory going in the hope of getting in with better paying lines...£1237 was lost in actual trading in eight months...

Selling below cost was often resorted to by infant firms, but Booth & Co., above, has shown a mature firm with financial problems might also resort to this practice. By the twentieth century, probably the single most potent imperative forcing mature firms to adopt the practice was where they were trying to compete against firms operating modern factory systems, whilst they clung to operating high cost, out-dated transitional, outwork operations, which many average practice firms had increasingly abandoned after 1895. The failure of John L. Sharman & Co. in 1900 shows the consequences of retaining out-moded manufacturing practices. J.L. Sharman had established the firm in the late seventies, and his son, Lewis J. Sharman, succeeded him a decade later. The firm failed in 1900, when liabilities stood at £3918.18.4, against assets of £1155.16.6. Although "...improper and crude" books of account had been kept, rough balance sheets, in showing stock for a clicking room, rough stuff room, and shoe room, strongly suggests that outwork was still in vogue here. So, also, does the figure of only £152 for machinery: no evidence of leased machinery is extant. And the cause of failure, the chairman of the creditors meeting declared, was a mix of high overheads and of selling below cost, the very symptoms of out-moded production practices.² Contrast this last case with the suspension of Carter and Barltrop, caused by high overhead costs and selling below cost. Here the creditors refused to support a plan to continue the firm under old methods of working and wound it up: "...the debtors admitted the trading had been disastrous since November (1910), but they had changed their class of trade and were

1. BSTJ *ibid.*

2. This paragraph relies upon BSTJ 23 June 1900, p.842.

endeavouring to do a cheaper trade than formerly, and were not successful.

They were still of the opinion that by resorting to old methods they might not do such a large trade, but that it would be more profitable, and they might still be successful..."¹ A market still continued for handsewn goods, but trading in such footwear now had to be placed in a modern organisational and distribution setting.

As Booth & Co. and the Carter case reveals, trading below cost was a strategy which could take place against a background where the debtor was aware that the firm was in effect insolvent: that the firm's assets were insufficient to cover the liabilities incurred. Indeed, the insolvent's awareness or suspicion of insolvency, permeated not a few firms, although in many cases the degree of accounting skills utilised were of such a low order that the financial position was only subsequently discovered once creditors had forced a suspension of trading activities, as a result of non-payment of a debt. Trading whilst knowingly insolvent was one of several situations found in business failure reports where it became necessary to make a distinction between a deviation from established norms of business behaviour amounting to unacceptable practice on the one hand, and criminal deception, or other misdemeanour, on the other. In the majority of instances, these malpractices would appear to have arisen more from a straightforward lack of skill and knowledge, or a readiness to deviate from the established norms, rather than any positive malfeasance. In the latter situation, most debtors acted, not with the intention of defrauding, but in the hope of an upturn in trade. Trading while knowingly insolvent was in itself adopted as a short-term survival strategy.²

1. BSTJ 17 March 1911, p.448

2. Many examples of this lack of business acumen appear in the financial reports of the period. Where examined by the Registrar in Bankruptcy such practices were inevitably condemned out of hand. For instance, in the case of Farner & Co., reckless trading had been resorted to in the hope that something would turn up. The registrar noted: "...this was another of those cases showing how foolish it was for men of no business knowledge, but with some technical skill, to enter the trade, thinking that business ability would come to them in some extraordinary way. The only wonder was that factors and leather dealers were so foolish as to trust men who obviously had no obvious business ability.." (BSTJ 18 April 1913 p.93). See also BSTJ 18 March 1893, p.364, for a similar judgement.

Certainly, the incidence of criminally negligent business dealings is low, but there exists an ill-defined middle ground. Clearly, on occasions, some element of calculated deceit is evident. This is best shown in those cases where "reckless trading" was resorted to in a last bid to ensure a firm's survival. Such activity lies at the borderline between legitimate, though unacceptable, business behaviour, and unscrupulous, near criminal behaviour. In one or two instances where matters had become particularly bleak and un-savoury, the insolvent attempted to evade his responsibilities by absconding. A case in point was that of Robert Clarke in 1886. He was principal of a firm which had traded in Northampton and London from 1858, having succeeded his father in 1861. When trading was suspended in June 1886, the firm's financial affairs were in a desperate and complex state. Liabilities stood at £10,449.17.0², against net assets of £3304.16.6. No books of account had been kept, but it was clear the debtor had been insolvent for some time. £12,000 had been lost on consignments, and bad debts were excessive: one amounted to £1600. It was stated that the firm had been heavily indebted since 1871.³ Indeed, it was subsequently disclosed in the Bankruptcy Court that Clarke had engaged in questionable bills transactions:

...the Court disclosed a system of raising money by the bankrupt,

1. Most criminal actions against manufacturers in the period arose out of illegal leather dealings. However, several forgery charges were brought. For example SLR 14 July 1888 p.89, reports George Hill, manufacturer, serving a six month prison sentence on this count. William Jackson's bankruptcy a year later led to a criminal charge of falsifying accounts (BSTJ 15 August 1889 p.123) Also charges of arson were brought against manufacturers who fired their premises in the hope of seeking insurance monies to pay out creditors: the firm of Morris & Marshall being one such example. The partnership commenced in 1895, but got into difficulties by 1898. Morris proceeded to fire the factory and then absconded. The partnership subsequently dissolved, P.C. Marshall then re-commenced in sole proprietorship: he failed in 1901 (BSTJ 20 September 1901 p.387)
2. The three largest creditors were: Northants. Union Bank £2203; F. Clarke £1133; and W. Clarke £1019.
3. BSTJ 12 June 1886 p.394: cf N.M. 17 June 1886 p.5.

which, we fear, is only too common, namely arranging with persons in the City of questionable financial position to accept bills on the understanding that from being discounted the proceeds should be divided between the respectable parties to such accommodation bills. We understand that claims against Clarke's estate of many thousands of pounds have been lodged in consequence of these bills not having been paid at maturity, nearly all receipts having proved worthless or failed. The bankrupt has absconded...

Several examples appear in bankruptcy reports, where the Registrar adjudicated that, although there was no misdemeanour to answer, nevertheless the strict letter of the law had not been observed. The failure of Pollard, Boyes and Pollard of Leicester in 1913 provides a good example of reckless trading considered to be on the verge of criminal behaviour.² Despite this, criminal charges arising out of a suspension were rare. The charges brought against Morris, for example, excited great comment locally,³ as did the occasional defrauding case in leather dealings.⁴ And, although the Registrar could refer matters to a magistrates court, it was generally regarded in business circles as more acceptable for deceitful behaviour to be dealt with civilly and not criminally, as it was considered that this would place too large a psychological yoke upon decision-making in business. This, however, did not mean that the Registrar was powerless to deal with what the Mackenzie Report called delinquent debtors. Following the public examination of the insolvent debtor, an undischarged bankrupt applied to the Court of Bankruptcy for a discharge. But before this was granted, the Court had to consider what his conduct had been in relation to the causes of his insolvency. The Court had the power, if certain delinquencies were revealed against the bankrupt, to suspend his discharge for a period of not less than two years,

1. BSTJ 11 December 1886, p.430.

2. BSTJ 20 June 1913, p.492.

3. N.M. April 1893

4. S.L.R. 14 June 1892 p524.

or grant an immediate discharge subject to conditions binding upon the bankrupt.¹ The length of the suspension reflected the degree of malevolence of the debtor. This had the effect of not only inhibiting the debtor from trading directly during this time, but also of arousing doubts, socially, as to his integrity. These delinquencies displayed dishonesty, an intention to defraud, and included

- (i) failure by the debtor to keep books or any proper or adequate books of account in his business.
- (ii) trading with knowledge of insolvency
- (iii) gambling and speculation, leading to, or contributing to, the debtor's insolvency or bankruptcy
- (iv) failure properly to account for any substantial deficiency of assets
- (v) contracting debts by means of fraud.

There were also certain types of conduct, which were made punishable as criminal offences, and the Court of Bankruptcy had the power to order delinquent bankrupts and debtors who reported such offences to be prosecuted.²

Under the Deed of Arrangements proceedings, the insolvent debtor was not subject to the discipline of the Court's jurisdiction. The correct role of the Courts in matters of discharge was open to conflicting opinions and those are represented in the Mackenzie Report. Some witnesses favoured an extension of criminal sanctions, others did not. Some recommended that certain offences, *should be repealed*, others favoured the greater intervention of criminal courts of summary jurisdiction.³

In cases that have already been reviewed in this chapter, one can see examples of suspensions. In the case of John Maddy, his discharge was suspended for two years as a result of reckless trading and of trading whilst he knew himself to be insolvent.⁴

1. Bankruptcy Act 1883 S8; S-16-17; S24.

2. Debtors Act 1869 Part II.

3. On the question of Discharge, see Mackenzie Report op.cit. 49-83. Cf. paragraph 181, II on the Committee recommendations regarding discharge: "...whether the provisions of the laws relating to the discharge of a bankrupt and the conditions on which such a discharge should be granted, refused, or suspended, should be made more stringent, so as more effectually to check improper and reckless trading, and the neglect by traders to keep proper books and accounts, or be otherwise altered or modified..."

4. SLR 17 April, 1891, p.904-05, report of public examination.

Similarly, Jesse Harrison's discharge was suspended for two years because he traded "...after knowledge of his insolvency, contracting debts, and rash and hazardous speculations..."¹ As is chronicled elsewhere, in the meantime a company, ostensibly run by his wife was begun, and even as late as 1908 when the company was converted, it bore his mother's maiden name: John Emmet Ltd. Harrison had abused the limited company form in 1891 and his bankruptcy had excited much adverse publicity then. Clearly, there was still imagined or actual hostility toward him.² A contrasting case is provided by the bankruptcy of W. Barratt & Co. in 1906.³ Two brothers, William and David, had begun a thriving mail order business which floundered as a result of their financial miscalculations. In refusing to grant their discharge, "...the official receiver submitted that the bankrupts must have known that they were spending more in advertising than they were justified in doing, especially having regard to their small capital. The bankrupts were evidently so intent upon beating down opposition that they became regardless of their rash and hazardous speculations to creditors and to themselves..."⁴ In giving his decision, the judge noted:

...No doubt the debtors intended to do right and if proper capital had been employed they might have laid the foundation of a prosperous business. I do not disregard the fact that many creditors who trusted them were heavy losers, and it is impossible for me to grant an immediate discharge. I am anxious to secure something for the creditors and I therefore suspend discharge for two₅ years, or until a dividend of not less than 10/- in the £ is paid...

Unlike the Harrison case, the Barratts' methods were not condemned out right, and the prospects for future trading was good. Consequently, a limited company purchased the bankrupt estate and trading was resumed in early 1907 under a caretaker board of directors, until discharge allowed the

1. SLR 27 February 1894 p.193, cf. above p.331.

2. for full details see Appendix II, C25.

3. for full details see Appendix III, NG10.

4. BSTJ 14 December 1906 p.460.

5. BSTJ *ibid.*

Barratts to resume business activities.¹

Of course, no such jurisdiction was available to the chairman of creditors meeting. Bearing in mind that it was often beneficial to all parties if the debtor could resume trading, their key sanction against the debtor would be to recommend a declaration of bankruptcy.

Before concluding this section regarding the causes of failure, mention must be made to the whole effect of business confidence upon individual firms. In the period that led up to a final suspension of trading, the local business community often became alerted to the deteriorating trading position of a firm. Inevitably, there was a growing reluctance to extend normal credit facilities in these cases, and, on occasion, this ebbing of confidence became a potent element in the subsequent failure. The case of Juggins and Cochin in 1893 provides one with an illustration. The firm failed owing £4097, against assets of £1659. The cause of the insolvency was summarised in the following way:

...Bad debts, the firm for the last two years has been a victim of rumours which have been circulated and materially injured its credit...²

A similar situation obtained in the failure of Edwin West & Co. Ltd., of which it was said:

...For some time past the company have been in a very unsatisfactory position, and have found it somewhat difficult to obtain supplies in the best markets and the present financial crisis is not altogether unexpected...³

Yet, as has been shown at several points in the discussion, a suspension of trading did not necessarily end a manufacturer's career. At least eight firms (10.5%) present in the 1914 directory list had successfully overcome the difficulties facing an organisation at the point of suspension.

J. G. Sears' dynamic firm rose out of the failure of his father's firm⁴, and

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1. Appendix III NG10: cf Keith Brooker "William Barratt", DBB Vol.I (1984) p. 185-86
 2. SLR 5 May 1893 p.1086: cf SLR 10 March 1893, p.612 and 17 March p.680B.
 3. BSTJ 1 February 1907 p.211. Cf further discussion in Chapter 6 below.
 4. Appendix III NG.1.

similarly J & G.H. Roe was begun as a partnership a short while after G. H. Roe's sole tradership failed.¹ Of the eight, three - William Barratt Ltd.,² Conformable Boot Co. Ltd.,³ and Hornby & West Ltd.,⁴ had sought limited company status as part of that resurgence. Of the remainder, Henry Gorbald failed after many years as a trader⁵, whilst Jesse Harrison showed a tenacity that has already been discussed.⁶ The last firm was that of A. & W. Arnold & Co.⁷

Of the other firms, not a few revealed remarkable qualities of persistence and resilience in their bid to survive. Unlike those who traded through to 1914 after suspension, most of those restarting following a composition payment did so on a smaller scale. It was this erosion^{of} capital and the failure to regenerate the capital base, as much as any other factor, that largely contributed to the firm's ultimate demise.⁸ In the process of trying to re-establish the business, these enterprises revealed some interesting strategies:

- (i) some men shifted from manufacturing to sub-contracting work in order to survive: eg. John Collins established himself as a manufacturer in 1873, trading until his failure in July 1887. Thereafter he traded as an upper manufacturer, in partnership with his brother, John William.⁹

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1. Appendix III N.G.9.
 2. Appendix III N.G.10.
 3. Appendix II C.22.
 4. Appendix II C.15.
 5. Appendix IV Misc.5 Cf. Chapter Six below.
 6. Appendix II C.24.
 7. Appendix III N.G.6.
 8. Many firms that resumed trading after a suspension gave insufficient planning to the situation where they were having to use scarce capital to pay off creditors, whilst at the same time re-vitalise their business. This situation often quickly resulted in a second and final suspension - eg. J.J. Brockett, first suspension SLR 22 November 1890 p.660, and second SLR 11 September 1891 p.617; J. Gordon SLR 24 July 1891 p.214, and SLR 1 January 1892 p.28; F.Juggins SLR 10 March 1893 p.612, and SLR 3 August 1894 p.254.
 9. SLR 9 July 1887 p.38; and SLR 27 July 1889 p.100; cf BSTJ 3 August 1889 p.99.

- (ii) others shifted to factoring from manufacturing: eg. Wheeler, Hull & Co.¹
- (iii) others again re-established themselves by entering into partnership: eg. following his failure in 1893, Langley became a partner in Bond & Co.²
- (iv) it was also possible to divert into specialist sectors of the market: eg. Mann, Greaves & Co. overcame failure by side-stepping into hand sewn work.³
- (v) others shifting the constitution and membership of the company in order to maintain a presence in the market-place. This led to some interesting links between firms. For example, John Flack and Fred Durrant traded from 1885 until the partnership was dissolved in 1896. Flack then traded in partnership with John Corby until business was suspended in 1900.⁴ In the meantime, Durrant had set up on his own, trading until a private arrangement in 1903.⁵ By contrast, Corby had traded with Risdale from 1892 to 1896; and again traded as a sole trader from 1900 to 1903.

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1. BSTJ 11 December 1908 p.304, reported came out of manufacturing and into factoring in 1903.
 2. SLR 27 July 1893 p.141 and SLR 7 June 1895 p.1323 (the failure of Bond & Co.) Cf Henry Vorley inherits employer's business which fails in 1891 (SLR 21 August 1891, p.438). (LTC 15 November 1887 p.2 "...in trade he will be succeeded by Mr Vorley, his foreman for thirty years...") In 1892, he became a partner in W. Baker & Co., which similarly ceased trading in 1893 (SLR 17 February 1893 p.433).
 3. BSTJ 6 December 1912 p.494 and 506.
 4. BSTJ 5 May 1900 p.631.
 5. BSTJ 23 October 1903 p.635.

If, therefore, it can rightly be postulated that a lack of business acumen consistent with a firm's survival in this period of change is present and lies somewhere at the centre of high failure rates, an important question remains. It is this; beyond the general, but crucial, problems faced by infants, what was the basis of this lack of acumen?

Was it due simply to a lack of skill and ability on the part of the individual shoe manufacturer, or, more properly the failure to adopt new skills as these became germane to the new, evolving methods of shoe manufacture? Certainly, in the shoe industry at this time, the effects of any lack of business acumen was made more acute because the whole basis upon which shoe manufacture was conducted was shifting. As a result, within the industry, the emphasis concerning manufacturers' qualities and skills steadily moved away from purely craft, practical abilities towards the more thorough-going need for business skills. The value of practical skill was never finally and totally lost sight of, but there increasingly arose a perceived need for manufacturers to exhibit at least a balance between these two categories of skill.¹

Traditionally, it had been considered essential that an aspiring manufacturer should have a thorough practical knowledge of the production skills of the trade, as well as a "...capacity for hard work and perseverance".² The need for this was not difficult to find as the quality and 'craft' of Northampton footwear were regarded as keys to manufacturing success. Thus, the ability to exercise effective control in the workshop, particularly when outworkers handed in completed work, was vital. It ensured both quality control and the

1. See, for example, Appendix II, C11 Jonathan Robinson & Co., and C16 Richard Taylor & Son.

2. BSTJ 26 May 1911 p.202, cf J. Boswell, The Rise and Decline of Small Firms (1976) p.76 "...The founders put 'drive' and 'hard work' as the top qualities for business success to a far greater extent than did (their successors)..." (on this issue in general see Boswell Chapter Four passim). But note most modern assessment of small business motivations, and development stress the part played by luck and timing; the need to recognise an opening and the ability to exploit the need; and the need for businessmen to work intelligently. Above all, the essential key are the personal qualities of the man himself.

efficient use of factors of production. An extract from the failure report of Dean & Adams in 1891 underlines this need.

...A great leakage had always been going on in the clicking room. On 12 February 1890, a lot of scraps from this department, weighing nearly four tons, were sold for £90. This, it was estimated, would mean that skins had been cut to waste on this lot alone to the extent of £1000...

Adams was in charge of clicking, but was unable to properly supervise operations. In addition, he was unequal to his responsibilities in keeping the account books and so the leakage was never isolated. Although Dean had pressed, a complete stock taking had never been done. Adams freely admitted that he was completely incompetent as a manufacturer; a view endorsed by the Official Receiver.² In contrast, Dean, a former laster who took charge of other aspects of production and of sales, was both able and competent, but no matter how efficient he was his skill could not counter-balance Adams's ineptitude. Another fertile area of failure lay in the miscalculation of the size of the operation required for the level of trade being done. George Woods failed in 1898 after five years of trading because of high costs.³ Despite a starting capital of £150, and a further capital injection of £365 made by his mother, and relatively high levels of trade credit, the enterprise floundered as he "...has foolishly put down machinery and plant which were capable of turning out 6 or 7 times the amount of trade which he was able to obtain..."⁴ A similar fate befell C. C. Hart, of whom it was said

...The principle cause of failure appears to have been that the debtor overloaded himself with machinery, and had not sufficient trade to make it profitable and to pay for the hire of it...⁵

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1. SLR 17 April 1891, p.902.
 2. SLR 8 May 1891 p.1071: cf BSTJ 18 April 1891, p.423.
 3. Liabilities of £1614 against assets of £441.
 4. BSTJ 29 September 1898, p.402
 5. BSTJ 16 January 1897 p.69: liabilities £3344.13.6 and assets £1391.10.4

In H.V. Tebbutt's case he had made a profit until moving into a new factory in 1896, "...which was too large and ill adapted to his business requirements..." His turnover there had been £5908 but "...these large premises...needed to be at least £20,000 to show a profit..."¹

Similarly, a failure to command the respect of employees and business associates could lead to failure. Of the bankruptcy of W. E. Lloyd it was declared, "...he was a poor businessman, who was taken advantage of by workpeople and others alike..."²

Beyond a thorough practical knowledge, however, any specific business ability was regarded as a lower order of skill. Profit margins were larger, and the difference in unit production costs between small and large scale operations more nearly compatible: so with the exercise of a prudent and moderate level of care & common-sense a business could survive. In this climate, matters of costing tended to be decided on a rule of thumb basis. The ability to discern the quality of leather, and the ability to judge the craftsmanship of a completed shoe, which in part meant the ability to be alive to the "tricks" of outworkers in trying to save leather,³ were perceived as more important than the precise ability to cost out material and market the finished product.

In the last twenty years of the century, however, a wind of change swept the industry, radically shifting the business skills, qualities and attributes needed by manufacturers to survive. As early as 1884 it was stated:

1. BSTJ 6 March 1897 p.355. Cf dramatic case of Morris Bros.: "They have been steady, hardworking young men, who did well before they saddled themselves with a new factory, which has been a considerable expense to them, and...played a prominent part in their undoing..." BSTJ 10 March 1911, p.408. Cf. BSTJ 17 March 1911, p.447-48 and p.454-55.
2. BSTJ 13 October 1900, p.481. Lloyd had taken over his father's failed business; see BSTJ 23 April 1898 p.571.
3. Any leather remaining after completing a shoe was customarily kept by the outworker. This was known as 'cabbage'. A ready market existed for the sale of this waste. But beyond this an astute shoemaker could use cabbage to make his own shoes. A fine borderline existed between cabbage and leather embezzlement.

...the present conditions of the wholesale trade demand, on the part of the manufacturer, a much wider range of business knowledge than was formerly requisite. It is no longer sufficient that he shall be an expert workman who has saved a few pounds, with which he wishes to start in business. When such a man commenced manufacturing a few years ago his chances of success were considerable because his technical experience was all important. Now, however, conditions are much changed. It is, indeed, still desirable that principals should have as much knowledge of the trade as possible, but this of itself will avail but little if unassisted by business knowledge...¹

The truth of this assessment can be readily discerned from failure reports as the period progresses. By the late Edwardian period, the need to blend practical and business skills had become an accepted norm, even where a quality trade was undertaken.² Most certainly where ex-shoe workers sought to enter the manufacturers ranks, most quickly failed if possessed only of practical skill. A case in point is the chequered career of the Tysoe Brothers. The firm, a partnership between brothers Charles and John and Dover, their commercial traveller, was commenced in March 1908.³ The partnership quickly soured, as Dover began to dominate the business and losses mounted, and it was ended in July 1909, following which trade was suspended. At the creditors' meeting E. Panton, leather merchant, "stated that he believed the brothers to be straightforward men, but they had been handicapped by their unfortunate partnership agreement..."⁴ This was the prevailing mood, and thus a composition of 10/- in the £ was accepted, and trading resumed. Within eighteen months, however, trade was again suspended:

1. BSTJ 4 August 1884, p.516.

2. See, eg., Appendix II, C11 and C16, op.cit.

3. Their brothers, William, Thomas and Len, had been in business as Tysoe Bros. from 1898. They got in difficulties in 1901 when the Stamford & Spalding Bank refused to increase their overdraft facility of £300. Trading at that time showed a deficiency of £145: liabilities were at £3222.3.11, and included £77 owed to Capital & Counties Bank, against assets of £961.18.4 (BSTJ 31 May 1901 p.761). Trading continued but the death of William in 1902 considerably diminished the firm's trading (William Tysoe (1864-1902) died on 26 August at 76 Holly Road, Born at Hackleton, Northants. and the ex-manager of Henry Wooding & Sons. Senior partner. Effects £455.8.0) Whether the two companies are in fact one, or whether the second was started out of the first is not currently known.

4. BSTJ 6 August 1909 p.180.

... The partners in Tysoe Bros. seem to have been very much handicapped ever since the failure of the firm in July 1909...A discount business has been done with one or two wholesale houses, and a loss on trading of £531 between September 1909 to date has been made ...¹

In fact, the company had never been solvent, and despite £1600 capital which had been sunk into the concern, all capital had been exhausted. The bank was now owed £674, and with extensive trade credit, liabilities now stood at £3420.7.5 assets £642.19.10. The failure report made the following summary:

... They had been employed previously in the shoe trade, and saved £200 each. They manufactured good boots, but the business was entirely unprofitable. They were suited far more as foremen rather manufacturers ...²

Indeed, following the dissolution of the business both principals returned to the trade as managers. In 1912, it was reported that Charles, who had been with Charles Parker of Higham Ferrers, had just been appointed manager at the C.W.S. factory in Rushden.³

Despite this shift in emphasis regarding the skill required to be a successful manufacturer, it is not true to state that craft ability became an entirely debased currency: several men with no experience of the industry suffered failure as a result of this.⁴ Rather, what occurred was a re-ordering of skills, with an emphasis placed on the purely business aspects of the enterprise and upon marketing and sales.

To argue, however, that small masters were often ill-adapted at re-ordering the skills necessary to react successfully to change ignores a second level

1. BSTJ 17 February 1911, p.296.

2. BSTJ loc.cit. p.304.

3. BSTJ 15 November 1912, p.380.

4. Eg. SLR 22 May 1891 p.1208 (J?) Katterns trading as Meads & Katterns from January 1890 on a starting capital of £97. Liabilities stood at £434 11s 5d, assets £169 8s 9d; excluding £80 of bad debts. The firm had never traded profitably, and failure was ascribed to Katterns having no knowledge of the shoe industry: he was a well known local photographer (see J. Stafford Life in Old Northampton (1975) p.24) Cf. G. Stone & Son, farmers at Bugbrooke, who failed as boot manufacturers (SLR 3 May 1890 p.548). But, note Fox comments that in Leicester the shoe industry witnessed an influx of men from outside the industry:

"The rapid expansion of the wholesale trade drew in many manufacturers from other fields. 'A comparatively new class of people entered the trade', said a Union official in 1892, 'Among the most successful manufacturers in Leicester were hat manufacturers and so on.' 'Capitalists and adventurers with no knowledge of technicalities have crowded in', declared a trade journal in 1888..." (Fox, op.cit. p.26, quoting a Leicester trade unionist and SLR 4 February 1888).

Such was NOT the experience of the Northampton, nor the Stafford, trade. Presumably, this difference was a function of the differences in the quality of footwear produced in the two centres?

of argument concerning how this lack of business acumen consistent with modern methods in the industry evolved. Rather than stressing any lack of individual ability and personal character, is it possible to argue that the motivation and psyche of small masters in the industry was not in harmony with prevailing norms of orthodox economic behaviour? That their value system was not founded within parameters of progress and profit maximising behaviour.

At the level of the individual it is feasible that shoe manufacturers made decisions to maintain modest life styles nearer in form to their artisan background. Certainly, some retained an attachment to customary methods of production and craft standards. But no evidence suggests that such attachments represented a collective, conscious social position, rather than merely a necessary economic or, indeed, sentimental attachment to the known world: a dislike of change. Certainly in questioning the reactions of small shoe masters to change, an important distinction to the European small master experience and tradition must be made. A central theme in the debate concerning the action of European small producers to the type of industrial problems and pressures experienced in the British shoe industry has been to stress the collective and essentially reactionary nature of their response. Both French and German historians write of the anti-modernistic response of European small masters to industrialisation. This appears not to be the case in Britain, and certainly not the experience in the shoe industry. Whilst this area of research has remained comparatively underdeveloped and neglected in this country, one crucial difference has been highlighted in a recent exploratory article. There Geoffrey Crossick has concluded that in trades such as shoe making one finds:

...l'absence d'une catégorie de petits patrons artisans, misant sur leur place traditionnelle dans leur métier et dans la société locale.. on trouvait quelque petites entreprises solidement établies, depuis de nombreuses générations, dont la system de valeurs correspondait a la culture des petits maitres artisans, mais - c'était là des exceptions...¹

1. Geoffrey Crossick "La petite bourgeoisie britannique au XIX^e siècle", le mouvement social 108 (1979) p.29.

What one is witnessing in Northampton and other shoe centres, therefore, is the reaction of a substantially 'new class' of small producers to economic and trading pressures. It is not the reaction of an established, anti-modernistic petite bourgeois producer class.¹

How, then, is one to summarise their reactions to change or understand what motivated and guided decision-making and business strategy? The answer given by Sydney & Beatrice Webb concerning shoe manufacturers is that of individual self-interest, and this can provide an entry point in answering this question. The Webbs noted:

...We have here an almost perpetual stream of new inventions and new applications of old machines. The employers, themselves new capitalists without new traditions, exposed to keen rivalry...are eager to take the utmost advantage of every change...²

Thus, in place of any cohesive, traditional response to change, that of the small producer in the British shoe industry was far more individualistic. It is less probable that the inability of many small masters in the British shoe industry to embrace modernity represents a desire to cling to a set of articulated political and social values derived from a sense of belonging to a craft. One stark fact suggests that, a priori, this was so: the constituency of the small shoe master class rapidly changed, thus there existed a marked lack of multi-generational firms. In addition to which there was no articulated guild system as existed in Europe. This response was both opportunistic and economically pragmatic. His perception of trading problems was significantly unhampèred by any adherence to a group ideology or strategy. At one basic, yet crucial, level, such an attitude was engendered purely by the very shortness of the average small producer's business life. The nature of the first months - and for many the only months - in business, hampered as they often were by inexperience, chronic

1. This was the case in Europe, and recent scholarship by French & Germans has highlighted the rearguard action fought by small masters against modernity.

2. S & B. Webb History of Trade Unionism (1920) p.396-97.

cash-flow problems and the difficulties of breaking into what was often an overstocked market, as has been shown above, led to an overriding preoccupation for self and the survival of self. Thus, the effectiveness of any joint action tended to be minimised and made overwhelmingly difficult by this high turnover of members within the group.

The absence of a guild-type structure, as still existed on mainland Europe, to monitor entry, control business conduct, and institutionalise attitudes and responses, in addition to the low skill and capital levels at which it was practicable to commence trading, appears merely to have fulfilled this raw eagerness.

Yet to stress this individuality of response does not mean that no collective organisation existed amongst employers in the industry. Progressively, from the early 1870s, groups of manufacturers in the main trade centres formed trade protection societies and manufacturers associations.¹ These organisations aimed to provide a comprehensive service of support and guidance to the manufacturer ranging from debt collection, arbitration in labour matters, price fixing, to a collective voice in matters of joint concern. Links were forged with political figures and the political arena at both local and national levels: not a few manufacturers were elected to office. In common with other interest groups political means were seen by them as an important vehicle for publicising their viewpoint and influencing its effectiveness. However, the evidence clearly shows that in most centres the small owner rarely joined such bodies, not least because of the shifting character of the small master group. For example, the principal trade union

1. eg. The Leeds Manufacturers Association dates from 1871 and lasted until 1878; a second association was formed in 1887. The Leicester Manufacturers Association dates from 1878 and the London Association from 1882. At Northampton, a Trade Protection Society was formed in 1879, and reconstituted as a Manufacturers Association briefly in 1885, and permanently in 1887. In 1890, a national co-ordinating body, the National Federation of Footwear Manufacturers was formed. Prior to 1870 manufacturers in these centres used local bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce (at Northampton after 1865) to promote their collective aims.

frequently reported the problems of enforcing new wage agreements amongst the smaller manufacturers outside the association ranks.¹ It was only in the smaller trade centres that small owners joined in any numbers. A case in point was the Government Boot and Shoe Contractors Association in the army boot making district of Northamptonshire.² Founded in the 1890s, it did important work to remedy the problems smaller contractors encountered in their dealings with governmental bureaucracy. To some extent this non-participation is understandable where the association provided schemes to protect larger manufacturers at the expense of the smaller, for example the decision at Northampton to add 1/6d for the retail price of handmade boots because the larger men found such work unprofitable. Matters of exclusivity and discrimination are likewise important. Nevertheless, in many respects these associations operated to the benefit of the local trade community as a whole, so the smaller men benefited indirectly from its work; for example, in the matter of a revision of railway freight charges in the Midlands in 1893, and in the debate on the rating of machinery in the late 1890s.

There is evidence of only one association specifically founded for the needs of the small owner at a main shoemaking centre: the Northampton Trade Sewers Association. There appear to have been two main reasons for its inception:

- (i) As a debt collection agency, through which members could ensure receiving monies due for work completed.³

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1. Eg. NUBSO Monthly Report February 1885, January 1887, November 1890 and March 1893.
 2. Information concerning the Association can be gleaned from the evidence members submitted to the Select Committee on the Application of the National Insurance Act to Outworkers (1911).
 3. BSTJ 19 March 1892 p.379.

- (ii) to protect interests generally, standardise payments to workers, and eradicate "jealousies" between members.

There is no record of this association's strength of membership, nor of its success; it would appear to have been in existence for about 18 months. Certainly, there is no hint here of a desire to retain established trade customs or traditional norms of economic and social life: no question of mobilising collectively in opposition to encroaching modernity. Rather, the economic motivations of the market-place hold a central place in the British small masters psyche. Indeed, for many small producers in the transitional phase, it was modernity itself that gave them the enhanced opportunity of going into business on their own account. This characterisation has more in common with the ideology and motivations scholars perceive have fired the American small businessman, rather than the European guild craftsman. An ideology and motivation derived from a deep seated cultural desire for personal independence and individual self advancement: traits that are set within the orthodox economic norms of progress and profit maximisation.

This type of liberal economic idealism can be seen to pervade 19th century British economic thinking and writings.² The Northampton shoe manufacturer more closely accords to this ideological characterisation than that of his European neighbour. Is it then to neo-classical economic theory that one must look in order to divine their objectives and aims? Here the ideal of individual self interest has become subsumed in the economic assumption of profit maximisation. Thus, G.C. Allen, for example, has argued that it was this basic motivation that pervaded 19th century entrepreneurial thinking:

...the world was at this time moving forward rapidly under the impetus of great technical discoveries, the rise and fall of industries and the adaptation of particular areas to new conditions were necessary and continuing processes in economic system moulded on this principle. The impulse behind these changes was provided by the profit-seeking motive of the entrepreneur who was guided by price changes...³

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1. BSTJ 27 December 1890 p.657.
 2. See for example S. Smiles Self Help (1859), Lives of the Engineers (1869), and A. Marshall Principles of Economics (1890)
 3. G.C. Allen, British Industries and their Organisation (4th edition 1959) p.6.

This traditional assumption has, however, been increasingly challenged for some time past. Not only are doubts entertained as to its modern applicability, but, more fundamentally, as to whether it was ever a true reflection of the decision-making process in the traditional, small owner-managed firms of Marshall's theory. For example, Prof. J.F. Pickering has observed:

...The classical theory of the firm relied heavily on the notion that firms are small, owner-managed organisations operating in highly competitive markets whose demand functions are given and where only normal profits can be earned. If the firm did not, therefore, maximise profits it would fail to survive under those conditions. Setting aside the question as to whether this ever was a valid description...it is certainly far removed from the actual characteristics of firms in many branches of economic activity today...¹

Even if the small shoe firms in this study were not organisationally complex, and were not able to exert control over their markets, decision making in most cases was reached and carried out with reference to a group of people, who were faced with a range of choices concerning the conduct of business: for example, whether to sell temporarily at below cost to establish a market, or whether to trim profit-margins to safeguard future orders. Such decisions, therefore, were based upon a social process, upon the sum of the attitudes, temperament, judgement and so forth, of the decision-makers, and not purely on the basis of economic rationality as Marshall suggests.

This is not to completely ignore profit-seeking as a motivation - indeed it could have been an over-riding consideration in individual instances - but rather to realign its importance. A level of profit would be required in the long run to financially sustain the firm, and probably on entry to the industry at least some small masters hoped and actively sought to enrich themselves. The only autobiography of a Victorian shoe manufacturer in Northampton relates his reasons for starting on his own account in the late eighties; in the following way:

...I was working at my uncle's little shop in Hunter Street when we removed our home to the same street, no. 29, where there was a

1. J.F. Pickering, Industrial Structure and Market Conduct (1978) p.98.

nice little rivetting shop at the back, large enough for five men to work in. We kept struggling on, and our second and third children were born. Of course, our expenses were increasing, and there never seemed to be enough trade to enable me to earn the large sums that I did when I was single. I was not satisfied, neither was my Uncle Anthony...and we talked of starting manufacturing ourselves. Others were doing it, and getting on, why should not we...

In the place of this traditional Marshellian assumption of profit maximisation, therefore, a range of theories, some managerial, some behavioural, others organisational, have been put forward.² Many, of course, have a particular applicability to late twentieth century forms of organisation, which rely heavily upon the business skills and perceptions of managers and directors, rather than the close-knit, family orientated control that pervaded shoe firms a century ago, in which no appreciable divorce of ownership from control had taken place. Yet if these formal theories are denied us, there are two underlying objectives that have consistently predicated both the contemporary and modern literature, which can provide a framework within which, albeit somewhat speculatively, to locate small shoe master motivations. The first is the desire for independence, for enhanced social status and the material rewards of proprietorship: the desire "to be one's own boss". This motivation underscores much of the literature, where it is usually assumed that self-employed artisans express beliefs symptomatic of traditional capitalist values. As Scase & Goffee postulate:

...the self-employed and small employers are often held to display a common commitment to the values of individualism, self-reliance and the laissez faire economy...

Thus a modern research report upon small master attitudes and motivation decisively concluded that the underlying motivation was an articulated need to attain and preserve independence. It was noted:

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1. W. Arnold; The Recollections of William Arnold (1915) p.55-6.
 2. See, for example, Pickering op.cit. Chapter Seven passim.
 3. R. Scase & R. Goffee "Traditional Petty Bourgeois Attitudes: the case of Self Employed Craftsmen", Sociological Review (1981) vol.29, No.4, p.729 Cf B. L. Johns, W.C. Dunlop & W. J. Sheehan Small Business in Australia: Problems & Prospects (1978) Chapter Three, passim, where the authors question whether all enterprisers commence in business with a view to "growing big" or "being successful", or "becoming rich". At p.49 they argue "...Many small firms, like people, lack the drive and ambition which create the outstanding business success stories and opt instead for a comfortable canter on a horse compared with a gallop on a tiger..."

...This need for independence sums up a wide range of highly personal gratifications provided by working for oneself and not for anybody else. It embraces many small satisfactorions which running a small business provided - the personal supervision and control of staff, direct contact with customers, the opportunity to develop one's own ideas, a strong feeling of personal challenge and an almost egotistical sense of personal achievement and pride - psychological satisfactions which appeared to be much more powerful motivations than money or the possibility of large financial gains.

...Because the sense of satisfaction derived from personal achievement was so important, many of these respondents appeared almost to turn a deaf ear to any outside source of advice or help...Moreover, respondents attitudes to growth were considerably influenced by this need for preserving independence. In fact attitudes to growth and expansion were highly ambivalent. Many...appeared to be torn on the one hand by the desire to remain small and so retain their independence...and, on the other hand, by the need, as businessmen to conform to the idea of growth - almost as a moral imperative...

Yet this characterisation goes deeper than providing an explanation of individual motivation, for successive writers have stressed the cardinal role that is played by the petite bourgeoisie in preserving and nurturing the very fabric of society, and its value system.

Again, to quote the Bolton Committee:

...If we kill off the small man in business, we shall kill off many of the qualities which built Britain, the qualities we need to restore our moral fibre and economic health...The contribution of the small businessman to the vitality of society is inestimable. The qualities of vigour, enterprise and ambition...have made them natural community leaders...Above all their spirit of independence is² a strength to the nation, as deeply needed now as ever it has been...

Similar conclusions have been reached in the U.S.A. where the small business literature is greater. The most recent historical synthesis on the subject, describes the small master in the following way:

...The American Revolution turned peasant self-sufficiency into an explicit republican ideal of personal independence...And so it continued. The urge to be an entrepreneur, to be ones own boss, is still virtually universal. Voices continue today to trumpet the nineteenth century medley of staple independence and dynamic entrepreneurship. Even huge conglomerates regularly advertise their

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1. Bolton Committee Research Report on Attitude and Motivation (1971): Cf B.L. Johns et al, op.cit. Chapter Four passim.
 2. Bolton Committee Report, quoted in F. Bechhofer and B. Elliott, "The Voice of Small Business and the Politics of Survival", Sociological Review (1977) Vol. 25 No. 1 p.83-4.

similarity to small business: tiny beginnings sometime in the past; ...and the increased autonomy permitted..to managers of their decentralised units... (corporate executives)...prefer the old ideology of self-respect and fulfillment, the lonely struggle in which initiative and hard work pay off...The current prescription for corporate managers and working men alike is individuation...as a practical application of the old ideal small businessmen are folk heroes in America. But this is not surprising in a republic founded on the civic virtue of the ideally self-reliant citizen...

From this postulate, Scase & Goffee go forward to argue that many self-employed craftsmen, whilst committed to ideals of "autonomy", "individualism", and "self reliance", do not locate them within a traditional capitalist value system, but rather infuse these ideals into what remains an essentially proletarian pattern of beliefs and values: that such small masters do not absorb the essence of traditional petty bourgeois values only their form.² In exploring their empirical study, based on present day interviews with self-employed craftsmen, they follow the argument developed in the work of Chinoy³ and of Mackenzie⁴ in America that partisans display a preference for work autonomy:

...Chinoy, in his study of American automobile workers, was one of the first to argue that a small business represented an escape from the alienating experience of factory employment, while more recently Mackenzie-in his study of American craft workers - found that a business of one's own has been regarded as offering prestige, independence

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1. S. Bruchey op.cit. p.2-3: Cf at p. 21, where a central link is made between economic and political independence. Bruchey notes: "...Still the desire to be one's own boss has not faded from the American value system, nor has the widespread conviction, present in this country since its beginnings, that roots of either national or personal political independence are best sunk in the ground of economic independence. The continuing vitality of this small business ideology helps explain the enactment of Anti-trust legislation by Congress..as well as the passage of other laws in the interests of small enterprise..."
 2. R. Scase and R. Goffee loc. cit. p.744, where they conclude "...On the basis of our evidence...we would query some of the commonly-held assumptions about petty bourgeois attitudes and beliefs. If these men have a commitment to "autonomy" and individualism" this may be interpreted less as an expression of capitalist values than as the desire to avoid forces within the labour process which are increasing the level of employer/managerial control over "semi-autonomous" craft employees. Thus, self-employment may be seen as an individual as distinct from a collective response to developments within capitalist relations of production...not all those who are self employed have reacted in this way. But, at least, our interviews offer a useful corrective to the assumption that all sectors of the petty bourgeoisie uniformly express the quintessential values of classical capitalism..."
 3. E. Chinoy Automobile Workers and the American Dream (1955).
 4. G. Mackenzie The Aristocracy of Labour (1973)

and, above all, freedom from the constraints of a particular work situation...

As Bechhofer has noted, "Independence...may have a dual meaning. It can be viewed as a condition of positive freedom, of freedom to act or think in a particular way, or it may be seen negatively, - as a freedom from some set of constraints...the idea that owning a small business is seen as an escape from the alienation of the manual workers world is far from new... one can imagine a working class pattern of attitudes and beliefs quite compatible with (petty commodity production)..."² Above all, what is argued is that artisans display a preference for work autonomy; the desire to escape from the constraints imposed by wage labour and discipline. For example, of the British experience, J. Strachey notes that:

...the pressure to escape from working for wages in other men's factories is so overwhelming that almost any worker who can beg, borrow or steal the barest minimum of necessary capital will attempt to set up a small, independent business of his own...³

Therefore, he argues, as long as the market demand is present, a rash of small men will be attracted to the industry, even though:

...they are inevitably forced into the fiercest competition and soon each is working on the barest minimum of subsistence. There, worker-owners are often forced, by the impersonal compulsion of competition, to work themselves harder, for longer hours and for no better pay, than if they were wage workers. The independence for which they schemed and starved and saved and dreamed turns out, only too often, to be pathetically illusory...⁴

Quite how many Northampton shoemakers, thus motivated, set foot on the perilous path into manufacturing on their own account is not clear, but two strands of thought possibly suggest that many were. In the transitional

1. Scase & Goffee loc.cit. p.731.

2. F.Bechhofer and B. Elliott "Persistence and Change: the Petite Bourgeoisie in Industrial Society", European Journal of Sociology (1976) Vol XVII p.121.

3. J. Strachey, op.cit. p.22.

4. J. Strachey, ibid. Cf Appendix III NG6 regarding William Arnold's early troubled years in business and his stoppage in 1893.

period the shoemaker enjoyed a marked/degree of autonomy at work that had been a customary feature of the industry for many generations past.¹ Increasingly, after the 1887 strike at Northampton, employer and shoemaker became engaged in a conflict in the course of which the former ultimately wrested that control from the latter as a prelude to the introduction of a complete mechanised factory system.² And at the centre of that turmoil was the shoemakers' opposition to their loss of control within the workplace. This opposition found articulation in a number of ways, and recent work by this writer has stressed formal trade union protest, workplace disruption and increased participation in co-operative production enterprises mounted by shoemakers.³ But in addition, as this and the last two chapters have argued, the period to the mid 1890s was marked by the increased entry of shoemakers into the manufacturers ranks. Could it be speculatively argued that as shoemakers were faced with the transition from an out work structure and the consequent loss of work autonomy that this represented, numbers of them were motivated to embark upon business ventures in an effort to retain that autonomy?

The second, underlying objective that has consistently been put forward, and that now fills the central position in modern treatments of the firm once held by profit maximisation is the notion of survival.⁴ Many modern writers on the subject argue that, whilst the matrix of possible objectives of the firm is complex, and dependent upon a range of variables centring ultimately

1. E. J. Hobsbawn "Political Shoemakers" Past & Present (1980) p.
2. A. Fox op.cit., Chapters 14 to 22 passim.
3. Keith Brooker (1) "The Effects of Technological Change Upon the Northampton Shoemaker" (Unpublished seminar paper 1976); (2) "Changes in Workshop Control & Industrial Relations in the Victorian Shoe Industry: the Rank & File Response" (unpublished seminar paper 1977); (3) NP&P (1980) op.cit. passim.
4. eg. L.L. Steinmetz, "Critical Stages of Small Business Growth: when they occur and how to survive them", Business Horizons Vol.12 Pt.10(1969) p.29-36, where it is argued that between the establishment of a firm and its "arrival" as an established firm, a concern has to contend with three phases of development. The first, Steinmetz delineates as "live or die", during which the only motivation is survival: "...Fundamentally (the small businessman) is relying on personal skills or a unique market (or method or market) of which he can take advantage. He is usually not concerned about the rate of return, being more concerned with keeping the sheriff from the door..." (p.31)

around a firm's main organisational features, one underlying motivation pervades all decision-making processes; that is, the fundamental need to ensure the continued functioning of the firm. It is this base-line need amongst shoe firms, in an industry noted for high endemic levels of mortality, which has surely subfused this chapter on the trading pressures amongst small shoe masters and lay at the heart of strategies adopted by shoe manufacturers in the wake of change. It is the significant theme that links the causes of failure discussed above: it is this strategy of keeping the firm going, using legitimate or illegitimate business practices come what may in the hope that trading would pick-up at some point in the future, that dominated the infant small master's thinking.¹ For them, decision-making was dominated by the basic expedient: survival, and what Kurt Mayer has observed about inter-war American firms generally, provides a fitting conclusion here:

...the obstacles to the establishment of a small business enterprise are neatly insurmountable in certain industries, and that in others, though entrance is easy enough, survival is the real difficulty. In the latter case, the question is not how much money it takes to go into business but how much it takes to stay there. With regard to the chances of expanding a business, the available evidence points to the fact that those concerns which survive the danger period of infancy become increasingly impervious to mortality, and that they grow somewhat with age...²

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1. For example, see BSTJ 16 April 1898 p.535-36. C.C. Hart commenced in partnership with a Mr Barnes in 1890, and started on his own account in 1893. He failed in January 1897. Re-starting in April 1897, he traded on until his final suspension in January 1898. He had incurred £2374 worth of debts in twelve months. It was noted "...He knew that during the last twelve months he could not have paid 20/- in the £, and that he was losing money, but he hoped better trade to pull (him) through. When he (re-)started in April the trade was nearly gone. In 1896 he had made a turnover of as much as £10,000 but the turnover in the next year was only £3829...Debtor had sold boots at less than cost, but not less than the market price, and he went on hoping to get a better trade..."
 2. Kurt Mayer "Small Business as a Social Institution", Social Research Vol. 14 (1947) p.338

CHAPTER SIX

ATTITUDES AND STRATEGIES OF NORTHAMPTON
WHOLESALE MANUFACTURERS TOWARD CHANGE -
PART III BUSINESS FAILURE AND MODERNITY

Thus a persistently high level of failures in the period 1885-1913 can be ascribed to a lack amongst insolvent debtors of those skills consistent with survival in a changing business world. A world in which artisanal manufacturing skills alone could no longer determine a firm's survival. Prior to 1895, 89.8% of the primary causes of failure tabulated in Figure 4 viii can be ascribed to some lack of business acumen on the part of the insolvent manufacturer: what has, in effect, been charted has been endemic failure. After that date, this figure fell to 63.4%. This diminution, however, is more apparent than real, for rather than signalling an increased awareness amongst small masters of the new business environment that was enveloping them, it rather denotes a proportionately higher increase in failures due to external pressures - primarily, intensified competition and the scale economies enjoyed by larger manufacturers - which, after 1895, began to operate against small producers as a group. One thus finds that the prime cause of failure attributed to external factors rose from 10.5% prior to 1895, to 36.6% thereafter.

As has been noted at several points in this thesis already, after 1893 is observed a contraction in the wholesale manufacturers' group. It is to the character and causes of this contraction that I now wish to turn.

I

What one is witnessing in the decade following 1895 is not just the customary, high mortality of firms in the industry, but a fundamental process of shake-out of the less efficient, conservative elements found there. A process that progressively eroded the industry's small, independent manufacturing base. As the directory study has shown, there occurs in this period an absolute contraction in the size of the footwear business community in the town. The first evidence of this absolute contraction is found in the years 1895-1904, followed by a respite

to 1909. Then from 1910, there occurs a renewed severity in contraction. Although endemic failure is still present, it is a declining feature, whilst 'shake out', as a feature continually attracts the interest of contemporaries. By the latter period, small firm activity had significantly lessened, with fewer new entrants coming forward, whilst many more old-established firms ceased trading. Thus, this contraction was as much a question of falling entry rates, as of failure rates. As has been stressed in Chapter 2, the strengthening of an oligarchical elite of manufacturers had done much to raise barriers of entry against small masters. Now with opportunities declining in the sub-contract and component areas, contemporaries watched over an absolute contraction in small master membership throughout the industry. Inevitably, this process overlays and intertwines with those features of failure already touched upon to some extent. Nevertheless, its characteristics are discernibly different in nature and were perceived to be so by contemporaries, as to constitute a unity. As in the case of depression failure, this shake-out is as much a qualitative phenomenon as a purely quantitative one and was perceived to be so by contemporaries. Thus, if one looks at the statistics of failure decade by decade, there is little quantitative difference when one compares 1885-94 with 1895-04: Figure 6:i refers.

Rather, there are certain well defined qualitative features which segregate post 1895 failure patterns from what had gone before. The first was the contraction of the small master base. This contraction was composed both of declining entry rates and of failure. Contemporary observers noted a growing disinclination on the part of new recruits to enter the manufacturers' ranks. There is evidence of this process being underway by 1898:

... the small manufacturer is rapidly becoming extinct and the numbers of clickers, anxious to try their luck as manufacturers without capital, is much less than it used to be ...¹

1 B.S.T.J. 24 September 1898 p402

Figure 6:i Mean ratio of assets to liabilities in failed wholesale manufacturing firms, Northampton 1885-1914

Period	Number Reported Failures	Liabilities (Total)		Assets (Nett)		Mean Ratio Assets to Liabilities
		Total	Mean	Total	Mean	
1885-94	123	£309869	£2519	£126567	£1029	1: 2.45
1895-1904	107	£245575	£2295	£109176	£1020	1: 2.25
1905-13	39	£203934	£5229	£101461	£2602	1: 1.80

Indeed, a Leicester trade correspondent commented upon such a trend being underway within the industry five years earlier, but the intensity and irreversible character of this shake-out was not stressed until the latter part of the decade.¹

In part this was due to causes discussed more fully elsewhere: the rising intensity of competition, escalating costs of production, the need to pay closer attention to the administration of business. But, in addition, an increasingly strong disincentive was the unattractive and unprofitable nature of such a career. At the turn of the century it was noted:

... it is apparent they carry on a miserable existence for a short while, drawing less than any decent workman, and being bowed down with business cares and worries until they are heartily glad to relinquish a business which they in first flush thought was going to be so profitable but which turns out to be nothing but a source of misery. Many small manufacturers are today working hard, drawing a miserable pittance and looking forward to the future

¹ B.S.T.J. 23 December 1893 p695. "This altered condition of things is rapidly putting an end to the good old days when a man - a good, honest man - could start in business with very little capital, with every prospect of success, especially if he was lucky enough to have a wife who could undertake the management of the fitting and machine department". cf B.S.T.J. 23 December 1893 p695 and 8 October 1892 p426, where it was noted that "One thing at least is very clear, namely that the days are fast being numbered when a manufacturer can start a factory with a capital of £20, £40 or £60, however good his credit is. That this has been done in many instances in the past with varying degrees of success is only too well known. Every day the cost of the boot factory is mounting up and in a very short time the old fashioned method will be a thing of the past".

with trembling and fear. With the help of machinery the large firm can with ease beat the small manufacturer in battle and he must soon bow to the inevitable and be left behind in the race for wealth ...

By 1907, the results of this shake-out amongst small producers in Leicester and Northampton was almost complete. A trade journalist summed up the outcome in these words:

... The reduced number of (business) failures in the shoe trade is due to a reduction in the number of firms engaged in the industry, compared with the number found say five or ten years ago. A walk through Leicester or Northampton will be an all sufficient proof. Empty factories can be seen in almost every other street. Factories which were once hives of industry, finding work in aggregate for thousands, now stand empty. There have been few or no beginnings to make up the waste of death, retirement and failure ...²

Several of this journalist's contemporaries also noted another trend which, not only typified this process, but also exemplified the profound and irreversible nature of the shake out. In view of the prevailing economic and trading conditions the families or surviving partners of several deceased small men decided to wind up the firm's activities, rather than continue the unequal struggle against the large wholesalers.

Secondly, there occurred a 'squeezing' of those small producers already in operation as a result of the growing tendency of the concentration of production into fewer hands. Already by 1898 an editorial leader posed the rhetorical question, "how long can the small manufacturer survive?"³ Two years later, the same editor noted that the pressure on small masters was mounting:

... One or two manufacturers who having been doing a rather moderate business were asked for their opinion as to whether it was possible for small factories to continue to meet the competition of the larger ones in the various lines of shoes. To such a question they replied that, to them, it seemed each year was growing harder for the factory limited in its output to, say 400 or 500 pairs per week to meet competition ...⁴

1 B.S.T.J. 19 November 1898 p708 cf B.S.T.J. 21 April 1901 p564. "With restricted capital his (the small master) case is hopeless and can only have one ending. As a rule he seems content to draw less than the average workman and work for longer hours bearing the worries that attend shoe manufacturing. Many are now struggling hopelessly against their larger rivals."

2 B.S.T.J. 15 March 1907 p234.

3 B.S.T.J. 5 December 1898 p603.

4 B.S.T.J. 20 October 1900 p528.

Growing scale economies, the editor argued, gave increasing costs advantages to larger manufacturers, who were able to enjoy bulk-buy discounts from suppliers as well as economise by using a larger scale of production. These discounts could then be used to offset discounts given to customers.¹ From this date leader comment and reports increasingly drew attention to the ability of larger manufacturers to thrive and fill order books, whilst smaller men struggled for existence. The high costs of running an improved, modern factory and the continued seasonal fluctuations in the demand for footwear led to the adoption of more aggressive sales techniques by the large manufacturers. The use of brand names, retail chains - established features of trading in footwear for some years past - were intensified and sustained advertising campaigns were resorted to. Leading manufacturers began to offer local retailers' agencies to sell well known and proven branded lines. For the small producer, largely dependant upon sales to retail outlets, this pressure was keenly felt. Similar pressures were experienced in export markets. Here both the escalating level of competition and overhead costs tended to act against their continued participation: in past years even a quite modest manufacturer could market abroad. The Northampton Correspondent of the Shoe and Leather Record noted in 1902:

... It has become increasingly evident of late that those doing business in a small way find it more and more difficult to compete with large firms and it looks as if the day is not far distant when practically the whole trade will be in the hands of the large houses. In support of this I may mention that during the past five years between 40 and 50 firms who were then in business in the town have ceased to exist. Most of these were small concerns who found the pace too warm and who have been

1 Ibid. He also argued that small masters who sold small lots to retailers were handicapped. The selling to factors was advocated: "To sell to jobbers means that a factory is sure of its money and that it will get it in large quantities. To sell to retailers may be just as sure, but the bills when paid are always small. The average small factory rarely or never gets money enough together at any one time to pay a big bill or to take advantage of large buying of stock". (Ibid). The suggestion is that cash flow problems are to some degree inevitable amongst small masters trading in this way. cf Northampton Managers' Book I folio 381, where it is reported that a manufacturer customer had become a sub-contractor because of the reduced risk, when compared to being an independent manufacturer.

compelled to go under. Yet the total output of Northampton goods has largely increased. Fine new factories and up to date machinery have told their tale, and the position of the energetic, pushful houses is more secure than ever. The smaller houses served a very useful purpose and in some respects its a pity they could not have secured a firmer foothold in the face of the growth of large firms ...¹

The experience of one firm provides a telling testimony to this assessment.

William Fleming had been in business for ten years as a successful trade sewer before embarking as a wholesale manufacturer in 1893, with a capital of £1,000. However, he had "not kept pace with the times" and ultimately trading was suspended with liabilities at £1,056, whilst assets were estimated to produce only £455. A journalist remarked:

... Everything looked favourable (in 1893) but shoe manufacturing is very different to sewing and stitching and it appears as though the debtor was not fully competent to carry on the latter and the result has been a gradual process of getting behind times until he now meets his creditors.

... This case seems once more to point to the obvious moral of the great and increasing, difficulty which a small manufacturer has in making a success of shoe production. Everything nowadays is on a large scale and to meet the competition with which we are assailed from all quarters, it is necessary to have all the latest and best weapons. The cost of production, moreover, is much lessened when the most up to date machinery is used and herein lies success ...²

It is instructive to compare such a statement with Sir J. H. C. Crockett's assessment of the industry in 1907, where he stresses the need for modern production techniques, enterprise and sales flair.³

One important aspect of this process of contraction after 1895 was that, whilst inexperienced manufacturers continued to fail, a new theme is increasingly

1 S.L.R. 19 September 1902 p398. The editor noted in relation to this issue: "Unquestionably the tendency of the large firms to get bigger and bigger; extensions and additions have been going on in all directions, while the smaller people are gradually getting less, until before long they will, from all appearances, be shouldered out of existence by their larger brothers". cf B.S.T.J. 10 February 1906 p274. "Business is brisk amongst progressive houses; not so the smaller ones. The tendency is for the big ones to get bigger, while the smaller are crushed out of existence".

2 B.S.T.J. 20 June 1902 p949.

3 N.I. 18 May 1907 p23. cf Appendix II C.2. where a fuller consideration of his comments appears.

stressed in failure reports; that of the downfall of essentially straight-forward, hardworking and honest small masters in the wake of the ascendancy of large, efficient units of production. By 1900 it was noted:

... It becomes more evident every day that the difficulties of the small manufacturer are exceedingly great and although he may be honest and straightforward, his path is by no means strewn with roses. It would seem that the tendency of the times is for the great to become greater and for the less to be crushed out of existence. At all events, Mr. C. Birt has had some such experience and has decided to relinquish the business of shoe manufacturer. He had been in business since 1894, when he started with a capital of £80, partly borrowed and from all accounts, he has been industrious, honest and honourable, but, for all this, he has not been able to make both ends meet and the result has been a meeting of creditors in the matter. The liabilities are only £232 and the assets £95, or a deficiency of £137, which was more than accounted for by bad debts. As estimated above, the debtor had no offer to make and the estate is to be realised under a deed of assignment. Mr. Alfred Andrews is to dispose of the assets by auction at an early date ...¹

A report ten years later suggests that this trend had continued during the intervening period:

... At the meeting of creditors regarding T. S. Mellowes, it was generally agreed that the debtor had done his best and deserved sympathy. Like so many of late years, he has found it impossible to compete with the large manufacturers and fearing further loss, he has obtained a situation and decided not to attempt to continue business ...²

Probably the most fullsome exoneration of an 'honest' insolvent was that given to F. Durrant in 1903:

... The Chairman said this was one of those cases where one might lose money cheerfully, as it was a genuine failure and not from any want of effort on the part of the debtor. The books had been particularly well kept and showed all the transactions, stock having been regularly taken every six months. His drawings had been small - circa £175 per annum - and he had worked hard ...³

1 B.S.T.J. 13 October 1900 p476 per Northampton trade correspondent.

2 B.S.T.J. 11 November 1910 p298 cf Ibid p279. (Mellowes) "commenced business in 1901 and has done a small but comfortable trade. There have been no bad debts to speak of, but competition has been keen and the debtor is well advised to relinquish a business which has only relinquished 34s. per week and devote his attention to something more remunerative. At the same time, it is sad to see the extinction of the small manufacturer and his passing is not to the advantage of either the town or the trade".

3 B.S.T.J. 23 October 1903 p635.

Significantly, the chairman, Mr. G. W. Beattie, a Northampton accountant, was not one of the creditors!

However, this preparedness to exonerate was sparingly used and certainly prevailing opinion was that bankruptcy was almost always brought about to some extent by the debtors own, conscious actions. Mr. Registrar Hope of the High Court in addressing the Mackenzie Report in 1908 stated that in his experience very few bankruptcies arose "purely from misfortune. I think stupidity or want of business capacity, if you call that misfortune, gives rise to bankruptcy very often".¹

II

The second qualitative feature which segregated post 1895 failure patterns from what had gone before was the termination of longer established, mature firms in the wake of change. The advantages of maturity - for example, established markets, well-known and accepted brand names, a reservoir of business experience - to some extent served to immunise older established firms from failure, but there came a point in the life of some firms when age ceased to be an ally and instead, acted as a negative force upon their continued trading. It was at this point that survival became an acute issue. Therefore, although the overall level of failures amongst such mature firms was proportionately less than amongst infants, their demise was nevertheless an ever present feature through the period.²

1 B.P.P. 1908 (Cd 4069), op cit. Q 4346 cf Q4350. "But there is no considerable number of bankrupts in your experience who are bankrupts through no fault of their own? - I should say not, certainly".

2 U.S. data on the age of businesses at the time of failure leads one to expect this. Thus in Altman op cit p21, whilst stressing the dominance of infant mortality, that has been fully explored already, also argues that in the manufacturing sector the failure of old established mirrors that of infants. The reason he cites centres in the problems of or failure to adapt to new technology. Whilst the Northampton shoe industry does not entirely conform to the former observation, and will be explored below, the latter feature is present in this study.

As will be shown below, business atrophy manifested itself in a variety of forms, but initially it should be noted that mature firms could be just as vulnerable to poor management decisions and adverse economic conditions as infant firms. A case in point was Arthur Stanton & Company Ltd. Stanton began as a manufacturer in partnership with William Seaby in 1876. The partnership was dissolved sometime between 1879 and 1884.¹ From then until 1896 Stanton traded, initially as a sole trader, then in partnership with Frederick Brickword, from premises in St. Andrew's Street. At this time it must be presumed trade was healthy and growing: in 1884, numbers 14-16 were occupied, but finally expansion took place to include numbers 8-24. Certainly in late 1895 a freehold factory was erected in St. James's End and extensions added in 1897: "The land and buildings were amongst the best in Northampton, the machinery absolutely up to date and the whole in thoroughly good working order".² Trading was suspended in 1902 and in the wake of rumours came as little surprise.³ At this time, the factory's output stood at 6,000 pairs per week. The company had been making a loss on trading for at least two years and it would appear that its conversion in July 1900 had been an attempt to overcome escalating debts; just why these arose is unclear. Nominal capital was set at £40,000 and the business was valued at £50,190 2s. 4d.⁴

1 Seaby continued to trade as a sole partner until 1910, when he was succeeded by his son, William Seaby junior (1876-1955).

2 B.S.T.J. 22 August 1902 p216.

3 B.S.T.J. 15 August 1902 p181. It was noted that "the company had been successful and had made a profit".

4 BT 31/9024/66766 Sale Agreement valuation.

	£	s	d
(i) Goodwill, trademarks, contracts	4000	0	0
(ii) Premises and machinery	11000	0	0
(iii) Moveable plant etcetera	10000	0	0
(iv) Stock in trade	25190	2	4
	<u>50190</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>

Consideration for the sale was set at £29,999, being satisfied by the allotment of shares to Stanton (£16,245) and Brickword (£13,745). The residue of £20,200 was set aside to settle outstanding debts. By July 1902, £24,000 in debentures had been issued by the company.¹ Compounding this financial situation was a rapidly deteriorating trading position arising out of the end of the South African war. In 1901 good profits had been made on government orders worth £34,000; a year later not one pair was ordered. With debts mounting and turnover cut by over half, the company's banker dishonoured company bills and called for voluntary liquidation.

Upon suspension, unsecured liabilities stood at £20,536 2s. Od. and secured liabilities at £29,000,² against net assets of £23,976 16s. 11d. A committee of creditors was formed and the business sold as a going concern to Padmore & Barnes.³ Two of the directors - Brickword and F. R. Jelley - went into partnership, but the firm entered into a private arrangement four years later. Arthur Stanton retired from the industry.

A second example is the business experience of Benjamin Edwin West. West commenced in business in 1879 as the junior partner in the already successful firm of John Cove & Company, established in 1861. They traded as Cove & West. Cove was one of the foremost manufacturers of his day as West was destined to become. The partnership lasted until Cove's retirement in the early nineties, after which West took complete charge, trading as Edwin West & Company and the Hygienic Boot Company at Northampton, London, Towcester, Sydney and Cape Town.

1 BT 31 Ibid. 1902 Annual Return. At least £3,000 was issued to the Stamford and Spalding Bank.

2 B.S.T.J. 22 August 1902 p217. This figure included a £6,000 debt in a bank loan account.

3 Appendix III, N.G.3.

For a period he maintained the success of the company on a policy of specialising in first quality hand-sewn and long boot work and sportswear. In 1896, the company was converted, the nominal capital being £50,000. The consideration for the sale was settled by allotting £20,000 in shares to West in addition to a residue of £4,000 in cash:¹ the balance of Cove's partnership share?² That is one possible reason for the conversion, the other is that the bank wished to gain security for loans: by 1907 debentures issued were valued at £17,000, of which the bank held 15,000.³ West retained almost entire ownership and control, there being just two other nominal directors resident in London - his London managers? - holding shares to the value of £300: the family held six subscribing shares. In 1901 his son, L. R. West, joined as company secretary and in 1902 another son, P. C. West.⁴ In early 1907, trading was suspended and the firm sold up.⁵ Liabilities stood at £38,956 lls. lld., against net assets of £9,513 14s. 3d. It was noted that:

... For some time past the company has been in a very unsatisfactory position and has found it somewhat difficult to obtain supplies in the best markets. The present financial crisis is not altogether unexpected...⁶

The receiver pinpointed two factors contributing to the crisis. The first related to a decline in trade:

... The company had experienced heavy losses through diminution of trade. Formerly they conducted a large business in South Africa and Australia, but this had been lost and there was now practically no shipping done.

1 BT 31/7173/50662 Sale Agreement.

2 The partnership between the two was formally dissolved in January 1892, although West had, in fact, managed the business 'for years' previously. (B.S.T.J. 16 January 1892 p68).

3 B.S.T.J. 1 February 1907 p200.

4 B.S.T.J. 31 January 1902 p223.

5 It was purchased as a going concern by A. E. Marlow (see Appendix III N.G.3). The order books were full and the company traded thereafter at a profit until the late 1950's.

6 B.S.T.J. 1 February 1907 p200.

The gross profit on the home trade had been very good indeed, but owing to the very large expenses by which the business has been conducted, the net result has been a loss ...¹

These 'very large expenses' were the second factor and reveal how ultimately damaging was the action of a principal who chose to extract excessive sums from the company. In addition to large drawings from his capital account, West had drawn a salary through the period of £1,500. The official receiver drew up the following list - Figure 6:ii of trading results, impliedly condemned West's extravagance and firmly argued that all limited companies should present annual financial reports.

Year	Profit/Loss Balance		Mr. West's Capital A/c (Debit Balance)
	P	L	
1897		-£601	-
1898	£474		-
1899	£716		-£ 4000
1900	£1572		-£ 5840
1901	£3972		-£ 7787
1902	£4690		-£10757
1903	£4811		-£12649
1904	£3536		-£13877
1905	£2000		-£14714
1906	£70		-£15593

Figure 6: ii E. West & Company Ltd. Profit and Loss Balance and Private Capital Account Analysis.

Following the 1907 failure, West re-commenced business on a significantly smaller scale under the name Broad Street Company. The aim of this new company was to concentrate upon the manufacture of 'Forbec' heels and other specialities.²

West had held the rights to this process for some time. Only a limited trade was done. In April 1910 the company was converted in order to secure funding

¹ B.S.T.J. 29 March 1907 p577.

² The patented Euknemida waterproof boot. B.S.T.J. 25 June 1894 p76: Cove and West patented the boot in 1877.

from the Royalties Syndicate Ltd., who purchased the company. Nominal capital was fixed at £5,000 and the company was purchased for £4,777 satisfied by allotting 1,600 shares and securing £3,177 as debentures in favour of Royalties Syndicate.¹ A further £1,529 was allotted as fully paid up shares.² The directors were B. E. West and W. V. Jones, a London gentleman.³ After several years of indifferent trading the company was voluntarily wound up.⁴ Little surprise was expressed in the industry: "it's not altogether surprising to learn that there is trouble at Broad Street Company Ltd., and that the appointment of a receiver for the debenture holders is pending".⁵ The total deficiency was £8,317 10s. 10d.⁶ For West, the ignominy of failure after so many years in the front rank resulted in his suicide in early February 1913.⁷

If West's failure reveals the effects that the personally ostentatious habits of a principal could have on a mature firm that was encountering trading problems, then the third example, William Hickson & Company Ltd., reveals the financial burdens a dependent family could place upon an ailing company. Hicksons had been founded in London at the turn of the century and had had close trading connections with Northampton from that time: the company commenced manufacturing in the town in 1857. By the late 19th century, the third and

1 BT 31/13215/109143 floating charge filed 12 May 1910: Sale Agreement - 1,000 of these shares were held by West's wife Martha.

2 Annual Returns 14 August 1911: (B.S.T.J. 10 May 1912 p205) and 22 November 1912 (BT 31 op cit).

3 BT 31 op cit; Articles of Association Clause 82.

4 BT 31 Extraordinary Resolution 10 February 1913.

5 B.S.T.J. 31 January 1913 p158.

6 B.S.T.J. 7 March 1913 p429.

7 West was born at Stoke Bruerne in 1841, the son of a carpenter. Initially an employee of John Cove, he later became his partner and married Cove's sister-in-law Martha. They had issue two sons and two daughters. One daughter married P. E. Sandlands, a barrister, who had an interest in the Broad Street Company, the other a son of the Registrar of the Northampton County Court. No trace of a will has been found. (B.S.T.J. 7 February 1913 p204 and 2621: cf N.I. 8 February 1913 p15, found drowned in canal at Stoke Bruerne).

fourth generation of the family had control of the company. The company's founder was William senior¹ and he was succeeded by three sons: Samuel; James;² and George.³ William junior,⁴ the third generation head, joined the firm in 1870, followed thereafter by Thomas A. Hickson. Upon the conversion in 1897, these two became joint managing directors, in addition to whom, F. G. Hickson, a cotton spinner from Bollington, Near Macclesfield, joined the board. After 1899, F. G. and G. S. Hickson managed the London operation at Smithfield, whilst William junior and his sons, Alfred H. Hickson and Harold S. Hickson,^{the} activities at Northampton.⁵ All except Alfred were directors, but after the shedding of the London premises in 1907, just William junior and his son, Alfred, remained on the board.⁶

- 1 William Hickson senior (1781-1857) commenced manufacturing in London circa 1796-1801 and migrated Northampton in 1806. In 1811 he was the agent at Northampton Depot, London. (see V.C.H.ii p323-24). A resident of Fairseat, Kent, he had four sons, one of whom was William Edward (1803-1870), hymn writer. (T. Wright Romance of the Shoe (1920) p160). His youngest daughter, Anna (died 1880) married Sir Sydney Hedley Waterlow, baronet, in 1845: he was head and founder of Waterlow & Sons, government printers and stationers. (Who's Who 1897 and Burke's Peerage 1929).
- 2 James Hickson (1811-1880), boot manufacturer of Cholmley Park, Highgate, London, died 11 April 1880, effects under £6,000. He was survived by his widow, Wilhelmina and son, Thomas Albert Hickson (1863-99). (B.S.T.J. 5 May 1881).
- 3 George Hickson (1819-89). Entered father's business in 1835, ultimately becoming the second generation senior partner: "throughout his life he showed the utmost tact and ability in all commercial matters". He was president of the Boot and Shoemakers Benevolent Institute in 1882. In 1840 he married Ellen Celia Waterlow, a sister of Sir Sydney Waterlow (above).
- 4 William Hickson junior was born in London in 1845 and joined the family firm in 1870. He was for a number of years a radical councillor and alderman at Northampton and was made a J.P. there in 1908. A chairman of the Highways Committee and an elder statesman figure with a great gift of speech "he is one of the most senatorial kind of men in public life". Quick thinking, he was very good in arbitration and conciliation matters: "good in trade disputes and crises": "One of the most able in the trade". A past president of the Federation of Boot and Shoe Manufacturers and the local Manufacturers' Association.
- 5 The company also had - warehouse facilities at Paris and retail outlets in London, Bexhill and Market Harborough (under the name of H. Sully).
- 6 BT 31/7182/50741: Annual Returns and Director Lists 1897-1909.

At one stage in the late 19th century this firm was amongst the more successful of footwear enterprises, with annual profits in the range of £5,000/£7,000 being recorded. However, from 1897 a gradual malaise overtook the firm, which can be identified by a marked fall in turnover: from £40,000 in 1897 to under £30,000 in 1909. This reversal in fortunes reached the stage where, in December 1909, the Northamptonshire Union Bank as debenture holders¹ in the company, called a shareholders' meeting "in order to protect their interests".² Liabilities, including the shareholders' interest, were assessed at £55,224 15s. 3d. against assets of £43,464 16s. 3d. a deficiency of £11,759 19s. Od.³ The subsequent meeting decided to voluntarily wind up the company.⁴ The root causes of the failure were the financial burdens imposed upon the firm under the conditions of the 1897 conversion. Overriding all commercial considerations and policy decisions was the fact that the company was the financial mainstay of a large family. Registration had been for family reasons, to secure the financial future of family members dependent upon income derived from the firm's activities. Authorised capital was fixed at £30,000 with a share take-up of £12,750 in preference and £10,079 in ordinary shares.⁵ The sale agreement however, reveals that the firm was valued at £41,586 with a large cash residue being paid out to family and friends. Much of this was then placed on loan with the new company in the form of first

- 1 In 1900 the N.U.B. had taken £3,822 in second issue debentures in order to secure an overdraft.
- 2 B.S.T.J. 3 December 1909 p426.
- 3 B.S.T.J. 7 January 1910 pl2: much of the following discussion relies upon this report found on pages 12 to 19.
- 4 B.S.T.J. 17 December 1910 p519.
- 5 BT 31 op cit; Annual Returns 1898, 1902 and 1907 cf B.S.T.J. 3 December 1909 p426.

issue debentures.¹ The schedule of monies due and shares issued below at Figure 6: iii, reveals the position. This step was presumably taken to provide a fixed and certain annual income for family members, which a fluctuating dividend earning from shares would not have necessarily done. In addition, £8,700 was paid out of capital to sick members of the family and to widows etcetera on the death of their husbands.² In addition, £358 was paid to William junior's mother as an advance on dividend and £130 per annum paid to Percy Hickson.³ These sums had to be replaced by seeking loans and increasing overdraft limits. It was the subsequent, abnormally high levels of funding that were required to meet the interest payments due on debentures, loans and overdraft that progressively undermined the firm's profitability.

Figure 6: iii: William Hickson & Sons Ltd. Schedule of monies due and shares allotted upon conversion in 1897.

Name	Principal Sum Due	Preference Share	Ordinary Share	Cash Residue
William Hickson junior	) 13913	) 7500	) 4413	) 2000
Fredk George Hickson))))
Kate Hickson	3900	1050	2850	
Mary Hickson	5000	1800	200	3000
Ellen C. Hickson	2318	155	163	2000
Thomas A. Hickson	2588	900	1038	650
Ellen W. Hickson	4524	500	524	3500
Celia M. Arnold	3670	100	70	3500
Annie W. Hickson	4463	450	513	3500
Prof. Sydney J. Hickson	1210	250	310	650
	41586	12705	10079	18800

Source: BT 31/7182/50741

- 1 B.S.T.J. 7 January 1910 pl2: the first issue debenture holders were: Lady Waterlow £2,000 (plus interest at £74 3s. 10d.); Mrs. Arnold £3,500; Miss. A. W. Hickson £3,500; Miss. E. W. Hickson £3,500 (plus interest at £238 2s. 8d.) cf business failure report which noted: "There was a contract under which there was a considerable sum of money payable to friends and relations. A portion of that money had to be paid in and a portion was left in the business on loan, other members of the family taking shares for their portions".
- 2 eg on the death of Thomas £650 of debentures were paid out to his widow.
- 3 Percy Hickson played no active role in the firm. After a period of psychiatric illness, he died on 4 November 1908 at the L.C.C. Asylum, Woodford Green. His widow continued to receive his allowance.

After 1897, trading was conducted at a loss, save on two years. As the failure report records, "a good gross profit had always been made but the whole business had been swamped by expenses".¹ The payments of interest to the family, therefore, were isolated as a significant financial problem. By contrast, the company's production and marketing functions were viable and well executed, being ultimately undermined by the financial situation. Unlike the majority of mature firm failures at this time, modern machinery and production methods had been deployed and the footwear produced was of good quality, albeit of a somewhat conservative style. At the failure the order book was valued at circa £7,000. Indeed, the receiver argued for the continuance of the firm, but the family pressed for a voluntary liquidation. In addition, the directors had acted honestly and straight forwardly and have sunk all their personal means into the company. Personal drawings of directors, bad debts and so on, had all been modest: sums owed to unsecured cash creditors had risen from £3,321 in 1897 to £4,594 in 1909 and debts to unsecured trade creditors had risen in the same period from circa £7,000 to circa £9,000. Some criticism however, was made of William junior's reluctance to seek expert advice. When this step was finally taken in 1909, a recommendation to cut overheads by sacking staff was firmly rejected by him.² It was acknowledged that he had attempted to do some rationalisation of activities, but that these moves were largely ineffectual. In 1904, the firm of Turner Brothers & Hyde was purchased in the hope of injecting 'new blood' and in 1907 manufacturing at Smithfield, London, was discontinued because of the 'great expenses' incurred there.

1 B.S.T.J. loc cit p15: "the whole cause of the present position has been brought about owing to the enormous expenses which ought only to have been incurred had the turnover been double".

2 B.S.T.J. loc cit. "It was doubtless a pity that the managing director did not call in expert advice some time ago".

Yet, it should be noted that not all mature firms that failed were of the size of three examples above. Some firms traded over a considerable period, yet retained a small master configuration throughout.¹ For example:-

William Thompson - failed in 1889 after trading for 23 years. His liabilities were £889 6s. 4d. and assets £38 10s. 9d. The cause of failure was bad debts, travelling costs, competition and losses arising out of retailing activities in Raunds.²

W. & R. Barton - failed in 1892 after trading for circa 30 years, as a result of trade "dwindling away in the last years". Liabilities were placed at £951 11s. 9d. and assets £367 6s. 5d. The Northamptonshire Union Bank was owed £288.³

Tebbutt & Skinner - commenced trading in 1870, with a combined capital of £325. After 21 years, the business was suspended, at which time liabilities were £457 11s. 6d. and assets £161 12s. 6d.⁴ In the last nine months of trading, output reached only £840, equivalent to circa £23 per week.⁵

III

One crucial element readily observable in our period are the difficulties the death or retirement of a principal caused for a mature firm. For some, this hiatus caused a permanent rupture in trading, whilst for others the difficulties were surmounted. How a firm coped with such a period of adjustment depended ultimately upon the strength of the partners left or of the inheritors of the organisation and the firm's financial position. This hiatus was most keenly felt

1 This point emerges from American evidence: See K. Mayer loc cit p338 "though many businesses attain a very respectable age, most of them remain small throughout their existence. Contrary to our folk-lore, small concerns do not, in general, grow into large concerns". cf A. D. H. Kaplan Problems of Small Business (1941) pxix.

2 S.L.R. 2 March 1889, p359.

3 S.L.R. 28 October 1892 p1058.

4 The assets were as follows: stock in trade £42 10s. 6d; book debts £94 11s. 2d. and plant and machinery £18 5s. 0d.

5 B.S.T.J. 6 June 1891 p596: cf S.L.R. 5 June 1891 p1315-16.

by unincorporated associations, which as we have seen, formed the greater part of the business community in the shoe industry. The hiatus had two main features.

First, the loss of a principal deprived a firm of that man's skill, business ability and enthusiasm. The extent to which a firm could overcome this difficulty depended upon its succession strategy. In cases of the small partnership, there are not a few examples of the surviving partners continuing to trade. A case in point was that of Stubbs & Grimsdell. One of a number of London firms which established factories at Northampton in the 1880's; the firm was the first in the town to accommodate all workers on their premises at Talbot Road in 1889.¹ Edgar Stubbs died in 1893,² but the firm continued to trade under the direction of E. Grimsdell until his failure in June 1903. The report notes that "the debtor has a very good business connection and a hope is entertained that the business will be sold as a going concern".³ Liabilities were assessed at £13,621 against assets of £6,019. At the time it was noted:

... The only reason why the debtor has been compelled to consult his creditors is that he has been losing money for some years and he cannot see any good purpose in continuing the business. He therefore consulted his friends and decided to lay the statement of affairs before his chief creditors and to leave the estate in their hands ...⁴

Most frequently in these firms it seems to have been anticipated that succession would pass to the next generation of the family; classically to the son, sometimes a nephew. Succession was therefore dependant in large measure upon

1 S.L.R. 7 September 1893 p286. "It is intended that all the labour connected with the business shall be located on the premises and we believe this will be the first factory where this system has been attempted in Northampton: cf S.L.R. 18 January 1890 pl12.

2 Edgar Stubbs (1833-93) of 16 St. Michael's Avenue, died 18 January 1893. Effects £156 S.L.R. 20 January 1893 pl72. cf B.S.T.J. 28 June 1912 p539. Edgar junior traded briefly as a manufacturer before failing.

3 B.S.T.J. 26 June 1903 pl059.

4 B.S.T.J. Ibid.

the business ability of succeeding generations. For some well established firms, particularly if the succession was to a son or relative who had trained in the firm and taken an active role in the management prior to the founder's death, this hiatus was overcome with relative ease.¹ However, only a small number of multi-generational firms are to be found in the industry and in most cases succession was not achieved and then consolidated with such consummate ease. The firm of Hancock & Company can be taken as a representative example. Joseph Hancock traded from 1861 to 1888 as a sole proprietor, although he was briefly in partnership with one Piddington in the late 1860's. During the latter years his son, Henry Charles, assisted him. The firm temporarily suspended trading in February 1888: total liabilities being £3,240 14s. 10d. against assets of £444 8s. 0d.² At this point, Joseph retired and his son took over the business. Henry traded through to 1904 and through much of the period relied heavily upon excess credit from leather merchants. His first suspension came about as a result of Brice & Company's failure.³ Liabilities totalled £4,825 9s. 8d. against assets of £1,769 14s. 0d.⁴ A modest composition was agreed and trading recommenced on a modest scale from smaller premises. Through this second phase, Hancock probably relied upon sub-contract work from other manufacturers. But then misfortune struck again and he left the industry in 1904.⁵

Where no immediate successors were present, this led on occasion to senior employees taking control. Whilst some were successful, others faced immediate

1 Prominent examples of the gradual transition style of succession can be found in Appendix II and III and are discussed in Chapter Seven below: eg J. Marlow & Sons C.7. On retirement, see Manfield & Sons C.3: on death, Crockett & Jones C.2. But note the state of semi-retirement commonly found, see Simon Collier C.10.

2 B.S.T.J. 3 March 1888 p165.

3 See Chapter Four above.

4 B.S.T.J. 27 February 1897 p325.

5 B.S.T.J. 12 February 1904 p283: liabilities of £1,388 13s. 7d.: assets of £40 13s. 6d.

and insurmountable capital problems.¹ For example, in 1887 John Lowe, manufacturer died,² and his business passed to a senior employee, Henry Vorley. Within three and a half years the company was wound up, showing a deficiency of £251. At the time it was noted.

... commenced with a capital of £100, which sum was a legacy from his predecessor and former employer, the late J. Lowe and from his executors,³ assets of business up to £400 were purchased, but the cash never paid ...³

Nevertheless, the instance of Rowland Fisher & Company reveals that a company could withstand the death of principal and succeeding son within a short span, yet continue to flourish in the hands of competent employees.⁴ In other instances again the deceased's wife took over effective management either as a sole trader, as in the case of Mrs. Louisa Todd;⁵ a partner with her sons, Mrs. Crick;⁶ or a partner with a manager, Mrs. Marks.⁷ Indeed, there exists a deal of covert evidence suggesting that women played a significant role in wholesale manufacturing, in addition to the much more central role they

- 1 See eg Appendix II, G. T. Hawkins C.6; Appendix III, A. E. Marlow N.G.3., but here when the former manager, George Webb, relinquished control in 1927, the company was liquidated within seven years.
- 2 John Lowe (circa 1850-1887) died 12 November 1887 effects £2,645 5s. 7d.: S.L.R. 28 August 1891 p506.
- 3 S.L.R. Ibid: cf 21 August 1891 p438: cf A. H. Fowkes, who took over the business of William Jones (see Appendix II C.2.). Fowkes failed in 1894 having experienced difficulties in retaining Australian markets: turnover had fallen from £21,210 to £7,116 in two years. Liabilities were returned at £2,154 17s. 9d., assets at £873 3s. 10d. (S.L.R. 23 March 1894 p655 and 9 November 1894 p1032).
- 4 Appendix II C.23.
- 5 George Todd (1859-95) commenced trading in 1893 at Duke Street, but died on 3 June 1893 at 23 Cowper Road; his effects £936 16s. 2d. (B.S.T.J. 7 June 1895 p38). His widow continued the business from premises in Earl Street with the assistance of James West, foreman. Trading was suspended in April 1897, the result of losses on trading: liabilities £955 2s. 8d., assets £417 11s. 7d. From 1898 W. Todd & Company occupied the premises, which suggests another member of the family took control.
- 6 Appendix II C.13.
- 7 Appendix III N.G.21.

undertook as closers to the trade.¹

Another, possibly unique, feature of succession was the amalgamation of firms as occurred in the case of Henry Marshall & Company and William Marshall & Company in the early 1890's. Brothers, they had commenced trading in Northampton earlier in the century: Henry in 1847 and William in 1861. In 1891 William died and was succeeded by his two nephews, Henry Marshall junior, manufacturer and Frederic Marshall, a London solicitor. This change prompted Henry senior's retirement and the two companies were amalgamated, trading as Henry Marshall & Company in Northampton and William Marshall & Company in London. Trading was suspended in 1911.²

For others, however, the loss of the principal deprived the firm of its main motive force and if no successor was present, then the firm ceased trading. This dilemma particularly faced sole traderships but not exclusively so.³ Several examples are provided by the sample. Robert James Johnston died on the 25 September 1895, leaving a widow and son.⁴ He had been in business as a sole trader from 1877 and as there was no one to succeed him, the business was wound up.⁵ This process was delayed because of a deficiency partly caused by

1 In addition to the activity of widows, wives took over (nominal?) control when husbands failed. eg J. E. Harrison, above; M. S. Brockett & Company in 1891 and P. Frisby in 1897.

2 For further discussion see below Chapter 6 p.406 *et seq.*

3 eg Tebbutt & Branson traded from premises in Castle Street from circa 1884. Walter Stephen Branson (1858-1904) manufacturer and licensed victualler of the Fleece Hotel, died on 30 December 1904. Effects £6,012 ls. 8d. (B.S.T.J. 6 January 1905 p7). At this point, directory entries for the firm ceased. They did a small trade and in the light of prevailing economic conditions it is to be presumed that Tebbutt felt disinclined to continue the business, which was wound up, apparently solvent. cf with suspension of S. Dunn & Co. Formerly a partnership between father and son. The son retired in 1898 and the father's health broke down. Consequently, the latter, having no wish to continue, agreed to a deed of assignment. (B.S.T.J. 8 October 1898 p505).

4 His effects were proved at £2,711 6s. 1d.: his executors included the prominent leather merchant, William Neepe and E. A. Peachy 'Of the Daily News'.

5 His son, R. A. O. Johnston, had become a solicitor.

depreciation in the value of the factory: liabilities were £3318 against assets of £1,792 6s. 9d.¹ The case of Edwards & Sons was more complex: here an old established firm, experiencing a contracting trade, faced the death of three of its principals in close succession. Established in 1838, By George Edwards, the firm had traded as wholesale manufacturers to 1874. From that date, it is dual-listed as both a wholesale manufacturer and an upper manufacturer. Presumably in the face of change in the industry, the firm contracted manufacturing for the upper trade only, from 1883 to 1903: a classic example of retreat. George Edwards retired in 1883, when sons William and Henry succeeded. He remained as a consultant until his death in 1895.² Six years later, his younger son committed suicide,³ and two years after that William died.⁴ At that point, although the firm was solvent, in the wake of mounting trading difficulties, the family chose to wind up the business.⁵

Similar to the Edwards situation was that of Chapman Brothers & Jeyes,⁶ where the effects of retirement and death aggravated an increasingly difficult trading position for the firm. As was noted at the time of the 1911 failure:

... They have been a struggling firm for a number of years and many will be sorry they have not been able to make a successful business of the concern...⁷

1 S.L.R. 7 February 1896 p359. Trading had previously been suspended in April 1884 of the demise and subsequent failure of S. B. Rubinstein provides a similar example (S.L.R. 23 June 1894 p1414).

2 George Edwards (1827-95). One of the town's oldest manufacturers, died at home, 9 Springs Villa, Cliftonville, on 2 July 1895. Effects £7,043 5s. 7d. (S.L.R. 5 July 1895 p19.)

3 Henry George Edwards (1862-1901) of 19 Billing Road. He committed suicide on the 14 April 1901. Effects £844 13s. 6d. (administration). The suicide was partly caused by business worries. (B.S.T.J. 19 April 1901 p519).

4 William Henry Edwards (1859-1903), died 26 April 1903. Effects £6,624 18s. 5d. (B.S.T.J. 1 May 1903 p689).

5 Principal members of the family were George's widow and a son, Frederick Edwards, a pawnbroker and jeweller. Compare this with Rowland Fisher & Company above.

6 Established 1880.

7 B.S.T.J. 15 December 1911 p506.

The firm, however, first failed in 1897; with estimated assets of £3,449 18s. 0d. set against liabilities of £5,654 16s. 3d. The firm had been in a tight though viable trading situation, for despite being over extended by the costs of a factory extension, a loss of £32 in 1895 had become a surplus of £812 a year later: the partners were personally frugal. The immediate cause of the suspension resulted from the failure of one of their suppliers, J. Boyes of Edinburgh.¹ A composition was accepted, Jeyes retired and the firm reconstituted as Chapman Brothers, with a capital of £345. Within a decade the firm had recovered much of its former position: in 1906 the capital stood at £3,189. The architect of this recovery was the senior partner Charles, who died in 1907.² The remaining partners, brother William, nephew Thomas and son Horace, continued trading. An agreement was entered into with Ellen to leave Charles share in the business in return for an income of 30s. per week to her.³ Nevertheless, Charles business ability was missed and although trading was basically sound, the remaining partners were particularly weak in handling customer credit. Thus within four years, book debts rose to £1,280, at which point trade was suspended, as gross profits could no longer cover such indebtedness: liabilities at this time were £5,114 19s. 4d. and assets £2,563 3s. 7d. The creditors accepted a plan to re-cost production with a view to restarting: a composition was accepted.⁴

A final example, is the firm of Thomas Tebbutt. Founded in 1843, he relinquished control to his sons in the 1870's, although he retained an interest

1 S.L.R. 27 February 1897 p325.

2 Charles Chapman (1857-1907) of 89 Holly Road, died on 24 June 1907. His effects were entirely composed of his partnership share (B.S.T.J. 28 June 1907 p485).

3 At the time of the 1911 failure she is listed as a cash creditor to the sum of £1,745.

4 B.S.T.J. 22 December 1911 p546.

in business affairs until his death in 1889. His death was followed quickly by that of his eldest son and second generation senior partner, Charles J. Tebbutt in 1893: the firm ceased trading.¹

Technically, the death or retirement of a principal automatically terminated the association. In the case of a partnership, the remaining partners had to draw up a new agreement in order to continue trading. This inevitably interrupted business dealings in the short run. This problem however could be substantially overcome by Section 16 of the Partnership Act 1890 which made provision for the partnership agreement to include a clause automatically vesting the legal duties and obligations of the old partnership in the surviving partners: business could, therefore be continued without interruption.² By contrast, limited companies were in a more advantageous position. The separate legal personality vested in incorporated associations ensured, theoretically, a more ready continuity both of ownership and control and this was indeed the case in the sample under study here. Yet, in terms of management structure many were small private limited companies and more alien to unincorporated associations. Thus, in practice, they often faced exactly the same hiatus occasioned by the death of a director. A case in point was the failure of H. J. Bateman Ltd. Henry Bateman traded as a sole proprietor from 1884, quickly establishing a good trade. Extensive factory additions were made in 1891, at which time he employed circa 200 men.³

1 For full details, see Appendix II C.12.

2 On the succession issue following the death of a founder see example J. G. Sears (Appendix III N.G.1) and W. Barratt & Company Ltd. (Appendix III N.G.10). In practice, the actual transfer of power in the board room depended much upon the founder's management style when alive: Contrast H. E. Randall (Appendix II C.4.) and S. Collier Ltd. (Appendix II C.10.) with J. G. Sears, *passim*.

3 B.S.T.J. 29 August 1891 p248.

Bateman died in 1903,¹ when control of the company passed to his managers, George Butcher and John O'Connor Bailey. In order to effect the purchase of the company's assets, a limited company was formed in November 1904, with an authorised capital of £2,000. The take up was £800. Butcher and Bailey acquired a circa two-thirds shareholding (?) and were nominated directors.² Several prominent manufacturers held shares, including Harry Manfield and George Ellard, suggesting possibly that Batemans did sub-contract work. Although little machinery was used in production and despite high commercial travelling costs and marketing problems, the company carried on a viable trade in hand made goods. However, when both Bailey & Butcher died within days of each other,³ without adequate direction the company quickly began to make a loss on trading. At the stoppage in January 1906, liabilities amounted to £1,659 8s. 4d. and assets £1,164 14s. Od.: there had been a loss in trading up to September 1905 of £1,015.⁴ Given that no other directors could be readily appointed, the company was voluntarily liquidated. At that time, A. Gurney, chairman of the shareholders meeting commented:

... he regretted the state of affairs and but for the death of Mr. Bailey, whom they all held in great esteem, they would not, he believed, have been called together ...⁵

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- 1 Henry John Bateman (1851-1903) died on 1 April 1903 at 5 St. Michael's Avenue. He took no part in local affairs. Effects £7,996 4s. 5d.
- 2 B.S.T.J. 25 November 1904 p396: C.R.O. File destroyed by P.R.O.
- 3 John O'Connor Bailey (1841-1905): 40 years with Turner Brothers Hyde & Company prior to his present directorship. Prominent in local public life as a director of Northampton Permanent Benefit Building Society; a member of the Infirmary Sports Committee and 15 years chairman of the Northamptonshire Amateur Athletic Club. Died 28 April 1905 at St. George's Avenue. Effects £1,677 5s. Od. His son was a licensed victualler. (B.S.T.J. 5 May 1905 pl48). George Butcher (1845-1905). Employed for many years at Turner Bros. and a life long friend of Baileys. An active freemason.
- 4 B.S.T.J. 29 January 1906 p87.
- 5 B.S.T.J. Ibid.

Nevertheless, even if succession was assured, a second difficulty had to be surmounted. This turned upon the essential legal character of unincorporated associations themselves. In the absence of any legal personality, the assets of the firm were severally vested in the principals. Thus, upon the death of a principal, his share of the firm's assets became part of his personal estate. Unless his heirs were his successors, the firm was faced with a potential loss of capital: this often compounded the problems caused by the death itself. The case of Major Howe & Company succinctly reveals the problems which could ensue. The company was established in circa 1850 by Major Howe, a respected and influential manufacturer "of the old school", from a prominent shoemaking family.¹ In the wake of growing mechanisation the firm continued to trade strongly in high quality handsewn and bespoke footwear for the London trade, where they had three retail outlets. In the eighties, the firm is also listed as an upper manufacturer, although this does not in this instance suggest any downturn in company fortunes, but rather a logical diversification into machine and hand-sewn upper manufacture. Howe died in 1890, leaving a widow and five sons. The firm passed to Harry England Howe and Walter J. Howe, sons: the other brothers being 'paid out'. The two sons and their mother entered into a partnership agreement in May 1890:

... By articles of partnership dated 29 May 1890 and made between Sarah A. Howe of the first part and H. E. Howe of the second part and Walter John Howe of the third part, it was provided that (they) should become and remain partners in business as boot and shoe manufacturers and retailers and exporters for a period of 42 years ...²

A dispute arose between the two brothers resulting in Walter leaving the partnership in July 1890.³ His partnership share of £3,500 was lost to the

1 Six other members of the family are listed in nineteenth century directories as local manufacturers between 1840 and 1900.

2 BT31/7838/56097. Sale Agreement: It was agreed to give Sarah an annual income of £208 and a house with a servant, at 12 Regent Street, free of rent, rates, coal and gas.

3 BT 31 Ibid.

firm.¹ "Altogether circa £4,300 was paid out to get rid of all liabilities when (H. E. Howe) and his mother were left with the business".²

This major problem of disinvestment was to be centrally responsible for the ultimate demise of the firm, or rather, Harry's handling of the situation. There is no suggestion that if the company had been financially sound it could not have continued to trade effectively in the contracting yet still viable handsewn market.³ Initially the Capital and Counties Bank had funded the short-fall in capital and the other liabilities which had arisen from it. By 1897, £7,500 was thus owed, with other debts reaching £3,000. At this point, in order to secure their loans, the bank pressed for the conversion of Howes and the conversion of the bank debt to debentures. Consequently, the company was registered on 2 February 1898,⁴ with an authorised capital of £40,000. The directors were Harry E. Howe, managing,⁵ and Henry Marshall, a Northampton manufacturer related to Howe through marriage: Marshall's cousin William, a London solicitor, acted as the company's lawyer. The company was valued at £17,200 on registration and the called up capital in 1898 was £17,464, with £75 calls unpaid: Harry held 17,150 ordinary shares. £10,000 first mortgage debentures were issued in 1898, with a further £1,500 issued in 1901. Later that year, £4,160 second mortgage debentures were issued.⁶ H. E. Howe was declared bankrupt in 1902 and the company placed in voluntary liquidation. This arose out of financial collaboration between the company, the Law and Guarantee Trust Society and the firm's solicitor, begun in 1898. Law and Guarantee and

1 Walter then set up as a manufacturer from the firm's old factory in Broad Street. His business failed in 1893. S.L.R. 29 September 1893, p736.

2 B.S.T.J. 23 October 1903 p637.

3 Note, following the firm's liquidation, it was sold by tender as a going concern (finding a buyer in A. E. Marlow). B.S.T.J. 14 November 1903 p586.

4 Limited company details from BT31/7838/56097.

5 As Managing Director, Harry received a salary of £600 per annum; plus £2 per week expenses plus 5% of nett profits. (B.S.T.J. 26 March 1898 p432).

6 BT31 Ibid. Annual Returns 1898 and 1901.

Marshall in effect financed the operation. Howe knew little of these financial operations and left them to Henry Marshall, who was negligent in his duty as a director. He both failed to pay monies owing to Law and Guarantee and issued debentures without Howe's knowledge. Marshall had subsequently gone bankrupt and Howe became solely liable for monies owing. At the bankruptcy hearing, the registrar noted that Howe "never obtained any good from the formation of the company" and that "you have been a tool in their hands and have done whatever they asked. You went on signing bills, hoping the money would come into the company".¹

Several failure reports show that if the firm's position was already precarious then this hiatus often proved to be fatal. Moreover, if the hiatus occurred at a time of poor trade generally, then the implications of that hiatus were deepened by depression, as the experience of Chapman Brothers has shown. Similarly if the firm had problems, such as a loss of markets, a run-down of capital, similar repercussion ensued. The trading difficulties of Hornby & West in the years between the founder's death and the firm's takeover by H. E. Randall in 1910 well illustrate this point.²

The experience of George Ellard after he succeeded to his father's business provides another illustration. Prior to George taking over in 1884, John Ellard had traded as a manufacturer from circa 1864. The business was insolvent and George had to pay his father's estate a composition of 10s. in the pound on debts of £3,000. He had to borrow to meet this commitment, which financially weakened his enterprise: at the time of his final suspension seven years later, some of the loan was still owing. In addition to this, he contracted a high proportion of bad debts and in 1887 he lost "the whole of his continental trade consequent upon the strike in Northampton, having to close his premises for a

1 B.S.T.J. 23 October 1903 Ibid.

2 Appendix II C.11.

month at the most critical period of the year and he could not recover the trade".¹ Thus, despite new first class machinery, good quality stock and close attention to correct business practices, the business failed. In June 1890, he executed an assignment under which a composition of 15s. in the pound was paid on liabilities of £4,400.² A year later, matters were further complicated by a second and final suspension, when liabilities stood at £2,799 9s. 9d. and assets £2,160 6s. 9d.³ Prior to 1884, Ellard had been a leather merchant's manager and now he became the manager of Stead & Simpsons' local branch factory.⁴ He was a prominent freemason and much involved in local philanthropic work and in sporting circles. He died on 7 October 1906, leaving a widow and two daughters: Effects £3,376 16s. 1d.⁵

A third illustration is afforded by George Gilbert. His father, Joseph J. Gilbert, founded the firm in circa 1866 as a wholesale manufacturer. From 1869, he was dual-listed in directories as an upper manufacturer as well. By the nineties it was probable that wholesale manufacturing activities constituted a shrinking proportion of their turnover. Under trading pressures in the early Edwardian period, the company retreated from wholesale manufacturing completely and appears in directories as retail shoemakers and upper manufacturers.⁶ Against this background, George had to cope with the financial effects of his

1 S.L.R. 22 January 1892 p188.

2 S.L.R. 27 September 1890 p394.

3 S.L.R. 31 July 1891 p266. It was noted that the present position flows from the September 1890 composition, which "crippled him to a great extent".
5th February 1892 p338.

4 B.S.T.J. 21 November 1891 p565.

5 B.S.T.J. 12 October 1906 p62.

6 Underscoring these increased trading difficulties in J. J. Gilbert's probate documents in 1900, he appears as a leather seller (a function of many small manufacturers) and his son as a bootmaker.

father's death.¹ The capital in the concern amounted to £1,100 and in 1900 George paid £800, his father's partnership share, to his father's estate. This combination of disinvestment exacerbated the effects of the firm's diminishing trade, causing a suspension of trading in 1905. Liabilities were assessed at £1,362 4s. 8d. and assets £879 10s. 4d. Two mortgage debts were the largest liability: £300 to a Mr. M. Ward and £270 to the Northamptonshire Union Bank.

It was noted:

... Takings were established at circa £40 per week and trade has diminished of late. Goods have apparently been sold at the same figure as formerly, notwithstanding the rise in leather ...²

No books of account were kept and the principal drew £2 a week in wages. A composition was accepted by the creditors and upper trading resumed for a further two years before the firm was finally wound up.

To some extent the exigencies of death and retirement could be overcome by agreement that a retiring partner's capital share should only be gradually withdrawn.³ If no such agreement existed, in practice, an ex-partner's share often remained in the business, in return for an annual interest payment.⁴

IV

The problems of dislocations in ownership and management continuity, of general business atrophy are, of course, common in any period in the economic history of the shoe - indeed of any - industry. In the period after 1895, however, in addition to these general problems of ageing, the 'old guard' were consistently at risk in the wake of the modernity which swept the industry.

1 Joseph John Gilbert (1834-1900) of Harleston Road, Duston, died on 12 April 1900. Executors, Sarah, his widow and George. Effects £3,748 11s. 6d. cf B.S.T.J. 15 September 1905 p439.

2 B.S.T.J. 15 September 1905 p439.

3 Church & Company Papers, Partnership Agreement 1902, Appendix II C.6. cf Chapman Brothers above; cf Appendix II C.14. Hornby & West, where founder's widow withdrew capital contributing to failure.

4 Example Appendix II C.15. See also Dissolution of Partnership Agreements of Northamptonshire firms: N.R.O. or (M) 255; or (M) 209-12; X6560 Bundle 20.

There is evidence that this inability for manufacturers of the 'old school' to compete against new ideas and younger, more vigorous firms dates from the beginnings of the modern development in the mid-eighties;¹ but this process reached its peak now during the last phase of industrialisation. A peak which is signalled by the 'shake out' of a number of old-established and formerly leading and influential Northampton firms.

Some of these firms were already run-down and show a common behavioural pattern in the wake of change. The principal, though of advanced years was still in control and unwilling to respond to new technology and organisational methods. Gradually as the firm's costs rose and markets contracted and the ageing principal's ability and energy faded, the stiffer price competition and more aggressive trading techniques of more progressive firms eclipsed the laggard. Implicit in this process was a failure of succession or second generation management. A prominent example of such a firm was that of Robert Derby J.P. A manufacturer of 50 years standing, he had once stood in the front rank, but at the time of his suspension employed only circa 35 men. It is noted:

... There's something almost pathetic in the downfall of the old established business of Robert Derby, one of the oldest and most respected (manufacturers), but its been evident for years that he has not moved with the times and fate has again overtaken the laggard. It is a case which illustrates once more the folly of men continuing in business beyond their times, in vain hope of making old notions square with new conditions ...²

An advertisement for the auction of his effects revealed machinery more suited to manufacturing in the early eighties: none of the post 1887 equipment was in use. The sale of "large quantities of work baskets", along with the absence of lasting and finishing machinery suggests that outworking had been used to the last.³ Derby, a former mayor and alderman of Northampton, died two years later

1 See example B.S.T.J. 16 October 1886 p275 per Northampton Correspondent: "Some of the old established houses complain of great competition they have to encounter from younger, go-ahead manufacturers".

2 B.S.T.J. 21 July 1900 p61.

3 B.S.T.J. 10 September 1900 supplement p21.

aged 88, at Windsor, his considerable fortune gone. An obituary commented:

... at one time he made considerable fortune. His one mistake was that he could not change with the times, but clung to old fashioned business until inevitably, disaster came and he was involved in ruin ...¹

H. Harday & Company was a company of similar stature to Derbys, where a 'withering away' of trade can be observed. The firm had been established in the late 1840's at 23 Regent Street by Henry Harday and through the mid-century had been one of the town's leading firms. In the early 1880's, David Sherwell and John Henry Neal were taken into partnership;² presumably the result of Harday's advancing years.³ Harday died in 1887,³ and under the terms of his will, Sherwell took over the business. Although an expansion of premises in Regent Street by the acquisition of numbers 17-21 and the taking of additional premises suggests that the firm was still displaying some vitality, there now followed a long period of decline. This decline was rooted in two elements. The first was financial. Under the terms of Harday's will £8,570 was paid out in annuities; money which had been a large part of his partnership share and represented disinvestment within the company on a large scale. Then in 1891, the partnership between Sherwell & Neal was dissolved and Neal who had been drawing £800 per annum, took £1,000 from the business. Secondly, at the time of the company's suspension in 1902, it was described as 'old fashioned' and "the firm had got sadly behind the times".⁴ Old, transitional methods of production were maintained with no effort made to improve marketing techniques. And so, the losses gradually mounted year by year. By 1902 liabilities stood at £5,035, against assets of

1 B.S.T.J. 14 February 1902 p263.

2 D. Sherwell had been in business on his own account 1876-79. The new partners received an annual salary of £250.

3 Henry Harday (1816-87). Died at Cliftonville 7 May 1887, effects £4521 ls. 4d. His brother George, one of four executors, was a surgeon of West Haddon. (Probate Registry Calendar 1887 plus will).

4 B.S.T.J. 3 January 1902 p4.

£1,149.¹ Northamptonshire Union Bank was owed £4,175 and it had been that organisations preparedness to continuously fund the firm that had enabled it to continue trading for so long. In fact, the business has been insolvent since Harday's death and Sherwell told creditors that he had only continued the business for so long because he had promised the founder to do so. This withering away of trade also occurred in the case of William Hollis & Son that failed in 1898 after trading for over 50 years. William G. Hollis was "one of the old school of boot manufacturers who have practically passed away".² He was a prominent public and political figure in the town, having been one of the promoters of the local manufacturers' association in 1879 and an active supporter of the volunteer movement.

Of course, implicit in the process of atrophy described in the last two paragraphs is a failure of succession. Yet even where second generation management had taken control, on occasion the dead-weight of an old firm's methods was often too great. This was particularly and strikingly demonstrated in the failure of Henry Marshall & Company. The family had been manufacturers from the early 18th century,³ but the modern firm had been began as two concerns controlled by brothers: Henry senior, who commenced in circa 1843,⁴

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- 1 B.S.T.J. Ibid p44: improper books of account had been kept and no stock-taking done.
- 2 William G. Hollis (1828-1903) died at St. Andrew's hospital, effects £10. His son, Walter G. Hollis, was a shoe agent.
- 3 N.I. 7 January 1922 p5. Henry (Henry senior's uncle) and William senior came to Northampton in 1818 from Water Eaton, Buckinghamshire, to start boot manufacturing.
- 4 Henry Marshall senior J.P. (1826-95), son of William senior and brother of William junior. A "pioneer of the staple industry, a man of keen business habits, (he) was one of the very first to introduce the sewing machine into boot manufacture". (B.S.T.J. 9 March 1895 p304). Prominent in the town's public life, serving as mayor in 1871, he died on 2 March 1895 at 'Poplars', Leicester Road, Northampton, leaving a widow but no children. Effects resworn at £6,208 Os. 7d. (S.L.R. 8 March 1895 p560).

and William junior who commenced in circa 1845.¹ In 1891 the second generation proprietors, Henry junior, manufacturer and Frederic junior, London solicitor,² purchased William Marshall & Company. Two years later Henry senior retired and the two firms amalgamated, trading as Henry Marshall & Company in Northampton and William Marshall & Company in London.³ When the bankruptcy petition and receiving order was filed it was noted that:

... (this) will come more or less as a surprise. Of late years it has been a great struggle, but it began to be thought the firm had got over the hard part. It is much to be regretted that such an old established firm as Henry Marshall has gone the way of so many of our older houses ...⁴

Only two years previously a small trade journal feature had written about the firm very positively: "The firm held and still possesses, a reputation for high grade goods and all that is best in the art of shoe manufacture. Under the present proprietor the business had developed and great enlargements have taken place".⁵ In the early years, the second generation made a profit and "until five years ago (1906) the capital was considerable".⁶ In 1908, the company was declared insolvent, but the chief creditor, Brooksbank, leather merchant and the family rescued the concern against the proprietor's wishes. Clearly attempts had been made to modernise production for it was noted:

- 1 William Marshall junior (1830-91) died 17 December 1891 at 1 Royal Terrace. Related to J. H. C. Crockett. Effects resworn £9,081 2s. 2d. (B.S.T.J. 12 December 1891 p672).
- 2 Frederic Marshall L.L.B., Q.C. born 1839, the fourth son of William Marshall senior of Northampton and father of Henry junior and Frederic junior. London University B.A. 1862, L.L.B. 1872. Called to the bar 1870, K.C. 1893. Noted legal career and publisher legal works (Who's Who 1897 and 1902 p474).
- 3 B.S.T.J. 26 June 1908 p518-19.
- 4 B.S.T.J. 23 September 1910 p486. Indeed, the period 1910-14 witnessed a final 'shake-out' of old established, traditionally minded firms. Prominent amongst these being Henry Wooding & Sons.
- 5 B.S.T.J. 26 June 1908 p518.
- 6 B.S.T.J. 5 November 1911 p155.

... They still possess the faculty of making high grade footwear, but they also produce them at present market price and with every modern requirement for latter-day shoemaking: (They) prepare smart stylish goods for present needs which combine the strength and solidity of the old with the style and smartness of the new and under (Henry junior) guidance, the house of Marshall should still rise to higher things in the world of shoe manufacture ...¹

However, the creditors' lists of 1911 reveal that trading had only been maintained in the closing years by the massive use of trade credit from leather merchants: that attempts at cost efficiency in production had been insufficient.² As a result it was noted that trading had appreciably fallen away in the last years. The final demise was heralded by a fire in September in the year 1909, which resulted in an insurance claim loss of £1,800. At this point, creditors began to push for payment. An arrangement to pay off £8,000 in debts was agreed.³ The resulting pressure of meeting these payments and a high production cost structure, led to the receiving order of September 1910 being filed. At the bankruptcy examination, liabilities were assessed at £11,128 5s. 9d. against assets of £3,543 13s. 6d., a heavy failure.⁴ The largest creditors, London leather merchants were Margetson & Company £3,140 and A. Brooksbank & Sons £2,500.

Yet, 'old guard' firms did not all leave the business in such a dramatic and painful way. Not a few manufacturers in this group chose to relinquish the business whilst it was still solvent: both H. Wooding & Sons and Evans & Company, briefly discussed above, exemplify this trend. But most prominent was the firm of Turner Brothers Hyde & Company and reference has already been made to this firm at several points in the thesis.⁵ The firm was one of the

1 B.S.T.J. 26 June 1908 p519.

2 B.S.T.J. 30 September 1910 p537 and B.S.T.J. 7 October 1910 pl2.

3 £3,300 to be paid cash and the balance at £60 per month for a year, £80 per month in the next year, thereafter at £100 per month.

4 B.S.T.J. 5 May 1911 loc cit.

5 See Chapter 8 , p517: for a full discussion of the firm's history.

dominant forces in British shoe industry in the 1860's and 1870's. Of the founders, Richard and George Turner were men of considerable business ability and centrally responsible for its phenomenal growth. They employed people in very considerable numbers, reputedly circa 4,000 in the 1870's and retained large numbers of outworkers in rural Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, serviced by shoe agents.¹ This organisation represents the extensive transitional mode of production carried to its extreme. In 1878 the shoe industry's union journal noted:

... The largest single shoe factory in the world is that of E. & A. H. Batchellor & Company, North Bridgewater (U.S.A.). It produces 7,000 pairs a day and employs 1,400 hands. Messrs. Stead & Simpson & Nephews of Leicester, England, having factories also at Leeds and Daventry, besides doing an extensive currying business, employ more hands and make a greater variety of goods. Turner Brothers & Hyde of Northampton, England, also have a very extensive factory, where they may possibly make a greater² number of pairs than Messrs. Batchellor but of less aggregate value ...

In 1881, the census enumerator noted that Richard Turner employed 1,500 hands.³

Both Richard and George retired in the mid 1880's, leaving the second generation in control: William Henry Turner (son of Richard) as senior partner, Thomas G. Turner (son of George), John (son of John, a founder) and Richard, a nephew. Absolutely no evidence is extant regarding trading between this time and the firm's closure in August 1904, save one short trade report in January 1897 which noted:

... One old established firm discharged a great number of hands on Saturday. They are finding out that things have changed from what they were 20 years ago when the firm in question could employ as many as 200 men in the shoe room alone. For some time past, they have found their trade gradually drifting away into more energetic hands ...⁴

1 Thomas Wright The Romance of the Shoe, p167.

2 N.U.O.B.S.R.F. Monthly Report January 1878 p14 quoting from the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labour 1875 p31.

3 P.R.O. 1881 census RG11/1543: By 1891 this number had shrunk to circa 800 (Where to Buy in Northampton p8).

4 B.S.T.J. 16 January 1897 p63, per Northampton Correspondent.

In 1904, the trade press give only the most formal of details regarding the cessation, which caused a degree of long term unemployment amongst former employees.¹ William Hickson & Sons Ltd. purchased the firm's goodwill, contracts and trade marks for an undisclosed sum,² and the factory was sold to Arlidge & Horton, box manufacturers. From surrounding circumstantial evidence it is reasonable to conjecture that the partners decided upon this course of action in order to liberate capital for other, presumably more profitable ventures. At the present state of knowledge it would be mere speculation to argue that Turners had failed to make the transition and were gradually losing ground. In 1908, W. H. Turner, with two sons, founded W. H. Turner & Company, leather factors.³ A year earlier, other former partners formed Turner & Company (Shoe Mercers) Ltd.⁴

Others of the old guard were small masters and they were similarly at risk during this period. Again, under competitive pressures, the familiar difficulties of finding a role, of seeking an alternative strategy in the face of change, which have been discussed elsewhere, came to the fore. Even where a small man traded with factors in the hope of shielding them from the full blast of competition, he too often found that he could not compete with those who were fully equipped with new machinery.⁵

V

A final qualitative feature which segregates post-1895 adjustments within the Northampton industry from what had gone before, was the removal of mature, successful firms to other locations, where trading was continued.⁶

1 N.R.O. Northampton Distress Committee Papers : Unemployed Registers 1905-14.

2 B.S.T.J. 3 December 1910 p426.

3 S. & L. Trades Supplement (1916) pxli. Also a director of Northampton Shoe Machinery Company Ltd.

4 C.R.O. File destroyed by P.R.O.

5 see example failure of B. Collyer & Sons; B.S.T.J. 19 April 1901 p529.

6 John Cooper & Sons Ltd; Derham Bros; A. & W. Flatau Ltd; all left the town as part of their Edwardian rationalisation plans.

As has been noted elsewhere, product specialisation at each shoe centre had been responsible for firms either setting up branch establishments in other centres or relocating to other centres. This trend was particularly strongly felt in Northampton in the 1880's, when a number of London firms sought to re-locate in the town. The last significant move in our period was that of R. E. Tricker & Company in 1903. However, as a result of mechanisation and the break down of product specialisation in the chain of distribution, the exclusive attachment of certain grades and types of footwear with certain centres was to some extent broken down: the rapid introduction of ladies footwear production in Northampton, traditionally a centre for men's wear, signals this process. The former element overcame the locational tie of labour skills, whilst the latter, particularly the consumer, increasingly demand a comprehensive service from shoe shops.¹ Thus, in the Edwardian period, under trading pressures and the pursuit of cost economies, firms began to close down branch operations and concentrate production at their home base. The most significant examples were: John Cooper & Sons Ltd., Derham Brothers, Flatau, Stead & Simpson.

VI

The business failure analysis discussed in the last two chapters, therefore, has highlighted a number of important issues relating to shoe manufacturers and their reactions to change in the wake of industrialisation. Initially, recognising the barrenness of the current literature's position that the forces

¹ Note the tendency of firms in Appendix II and III to diversify into ladies shoes in the period. cf Keith Brooker, "Henry John Bostock" D.B.B. (1984) Volume 1 p389. "Lotus Shoemakers Ltd. was formed in 1903. The branded products of the two family companies, Edwin Bostock Ltd. based at Stafford and Frederick Bostock & Company based at Northampton, were now marketed by Lotus. Ladies footwear was supplied from Stafford and menswear from Northampton. Traditionally, firms at each footwear centre in Britain had tended to concern themselves primarily with the manufacture and distribution of either men's or women's wear. The Bostock collaboration reflected a currently general trend towards eradicating this historic and in retailing terms, outmoded product specialisation".

of modernity were tamed by a small group of progressive manufacturers who forsook conservative business practices, it has been argued here that recognition must be given to the wide heterogeneous character of the shoe manufacturing community. The attitudes and business practices of the traditionally strong small master base permeated the industry and the high endemic levels of failure amongst infant small masters influenced all who traded there. Thus, any evaluation of the shoe manufacturing class as a straight-forwardly successful entrepreneurial group stands in need of qualification and modification.

In reality, rather than an assessment which stresses success exclusively, there emerges a strongly contrasting story of often notable individual success tempered by the much more common experience of a short, frequently precarious business life terminated by insolvency. In addition to which, some of the most successful of manufacturers had experienced temporary suspensions of trading. Both success and failure were part of the entrepreneurial experience in the shoe industry and to put forward what is essentially an heroic view of its history as the current literature does fall short of reality. The study of business failure in this industry therefore, acts as a necessary counter-balance to the success of small numbers of progressives recorded in that current literature: Indeed, it is an essential and integral element in the study of any industry, especially those typified by an unstable and strongly differentiated business class. And it is not merely the case that the study of failure becomes valid in its own right, because so many of the business group experienced insolvency, but more importantly, it becomes necessary to question the extent and ways in which the presence of a high failure rate in an industry inhibited its overall development and success. In the footwear industry, as has been demonstrated, the business practices of insolvents not only undermined business confidence, but also affected overall profitability in the industry. By this acceptance of the symbiotic relationship that exists between success and failure, entrepreneurial performance can be viewed in depth and from this a more balanced appraisal of progress emerges.

Turning now to the Northampton shoe industry, high endemic levels of failure were found to characterise the industry. In the period after 1887, there occurred a shift in the character and quality of the failures found there in the wake of industrialisation. This raises a number of issues:

(i) Normal trading pressures were characterised by three areas of problems that militated against an individual firm's success in the short run. Problems of credit; problems of establishing a market and questions of personal business skill and knowledge. It was found that this matrix and in particular the infant small masters often unorthodox solutions to those problems in his quest for survival, tended to undermine the shoe community generally in the years prior to 1895. In the course of this analysis, a closer characterisation of small masters in the industry emerged, than has previously been the case.

(ii) In the long run, it was found mature firms gained a degree of immunity against failure, but atrophy, a breakdown of the mature firms immune system, would leave it weakened and vulnerable to normal trading pressures. The extravagance of principals, the demands of family, poor management, the hiatus caused by death and retirement - all were isolated as potential problems for the mature firm.

(iii) The push to industrial maturity after 1895 caused a radical change in the character and quality of business failures in the industry. In addition to endemic failure, firms unable to accommodate change in the industry likewise began to either fail or leave the industry. This caused a shake-out, a contraction in the very size of the business community. Whereas previously a high turnover of firms is discernible, after 1893 the balance between entries and exits shifted causing a permanent diminution in the number of firms trading.

Finally, what was the ability of the shoe manufacturer to deal with the shifting business pressures present in the industry after 1887? Clearly any generalisation concerning the group has limited value and aspects of small master success have yet to be discussed. Nevertheless, some interim

observations emerge and should be recorded here. By the 1890's, it had become accepted that small masters had to be of a minimum size to survive regardless of any qualities they might possess and bring to bear on their business. The sheer weight and size of the competitive forces arrayed against them was to force many out of business. Increasingly survival was to require quite a flexibility of response; and understanding of markets and the ability to perceive and exploit a business opportunity. And it is in just this area of response - the personal skills and business acumen the small master was able to bring to shoe manufacture - that so many were found wanting. This not only gave rise to the rapid turnover of individual small masters over time, but contributed to their secular decline as a class in the face of modernity.

Since this chapter was written, the author's attention has been drawn to a small collection of legal documents concerning land dealings entered into by Turner Brothers & Hyde in 1888 and 1901. These reveal that the Company raised substantial sums of money by way of mortgage ⁱⁿ its premises in Northampton. In the absence of any evidence citing fixed capital developments being undertaken at this time, can one infer that these monies were used to support a company that was incurring rising levels of debt?

Their property was in two lots: the larger was a warehouse in Newland purchased by the partnership in July 1857;¹ the second, two small shoe factories also in Newland purchased privately by George Turner but rented to the partnership.² In 1888 the smaller premises were initially conveyed to the partnership by George, who then acted as mortgagor for the £1,800 that was

1 N.R.O. ZB37/12 Abstract of Title dated 25 July 1871

2 N.R.O. ZB37/13 Abstract of Title dated 27 August 1888

raised.¹ Then in 1901, this mortgage settled,² the main warehouse premises were mortgaged to J. R. Cowley, a farmer of Kilsby, Northamptonshire and F. Willoughby, a Daventry solicitor. The amount advanced was £3,500.³ A valuer's letter attached to the conveyance concluded that its market value was £5,340 and noted that:

... The whole is brick built and slated, of a substantial character and in a good state of repair ...⁴

-
- 1 N.R.O. ZB37/13-15 respectively. Abstract of Title, Conveyance and Mortgage Agreement. George funded the mortgage by creating a sub-mortgage on his principal mortgage with which he purchased Upton Hall. This enabled him to offer the partnership premises as further security so he could extend his mortgage on the Hall, which fell due on 16 September 1889. Turner purchased the Hall and c650 acres of land for £57,500 from William Wright of Friskerton House, Nottinghamshire in September 1881. (N.R.O. YZ9661 Conveyance). A mortgage for £40,000 was arranged between the parties. By late 1888, £5,000 had been paid and when it fell due in September 1889, was renegotiated. Wright transferred his mortgage to a group of Midlands businessmen, headed by a Henry Scampton. (YZ9662 Mortgage Transfer Agreement) cf Chapter 8 below.
- 2 ZB37/17 dated 1 July 1901.
- 3 N.R.O. ZB37/18-19 Conveyance and Mortgage Agreement.
- 4 Ibid, attached valuer's letter. The valuation included fittings, a 14 h.p. Stockport gas engine, shafting and pulleys.

SURVIVAL, SUCCESS AND THE INDUSTRIAL ELITE

One of the recurrent themes of this work so far has been to stress the heterogeneous character of the wholesale manufacturers group. Underpinning this heterogeneity was a small master characterisation in the industry, which was only gradually challenged and modified in the face of growing scale economies accompanying structural change. The common shared experience of the largest number of Northampton manufacturers prior to 1914 was business failure, which, as both an endemic factor and as a feature of structural change, has dominated the substantive part of the foregoing micro-economic study. Yet, there were sharp internal divisions between the diverse range of firms discussed in the last three chapters and the growing pervasiveness and importance of a small, increasingly dominant, elite group of progressive manufacturers. Although their presence and role has been noted at a number of points in this thesis, as a counterpoint, it is important now to pass to a study of this successful group.

Three introductory points need to be made. First, throughout the nineteenth century evidence of larger, more influential firms is present in the literature,¹ but as has been argued above, such men retained a dependence upon small master sub-contracting and component making through the transitional phase. Thus in the eighties, it has been found that this dependence and the business methods of the small master substantially affected the larger manufacturer's activities. It was only in the radical period of change after 1887 that larger scale production eclipses small commodity production and that the small elite group are able to fully consolidate their position. Secondly,

1 For example see Hatley (1967) op cit p246, "... By the 1830s many of these firms had become quite large. William Parker, who was probably the leading manufacturer at the time, stated in 1836 that he employed 500 persons and that his annual production was 20,000 pairs of boots and 60,000 pairs of shoes. One third of this output went to Manchester and the rest (so he inferred) principally to London. Parker was prepared to admit that John Groom, also of Northampton, was the proprietor of a firm almost as large as his own..."

it is important to appreciate the extent to which this small number of manufacturers ultimately dominated and determined the character and direction of the industry. Whatever measure one employs, be it personnel employed,¹ or capital utilised,² or pairage produced,³ this small group dominates our period. It will be important in this chapter to determine how and why they came to occupy this position, both as individual firms and as a group.

Thirdly, it must be stated that these oligopolists came from the same clay as the transient members of the group, the manufacturers who failed. That is to say, a practical, artisanal background. Only a few were foreign to this back-ground. This is the commonly accepted view: most writers, contemporary and historical, stress that shoe manufacturers 'rise from the seat'.⁴ But it will be an important task here to add a crucial gloss to that basic observation, which stresses the increasing exclusivity of the elite group. An exclusivity based substantially upon a small number, relative to all firms in the industry, of multi-generational firms, characterised by:-

- (i) an increasing number of second and third generation principals and
- (ii) a growth of a professional group of managers and directors and
- (iii) the increasing dominance of this group in the town's staple industry and its political and social life.

1 Note the discussion in Chapter 3 on firm size. Both Silverman op cit and Mounfield (1960) op cit attest that very few British shoe manufacturers employ more than 750.

2 Compare Figure 3:x, showing the declared realisable assets of Northampton shoe firms at the time of business failure 1885-1912 with Figure 7 and showing the capitalisation of limited companies in Northampton 1889-1914. In the former 43% held assets worth under £500, whilst in the latter the mean average capital declared on the first Board of Trade Return was £31,254: most companies fell within the range £20,000 to £50,000.

3 Compare Figures 7:ii and iii below with scattered references to small master pairage in Chapters 3 and 5.

4 See, for example, Fox op cit p26, where he notes of the manufacturer class, "There were many one time workmen and small scale producers who worked hard, ran risks and prospered rapidly; resolute, self-made individualists prepared to fight fiercely to defend and extend their holding".

These characteristics give rise to a number of issues which should properly be investigated. Initially, there is a need to identify the group and to explain its internal structure. Secondly, an examination of the economic motivations of members of the group and the strategies they employed to reap success. Lastly, the social character of the group will be examined, in order to reveal the social means whereby this exclusivity was delineated and reinforced.

I

The initial task, therefore, must be one of identification. This will be undertaken in two stages; the isolation of the successful group of manufacturing concerns, followed by an examination and determination of the internal structure of that group. Again, the essential methodological tool, is, as before, the corrected directory analysis. Of course, to take a static picture of a group, to scrutinize it and to declare some successful and others not so, is open to objection upon a number of counts; not least that it fails to take account of the transient and somewhat ambivalent nature of success, however that is to be measured. Nevertheless, there are at least two grounds upon which the study below can be argued to be of utility. The footwear industry had just emerged from a period of fundamental change. This marks a point in its history where one can justifiably and usefully make such an appraisal. 1914 can be correctly viewed as a secular high point of the industry's twentieth century trading. Never again was it to be in the position it enjoyed on the eve of the Great War.¹

At this time, 76 firms were engaged in wholesale manufacturing at Northampton. As a starting point, it can be proposed that 66 of this number had responded sufficiently to competitive pressures and the changes in both production and marketing to fulfil our basic criterion of success: survival. The remaining 10 (13.2%) were infant firms, founded between 1910-14: half of this number being new entrants. Given the high level of endemic mortality in the industry, their continuance in business can by no means be assured. They are,

¹ P Head (1968) op cit p184.

consequently, excluded from this study.¹ At the other end of the spectrum are the 25 (33%) firms which had been in business throughout the period from 1884. These form a core of firms in the success group, 10 of whom can be regarded as being in the front rank. The remaining 41 (53.9%) were founded between 1885-1910. Again, in their case, it is argued that survival beyond the crucial five year stage provides at least prima facie evidence of success. Of these 41, ten moved quickly into the first rank of firms by 1914, where they joined leading core firms, assuming a dominant role in the industry: see list at Figure 7:i below.

FIGURE 7:i LONGEVITY PROFILE OF NORTHAMPTON

WHOLESALE MANUFACTURERS GROUP OF 1914.

Year	Entry of Firms			Number of Firms with Biographical Sources	
	Number	% of total	*	Number	%
1910-14	10) 16	) 21	40	) 6	12.2
1909-05	) 6	)	13)	
1900-04	9) 16	) 21	13	) 8	16.3
1895-99	) 7	)	12)	
1890-94	9)	)	7	) 14	28.6
1885-89	) 19	) 25	9)	
1884 or before	10) 25	) 33	-	21	42.9
Total	76	100	-	49	100.0

Notes: * = number of 1914 firms expressed as a % of all firms entering in that five year period.

¹ C. Erikson, op cit, p222. Manufacturers were disqualified from her study if in business for under five years, or if they employed under ten persons. Whilst accepting the former criterion, little attempt has been made to invoke the latter due to a lack of data.

A further 17,¹ can be classed as being in the second rank. These firms, along with the remainder of core firms displayed, as a group, less aggressive and progressive management styles and policies, or traded on a smaller scale. The remaining 12, form a miscellaneous residual group, of whom much less is known.

Returning to the CDA study in Chapter Three, how does it compare with the findings there? Given that the detailed 1914 study represents a quantitative minority of the total of firms present between 1884-1914 (11.8% of the total of 643) and that a major qualitative difference exists between this group and the majority of firms - that is to say, survival and a measure of success over time - one would predict little or no conformity to the entry configuration found in the larger study. Indeed, this is the case, although it will be noted that a discernible difference exists between the number of firms founded prior to 1895 - 43 (56.6%) - compared with those formed after that date - 33 (43.4%). There is a slight tendency for entry levels to reflect movements in the trade cycle and for fewer firms to enter towards the end of the 30 year period. The years 1905-09 reveal this most sharply, when entry generally slackens following the psychological effects of the shake-out of manufacturers and the recent depression upon new entrants expectations. This is not surprising, for if the overall number of firms entering diminishes then the number of survivors over time from that period must similarly fall also. But one comparative point should be stressed. Observe column four of Figure 7:i. This reveals that despite the falling level of entries overall, the percentage of entries for firms surviving to 1914 in any one five year period remains remarkably constant between 1895 and 1910. This suggests that fewer enter, but, because of an increasing awareness of the level of failure in the trade, fewer marginal firms are floated. Indeed, for the last period, 1910-14, it appears on first sight, to be remarkably high. However, five firms are new entrants,

1 Together, these firms are designated, 'new generation'.

leaving a further five who survive, but had yet to reach a mature stage of development. At 7%, the figure is lower when compared with the period 1890-94, probably being a reflection of the increased likelihood of marginal firms to enter during depression. Again, a lower figure of 9% for 1885-89 is possibly an indication of the variable of age beginning to take effect.

Sheer survival, of course, does not necessarily imply that these firms and their principals were either wealthy or operated on a large scale; nor even that they were necessarily dominant and influential forces within the industry and local society. Using the longevity profile, it has been postulated above, that three bands of mature firms are present in the 1914 list: core firms, new generation firms and a miscellaneous category. Even a cursory examination of Figure 7:i shows 1914 firms to be at differing stages of maturation, but age alone is an insufficient criterion upon which to categorise. As has been demonstrated in the discussion of business failure, longevity alone is not a guarantee of survival, although several economists have suggested that a degree of immunity is achieved by virtue of a firm's age.¹ A priori, it is reasonable to expect that the industrial performance and wealth generating capacity of each individual firm, within the group, to have varied quite markedly and for this to be only partly a function of age. Thus, of the firms in the First Rank Listing, at Figure 7:ii, one finds that some were trading strongly in 1884 and that their position had become reinforced 30 years later;² that some had lost ground in the period;³ and that some, though founded only a short time had risen to prominence quickly.⁴ Moreover, their age alone did not ensure successful trading, this being as much a function of individual goals and

1 See, for example, Altman op cit Chapter 1 passim.

2 Example Appendix II C.1 to C.5.

3 Example Appendix II C.10, C.12, C.15, C.20.

4 Example Appendix III N.G.1, N.G.2, N.G.3.

FIGURE 7:ii - FIRST RANK FIRMS IN 1914:

THE INDUSTRIAL ELITE

Firm	Appendix Ref	Pairage	No. Retail Outlets	No. Prod. Workers	Capital ⁶ £
1 C. & E. Lewis	C.1	16000	-	1500 ⁵	-
2 Sears & Co. Ltd.	N.G.1	12500	100	1000 ³	350000
3 Crockett & Jones	C.2*	12180	-	1100	c850000
4 Manfield & Sons	C.3*	10500	60	1100 ³	(1.3m)
5 A. E. Marlow (and Mounts Co.) ¹	N.G.2*	7700	-	-	-
6 H. E. Randall Ltd.	C.4*	2190 ⁴	C55	300	211750
7 F. Bostock Ltd. (and subsidiaries) ²	C.5*	7000	10	C350	103195
8 G. T. Hawkins	C.6*	6250	-	C400	80000
9 Padmore & Barnes Ltd.	N.G.3	6000	-	-	44370
10 John Marlow & Sons Ltd.	C.7*	6000	-	350	30000
11 James Branch Ltd.	N.G.4	5000	-	-	42104
12 A. & W. Church & Co.	C.8*	4950	-	-	(135712)
13 G. Swan	N.G.5*	4300	-	250	-
14 J. Dawson & Sons	C.9	4000	-	-	(42299)
15 A. & W. Arnold	N.G.6	4000	-	C400	(24998)
16 Arnold Bros.	N.G.7	4000	-	C400	(25000)
17 S. Collier Ltd.	C.10	3000	23	C400	62536
18 Oakeshott & Finnemore	N.G.8	3500	-	-	-
19 Roe Bros. Ltd.	N.G.9	2000 ⁴	50?	-	N.A.
20 W. Barratt & Co. Ltd.	N.G.10	N.A.	20?	-	39648

Notes: 1 Mounts Factory Co. purchased 1908 from B. E. West.

2 (i) Lotus Ltd. (1903) and (ii) Sutor Ltd. (1911).

3 In case Sears & Manfield, firms had at least this number again employed in their multiple chains.

4 Factoring.

5 Probably the largest factory in the U.K. at this time was the C.W.S. factory at Knighton, Leicester, of which it was stated in 1906: "the largest shoe manufactory in the United Kingdom. There are here some something like 2,000 hands employed and the factory is capable of turning out about 40,000 pairs of boots per week".

* Signifies hand-sewn, specials capacity.

6 Valuations in parenthesis represent the nearest post-1914 valuation available.

attitudes. Yet, in terms of age, long established core firms marginally outweighed those of the new generation: as has been stated maturity brings with it a degree of immunity against failure. Indeed, individual manufacturers perceptions of what constituted success must have varied quite markedly being conditional upon a range of economic and social variables. Therefore, it is further necessary to investigate the internal structure of the 1914 Group: to attempt to rank surviving mature firms by industrial size, performance and characterisation, rather than purely by age. In the complete absence of anything like detailed, standardised business records for each firm, three economic measures of size are presented in Figures 7:ii and 7:iii as the criteria for segregation. As nominal output in 1912 is the single most uniform and comprehensive measure,¹ ranking is based primarily, though not exclusively, upon that. It is at once apparent that even from these incomplete tables, a wide range of firms in terms of size are represented.²

It is desirable, therefore, to realign these mature firms in order to take account of this essential difference. An amended, three part ranking emerges. A first rank of 20 firms which constituted an industrial elite in the town's staple industry (Figure 7:ii) and a second rank of 32 firms (Figure 7:iii). In addition to these, there is a miscellaneous group of 12 firms. In order to substantiate such a ranking, this chapter will analyse and explore this internal

1 G. T. Butnam, Shoe and Leather Trade in the U.K. (1912) Special Agent's Series No.49 U.S. Government of Commerce and Labour.

2 It was suggested by E. J. Swaysland in Boot and Shoe Design and Manufacturing (1905) that the typical, characteristic industrial unit, was one producing 3,000 pairs a week. At this level of production, volume batch production was possible. He adopts this production level throughout his book to describe the work of the various departments: see, for example, p192 on the lasting and attaching room and p201 and 210 on the finishing room. cf G. P. Grant loc cit p395, whose measure of a small efficient shoe firm is comparable with that used by Swaysland. (See the discussion on this point at Chapter 3, p above). Nevertheless, note also Grant's caution in using this measure; "a bold statement of the number of shoes produced compared with the number of people employed to produce them can be very misleading. In the first place, the simple output figure must be adjusted for quality and work content and then many other factors which make the simple comparison a dangerous one must be allowed for. Nevertheless (this measure of efficiency is the only readily available one)."

FIGURE 7:iii - SECOND RANK FIRMS IN 1914

Firm	Appendix Ref	Pairage	Number Retail Outlets	Number Production Workers	Capital £
1 A. Lee	N.G.11	3400			
2 H. Sharman	N.G.12	3200			
3 J. Robinson	C.11	3000			
4 John Branch Ltd.	N.G.13	2400			
5 G. M. Tebbutt & Sons Ltd.	C.12	2000		c100	25546
6 Crick & Co.	C.13	2000			
7 Green & Sons (N) Ltd.	C.14	N/A			9331
8 Hornby & West Ltd.	C.15	1500			10011
9 R. Taylor & Son	C.16	1300			
10 Allinson & Co.	C.17	1100			
11 T. Singlehurst & Son	C.18	1100			
12 W. B. Stevens & Co.	C.19	1000		c100	c2000
13 J. & W. Read	N.G.14	1000			
14 G. & W. Morton	N.G.15	1000			
15 G. H. Gainsford & Co.	N.G.16	800			
16 F. W. Pollard & Co.	C.20	700			
17 C. Gibbs & Co.	N.G.17	700			
18 J. Holmes	N.G.18	700			
19 W. Beale & Co.	N.G.19	600			
20 Eales & Son	N.G.20	600		c100	
21 C. G. Tompkins	C.21	400			
22 W. J. Marks & Co.	N.G.21	300			
23 C. W. White & Co.	N.G.22	300			
24 Conformable Boot Co.Ltd.	C.22	N/A			930
25 R. J. Fisher & Co.	C.23	N/A			
26 J. Emmet Ltd. (trading as J. Harrison)	C.24	N/A			2449
27 G. H. Kendall & Son	C.25	N/A			
28 F. Cook Ltd.	N.G.23				
29 W. P. Dalton & Co.	N.G.24				
30 C. E. Gubbins	N.G.25				
31 J. J. McMain	N.G.26				
32 Pioneer Co-operative Boot Society Ltd.	N.G.27				

APPENDIX: MISCELLANEOUS LISTING

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 W. Bosworth | 7 J. Jelley |
| 2 E. De Loos & Sons | 8 J. & J. Mann |
| 3 Pickering Fisby | 9 Thomas Richardson |
| 4 W. G. Garratt | 10 W. Todd & Co. |
| 5 Henry Gorbald | 11 R. E. Tricker |
| 6 Griffen & Fox | 12 I.L.P. Boot Society Ltd. |

structure. In charting success amongst footwear firms, two elements will be stressed. First, the different business and organisational strategies to change utilised in the pursuit of success, however that may be measured. And secondly, the recognition that such a ranking is as much a social as an economic segregation and that social characteristics and values were increasingly present to bolster and segregate the elite.

Before proceeding to a discussion of business strategies used by shoe manufacturers in this period of change, however, it is important to raise a methodological issue. In an industry populated by many firms that have left little in the way of archival material, a very real and acute initial research problem is to assemble adequate information upon a sufficient cross-section of individual firms, if one is to be able to investigate the economic and social make-up of the manufacturing group in a meaningful way. Consequently, a biography of each firm and its principals was assembled, where possible and a large portion of the proceeding discussion draws upon a comparative analysis of that biographical information. In order that such data does not unduly obtrude, it has been collated firm by firm and presented in three biographical appendices at the end of the thesis.

In the almost complete absence of business records, it has rarely been possible to comprehensively chart a firm's performance over time. Instead, what is more usual was the presence of sufficient information culled from a mosaic of sources with which to re-construct main shifts in policy and strategy. Concerning the biographies of principals, the information was collected, again, from a variety of genealogical and other sources readily familiar to biographers. Given the time constraints operating it was imperative to find an empirical key from which it was possible to begin to unlock each subject's life. The basis of this research was the trade press obituary columns, which were systematically searched between 1878 and 1914 and selectively searched thereafter to the 1960's. However, these obituaries provide one with a selective and partial sample, for only the more prominent of shoe manufacturers were seen as fit subjects by their

contemporaries for such treatment. Inclusion rested upon three broad grounds: that he was a significant trade figure; that he was a public man and that he was in some other way, worthy of remembrance. Thus the accolade of an obituary is suggestive of membership of the elite group, but by no means wholly so. In the absence of an obituary any search for data was quickly found to be fraught with pitfalls, given the wider ranging nature of this thesis.¹ Nevertheless, despite such problems, in only four instances amongst the core and new generation group was it not possible to generate a biography of some utility, despite levels of incompleteness.

II

This ranking by industrial size, therefore, provides a basis upon which to explore the internal economic and social stratification of firms in the 1914 sample. Any attempt to advance the analysis this stage further and to categorize Northampton manufacturers by industrial and entrepreneurial strategy is ultimately difficult because of the range and subtlety of the possible permutations that could be employed. Nevertheless, such a generalisation can be usefully put forward to facilitate discussion. By this means, a basic and contrasting strategic characterisation can be ascribed to first and second

1 It is instructive to record that in the collection of biographical information for this study, the most significant pitfall has been that of time. And beyond any question of time and the diseconomies of time which quickly set in if biographic details have to be searched for with no guarantee of success, was the lack of research funds required to give full biographic coverage of all subjects. (A particular handicap is the inordinate expense of using the Registrar General's records. On two occasions - 1975 and 1980 - permission was sought to have fees waived for this and other research purposes without success). At the heart of the matter is that such research is complex given the inconsequential social standing in which many shoe manufacturers were held by their contemporaries. Several historians have remarked that such difficulties have precluded research in other areas. For example, Doctor Gourvish, in his elite study of Victorian railway executives, notes: "much of this reticence may be explained by the difficulty of obtaining sufficient information on the background, careers and business interests of a representative sample of executives. Victorian society was much more interested in its statesmen and soldiers than its industrialists and commercial figures". (R.Gourvish, 'A British Business Elite: the Chief Executive Managers of the Railway Industry 1850-1922' B.H.R. (1973) XLV11:3 p291).

rank firms.

The first rank was composed of volume producers, many of whom both dominated the industry and played a significant role in political and social life. These 20 firms constituted a ruling oligarchy, an industrial elite in the town's staple industry. Included in their number are the progressive manufacturers of the current literature, who initiated and dominated industrial change. The accepted, prescriptive norm of what a successful firm was in that literature is derived from the experience of these firms. Implicit in the description is a move to volume, batch production of a few standardised lines based upon machine working and rationalised, sub-divided work procedures. Architypical of such firms is A. E. Marlow & Company,¹ Crockett & Jones² and C. & E. Lewis.³

The second rank covers a wider spectrum of firms and consequently, as a group it is less stratified. A majority of these firms were smaller in size when compared with many in the elite group and most developed a fundamentally alternative strategy for survival in a changing industry. Whereas the elite were volume producers, those in the second rank were more likely to concentrate upon short-runs of quality and specialist footwear: what Hillman describes as variety production.

In terms of quantity produced in any one centre the elite held a clear ascendancy, yet smaller firms, relying upon more traditional methods of production and marketing, were clearly able to sustain remunerative trading. At the level of the firm it was not crucial to 'be big' in order to survive;⁴ rather it was crucial for the small man to have the ability and perception to exploit his small size and mode of production in order to meet customer needs -

1 Appendix III, N.G.2.

2 Appendix II, C.2.

3 Appendix II, C.1.

4 H. C. Hillman "Size of Firms in the Boot and Shoe Industry" Economic Journal 49 (1939). The pre 1900 optimum size was large because of the presence of a competitive machine supply and because there was no balance between the individual capacities of machines. After 1900 this was altered by: ...

essentially these can be thought of as gaps caused by the rise of volume trading - in the market not readily satisfiable by the larger dominant firm. The basis of this role was the production of footwear partly or wholly by hand. Production which was either uneconomic for the volume producer to make, or, if he did, it was an area of production where the two competed on a more equal footing. The market for footwear was not monolithic in the period, despite the growth in sales of standardised, uniform footwear in the market-place. In practice, footwear markets remained differentiated by the quality of the product, its price, the function to which it was to be put and ultimately, by the mode of production utilised to make it. As S. S. Campion suggests, below, a market for single pairs and small order handsewn or combination goods remained. For, although volume producers held a dominant market position, it must again be stressed that 'traditional markets', whilst contracting, did not entirely collapse. As

Campion noted in 1907:

... Hitherto we have spoken of machine made boots and shoes, but excellent as they are, there is still a large section of the community which insists on hand-sewn goods. There are certain qualities imparted into the boot by the hand-stitchman, which no machine can hope to rival - says the votary of hand-sewn work - an elasticity, a pliability, a human touch which makes the hand-sewn boot a treasure. Such work is, no doubt, worthy of the palmist days of 'ye gentle craft' ...¹

Smaller manufacturers were therefore, able to fund and exploit a role suited to their size and type of operation and capital despite the forward march

4 ... (i) a change to monopolistic machine supply and
 (ii) growing imperfections of markets on the basis of variety manufacture. Consequently, after 1900 Hillman notes, "firms of less than 500 employees which are primarily engaged in variety manufacture may be just as efficient as the 25 large scale firms which produce almost exclusively standardised lines of shoes" cf H. A. Silverman Industrial Organisation (1947) Chapter 5 where he places the optimum size of a plant in the shoe industry at c750 employees. This conclusion is mirrored in the Northampton industry, with firms of employees in excess of this number operating from more than one plant.

1 S. S. Campion The Homeland Books: Northampton (1907) pxii-xiii, cf A. Adcock The Northampton Shoe (1936) p49. "A considerable number of shoes are still made by the old hand-sewn or hand-stitched method, not merely by some of those tradesmen who put 'Bootmaker' over their shop windows but by journeymen employed in the shoe factories of Northampton and district. Handsewn shoe making threatens to disappear, notwithstanding continuous efforts to maintain it".

of modernity in the industry. Competition for these markets¹ was intense and survival within it was often only assured after a painful period of retrenchment and rationalisation.² The hand-sewn specials market in fact covered a wide range of products. Much of this production was for heavy country boots and 'sporting boots'.³ Pollards and others found outlets for first quality town shoes in West End stores. Other small men again found outlets for special working boots, particularly in the industrial north, although competition from man-made materials and rubber boots provided stiffer competition here.⁴ Other specialty markets were more firmly dominated by small manufacturers: white goods;⁵ sportswear;⁶ medicinal and surgical boots.⁷

However, as has been suggested above, such a mechanistic distinction in production strategy was never in practice as clear-cut as this. Contemporary boot making manuals describe the move by manufacturers to one class of footwear and to a narrow range of styles, but as late as circa 1918 this clearly had not been fully attained:

... Under the present day conditions the secret of success, both commercial and technical, lies in specialisation and the factory which attains the best results is that which confines attention to one particular class of goods, but this development has been only partly successful ...⁸

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- 1 The general hand-sewn market contracted in the period, but portions of the first quality and special sectors were stable/rising, but subject to fierce home competition (overseas traders never entered these sectors) as manufacturers retreated here from other activities.
 - 2 Example Pollard & Co., C.20, cf S. Collier, C.10. The late 1890's was a period when smaller, average practice firms mechanised, example Pollard: W. B. Stevens & Co., C.19: Eals & Son, N.G.20.
 - 3 Example R. E. Tricker & Co., Misc. 11; G. H. Kendall Appendix II, C.25.
 - 4 Example Appendix II C.8 and C.10, where contraction in making working boots was attributed to the rise in man-made materials.
 - 5 Example Rowland Fisher Appendix II, C.23.
 - 6 Example G. M. Tebbutt & Co. Ltd., Appendix II C.12.
 - 7 Example J. J. McMain Appendix IV, Misc. 8.
 - 8 E. D. Sidwell, "Upper Cutting and Clicking", in Anon (Editor) The Modern Boot and Shoe Maker Volume III (1918) p63.

Thus, within the first rank 46% of firms retained a hand-sewn specials function (see Figure 5:iii). In the case of Manfield, this represented 14% of nominal weekly capacity, whilst in other instances this function was merely a residual capacity: at Crockett & Jones the figure was 1.5% and at Randall's 9.5%.¹ Despite this, the very retention of such capacity signifies the continued demand for first quality hand-made footwear in English markets noted by Campion in 1907. Those retaining hand-sewn work were long established firms that had established a market and retained a service that customers expected. Whether this represents just the pursuit of a profitable line, or an exercise in customer goodwill, or merely the desire on behalf of manufacturers raised in an era of hand-sewn techniques to retain at least some traditional work is not entirely clear. Certainly in the case of Manfield & Sons the provision of bespoke capacity, with its ancillary operations of last making etcetera and a range of special lines was not regarded by the principals as anachronistic and out of step to Edwardian trading techniques. Rather, it was viewed as being complimentary to the volume produced shoe made for their multiple chain. Customers expected the firm's branch shops to offer a full range of footwear services and Manfield's met that expectation.² In 1908, a trade journalist wrote of this variety of production in the following way:

... A noteworthy feature of the goods produced at Manfield & Son's works is the unusually large proportion of best quality boots and shoes and the machinery and labour are selected for quality of work, not essentially for cheapness of production. Manfields are not famous as the vendors of certain brands of boots, nor is the factory run upon the principle of exclusive concentration of a few lines. Their aim is rather at supplying the whole footwear requirements of the public and with this exceedingly ambitious end in view they are continually adapting their resources to suit the occasion and with such success that their clients become accustomed to the idea that whatever kind of boot they desire or need is to be obtained at Manfield's ...³

1 Figures taken from G. T. Butnam, op cit, cf in the case of G. M. Tebbutt Ltd., a second rank firm, the figure was 30%.

2 See Appendix II, C.3 p 612, regarding the firm's rationalisation of branch trading in the Edwardian period.

3 B.S.T.J. 26 June 1908 p49.

However, Manfield's policy was not as unique as this report implies. H. E. Randall Ltd., retained a long established retail branch in the city with a reputation for high quality hand-sewn goods. The market was defined and established and was in consequence maintained. The city trade in men's goods was one relied upon by many Northampton houses and recognised as a major outlet for first quality footwear.¹ In the case of Crockett & Jones, the custom of a wholesaler dealing, either direct with a bespoke customer or through a local agent, had been advantageously carried on for a long period. By contrast, new generation manufacturers had risen to prominence during a period of shifting fashions and had either been unable, or were disinclined, to enter this sector of the market. The only exception was A. E. Marlow, who had developed a specials factory and taken over the old established firm of B. E. West & Co. Ltd. But alone amongst the new generation, he had, in turn, been a manufacturer for some time prior to setting up, on his own account.²

Most front rank Northampton firms still offered what U.S. manufacturers regarded as too wide a product range. The British sales catalogues of the period reveal a large selection of styles still being offered by manufacturers. It was usual by the end of our period to offer within each main shoe style a variety of alternative finishes, choices of upper and bottom decoration and style variations. This was done in the belief that such choice range was

1 Anon The Modern Boot and Shoe Maker Vol IV p155: "All grades of trade in men's goods are successfully conducted in the city of London and other large commercial centres. Given a suitable position and a fair rent, it yields the best results. A good city position is near an Exchange or shipping centre. Other good positions are found near centres of activity such as the Law Courts. The strictly business centres are best. Smart-fitting, well-cut goods command remunerative and even high prices. The 16s 6d men's trade is essentially a city one and may be said to be the groundwork of the trade of a good class city shop, though the business spreads over so as to include higher grade lines held in limited quantities up to 30s per pair. Another type of city boot business is the 8s 11d and 10s 6d men's trade. The goods are sold at a low rate of profit".

2 Appendix III, N.G.2 p 752.

desired by the customer.¹ Thus, Manfield & Son's Costing Books (1906-07) reveal overloo styles being offered,² whilst Church & Company's Edwardian catalogues list a wide range of style variation and optional extras.³ Similarly, many Northampton firms continued to participate in a variety of sectors within the market: again a trend strikingly exhibited by Church & Co.⁴ The evidence presented in Appendices II and III, however, does suggest that specialty lines had been resorted to by manufacturers from the 1880's particularly in the sportswear sector. The first firm to use such a marketing technique was H. E. Randall Ltd., and their growth in that decade was centred upon the successful exploitation of the 'Tenacious' tennis shoe.⁵ Despite this departure, most in addition, still relied upon a general trade, which, like other aspects of trading policy rested upon the conviction that customers expected a broad spectrum of service from one manufacturer, rather than using several outlets to satisfy all of their

1 In Chapter 2, it has noted that major differences in style and customer expectation were perceived by U.S. and British manufacturers. Certainly in the 1890's, as a forerunner to successful penetration, U.S. manufacturers had had to modify last designs and in 1912, Butnam noted the continued essential differences between consumers on both sides of the Atlantic: "As a rule, English made goods are manufactured from plumper and heavier material than the same style of boot or shoe in the United States". "It seems characteristic of the English public to demand solidity rather than flexibility and comfort. There is no tendency to sacrifice wear for style and fit and the British man or woman demands wear first; yet it must be added that the British manufacturer is making real progress in the art of combining style and fit with durability". (Butnam, op cit, p10).

2 Manfield & Son's Records: Costing Books 1906-07.

3 Catalogue Collection in possession of Church & Co. p.l.c. Northampton.

4 Appendix II C.8.

5 Appendix II C.4. p . By the early 1890s the trade in patented and branded specialities had become an important element of many firms trading. In 1892 it was noted: "The manufacture of specialities has materially increased and as has many times been said, those manufacturers who were early in the field with such and have kept up the quality, have suffered less from bad trade". (B.S.T.J. 2 January 1892 p7). cf B.S.T.J. 30 January 1892 pl77 where the Northampton trade correspondent noted the increased use of patented specialities by Northampton manufacturers.

footwear needs.¹ Many Northampton manufacturers spoke of the essential need to be able to respond flexibly to the shifting needs of the market. In 1897, Simon Collier noted "the importance of adapting myself to the needs of my customers, never trying to make any special line of work but anything and everything my customers would buy".² By contrast, U.S. shoe manufacturers in the period appear to have been, as a group, much more aggressive manipulators of the marketplace. Indeed, Butnam pointed to this trend toward specialisation in his 1912 Report, but, as the Northampton evidence suggests the process had yet to reach maturity:

... Some English manufacturers are tending towards specialisation. Factories where formerly almost everything in footwear was manufactured have either discontinued some of the lines and are directing their energies toward perfecting the one or two continued or have divided the production of the numerous lines into different departments with separate supervision and management. Owners of some recently established factories confine the output of their plants to a certain class, grade, or line of footwear ...³

This was very much in line with a trend already taken much further in the U.S. By contrast, far fewer Northampton firms had concentrated production solely upon the volume batch production of a narrow range of standardised lines. Amongst the industrial elite, ten firms unequivocally reveal such a trend: C. & E. Lewis, Crockett & Jones, A. E. Marlow, H. E. Randall, A. W. Arnold, Arnold Brothers, S. Collier, Oakeshott & Finnemore, Roe Brothers and W. Barratt & Co.⁴

1 This belief gave rise to a trend in the Edwardian era of manufacturers cutting across the divide that traditionally existed between men's and ladies' footwear. Increasingly, retail outlets began to stock goods for both sexes and manufacturers responded by producing both men's and ladies' wear and complementary trade brands and styles began to appear. This gave rise to a number of Northampton manufacturers taking over firms producing ladies' goods, or acquiring ladies' goods trade brands: eg J. Marlow & Sons purchased W. Loading & Co., whilst G. T. Hawkins secured ladies' brands. See above Chapter 6 p .

2 B.S.T.J. 30 January 1897 p168.

3 Butnam, op cit, p9.

4 But note that Crockett's, Marlow's and Randall's had a separate hand-work capacity, noted above.

By comparison, as has been outlined above, the second rank and small miscellaneous group, reveals much greater variation in production strategy. At the top of the list are seen clear examples of volume producers,¹ and volume production capacity elements percolate far down the list,² although G. M. Tebbutt fifth in the list, executed one third of capacity as hand-sewn. The single greatest difference between first and second rank firms was the greater extent to which hand-work, either in the form of pure hand-sewn³ or as machine work combining significant elements of hand-work,⁴ was retained. Emphasis here was placed upon the production of first quality work, compared with the greater degree of medium grade work executed by the elite. Certainly the incidence of small order working is greater and at the end of the list, this tendency is universal. Here also can be found elements of the mixed function trading between the wholesale and retail sectors discussed in Chapter three.

III

Quite clearly, therefore, it would appear that the survival of individual firms was attainable without confining policy options to an inevitable shift to volume batch production. Certainly, elite firms were able to dominate the growing mass market for footwear, but smaller firms continued to trade with a measure of success, if they could overcome the vexed problems of credit provision

1 Appendix III N.G.11, A. Lee & Co.

2 Example Pollards (Appendix III C.20) was still executing restricted volume output at 1914, although much reduced when compared with 1895.

3 Firms at the lower end of the second rank were substantially still purely hand-sewn bootmakers: eg Appendix III N.G.26 and N.G.27; and Appendix II C.25.

4 R. E. Tricker (Misc. 11) is typical of the firm retaining hand-work with machine methods. In fact Swaysland op cit, at several points states this mix of hand and machine work for better grades of English footwear was common: eg at p201. "The production of 3,000 pairs per week on men's good to medium class work, provides for a considerable amount of hand-work, which in a lower class of trade might be dispensed with, but it has been found that for high class finishes a certain amount of hand-work is an advantage."

and entrepreneurial skills that have been discussed in the last two chapters. Many lacked that ability, but within the second rank are a number of firms that were successfully able to respond to changing market conditions by adjusting their factor mix. The biographies of these firms stress two abilities. First, the profitable production of first quality goods, competitively priced and made to a high standard that reflected traditional craft standards, yet gave recognition to modern styles.¹ Although modern, standardised styles were made, a wide range of specialty markets were catered for. Central to such thinking, was the emphasis firms placed upon the need for a flexibility of response; upon the need for diversification.² Whilst for some firms this was a positive response to change, for others it was a defensive strategy and underlines the painful period of adjustment experienced by some in the face of a contraction and rationalisation of their level of business.³ In similar sharp contrast to flexible managerial styles stands the example of firms who simply tried to imitate the machine systems of larger firms and failed!⁴

- 1 See, for example, Appendix II C.12 G. M. Tebbutt & Sons Ltd; also Appendix II C.11 J. Robinson & Co. and C.16 R. Taylor & Son: G. M. Tebbutt particularly displays this mix, for whilst hand-sewn work represented a large proportion of work made, modern welting machinery was adopted and in 1895, the firm was the first in Northampton to use a powered finishing system. The need for a high quality of production was noted at all levels of trading in the town. For example, a review of J. H. Marlow & Sons Ltd., in 1912 noted of its success, "(the firm has gained victory in waging)...bloodless war against unscrupulous competition, the stifling of output and the thousand and one other enemies of successful manufacture. This hard fight has been achieved only by the production of the highest grade of footwear; the strictest and most conscientious regard for business rectitude and the most strenuous efforts to keep always abreast of the times". (B.S.T.J. 28 June 1912 p601.)
- 2 All successful firms, elite and second rank, display elements of such a policy:- eg Appendix II C.1 C. & E. Lewis; C.4 H. E. Randall Ltd; and particularly C.8 A. & W. Church & Co. Likewise C.10 Simon Collier Ltd made the need for a flexible response to market demand paramount in deciding production policy in the short run. cf Chapter 6 where the inflexibility of old guard firms is discussed.
- 3 See, for example, Appendix II C.20 F. W. Pollard & Son: for a discussion of this firm's approach to change see Chapter 2.
- 4 The experience of several such firms has been discussed above in Chapter 5, prominent amongst whom was F. T. Tebbutt Ltd.

Despite this ability to respond to change, second rank firms were rarely in a position to challenge the elite. Their position was unassailable. That this was so, is shown in the number of important ways elite firms were able to reinforce their increasingly oligopolistic position in volume production to erect barriers to effective competition against competitors. The extent to which there had occurred a concentration of capital in production and with it the adoption of modern business skills and attitudes that progressively narrowed entry and competition in the industry, has already been alluded to. But, in addition to this, the elite sought to dominate distribution and marketing and it is here that these effective barriers are particularly noticeable. By our period the marketing and distribution of footwear had come to occupy a dominant place in shoe manufacturer's thinking: indeed, this can be said to be true of British industry generally.¹ Increasing efforts were made by British shoe manufacturers to operate their own distribution networks.² The increased importance given to this function is shown by the extent to which principals were engaged in selling and the degree to which rising second generation principals were trained in salesmanship.³

1 C. H. Wilson The History of Unilever I p44 where he concludes that increasingly from the 1870s the "emphasis in British industry was shifting from problems of production to those of distribution and salesmanship". As has been noted elsewhere the 19 century footwear industry was an early example of a manufacturing industry where producers make forward linkages into wholesaling in order to eliminate middle man profits. This further move forward in retailing represents an entirely logical extension of this trend. But cf Kindleberger's stricture in C. P. Kindleberger Economic Growth in France and Britain 1851-1950 (1964) p125 where he argues that the social aspirations of manufacturers generally tended to inhibit their marketing and sales techniques and acumen.

2 See discussion in Chapter two of the development of shoe industry distribution techniques and the reasons for this growth.

3 The importance attached to this aspect of a firm's operation is clearly shown in Appendices II and III. Underlining this importance is:
 (i) the extent to which shoe manufacturers matured and supported the Northampton branch of the United Kingdom Commercial Travellers' Assoc. (eg see Appendix II C.2 and C.17). No records of the branch have survived, but short feature articles and annual reports appear in the trade press. The conclusion here is based upon those sources; and
 (ii) the increased prominence of senior salesmen in shoe firm management (for example see Appendix III N.G.13.)

What is developed are all those marketing techniques economists have since linked to oligopolistic behaviour. The leading firms in the Northampton shoe industry acted as oligopolists, or near oligopolists, in the markets for men's medium and quality footwear.¹ The main elements of this behavioural pattern revealed here were:

- (i) the use of product differentiation techniques, trade branding and increasing levels of advertising;
- (ii) standard pricing;
- (iii) informal pricing agreements;
- (iv) a more intensive use of direct selling techniques and
- (v) a growth and extension in the case of multiple trading.²

¹ Most studies stress that oligopolistic concentrations within the industrial sector are linked to the rise of a few very large firms within each industry. Much less attention has been focused upon levels of concentration found in small scale manufacturing industry. But in P. G. Porter and H. C. Livesay "Oligopoly in Small Manufacturing Industries" Explorations in Economic History (1969/70) 7 p371-79, the authors conclude, "although studies of concentration of production almost invariably focus on the giant firms in the major modern industries which constitute the "center economy", it is clear that oligopoly has also existed in many minor manufacturing industries. Our researches suggest that, indeed, concentration has been a more common phenomenon in the small scale industries than in the major ones during the last half century". (Ibid p378): "In addition we found that in many cases the oligopolies existed in the latter decades of the nineteenth century as well". (Ibid p371). These small firm oligopolies were found to fit discernible patterns. First, a concentrated industry was one in which six or fewer firms produced at least 50%, or 12 or fewer firms produced at least 75% of the total value of product in the industry. Secondly, that such concentrations occurred, not in modern twentieth century industries reliant upon new technologies, but in "closely related to the older, agrarian-based economy of the nineteenth century. They represent businesses whose markets survived even after the rise of the giant firm and after the coming of large scale, modern industry. They are those industries in which markets have remained relatively stable and in which the degree of technical complexity involved in production has not changed". Although this research refers to the U.S. economy, it is useful in this study and points to the question of concentration in the shoe industry. Quantitative evidence presented earlier in Chapters 3 and 7 suggests a level of concentration existed. Total product values for the Northampton industry are not available, but using output data from Figure 7:ii and iii, it was found that the leading six firms produced 41% of total output and the leading 12 firms produced 64% of total output: this assumes all firms are producing at full capacity. Given that there exists a direct relationship between output of a product and total value produced, it is observable that levels of concentration had occurred in the industry.

² On firm created barriers to entry see R. G. Lipsey Positive Economics (1983 sixth edition) p286-89 cf Pickering op cit p68 et seq and particularly his discussion there of the use of trade marks to restrict competition.

As Chapter two has demonstrated, the use of direct selling through representatives and of agency agreements had long been resorted to. The 1870s witnessed the rise of retail chains; a movement that was to intensify in the 1890s as a result, partly of increased competition and partly of the shift to factory production giving rise to over production.¹ The trade press suggests that the pressure growing retail chains generated led to more aggressive marketing techniques generally. Those manufacturers without chains moved quickly into in-stock systems,² in an attempt to provide retailers with better service. Agency agreements became more common and some manufacturers provided retailers with display materials for window dressing. A. E. Marlow was prominent in these departures and one manufacturer in Northampton established an art department at his factory to produce display materials.³ Another course was taken by William Barratt, who introduced mail order selling into the industry in 1904.⁴

Increasingly, elite firm advertising became more flamboyant and intensive. The use of newspaper and periodical advertising became common, with some revealing a high quality of art work.⁵ It now went beyond the more passive and sedate use

- 1 The trade press in this decade gave increasing coverage to retailing issues, which reveal that the industry was becoming more aware of the need to present footwear for sale in a more attractive way. More attention was being given to window dressing, colour, presentation, sales techniques and so forth. The style and decor of the multiple chains became increasingly more lavish in the period (see, eg, Appendix II C.3). Another element in the intensification which took place in retail matters was the rise of local retailers' associations.
- 2 On in-stocking see Appendix II C.3, C.4 and Appendix III N.G.3 cf Anon The Modern Boot and Shoemaker IV pl76 on the derivation of shoe in-stock systems from on-stocking.
- 3 Appendix III N.G.3 Padmore & Barnes Ltd.
- 4 Appendix III N.G.10.
- 5 See, for example, A. E. Marlow's advertisements in the B.S.T.J. after c1908. Another new generation firm's success can be said to be founded upon this new style of advertising and the use of high quality sales catalogues and mail order literature: W. Barratt & Co. Ltd. An obituary noted: "Sensational was the publicity of the earlier boots-by-post years, when full page spaces in national press compelled the public to take notice. Among practitioners of advertising the Barratt advertisements have been acknowledged as exemplars ..."

of customer recognition of a manufacturers' goods through the medium of advertising derived from trade exhibition awards which, whilst still used, had been particularly in vogue in the 1880s and 1890s. Increasingly, what are witnessed in the shoe industry are the characteristic techniques of brand marketing, then being rapidly developed by consumer industry firms in the economy: standardised products; distinctive retail packaging; advertising; the stress upon brand goods.¹ The central aim of such techniques was an increase in market share; the mood of the market place was both alert and aggressive. The Edwardian period also witnessed the use of advertising gimmicks to arrest the public's attention. Prominent exponents of this technique were A. E. Marlow's use of heavily publicised long distance walks to advertise the resilience and quality of his footwear² and William Barratt's use of aircraft to deliver shoes.³

The seemingly pervasive character of the shoe industry's small firms might suggest the presence of open, competitive trading, but the reality became increasingly removed from this.⁴ Both the increased concentration of manufacturing capital and the increased use of trademarks, multiple chains and standard pricing served to practically concentrate a large share of the market,

5 ... of the craft". (N.C. & E. 8 December 1939 p10. By 1913 advertising space was taken in all national dailies and many periodicals. By the early 1920s a card index of over 200,000 mail order customers had been generated, derived principally as a result of newspaper advertising. An interesting feature of these advertisements and one copied by several twentieth century businessmen, was that they always featured William: many thought this egotistical, but it clearly had an impact". (See Appendix III N.G.10: cf N.I. 6 June 1936 p10-11. "A Northampton Firm's Romantic History": The Romance of Barratt (c1948) carries illustration of these).

1 See W. J. Reader's discussion in W. J. Reader Metal Box: A Company History (1976) Chapter one.

2 See B.S.T.J. March/May 1904, when a walker covered the distance from Land's End to John O'Groats in a pair of Marlow's 'Dreadnought' boots.

3 Occurs in 1911 between Northampton and Hendon. This was claimed to be the world's first aerial parcel post. cf in 1921 Barratt supplied boots to Shackleton's polar expedition.

4 But note the Balfour Committee Report on industry describes the shoe industry as being characterised by open competition.

more particularly for standardised footwear, into the hands of a relatively small number of the many firms still trading;¹ whilst the remainder sought markets, as has been argued above, in specialist fields and at the periphery of the volume market.

In contrast to aggressive young firms like Marlow's and Barratt's, many others continued to follow the more sombre and modest marketing techniques of the generation before. Rather than portraying a modern image that stressed fashion consciousness and competitive pricing, second rank firms stressed older values: a pride in quality and craftsmanship at fair, honest prices.² Practical manufacturers rather than men of business, their concern centred upon the workshop and production: a good product fairly priced, it was implicitly felt, was bound to sell. Indeed, the concept and ideal of fair, honest trading was made a virtue of. Similarly, in terms of selling techniques, whilst the use of branding to differentiate products was universal, the increasing scale and sophistication of elite firm advertising was shunned by the more restrained, passive style summed up in the phrase, "let the product speak for itself".³ The new generation of manufacturers, however, whilst appreciative of the need for good quality workmanship, increasingly shifted their focus of attention to

1 A further important element was present, but it is not known how widely it was utilised. Some Northampton manufacturers became involved in the importation and distribution of foreign shoes during the late nineties importation boom: a trend that anticipates retailing techniques in the industry today. See Appendix II C.4, where the involvement of H. E. Randall in the sale of U.S. import goods through a subsidiary, the British And American Shoe Co., is discussed. The only other documentary evidence that suggests the prevalence of such a strategy, is Crockett & Jones involvement with Bally of Switzerland in shoe importation; through the London Shoe Company Ltd. Formerly owned by E. J. V. Earl, the company was incorporated in 1899 and three years later had an issued share capital of £105,000. The Swiss shoe firm and other Swiss nationals were prominent shareholders and I. Bally sat on the board. Crockett's also owned shares. (B.S.T.J. 1 August 1902 pl33).

2 Yet this does not necessarily mean that new methods of production were finally eschewed. See, eg, Richard Taylor & Son Appendix II C.16 and G. M. Tebbutt C.12.

3 Appendix II C.20, F. W. Pollard & Son. cf this approach with Barratt's, who pointedly noted "he who has goods to sell should holler and not whisper down a well". (N.I. 6 March 1936 pl1).

what they perceived as the more crucial issues of modern business: marketing and finance.¹

A final example of the way the elite was able to manipulate and dominate markets is shown by the activities of the Northampton Manufacturers' Association. Through the period under discussion the elite had effective control of the Association and were able to use this organisation to reinforce their trading position.² The Northampton Association was founded in 1879 to protect the trade interests of the town's manufacturers: prior to that date matters of mutual interest had first been decided at ad hoc meetings,³ and after 1867, through the re-constituted Northampton Chamber of Commerce. Initially founded as a trade credit association, in practice its activities quickly went beyond this.⁴ The important work of the Association dates from the time of the 1887 strike, when arbitration and conciliation machinery was permanently established in the town.⁵ Industrial relations matters have tended to dominate the little literature that

1 Several of the elite reveal a preoccupation with these matters; eg Appendix II C.3 and Appendix III N.G.1. Matters of production were increasingly left to competent managers.

2 This statement rests upon two strands of evidence from contemporary press coverage of Association activities. One strand stresses the constant problems caused by small manufacturers, who declined to join the Association and constantly worked against Association interests. The other strand reveals the dominant role played by elite members in the management of Association affairs.

3 This is ascertained by Anon Story of Northampton Town Boot Manufacturers' Assoc. Jubilee Year 1929 (1929) p.1. (N.R.O. Records of Northampton Town Boot Manufacturers' Assoc. Acc 1978/164, Box S 357). Thus for example, the commercial crisis of 1857-58 finds leading manufacturers in the town meeting to decide joint action concerning advances in raw material prices. See N.M. 14 February 1857 p.4, where it was decided.

4 The remaining records of the Northampton Town Boot Manufacturers' Assoc. were deposited in N.R.O. in 1978. Unfortunately this archive contains nothing but negligible references to the pre 1914 period.

5. This arbitration and conciliation machinery was initially founded in late 1883, following militant industrial strife in the town, principally concerned with the practice of depressing wage rates in times of slack demand. It quickly disbanded and was temporarily reinstated in mid-decade, again briefly (see Anon (1929) op cit p3 cf contemporary reports in N.U.B.S.O. Monthly Reports). In 1884 Assoc. members entered into a £100 bond for "mutual protection and support".

has been published about the Association and this aspect of its work was indeed very important in this period ^{of} change.¹ Yet there is at least some evidence that suggests that the ways in which the Association offered "mutual protection and support" were more diverse than this. Successive reports of the Associations's annual general meetings give some idea of the scope of this mutuality: lobbying railway companies concerning freight charges;² petitioning insurance companies regarding fire insurance tariffs;³ attendance at government inquiries;⁴ petitioning the local town council concerning the vexed machinery rating issue⁵ and so on. Indeed the revised constitution of 1910-11 gave a rather belated recognition to these many activities:

... instead of the Association being merely a debt collection agency it became one for the general promotion of interests of boot manufacturers. The aims were:

- (i) to promote general interests and render aid in worker disputes.
- (ii) frame statements of wages and conditions.
- (iii) settle disputes by arbitration.
- (iv) support measures for the promotion and improvement of the industry.
- (v) promote technical education ...⁶

of particular interest to the present discussion, however, are the few strands of evidence that suggest the Association set minimum prices for product ranges; that it acted as a price ring in the interests of the elite. In 1889 following an increase in wages to hand-sewn shoemakers, the result of increasing demand and of the decreasing supply of first class hand labour:

1 See J. H. Porter "The Northampton Arbitration Board in the Shoe Industry Dispute of 1887" N.P. & P. IV: 3 (1968) and "The Northampton Boot and Shoe Arbitration Board Before 1914" N.P. & P. VI 2 (1979): cf A. Fox op cit Chapter

2 B.S.T.J. 17 April 1897 p55, cf B.S.T.J. 20 April 1894 p894.

3 B.S.T.J. 7 May 1903 p717.

4 William Hickson, for example, represented the Association at both the Royal Commission on Labour in the 1890s and the Tariff Commission a decade later.

5 B.S.T.J. 17 April 1897 p551.

6 Anon (1929) op cit p3.

... The Northampton Manufacturers' Association have just taken a step of some importance to buyers of hand-sewn boots and one which is almost, if not quite, unprecedented in the shoe trade. It has become necessary to advance the price of the manufactured article and this has been done by the joint action of the local association ...¹

Under this directive, calf work was advanced by 9d per pair and patent work by 1/- per pair. In addition to this, the making of odd pairs was, in future, to be charged at bespoke work rates and some classes of youths' styles were increased by 1/- per pair. The circular letter informing manufacturers of this decision argued that "the above resolutions do not attempt, of course, to provide absolute uniformity of price; but they provide uniformity in the amount of advance to be asked by the manufacturers".² The effect in practice, however, ensured just this, as a marked degree of price uniformity already prevailed as a result of recently negotiated and detailed wage statements, standard pricing and general market conditions. It is probable that such a uniform pricing policy became standard practice in the ensuing decade.³ The available evidence is, however, particularly sparse,⁴ thus making any final observations rather

1 S.L.R. 7 September 1889 p286.

2 Ibid.

3 S.L.R. 21 April 1893 p983. Manufacturers' Association to circularise customers re uniform price increase: opposed by smaller Association members because it was said to favour the large firm.

4 The N.R.O. archive noted above contains only negligible information pre 1914 and is, hence, silent on this issue. But note press interview with Sir J. H. C. Crockett, then Association president, in 1907 when asked "Is there any hope of absolute unity amongst manufacturers?" he replied, "It is a consummation we devoutly wish for. It would be better for the trade and manufacturers themselves if they remained united. The prospects of unity which could secure standard prices are prejudiced by the fact that each manufacturer generally prefers to work his own lines. It is very difficult in a country like ours, where there is such a mixed production to lay down a hard and fast standard of prices, as against prices of U.S. manufacturers, who specialise in a few lines in such great numbers, that they can bring down the cost of standard goods to an enormous extent". (N.I. 18 May 1907 p22-23. The general historical literature on Manufacturers' Associations is sparse and offers little guidance, although a recent essay suggests their power and influence was sectional and generally limited; a position only changed by changed conditions of the Great War. See W. R. Garside "Management and Man" in B. Supple Essays in Business History (1977). The extent to which the Northampton Association was able to assume full control of the workplace and set the price of labour in addition to influencing market prices, possibly represents a strong association.

speculative.¹ In May 1900, a circular letter from the Association again instructs uniform, across the board, price increases upon the making of single pairs in the specials department. It was noted:

... with reference to single pairs specially made and boots made to measure, that as modern methods of boot manufacturing make it increasingly difficult to produce them at prices that have hitherto prevailed, it was necessary for manufacturers to come to a common understanding on the subject. Although it has been the practice to make some charge above the quotation for regular lines, it has not hitherto been sufficient to compensate the difference in the cost of production. With a view to put this matter on a satisfactory footing and to ensure uniformity of practice at this centre, it was resolved that in future there shall be a charge of:-
1/- per pair on all single pairs and a MINIMUM CHARGE of 1s 6d on all measures ...²

Certainly this represents an attempt by the Association to control prices in a sector of the market in which British manufacturers held sway. But whether this was merely an attempt to create an element of excess profits to help offset falling profit margins in the keenly competitive volume trade, or whether it was an attempt by elite manufacturers to place pressure upon small masters is, again, not clear.

IV

Beyond the need and ability to diversify into new areas of production and to utilise new distribution techniques, Chapter six has stressed that established firms faced almost inevitable organisational hiatuses. The ability

1 Nevertheless, this trend has been observed by both historians concerned with general economic trends in this period and by those writing case studies of single associations or firms. On the former, see W. H. Court British Economic History 1870-1914: Commentary and Documents (1965) Chapter 5 on competition and monopoly. On the latter, M. Sessions The Federation of Master Printers: How it Began (1950) especially at p12 where a contemporary assessment is reproduced: "It argues well that the new century begins with this important movement towards the increased solidarity of the trade: I hope great things of it, not only in uniting the trade in self defence against undue aggression on the part of employees, but still more as a basis to resist unreasonable demands by customers and getting a more adequate return from them for arduous and expensive work".

2 N.R.O. Pollard & Son Papers. Pol. 253, miscellaneous correspondence: G. F. Lea, Secretary, Northampton Manufacturers' Association to all members dated 28 May 1900.

to cope with such crises was crucial to the firm's short-term survival and its long-term success. Indeed, it was the successful negotiation of these organisational problems as much as continued financial solidity and trading success that ensured the continuance of these leading firms. The organisational framework within which these strategies were worked out in the shoe industry was overwhelmingly that of the family partnership: sole traderships being less numerous. As is true of most British industrial concerns prior to the Great War, shoe firms typically reveal a close pattern of family and friendship ties. It was these bonds of kinship as much as partners industrial and business skills that lay at the centre of a firms survival and success over time, despite the rise and development of the limited company form amongst the elite. Thus, underlying any discussion about strategies for survival and success it is important to consider the organisational character of elite firms and in particular, to consider their preparedness and ability to face organisational change. Rather than being the 'weak link' that resulted in the demise of old guard firms, the organisation of the elite was more resilient in the face of change: they could negotiate the inevitable hiatus. This ability both strengthened and underpinned their dominant trading position.

When the success of the elite is measured against the failure of the old guard discussed in Chapter six, it raises an issue of importance, both to historians generally and to our deliberations here: do the interests of the family inevitably have a detrimental or an invigorating effect upon the performance of the firm? Certainly, U.S. scholars studies of their economy in the period perceive that old forms of business organisation had to be re-shaped to help facilitate change and growth. For example Navin and Sears conclude:

... the nature of ownership was in many instances imposing a block on progressivism in business affairs ...¹

1 Navin & Sears "Rise in a Market for Industrial Securities" B.H.R. xxix (1955) p106.

Such a clear cut perception of the family firm is not present in writings on the British experience. Strongly contrasting views of the 'drag effect' of family influence upon development and growth have been put forward. British historical opinion is divided on the issue. A large weight of opinion has stressed what P. L. Payne argues was the "dead hand of family influence" that ultimately hindered British corporate development and in turn limited over-all growth within the economy during the period.¹ Much of the earlier literature expressing this view has been reviewed in Kindleberger's essay on the British family firm published in 1964.² Based on this literature he drew up a list of failings:

(i) the failure of leadership by inheritance, because the drive and ambition of the founder is matched only by the acceptance of comfort and familiarity with wealth in the succeeding generations. He notes, "After the family had held property for two generations, it became aristocratic in thought and interested in dynastic succession";³

(ii) the unwillingness of the family to accept any loss of control over the running of the firm;

(iii) the failure to delegate in old age, matched by the problems of bureaucratisation if the founder dies;

1 P. L. Payne (1967) op cit p537-38, where he notes the marked difference in capitalisation between top companies in the U.S. and Britain. cf p539-42 on which are tabulated the sizes of top American and British Limited companies in 1905. It is pertinent to note that even amongst these top British companies an essentially family style of management persisted in the period. See, for example, I. A. Williams The Firm of Cadbury 1831-1931 (1931) p258. "The growth has been from a business employing a few people, to one employing many thousands. It has been from the undivided personal control of a proprietor working side by side with his work-people, to that of a board of directors - chiefly his grandchildren and great grandchildren - whose whole energies have to be given to the management of a great organisation; and B. N. Reckitt The History of Reckitt & Sons Ltd. (1952): The firm was first incorporated as a public company in 1888. In 1910, the family occupied seven out of ten seats on the board and by 1924 five out of 11. (Reckitts were 49 (of 52) on Payne's 1905 list).

2 C. P. Kindleberger Economic Growth in France and Britain 1851-1950 (1964) p124-34.

3 Ibid p124.

(iv) the social restrictions that upward social mobility placed upon marketing flair, which has been touched upon above.

In contrast to Payne's condemnation and Kindleberger's strong reservations, may be cited Habakkuk's view of the British family firm as an important engine of growth and economic progress.¹ In his history of Marsh Brothers & Co. of Sheffield, Pollard is equally convinced of the primacy of unincorporated associations dominated by family influence, not only during the classic period of the industrial revolution but through into the twentieth century.² These different opinions are in part based upon a difference of position and partly on a difference of perception. Those who condemn the family firm tend to be concerned with investigating long run performance of the economy and are seeking to explain Britain's decline in terms of the failure of firms and entrepreneurs to perform adequately in a changing economic climate.³ Habakkuk's view clearly stands at variance to this trend, but gains ground when individual firm's histories are analysed. Certainly a number of company histories have been written which tell of a family firm's ability to trade dynamically through several generations, to recruit outside personnel and capital and to avoid the sterility and inertia with which many view multi-generational firms in

1 H. J. Habakkuk "Family Structure and Economic Change in Nineteenth Century Europe" J.E.H. 15:1 (1955) passim. See also Habakkuk (1962) op cit p213, where he argues that where market conditions were favourable to Britain, then the British entrepreneur was as dynamic as his American counterpart. cf Chapter 2, above, where Britain's overseas trading in footwear is discussed. The conclusions reached there, commended themselves to this line of argument.

2 S. Pollard Three Centuries of Sheffield Steel (1954) pl. "It was largely the family firm, built up as it was, on the personal integrity and reputation of the partners, each of them liable with all his possessions, for the actions of the others, which laid the foundations of Britain's industrial greatness".

3 See P. S. Florence The Logic of Industry (1953) p320. "It is possible that the relative decline in British industry between 1880 and 1930, when compared with that of other countries, has been due to the large proportion of its output controlled by family heads reacting less keenly to higher profit and reinvesting less of that profit".

nineteenth century Britain.¹

Indeed, this ability of family firms to trade successfully through several generations is a theme that underpins the Northampton elite. The evidence suggests that there was a continuity of family ownership across generations. This is first revealed by the directory analysis.

The founders of a majority of the firms in the 1914 corrected directory list were still in control of their businesses. This is true of 55.3% (42) of firms recorded there. In the remaining 34, however, some element of multi-generational control was present: of these, 23 were core firms.² The spread of control by generations in these substantially family businesses is listed in Figure 7:viii below:

1 Possibly the most cogent defence of family influence is that in T. C. Barker's study Pilkington Brothers and The Glass Industry (1960). Here it is shown that a firm could be progressive over succeeding generations and that continuing family influence and control need not exclude the granting of considerable influence and control to outsiders possessing needed technical expertise in order to strengthen family management of the firm. cf this assessment with G. B. Sutton's of the Somerset shoe firm C. & J. Clark. In "The Marketing of Ready Made Footwear in the Nineteenth Century" Business History 4 (1964), he writes of the inertia and conservatism which pervaded the firm after the first bloom of the founder's success; a result of insular and parochial family domination. On this theme see D. H. Aldcroft "Technical Progress and British Enterprise 1875-1914" Business History 8 (1966), where the small family firm is perceived as an important causal factor in what the author sees as a failure in British industry after 1870. At p127 he notes, "It could of course be argued that Britain's concentration on the heavy staple industries created structural rigidities and made it difficult to shift resources to newer lines of development. But there is no evidence to suggest that the newer industries were held up by lack of resources, either labour or capital. The problem of these industries was not that they did not develop but that they progressed too slowly. There are a number of reasons to account for this, one of which is the smallness of many of the firms and the unscientific approach which they adopted to the techniques of production".

2 Only two core firms do not reveal an element of multi-generational control. J. Emmet Ltd. (Appendix II C.24) and Comformable Boot Co. Ltd. (Appendix II C.22).

Figure 7:iv Multi-Generational Control Patterns
Amongst Northampton Wholesale Shoe
Manufacturing Firms in 1914

Control Pattern	Firms Founded pre-1885	Firms Founded pre-1890	Firms Founded 1890-1914	Total
Founder	3	2	37 (5)	42 (55.3%)
Founder/ Second Generation (1)	7	1	2	10 (13.2%)
Second Generation	11	3	2	16 (21.1%)
Second Generation/ Third Generation (2)	3	-	-	3 (4.0%)
Other	1 (4)	-	-	1 (1.3%)
N/A (3)	-	4	-	4 (5.1%)
Total	25	10	41	76

- Notes:
- (1) The essential qualification for control is that of a binding legal agreement conferring control. Thus where the founder shares control with the second generation it most commonly took the form of a family partnership. Where a limited company had been formed, the qualification was that of director. Where the second generation is merely part of the management and has no legal ownership share conferring control, a firm is not entered under this category.
- (2) Here the second and third generations shared control legally. Again, the mere presence of a third generation member in the management structure, as is the case in Allinson & Co. and F. Bostock & Co. Ltd., is not sufficient to place these companies in this category.
- (3) Information not available.
- (4) This firm is Joseph Dawson & Son, a fourth generation firm founded in 1780.
- (5) Includes ten infant firms.

Source: Corrected Directory Analysis.

Only firms which pre-date 1885 display a marked tendency toward multi-generational control. Yet fully ten still had the founder actively involved in the running of the business, as has been shown above. The three public limited companies in

the list¹ had not developed a true corporate identity, but rather had dominant founders in post exerting decisive control over the company despite the presence of fellow directors and of shareholders.² Amongst the 41 firms founded from 1890, only four had a multi-generational element. Four others should be briefly mentioned, as their character was essentially different. Two, Sutor Ltd. and Lotus Ltd. were wholly owned subsidiary companies of F. Bostock & Co. Ltd. and of E. Bostock & Co. Ltd. of Stafford. The other two, the I.L.P. Boot Society Ltd. and Pioneer Cooperative Boot Society Ltd. were cooperative productive societies.

Kindleberger's marshallian vision of firms experiencing a life cycle pattern of birth, maturity and death is not confirmed here.³ There is no simple model in which old firms at the end of their life cycle are replaced by new thrusting firms. As the foregoing study has shown, infant firms constituted the majority of business failures.⁴ whilst the failure of established firms commonly occurred as a result of an inability to negotiate a hiatus in the firm's development. Certainly some new elite firms appear in the period, controlled substantially by men from established manufacturing/small master backgrounds, yet, despite this, the progressive force of modernity in shoemaking was founded upon a phalanx of established firms. It was the elite that finally

1 H. E. Randall Ltd; J. Sears & Co. Ltd; W. Barratt Ltd.

2 In particular see Appendix II C.6 where Randall's biography reveals a man who entirely dominated the post 1896 public company.

3 Kindleberger op cit p134. "In Britain the family firm is milked for profit, it follows a life cycle from one generation to the next, rising, stabilising, declining". As has been discussed in Chapter 3 above an organic conceptualisation of the firm is ultimately untenable. Nevertheless, Kindleberger's acceptance of this concept is qualified; he notes, "the greatest weakness in attaching first importance to the nature of entrepreneurship in shaping France's and Britain's economic development is that the model is incomplete. What needs to be explained is, not why business behaved as it did but, taking this for granted, why other firms did not come along and challenge existing enterprise. (Ibid p134).

4 See Chapter 5 passim.

shaped and influenced the shoe industry's response to the economic and marketing problems of the period and in that sense, elite firms were not a negative force, but agencies of change and success.

In place of an assessment that stresses the inevitability of the 'dead hand' of family and personal interests in the shoe industry, therefore, we are faced with a more ambiguous conclusion. As R. G. Donnelly's study of the American family business has concluded:

... family firms have both strengths and weaknesses. The important thing is to recognise and understand them, the very presence of family members is definitely open to question ...¹

The important key that Donnelly isolates is that whilst family influence and interest are a source of weakness and that weak firms clearly exist,² the presence of a RESPONSIBLE family ownership interest is crucial. Indeed, the biographies of elite firms consistently point to business skill and acumen; to the personal qualities of both founder and his successors as being a mainstay of their success. Elite firms in this study tend to portray positive qualities and reveal patterns of good business practice when compared against those who fail. The evidence that is amassed in Appendices II and III reveals the ability and the preparedness of family firms to initially accept low monetary rewards in return for long-term success. Likewise, these firms reveal levels of management unity to a marked degree, although disagreements and tensions must inevitably have arisen.³ Nevertheless, most members of elite families display a loyalty that committed them to the firm throughout their life, usually until long after

1 R. G. Donnelly "The Family Business" Harvard Business Review 42 (1964) p93.

2 Included in his list of weaknesses are: conflicts of interest, a lack of management and financial discipline, a failure to meet new marketing challenges and excessive nepotism.

3 See, for example, Appendix II C.8, where the death and retirement of first generation founders led to a power struggle amongst remaining partners.

the 'normal' retirement age,¹ and generated intense levels of work over time. The relatively simple organisational structure suggests that quick, tight decision making and better financial control could be attained. Clearly not ALL shoe firms are of this character and family firms under the control of less able principals show many of the weaknesses suggested by Donnelly.²

In the final analysis, the economic efficiency and success of elite firms depended four-square upon the ability of the principal just as much as the advantages he derived from operating an established firm:³ this applied not only to success in trading operations, but the successful balancing of the often opposing needs of family interests and influence and those of the market place. Within family firms, it is reasonable to presume that the needs of the family were a central motivating force, often the *raison d'etre* for undertaking economic activity in the first place.⁴ If he were deficient in ability or reckless, then there existed more chance of family priorities overwhelming the business, yet if the principal were astute, then a working balance between the

1 Contrast Frederick Bostock junior's 50 years of service, (Appendix II C.5,) with H. C. P. Randall's possibly more diffident career in the family firm, (Appendix II C.4). Generally, the early retirement of manufacturers was sufficiently unusual to call for especial note when it did occur: see B.S.T.J. 9 January 1908 p32 and N.I. 11 January 1908 p12, where the retirement of Walter Beale was regarded as an unusual event in an industry where great wealth was rare. cf N.I. 23 December 1933 p7. (Beale).. built up such a successful business, he was able to retire several years ago".

2 See Chapters 5 and 6 *passim*.

3 As has been stressed at several points in this thesis, established firms enjoyed an established network of credit and markets that provided a buffer against intensified competition. In terms of production, the larger firms had the resources to enjoy the scale economies that accrued from establishing modern manufacturing plant and distribution systems. For the smaller firms, both their reputation in the marketplace and the residue of skilled labour they employed enabled them to dominate specialist markets. Yet, of course, in the absence of principals who had the ability to capitalise upon such advantages, these firms would ultimately have joined the many firms that suspended trading in our period: longevity offered protection against the vagaries of the marketplace, never full immunity.

4 See, for example, A. & W. Arnold & Co., Appendix III N.G.6.

two elements could be struck. In this regard, it is instructive to contrast the family affairs of William Hickson & Sons Ltd. and B. E. West & Co. Ltd., with A. & W. Arnold & Co. The former firms allowed personal interests to irreparably damage their trading,¹ whereas the latter was able to attain a balance. Thus, at a crucial stage in the firm's growth, William Arnold made an opportunistic purchase of land in his native village and some years later set his sons up in business.²

Economic efficiency in this sense does not necessarily signify rational, maximising behaviour but rather a level of financial prudence and restraint sufficient to ensure the firm's long-term stability, yet answer family aspiration. It was in the successful execution of this balance that the strengths of a family business became most apparent. A prime example of this balance concerns the issue of the disposable income principals allowed themselves. As the biographical appendices reveal it was not uncommon for principals of expanding firms to exercise great restraint in personal spending, yet as growth expectations were realised for this expenditure to escalate.³ Although it is difficult to be precise on this point, a degree of tension must always have existed between

1 See brief note above and discussion on the failure of the two firms in Chapter 6 above.

2 See Appendix III N.G.6 & 7. cf this with John Marlow's funding of his son's new business. (Appendix II C.7 and Appendix III N.G.2).

3 See, for example, A. & W. Arnold & Co., Appendix III N.G.6. Many have noted this trait, for example Donnelley op cit, p98. "It is paradoxical that family interest, a source of financial weakness in some firms, is in other circumstances a major element of financial strength. Many family firms have been built on the tradition of minimal dividends and personal sacrifice and family pride and loyalty have been responsible for continued operation through periods of hardship when considerations of profit and loss might well have dictated closing down". cf F. W. Pollard & Son's balance sheets reveal that the company made losses on trading from 1869 to 1882. The first year's profit is signified by the comment "Hurrah! On the right side at last."

(N.R.O. Pollard & Co. papers, balance sheets (Pol.26 to 49

See the treatment of the issue of wealth and power derived from the shoe industry in Chapter 8 below.

purely economic goals and objectives that satisfied family aspirations.

Effective, responsible principals were able to attain an even balance between short run family interests and long-term trade and planning.

Thus far, however, it has been presumed that family shoe firms took the traditional private partnership form. Yet this continuity of elite family control must also be set against two major organisational changes that affected the industry in the period: i.e. the rise of limited company status and the emergence of a managerial class. The rise of incorporated status provided a new organisational framework within which to accommodate change. Fully half of elite firms and 30% of the second rank had sought registration by 1914.

It has become commonplace for British historians to date the rise of corporate capitalism from 1885, albeit that this process was in its early phase: Indeed, by 1914 large areas of the economy were unaffected by this movement.¹ A sharp rise in the number of company registrations can be observed in this country from that date,² with a particularly sharp rise occurring in 1896-1901, as a result of cyclical recovery with the economy and in anticipation of company law amendments.³ Theoretically characterised by a divorce of ownership from control, the increase in company formation is viewed as setting loose forces tending to subvert the economic order founded upon the family and small

1 See L. Hannah The Rise of the Corporate Economy (1976); cf Cottrell op cit Chapter 6 passim; P. L. Payne "The Emergence of the Large Scale Company in Great Britain 1870-1914" E.C.H.R. second series 20: 3 (1967).

2 Figures regarding growth of limited companies in England and Wales 1885-1925.

Year	Number of Companies	Total Paid-up Share Capital
1885	8924	482
1895	18607	1037
1905	38317	1912
1915	63969	2606
1925	90918	4356
		in £ m

Source: The Accountant 10 July 1926

3 Cottrall op cit p 215 cf Payne (1967) loc cit p 387 and of his 45 U.K. companies with a nominal share capital of over £2m., 27 sought incorporation between 1894-1903 and 23 of these in the years 1896-1901.

Figure 7:v SUMMARY OF INITIAL SHARE CAPITAL EMPLOYED IN BRITISHBOOT AND SHOE FIRMS: 1856 - 1900(I) 1855 - 84

27 firms with total share capital £215,968

- mean share capital = £7,999

(II)

Year	No. of Firms	Share Capital	
		Total	Mean
1885	2	16200	8100
1886	3	6575	2192
1887	3	7790	2597
1888	1	1000	1000
1889	7	261836	37405
1890	7	30314	4331
1891	6	225122	37520
1892	8	44019	5502
1893	8	96973	12122
1894	7	185998	26571
1895	7	99588	14227
1896	17	411364	24198
1897	14	441056	31504
1898	20	350185	17509
1899	14	254534	18181
1900	18	430885	23938
1885-1900	142	£2863439	£20165

(III) 5
year
period

Year	Year	Share Capital	
		Total	Mean
1885-89	16	293401	18338
1890-94	36	582426	16179
1895-99	72	1556727	21621

- Notes:
- (i) Source B.P.P., Board of Trade Annual Joint Stock Company Returns 1856-1900
 - (ii) First Northampton firm incorporated in 1889
 - (iii) Post 1900 returns format precludes ready utilisation

partnership concern.¹ Yet in the shoe industry, the old order retained an abundant capacity for survival,² and even where conversions took place most retained a close coincidence of ownership and control through the private limited company form.

Company registrations in the shoe industry mirror this trend, as is shown in Figure 7:iv. Within the Northampton industry, the first registration took place in 1889 and between then and 1914, 45 registrations have been located. Of these, 18 appear in the 1914 sample, 10 of which were elite firms. When compared against the asset size of most shoe firms (see Figure 3:x) it can be seen that incorporation tended to be undertaken by the centre's larger firms: Figures 7:v and vi:refer.³ Furthermore, when Northampton's registered companies are

1 These forces were fourfold:

- (i) the seeking of scale economies in production and of forward vertical integration into retail distribution.
 - (ii) the introduction of a managerial class.
 - (iii) the limitation of competition through branding and standard pricing.
 - (iv) the desire of owners of private firms to liquidate assets.
- (iii) and (iv) were generally decisive in growth by merger, but in the shoe industry little headway of this kind was made. There were momentary rumours of a larger American inspired merger of shoe interests in 1897. (B.S.T.J. 29 May 1897 p7537-54 cf B.S.T.J. 12 June 1897 p817) whilst amongst Edwardian firms in Northampton and other centres moribund companies were taken over as opportunity allowed. Major shoe mergers only occur in the inter-war period. (See Appendix III N.G.1). Note, the only amalgamation of any size contemplated was in 1897, when Vavasow Earle promoted Shoe Industries Ltd; a company designed to amalgamate 23 leading shoe factoring firms, principally in Leicester. The company would have control of 800 to 1,000 shoe shops.

2 Marshall notes of the partnership form generally. "In these and in other ways private partnership is capable of adapting itself to a great variety of problems. It is very strong and very elastic; it has played a great part in the past and it is full of vitality now". (A. Marshall Principles of Economics (1910: sixth edition) p301.

3 Although it should be noted that some of the largest and most dynamic of Northampton's Edwardian firms eschewed incorporation: for example, A. E. Marlow, C. & E. Lewis and Manfield & Sons. Moreover, some reservations about incorporation appear in trade circles. These were most forcefully expressed when incorporation was used as a means of avoiding creditors. This occurred in the bankruptcy of Frederick Harrison, which has already been discussed. Here conversion had the effect of leaving creditors with nothing: "that they should thus be done out of the entire amount of their claims seemed impossible, but as the state of affairs was gradually revealed they gradually had to bow to the inevitable and to this day they have not and are not likely to receive one penny. This event had the effect of discrediting the principle of limited companies throughout the trade and it's pretty certain that creditors in this failure will for some time look askance at similar concerns, no matter how sound they may be". (S.L.R. 30 December 1892 pl600).

Figure 7:vi CAPITALISATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES
IN NORTHAMPTON FOOTWEAR FIRMS CEASING TO
TRADE THERE PRIOR TO 1914

Year of Registration	Name of Company	Nominal Capital £	Share Capital ⁽¹⁾ Taken Up £	Mortgages ⁽¹⁾ and Charges £
1889	Johnson Clarke & Parker *	80000	35196	2000
1891	Jesse Harrison & Co. Ltd	40000	24977	11025
1891	Priddle & Co. Ltd	3000	307	NIL
1896	British Heel Co. Ltd *	2000	503	NIL
1896	J. N. Brown & Co. Ltd	10000	2106	NIL
1896	John Cooper & Sons Ltd ^o	140000	100780	NIL
1896	Edwin West & Co. Ltd *	50000	20000	NIL
1897	William Hickson & Co. Ltd	30000	22784	12500
1898	Derham Bros. Ltd ^o	80000	59005 ⁽²⁾	10000
1898	Major Howe & Co. Ltd	40000	17463	10000
1899	Elijah Irons & Co. Ltd	10000	5007	2700
1900	Petch & Co. Ltd ^o	30000	17546	NIL
1900	Arthur Stanton & Co. Ltd	40000	29997	NIL
1903	S. T. Midgley & Sons Ltd ^o	50000	44250	NIL
1904	H. J. Bateman & Co. Ltd	2000		
1908	Jack Jacobus Ltd*	20000	10363	11000
1909	Advance Shoe Co. Ltd	25000	(3)	(3)
1909	A. & W. Flatan & Co. Ltd ^o	60360	60360	NIL
1910	Broad Street Co. Ltd	5000	3129	3177
1911	F. T. Tebbutt & Co. Ltd	5000	3357	NIL
1914	Maximum Shoe Co. Ltd	5000		
N/A	G. Angus Ltd	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	Parker Ltd	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	Poynton & Co. Ltd	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	Trasler Bros. Ltd	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	Frank Harrison Wills Ltd	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: P.R.O. Kew, BT 31 series and Companies House, Department of Trade, London and Cardiff.

- Notes:
- (1) Share capital and mortgages and charges as at first return to Board of Trade (cf Appendix 5).
 - (2) 1902 return.
 - (3) Company into voluntary liquidation before commencing production.
 - * Registered Office outside Northampton.
 - ^o These firms merely ceased their Northampton operations prior to 1914.

compared against British shoe companies generally, they lie towards the upper limits of the capital range found there. Confirmation of this can be had from data derived from the Warmington Committee Report for the period 1896-1901, which is laid out in Figure 7:vii. As is apparent from the details of capitalisation at the time of incorporation, Northampton's limited companies, like those in other shoe centres, can be regarded as moderately sized when compared against limited companies nationally. As a 1903 trade journal editorial noted:

... the shoe trade does not reveal in great capitalistic ventures. It deals rather with smaller, or what might be termed bread and cheese amounts ...¹

Most were conversions of established companies and only very occasionally was a new shoe undertaking registered. In the Northampton group, five were newly founded;² the other 40 being conversions. Again this conforms with what is known about shoe companies at other centres and indeed, reflects the general findings of the Warmington Committee on this subject. This report comments on what had become a common occurrence since the conversion boom of the late 1890s in the following way:

A large and increasing proportion of companies under the acts are classed in common parlance as private companies. The number of members of these

1 B.S.T.J. 9 January 1903 p34.

2 Sutor Ltd. (formed 1911) and Lotus Ltd. (formed 1903) were fully owned subsidiaries of F. Bostock & Co. Ltd. of Northampton and E. Bostock & Co. Ltd. of Stafford. All four amalgamated in 1919 to form Lotus Ltd. (See Appendix II C.5): The Broad Street Co. Ltd. was a company incorporated by B. E. West as an attempt to resume trading after a trade suspension. (See the discussion on West in Chapter 6). The Advance Shoe Co. Ltd. was incorporated in 1909 by Percy E. Marlow, youngest son of John Marlow and Joseph Bellamy, a Brigstock farmer and miller: each provided £3,000 of capital. Trade was suspended in February of 1910 (BT31/12724/102255). Priddle & Co. Ltd. was incorporated in April 1891 and traded until its voluntary winding up in September 1899. The two shareholders were Albert Henry Turner, a London manufacturer (£200) and Alfred Priddle, managing director of Northampton (£100). BT31/5031/33757.

Figure 7:vii CAPITALISATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY

COMPANIES IN FIRST/SECOND RANK

NORTHAMPTON FOOTWEAR FIRMS

Year of Registration	Name of Company	Nominal Capital £	Share Capital Taken up £ ⁽¹⁾	Mortgages ⁽¹⁾ & charges £
1896	John Branch Ltd*	25000	16785	NIL
1896	H. E. Randall Ltd	70000	68221	30000
1897	Padmore & Barnes Ltd	20000	15007	NIL
1898	James Branch & Sons Ltd*	30000	30000	NIL
1898	Simon Collier & Sons Ltd	100000	33031	NIL
1898	John Marlow & Sons Ltd	60000	44370	NIL
1902	Green & Sons (Northampton) Ltd	12000	3856	NIL
1903	Lotus Ltd*(2)	10000	630	NIL
1907	W. Barratt & Co. Ltd	4000	2287	NIL
1909	Conformable Boot Co. Ltd	2000	800	NIL
1909	John Emmett Ltd	3000	1249	NIL
1910	Hornby & West Ltd	20000	10011	NIL
1911	Sutor Ltd(3)	10000	4000	NIL
1912	F. Bostock Ltd	100000	98115	NIL
1912	J. Sears (True Form Boot) Ltd	350000	213224	NIL
1912	G. M. Tebbutt & Sons Ltd	30096	25546	NIL
1915	G. T. Hawkins Ltd	100000	80002	NIL
N/A	British Shoe (J.&G.H. Roe) Ltd	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: P.R.O. Kew, B.T.31 series and Companies House, Department of Trade, London and Cardiff.

Notes: (1) Share capital and mortgages and charges as at first return to Board of Trade. (cf Appendix 5).

(2) Partly owned marketing subsidiary of F. Bostock Ltd.

(3) Partly owned subsidiary of F. Bostock Ltd.

* Registered Office outside Northampton.

companies generally does not exceed 20 and very commonly is not above seven. The regulations of such companies usually restrict, more or less, the transfer of shares. The capital for working such companies is subscribed privately, (but they cease to be private companies when they appeal to the public to subscribe for their shares). A large number of such companies are, year by year, formed to effect what are called conversions of existing businesses into companies and many well known concerns are carried on as private companies, for example, Harland & Wolff; Huntley & Palmers; Crosse & Blackwell; J. & J. Colman. But the process of conversion is not confined to large and well known concerns; it extends to moderate and to comparatively small concerns. A further large proportion of private companies is formed for cooperative enterprise, for example where an inventor wants capital and a few others, willing to provide funds, join with him in forming a private company, or where several persons see their way to starting some new undertaking and concur in forming a private company as the readiest and safest mode of association.¹

In effect, Warmington suggests that the potential capital raising and growth benefits accruing to a converted company through the issue of shares and the devolution of control was not the main inducement in seeking conversion. Close scrutiny of the Northampton company records reveals that, of the 39 companies for which data is extant, 36% (14) reveal no increase in share capital or in registerable mortgages and charges.² This strongly suggests that conversion was for a reason other than seeking capital. A further 23% (9) reveal only an increase in mortgages and charges in the period up to 1914. Often this device was utilised by banks concerned for the security of escalating overdrafts. In such a situation the bank encouraged incorporation in order that the overdraft

1 Report of the Company Law Amendment Committee 1906 (Col. 3052) xcvi p216.

2 These were fixed term, fixed interest loans, the most common of which was the debenture. Such loans were registerable under the Companies Act 1908.

Figure 7:viii LIMITED COMPANY REGISTRATIONS IN ALL UNITED KINGDOM
INDUSTRIES COMPARED WITH THOSE IN THE FOOTWEAR
INDUSTRY 1896-1901

Nominal Capital	All U.K. Registrations(I)		All U.K. B. & S. Registrations(II)		Northampton B. & S. Registrations(II)	
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	Number	% Total
Under £900	1288	5.2	2	2.4		
£ 1000 to 4999	5314	21.6	12	14.3		
£ 5000 to 9999	3621	14.7	10	11.9		
£ 10000 to 19999	3559	14.5	16	19.0	1	7.1
£ 20000 to 49999	4384	17.8	19	22.6	6	42.9
£ 50000 to 99999	2436	9.9	15	17.9	4	28.6
£100000 to 199999	2286	9.3	9	10.7	3	21.4
£200000 to 299999	834	3.4	1	1.2		
£300000 to 399999	299	1.2				
£400000 to 499999	108	0.4				
£500000 to 749999	227	0.9				
£750000 to 999999	48	0.2				
£1m and above	159	0.6				
Total	24563	100.00	84	100.00	14	100.00

Notes: (a) 0.34% of all registrations = from the footwear industry
(b) 16.6% of footwear company registrations = of Northampton based companies or companies with productive capacity in the town

Sources: (i) Report of Company Law Amendment Committee (the Warrington Committee) 1906 (Col 3053) XCV11 p354.

(ii) B.P.P. Board of Trade, annual joint stock company returns 1896-1901

could be converted into loan stock.¹ That is to say, one of the basic theoretical assumptions made about late twentieth century limited companies was not operating here.² But this is not to say that incorporation could not provide the opportunity to increase the capital available to a company. Thus, in the case of 26% (10) of companies there occurred an appreciable increase in share capital,³ and six (15%) companies reveal an appreciable increase in both share capital and loan capital.

Yet even where this growth in share capital and loanable funds occurs there was a marked tendency for the companies to restrict ownership and control. There was no wish to permit any dissipation of ownership from the centre. Several legal methods were used to achieve this end. Loanable funds conferred no rights of ownership and thus centrally reveal this trend. Directors also used the rules governing private companies concerning the holding of shares and their transfer. Company law forbade private companies offering shares to the public at large: shareholders were limited to 50, although in practice the number was usually much smaller than this, being restricted to family and close business associates and often being composed merely of former partners.⁴

- 1 B.S.T.J., 9 January 1903 p34. "Lately we have reason to believe that some concerns have been converted in order to give the bankers full security for advances, such as debentures; with one or two we have noticed that registration of a new company has been instantly followed by a registration of debenture bonds. (We) protest against conversions effected for the main purpose of giving them a preference over all other creditors". The editor suggested that this device was utilised by banks following many protests some time before concerning bankers habit of securing assignments on book debts."
- 2 The assumption runs as follows: one of the crucial limiting factors of unincorporated associations is the difficulty of securing outside funding. Fixed capital is classically viewed as being generated from within the organisation through profit retention. Given the finite limit upon profit levels at any one time, this, it is argued, will tend to have an inhibiting effect upon the firm's growth potential. This investment blockage can be overcome by seeking incorporated status and the right to seek outside funding that it confers.
- 3 Where new shares were issued, this frequently took the form of a capitalisation of undistributed profits that were taken up by existing shareholders.
- 4 J. Branch & Co. Ltd. (Appendix III N.G.13) was the only private company with a wide shareholders list, most of whom were close friends, family and employees.

Moreover, there was no free transfer of shares permitted under statute. Existing shareholders had to be informed of any transfer, having a right to veto such a sale and an option to acquire the shares. Finally, the provisions of the articles of association were used to retain control of the company. This was most commonly done by confirming the former partners as directors who did not have to seek re-election.¹

In only three instances did firms in the Northampton sample register under the Companies Act 1908 as a public company.² Clearly here the raising of public funds was important in order to sustain company growth. In two cases 'going public' would appear to be linked to major developments in each company's retail chain. Yet, even here the effect of a shift to a corporate form, characterised by the divorce of ownership from control and the introduction of a professional managerial class into the board room, was limited by the charismatic and personalised managerial style of the founders: Sir Henry Randall, John G. Sears and William Barratt. Each recognised the principle of delegation of authority and worked through the organisational structure imposed by incorporation. But, nevertheless there is no hint from biographical and other sources that their entrepreneurial flair or decision making was curbed or impeded by company conversion: Policy remained firmly under their control. In the case of Randall, his board was composed of senior employees and city men with little knowledge of the industry. At several points in Sir Henry's biography, reference is made to his leadership qualities and to the ability of the board to see his point of

1 Several such examples appear in the Northampton sample. See, for example, Appendix II C.10 where Simon Collier was made a director for life and Appendix II C.6 where G. T. Hawkins was allowed to remain a director as long as he held £10,000 worth of shares in the company. Usually directors had to seek re-election to the board once every three years.

2 For full details see Appendix II C.4 H. E. Randall Ltd; Appendix III N.G.1 J. G. Sears (True Form Boot Co.) Ltd; Appendix III N.G.10 William Barratt Ltd; F. Bostock Ltd. became a public company in 1919:- see Appendix II C.5.

view without demurring or needing to formally vote on motions.¹ Similar statements were made of both Barratt² and Sears.³ In all three instances, the founders remained the largest shareholders and care was taken in share allotments to ensure that they and their close associates retained a majority of voting shares. Such practices were general in British industries at this time as Alfred Marshall noted:

... By skilful distribution of the company's stock, associations of private capitalists could command great sums, protect their own wealth from liability, yet retain the complete effective control of all the affairs of a company in their own hands, they can act with as much freedom and vigour as if they remained in a single partnership ...⁴

This structuring of stock is particularly observable in the case of Barratt, where the founder's share device was used to ensure control from the centre.⁵ In the case of H. E. Randall Ltd., the more common device of the family and close directors holding a concentration of ordinary voting shares is found: investors held higher interest preference shares that did not carry with them voting rights.⁶ Yet, this evidence cannot be used as an indication that the industry was starved of capital. The evidence presented in Chapter five suggests a range of sources including banks, provided adequate circulating and fixed capital:⁷ the capital problems encountered centred upon the ability of

1 Appendix II C.11, op cit.

2 Appendix III, N.G.10, p

3 Appendix III N.G.1, pl.

4 Alfred Marshall Industry and Trade p163, quoted in C. E. Amsler et al, "Thoughts of Some British Economists on Early Limited Liability and Corporate Legislation", History of Political Economy (1981) 13:4, p790.

5 Appendix III, N.G.10, Ibid.

6 This is dealt with more fully in Appendix II C.4. For a private company with a large shareholders list using a similar device see J. Branch & Co. Ltd. (Appendix III N.G.13).

7 Indeed, Landes has argued that the closed character of firms, that has been perceived in this study, was determined by the fact they had access to sufficient funds through private channels. See D. Landes "The Structure of Enterprise in the 19 Century: The case of Britain and Germany" Extrait des rapports de xie Congrès International de Sciences Historiques v (1966) pl14. But cf J. B. Jefferys Trends in Business Organisation in Great Britain since 1856 (unpublished PhD University of London 1938) p15-18 suggests that after the 1870s the failure of banks to support industrial development and the inability of retained profit to inject sufficient capital lead to a rise of incorporation to provide alternative funding.

particularly infant firms to effectively utilise and to monitor the use and level of capital. Certainly, it may be safely assumed that the traditional method of retaining profit was substantially able to satisfy the capital needs of shoe firms. Evidence from both company records and business failure suggests that this was so. Thus, for example, a statement made in the 1950 prospectus of Manfield & Sons Ltd., when the company first offered shares to the public, noted:

... Throughout its history the company has financed its growth largely from undistributed profits; but in recent years and particularly since the war rising costs and higher rates of taxation on company profits have made it necessary to resort to bank loans to provide fixed and working capital, although the dividend policy of the company has continued to be very conservative and substantial earnings have been retained in the business. The company's overdrafts to the banks now amount to c£760,000 ...¹

This is not to say, however, that no evidence is present of growth being hampered by under capitalisation: Barratt & Company's suspension of trading in 1905 provides an example,² as does that of Jesse Harrison & Co. Ltd. in 1891.³

Rather Warmington's statement, discussed above, must be taken purely as an indication that incorporation was being used for different purposes. Thus, although the introduction of limited liability is the most conspicuous change amongst Northampton shoe firms after 1885, care must be taken to place this development into a true perspective. Far from incorporation always providing a basis for expansion through the capital of objective investors and the business skills of professional managers, most Northampton companies retained relatively narrow ownership and control patterns based on the family, that had characterised these firms when they were unincorporated: any divorce of ownership from control was more apparent than real. An example of this is present in a brief historical resume of Joseph Branch & Son Ltd. made in 1954:

1 C.R.O. 164082, 1950 Prospectus.

2 Appendix III N.G.10.

3 See Chapter 6, above and Appendix II C.23.

... On (Joseph's) death in 1910, the business was registered as a limited company, with his son, C. H. Branch, as managing director and A. C. Baker as secretary. On C. H. Branch's death in 1942, A. C. Baker (51 years with the firm) assumed full control and in 1947 was joined by his son, Kenneth. This continuity in this essentially family firm has been maintained ...¹

What therefore emerges from available Northampton records is a picture of incorporation being substantially utilised, not to atomise, but to entrench and perpetuate family ownership and control.² The family character of concerns was only very gradually becoming attenuated without any clear cut transition to a new organisation intervening. And, whilst in one way or another, old established closed concerns were slowly being opened up, the scope for newcomers to enter business in a small way was becoming narrower. What is not observed in Northampton is the customary family partnership giving way to the corporation, but companies whose scale of operations that did not surpass that of many family businesses and which were organised around a dominant founding personality, as intimately identifiable with the concern as the individualistic entrepreneur of a generation or more before. There was a marked tendency for conversions to

- 1 S.L.R. 24 October 1957, supplement pxiii: Joseph was the elder brother of John (qv) and James (qv), both manufacturers at Northampton. He commenced trading in 1882 from premises in Bethnal Green, London. cf D. J. Timpson William Timpson Ltd., A Century of Service: 1865-1965 (1965) p5. 53 years after incorporation and 36 after going public, the author notes, "Naturally, my story is a family one. Our company can still be called the Timpson Family Business. Elsewhere reference is made to "our family business": cf F. W. Wheldon A Norvic Century (1946) p60, when writing of a remark made by a founder in c1910 notes, "(The money) all comes from the same source, said he, thus emphasising the 'family' and personal character of the business, which persists (more for good than for ill, the writer thinks) to this very day (1946)". Howlett & White were incorporated in 1899 and went public in 1935.
- 2 Certainly the advent of incorporation into the shoe industry prior to 1914 does not signify the rise of corporate capitalism there and thus few of the criticisms of the limited liability firm voiced by Marshall and his contemporaries apply here. On these criticisms, see C. E. Amsler et al "Thoughts of some British Economists of Early Limited Liability and Corporate Legislation" History of Political Economy 13:4 (1981) at p790-93: "Their managers would lack zeal. They would succeed only in industries where a large capital was required. They lacked flexibility, internally as well as externally and their diffusion of ownership would allow managers and directors to ignore small gains and losses, or engage in small scale diversion of the firm's resources for their own advantage".

take place for what were known as "purely personal or family reasons". To return to the editorial quoted above.

... the bulk of (footwear) concerns floated have been so floated for private or family reasons, or in other words, to divide family interests ...¹

The importance of incorporation was that it was being used to overcome an hiatus, or potential hiatus, within the controlling family's continuing hold over the firm.² Three prevalent family reasons for incorporation arise explicitly or by implication from the evidence:-

(i) to provide income for a large family, or to settle matters of inheritance.

One of the problems besetting some shoe manufacturers was that a portion of the firm's revenue was absorbed in providing an independent income for members of their large family, some of whom played no direct part in the management of the firm. The procedure was straightforward: the sole trader or partners sold their assets to the newly converted company, which then allocated shares to the family members. One such example was that of William Hickson Ltd. This company was converted in 1897, when it was noted: "this change is simply made for family purposes; no shares are offered to the public and business will be continued on the same limits as hitherto".³ 12 members of the family were shareholders, six being without other occupation: the three former partners were directors.⁴

1 B.S.T.J. 9 January 1903 p34.

2 J. B. Jefferys, op cit, passim. This viewpoint contrasts with the assessment made by Jefferys. There he stresses that the limited company formed was an important means of solving the necessity for an increase in capital needed for industrial enterprises. The development of incorporation, he asserts, witnesses the growth in importance of the investor and the mechanism of investment: that is to say the arising of a divorce of ownership from control. He notes, "its use and extension to all branches of industry until, in 1914, it is almost the universal form of business organisation". (Abstract).

3 B.S.T.J. 9 January 1897 p36. But note BT 31/7182/50741 reveals a mortgage debenture being raised in February 1897 for £12,500 and held by the Northamptonshire Union Bank. This clearly influenced the decision to convert.

4 BT 31, Ibid, shareholders' lists.

A long established firm, having been founded at Smithfield, London, in 1811, it went into liquidation in 1909.¹ Linked to this issue of income was that of settling matters of personal inheritance of the partners. A partnership is an unincorporated association and as such the partner's share in partnership assets became part of his personal estate upon death. Converting the firm prior to death ensured a continuity of ownership through share transfer and thus avoided the financial hiatus that this represented.

(ii) to liberate capital for alternative personal or family use.²

Conversion could be utilised to liberate a principal's capital from the company for other use, without unduly weakening the company's capital base. This is not directly signalled in company papers, but on occasion it is possible to infer that this has been done. It is achieved by the principal(s) taking an allotment of shares in addition to a cash residue in satisfaction for the sale of the firm to the company. The residue taken is then made good by either new shareholders being invited to invest in the company,³ or by the company issuing debentures.⁴

(iii) to settle matters of succession and of future control.

A crucial consideration for the established firm was the need to ensure smooth succession; a continuity of management from one generation to the next.

1 On this failure see Chapter 6 of Major Howe & Co. Ltd., where a single dependent relative became chargeable upon the company. For details, see the treatment of this firm's dilemma in Chapter 6 above.

2 See Jefferys, op cit, p54 and p82 notes that capital liberation was one of the three reasons for company formations in the mid century iron and steel industry. He notes this as the device for "the entrepreneur or leading partners wishing to retire with well earned fortunes while only retaining a limited responsibility, from the point of view both of amount and legal consequences in the concern".

3 See Appendix III N.G.1, where in 1912 J. G. Sears cash residue at the time of conversion was probably utilised to purchase Collingtree Grange. The company invited shareholders to invest to make good the shortfall.

4 Appendix II C.7 J. Marlow & Sons Ltd., where conversion liberated A. E. Marlow's capital to begin his new company. Debentures made good this loss.

Often the issue at (i) above and this were closely linked. The conversion of Manfield & Sons in 1921 provides an example of the presence of a high number of family dependents with a shareholding, although here matters of succession also necessitated conversion: Harry died in 1923 and James two years later.¹ In the case of Manfield's, control devolved substantially upon directors drawn from outside the family, necessitating an adjustment to the prevailing partnership structure. The resulting limited company status was able to settle both issues. In the case of Simon Collier Ltd., conversion ensured succession to the next generation of family control.²

The passage of sons and nephews into the family firm appears so frequently in the shoe industry as to constitute what appears almost to be a rite of passage . . . and doubtless, this is an accurate appraisal in some cases. As has been noted, Kindleberger argues that such leadership by inheritance was an essential destabilising mechanism that signalled the long term failure of a firm: such leaders turned their energies from business, leaving managers to preside over what is seen as an almost inevitable decline.³ This pattern does not appear amongst firms in this study. Rather, the evidence suggests that there was a continuity of family ownership and control across generations. Marshall's observations concerning manufacturers' sons are of relevance here. He argues that the son of a man already established in business starts with very great

1 Appendix II C.3 p628 cf C.R.O. Number 164082.

2 Appendix II C.10 p785; cf BT 31/16026/58252. cf Appendix II C.8; A. W. Church & Co., for example where conversion provided a means of helping to overcome family conflict concerning succession.

3 No evidence of such a pattern of decline is present in any of Northampton's 643 manufacturing firms that traded in the period 1885-1914. Nevertheless, what is apparent is that some of the second generation heads lacked the degree of business ability needed to steer old established but only moderately successful firms through a period of radical change. For examples, see the discussion of the business failures of Henry Marshall & Co., and of Major Howe & Co. in Chapter 6.

advantages over other entrants. First, he had an unparalleled opportunity to train in and absorb knowledge of the industry:

... He has special facilities for obtaining the knowledge and developing the faculties that are required in management of his father's business. He learns quietly and almost unconsciously about men and manners in his father's trade and in those from which the trade buys and to which it sells; he gets to know the relative importance and the real significance of various problems and anxieties which occupy his father's mind: and he acquires a technical knowledge of the processes and the machinery of the trade ...¹

Secondly, the son is well placed to acquire good business skills and habits, which are learnt "by association with those who control the larger issues".²

And thirdly, he is in a position to establish himself socially in the industry.

Yet this *rite of passage* into ownership was not infallible and Marshall argues that it would be wrong to see businessmen as a caste, because their abilities were not always inherited and that it was at this point that he observed some successors merely using the family firm as a money source from which to build a social life.³ The achievements of successors, therefore, had as much to do with their individual abilities and qualities as with inherited advantages.

At least some Northampton manufacturers were aware of the potential weaknesses inherent in the principle of leadership by inheritance. For example a clause in Church & Company's 1902 partnership agreement declared that

1 A. Marshall Principles of Economics (1910) p298. See also R. V. Clements, Managers: A Study of Their Careers in Industry (1958) where a similar line of argument is adopted. cf what Marshall notes of the training they received neatly summarizes the position in Northampton industry: "The old apprenticeship system is not exactly suited to modern conditions and it has fallen into disuse; but a substitute for it is wanted. Within the last few years many of the ablest manufacturers have begun to set the fashion of making their sons work through every stage in succession of the business they will ultimately have to control; but this splendid education can only be had by a few. So many and various are the branches of any great modern industry that it would be impossible for employers to undertake, as they used to do, that every youth committed to their care should learn all; and indeed a lad of ordinary ability would be bewildered by the attempt".

2 Marshall, *Ibid*, p298.

3 Marshall, *Ibid*, p299-300, where he argues the tendency, in such a case, toward a 'clogs to clogs' syndomn.

founders' sons had to be adjudged competent in matters of business germane to the shoe industry before being admitted as partners to the family firm: clearly matters of business were put before nepotism.¹

But this is not to say that leadership by inheritance automatically caused a fissure in the organisational structure and pattern of success of any of Northampton's leading firms. The important question here revolves around, not just whether effective management was present, but whether effective management was sustained by successors. Being born the kinsman of a manufacturer did not automatically confer business acumen. As has been noted above, this study reveals talented second and third generation principals who were able to sustain the growth initiated by the founder.

Underpinning this continuity are two elements that require our attention: the position of an ageing principal and the problems of succession. The first concerns the extent to which shoe firms remained under the control of the same owner managers for long periods of time. Whilst potentially offering a stability of policy and direction over time, the position of an ageing principal was not necessarily entirely advantageous for the well-being of the firm. For, as has already been discussed, old guard manufacturers were owners who clung to control long after they were able to make decisions that were valid for trading conditions that had radically changed since their heyday as manufacturers.²

1 Appendix II C.8: But cf R. V. Clements op cit, p29: "This is not a study in nepotism in the crude sense. Nepotism usually implies that the beneficiary prospers solely because of his relationship with a man of power; often that he is unsuitable; that his success is and has been underhand. Nothing of that is suggested here. There is nothing discreditable in a son succeeding his father. There is no evidence that suggests that these people are not generally worthy of the positions they hold".

2 For example, it was said of Robert Derby at the time of his failure: "There's something almost pathetic in the downfall of Derby. It is evident for years that he has not moved with the times and fate has again overtaken the laggard. It is a case which illustrates once more the folly of men continuing in business beyond their times, in the vain hope of making old notions square with new conditions". (B.S.T.J. 21 July 1900 p61) cf B.S.T.J. 25 June 1909 p554, where it is stated that Derby along with Henry Harday and Robert Faulkener, were Northampton's largest manufacturers in the late 1840s.

They gave no thought to the delegation and ultimate transfer of ownership to a younger second generation. Important to a firm's development at this stage, therefore, was the question of how he and fellow partners faced up to the changes in patterns of control. In contrast to the old guard, elite founders had the important ability, to a greater or lesser extent, to gradually relinquish and/or delegate elements of control and decision making to second generation owners.¹ Simon Collier's gradual relinquishing of control is typical of the elite. In 1896, the firm was converted, his sons made directors, with Simon maintaining considerable authority. In 1909, a special resolution effectively passed control to two of his sons. Nevertheless, he continued to visit the factory until his death in 1930:² his role from this date was, in effect, that of consultant.

Given that elite principals were individually men of some business ability, this collective ability to cope with the transition phase between generations was ultimately important for the further potential growth of the organisation.³ The retention of a dominant older man, as old-guard firms testify, increases the likelihood of growth inhibiting, defensive strategies linked purely to short-term survival:⁴ linked ultimately to business failure at or before his

1 J. Boswell op cit, p34, discusses the problems of the long serving principal who typically faces the twin problems of an inability to delegate adequately and 'managerial fatigue'. cf J. F. Pickering op cit, p99-101, where it is stressed that a firm's internal organisational structure will help determine the pattern and ability of decision making. That it is in part a process of social interaction moulded by past achievement, present objectives and current financial position and in part determined by the speed of response to a problem.

2 For a fuller account, see Appendix II C.10.

3 It is usual for historians to stress formal analytical reasoning in determining business success, but recent writings by Doctor P. N. Davies provides a timely reminder of the role played by chance: P. N. Davies:
 (i) Henry Tyrer: A Liverpool Shipping Agent and his Enterprise. (1979) and
 (ii) "Business Success and the Role of Chance: The Extraordinary Phillips Brothers" XXV (1983) Business History.

4 cf J. F. Pickering op cit, p99-100.

death. Indeed, if reference is made to the discussion of problems and dislocations in owner-managership faced by the old-guard, it can be seen that all three family reasons for incorporation noted above could precipitate failure.¹ An important potential solution to these hiatus points was the organisational shift away from the inhibiting features of unincorporated associations and toward the solutions offered by incorporation: clearly these did not meet with universal success. Old established firms who introduced a dynamic second generation of ownership stand in a strongly contrasting light. Here fresh vigour and ideas were introduced free of such constraints, leading to continued patterns of successful trading. Clearly, within the elite is such evidence of vitality and innovative management amongst the second generation.² Far from withdrawing business and leaving managers and directors in charge with inadequate discretion to act decisively, the evidence available reveals manufacturers who consolidated and improved the performance of the family firm. This is not to say that none introduced others into the firm to take charge of the day to day conduct of business. As the next chapter will demonstrate, there is evidence that some of the elite were to seek the social approbation and power that went with public office and entry into county society. Nevertheless, such men were at pains to ensure the solidity of the business that had to continue to fund the new found

- 1 Thus on the financial drain caused by excessive family income drawn from the firm, see William Hickson's failure; on the problems caused by inheritance, see Major Howe & Company's failure; on a failure to settle on matters and delegation, see Sections III and IV passim; cf Benjamin West's reckless liberation of company capital for personal use; cf Major and Howe & Co. Ltd., where failure was precipitated by the irregular conduct of a director in the discharge of his distress.
- 2 See, for example, Manfield's vigorous move into standard pricing, multiple shop trading and a faster rate of factory mechanisation from the early 1880s, following the entry of the founders' sons into the partnership (Appendix II C.3); cf F. Bostock & Company's increased marketing collaboration with E. Bostock Ltd. of Stafford (Appendix II C.5); cf the shoe design and commercial flair of Sir J. H. C. Crockett's sons (Appendix II C.2; cf F. W. Pollard & Co., where the introduction of a third generation partner, A. E. Pollard halted the decline in trading started a short time before. Under his father old techniques of production had been retained, but between c1901-09 his son radically re-organised production based upon a factory-based machine scale (Appendix II C.20).

social position.

Yet delegation was only the fore-runner to succession: the permanent transfer of ownership. In many elite firms a smooth, gradual transition is observed, whereby power was slowly passed to the second generation: any hiatus was affectively eclipsed. The typical pattern that emerges from Appendices II and III is this:

(i) the successor was trained in the art and business of shoe manufacture;

(ii) the successor then worked with the founder in a junior managerial capacity;

(iii) upon becoming a junior partner, the founder began to delegate responsibility, until in old age, the founder fulfilled merely a consultancy role;

(iv) the founder dies and the successor inherits full ownership and control. In addition, a founder's share of the partnership capital could cause difficulty upon death. Part of his personal estate, the capital to be vested in the successor to ensure a smooth transition.¹ But, of course, for some elite companies this transition marks a discontinuity in the firm's history.²

The final change observable in the organisational structure relates to the rise of a managerial class. In general terms, if all shoe firms trading in the period after 1887 are reviewed, the joint owner-manager is found to dominate: as has been noted, there existed the closest possible bond between the ownership and control of businesses.³ Even a cursory study of the biographical appendices of

1 As has been discussed, incorporation could overcome this problem. For a firm facing problems concerning a dead partner's capital share see Appendix II, C.15, Hornby & West.

2 See, for example, Appendix II C.20, F. W. Pollard & Son where a distant break in this firm's fortunes appear upon the founder's death. cf Tebbutt Bros., where the transfer to the second generation failed. (Appendix II C.12).

3 This accords with the general conclusions made by C. H. Wilson in Economic History and the Historian (1969) p156-77 passim and "The Entrepreneur in the Industrial Revolution in Britain" Explorations in Entrepreneurial History vii: 3 (1955) p32 and by P. L. Payne (1978) op cit, p664-65. Both stress that historians have wrongly tended to view firms as being in the hands of an owner-manager. Sole proprietorships were something of a rarity; the small ...

this thesis reveals that partners commonly divided the many managerial and entrepreneurial tasks amongst themselves according to individual ability and taste. Amongst elite firms, however, can be found a break with this custom. Here, the development of significant examples of managerial styles of control are observable. In the late nineteenth century two functional splits in the entrepreneur's role are discernible. With the emergence of a growing number of outside sources of capital the role of capitalist became a separate one. And, "subsequently, a second functional split occurred: those who made strategic decisions became differentiated from those whose role was to keep the firm running. The first, continue to be, entrepreneurs, while the latter are simply managers".¹

... 3 often family, partnership being much more the norm. Payne suggests that joint owner-managership was very much the norm by the mid-nineteenth century, so it remained until the end of our period: "While it is unquestionable that during the industrial revolution the entrepreneur often fulfilled in one person the function of capitalist, financier, works manager, merchant and salesman, it is necessary to emphasize that any definition that rests on these distinctive characteristics is applicable to an historical period now past. Even in the pioneering days, many entrepreneurs were divesting themselves of one or more of these functions, until as early as the opening decades of the nineteenth century the 'complete businessman' was already a rare phenomenon in some branches of industry. As the multi-partnership and then the joint stock company permeated different areas of economic activity, the proprietor's role was taken by a team of businessmen, making strategic decisions and running the enterprise." (Payne, Ibid, p181).

1 Payne, Ibid, p181. cf Keith Tribe Land, Labour and Economic Discourse (1978) p11 where he suggests that whilst the emergence of the managerial function was not new, having begun in the eighteenth century, it took over a century to establish itself in the economy: "The elements which entered in this reorganisation of production (in the Industrial Revolution) were various: the creation and disciplining of a skilled labour force; the development of new forms of accounting; the standardisation of product quality; the utilisation of forms of credit; the formation of a class of clerical workers and managers to administer the growing complexities of production and sales and so on. The emergence of these features was only partial and hesitant at the end of the eighteenth century and many of the elements that are assumed to be fully developed in the eighteenth century in fact, only became fully developed perhaps a century later".

In fact, the utility of involving employees in the managerial processes of shoe production was recognised by manufacturers from at least the beginning of the transitional phase in c1857. At this early stage most were trusted, senior employees who became foremen. As foremen they exercised wide discretionary powers crucial to the successful operation of the firm: powers of hiring and firing, the purchase of raw materials, production and stock control, quality control and so forth can all be observed from contemporary trade reports.¹ To what extent they became involved in entrepreneurial decision making is unclear, but given the close business and personal ties that often existed it is entirely probable that principals relied upon their advice and knowledge.² The importance of the foremen remains through our period, but what is certain is that their power became more circumscribed as factory working spread. By 1905, Swaysland perceives their role, although of importance, as being fundamentally that of a supervisor and quality controller on the shop floor. In his discussion on prime costing in shoe manufacture he notes:

... The ideal method would be some system by means of which any wastage or loss would be immediately detected by the mere system of accounts. But it appears that no system in use is so prompt and effective as an intelligent foreman and although a system should be used that would test any statement made and would ultimately detect any defect, immediate notification should be expected from the person in charge of the department ...³

Other managerial duties and discretions once undertaken by foremen had by this time passed to managers: a hierarchical division between shop floor and office

- 1 N.R.O. Pollard Company Papers: balance sheets (Pol 26 to 49) and production data (Pol 54) reveal that foremen undertook many of the production and stock control functions for the partners.
- 2 Many, in turn, set up in business on their own account, just as failed manufacturers became foremen.
- 3 Swaysland, op cit, p233. By the Edwardian period the shoe foreman's role as a labour supervisor aroused much controversy amongst shoe operatives and was the cause of many short, unofficial strikes: on this see Brooker (1980) loc cit p158-59. cf F. Plucknett Boot and Shoe Manufacture (second edition c1932) p269, 287-88 where a foreman is, similarly, described as being essentially a supervisor. A man who needs qualities of leadership, tact, instruction (see p301, where he advocates centralised buying by a manager, rather than the old system where each departmental foreman was responsible for buying.

had grown up.¹ Foremen were always practical shoemakers,² and whilst managers could be, they were drawn increasingly from a commercial background;³ those connected with distribution and finance rather than with practical shoemaking: shoe company directorates display this tendency.⁴ This was the beginning of a trend which was to increase in the inter-war period as the primacy of these skills over purely production skills sharpened.⁵ In addition to this, increased

- 1 Plucknett, op cit, Chapter XLXXX and p283-95 passim. Plucknett sees shoe management staff as essential to the co-ordination of a factory using machines and rationalised, sub-divided work systems. As factory working became more complex so the old management structure based on foreman became inadequate and the need for centralised control increased of factory management. He notes, "When boots are made in large quantities, sub-division of labour is the policy adopted and the larger the business, the more exhaustively can the principle be developed. But side by side with the growth of sub-division there will also be required a development of the organisation to supervise the planning and to regulate both the speed and the quantity of the work, to ensure that each operative is supplied with an adequate amount of work and that for each operation the staff of workers will be of sufficient strength to cope with it. When this has been accomplished, then as regards this detail the factory could be described as 'well organised'."
- 2 Shoe Manufacturers' Monthly February 1916 p286. "To be a successful stitching room foreman, one must be a first class stitcher and have a general knowledge of adjacent machines. He positively must work his way up from the ranks, first as an all-round stitcher, then a vamer, then a sample stitcher and so on. (Then) he must learn how to adjust all kinds of machinery; then work on the floor matching up work and getting out odd shoes".
- 3 The evidence here is at present slight but suggestive. See, for example, the biographies of Manfield's general staff, Appendix II C.3 and of H. G. White, Appendix II C.6.
- 4 See, for example, H. E. Randall Ltd. (Appendix II C.4) and J. G. Sears & Co. (Appendix III N.G.1) cf W. Barratt & Co. (Appendix III N.G.10) for the important director role of Sheffield accountant F. Freeborough in revitalising the firm.
- 5 Several trade articles point to the growing importance of this issue: eg S.T.J. 1 September 1922 p298 which stressed the increasing value of executive staff, "this feature has been recognised for a long time by the few, to the extent that here and there we find manufacturers who have assiduously trained their own executives for many years back and provided generous conditions and pay so as to preclude the possibility of other firms attracting important men away".

numbers of men and later women, were being recruited with administrative skills for the growing office functions found in shoe firms. Traditionally, counting house staffs had been small, but as shoe firm operations became more complex, the need for administrative skills increased. This was particularly true of those firms that initiated retail chain and mail order operations. All of this reflects the increased preoccupation of the production process with matters of accurate costing,¹ of marketing and selling, of scientific management techniques,² and of legal rules regarding the working environment.

Hobsbawm and others tend to view increased control by managers in place of the owners as playing an important function in the growing malaise that afflicted British industry after 1880.³ Managerial control and with it the principals' withdrawal from active participation, represents to them the onset of the degenerative phase of a firm's life cycle, in which the interests of owners are gradually eclipsed by the differing interests of the manager. Whilst it is presumed the owners interests mirror what is best for the firm, those of the manager are presumed to represent what is best for the manager's career advancement. Thus Kindleberger notes:

... Concern has been expressed about the professional manager who may be given only limited powers of decision making by the shareholders or who may be moved by the desire for a quiet life. Bureaucratization of large firms is perhaps as great a danger as leadership by inheritance ...⁴

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- 1 See Swaysland op cit. Chapter XIV passim, on the crucial importance of prime costing to factory shoe production. An accounting literature concerning shoe factory costings and accounts develops in the period.
 - 2 Although F. W. Taylor's The Principles of Scientific Management was not published until 1911 and many of his ideas not formally used in Britain until the 1920s, embryonic Taylorian techniques and principles can be found in use in British shoe factories from c1895. It is entirely probable that these ideas permeated the industry through the shoe machinery company technicians and advisers who were widely consulted by shoe manufacturers.
 - 3 E. J. Hobsbawm Industry and Empire p168 et seq.
 - 4 Kindleberger, op cit, p125.

The evidence concerning Northampton firms does not readily confirm this pattern, however, although as the next chapter will demonstrate there did occur a flight from trade by principals of elite firms. Two broad reasons can be advanced to explain this. First, it might be argued that the elite shoe firms in our period were at the height of their powers and that the degeneration described by Hobsbawm was yet to manifest itself. And, secondly, rather than interests diverging, the evidence superficially suggests a convergence. That within the shoe industry there was a commonality of outlook and goals amongst managers and manufacturers. That managers identified more closely with the firm than the above argument allows. Very often, their career was intimately tied to the firm and several, after many years of service, died in the firm's service.¹

Certainly, the manager's role was often crucially vital to the success of the firm,² and many managers were highly respected by manufacturers, being on familiar terms with them.³ Some examples will serve to show this:

(i) where branch factories were operated or warehouse showrooms, managers assumed almost complete control;⁴

1 For example, E. G. Elliott of Sears; J. B. Cartwright of Manfields; S. J. Davis of Padmore & Barnes; J. W. Horsfield of John Branch Ltd; Phineas Hayman and Frederick William Hurst of Randall's. For biographical details of each, see the relevant entry in Appendices II and III.

2 But note the extent to which this managerial growth and development can be viewed as a generalised movement throughout the British economy, is open to question. In a recent article, Professor A. D. Chandler has concluded that British failure might be linked to the inhibiting role played by continued family ownership in stifling the development of managerial skills. He notes, "The British failure to participate fully in the growth of new industries and to meet new competition from the U.S. and the Continent has often been explained as entrepreneurial failure. A better term may be managerial failure: that is, the continuing existence of the family firm helped to deprive Britain of a class of trained managers and sets of technological and managerial skills that became increasingly essential, not only to technically advanced industries but also to the operation of modern urban, industrial economies". (A. D. Chandler "The Growth of the Transnational Industrial Firm in the U.S. and the U.K.: a Comparative Analysis". E.C.H.R. xxxiii: 3 (1980) p410.

3 For example, when H. J. Bateman & Co. passed into the hands of two shoe managers, several prominent manufacturers became shareholders of the company. See Chapter 6, p397 above.

4 See Appendix III N.G.1 of N.R.O. J. Branch company records: principal's diary 1888-1900 which reveals the crucial role played by branch factory managers.

(ii) where the principal immersed himself in public life, the manager's ability and role became an essential pre-condition to the principal undertaking such activities;¹

(iii) where principals died suddenly, his successor often relied centrally upon the firm's management to ensure the continuance of the firm;²

(iv) where no family successors were present, the manager was groomed to inherit the business;³

(v) some managers were ultimately made partners or directors of the firm.⁴

In very many cases, the trusted manager, later to become part controller of the firm came to be regarded as part of the 'extended family', with at least one marrying into the manufacturer's family.⁵ In more general terms, the growing importance of this group and of the foremen they to some extent superceded, is revealed by the formation of the Northampton Association of Managers and Foremen in 1892, under the presidency of a Mr. F. Roberts and secretaryship of Mr. G. T. Bailey.⁶

1 Example Appendix II C.3 and Appendix III N.G.2.

2 Example Appendix III N.G.21 and Appendix II C.13.

3 Example Appendix II C.6 and C.23; Appendix III N.G.3.

4 Example Appendix II C.3, C.4, C.19; Appendix III N.G.1, N.G.2 and N.G.4: cf Marshall (1910) op cit at p300-01, where he notes, "The oldest and simplest plan for renovating the energies of a business is that of taking into partnership some of its ablest employees. The owner manager as years go on, finds that he has to delegate more and more responsibility to his chief subordinates. He still exercises a supreme control, but much must depend on their energy and probity: so if his sons are too young, or for any other reason are not ready, he decides to take one of his trusted assistants into partnership.

5 Marshall, Ibid, p301, notes this trait: F. W. Hurst married Sir Henry Randall's cousin (Appendix II C.4).

6 S.L.R. 9 December 1888 p1410. A similar, short lived association had to be formed following the 1887 strike: this association survived until at least the 1950s. Like the Northampton Day Workers' Association - an alternative supervisory group - the Association was formed as a direct result of growing conflict between labour and capital in the industry. Its main objective was to, "secure a unanimity of action on the part of the members of this Association upon any question arising in trade which we may consider will be

V

In drawing this discussion of success to a close, two fundamental points that have lain at the centre of this and indeed earlier portions of the study, need to be stressed.

First, is the need to underscore the stark fact that relatively few firms enjoyed success in the terms it has been described here, between 1885-1914. This has been charted quantitatively in a number of ways, but what this finally means is that of 643 wholesale manufacturing firms that traded in the period, only 4%¹ present at the end of the period had been there at the beginning. And of the 448 firms commencing business in the period, only 8.7%² were present in 1914. Taken together they represent 9% of all firms trading in the period and of these only 3% can be categorised as being amongst the 20 front rank firms. Amongst this elite, whilst established pre-1885 firms played a dominant role in the industry, a number of new generation firms made a formidable impact upon the industry, both nationally and at Northampton itself.

And secondly, the reason for their success and dominance rested upon the entrepreneurial ability of their principals and the flexibility of their trading policies and strategies; in contrast to the inability of most manufacturers to fund trading and to accommodate the changing face of the industry. Yet amongst the survivors there existed an essential division of experience; a division between the increasing standardised volume batch production techniques of the elite and the continued reliance placed by second

6 ... of welfare to the trade: to prevent, if possible, any dispute, or to endeavour to bring about a speedy and satisfactory settlement of disputes". S.L.R. Ibid). Ancillary to this was the protection of managerial staff victimised by operative shoemakers as a result of the introduction of new systems of work (cf Brooker (1980) passim). In addition to this, the Association acted as a Labour Bureau, a friendly society to render "Freemasonry assistance to any member in distress" (S.L.R. Ibid) and to "promote a more mutual brotherhood". (S.L.R. Ibid).

1 This represents a figure of 23% of the 1884 directory listing.

2 This figure only includes those that were mature firms in 1914.

rank firms on customary more conservative variety production strategies. This duality of approach was never rigidly demarcated and it is quite clear that the survival of individual firms was attainable by not confining policy options to an inevitable shift to volume work. It is also quite clear that because the market for footwear was never monolithic, alert second rank firms could survive, although they were never in a position to ultimately challenge the elite. Just as a monolithic characterisation of economic activity in the industry is too narrow, so, too, the sole measure of success cannot be represented by the progressive firm alone. As Chapter five has argued, the term success is ambiguous; open to a range of meaning and interpretation. Whilst to equate success with elite, progressive firms may be undeniably correct, in a small master study. Enveloping a wide range and condition of firms, this interpretation is inevitably too narrow. Rather the term must be applied in a subjective, gradated fashion over a much wider spectrum of firms, the base-line being survival: the ability to remain in business. Indeed, in an industry with high levels of business failure and during a period of radical change, to survive was in itself an achievement. Yet, ultimately the elite's dominance rested not only upon production, but as much upon distribution strategies and here this chapter has stressed the importance of their oligopolistic behaviour patterns.

Moreover, underlying their production and distribution strategies, the elite also enjoyed organisational advantages that served to overcome the discontinuities and managerial hiatuses commonly experienced by unincorporated association. The use of incorporated status, the introduction of outside business talent and the introduction of second generation owners, all potentially fostered and strengthened long term growth and development.

CHAPTER EIGHT

POLITICAL POWER, SOCIAL PRESTIGE AND THE INDUSTRIAL ELITE

The discussion put forward in the last chapter suggests that it is not possible to be prescriptive about the policies and strategies adopted by manufacturers. In industrial terms, the elite group was portrayed as successful in that a variety of policies were implemented in order to achieve individual goals. Although certain broad similarities of response can be detected relating to changing manufacturing and marketing conditions, shoe manufacturers had to ultimately commit their resources in a way that would achieve individual aims and objectives. Yet the impact of such industrial elites was not bounded purely by industrial endeavour. The power and wealth generated in business spilled over and was reflected in local political and social power structures and institutions. Like other Victorian businessmen, shoe manufacturers sought to use these institutions as a means to both strengthen their industrial ascendancy and to gain a social approbation with which to set the seal upon their industrial achievement.

Before exploring these facets of the elite, it is important to place the group into perspective against the generality of early twentieth century industrialists. In common with the other East Midlands industrial towns, the scale of industrial enterprise was relatively small. In consequence, the wealth and wider social position of members of the industrial elite was on a correspondingly small scale when measured against the vast wealth amassed by, for example, Sir John R. Ellerman and his son,¹ or the Wills family,² or the

1 Sir John R. Ellerman (1862-1933), the shipping magnate and financier left £36.7 millions, "by far the largest British fortune left up to that time or indeed left down to the death of the second Sir John Ellerman in 1973. Ellerman left about 30% of all the wealth passing by probate in Britain 1933, when nearly 400,000 adults were deceased in Great Britain". The son left £52.3 million. (W. D. Rubinstein "Sir John Reeves Ellerman" *D.B.B.* Vol 2, p255. On the firm see James Taylor Ellerman's A Wealth of Shipping (1976); and on Ellerman personally R. MacAlmon, Being Geniuses Together (1938).

2 W. D. Rubinstein Men of Property (1981), places the Wills family with the Coats and English Rothschilds as Britain's three wealthiest families: each family had produced ten or more millionaire wealth-leavers over several generations. On the firm, B. W. E. Alford, W.D. & H.O. Wills and The Development of the U.K. Tobacco Industry 1786-1965 (1973).

Lever Brothers,¹ or the political power of, say, the Chamberlains,² or of Stanley Baldwin.³ Writing of Leicester, Professor Simmons puts the relatively small fortunes of this town into an equally telling perspective:

... Though there have been plenty of rich men here, there have been scarcely any millionaires. (And as a result, although Leicester's foremost industrialists are well known), they are not associated with any great, famous schemes of physical or intellectual improvement, with the endowment of colleges or the gift of large parks. Leicester has produced no Jesse Boot, no dynasty of philanthropic manufacturers like the Cadburys of Birmingham, the Wills of Bristol or the Rowntrees of York ...⁴

The scale found in these towns is much more in keeping with the industrialists discussed by Doctor Trainor in his recent study of the Black Country.⁵ In terms of political ambitions realised and the power shoe manufacturers in East Midland's towns wielded, theirs was largely a myopic, parochial outlook. Few of their

- 1 William H. Lever, the 1st Viscount Leverhulme died in 1925 leaving £1.6 million. (W. J. Reader "William Hesketh Lever" D.B.B. Vol 3 p750). On the firm see C. Wilson The History of Unilever (2 Volumes 1954). The brother, J. D. Lever died in 1910).
- 2 Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914). Birmingham screw manufacturer; Mayor Birmingham; politician - President of Board of Trade 1880-85; President Local Government Board 1886; Colonial Secretary 1895-03 (On life see J. L. Garvin and H. J. Amery The Life of Joseph Chamberlain (5 Volumes 1932-51). And his sons: (i) Sir Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937), Chancellor of Exchequer 1903-5 and 1919-21; Secretary for India 1915-17; Foreign Secretary 1924-29; First Lord Admiralty 1931. (On life see Sir Charles Petrie Austen Chamberlain (1940). (ii) Neville Chamberlain, Mayor Birmingham; politician - Director National Service 1917; Postmaster General 1922-23; Minister of Health 1923, 1924-29 and 1931; Chancellor of Exchequer 1923-24, 1931-7; Prime Minister 1937-40. (On life see K. Feiling Neville Chamberlain (1946).
- 3 Stanley Baldwin (1867-1947) of the steel-making family; President Board of Trade 1921-22, Chancellor of Exchequer 1922-23; Lord President 1931-35; Prime Minister 1923, 1924-29 and 1935-37. (On life see R. K. Middlemas and J. Barnes Biography (1969).
- 4 J. Simmons, "Leicester Past and Present" in A. E. Brown (Editor), the Growth of Leicester (1972) p90 cf J. Simmons, "Three Midland Towns" N.P. & P. (1963) III No.4 p140. "In Nottingham, things developed on a large scale, with great, nationally famous, businesses like Boots and Players and Raleigh bicycles. Leicester has never had any single firm on the scale of these. For a century past it has been a prosperous town, not in the sense that it has produced millionaires, but from the high average income of its whole population".
- 5 Richard Trainor Authority and Social Structure in an Industrial Area: A Study of Three Black Country Towns 1840-90 (unpublished PhD Oxford University 1981).

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number broke the small town mould into which they had been cast.

It will be the role of this chapter, therefore, to examine the social and political character of the Northampton shoe industry elite. This will be carried out in three main stages. First, an investigation of the social origins of the group, followed by an extended consideration of the process of gentrification as it applied to the industry, and finally, a treatment of their place in the politics and society in the county town itself.

I

The place of industrial elite studies in North American business history has been established for some time past.¹ However, in Britain, much less attention has been focused upon this important area,² as W. D. Rubinstein has recently noted:

... Despite the obvious importance of elite social mobility studies in our perceptions of the evolution of modern Britain, social and economic historians have not been much interested in this subject. Since Charlotte Erickson's pioneering investigation of nineteenth century industrialists, probably no more than ten such studies have appeared. The absence of research has, as always, allowed myths and guesses to take the place of evidence and credible argument ...³

Whilst what follows does not purport to be a full social mobility study in the sense Rubinstein means, it is proposed to draw a collective social portrait of the 1914 elite group in an attempt to understand something of the social origins of the group. The necessary data for a full comparison of this group with that of the 1887 elite group, was not forthcoming from the range of sources available to the writer. Nevertheless, this portrait is important at this stage of the thesis in order to begin to analyse, more fully, the character and nature of

1 See, for example, I. D. Ness, "The American Industrial Elite in the 1870's: their social origins" in William Miller (Editor) Men in Business (1952) p191-211; William Miller, "The American Business Elite: A Collective Portrait"; J.Ec.H. Vol IX p184-208; T. W. Acheson, "Changing Social Origins of the Canadian Elite 1880-1910"; B.H.R. (1973) XLVII No.2 p189-217 and in D. S. Macmillan (Editor) Canadian Business History: Selected Studies (1972) p144-74.

2 Important exceptions to this statement are: C. Erickson op cit; K. Honeyman Origins of Enterprise (1982); W. D. Rubinstein op cit; and F. Crouzet The First Industrialists: The Problem of Origins (1984).

3 W. D. Rubinstein, Social History (1984) Vol 9, 2, p243 (a review article).

this elite's exclusivity from the generality of Northampton shoe manufacturers. Five points of reference will be used: birthplace; father's occupation; training; education and religion.

The basic configuration of the Northampton industrial elite has been discussed in the last chapter, thus only a brief resumé is needed here. It was composed of the town's 20 front rank firms and of these, 15 display an element, usually dominant, of founder family control. Of the remaining five, one was a first generation partnership of friends and the other four, first generation sole traderships. 83 men have been identified as having a defined, controlling role within these firms: that is to say, a share in the determination of long term, key policy making. Most usually they were partners or directors, but in five firms senior managers undertook such a role and have consequently been included here. Of the 83, 56 (67%) were either founders or members of the founder's family; they were either owner/managers, or successors yet to be given a formal legal share of control. 15 (18%) were professional directors and 12 (15%) were senior managers.¹

Reviewing the points of reference in the above order, the first relates to birthplace. The significant portion of elite members were born into local shoe-making families, with a lesser proportion coming from other shoe centres. This pattern was only partially disturbed by the introduction of professional managers into the industry in the period.² This underlines the important need of manufacturers to have a practical grounding in shoe production. An important theme and one that was even stronger amongst elite members during transition, is the number of leading manufacturers in Northampton who originated from London; evidence of the close links that existed between the two centres. I will return to this theme shortly.

1 This classification of shoe manufacturers is based on that utilised by T. W. Acheson (1973) loc cit, passim.

2 cf Erickson, op cit, p106.

FIGURE 8:i OCCUPATION OF FATHER'S OF THE ELITE

Occupation	Number	%
artisan (other)	8	9.6
artisan (shoe)	4	4.8
master shoemaker/retailer	5	6.0
manufacturer (shoe)	40	48.2
manufacturer (other)	4	4.8
professional	7	8.4
unknown	15	18.2
	83	100.0

The next point of reference goes to the centre of the social composition of the group: father's occupation. And here, the data tabulated in Figure 8:i suggests that a degree of exclusivity was present within the group. Amongst shoe manufacturers generally it would be predicted that a significant proportion of their fathers to have been of a shoe artisan background, not least because most manufacturers were practical men in charge of first generation firms. This is not the case here: only 4.8% of the sample have fathers of this occupational background. By sharp contrast, 54.2% of fathers were either shoe manufacturers or master shoemakers, which reflects the marked number of multi-generational firms in the sample. And indeed, of the 20 firms, 14 reveal some degree of multi-generational control,¹ six were entirely so, with the remaining eight sharing control between founder and second generation. Beyond this, a marked degree of family involvement in the industry is observable, with 59% of fathers having been in shoemaking.

1 cf Figure 7:iv above.

This degree of multi-generational control and of inherited ownership by descendants, amongst elite firms is important to stress because one of the abiding myths amongst small industries like shoe-making is that manufacturers rose from the seat: that in terms of social background they were of humble origins. A significant feature current, both in local oral tradition and in biographical sources, concerning elite manufacturers here is that the Smilesian model of a man with few social advantages, rising in social standing and esteem by dint of hard work and personal sacrifice dominates and permeates that elite. In the period, this simple model of entrepreneurship does not bear close examination using the available widely scattered evidence that is collated in Appendices II to IV.

Certainly, as is stressed elsewhere, the extent to which artisan shoemakers entered the manufacturers' ranks was undeniably high. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century it was still common for manufacturers to rise from the ranks. In 1878, the Boot and Shoemaker noted:

... on the whole, the shoe manufacturers have been a successful class; many of them within the last quarter of a century have risen from the seat and attained a position of which they may be justly proud ...¹

But the overwhelming majority of these men were undercapitalised victims of lax credit provisions in the industry and quickly failed in their attempt to sustain independent trading.² Yet, when the elite is examined - those manufacturers and firms who were ultimately responsible for the industry's trading success - the position is different. It is apparent that the success enjoyed by the elite was beginning to affect the general social character of the wholesale

1 B. & S. 26 May 1878 p83.

2 L.T.C. & R. September 1876 p21, Editorial comment: Laxity of credit found in boot and shoemaking "there is no other trade which is so much inundated with 'little men' as the shoe trade. (Little or no capital is required). A working shoemaker has only to wake up some morning and make up his mind to become a master. Indiscriminate credit on long terms is given by all in the trade, the leather merchant to the manufacturer, the manufacturer to the retailer". cf Chapter 5, passim.

manufacturers sub-group. Such change was detected by commentators as early as 1880, when it was noted:

... For better or for worse, changes are coming over the trade. The master bootmaker of today has twice the polish of his predecessor and his habits are distinctly different,¹ The master shoemaker 50 years ago consorted largely with his men ...

Previously, masters had enjoyed a shared leisure with their men, frequenting the same public houses, cockpits and prize-fights: they had a shared cultural and political identity. Above all:

... they were practical men and were in no sense dependent upon foremen or others for the proper conduct of their business. Whenever a prize boot was shown, they were sure to be present and on such occasions all sense of masterdom was forgotten and they mingled with the journeymen of the craft as their equals and nothing more and from all that we have been able to learn, aught approaching a presumption to superiority in any sense would have been deeply resented ...²

At the centre of the change in the character and habits of the group was the presence of a rising number of second generation manufacturers, who although ever small in number, were to wield an influence over the industry out of all proportion to their numbers. To quote the trade press once more:

... There is a small amount of the old leaven left (but) it is easily seen how the change has been brought about. A large number of existing masters, owing their position to their parents, have not had to pass the preliminary ordeal of their progenitors. Their scholastic training has been in every sense superior; they have come less in contact with the rougher elements; they have mixed more with their equals and have become more polished. Hence, modern masters dress differently, talk differently, live differently, think differently and wear a different appearance ...³

Thus, any suggestion that the successful and dynamic nature of the industry was generated by conditions of free entry into the manufacturers' ranks - conditions that allowed former artisans the opportunity to participate in that success - must be treated with considerable qualification. Three, inter-related statements can be made about the social structure of the elite.

1 B.S.T.J. 11 December 1880 p278.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid, p279.

First, the majority of the elite were of an exclusive middle-class background. They were overwhelmingly recruited from the industry. Their fathers had themselves frequently been shoe manufacturers or small masters and their success relied heavily upon family connections.

In this respect the findings from the Northampton sample lends support to recent United Kingdom, United States and European studies.¹ In the industry this exclusivity tended to increase in the period:² even amongst new generation firms, principals tended to be drawn from the same social background. Not surprisingly, none were drawn from the upper classes; but there again relatively few came from humble origins, although this is not

1 In nineteenth century France, elite recruitment was exclusive in that recruits' fathers were businessmen and that upwardly mobile people were rare. See, B. Gille La Sidérurgie Française au XIXe Siècle (1968); C. Fohlen L'Industrie Textile au Temps du Second Empire (1956); J. L. Dansette Quelques Familles du Patronat Textile de Lille-Armentières 1789-1914 (1954).

In Germany the independent studies of W. Stahl (Der Elitekreislauf in der Unternehmerschaft (1973)) and H. Kaelble ("Sozialer Aufstieg in Deutschland, 1850 bis 1914", Vierteljahrschrift Für Sozial-und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, (1973) Volume 60) conclude that German elite recruitment was similarly elitist.

U.S. research follows a similar line, see example R. Bendix and F. W. Howton, "Social Mobility and the American Business Elite" in S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix (Editors) Social Mobility in Industrial Society (1963) pl22-48; and J. N. Ingham "Rags to Riches Revisited: the Effect of City Size and Related Factors on the Recruitment of Business Leaders", Journal of American History (1976).

Finally, in Britain, recent syntheses of British research findings by Professor P. L. Payne led him to conclude that it is not improbable that nineteenth century British businessmen came predominately from the lower levels of the middle ranks of British society and that, as a result of the emergence of large firms late in the century, the opportunities for upward social movement were reduced. Payne, however, places great emphasis on the lack of reliable data to fully substantiate such conclusions.

2 Both C. Erickson (op cit pl2) and H. Perkin ("The Recruitment of Elites in British Society Since 1880" Journal of Social History (1980) suggest that such exclusivity has declined in the course of the twentieth century, although the factors causing this are not entirely clear.

true of the generality of manufacturers. A few notable known exceptions unequivocally came from a working-class background: William Arnold,¹ G. T. Hawkins,² C. & E. Lewis,³ and Oakeshott & Finnemore.⁴

These seven men represented only 8.4% of the controllers of elite firms. This, however, did not prevent the claim of humble origins being made by other members of the elite and perpetuated thereafter.⁵ This stress placed upon lowly origins was possibly nothing more than a means, in later life, to erect exaggerated claims for success.

Recent research by Clive Behagg, however, concerning Birmingham's small metal trades has suggested that such claims were made in Birmingham as part of the justification for the anomalies inherent in capitalism:

... It was essential that men like Ryland and Chamberlain could stress the original small scale nature of their ventures. This went some distance towards justifying the fact that their continued expansion directed the changing context within which the small firm existed. The reality of a limited traditional mobility (often more occupational than social) from journeyman to small master, which had been at the heart of the decentralised workshop structure, was being usurped by a largely mythical social mobility which attested to the possibility of a meteoric rise to large scale manufacturer status by the exercise of basic human qualities. For the small manufacturer, of course, the acceptance of

1 Appendix III N.G.6.

2 Appendix II C.6.

3 Appendix II C.1.

4 Appendix III N.G.8.

5 See Appendix II C.2. Sir J. H. C. Crockett; Appendix III N.G.2. A. E. Marlow; Appendix II C.4., Sir H. E. Randall; Appendix II C.10, Simon Collier.

this line of thought gave limitless horizons to what was actually a highly circumscribed universe ...¹

Secondly, given the degree of multi-generational control, the successful response of the industry came substantially from established and successful firms. Firms that could trace their origins to the pre-industrial era in the industry. In Appendix II, C.3., C.4., C.5., C.7., C.8., C.9., and C.10., are clearly of this character. C.1., C.2., and C.6., less clearly so. These shoe firms and their principals were amongst the most influential not only in Northampton, but in Britain. Nevertheless, this key role of a continuity of leadership from the pre-industrial period, although it is important in the industrialising process, must not be exaggerated. For there was also a significant role played by founder-controlled firms of much more recent origin: the last chapter has stressed that the elite was composed, equally, of both core and new generation firms. However, amongst the leading new generation concerns, elements of continuity are apparent. The most dynamic of this new blood in the elite was John G. Sears,² who bought out his father's suspended business. After him came A. E. Marlow³ and George Padmore:⁴ they relied heavily upon initial injections of capital and experience drawn from older established family firms.

1 C. Behagg "The Changing Role and Nature of Small Producers in Birmingham in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century" (1980 - unpublished seminar paper read at Conference on Internal Structure of the Petite Bourgeoisie, University Bremen) p20. cf elsewhere in this paper, Behagg also draws upon the need for proponents of economic liberalism to stress that "the traditional mechanism of upward economic and social mobility" was still retained under industrialisation and that small scale production provided an avenue for entrepreneurial effort. "(Certain forms of small scale production were constantly lauded as examples of entrepreneurial spirit and individual endeavour" (p21). Nevertheless, Behagg does find that contemporaries drew a distinction between the small manufacturer and the artisan small master, who by the mid century was "increasingly equated with the garret master (and was) consistently pilloried" (p21) cf C. Behagg.

2 Appendix III, N.G.1.

3 Appendix III, N.G.2.

4 Appendix III, N.G.3.

The next in line was James Branch Ltd.,¹ a London firm founded in the 1870's that had transferred manufacturing to Northampton in 1889. Below this again, with the exception of the Arnold family firms,² and Oakeshott & Finnemore,³ the remaining new generation firms in the elite show similar traits of continuity.⁴

This essential continuity of control by predominately middle-class men has recently been stressed by K. Honeyman's study of social origins amongst industrialists in the lead mining, cotton spinning and lace industries during the Industrial Revolution.⁵ The central thesis of this book challenges the orthodoxy that entrepreneurs emerged from diverse social origins.⁶ Instead she proposes, like E. E. Hagen, that whatever the stage of development or social or cultural

- 1 Appendix III, N.G.4: James' father had been a London manufacturer.
- 2 Appendix III, N.G.6 and N.G.7: Arnold Brothers is the youngest elite firm, being virtually a subsidiary of A. & W. Arnold.
- 3 Appendix III, N.G.8.
- 4 These firms reveal particular entrepreneurial traits that in their relatively short business life had marked them out as innovators: Oakeshott & Finnemore (N.G.8) had quickly come to dominate export trading; Roe Brothers (N.G.9) retail chain activities and W. Barratt & Company (N.G.10) in 1914 still "a rising star", in just 11 years trading had established mail order activities in the industry, exploited and placed newspaper advertising on a new footing in the industry, recovered from bankruptcy and launched a public company and initiated retail chain trading.
- 5 K. Honeyman, Origins of Enterprise (1982).
- 6 See, example, Paul Mantoux The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century (1929) p376-98. Also J. Chapman and F. J. Marquis "The Recruiting of the Employing Classes from the Ranks of the Wage Earners in the Cotton Industry" J.R.S.S. (1912) LXXV p293-313, where it is argued that a "vertical mobility of labour" still exists on the eve of the Great War not only in cotton but other industries as well. But, cf R. Bendix Work and Authority in Industry (1974) Chapter 2, passim, where he looks at this traditional approach and argues, "To begin with, many came from a modest family background, though probably not as many as is usually assumed" (p23): "It is misleading, however, to assume that a majority of the most prominent entrepreneurs were self made men (in the sense that they came from the working class). Hence, to speak as if a large majority of the early entrepreneurs had suddenly risen from the dunghill to the chariot was intentionally misleading. A number of interpretations by historians of specific industries confirm this evaluation". (p24/25).

environment, entrepreneurs are drawn from a similar social background and very rarely do they emerge from humble origins. Hagen hypothesizes that:

... the leaders in the transition to economic growth were neither randomly distributed throughout the population nor drawn from the group that was most elite or had the greatest wealth, instead, they came disproportionately from some one or more less elite groups ...¹

Although this study is different in time scale and coverage from Honeyman's, a close parallel regarding certain key characteristics emerges between the social structure of the early twentieth century shoe elite and that of eighteenth century industrialists. Honeyman's work echoes certain similarities found in the shoe industry over a century later. The same high participation rate drawn from the middle-class; the same role of hereditary leadership; the same failure of small men to survive and adapt to business life in the long run. She notes:

... A number of small and modest men apparently made a success of entrepreneurship, at least in the short term, but individuals from the bottom of the scale made little progress. Despite the transformation of the economy and of society circa 1750 to circa 1830, there appears to have been little change in industrial leadership ...²

Again:

... The range of opportunities open to the small man to reach a position of industrial leadership probably grew from the second half of the eighteenth century, but the restrictions on his mobility apparently remained as insuperable as they had always been. Continuity of leadership was the result. A group of small men were successful in the long term, but they were exceptional and should be recognised as such ...³

1 E. E. Hagen On the Theory of Social Change (1964) p30 quoted in Honeyman Ibid, p7.

2 Honeyman, op cit, p166.

3 Honeyman, Ibid, p170. cf C. Erickson, op cit, p29, where it is stated that a majority of steel manufacturers came from a middle-class background: "Nine out of ten steel men in office between 1875 and 1895 came from middle-class families, while only two in ten men in the population as a whole, at the time these men started their careers, were in these middle-class occupations. "One cannot conclude, however, on the basis of these figures, that the trend toward a broader social base of recruitment had actually begun before the first World War". Similar conclusions are reached regarding Nottingham hosiery merchants; see p89, et seq, where it is noted that merchant hosiers were drawn from a social class I and II background in the 1840's. "The children of framework knitters who became merchant hosiers were not, it seems, without some advantages of birth". (p89). But here, also, a range of middle-class origins are apparent, similar to that found in shoemaking. "Among those who were not hereditary leaders, very few seem to have entered the ...

This dichotomy of experience she partly explains by shifts in economic and financial conditions, but she particularly stresses that the middle-class were better suited socially and psychologically to the entrepreneurial role:

... There is a long tradition of sociological thought and some evidence to support the view that the entrepreneurial role attracts an individual with a particular type of personality, though the possibility remains that a person can adapt to the requirements of the role. D. McClelland's extensive research on achievement motivation, for instance, shows that the individuals most likely to become successful entrepreneurs are those who possess high 'n achievement' and that there is a strong relationship between this and social class. From his studies McClelland is able to conclude that middle-class individuals typically possess a higher 'n achievement' than those with an upper-class or lower-class background. According to this proposition, men of humble origins are unlikely to become successful or lasting industrial leaders ...

... It is also possible that small men who achieved entrepreneurial success in the short term may have experienced social or psychological strains in the process of adapting to their new and alien position, thus eventually failing. Acceptance of the small man by better adapted or longer established peers was frequently lacking. Peer solidarity was necessary, not just for moral but also for financial support. Social contacts were important for economic survival and the formation of these connections could pose problems for the men of humble origins. It is possible, therefore, that economic and social constraints persisted throughout the period of industrialisation which hampered the industrial activity of the small man, while leaving the wealthier entrepreneurs unaffected ...¹

Thirdly, however, although their social origins were predominately middle-class, a majority were drawn from the lower strata of that social group. Although the second generation leaders of the industry had experienced a solidly middle class upbringing, a larger proportion of the elite came from a petty

3 ... hosiery industry from families with substantial capital resources. Hosiery was an industry which attracted local and petty, not large scale capitalists" (p90). A similar lower middle-class recruitment is noted amongst hosiery manufacturers, whereby the late nineteenth century there was a "very marked decline in the proportion of hereditary leaders among them", (p94-5). "On the whole the rise of the factory did not attract new blood from families with large capital resources" (p96). "The most important influx was not of men from capitalist families but of craftsmen" (p97). But "by 1900 hosiery manufacturers had reverted to a class structure similar to that of the merchant hosiers of the 1840's. The entry of children of independent craftsmen and skilled workers fell from 34% to 12%" (p99).

1 Honeyman, Ibid, p168-69: cf D. C. McClelland The Achieving Society (1961), where he shows that circa 70% of the business elite in the last 150 years has come from middle/upper-class status (see p276-77).

capitalist or independent craftsman background. Their social origins were often financially restrained but not socially humble in the sense of being proletarian. Yet this did not preclude social mobility between generations, with a socially upward trend observable between founder and second generation principal. Other studies have noted this, but Francois Crouzet's major new study of British industrialists during the Industrial Revolution provides us with the broadest documented proof to date.¹ Regarding Crouzet's findings on upward social mobility a reviewer has noted:

... He reveals more clearly than any previous student of this subject that although many of the industrialists had humble - though not proletarian - backgrounds, upward social movement did take place on such a scale and in such a way that it is possible to talk of the self-made man; that 'rags to riches' is not entirely a myth; that there was intra-class if not inter-class mobility ...²

Crouzet himself comments, "Most people who benefited, rose WITHIN the middle-class, from its lower strata (in some cases on the fringe of the working class) to a new stratum of wealthy, or at least, well-to-do industrialists".³

This is a trend that is observable within the Northampton elite. The inter-class shift between the differing social experience of successive generations is markedly revealed in the biographical Appendices II and III. There a general shift in social and cultural activities is observable when the founder is compared against subsequent principals.⁴ However, upward social mobility is probably most readily shown by the increased levels of wealth left at probate by successive generations. A sample of 145 wills have been traced of

1 Francois Crouzet The First Industrialists: The Problem of Origins (1984). This book investigates social origins by reference to the majority of the published data about pioneer industrialists. His conclusions are echoed in this thesis. Like others before him he concludes that the middle-class provided the most fertile recruiting ground for industrialists.

2 P. Payne "Self-made Men" (a review of Crouzet, Ibid) Times Higher Education Supplement 29 March 1985 p17.

3 Crouzet, op cit, quoted by Payne, Ibid.

4 See, example, Appendix II C.5.; C.7.; (cf N.G.2) and C.8. Shifts in residential locational, which are dealt with later, between generations could likewise be utilised.

FIGURE 8:ii - WEALTH LEFT AT PROBATE BY ELITE NORTHAMPTON

MANUFACTURERS 1884 - 1964

	Others 1884-1914	1914 Core and N.G. 1884-1914	1914 Core and N.G. 1914-1964
Number of wills sampled	68	21	56
Total wealth	£1604203	£391223	£4969871
Arithmetic mean	£23591	£18630	£88748
Standard deviation	£8650	£1717	£2249

manufacturers who died in the period 1884-1964. Of these, 89 relate to the period to 1914 and 56 to the later post 1914 period. The total wealth profile in Figure 8:ii suggests an aggregate increase in wealth accumulation for the sample as a whole over time. These figures, however, are not adjusted for inflation. Moreover, whilst probate records offer probably the best indicator of wealth at death, this does not necessarily give a clear indicator of the ability of an individual to generate wealth in his lifetime. Several biographies reveal that excessive expenditure reduced, in some cases, substantially reduced, the value of a personal estate at the time of death. Thus, it was said of M.P. Manfield that his many acts of philanthropy and private charity reduced his wealth,¹ and of H. E. Randall, that his social activities similarly drained his purse.² Looking more closely at the period to 1914, several points can be observed that give credence to Professor Simmons contention, noted above, of the modesty of wealth found in industries like shoemaking. The bulk of wills proved showed levels of wealth at the bottom of the spectrum. 66% of all manufacturers left personal property below the value of £1,000: an aggregate

1 Appendix II C.3. p

2 Appendix II C.4. p

total of £177,397, constituting 8.9% of all wealth passing through probate. At the 77% level, the £309,116 passing through probate represented 15.5% of all wealth in the sample. The bottom 10 men left just £1,501 (0.07% of the total), whilst the top 10 left £12,555,184 (63% of the total). Of these only three left sums in excess of £100,000:

Edward Simpson	£131,810	8s	11d ¹
Samuel Isaacs	£202,084	17s	9d ²
Ebenezer Homan	£353,003	7s	2d ³

Homan and Isaacs were London shoe merchants, manufacturing in Northampton. This connection between the centres has been alluded to above and it is again of interest here. For London merchants and those from other centres,⁴ formed an important part of the elite group prior to the mid-1880's and shortly after. Most were absentee manufacturers relying upon managers and agents to conduct their business. In addition to the above, the most prominent were Palliser &

1 Edward Simpson born Leeds 1818; co-founder of Stead & Simpson of Leeds and Leicester. Retired in 1889 to Scarborough, where he died in December 1904. On the firm see, Anon, Stead and Simpson Centenary 1834-1934: 100 years in the Boot and Shoe Trade (1934).

2 Samuel Isaacs born London 1812; from a merchant family with trading connections at London and Liverpool. Partner in Isaac, Campbell & Company, shoe manufacturers of London and Northampton. Died 22 November 1886 at Maida Vale, London.

3 Ebenezer Homan born London 1822. Head of Homan & Company, London and Northampton shoe manufacturer. Died on 17 March 1909 at Finchley, Middlesex.

4 In addition to Stead & Simpson, amongst the most prominent were Derham Brothers and W. Silvester & Sons. James and Samuel Derham commenced trading at Bristol in 1843, opening branch premises at Northampton in 1870. Samuel Derham (1817-86) lived at Henleaze Park, Westbury, Gloucestershire. Personal effects £91,259 10s 11d left to widow and son, Walter, a barrister. James Derham 1819-90 lived at Sneyd Park, Stoke-Bishop, Gloucestershire. Personal effects £75,820 13s 4d, left to his widow, daughters and a son, Henry, shoe manufacturer. (S.L.R. 19 June 1886 p58; S.L.R. 1 March 1890 p293; Anon,

William Silvester (1839-1904), a Stafford manufacturer with a factory at Northampton, under the managership of Bruce B. Muscott from 1888. Died at Ronley Park, Stafford, on 23 September 1904; personal effects £49,393 11s 5d. His son, R. W. Silvester, took over control of the firm. (B.S.T.J. 7 October 1904 p5).

Company,¹ A. & W. Flatau,² and W. Hickson & Sons.³ Only in a few instances did these men reside in the county and take an active role in public life there.⁴ Their success and prominence can be highlighted in a variety of ways, but in the context of the present discussion, this prominence is reflected by the value of the estates. Although the 15 outside manufacturers whose wills have been traced only constituted 22% of all wills, they represented 78% of total wealth in the period: £1,235,350 as against £368,853 left by local manufacturers. By contrast, amongst local men the two wealthiest in the earlier period were George Turner (£71,387) and Richard Turner (£60,670).⁵

Returning now to the main issue of the father's occupation, those whose father had a professional background, all were professional directors; three belonging to the three public companies, the fourth, S.J. Davis, to the board of Padmore & Barnes Ltd. In all cases, the professional director was a personal friend of the company's chairman or managing director. The high 'unknown' figure is composed of professional directors and senior managers, of whom it could be speculated that their fathers came from a commercial/professional background, but this is by no means clear given the present state of knowledge.

This theme of exclusivity engendered by the multi-generational character of the elite firm, is again met with at the third point of reference: training. Of

1 Sir William Palliser M.P. (1830-82). Resided at 21 Earls Court Square, London. A man of diverse industrial and political interests. Personal effects £89,689 16s 2d. (On life see D.N.B. XLIII p117-19; Alumn Cantab Part II Vol V p11; Who's Who of M.P.'s Vol I p299).

2 Founded by Jacob Flatau (1845-91). Merchant of Maida Vale, died March 1891, estate valued at £42,819 4s 10d: Control taken by brother Solomen, of West Hampstead who died December 1934. Personal effects £148,535 17s 2d. The firm then passed to H. P. Flatau O.B.E., S. F. E. Flatau and R. A. Flatau; (S.L.R. 20 January 1891 p173; B.S.T.J. 7 March 1891 p259).

3 On W. Hickson & Sons see Chapter 6 p385 above.

4 Example John Cooper (cf Chapter 6 p410; and Chapter 8 p530, below) and James Branch (Appendix III N.G.4).

5 On Turner Brothers, Hyde & Company, see Chapter 6 p408, and Chapter 8 p516 below).

FIGURE 8:iii - TRAINING PATTERNS OF THE INDUSTRIAL ELITE

Mode of Training	Number	%
On the job (operative)	3	3.6
Apprentice	13	15.7
Pupilage	42	50.7
Apprentice/Pupilage	3	3.6
Clerical	9	10.8
Professional	7	8.4
Unknown	6	7.2
	83	100.0

the sample in Figure 8:iii, the biggest proportion, 54.3%, were introduced into the industry through a process here called pupilage. 14 (70%) of elite firms have an element of pupilage amongst their executives, indicating the pervasiveness of succession amongst these firms and the theme of exclusivity. From the available biographical information it is apparent that the sons who succeeded father as manufacturers commonly received a practical shoemaking and management training within the firm, often by initially being apprenticed to a trusted employee. It appears to have been relatively unusual for sons to gain experience in other shoe firms. This emphasis upon practical skills and usually upon acquiring some degree of understanding and competency in each process, underscores the continued importance of these skills for manufacturers in the period: this has been fully discussed elsewhere. Clearly juxtaposed with this, however, was a growing concern for business skills and in particular for a competency within the sales function. The commitment of late Victorian and Edwardian shoe manufacturers to the United Kingdom Commercial Travellers' Association can be cited as evidence in support of this. The next biggest category were apprentices,

FIGURE 8:iv - EDUCATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL ELITE

Style of Education	Number	%
"Negligible"	1	1.2
Elementary	29	34.9
Technical College	2	2.4
Grammar	9	10.8
Private	3	3.6
Boarding/Tutor	1	1.2
Public	5	6.0
University	2	2.4
Unknown	31	37.5
	83	100.0

accounting for 15.7% of the elite. This again draws attention to the continued need for manufacturers to be competent, practical men. However, it is possible to argue that the rise in importance of managerial/financial skills are nevertheless significantly reflected in training patterns. 19.2% of the industrialists had had a clerical/professional training. These men are to be found exclusively within the professional directors and managers groups. Moreover, the "unknown" category are likewise all drawn from these areas and if their training was of a similar character, then the figure of those trained within this new executive manager area would rise to 26.4%. The way in which this new, though still small executive group could compliment and strengthen a manufacturer's abilities, thereby improving a firm's performance, is vividly shown in the revival of W. Barratt & Company after their trading suspension in 1906.¹ By contrast, the small number of ex-operatives in the elite group is

¹ Appendix III N.G.10 p

FIGURE 8:v - RELIGION OF THE INDUSTRIAL ELITE

Religious Affiliation	Number	%
Anglican	22	26.5
Congregationalist	13	15.7
Methodist	4	4.8
Primitive Methodist	1	1.2
Baptist	1	1.2
Unspecified Non-Conformist	18	21.7
Unknown	24	28.9
	83	100.0

reflected by the fact that only 3.6% of the sample received an operative training: however, if the number of apprentices are joined to this figure, it would rise to 19.3%.

The penultimate point of reference is that of education: Figure 8:iv. At 37.5% the high percentage of 'unknowns' once more reflects the less than full biographical data that has come down to us regarding the professional directors and managers within the elite. Of the remainder, it can be stated that their formal education was of a moderate, even basic character: That for most, the 'school of life' was the predominant educator: That most relied upon industrial experience in their role as an industrialist. By far and away the majority of manufacturers (34.9%) received an elementary education, which suggests the presence of a strong socially upward mobile element being present in the group. By contrast, 22.8% received an education of a non-elementary character: a reflection of the presence of successful manufacturers' sons in the group. And certainly public school/university instruction played very much a minor role in the education of the elite. Only 11 men received what could be termed a

'privileged' education, which provides a useful indicator as to the relatively modest character of the elite. The trait so common in many industries, of succeeding generations after the founder enjoying superior educational opportunity, followed by a professional or public life, rather than a life in the family firm, is not present in the shoe industry to anything like the same degree.¹ For although the multi-generational character of many firms suggests the presence of established and successful firms, the very modest education of the large proportion of second generation owners, speaks both of modest levels of wealth and possibly of aspiration also. Relatively few manufacturing families reveal a pattern of succeeding generations moving into professional life after a public school/university education.²

Finally, in this collective social portrait, is the issue of religion. Not surprisingly in a town noted for the radical, Nonconformist disposition of a majority of its population, Nonconformity held sway over Anglicanism amongst the elite: 44.6% of this group acknowledged the former, whilst 26.5% professed an attachment to the established Church. The most interesting point to emerge from the evidence is the importance placed by a majority of the elite upon an active involvement in religion and in the professing of faith. And most did profess faith and linked religiosity either explicitly or by implication to their business success. This faith was further translated into the world of business as giving rise to qualities of honesty, diligence and fairness in

1 But care must be taken not to overstate this point, for as Hobsbawm notes "even today, the actual management of medium sized firms (the sort of people who would in 1860-90 certainly have been owner-managers) contains not more than one in five who have been to university, not much more than one in four who have been to public school, including not more than one in 20 who have been to one of the top 20 or so public schools. (E. J. Hobsbawm Industry and Empire (1968) p185) cf R. V. Clement's Managers: A Study of Their Careers in Industry (1958) p154 et seq, where he stresses that pre 1920 it was usual for men with only an elementary education, to 'rise from the bottom'.

2 Exceptions to this statement are Bostock and Manfield where third generation after founder follow such a path; A. E. Marlow, where his youngest son does. This is similarly the case amongst older established firms outside the elite: example Marshall & Co., Chapter 6, p391 above; Turner Brothers, Hyde & Co., Chapter 6, p410 and Chapter 8, p510; and W. Hickson & Sons, Chapter 6, p 385 above.

industrial relations. For C. & E. Lewis, the presence of religion amongst individual employees was utilised as an effective barrier to progression to supervisory rank: their foreman were all drawn from the congregation of the Doddridge Chapel.¹ However, there is some evidence amongst this rising generation of the elite of a secularisation in belief patterns; that professional/business organisations take the place of religion in a manufacturer's life. For example, both A. E. Marlow and J. H. Marlow were Rotarians, whilst G. T. Hawkins and J. Manfield were Freemasons. In addition, it should be further noted that amongst prominent manufacturers, at least four are known to have changed religious affiliation in adult life, from Non-conformity to Anglicanism. Could this be a reflection of the process of gentrification through which some prominent members of the elite were to pass?

¹ See reference to Enoch Jeelson's obituary in Appendix II C.1 p (cf N.I. 9 September 1949 p9.)

II

Indeed it is to this process of gentrification amongst shoe manufacturers that I now wish to turn. In the introduction to this chapter it was stated that, like other Victorian businessmen, shoe men sought to use political and social institutions as a means to both strengthen their industrial ascendancy and to gain social approbation and recognition for their industrial achievement. The most complete articulation of this was gentrification, yet in past studies on the industry it is a subject that has received little consideration. Certainly in general histories of this and other periods, historians have often noted the predilection amongst English industrialists to seek that position and status conferred by the ownership of landed property.

Many historians have sought to link such aspiration in part or in whole, to the eclipse of British industrial supremacy after circa 1875.¹ One such writer is E. J. Hobsbawm in Industry and Empire. At several points in this work he argues that at least a portion of middle class industrialists assumed an aristocratic scale of values and leisured life style.² It was a process that gathered pace as the century progressed: "the assimilation of the British business classes to the social pattern of the gentry and aristocracy had proceeded very rapidly from the mid-nineteenth century".³ At the centre of this

1 A recent synthesis of this and other arguments concerned with this eclipse can be found in M. W. Kirby The Decline of British Economic Power Since 1870 (1981) Chapter 1, pl/23. cf Chapter 7 above.

2 On the character of upper class life see, example, A. Mejia "The Upper Class in Late Victorian and Edwardian England". A study of the formation and perpetuation of class bias (unpublished PhD Stanford University 1968). At p3 he notes "it is accurate to say that their upbringing and their style of life left them unwilling or unable to understand the principles of modern political and social life".

3 E. J. Hobsbawm Industry and Empire (1968) pl68. cf Chapter 7 above for Kindleberger's differing treatment of this subject.

value system lay a love of amateur status and an air of not trying too hard:¹ values calculated to dull enterprise, especially in a world marked by increased competition. This striving to achieve membership was met by "the vast ramparts of pioneer profits",² and the increasing reliance upon a managerial class to conduct many of the facets of running the firm. Concomitant with this, the further the family members were removed by age and upbringing from the trials and tribulations of the founder's struggle to establish the business, the less was the attention paid to the family firm's operation. This rejection of business by family successors and the shift in control from owner-managers to managers, marks for Hobsbawm a crucial element in Britain's economic problems after circa 1875 and the rundown of individual firms over time. This process he encapsulates in the old saying, "from clogs to clogs in three generations".³ Moreover, Hobsbawm argues that the mode of transmitting this anti-industrial value system was through the public school system, which developed rapidly from the early Victorian period. This, however, was only one, possibly the most

1 Mejia op cit p9/10 "Americans seem to have been especially struck by the aristocratic features of British political and social life .. by the tradition, the sense of duty, the sporting instincts and the noble amateurism of the English upper class". On the tensions which existed between quasi-feudal values of landed society in the shires and the quasi-democratic values of urban, middle class society, see Mejia op cit Chapter 4 "The Cult of the Land" passim.

2 Hobsbawm Ibid pl86.

3 Of course, the experience of shoemaking at industry level during this period was different; for rather than not adverting crisis, the industry had successfully combatted foreign competition. What is chronicled below is the founding of a shoe gentry drawn from firms often at the height of their power and success. They were at the early phase of the cycle Hobsbawm maps out. Although the subsequent fate of these firms and of the industry, is not properly part of this thesis it is at least interesting to record that within 40 years when Charles Clore begun his involvement with the industry, many of these firms were in turn moribund. He found former family firms, with the families still in part ownership, but more involved in county than in business life, whilst the management functions had passed to professional managers. Of the position when he acquired Sears, it has recently been noted "He regarded the position as being one where the entrenched directors were not making adequate use of their assets and on completing these acquisitions, he set himself the task of making the assets work". (L. Sainer "Sir Charles Clore" D.B.B. (1984) I p699).

potent, means of transmission. Certainly amongst the sample here a variety of more informal ways of inculcating these values emerge: for example, Philip Manfield's friendship with C. R. Spencer, George Turner's love of country sport and John Cooper's involvement in agricultural matters.

Although many historians have sought to link such aspiration to Britain's industrial eclipse, a recent book by Martin Wiener¹ has sought to argue that the English entrepreneur in seeking landed status was not merely striving for social acceptance or power, but that he was revealing a deep-seated ambivalence felt by English people generally, towards modern industrial society itself. He notes:

... England was the world's first great industrial nation. Yet the English have never been comfortable with industrialism. Inevitably, England became an industrial society, led by men who were deeply opposed to what they saw as the industrial ethos. Businessmen increasingly shunned the role of entrepreneur for the more socially rewarding role of gentleman. Their anti-industrial and anti-business attitudes had important consequences for British industry, as innovation was stymied and factories and production processes were allowed to become antiquated and inefficient. Gentry values and the gentry myth of England, domesticated industrialism in political thought and action as they did in the wider culture, separating the 'acceptable' from the 'unacceptable' face of industrial capitalism. There was, as a result, little commitment by political leaders to the wholehearted pursuit of economic expansion ...²

The English were and are, essentially conservative, argues Wiener and the ascendancy of middle and upper class attitudes and beliefs amongst industrialists led to two complementary traits. A hostility to industrialism and economic growth, set against a growing nostalgia and sense of loss felt by many late Victorians for "a mythical England of pleasant villages surrounded by green countryside".

1 M. J. Wiener English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980 (1981).

2 Wiener Ibid preface. The argument of this book is a logical progression of statements that have been evolving about British entrepreneurship over the past 20 years or so. See example H. J. Habakkuk American and British Technology in the Nineteenth Century (1967) Chapter VI passim, where he notes, approvingly, the argument "that the English social structure and English public opinion were less favourable than the American to entrepreneurship" (p190). In developing this view, he states that the dominance of economic and social institutions of the old order caused a haemorrhage of capital and ability from industry and trade into landownership and politics.

An important consideration therefore, which lies at the centre of any study of successful manufacturers is, "why did these men so assiduously pursue wealth?" This question assumes an even greater importance when it is stated that from Northampton biographical evidence it is clear that many of the most successful shoe manufacturers either worked until, or shortly before death; or else died prematurely as a result, partly of persistent and often severe overwork.¹ Certainly it may be asserted that they did not labour entirely to satisfy theoretical and ultimately abstract, norms of profit maximisation and optimum efficiency to the exclusion of all else. Professor H. Perkin suggests that the purely economic motivation of enrichment was an insufficient incentive to manufacturers to invest capital and effort in risk bearing enterprises. He argues that "the limitless pursuit of wealth for its own sake is a rare phenomenon"; rather one must look for, "additional motivations and drives to explain (their) extraordinary energy and ambition".²

He quickly reviews and rejects, religiously based motivation: that is to say, Weber and Tawney's protestant ethic thesis³ and the 'need for achievement' McClelland has argued motivated dissenters.⁴ Rather, Perkin argues, the essential drive came from the pursuit of social status. He quotes Adam Smith approvingly:

... To what purpose is all the toil and bustle of the world? It is our vanity which urges us on. It is not wealth that men desire but the consideration of good opinion that wait upon riches ...⁵

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- 1 See, example, J. G. Sears (N.G.2), A. E. Marlow (N.G.3), A. W. Barratt (N.G.10).
 - 2 H. Perkins, Origins of Modern British Society (1972) p83. Although concerned primarily with the century prior to 1880, his comments are germane to the discussion here. cf P. L. Payne's general, broad-based discussion on this issue, which contains an extensive bibliography, in "Industrial Entrepreneurship and Management in Great Britain", P. Mathias and M. M. Postan (Editors) Cambridge Economic History of Europe (1978) Vol VII p181-230.
 - 3 M. Weber The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism and R. H. Tawney Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.
 - 4 D. C. McClelland op cit.
 - 5 A. Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759), quoted in H. Perkin op cit p86 cf R. W. Emerson English Traits (1882-2nd Edition) p34. "Everyman who becomes rich wants to buy land and move up into the landed aristocracy".

Successful manufacturers, therefore, used their industrial wealth to satisfy social aspirations and to seek a wider social approbation of their achievement amongst contemporaries. And the apotheosis of this status seeking was the desire felt amongst at least a portion of the most successful men to become absorbed into landed society: to acquire land, a country seat. Land in this context was much more than just an investment; a place to reside. The possession of land went to the very heart of the English social system, for it symbolised both position and authority. As one recent study of the English upper class has noted, there existed a 'cult of the land'.¹ Mejia argues that:

... Land was no mere commodity and it certainly was not just another form of wealth. In the countryside the traditional social structure often survived well into the twentieth century; where it did not survive, the squire tried to convince himself that it had. Everything connected with the land, the country houses, the horses, the obedient and respectful tenants, all were regarded through a haze of mystical reverence. A capitalist or a commercial outlook was always an object of contempt (and) the landed approach to life had an impact far beyond the stables and the parish churches of the rural counties. Often the lingering quasi-feudalism took on a very attractive aura...²

As F. M. L. Thompson notes, "it has long been recognised that the rise of the new gentry is a permanent feature of English social scene".³ It is also clear that from the literature this movement of wealthy merchants and men of industry into landed society predates the Industrial Revolution. In discussing the relationship of industry and commerce with land in late Stuart period G. N. Clark has noted:

... It was not that commerce and industry were ousting the land owning and agricultural classes from their commanding position, it clearly appears that there was constant association and interchange between the two. There were ancient landed estates which would furnish a surplus for investment in commerce and industry and new ones could be built up by wealth acquired in the army, the navy, politics, the law and even the church, but it is not an exaggeration to say that it was a normal process for a successful

1 Mejia op cit p202, where he also comments "One of the most distinctive features of the English upper class was the fetish it made of the land".

2 Mejia Ibid p202.

3 F. M. L. Thompson, English Landed Society in 19 Century (1963) p121.

merchant and even the exceptionally successful manufacturer to buy a landed estate and establish a line of country squires and baronets or even peers ...¹

In particular, Northamptonshire, so often alluded to in literature and histories as a county of 'squires and spires', had long witnessed this process of gentrification through successive generations. Indeed, by the late nineteenth century landed society had appropriated to itself much of the country's total land acreage. R. L. Greenall notes:

... Northamptonshire was pre-eminently a county of landed estates. In the 'Return of the Owners of Land' in 1873, 57% of the land was owned by 102 landlords with estates of 1,000 acres or more and just under half of this was in the hands of 16 persons owning estates between 5,000 and 20,000 acres ...²

Indeed, some of the county's premier aristocratic and old established gentry families at this time could trace their landed origins back to similar beginnings as the new shoe gentry in the nineteenth century, discussed below. As Doctor M. E. Finch has demonstrated, the confluence of fertile, profit-bearing farmland on the one hand and the presence of wealth generated by successful London merchants and state officials on the other, lay at the foundation of many landed

- 1 G. N. Clark, The Later Stuarts (1949) p35/6, cf D. Mathew, The Social Structure in Caroline England (1950), especially Introduction and Chapter IV. For the period 1540-1640 see H. R. Trevor-Roper, The Gentry 1540-1640 (1952).
- 2 R. L. Greenall, A History of Northamptonshire (1979) p65 cf J. Bateman, Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland (1883) p507, provides one with a complete picture of Northamptonshire landownership patterns at the beginning of our period. cf F. M. L. Thompson op cit Chapters I and V.

Number Owners	Class	Acres
13	Peers	148236
23	Great Landowners	132120
31	Squires	52700
156	Great Yeomen	78000
444	Lesser Yeomen	75480
3287	Small Proprietors	67058
10010	Cottagers	3022
501	Public Bodies	36161
	Waste	254
14465		593031

society families from the sixteenth century forwards.¹ However, some gentry families were incomparably older than this: the prominent example being the Wakes of Courten Hall.²

III

Given the dominant role of landed society in the county and its history, which is underscored by the successive entry of new blood into its ranks, it is not surprising that some of the most successful of Northampton's shoe manufacturers should emulate past generations. In the present study, there exists^s prima facie evidence that ten manufacturers exhibited patterns of land acquisition comparable to the model of 'new men' discussed above: see Figure 8:vi. All, with the exception of George Turner and John Cooper, are members of the successful Core and New Generation Groups. Cooper died in 1906, his firm migrating to Leicester, where it continued to trade strongly to 1914. By contrast, Turner's firm was the most successful shoe firm of the pre-1887 period. Where do the men listed in Figure 8:v rank in the county society into which they entered? Clearly, they did not join the ranks of the great Northamptonshire land magnates, rather they became part of the landed gentry. This class has

1 M. E. Finch, The Wealth of Five Northamptonshire Families 1540-1640 (1955) N.R.S. Volume XIX. See also the late seventeenth century mercantile origins of the Bouverie family of Delapre cited below, p530: cf W. G. Hoskins, The Chilterns to the Black Country (1951) p50, where, in answer to the question why such a concentration of landed families should be found in the county, argues "it has a good deal to do with the fact that, once the heavy clays of Midland parishes had been cleared and tamed, they made surprisingly fertile corn lands and later rich cattle and sheep pastures. There is very little wasteland, it was nearly all deeply cultivated or grazed. Successful merchants and lawyers and state officials bought these estates, enclosed them in due time, doubled and trebled their rent rolls, invested in canals and the new industries when they came and built themselves great houses in every century from the sixteenth to the nineteenth".

2 The family can trace its origin as landowners back to circa 1160, when Hugh Wake held three small Domesday tenancies-in-chief. See E. King, "The Origins of the Wake family", N.P. & P. (1975) V, 3, p167/77.

Figure 8:vi LAND OWNERSHIP OF TEN NORTHAMPTON MANUFACTURERS IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Name	Estate	Date	*	Remarks
G. Turner	Upton Hall	1883	✓	(655) park - farmland
H. Manfield	Moulton Grange	1909	✓	800 acre park
J. Manfield	Weston Favell House	1899	✓	100 acre park - farmland
J. Cooper	Delapre Abbey	1896	✓	1895 leased land Courten Hall family at Delapre to 1914
J. G. Sears	Collingtree Grange	1912	✓	59 acre park - farmland
A. E. Marlow	Preston Deanery Hall	1909	✓	(939) acre park - farmland
F. W. Panther	Boughton Hall	1924	✓	(1464) park
J. H. Marlow	Sedgebrook Hall	1901	✓	(89) acres
W. T. Sears	Stud farm	1920's		
Sir H. E. Randall	Monks Park	1888	✓	8 acre urban estate

- Notes:
- (i) * = property listed in either Kelly's Handbook, Burke's Landed Gentry or Walford's County Families.
 - (ii) Date = date of acquisition.
 - (iii) Acreage figures thus () are taken from Return of Owners of Land (c. 1097), 1874, LXXXII, Pt. 2 and must be used tentatively.
 - (iv) Other acreages contemporaneous to purchase by manufacturer.
 - (v) In 1872-73 Collingtree Grange of 18 acres.
 - (vi) In 1872-73 Monks Park Hall of 48 acres.

been described as merely being the "untitled aristocracy".¹ Such a monolithic definition, however, belies the socially complex internal stratification existing within the group. F. M. L. Thompson's typology is useful. It is based upon land-holding and is, in effect, a three-fold classification, viz:

- (i) Great gentry occupying estates of 3/10,000 acres.
- (ii) Squirearchy occupying estates of 1/3,000 acres.
- (iii) Small landowners
 - (a) small proprietors occupying estates of 1/100 acres.
 - (b) lesser yeomen occupying estates of 100/300 acres.
 - (c) greater yeomen occupying estates of 300/1,000 acres.²

Based on this, most of the shoe gentry in this study are small landowners: either small proprietors or lesser yeomen. Of course, one must not be too rigidly tied, to such demarcations. As Thompson notes, "Simply to be armigerous (however) was not enough for old or new (families); the quantity of landed estate requisite for acceptance into the landed gentry remained essentially a matter of social judgement."³ In this sample, continued incomes from business and other sources would have conferred squire status upon some, as would the social role and prestige they had established in county society. Harry Manfield is clearly within this category as are possibly A. E. Marlow, G. Turner and J. Cooper. As Thompson argues it is not surprising that nineteenth century industrialists often chose to enter landed society at this point in the social scale and such is

1 F. M. L. Thompson, op cit, p109 "The landed gentry came in a bewildering variety of shapes and sizes, but contemporaries were confident that they were a reasonably homogeneous group, the solid core of the landed interest, mainstay of the hunting field and backbone of the resident magistracy, which managed the county. cf D. Mathew, op cit, p39. "The conception of a squirearchy constituted a unifying element in the shifting strata of a class of gentry based technically on the right to coat armour and in practice on a combination of landed property with a standard of social custom."

2 F. M. L. Thompson, op cit, p113/18. His typology is based on J. Bateman op cit.

3 F. M. L. Thompson, op cit, p110.

true of this sample. In many respects small proprietorship is a reflection of the relatively small scale of wealth to be found in shoe manufacturing. And it is not that larger estates were not on the depressed land market of the time. Both Sir Robert Loder's Whittlebury estate and Lord Westmorland's Apethorpe, both in Northamptonshire, for example, remained unsold in these years.¹ In practice, although only small, any landed estate was sufficient:

... in itself (to) produce a change in social habits, since instead of endowing a family with a self supporting estate this process would produce a comfortable country house and pleasure grounds suitable for retirement, or at most an estate of a few hundred acres, whose rents might supplement the income of some more leisured occupation than that of the founder ...²

Small ownership, therefore, was ideal for this sample, because it satisfied the perceived need for social status, yet, simultaneously, left much of the 'new man's' assets in other forms. A purchase outside this stratum would have been either financially beyond means, or else would have siphoned too much capital away from the business, which was ultimately going to substantially fund the running of the estate.

The properties in the sample had principal residences set in parkland within a five mile radius of Northampton. And all had land attached to them, rather than being simply houses conferring an address in the country. There were several examples of this.³ Such a property was a potent symbol of new wealth and elevated social position, rather than purely being an investment, or a purchase made simply for its own sake. Indeed, there is a proliferation of these country houses set in parkland, both large and small, in the county. As

1 Ibid p320.

2 Ibid pl22.

3 William Arnold at Everden, B. E. West at Grafton House, Blisworth, but probably the most prominent was Frederick Bostock junior's ownership of Pitsford House, Pitsford, purchased in the mid-nineties. A stone mansion of four wings built in the late eighteenth century, it stood in at least six acres of wooded grounds, with formal garden and vineyard. Previous owners included Lady Catherine Wake, a sister of Dr. Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury (N.I. August 1967 pl6; N.C. & E. 30 October 1979). For Bostock see Appendix II C.4.

W. G. Hoskins has noted:

... The last ingredient of the Midlands countryside that we have to consider is the country house and its park. It is probably true to say that no other part of England can show such a profusion of great houses as this Midland heart. And of all counties of England, Northamptonshire is the most notable in this respect ...¹

Several historians have alluded to the status such properties conferred. For example, locally J. Wake comments:

... Parks in England were probably from the beginning and have certainly been for the last four or five centuries, an 'amenity', a status symbol, a graceful and appropriate setting for the principal residence of the family. 27 parks were marked in Speed's map of Northamptonshire in 1610 and Morton records that over 20 were stocked with deer. The possession of a herd of deer was, indeed, one of the principal reasons for having a park ...²

IV

The first Northamptonshire shoe manufacturer to acquire such property was George Turner, who purchased Upton Hall in 1883, for approximately £60,000.³ He was "one of the great shoe manufacturers of Northampton",⁴ and although, for analytical reasons he does not fall within either of our groups of study, his move into county society serves as a model.

He was, with his brother Richard, the most conspicuously successful of the pre-1887 generation of shoe manufacturers;⁵ and it is entirely appropriate and

1 W. G. Hoskins, *op cit*, p49-50.

2 J. Wake and D. C. Webster (Editors) The Letters of Daniel Eaton To The Third Earl of Cardigan 1725-1732 (1971), N.R.S. Volume XXIV, Introduction, pxxxv: On the medieval development of Northamptonshire parks, see J. M. Steane "The Medieval Parks of Northamptonshire" N.P. & P. (1975) V, 3, p211 et seq.

3 B.S.T.J. 14 June 1884 p384, reported that Turner had been very ill, but upon recovery had gone into semi-retirement "having purchased an estate circa two miles out of Northampton, for something like £60,000, with the hope of enjoying some years of well earned rest".

4 Northamptonshire County Magazine (1931), 4, p83.

5 B.S.T.J. 20 March 1897, states of Richard, "His business career stands out as a model of the self-made, highly successful man; having few opportunities in his youth and yet by perseverance and energy, reaching the top-most rung of the ladder". And of the two brothers, "They were two of the foremost pioneers of modern shoe manufacturing".

not unexpected, that such a figure in the trade should initiate this new trend. He was born the youngest of four sons, on 31 October 1833 at Kettering into a poor shoemaking family. The firm of Turner Brothers, Hyde & Company commenced trading in 1859, being a partnership between George, his brother Richard,¹ and Henry A. de Ros Hyde.² Prior to this, Richard had begun trading as a sole trader in Commercial Street from 1852: following that, a brief partnership existed with his three brothers, which traded from premises in Marefair. The firm was "for years the biggest shoe manufacturers in the district";³ by the 1870's it was regarded as the biggest shoe firm in the world. They employed circa 4,000 people. Their original premises at Campbell Square had been considerably enlarged and they employed large numbers of outworkers in the county and Buckinghamshire villages, who were under the control of shoe agents. There were few concerns in the shoe industry prior to 1887 that could point to such an unbroken run of prosperous trading stretching over 30 years: and George, a shrewd and astute businessman, had a large share in promoting its success.

Upton Hall was substantially re-built in its present form in circa 1748 for Sir Thomas Samwell, although medieval features remain, as do elements of previous rebuildings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴ The Samwells bought Upton in 1600 from the Knightleys of Fawsley, who had owned the house from 1419 "although most of what we see today is due to the Samwells, the bones of the structure of the Knightley house still survive."⁵ The seventeenth century political theorist, James Harrington (1611-77), the author of The Commonwealth

1 Richard Turner J.P. (1826-97): active Liberal/Liberal Unionist politician; councillor and alderman 1866-97; contested parliamentary seat 1886; prominent member of Manufacturers' Association. Died at Cliftonville, 12 March 1897: Effects £60,669 11s 6d gross.

2 H. A. de Ros Hyde (1821-93), Australian merchant, of Kensington Court. Died 24 March 1893: Effects £73,072 19s 8d gross (resworn).

3 B.S.T.J. 1 November 1912, pl44. cf Chapter 6, p408 et seq.

4 N. Pevsner, Buildings of England: Northamptonshire (1973) second edition, p438.

5 Ibid.

of Oceana was born here.¹ By 1830 the Hall had passed to Thomas Watson-Samwell J.P. by marriage. His father "came from the colliery regions of Northumberland, (and) married the younger daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Samwell (above), the last representative of the family".² Although Shorthouse records Watson-Samwell as a member of the landed gentry, he was the only active gentleman magistrate not owning land.³ At the time of writing the reason why the Hall became separated from its land is unclear, but by the 1872-73 government land-ownership inquiry, the then owner, G. Wright Esquire occupied 655 acres.⁴ Turner purchased from Wright and, given that early twentieth century Ordnance Survey maps show the Hall as being substantially emparked,⁵ it must be assumed that Turner acquired an estate with the Hall. The Knightleys and Samwells had been owners of Upton village and Lords of the Manors there and it is possible that Turner was also.⁶

Nevertheless, given the indivisibility which existed between the county magistracy and land ownership, as an obituary notes, George Turner fitted the mould of a landed country gentleman:

... He spent his time (at Upton Hall) in the discharge of his duties as Justice of the Peace of the County of Northampton and in the pursuits of a country gentleman ...⁷

Earlier in his life he had been an ardent follower of the hounds. Probably as a means of cementing his place in county society he took his position as a

1 See Chambers' Biographical Dictionary (1969) p607.

2 R. W. Shorthouse, "Justices of the Peace in Northamptonshire 1830-45", N.P. & P. (1974) V, 2, p132.

3 Ibid p139.

4 B.P.P. Return of Owners of Land (c 1097), 1874, LXXII, Pt 2, gross annual rental £1,750 13s Od.

5 See, for example, O.S. 1 inch Popular Edition 1930 sheet 133, at 471.5E and 260N.

6 Northamptonshire County Magazine loc cit.

7 S. & L.R. 21 October 1892 p1003.

magistrate very seriously, being both painstaking and impartial in the discharge of his duties.¹ For many years he was an active Liberal politician in Northampton, representing East Ward from 1867 to 1876; an alderman 1876-89 and mayor in 1876-77. But he took no active part in county politics. He was, also, for many years active in the volunteer movement and retired with the rank of Hon. Major.

He died at Upton Hall on 13 October 1892, after a short illness, although he had been in poor health for some years: this had forced his semi-retirement in 1883.² His estate was resworn at £71,387 9s 0d gross. His eldest son, Charles Simkin Turner, is recorded as being a barrister in 1892,³ and in 1900 was serving in the army with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.⁴ His wife remained at Upton Hall until her death in September 1900, when the property was purchased by William Hudson J.P.

V

But, as George Turner's life at Upton shows, such land acquisition represents not just the vain pursuit of social acceptance: it was the pursuit of the power which arose out of and was dependent upon land ownership that lay at the very heart of this social phenomenon. As Perkin has noted of the century after 1780, there existed a direct link between the seeking of social status and "the social prestige and power over one's neighbours which were annexed to property".⁵

1 See Shorthouse, loc cit, p134, where he makes similar comments about a 'new man' J.P. in the 1830's; Reverend James Hogg (1774-1844).

2 1883-92 he was the consultative, senior partner, but the business was run by his youngest son, Thomas George and two nephews. One, William Henry (born 1857), son of Richard, ran the Northampton factory with Thomas, whilst J. A. Turner (1854-1912) was the firm's London merchant, trained by Hyde. Popular in London society, he had been a famous cricketer playing for Northamptonshire and M.C.C. (B.S.T.J. 1 November 1912 p144, N. P. & P. (1975) V, 4, p363. He died at Bexhill-on-Sea: Effects £3,134 13s 3d gross.

3 Probate Calendar 1892 Volume 7, p322.

4 B.S.T.J. 15 September 1900 p352.

5 H. Perkin, op cit, p85.

For, whilst an adequate estate with its own country house able to support the traditional sports and pleasures of the gentry, was an essential adjunct to full acceptance into county society, the ownership of landed property was imperative for those who sought power over their neighbours.

This power became institutionalised to some great degree: parliamentary representation on the one hand and service on the Quarter Sessions Bench on the other. In the two centuries which followed the Restoration, the leadership of landed society in the counties, outside the boroughs and towns, was scarcely challenged. As Doctor Finch has noted, their power locally was at once social and economic and hence political:

... Until recent times, landed families have been the most important element in the political and social life of England and their power rested ultimately on their possession of land ...¹

Their cornerstone within the county rested upon a monopoly of the magistracy.

Contrast D. Mathew's assessment of the seventeenth century, with F. M. L.

Thompson's of the nineteenth. For Mathew, acceptance into the local gentry was by a "process which was sealed by the attainment of a place in the commission of the peace".² Similarly, Thompson notes, "to serve in the magistracy and to form marriage alliances with established county families, these were the twin symbols of merger of a new family into the general life of county society".³

Indeed, such a sealing process appears to figure both prominently and consciously in George Turner's transition above.

It is into this conservative, entrenched landed society that the new shoe-gentry entered after 1880. Any conclusions drawn from an analysis of power and influence annexed by them are conditional upon two inter-related strictures. The first concerns the historic dominance of local aristocratic and large gentry

1 M. E. Finch, op cit, pxi. For Finch the term landed family applies to those above the rank of yeoman.

2 D. Mathew, op cit, p40: cf p3.

3 F. M. L. Thompson, op cit, p128.

families within the county. Naturally enough, given the small proprietor/yeoman ranks into which our sample was to enter, although some were to play a prominent role in county affairs, their power was circumscribed by this entrenched and tightly interwoven phalanx of powerful families. R. W. Shorthouse's study of the county justices in the early nineteenth century reveals just how complete this dominance was. He informs us that the "(Northamptonshire) county bench was at the time one of the most socially exclusive in the country"; he continues:

... Most of the peers active on the bench were local grandees, whose families had lived in Northamptonshire for centuries and had presided over the county's affairs. The same was true of the gentry. Nearly two thirds of this group of magistrates were the Northamptonshire families and sons of resident country gentlemen ...¹

And although a third of all justices were relative newcomers from professional and business backgrounds, all but three had quickly assimilated themselves into local landed society. Only the clergy magistrates break this pattern of social exclusivity. Indeed, Shorthouse cautions:

... The infusion of new blood into local landed society was a continual process, but such instances should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the country gentlemen who sat at the bench were principally descendants of many generations of men who had likewise been rulers of this country ...²

And, moreover, a similar solidity is observed a generation later:

... The public authorities I knew 70 years ago and over were a curious jumble. County Quarter Sessions, biggest of them all, was in the main hereditary - a sort of House of Lords - for the Justices of the Peace who comprised it were landowners and when their heir succeeded to the estate he became a justice almost as a matter of course ...³

This power base, reinforced and underpinned by landed wealth and inter-marriage, had been developed over the preceding 200 years. Of the Northamptonshire landowner it has been said:

1 Ibid p132.

2 Ibid p132.

3 W. W. Hadley, "Northamptonshire Memories - II", N. P. & P. (1957), II, 4, p175.

... Land (had) brought the gentry the prestige of local leadership. He also made them literally Lords of Creation; the local landscape was made and remade (by them). They were as much a political as an economic class; their estates constituted effective local spheres of political influence and electors were expected to vote so as not to disoblige their landlord ...¹

Though a relatively stable group over time, Greenall argues that the internal power structure of the group shifted in the period after 1640. Within a century, the small landowners - the 'parish gentry' - were declining in numbers in the face of a growing concentration of land in the hands of bigger members of the group. Meanwhile, through to the mid-nineteenth century, above the 'parish gentry' the political power and level of wealth of the more substantial squires - families such as the Knightleys and the Cartwrights, - who were for the most part Tory and more parochial in outlook, were gradually eclipsed by the Whiggish local aristocratic families, such as the Fitzwilliam's, Spencer's and Montagu's. Many squirearchical families had a long tradition of both parliamentary representation and active work on the bench and attempted to stem this aristocratic tide. Shorthouse notes:

... Through the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth, Northamptonshire country gentlemen steered a course of fierce independence in politics. Their principal aim was to thwart the rising ambitions of local aristocratic families anxious to dominate the county representation. Though such aristocratic intrusions into this traditional preserve of the gentry did occur, most notably in the case of Lord Althorp, the ordinary country gentry managed to retain the reins of county government very tightly in their hands ...²

1 R. L. Greenall, op cit, p65.

2 R. W. Shorthouse, loc cit, Part I, p136: A full account of this struggle for power appears in E. G. Forrester, Northamptonshire County Elections and Electioneering 1695-1832 (1941) cf Shorthouse, Ibid, p244, on the influence of the local aristocrats on the bench: "Magistrates from some aristocratic families were prominent on the bench of quarter sessions. Earl Spencer as Chairman, the Marquis of Northampton and the Earl of Euston attended this court frequently and played an active part in its deliberations. Other peers came only on ceremonial occasions, or when some special matter of county business lay on the agenda. None was especially active at petty sessions. They appeared from time to time, prosecuting minor offences, but it seems unlikely that their participation at this level was ever of much consequence".

Nevertheless, Greenall cautions that one should not exaggerate such internal dissensions, for "they were merely the rivalries of an increasingly narrow caucus of families who dominated the shire, whose differences were less than their shared similarity in outlook".¹

The second stricture which must be placed upon any conclusions reached concerning the power exercised by the new shoe-gentry relates to the general decline of the landed classes power both nationally and locally after 1880. Agricultural depression; government reforms in electoral and taxation legislation; an increasing aura of political liberalisation, together with a growth in working class political consciousness; all served to fuel this decline. Above all, it was the ten years after 1885 that witnessed the major re-structuring of those institutions upon which the landed class had relied, in part, to sustain their oligarchical powers. As Doctor J. Howarth has noted:

... Between the general elections of 1880 and 1895, the structure and organisation of county politics changed more rapidly than at any other time in English history. This period saw the introduction of household suffrage and single-member constituencies, the dethronement of Quarter Sessions and the parish vestry in favour of elected County and Parish Councils, the democratization of the Poor Law authorities and the arrival of permanent, popular constituency party organisations ...²

In her study of late nineteenth century Northamptonshire Liberal politics, Howarth has argued that this short period witnessed the "passing of the old system of class government" and that by 1898 "whichever party was in the ascendent, Northamptonshire politics could never revert to their traditional pattern of landed oligarchy".³ There occurred a sufficient incursion of democratic ideals

- 1 R. L. Greenall, op cit, p67: cf F. M. L. Thompson, op cit, p134, "The county families with ease on terms of equality with the magnates and generally took for granted as part of the inevitable and pre-ordained natural harmony of society the leadership of the aristocracy in government, sport and pleasure".
- 2 J. Howarth, "The Liberal Revival in Northamptonshire, 1880-1895: A Case Study in late Nineteenth Century Elections", Historical Journal, XII, 1 (1969) p80.
- 3 J. Howarth, "Politics and Society in Late Victorian Northamptonshire", N.P. & P. IV, 5 (1970) p274.

into county matters to ensure that some non-landed men were able to exercise power. Thompson's firm prescription that power rested upon the acquisition and holding of land, whilst not disappearing, ceased to be a true reflection of reality. Similar incursions were witnessed in Westminster politics. In Northamptonshire, as will be shown below, shoe manufacturers like Manfield, Marlow and Randall, in addition to others of the county's commercial bourgeoisie were able to give both a political and financial transfusion into the body politic.

Yet this was only a decline and not a final eclipse, for landowners still held political office and were to continue to wield strong influence over county affairs.¹ This accords with Thompson's understanding of the position nationally,² for he suggests that where once the landed gentry exercised power through the institution of the Quarter Session's bench, after 1888 they were able to substantially, though never completely, transfer the exercise of that power to the County Council chamber. He notes:

... Some, like Lord Carnarvon and Lord Rosebery, had felt that the establishment of County Councils in 1888 was a revolutionary measure which meant the "dethronement of the squirearchy", but in practice the nobility and gentry provided most of the chairmen of the new councils ...³

The democratisation of the County Magistracy started slightly earlier, although here the landed classes' resistance to change ensured that their strangle-hold lingered longer. The first three bourgeois J.P.'s in the County were appointed in 1882 and included J. T. Stockburn, a Kettering corset manufacturer and first chairman of the county's Liberal Association; and N. P. Sharman, a Wellingborough shoe manufacturer. As W. W. Hadley has noted:

... their appointment was for a time bitterly resented in some quarters. I was there when they first appeared at an administrative meeting of Sessions and remember how isolated they seemed to be, until Robert Spencer, whose

1 cf J. Howarth (1969), loc cit, p91: "The great men of the county remained influential but they were no longer in control".

2 F. M. L. Thompson, op cit, Chapter XI; especially p324 et seq.

3 Ibid, p325.

political friends they were, left his place and sat by them ...¹

The landowners reaction was sharp and rested upon two central points. First, bourgeois magistrates were ill-fitted to wield power. As Sir Hereward Wake commented, "there is no doubt that at present the bourgeois class are excessively vulgar in their notions, that is to say they are no respectors of persons and therefore hardly qualified as a rule to administer justice impartially. Besides that, if disgraced, they have nothing to lose, there are no particular honourable traditions of family or class to guide them and no liberal education and little travelling and mixing with the world to replace the want of legal training".² Secondly, it was argued that such appointments undermined the prevailing smooth operation of Quarter Sessions. As George Watson noted, "the harmonious and cordial working together which so distinguishes the Northamptonshire bench of magistrates, will be at once destroyed".³

Nevertheless, the establishment of the Northamptonshire County Council, which took over the administrative responsibilities of Quarter Sessions, brought with it a much wider sharing of political power, particularly amongst urban, middle-class Liberals in the County: although members of the landed oligarchy and their nominees, continued to be elected to serve in these new democratic institutions.⁴ And, although one finds examples of members of old-established landed families still fulfilling traditional and influential functions in county

1 W. W. Hadley "Northamptonshire Memories II" N.P. & P. II:4 (1957) p176: cf B.S.T.J. 27 October 1900 p558 which records the appointment of the first shoe manufacturers to the county bench in Northamptonshire: H. Manfield of Northampton, Thomas Bird and Frank Mobbs, both of Kettering.

2 Hadley, *Ibid*, p177.

3 Hadley, *Ibid*, p177.

4 Despite the alteration and partial reform of local government prior to the 1880's, the County Quarter Sessions remained the corner-stone and arguably, the most powerful element of local administration in county areas. Justices were nominees of the Crown and in Northamptonshire, landowners held sway until the beginning of the twentieth century: cf Hadley, *Ibid*, p175.

affairs until well into the twentieth century,¹ this changing pattern of power was, by the same token, one which served the needs, rather than thwarting the social ambition of 'new men' like the shoe-gentry, in this study.

VI

If George Turner can be singled out as the first Northampton manufacturer to enter local landed society, then Harry and James Manfield must be distinguished as the most conspicuous examples in the post-1880 period. The second generation principals of what was arguably the town's premier firm, Manfield & Sons,² they are very much cast in the Thompsonian mould of 'new men'.

Harry Manfield was one of the leading bourgeois figures to enter county politics and affairs at this time. His considerable influence was dependent, initially, not upon the holding of land, but upon the new democratic processes which had been newly established. He served as a County Councillor from 1890 to 1922, a County Magistrate from 1900 and as a Member of Parliament for mid-Northamptonshire from 1906 to 1918. Underscoring this influence was, the political association between the Manfield family and Hon. C. R. Spencer.³ The Spencers were the only Gladstonian Liberals amongst Northamptonshire's aristocratic families. As has been noted, Spencer strongly favoured and became a staunch ally of the new bourgeois faction in county affairs. Manfield, as his father had done, worked tirelessly with Spencer to extend Liberal Party organisation in the county and to secure Liberal representation there.⁴

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- 1 Examples of the continued influence of such men is most readily found in obituary columns. See, example, the obituary of:
 (i) George Brudenell (1881-1962) the Squire of Deene and a County Councillor for over 20 years, in the Times 17 August 1962.
 (ii) 5th Marquess of Exeter (1876-1956), Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Northamptonshire and J.P. for County and for Rutland and Lincolnshire, in N.P.P. II, 3, (1956) pl17-21.
- 2 Founded in 1844 by Sir Moses Philip Manfield: see Appendix II, c.3.
- 3 This important alliance between the county's leading industrial family and premier landed family has not been given the prominence it deserves by historians. Charles Robert Spencer (1857-1922).
- 4 A full treatment of Harry Manfield's public life appears at Appendix II c.3.

Yet, as Thompson implies, there was ultimately still present a felt need to legitimise this power by the acquisition of land. Thus, in 1909, the year he celebrated his marriage, Harry purchased Moulton Grange, an 800 acre estate "situated in a well timbered (deer) park, celebrated for its gardens",¹ five miles from Northampton and three-quarter's of a mile east of Pitsford village. For much of the nineteenth century the Grange was owned by the Nethercote family, one of the county's prominent small gentry families. The estate was acquired by John Nethercote, D.L., J.P., (1782-1867), who was in residence by 1835. His son, Henry Osmond Nethercote,² a staunch Liberal succeeded him and lived at Moulton until at least 1886. Nethercote estate ownership in the county stretches back to the early eighteenth century, when Henry's great, great, grandfather John (1708-84) "purchased estates in the parishes of Clipstone, Sibbertoft, Oxenden and Arthlingworth".³ The estate's principal residence was built in circa 1820 for a Mr. W. Abbott, who laid out the gardens and the park "in a bald Regency classical style" with an Italianised south front being added in circa 1850 and the east wings in 1911-12 by Manfield.⁴ Here Manfield indulged a love of country sports; having been a fox hunter in his early years and a deer-hunter in later life.

His younger brother, James, similarly sought the status offered by land. Together they represent the only example in the Northampton study where two principals from the same firm in the same generation sought the social advancement offered by land. Moreover, James Manfield is the only example in this study of a man who builds an estate, rather than purchasing an existing one.

1 N.I. 10 February 1923 p6.

2 H. O. Nethercote, born 1819 eldest son of John and Charlotte, daughter of W. D. Hammond Esq. of Kent. Married twice, to landed families (the Garnetts and Alix's both of Lincolnshire). Educated Harrow and Balliol (B.A. 1842). J.P. and D.L.; High Sheriff 1872 (Walford, County Families (1879) p766).

3 Burke's Landed Gentry (1871) Volume II p977.

4 Pevsner, op cit, p374; V.C.H. Northamptonshire, iv, p88; N.I. September 1971, p22-25.

As an obituary notes, "He built a palatial residence in Northampton and added to it land and farms as opportunity offered".¹ By 1908, judicious land purchases had added 100 acres of parkland to the property, in addition to an unspecified area of farmland. By this date he had purchased the Lordship of the Manor of Weston. His social aspirations in doing this have been summarised in the following way:

... In the midst of his multitudinous business and civic engagements, Mr. Manfield found time for more than one hobby. Perhaps nearest to his heart was the desire to be a gentleman farmer occupied on his own land in tending his herds and flocks and crops ...²

The estate he built up near Weston Favell just two miles north east of Northampton was a material reflection of the wealth the Manfield family had derived from the local staple trade.³ Weston Favell House, the principal residence, representing "the best style of local architecture",⁴ is described as "a substantial mansion by Charles Dorman, 1899-1902".⁵ It was built in a Jacobean style, using faced Duston stone and roofed with Colley Weston slates. The dressings are of Weldon stone, as is the porch, which has heavy strapwork above. The interior was marked by much good plaster, woodwork and stained glass.⁶ The house was surrounded by lavish gardens and pleasure grounds.

... 40 acres in extent, planted with choice shrubs and specimen trees and includes a beautiful rock garden and a fine bull ring of 26 old lime trees ...⁷

Politically James' aspirations still lay very much with Northampton - he

1 J.N.N.H.S.S. (1925), 23, p71.

2 Ibid.

3 Pevsner, op cit, p342, states that the estate was planned and begun by his father Sir Philip Manfield (1819-99).

4 W. T. Pike (Editor) Northamptonshire in the XX Century (1908) p50.

5 Pevsner, Ibid, cf V.C.H. Northamptonshire, iv, p107. Dorman was a local architect, who was responsible for the Manfield factory of 1892 on the Wellingborough Road.

6 Pevsner notes, "Inside, a staircase with lavish screen and large stained glass window."

7 Pike, op cit, p50.

was successively a town councillor, alderman and elected mayor in 1906 - but he was active in the County's Liberal Associations. He was a county magistrate and a leading figure in cultural organisations, as president of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society and a founder of the Northamptonshire Record Society. He was also a keen hunter, being a member of the Pytchley and Grafton hunts.¹

In the same year as Harry Manfield took up residence at Moulton Grange, A. E. Marlow, head of the most successful infant firm in the Northampton study,² purchased Preston Deanery Hall Estate from Major James Hoole.³ In the terms of our discussion here, Marlow was cast in a similar entrepreneurial mould as the Manfields, though was somewhat less flamboyant and urbane. An intensely ambitious man, his purchase of a country estate was a prelude to his prominent participation in county affairs both as a county councillor and magistrate. At the time of his premature death he stood poised upon a parliamentary career and a knighthood.⁴ The estate's principal residence, to which was attached a tiny village, stood in parkland half a mile from the Northampton - Newport Pagnall Road, four and a half miles south of the former. Its site was occupied by an ancient manor-house but as Bridges notes:

... In Preston was an ancient Manor-house the residence of the families of Hertwell and Edmonds; but the great part of it was pulled down and a new seat began these few years by Sir Richard Newman. The shell was built in 1716 ...⁵

A descendant of Newman sold the estate to Langham-Christie in 1815⁶ and it remained in that family's hands until 1871, when it passed, by sale, to Edward

1 For details see Appendix II C.3.

2 See Appendix III, N.G.3 for his business life and biography.

3 In the 1872 Government Return, op cit, the estate comprised 939 acres, with a gross rental value of £

4 For details, see Appendix III, N.G.2. He was Northampton's youngest mayor in 1904.

5 J. Bridges, History of Northamptonshire, Volume I, p379.

6 Christie was the son of a Swiss emigree, Daniel-Beat Christin, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Langham of Cottesbrook Park in 1786. Christie's son, William Langham-Christie (1830-1913) M.P., D.L., J.P., sometime Captain of Northamptonshire Militia, succeeded his father in 1861. They held an estate at Glynbourne, Sussex. (Who's Who) (1897).

Singleton,¹ who sold it to Major James Hoole in circa 1890-94. A large stuccoed stone and rubble building, the house underwent many additions, including partial rebuilding after a fire in 1872. Marlow added an east wing and large billiard room. At this time much use was made of oak panelling, black marble and stone in the interior: there were ten principal bedrooms and bathrooms. The gardens were extensive, making use of a natural brook, mature trees and stone rockeries.² A greater part of the house was demolished in 1933 and the remainder refashioned.³

A man of similar stature to Marlow in the trade was John Cooper.⁴ An enterprising manufacturer with extensive factories in Croydon, Leicester and Northampton, he moved his headquarters to the latter place in 1894 and came to reside in the county. Briefly at Courten Hall some four miles south of Northampton, in 1896 he leased Delapre Abbey from Captain John A. S. Bouverie,⁵

1 Singleton was born in County Clare, Ireland, in 1834, into an old landed family. In 1866, he married Sarah, the daughter of a Bradford businessman, John Ramson. He was a J.P. in County Clare, where he succeeded to the family seat, Hazelwood, Quin. (Walford, op cit, p955).

2 The foregoing relies upon Pevsner, op cit, p379; Northamptonshire Notes and Queries (1921-23) n.s. V, p193-97; Burke's Landed Gentry (1871) I, p209; Kelly's Handbook 1911 and 1922.

3 V.C.H. Northamptonshire, iv, p279.

4 John Cooper (1838-1906) formerly of Croydon. Will proved at £98,837 8s 1d gross. For life see below and obituary B.S.T.J. 7 September 1906 p34 and 40.

5 Captain J. A. S. Bouverie (1866-1905) was the sixth successive member of the family to own Delapre Estate since the early seventeenth century; the first was Sir Jacob Bouverie (died 1761), whose family had been eminent Turkish merchants in the City of London for three generations. He was created 1st Viscount Folkestone in 1747 and his eldest son 1st Earl of Radnor in 1765. He acquired the estate by marriage in 1723 to his first wife Mary (died 1723), daughter and sole heiress of Bartholomew Clarke of Hardingstone and Delapre Abbey (Burke's Peerage (1929) p1937: cf N.P. & P. (1958) II, 5, p231, incorrectly cites Edward, his second son as the purchaser. It is stated here that Edward married his mother: "The purchaser (of Delapre) was Edward, the younger son of Sir Jacob Bouverie. Edward married an heiress in a small way, Mary Clarke of Hardingstone". For details of Sir Jacob's successors see N.P. & P. Ibid and Burke's, Ibid. Most were county magistrates and deputy lieutenants; Edward the elder (died 1810) was M.P. for New Sarum and for Northampton for 20 years; three served in the army. Edward the younger (1767-1858); Lt. Gen. Sir H. F. Bouverie (1783-1852) was one time governor of Malta and Gen. E. W. Bouverie (1789-1871), an owner of the abbey, was equerry to Queen Victoria. The two other main branches of the family were the Pleydell-Bouveries (Earls of Radnor) of Wiltshire and the Bouverie-Pusey's of Berkshire.

and after 1905 from Bouverie's elder sister and successor, Miss. M. H. Bouverie.¹ At this time the estate was of some 586 acres.² The house was built on the site of a convent of the Cluniac Order founded in the twelfth century. Parts of this convent are extant in the modern building. It fell into secular hands following its suppression in 1536 and since that time substantial rebuilding took place under successive owners down to the nineteenth century.³ Despite John's death and the concentration of the firm's manufacturing capacity in August 1906, "to the largest boot and shoe factory in England on a site in Tudor Road (Leicester)"⁴ the family remained in residence at the Abbey until Mrs. Cooper's death in 1914.

It would appear that Cooper's move into the county in 1894 was a conscious decision to establish himself as a country gentleman. He took an active interest in local agricultural organisations, being both president of the Northamptonshire Agricultural Association and of the local Chamber of Agriculture. He was appointed High Sheriff of the County in 1903-04. Beyond this his public life was not as active as in Croydon, where he had been prominent in civic life. Nevertheless he was appointed a magistrate for the county town in 1896 and took

- 1 Miss Mary Helen Bouverie (1865-1942). In N.P. & P. Ibid, it is incorrectly cited that Cooper's lease runs only from Mary H. Bouverie's succession to the estate. Miss Wake records that "In 1905, the estate being somewhat encumbered, the Abbey was let to John Cooper Esq." (p231). Local directories and the C.R.O. file on Cooper's firm (BT31/15712/50650) cites him as being in residence there from at least 1896.
- 2 In Bateman, op cit and 1872 Return, op cit, the Bouverie family held 3,188 acres (gross rental of £8,676) in the county. The current owner was J. A. S. Bouverie, J.P. High Sheriff 1877 and Lord of the Manor of Hardingstone (sic). (Walford, County Families (1879) pl11). Pike, op cit, mentions farmland held by the family in Weston Favell. From this and other sources, it can be estimated that the Delapre Estate was some 586 acres at the time of Cooper's lease.
- 3 For a detailed study see, Reverend R. M. Serjeantson's essays in V.C.H. Northamptonshire ii and J.N.N.H.S. (1909) XV. A brief modern history by W. A. Pantin is to be found in N.P. & P. Ibid, p232-41; cf Pevsner, op cit, p352-53.
- 4 B.S.T.J. 23 August 1906 p329.

an active interest in matters of health. A philanthropist, he actively assisted the work of the Church Extension Society. By the early twentieth century, many of the trappings of gentry life had been adopted by the family. To take just one example, it has been noted that "the sons, who were most of them in the family business, hunted with the Grafton hounds and kept their own pack of foot beagles".¹ The stable block at the Abbey, built in the late 1750's, had accommodation for 20 horses; with a full range of other buildings to assist the enjoyment of country sports.

F. W. Panther was the last member of the shoe-gentry in this study to purchase a large estate: the Boughton Estate of some 1,464 acres in 1924. Panther had been a successful independent manufacturer from 1902-12, when his firm was taken over by the Sears Company. He took control of buying and production at Sears, joined the board and became influential in the company's inter-war trading success.² Prior to 1924, Panther resided at Hardingstone House, once the home of Miss Bouverie and had already absorbed himself in country life and local affairs. He was interested in parish welfare - later serving on his local parish council - and in 1922 unsuccessfully contested a county council seat. His wife served for many years on the county bench, being awarded an M.B.E. for public services. He took a passionate interest in shooting and other sports.³

The estate lies to the north of the county town, its centre-piece being Boughton Hall, which is set in parkland on the east side of the main Northampton/Market Harborough road, some two and a half miles from the former. A medieval estate, the central block of the original Hall dated from that period and was probably constructed for the Green family, who purchased the estate in 1340. The Hall and Park were refashioned and extended in the period 1764-80 by the

1 N.P. & P. loc cit, p231.

2 Appendix III, N.G.2.

3 This paragraph draws on N.I. 18 February 1922 p25; N.I. 18 January 1935 p7 and N.I. 29 May 1944, p8.

second Earl of Stafford,¹ showing the influence of his friend Horace Walpole, who popularised the eighteenth century version of medieval architecture known as 'Gothic'. The present Hall was built in 1844 using stone quarried on the estate, from designs by William Burn, a pupil of Robert Smurke, architect of the British Museum. The residence was built for Reverend Granville Sykes Howard-Vyse,² who lived at Boughton until his death in 1896. He appears as a typical squire parson of the period. Following 1896 until Panther took up residence the estate entered a period of decline and neglect similar to that which befell many estates in the period.³ Between 1900-07, Lord Chesham⁴ leased the estate for hunting. In the Great War the grounds were utilised as a prisoner-of-war camp, then, in 1921 the estate was leased to a Captain R. H. W. Henderson. Panther made extensive repairs and alterations to the Hall and estate generally. His family remained owners until the mid-sixties.⁵

Not all the estates of the shoe-gentry, however, were on the scale already discussed. Some, such as the small estates purchased by J. G. Sears and J. H. Marlow, were less imposing, having been established a generation before by

- 1 Cited from S. Ranson, Boughton Hall (1967), but according to Burke's Peerage (1929) p2218-19, the Right Honourable John Byng (1772-1860) was elevated to the peerage, as Baron Stafford in 1835 and created Viscount Enfield and 1st Earl Stafford in 1847. His eldest son George Stevens (1806-86) succeeded his father in 1860. Similarly, not the Earl of Stafford, which title became extinct in 1762 on the death of the third Earl. (Burke, op cit, p2181).
- 2 Reverend Granville Sykes Howard Vyse (1819-96), fifth son of Colonel Richard W. H. Howard of Stoke, Buckinghamshire. Educated Christ Church, Oxford, (B.A. 1840 and M.A. 1843). Rector of Pitsford 1842-92 and Rector of Boughton 1843-96. Rural Dean Haddon 1876-91 (H. I. Longden, Northamptonshire and Rutland Clergy (1942) XIV p101.) His father was Lord of the Manor and his daughter married her cousin, Howard-Vyse, the heir to the estate (S. Ranson, op cit, p33). Born 1858, educated Eton, served in guards. Succeeded 1870 to 1,464 acres at Boughton and 1,824 acres outside Northamptonshire.
- 3 See general description of this malaise in F. M. L. Thompson, op cit, Chapter XI.
- 4 Charles C. W. Cavendish (1850-1907). General (retired). Master of Royal Buckhounds and Lord of the Bed-Chamber to the Prince of Wales. Of Latimer House, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Owner "about 1,200 acres, exclusive of property in London". (Who's Who (1902) p273.
- 5 The above paragraph draws on S. R. Ranson, op cit, V.C.H. Northamptonshire, iv, p76; Pevsner, op cit, p324.

members of the local bourgeoisie. Neither Sears nor Marlow were prominently involved in county affairs in the way the shoe-gentry cited above were, but the same pursuit for prestige and for a life style radically different from that of their early life is nonetheless observable.

By any standard, J. G. Sears' 25 year career as a manufacturer, cut short as it was by premature death, was meteoric. In 1891, he had purchased his father's failed business and by his death in 1916 he had amassed a personal fortune of over £400,000; a sum which at that date was unprecedented in the shoe industry. In 1912, already in poor health, he purchased Collingtree Grange, a 59 acre park, with a view to retiring from business to become a gentleman farmer: within a short while the nucleus of a prize short-horn dairy herd had been acquired.¹ The principal residence was built on the site of an old farm house in 1875, for Pickering Phipps, a Northampton brewer, elected as a Conservative member of parliament in 1874.² The estate was of 18 acres in extent at this time.³ The house, designed by E. F. Law & Sons of Northampton, was constructed principally of brick and had an imposing Corinthian portico surmounted by a tower. There were 15 principal bedrooms and a first floor ballroom. The gardens were laid out by Alexander Mackenzie.⁴ Sears had the property extensively remodelled and details given at the time of the property's sale in 1952, give some notion of the comfort to which a successful manufacturer aspired:

1 Appendix III, N.G.2.

2 Phipps was born at Northampton in 1827, the eldest son of Edward Phipps (died 1829) and Elizabeth, daughter of St. John Outlaw Esq., of Irthlingborough. Married Mary Ann, daughter of John Whitney, director of the Northamptonshire Bank, in 1850. Formerly a chairman of the Northampton School Board and twice mayor of the town. (Walford, op cit, p832).

3 1872 Return, op cit: gross rental £598 12s 0d.

4 Pevsner pl54, who states that only the entrance gates survive today. Rest of the following detail from N.I. 14 October 1952, pl0.

... As a result of his work the outstanding impression of the interior is one of the beauty of wood. The entrance and the staircase hall under the tower and the dining room are panelled in oak and the lounge in mahogany, all finely carved into pediment and panel, frieze and cornice below the decorated ceilings. The drawing room, by contrast, is a delightful essay in the Adam style - a fine marble mantel-piece and framed wall mirror. (The gardens include) very picturesque rock gardens surrounding the lake. There were wide lawns, a lily pond, shaped shrubs and summer houses, together with a very large range of glass. A 'ha-ha' separates the gardens from the park through which the drive runs down to a pair of magnificent iron entrance gates ...¹

On a similar scale, was the 89 acre Sedgebrook Hall estate purchased by John H. Marlow in the late Edwardian period.² In comparison to the relatively modest life style of his father, which is discussed in Appendix II, his years at Sedgebrook provide a strong contrast; as, indeed, does the life style of his brother, A. E. Marlow. A leading manufacturer and public figure in the town, Marlow spent an increasing portion of his time amassing a collection of art treasures at the Hall and in farming his property.³ Upon his death in 1945, his youngest daughter and son-in-law, John Douglas Houison-Craufurd, resided there and retired from the firm in 1954 to farm the land.⁴

VII

Thus it has been demonstrated that a small number of dominant and influential figures in the industry made a successful transition into county society. However, the transient nature of their transition is a common feature worthy of note. None of these families founded landed dynasties in the mould of 'new men' of past centuries. H. J. Perkin has suggested that this was an important element:

1 N.I. Ibid.

2 Pevsner p374: Built for H. P. Markham, a local lawyer, "one mile south west of Pitsford. By a London architect, dated 1861. Facade with central pediment and a grand porch with Ionic columns": cf 1872 Return, op cit.

3 For details of J. Marlow & Sons and its principals see Appendix II, C.

4 Ibid, cf N.I. 12 July 1957 p7 and Who's Who (1954).

... The pursuit of wealth was the pursuit of social status. The pursuit of social status, not merely for oneself but for one's family. In the last resort the ultimate motivation of the industrialists, as for rising men before them, was a dynastic one: to found a family, to endow them splendidly enough to last for ever and to enjoy a vicarious eternal life in the seed of one's loins ...¹

Such does not happen amongst families in this study. In fact, the estates, with the exception of Panther's Boughton Hall, only remain in ownership for one generation. Thus, for example, Upton Hall was sold in 1901 after the death of Turner's widow and Manfield's Moulton Grange was sold under similar circumstances in 1943: also Sears' Collingtree Grange in 1952. In the case of James Manfield's estate, he severed the main residence and 19 acres of gardens from the rest in 1922 in order to endow an orthopaedic hospital: he lived in his London home until he died in 1925.²

The reasons why this occurs are properly outside the scope of this thesis, but certain possibilities present themselves. First, that there was insufficient wealth over time to retain the estate. Most of the estates required the support of business income to sustain them. Consequently, the continued viability of the firm was crucial. For example, after A. E. Marlow's death his family continued to reside at Preston Deanery until a hiatus in the firm's running was caused in 1927 by George Webb, Marlow's principal manager, leaving: the firm finally closed in 1935.³ Tied to this was the fact that in several cases - Manfield's and A. E. Marlow - the sons who were being groomed for succession were killed in the Great War. Pertinent also was the problem that several of these families were composed of numbers of dependent relatives who had to be provided for. This caused a break up of wealth on the death of the manufacturer. And, secondly, the changing power relationship between capital and land emerged in the twentieth century should be observed, giving rise to different wealth/power patterns.

1 H. Perkin , op cit, p

2 S.I.N. 16 July 1925, p38.

3 N.I. 6 May 1935 p8 and the local press at this time.

VIII

The last two of the shoe-gentry group in Figure 4:i represent a borderline between the county men in the elite group and the urban men. Strangely both men were race-horse breeders. The first was W. T. Sears, the head of the Trueform Company from 1916 to 1949.¹ In the inter-war period he had a stud farm at Weston Favell and had some success as a race-horse owner, notably in 1937 when a horse won the Derby. He took an interest in county affairs, being a county councillor 1925-38, a county magistrate from 1932 and high sheriff for the county in 1933. Yet his links with Northampton were never severed and he resided there at Abington Park Crescent at the time of his death.²

The second man is Sir Henry Randall. Within two miles of the centre of Northampton, by the time (Sir) H. E. Randall purchased Monks Hall in 1888:

... the expanding town was fast creeping eastwards towards Monks Park, (but) the estate, with its house set back from the main (Wellingborough) road, was still a most attractive property ...³

However, the next decade witnessed the final encroachment of the town, which was hastened by the building of Manfield & Son's new factory in 1892-94. Estate land abutting Wellingborough Road was sold for residential development; the streets here - Percy and Florence - are named after Randall's children.⁴ By 1900, the process of encroachment was complete. Life there must have been, "a most unusual existence - a small country estate, completely surrounded by the streets

1 Appendix III N.G.1.

2 Paragraph draws on N.I. 8 November 1935 p17 and S.L.N. 5 January 1950 p50. Of course, as Thompson notes by the inter-war period the relationship between land holding and power had shifted; the one no longer being necessarily conditional upon the other.

3 B. A. Bailey, "Monks Park, Northampton: The Story of a Town Property" N.P. & P. (1981-82), VI, 5, p293. cf Pike, op cit, p59, "At that time it was bounded on one side by cornfields and on the other by woods and open country, but Northampton has grown so much during the past 20 years that the house is now completely built round and the borough boundaries having been extended, it stands almost in the new centre of the town."

4 See N.R.O. Lease documents ZA 9133-34-35 relating to purchases from the Monks Park estate by the Northampton Town and County Benefit Building Society in 1894-95.

of expanding Northampton".¹ Nevertheless, the Hall remained to some extent buffered from the surrounding townscape by grounds several acres in extent and by screens of trees. It was described in 1908, in the following way:

... It is surrounded by spacious grounds with well laid out walks and extensive lawns, also many choice shrubs and specimens of noble trees. A quaint stone-faced lodge, with lattice windows, admits to a wide gravel drive about 150 yards long leading to the house. It is so circled by trees, many of them 70 years old, that it is still quite private and when standing on the front lawn, one can hardly realise that one is in the midst of the populous borough of Northampton ...²

Randall, however, evidently remained committed to the estate. He lived there until his death in 1930. The Hall was built of stone with cement facings and was over 150 feet long from north to south. Its south front was of a symmetrical design with a central porch on four columns. Randall extensively modified and enlarged the Hall in the nineties, completely refitting the interior, including the addition of a billiard room. In 1920, he added a new staff wing on the east side.

B. A. Bailey suggests that the estate dates back to the sixteenth and possibly the twelfth century. Formerly part of more extensive lands owned by the Priory of St. Andrews, these lands passed into lay hands after 1536, passing through several owners until acquired by Francis Arundal in 1636. Remaining in this family's hands until 1748, the ex-Priory lands were acquired by the Harding family. Upon the death of Richard Harding in 1832, ownership of the entire estate was broken up and the ex-Priory lands separately developed or sold by Thomas Grundy. Consequently, the Monks Park portion was purchased in 1833 by the Quaker, William Collins, son of a successful draper. He built the Hall in 1840 "on the upper level of the plot (with) commanding views with the Nene Valley towards Hardingstone and Houghton".³ At this time it stood entirely in a rural

1 B. A. Bailey Ibid p294 cf p291 "its history demonstrates the familiar pattern of a country estate being absorbed by a growing town and eventually disappearing save for a few isolated traces".

2 Pike, op cit, p58-9.

3 B. A. Bailey, Ibid, p292.

location. In 1872, the estate was of some 48 acres in extent (gross annual rent £411):¹ by the turn of the century this had contracted to eight to ten acres. The fragmentation of the small Monks Hall estate and with it the urban encroachment of the town, began when Collins died in 1876. His widow and relict sold a plot of estate land to the west upon which the Billington/Whitworth Road area was gradually developed. When she, in turn, died Randall purchased the estate after protracted negotiations.

Henry Randall is at the cross-roads between those manufacturers who remained committed to the town and those who sought social acceptance in the surrounding countryside. Possibly his urban persona won? As his full biography, that appears in another part of this thesis,² reveals, he gave largely of his time and money to public and municipal duties and to philanthropy in the town, not the county. Yet, he was in part, a county man. He was active in the Conservative party in south Northamptonshire, being knighted for his work there. He also indulged a great love of country sports, particularly horse-racing and gambling.³ He represents the model of the successful urban industrialist to whom I now wish to turn.

IX

Politics, religion, wealth and social position, all served to keep the county town's manufacturing class and county society apart. Even after 1880, despite the evidence that has been adduced above, the extent to which manufacturers were able to bridge this gulf should not be exaggerated. As has been demonstrated, the crossing of this social divide was the prerogative only of the town's

1 B.B.P. Return of Owners of Land (1872-73) op cit.

2 Appendix II C.4. p

3 Randall began racing and breeding horses in 1896, becoming a prominent winner in the Edwardian period: in 1904 he achieved the highest number of winners (30) in one season. Prominent winners included the 1898 Cesarewitch and the 1903 Ascot Stakes and Goodwood Plate. He was a member of the Council of the Racehorse Owners' Association. cf Thompson op cit p89-97 on the financial burdens of horse sports.

pre-eminent manufacturers. Very few broke the parochial, small town mould into which they had been cast. Within this mould, however, there existed a diverse social stratification and from this there emerged a small oligarchy of men who dominated, not only the local shoe industry, but the town's political and social life as well.

Care should be taken however, not to form the impression that a relatively straightforward hierarchical typology existed: gentry manufacturers at the top, followed by a small town-based oligarchy and a larger residual group of second rank manufacturers at the bottom, who enjoyed little social power and influence. The reality is more subtle and complex than this. First, the shoe gentry's withdrawal from town affairs was rarely complete and most continued to exert as important an influence there as they had done prior to their flight into the country. Secondly, some 20 second rank principals have been identified as having a role, usually attenuated when compared with the elite, in town life: see discussion below. And, thirdly, care must be taken not to assume that all that were financially capable of purchasing an estate did so. There was, of course, nothing rigid and automatic in this process. As Perkin notes, there is no one indelible path along which to pursue social aspiration. Rather, the ways are various and take account of individual preference and attitude:

... Vanity took many forms and not every industrialist wished to change places with a lord or squire ...¹

Indeed, many, he suggests, took pride in being an industrialist:

... Raising one's status did not necessarily and immediately mean retiring from business to lead a life of a leisured gentleman. In the first generation and often in the second, the position of 'eminent tradesman' was a novelty to be enjoyed and if the business spared mind and leisure

¹ H. Perkin, op cit, p86.

enough, English society was sufficiently flexible to admit rich entrepreneurs to many of the pleasures and honours of the ruling elite ...¹

Certainly, several of the biographies in Appendices II and III reveal that shoe manufacturers had social links with the county.² Within the ranks of Northampton manufacturers, both Sir James Crockett and Charles and Edward Lewis, men of equal stature to the shoe gentry, were more inclined to seek social approbation more completely through local public service and philanthropy. Indeed, these men offered a social/religious philosophy based on a desire, a need to enrich the community from which they had extracted wealth, rather than purely seeking material self-aggrandisement. Recording an earlier press interview, an obituary on Sir James Crockett noted:

... He had a very keen sense of the responsibility of citizenship and when it came to him, of the responsibility of wealth. He held it wrong for any man to take any action he did in business or out of it without considering the effects on the country and the community among which he lived and that it was the duty of everybody who had opportunity to give a certain amount of his wealth and a certain amount of his time to public service ...³

In a similar vein, at the time of their gift of Dallington Park to the Borough as a recreation ground, Edward Lewis spoke of the need, indeed duty, of successful businessmen to endow the community, which was in part responsible for that wealth creation.⁴ This attitude was consciously or unconsciously shared by other manufacturers and in great measure, would appear to spring from

1 H. Perkin, *Ibid*, cf E. J. Hobsbawm (1968) *op cit* pl85-86. "Sociologically the incentive to make money fast was by no means weak in Victorian Britain, the attraction of the gentry and aristocracy by no means overwhelming, especially not to the cohorts of middle-class conscious and often non-conformist (that is deliberately anti-aristocratic) Northerners and Midlanders, their heads filled with mottoes like "where there's muck there's brass" took solid pride in their productive achievements. They were proud of the soot and smoke in which they drenched the cities in which they made their money..."

2 See for example Appendix II C.8. Alfred Church cf J. D. Coldham "Early Northamptonshire Cricket" *N.P. & P.* (1956) II No.3 pl31-37, which reveals a mix of Northampton shoe manufacturers and county society serving as club officials in the late nineteenth century.

3 *N.M.* 13 February 1931 pl cf Appendix II C.2. on Crockett's extensive philanthropy and religious works.

4 *N.I.* 21 October 1922; cf Appendix II C.1. on the Lewis's religious beliefs and philanthropy.

sincerely held religious beliefs. For others, it was expressed more secularly through membership of Freemasonry or the Rotarians.

Although this urban oligarchy did not join the ranks of the gentry, they did, on a smaller scale, use the wealth and position derived from industry to gain social acceptance and power. As in the county, so in the county town, there were a range of political and social organisations and activities which served to legitimise the elite shoe manufacturers place in social and public life.¹ Indeed, in the period, Northampton's small bourgeois class and the town's lack of a diverse industrial base meant the shoe elite came to dominate the town's political and social activities almost by default. Leading shoe manufacturers joined with other leading petty bourgeois traders in the town to form a 'natural elite' linked by common economic and social bonds. Many elements combined to express the cohesion and separate character of this elite as a social group, yet three main elements can be isolated, viz:

(i) public duty and service.

(ii) wealth.

(iii) residential patterns.

Before discussing these main elements, it should be stated that it is entirely correct to write in terms of a socially exclusive oligarchy and by 1914, this elite position was demonstrated as much by their mastery with other businessmen, of the town's political and social institutions, as by the links that had been forged through marriage and social association.

The elite's political and social dominance of the town is at once a recognition of three inter-related elements: the centrality of shoe manufacture to the town's economy; a lack of an aristocratic governing class in the town and

¹ D. Fraser Urban Politics in Victorian England (1976) p281, where he argues that the urban political structure was parallel to that found in the shires and that it was a "deliberate attempt to create spheres of urban influence in which the bourgeoisie could lord it over the citizenry".

the prodigious energy and power seeking character of leading shoe manufacturers. That many nineteenth century businessmen were committed to public life and affairs of the locality from which they accumulated their wealth is now well appreciated by historians, as is the gospel of voluntary public duty that underpinned that commitment, through the writings of Professor E. P. Hennock¹ and Professor D. Fraser.² More recent research founded upon these studies aptly sums up this role of the industrialists governance of medium sized industrial towns of a similar character to Northampton. In a biography of Reuben Farley, a West Bromwich iron-founder and coalmaster, Doctor Trainor notes:

... Farley's unusually protracted and diverse public service only exaggerated a general, if by the 1890's a declining, tendency for prosperous Victorian businessmen to exert themselves in (local) public affairs. Men like Farley had especially great impact in medium sized towns, such as those in the Black Country, where civic life was poorly developed until the late nineteenth century. Their interventions helped replace the disputed edicts of earlier nineteenth century local leaders with the less absolute but more accepted decisions of quasi-democratic 1890's ...³

Although civic life had been established longer in Northampton, the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed similar substantive changes in the political climate and improvements in public services in the town as a result of rapid

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- 1 E. P. Hennock Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth Century Urban Government (1973).
 - 2 Derek Fraser (i) Urban Politics in Victorian England (1976) and (ii) Power and Authority in the Victorian City (1979).
 - 3 Richard Trainor "Reuben Farley" D.B.B. (1984) Volume 2 p326. At p325 it is noted "Reuben Farley's principal significance, however, lies neither in his impressive business success nor in his foundation of a partially landed family. For Farley was a classic example of the many Victorian businessmen who were active and influential leaders in the public affairs of industrial towns". cf Trainor's thesis, a recent study of authority and social structure in Black Country towns, that serves as a reminder of the important role many nineteenth century industrialists played in local government and life: Authority and Social Structure in an Industrialised Area: A Study of Three Black Country Towns 1840-1890 (unpublished D. Phil Oxford 1981). See also John Turner (Editor) Businessmen and Politics (1983), essays concerned with the role and interaction of business and industry with the political system in the first half of the nineteenth century.

economic and social development there.

All the evidence and argument assembled by both Hennock and Fraser tends toward the conclusion that nineteenth century town councils were consistently elected along class lines. From the Municipal Reforms of 1835 until late in the century, the council chamber was substantially middle-class in composition and the province of "men of respectability and intelligence". "Men of social standing" in the local community drawn from the local social and economic elite. This prime function in the local community served to legitimise both the political and social position of a town's leading citizens. Using evidence drawn from the R.C. on Municipal Corporations 1833-35 and other contemporary assessments, Hennock formalises the qualities expected from councillors into three crucial characteristics:¹ viz:-

- (i) men of station and respectability.²
- (ii) men of substance, or property, or wealth.
- (iii) men of intelligence and education.

1 For a full discussion of these characteristics, see Hennock op cit p308 et seq.

2 cf Fraser (1976) p20, where he discusses the need to conform to a code of respectability : "an unwritten code of respectability by which bourgeois authority could be sustained. At Northampton, two of the labour movements first councillors failed to conform. One, Councillor Inwood, left his family chargeable on the local Poor Law and following criminal prosecution, resigned from union and public office. The other, James Gribble, because of his unconventional and mercurial public behaviour, never attained that position in politics that his ability dictated. Contrast these men with the 'model' local labour leader E. L. Poulton. Cited by A. Fox as a "prototype of the twentieth century (bureaucratic) trade union leader", Standish Meacham has recently provided this brief pen-picture of him. "Poulton worked 8 years at the bench before assuming the position of branch secretary in 1890. The same year he founded a trade union club in Northampton and served as its first secretary. Two years later, as president of the local trades council, he helped organise the Midland Federation of Trades Councils. Soon his name appeared on various municipal boards and councils: School Board 1895; Town Council 1898; Northampton Technical Instruction Committee; Northampton General Hospital. In 1906 he was elected the city's (sic) first working man mayor. Poulton believed in the virtues of union centralisation, maintaining that negotiators should be allowed to bargain unhampered by restraints imposed upon their actions from below". He regarded his members as "a clientele instead of a collection of fellow workers". (S. Meacham A Life Apart: The English Working Class 1890-1914 (1977) pl47).

Of these, he views the first as the "indispensible criterion",¹ because municipal corporations were substantially bodies of magistrates and administrators of corporate property. Although by our period the former function had been hived off to a separate bench of borough magistrates, nevertheless, in practice, there still existed a remarkable degree of co-existence between the two institutions. In addition to these qualities, Fraser stresses that they were, in themselves, insufficient to guarantee political advancement. Important also were qualities of natural leadership and a record of individual political achievement.²

And at the centre of this prime function lay two principles. First, "the belief that town councillors should be recruited from local businessmen",³ thus tending to bring market-place management skills and financial criteria to bear upon local government administration. In 1875 it was recorded:

... Successful businessmen of age sufficient, experience ripened, honesty unimpeachable and of devotion to work, are the right men to send to the council. Nor does⁴ a high degree of education, so called, appear to me to be a necessity ...

Hennock notes that from mid-century English town councils experienced "the replacement of substantial and respectable men by people lower in the social scale".⁵ Increasing numbers of petite bourgeois figures were elected to office, giving a desirable mix of talents drawn from both groups. The second principle laid stress upon the desirability of the part-time councillor/administrator - most councillors took a more active role in both inspection and administration at

1 Hennock op cit, p297.

2 Fraser (1976) op cit, p18-19.

3 Hennock op cit, p298.

4 J. S. Curtis The Marsden Mayoralty (1875) p77 cf Joseph Chamberlain's comment in 1882 that "a large ratepayer, a man of thorough business habits, enlarged views and marked ability, belonging indeed to precisely the class of burgesses most desirable to the council" (cited by Hennock p324).

5 Hennock, op cit, p300.

this time - rather than the full-time, salaried official. And underpinning this regard for the amateur were the twin forces of voluntary public duty and what Briggs denotes as the "vigour of the civic gospel". A materialistic civic pride and rivalry gripped Victorian industrial towns, which gave rise, not only to many urban improvements, but also to more imposing symbols of civic progress:

... (for it was) civic pride which inspired the building of imposing and often expensive Victorian town halls. The boasting tradition did not disappear with the end of Victorian optimism ...¹

In addition to these qualities, it should be noted that for much of the nineteenth century the very character of the electoral process itself tended to ensure middle-class representation in the council chamber. Between 1835 and 1882 property qualifications were in force. Councillors had to be on the burgess role² and satisfy two other property qualifications. They had to own real or personal property worth £1,000 or else occupy property with a rateable value of £30. But in addition to this, service was unpaid and council business usually conducted during normal working hours, which further restricted opportunities for working men to stand for election.³ It was only after 1882 that property qualifications were abolished, making it possible for working men to become candidates. At Northampton both the local branches of N.U.B.S.O. and the Trades Council actively encouraged working class candidacy with some success.⁴

1 A. Briggs Victorian Cities (1968) p52. Northampton's Victorian town hall, the third, was completed in 1864, with a western wing being added in 1892. It is in the decorated Gothic style.

2 i.e. occupiers with a rateable valuation.

3 In addition, Hennock argues that this kept out principals of infant firms. At p10 he notes: "They tended also to exclude most of those in the process of building up their business, the young men on the make. The council was for those who could spare the time, who had arrived where they were content to be. In the Northampton sample a notable exception to this was A. E. Marlow, who, within four years of launching his firm had become Northampton's youngest ever mayor (see Appendix III N.G.2. p).

4 The Monthly Reports of N.U.B.S.O. through the 1890's frequently advocate the use of democratic institutions within the community as an important vehicle through which to bring about improvements in working class social and industrial conditions. cf The Annual Reports of the Northampton Trades Council provide a chronicle of the history of working class candidacy; through this decade.

FIGURE 8:vi: LIST OF ELITE MANUFACTURERS KNOWN TO HAVE ENTERED PUBLIC LIFE

NAME	Other Directorships	Trade Bodies	Public Office	District Councillor	County Councillor	Mayor	Borough J.P.	County J.P.	School Board	Guardian	M.P.	Deputy Lieutenant	High Sheriff	Other	Organisation Leader	Political	Religious	Philanthropic	Friendly Society	Building Society	Temperance	Hospital Charity	Volunteer/T.A.	Social/Cultural	Sporting	Rotarian	Freemason
Charles Lewis								✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Edward Lewis	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓									✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓			
T. D. Lewis		✓		✓		✓	✓			✓			✓				✓	✓	✓			✓		✓			
John Lewis	✓	✓																						✓			
J. G. Sears		✓																✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	
W. T. Sears	✓	✓																✓	✓					✓	✓		
F. W. Panther	✓	✓														✓		✓						✓	✓		
J. Dickins	✓	✓											✓											✓	✓		
H. Aspden	✓	✓					✓																				
Charles Jones		✓																									
J. H. C. Crockett		✓						✓	✓							✓		✓	✓				✓				
H. Crockett																		✓	✓								
F. Crockett																		✓	✓					✓			
F. Jones																								✓	✓		
M. P. Manfield	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Harry Manfield	✓	✓			✓			✓			✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
James Manfield	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
A. E. Marlow	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
H. E. Randall	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
H. C. Richards	✓										✓												✓	✓	✓		
A. Druker											✓																
C. M. Westfield	✓						✓																				
H. C. Randall	✓																✓							✓			
P. Hayman	✓																										
F. W. Hurst	✓																										
B. N. Dawson	✓	✓																									
F. Bostock snr.	✓	✓																✓	✓					✓			
F. Bostock jnr.	✓	✓										✓						✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Neville Bostock	✓	✓																						✓	✓		
Lancelot Bostock	✓																							✓	✓		
G. T. Hawkins	✓	✓															✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	
H. Edwards		✓																✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	
H. G. White		✓																								✓	
George Padmore jnr.																											
George Padmore snr.		✓																									
J. T. Forsell	✓																							✓			
A. Forsell	✓																										
J. Forsell	✓																										
S. J. Davis	✓	✓																						✓	✓		
J. Marlow		✓																✓	✓					✓	✓		

In order to more clearly understand the role of the elite in Northampton's public life, a study of their known involvement in political, religious and social institutions was undertaken. Of the 83 members of the elite, 56 (68%) played some leading role in the town's public life. The character and extent of that involvement is identified in Figure 8:vi. Inclusion in that table is determined by either an involvement in the industry outside the conduct of their own business, or the holding of public office or membership of a public body; or leadership of a local/national organisation; or other prominent role in some definable aspect of public life. The study takes no account merely of membership to an institution: rather, our concern here is to discover and analyse the extent to which the elite undertook prominent, leading roles in these institutions.

A number of important points emerge. Most of the sample, 82.1%, played an active role in the wider industrial field, either as a director of another firm, or as a prominent member of a trade body. An equally high proportion, 73.2% (41) played a prominent, leading role in political and social organisations of a diverse and gregarious nature. If this area of Figure 8:vi is considered more closely the following pattern emerges:

Organisation	Number of Men Involved	Expressed as a Percentage
I Political	16	39.0
Religious	19	46.3
Philanthropic	16	39.0
II Friendly Society	4	9.8
Building Society	3	7.3
Temperance	3	7.3
Hospital Charity	7	17.1
Volunteer Force	2	4.9
III Social/cultural	28	68.4
Sport	9	21.9

Whilst significant numbers of the sample are to be found in the town's primary political, religious and philanthropic organisations, by far the largest concentration of involvement occurs within a broad range of social/cultural organisations: a reflection of the degree to which the elite permeated the town's social life. Given their central position in town life, this level of involvement comes as no particular surprise, but was a corner stone of the prevailing code of public duty. Yet, doubtless, beyond any sense of duty that compelled their active participation, motives were more mixed than this. Some were drawn to an organisation out of a sense of personal interest, others as a place to nurture and maintain business connections. But the desire to utilise social organisations as a means of control was not lost sight of. This was particularly true of sporting organisations and the way in which inter-factory sport was used, along with other welfarist ideals, to foster company loyalty and identity amongst employees has been discussed elsewhere.¹

Of the second group, whilst friendly society and hospital charity work were essentially extensions of philanthropic activity, participation in building society management carried with it clear political undertones. The Northampton Town and County Freehold Land Society was founded in 1848 to promote ideals of thrift and house ownership amongst the town's shoemakers. Under the control of bourgeois Liberals it was used as an instrument with which to provide increasing numbers of Liberal shoemakers with the necessary house occupier status to secure enfranchisement in municipal and parliamentary elections.² Of this movement Labouchere's biographer comments:

1 See Chapter 2 above.

2 Initially this movement was set in train to reverse the effect of the 1832 Reform Act which had the effect of narrowing the working class franchise in the town: this had been historically widely based. See John Vincent, Pollbooks-How Victorians Voted (1968) where Northampton poll books are discussed and where it is suggested that the 1832 Reform Act narrowed the franchise there.

... The Radical element had for many years been very numerous among the population, but unfortunately the majority of the workers had no vote. The Household Suffrage Act of 1868 remedied this state of things to some extent. The work of the Freehold Land Society developed the scope of the remedy. This most practical expression of democratic ideals making freeholders of workmen, raised the number of the electorate from 6,829 in 1874 to 8,189 in 1880; of these 2,500 had never voted before and to a man were Radicals ...¹

For a smaller portion, this political and social leadership was taken one step further and found expression in election to political office. 20 (35.7%) of elite manufacturers are known to have been thus elected. Politics and more particularly local politics, held an importance for Victorians not wholly appreciated today. D. Fraser draws our attention to the idea that "urban politics (and the pursuit and exercising of power that this represents) were a touchstone of urban society", where even "issues of improvement, superficially non-political, could in practice generate enormous political heat".² The minor

1 Algar Thorold The Life of Henry Labouchere (1913) pl29-30 cf N.M. 21 March 1868 p5, where a Northampton Boundary Commission Report noted the following electoral pattern for 1865-66:

£10 Occupiers	2,579
Ancient Right Qualification	<u>278</u>
	2,857
Double Entries	<u>237</u>
	2,620

Population of the town was 32,813 and 6,150 houses were inhabited. In all there were 6,370 male occupiers, of whom 3,139 were at a rental below £10. The proposed boundary changes were much opposed by Liberals, who viewed them as an attempt to thwart the work of the Freehold Land Society. For example, Councillor Shoosmith noted: "it is no use disguising the fact that this was a political question. The real objective of this extension of boundaries of the borough was to take away from the county a great number of small freeholders who during the last 20 years by the efforts of the Freehold Land Society and other reform societies, had been placed upon the political register, thereby greatly increasing the strength of Liberal parties in the county". It was estimated that the change would involve some 600 voters.

2 D. Fraser (1976) op cit pl0 cf p9, where he notes: "politics for Victorians unlike ourselves, began not at Westminster but at their own front gates. Whether the pavement was drained and swept, whether the poor should be incarcerated in workhouses, whether dissenters should pay church rates depended upon the exercise of power and were issues of as much intrinsic political interest as great questions of national policy. Politics intruded into the whole urban experience and the limited political world of parliamentary elections, identified by many historians as the stuff of urban politics, was not a political boundary recognised by contemporaries. The political activist pitched his tent in whatever battlefield was open to him. Urban politics ran through many channels".

political institutions at township level lie at the heart of nineteenth century urban political structure:¹ to ignore them, Fraser asserts, is to distort the contemporary political structure. These political institutions were, therefore, not only important in their own right, but, as importantly, became part of an overall local struggle for power and a base from which an individual could advance his political position.

As in most English towns, Northampton shoe manufacturers found a variety of public political posts from which to vaunt their power. By our period, the town council had become the main platform.² Thus of the 20 to hold public office, 10 were district, or county councillors, whilst three were members of the school board and one a Poor Law guardian.³ 16 became J.P.'s and in addition, six were mayors, five M.P.'s, one a Deputy Lieutenant and one High Sheriff. The degree of multi-office tenure should be noted. In broad terms, the bourgeois composition of Northampton's town council conforms to the pattern laid down by both Hennock⁴ and Fraser⁵ and outlined above; although as will be noted below that dominance

- 1 D. Fraser (1976) p280. He views urban politics as a multi-layered structure composed of minor institutions; municipality; parliamentary elections; philanthropic organisations. It is misleading to see only parliamentary elections as being of political importance although they did provide an "opportunity for symbolic group identity, a barometer of local political feeling".
- 2 D. Fraser (1976) op cit p279. The town council was at the centre of municipal politics, "the local House of Commons and in carrying out its reform and administrative functions, councils provoked contention about the nature and exercise of urban authority".
- 3 D. Fraser op cit p282 notes that the political role of minor institutions like the School Board and Board of Guardians, was declining by the late nineteenth century and this would appear to be the case in this sample. Nevertheless such minor institutions could, in Fraser's opinion, still provide a 'launching pad' for a political career. cf in the 1890's, these minor seats of power provided an entrée for labour movement representatives. In 1894, two Trades Council delegates, E. L. Poulton and D. Stanton J.P. were elected to the Local School Board (Sixth Annual Report Northampton Trades Council (1895) p4). cf two years later two delegates were elected to the governing body of the local Technical School) (Ibid Eighth Annual Report p3).
- 4 Hennock op cit, p301 et seq.
- 5 Fraser (1976) op cit, p15 et seq.

was not complete by 1914. Increasingly, following the second Reform Act, greater emphasis was placed upon the need for internal cohesion and organisation within political parties. In addition to elected post-holders, a range of activists at ward level were required to maintain the momentum and fabric of the party. These jobs provided an outlet for party members drawn from a much wider class background. But "beyond lay the honorific posts of Mayor, Alderman and above, Magistrate, which were reserved for natural social leaders".¹ Fraser perceives these posts in the following way:

... The more honorific, unpaid posts were primarily status symbols which were sought as a means of legitimizing the role of social leader, the means by which economic, social and political authority could be strengthened and the stability of urban society ensured ...²

And, in Northampton, part of the legitimizing process included the lavish entertainment of prominent townspeople and the ample provision to charities, which had become as much part of the Mayor's year in office as his official duties. Despite the not infrequent criticism such spending excited,³ it was noted when Harry Manfield stepped down as Mayor that:

... When Mr. Manfield doffed the Mayoral robe and chain this afternoon he had the satisfaction of knowing that though his year's service involved a greatly depleted banking account he is richer than ever in the esteem of his fellow townspeople. Of no Mayor could it be more truly said that he has added to the lustre of the office and though it was an honour to him to fill it, the dominant feeling of Northampton people today is that he and the Mayoress have also honoured the town by the generosity and graciousness with which they have discharged the duties ...⁴

However, Manfield's successor was E. L. Poulton, the town's first working class Mayor. His Mayoralty marked something of a watershed, for, of necessity his

1 Fraser (1976) Ibid p18.

2 Fraser (1976) Ibid p18.

3 Sir Moses Manfield was a particularly outspoken critic of the extravagances of Northampton's Mayors, not least because it meant that the office tended to go only to men of considerable personal means rather than men of ability. Poulton (below) sharply ends that trend. See Manfield's obituary N.M. 4 August 1899 p7.

4 N.I. 10 November 1906 p10.

being in office was not marked by displays of personal wealth-giving. In fact, earlier in the decade, the Mayoralty of both Charles Lewis and A. E. Marlow had been marked by conscious efforts to lessen the extravagance that was causing increasing comment.¹

Although this is not the place to consider Northampton politics in depth, it is nevertheless important to understand its basic nature. The political character of Northampton and indeed, of the shoemaking areas of the county, were dominated by the twin forces of Liberalism and Nonconformity.² E. Royle has argued that these forces, together with the social composition of the town and the small scale of shoemaking, provided "a classic breeding ground for independent radicalism".³ And, it is this strong attachment to political Radicalism that has consistently been viewed as the hallmark of both the town and industry. It was noted in 1898:

... The Radicalism of Northampton penetrates largely into the shire. This is especially true of East Northamptonshire. More than half the constituency of shoemaking towns and villages (shoemakers) comprise the bulk of₄(the) constituents. They are active, ardent, irrepressible Radicals ...

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- 1 Lewis scaled down the annual Mayor's Banquet, making it a teetotal affair. Marlow cancelled his ball altogether, preferring to give a donation to the Distress Fund. Both men used the money that would have been utilised for entertaining on relieving hardship in the local community.
 - 2 H. Pelling Social Geography of British Elections pl08 and 110 of Gaskell (1907) "Northampton is and has, for many years been overwhelmingly Liberal".
 - 3 E. Royle "Charles Bradlaugh, Free-thought and Northampton" N.P. & P. (1980) Vol VI No.3 pl43. Social composition of the town was influenced by the many small masters and semi independent journeymen in the outwork shoe industry, the dominant petty bourgeois trading class and small middle class: cf Pelling op cit p422-23, where he links the small scale of the industry, the independence of the shoemaker and the opportunity for social association whilst working, to the strong Radical traditions in the industry. See also E. J. Hobsbawm "Political Shoemaker" Past and Present (1980) passim, where it is suggested that this Radicalism did not transfer to the factory and to the shoe operative.
 - 4 W. R. D. Adkins Our County (1893) n.p.

Evidence of advanced political viewpoints pervades the nineteenth century political history of Northampton,¹ but Radicalism is most often linked with the years of Bradlaugh's association with the town. Pelling suggests that it was this prominent politician who introduced a strong, abiding element of secularism into local politics. That Bradlaugh polarised Radical opinion is undoubted, but he was scarcely the precursor of advanced political activity in the town.² Royle argues that a strong fundamental vein of freethinking Radicals had been active in the town for over a generation before Bradlaugh's arrival there. In 1839, a small branch of the Owenite Universal Community Society of

1 Generally on the early nineteenth century see J. Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution (1974): on Radicalism and Chartism at Northampton see R. G. Gammage History of the Chartist Movement 1837-1854 (1854) p36-40, 117, 97-98, 256-58. On Owenism at Northampton see M. J. Haynes, "Class and Class Conflict in Early Nineteenth Century: Northampton Shoemakers and Grand National Consolidated Trades Union", Literature and History (1977) No.5 p73-94 passim. I am grateful to my colleague R. L. Greenall of Leicester University who allowed me to consult his M.S. files on Northamptonshire working class history prior to 1850.

2 Labouchere's official biographer notes that because of their advanced views, Northampton was really the only suitable constituency for Labouchere and Bradlaugh. Labouchere's political position is well illustrated by Thorold's summary of his failure to get elected at Nottingham in 1874: "At Nottingham there was a superfluity of Liberal candidates, but two of these, Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Laycock would probably have got in, had it not been for the determined antagonism of Mr. Heath, the Labour candidate, to Mr. Labouchere. It was also asserted by the leading Liberals of the place that the seats were lost because of Mr. Labouchere's advanced Radicalism which scandalised the Liberal supporters". (Thorold op cit p85). On Labouchere's views see H. Pearson Labby: The Life of Henry Labouchere (1936) pl58 et seq, where his dislike of centralism and privilege in all its forms is discussed, as is his preparedness to use extra legal means to ensure personal rights and liberty. Intellectually, he sympathised with both Republicanism and Socialism, but his strong sense of political pragmatism prevented his commitment to either of these causes. Of Socialism he commented, "Socialists are well-meaning sort of people. Their plan, however, is only suited to a state of things where every man would do his duty. If I am alive when the millennium comes, I am by no means sure that I shall not become a Socialist. As it is, I am not one for I am perfectly certain that the theory would break down in practice". (Pearson op cit pl59). Labouchere was also a strong anti-Imperialist, which estranged him from high parliamentary office. Of this Pearson notes, "towards the end of 1882 Labby commenced the series of attacks on Imperialist and jingo policy which gave him leadership of the extreme Radical party and provoked so much hostility in parliament and country that 20 years later he found himself practically in a minority of one". In his way, he was as extreme as Bradlaugh.

Rational Religionists was formed and in 1847 one of the few branches of Holyoake's Society of Theological Utilitarians.¹ In 1854 the Northampton Secularist Society was formed. By the 1850's, freethinking Radicals, led by Joseph Gurney² and Joseph Bates, were actively working with Non-Conformist elements for extreme Liberal policies in the town, which led in 1857, to the adoption of Charles Gilpin as the extreme Liberal candidate at the General Election.³ All this before Bradlaugh made contact with the town in 1859 on a Secularist lecture tour.

What Bradlaugh's presence did was to raise the general level of consciousness within the town toward freethought and Radical ideals. Certainly, the late 1860's and the following decade witnessed an increasing political radicalisation amongst local Liberals. There was an active branch of the Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League, the Northampton Republican Club flourished and Secularist ideas caught the imagination of many.⁴ Bradlaugh's influence was at the centre of Liberal

1 Royle, loc cit, p143.

2 On Gurney see F. D'Arcy biography in D.L.B. Volume 5 (1979).

3 Royle, Ibid, p144. cf E. Royle Victorian Infidels (1974) p305.

4 Local clerics spoke out several times against increasing infidelism: see Vicar of St. Edmunds article in Official Yearbook of the Church of England (1887) p39. Also, the Northampton Episcopal Visitation Returns from 1872 provide further evidence as to the extent Secularist and Radical ideas had permeated the local community. In discussing impediments to their ministry clerics - in addition to religious indifference fuelled by poverty and intemperance and an indifference to Anglicanism as a result of the prevalence of dissenting chapels in the town - wrote of the increase in infidelism. This was most apparent in the shoemaking district of St. Andrews, where Bradlaugh drew much of his support. In 1878, the Reverend Lamb noted: "Secularists are numerous, St. Andrew's is Bradlaugh's Stronghold. The whole parish has been covered with his atheistical principles and many more Christian helpers are needed to counteract the mischief done". (N.R.O. M.L.598: St. Andrews). Reverend Lamb estimated that most - 15/1 - voted for Bradlaugh in 1882 and that the "parish consists chiefly of political dissent". (N.R.O. M.L.600: St. Andrews). Similar traits of secularism and infidelity were noted in adjacent parishes. In All Saints (N.R.O. M.L.598 (1878) and St. Peters (N.R.O. X911 (1901): here in 1910 "the spread of infidelity through an active infidel agency was noted (N.R.O. X913). Reverend Robson noted in 1872 that "the welfare of the church around me, is, I fear, impeded by the effort of Secularists: and by the increasingly stormy manifestations of party spirit within the church. Secularism is much disliked by the (church) people and seems likely to do much

politics in these years. His adoption to contest the 1868 General Election had split the party locally. The substantially working class Reform League branch,¹ formed itself into the Northampton Radical Association, which accepted Bradlaugh's policies,² and his position on moderate Liberalism.³ Middle-class Liberals established the more moderate Northampton United Liberal Association.⁴ From this time to the General Election in 1880, the two groups remained locked in internal argument concerning policy and personalities, whilst the Conservatives, well organised at ward and town level,⁵ were able to take control of the local council chamber and twice won parliamentary honours.⁶ The healing of this split in the 1880's was brought about in order to prevent the growing ascendancy of conservatism in the town.⁷ Moreover, once Bradlaugh had been elected to the House,

- 4 Continued... mischief". (N.R.O. M.L.595: St. Giles). This party spirit, it was felt, "produces an indifference to all religion amongst many by religion being presented to their minds as a party matter (N.R.O. X907 (1875): St. Edmunds). This party spirit was still quoted as impeding the ministry in St. Andrews in 1905 (N.R.O. X911-12: St. Andrews). Beyond the work of activists, the spread of "cheap Radical and Secularist literature drew comment (N.R.O. X909 (1886): St. Michaels cf St. Peters in 1886: "indifference bred of infidel and Secularist literature").
- 1 N.M. 4 August 1899 p7. Formed on 16 July 1866, by the November local elections it had 535 members. Radical Association formed after 1867 Act: on working class membership see N.M. 10 October 1868 p6 and 8.
- 2 For Bradlaugh's policies on adoption see N.M. 18 July 1868 p4.
- 3 N.M. 26 September 1868 p8 carries a report on Bradlaugh's public attack on Lord Henley, Northampton's sitting junior member, whom he castigated "as part of tumbling Whiggism" of the day: "a man who has hindered the Radical advance" cf 15 August 1868 p6.
- 4 Supported by the local Northampton Mercury, then under the control of the Dacey family. The main plank of opposition centred on Bradlaugh's theological views - example N.M. 15 August 1868 p4 leader comment and subsequent readers' letters.
- 5 A local Conservative Association with effective ward organisation was in place by October 1868 (see N.M. 24 October 1868 p6 and 7). In addition a Conservative Operative Association was already in being (N.M. 7 November 1868 p8).
- 6 Pickering Phipps in 1874 and C. G. Merewether in 1874 By Election, see Appendix VI.
- 7 Royle (1980) op cit, p146-48.

the ensuing and well-known constitutional struggle to secure his seat¹ tended to rally all Liberals in the town, regardless of their political complexion.² At local level, this new mood was signalled by the election of M. P. Manfield, the Liberal leader, as the first Liberal Mayor for some years, although this alliance of moderate and radical took some time to settle.³ Added cement was being provided by this rise of Socialism in the town.

In the period after the mid 1880's, politics in the town remained as avowedly Radical, with Liberals dominating both national and local elections,⁴ but the range of political position and allegiance became more complex. The period to 1914 saw many changes in the alignment of politicians and parties both nationally and locally. The Irish Home Rule question fractured the Liberal Party, leading to the coalition between Liberal and Conservative Unionists. In Northampton, the leading shoe manufacturer Richard Turner, stood as a Liberal Unionist candidate in the 1886 General Election. Nevertheless, the shoe manufacturing elite remained overwhelmingly committed to Liberalism and a majority to the party's Radical wing: of the 83 members of the elite, 88% were Liberal. Moreover, their power base was only challenged and not

1 See W. L. Arnstein The Bradlaugh Case (1965) cf W. W. Hadley "Bradlaugh and Labouchere", N.P. & P. II No.6 (1959) p273-82.

2 Royle (1980) p149 "once Bradlaugh had been elected, the whole context of his relationship with Northampton was changed. His exclusion from taking the oath and sitting in the Commons in the normal way made him synonymous with constitutional liberties and freedom of conscience - cries to rally all but the most bigoted of Non-Conformists. A few Liberals do seem to have been prepared for the alternative of voting for the Tory, but sufficient Liberals were committed to maintaining Bradlaugh's right because it was Northampton's right".

3 Example in 1885 a row followed the selection of new J.P.'s. Radicals claiming moderate Liberals had been favoured: Moreover, some prominent moderates retired from politics as a result of what they considered to be an increased emphasis upon Radical policies. The most prominent examples were G. M. Tebbutt. See Appendix II C.12. p695) and Simon Collier (see Appendix II C.10 p684).

4 With the exception of 1889-95, when there was a Liberal majority in the Council Chamber in one year.

eclipsed.¹ Hennock writes of a shift in the social composition of town councils generally at this time, away from the dominance of wealthier merchants toward a dominance by the petty bourgeoisie.² Yet, given the absence of a large bourgeois class in the town, such a shift is not readily discernible. However, the way in which it does reveal itself amongst shoe manufacturers is that some of the wealthier, upwardly socially mobile, did turn their backs on municipal politics. Some, such as Henry Randall who developed a "distaste for competing in the rough and tumble of ward elections":³ whilst others, such as Harry Manfield, moved into the shoe gentry.⁴ Others, like Tebbutt & Collier, as has been noted above, turned from Radicalism, whilst many more manufacturers were pointedly noted by contemporaries as playing no part in public life, although some, such as G. T. Hawkins,⁵ took a back-stage covert role.

More important for the development of Liberalism locally, however, was the need to accommodate the increasingly strong working class political consciousness and Socialist organisation in the town. Many of the leading Socialists came to

1 For general discussion on the threat to the urban elite role. See D. Fraser (1976) p282 et seq., where he isolates four factors:

- (i) development of party caucuses and the rise of a mass electorate.
- (ii) increased national, as opposed to local character of politics.
- (iii) emergence of an articulated working class position, that used political agitation and extra parliamentary means thus causing a shift in the power balance.
- (iv) local government reforms that meant the eclipse of some local institutions.

2 Hennock op cit, p301 et seq. cf p305 where he notes that in Europe "patrician families with long standing traditions of municipal service began to turn away, nor were their places taken by newer families of the same standing". Rather Councillors were increasingly drawn from those who stood in a position of clientage towards the big industrialists of a town, although such was not the case in Northampton. In England, Hennock asserts that the reasons for this were the greater demands of business; involvement in national as opposed to local organisations and a withdrawal from those towns in which their wealth had been made.

3 Appendix II C.4. p641: Quotation from Hennock op cit, p303.

4 Appendix II C.2. p 619

5 Appendix II C.6. p 659

Socialism through Bradlaugh's ultra advanced brand of freethought Radicalism.¹ The first Socialist group and the most prominent to 1914 was the Social Democratic Federation, founded in Northampton in 1886. The Independent Labour Party did not establish a base until circa 1908.²

Following the 1887 strike, several reports in trade journals note that the increasing level of conflict between labour and capital in the shoe industry locally was mirrored politically by an increased polarisation of attitudes and of voting patterns along class lines.³ Although Pelling argues that this posed little real threat to continued Liberal ascendancy in parliamentary elections,⁴ the Social Democratic Federation gained an increased share of the popular vote at local elections - municipal, guardian and school board - and established a representation on these bodies.⁵ From the evidence presented by the local Social Democratic Federation newspaper, the Northampton Pioneer, these elections were fought on the industrial change issue. Yet, despite the extent to which the Social Democratic Federation raised the level of

- 1 See example, Keith Brooker "James Gribble" D.L.B. (1984) Vol VI p99.- "He was already a Radically minded Liberal in politics, largely through the influence of his father who was a committed supporter of Charles Bradlaugh. James, in adult life, often referred with pride to his acquaintance with Bradlaugh and spoke of the assistance he had given to the Radical and free-thinking cause in Northampton during the early 1880's".
- 2 This stands in strong contrast to its early strength and success in neighbouring Leicester.
- 3 See M. Dickie "Liberals, Radicals and Socialists in Northampton Before the Great War" N.P. & P. (1984) VII No.1 p51-54 passim, where it is rightly suggested that industrial change enhanced the dissemination of Socialist ideas and increased political awareness generally.
- 4 Pelling op cit, p110. The election of a Conservative in 1895 General Election was as a result of dissension within Liberal ranks as to the adoption of a Liberal/Labour candidate to partner Labouchere. After discussion with N.U.B.S.O. regarding a shoe trade unionist as candidate, E. Harford of the railway union was adopted. Liberal dissents of his policies rallied to J. M. Robertson who stood as an Independent Liberal, thus splitting the Liberal vote, letting the Conservative C.G.A. Drucker in: The presence of an S.D.F. candidate exacerbated this position. On N.U.B.S.O. involvement in this affair see A. Fox op cit p196-98. (Note: for a while in the 1890's a group named the Robertsonian Liberals played a minor role in local affairs.)
- 5 Prominent amongst those elected were A. G. Slinn, D. Stanton and J. Gribble.

political awareness amongst the shoe community, Pelling's assessment remains substantially correct in spirit for Northampton's trade unionists and working class remained too divided to ultimately challenge Liberalism at the ballot box before 1914.¹ In spite of a large popular following at local elections, the number of active, committed Socialists in the town was low,² and they never succeeded in wresting control of important bodies from the moderates. The executive of both trade union branches and of the local Trades Council remained in the hands of moderates loosely grouped under the leadership of E. L. Poulton. Consequently, the dissensions between the moderate Trades Council, the B.S.P. (S.D.F.), the I.L.P. and leading trade union branches in the town prevented any effective Labour representation until 1914, when the Northampton Labour Representation Council was formed. The Council's first Annual Report records the difficulty with which harmony was achieved:

... It is a distinctly pleasing feature to be able to place on record the fact that after efforts extending over some five years to establish a united party, the Labour and Socialist forces of this town have at length recognised that if the fullest benefit is to be derived their power must be used collectively. After many meetings, the constitution was accepted by the three organisations who had been concerned in the formation of the new council - the Trades Council, the Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist Party ...³

1 See S.D.F. performance, for example, in General Elections of 1906 and 1910: Appendix VI.

2 See Labouchere's letter to Henry Broadhurst. The letter discusses the choice of second candidate at the next election. Labouchere comments: "personally it is a matter of indifference to me whether a candidate holds that all property is to belong to the state. The opinion is not within the range of practical politics. But this is not the view of the electors. They would not return a man who says that Radicals and Tories are all akin and that a new Socialist party is to reign. Probably there may be two or three hundred bona fide Socialists in the town. I believe that they would, as a matter of faith, vote for me. But the second seat might be in danger if there were no Radical or Labour candidate with Radical opinions to come forward and occupy the ground". (L.S.E. Henry Broadhurst Papers Coll. L5. Vol IV, Item 9, 5 January 1892.)

3 Northampton Labour Representation Council First Annual Report (1915) pl. The first meeting was held on 15 October 1914, but the war effectively hampered any political progress. Subsequently, Annual Reports point to continued internal tensions between particularly the B.S.P. and the Council, as do Annual Reports of the Northampton Trades Council. cf Trades Council Reports of the 1890's that similarly tell of a politically divided labour movement:

Arising from the analysis of the elite's public life, three important observations need to be made. First, the intense and expansive appetite for life and work that was displayed by many of the elite, although to some degree, of course, entry into public life was necessary to secure the future stability of the firm. Their relentless energy was not contained by the cares of business alone, but spread out in numerous directions. Yet this energy was only found for these outlets because, secondly, there existed an adequate delegation of management functions within the firm. For, if a principal was to follow a full public life he had to make adequate provision to ensure that the firm continued to function well during his absence.¹ What was required was an effective delegation of control and authority,² and this could be achieved in a variety of ways as Appendices II and III reveal. Thus, in C.1. a senior partner attends to business duties, releasing partners for public duties; in N.G.1 and C.4 adequate delegation of duties to competent directors was made; in C.3 partners used a general staff structure; in N.G.2 and C.6 the presence of a 'lieutenant', an able general manager was present; and in C.2, C.8, C.9 and C.12 rising second generation sons were brought into the partnership, given sufficiently large areas of discretion to enable the founder to be released.

And, thirdly, there exists a sharp break in participation rates at group level between the elite and the second rank. 67 principal controllers of the 32 second rank firms have been isolated. Of these 20 (29.9%) played some leading

3 Continued ... example seventh Annual Report (1896) p3. "A Labour candidate was put up (for the General Election) in this town and secured the vote of the Council, but owing to the very divided state of the Labour vote such candidate failed to secure election. At the November (municipal) election a candidate was put forward, but here again, defeat awaited, largely due to the division and apathy amongst the working classes". However, by 1920, at the time when Margaret Bondfield first contested the Northampton constituency, her biographer implies that these divisions had been healed (M. A. Hamilton Margaret Bondfield (1924) p141-61.)

1 D. Fraser (1976) p19, where he suggests that public duties were only undertaken at the cost of sacrificing time, neglecting family and above all, neglecting business.

2 Both Perkins, op cit, p87 and Thompson, op cit, p133 allude to this issue.

role in the town's political and social life. The character and extent of that involvement is identified in Figure 8:vii, that has been constructed in the same mode as Figure 8:vi. It will be observed that the levels of public duty and social involvement in town life was much less. 11 (55%) played a part in trade organisations and two outside directors had other industrial interests. In addition, James Gribble was a leading local figure in N.U.B.S.O., the foremost shoe trade union. Seven (35%) held public office; two being magistrates and four district councillors. 16 (80%) played a prominent part in political/social organisations.¹ Only those principals of second rank firms, whose position had been worsened by change and who had established a public life earlier, appear to participate. The exceptions to this are Abraham Lee and James Gribble.

X

The power that the elite were able to annex was not the only expression of their success and position, for middle class consciousness was also very tangibly expressed and reinforced by residential zoning. And where a manufacturer resided was, in turn, closely related to his wealth and status within the community.

The relatively modest levels of wealth generated by shoemen has already been alluded to and analysed, as has the modest, retiring nature of many of them. To take just one example, men such as John Marlow appear to have been little touched by his position: he lived simply and took pleasure in plain pastimes.² However, an increasing trend of social emulation in spending appears amongst manufacturers, particularly amongst second generation leaders. Increasingly biographic sources make reference to manufacturers who filled their homes with fine artifacts; china, silver, antiques and art treasures. One such man was J. H. Marlow, John's son:³

1 Eight in political organisations, eight in religious and five in social and sporting.

2 Appendix II C.7 p 667-68

3 Ibid.

Others included W. D. Crick,¹ and W. B. Stevens.² Writing of an earlier generation, Perkin: pertinently notes:

... nearly everyone was prepared to spend a large part of (their income) in keeping up with the Joneses. Even the entrepreneurs whose emulative spending mainly took the form of long term capital investment in the hope of raising themselves in the social scale were not immune to competitive consumption. The Strutts, for example, filled their home with pictures, books and musical instruments and they were by no means unusual amongst the entrepreneurs, who supported the Lunar Society and other philosophical societies ...³

One of the more apparent and visible signs of success for businessmen therefore, was to reside in a substantial house set in a pleasant, residential suburb. In recent years a large literature has been generated by historians, geographers and others which points to the development of socially segregated residential districts in nineteenth century Britain. It is not the place of this thesis to critically enter that literature,⁴ but rather to draw upon the knowledge there in order to develop the main theme here: that is to say, the development of an industrial and social oligarchy of owners within Northampton's footwear industry.

What that modern research argues is that the relatively clear-cut difference between Sjoberg's pre-industrial city,⁵ and Burgess' modern, residentially segregated city,⁶ which emerges as a result of a rapid population increase and

1 Appendix III C.13.

2 Appendix II C.19.

3 Perkin, op cit, p96-7.

4 D. Cannadine, "Victorian Cities: how different?" Social History (1977) No.4 at p457 briefly summarises this literature. cf Cannadine's "Residential Differentiation in Nineteenth Century Towns" in J. H. Johnson and G. C. Pooley (Editors) The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities (1982).

5 G. Sjoberg, The Pre-Industrial City: Past and Present (1960). In Sjoberg's model the rich dwelt at the centre and the poor at the periphery. For the rest of the population, in so far as there was residential segregation, it was based on occupation and ethnicity, not socio-economic status.

6 E. W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City", in R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess (Editors), The City (1968) fifth impression. Segregation is by status and income. The city reveals a pattern of zoned land use, not a mix of function. Residentially, the poor occupy inter-city areas on the fringe of the central business district, whilst the rich live on the periphery.

industrialisation, needs to be modified. The debate centres upon the issue of the time-scale during which the move to residential segregation occurred. A two way split of opinion has emerged. A major and sustained corrective of the Sjoberg-Burgess line has been undertaken by a number of American historians. The substance of their case is that modern, residentially segregated cities did not emerge at the beginning of the nineteenth century under the impetus of industrialisation, as Burgess purports, but at the end with the advent of mass transportation. Thus, mid-century American cities which have been studied revealed no strong segregation of function: most were 'walking cities', about two miles in radius, in which small scale business predominated and in which land use function was mixed. P. G. Goheen, one of the leading proponents of this view, notes of Toronto in 1860: "By comparison with the end of the century the city was a jumble of confusion in 1860".¹ In this type of city scape any residential segregation which was present was of a Sjobergian character. This line of argument has been taken up in Britain by D. Ward.² His study, like Goheen's, points to cities of substantial size, retaining strong pre-industrial characteristics early in the century, whilst residential differentiation between mid and the end of the century was markedly dissimilar as a result of the mass revolution in transport.

In answer to Ward's investigation, Cannadine has put forward an alternative. He argues that the British experience is fundamentally different from that of the American:

1 P. G. Goheen, Victorian Toronto, 1850 to 1900: Patterns and Processes of Growth (1970), p84.

2 D. Ward, "Victorian Cities: How Modern?" Journal of Historical Geography, I, 2, (1975), p137, cf D. Ward "A Comparative Historical Geography of Streetcar Suburbs in Boston, Massachusetts and Leeds" Proceedings of American Assoc. of Geography (1965) 54:4 p477-89.

... distinct patterns of segregation did prevail in mid-nineteenth century English towns, not as extensive as they did after the coming of the tram, but still considerably more so than was apparently the case in contemporary America ...¹

Tramway systems in England do not initiate segregation but intensify a process already underway.² The results of American studies, therefore, cannot be straightforwardly applied to the British experience. Certainly, Cannadine argues, "several case studies of English towns have shown the extent to which walking cities survived in England in the nineteenth century. Their 'pre-industrial economies and high status central areas put them unequivocally closer to Sjoberg's model than Burgess".³ The experience of these towns however cannot be used to support Ward's case, because their size is too small and "tell us little of conditions prevailing in those larger urban areas conventionally labelled 'Victorian cities'".⁴ Cannadine then, briefly, explores why distinct patterns of segregation existed in English cities from an early date:

- (i) the major expansion in English city populations took place early in the century: in America this was delayed until later on and was coincidental with the boom in tramway systems.
- (ii) English landowners were able to play a major role in shaping land use, in a way which was not possible in America, through the medium of estate development and English land law they were able to determine both the function and social composition of such developments: the main weapon was the covenant.
- (iii) middle class attitudes.

1 Cannadine, op cit, p460. He notes elsewhere "contemporaries in early and mid Victorian England had little doubt that their largest towns were segregated".

2 Considering a different aspect of the urbanisation process, J. Saville in Rural Depopulation (1957) *passim*, notes that railways in the 1830's to 1840's do not initiate migration but strengthen it.

3 Cannadine, op cit, p459.

4 Cannadine, op cit, p460. Ward in turn, uses towns of similar size to illustrate his case.

The result:

... many (landowners) moulded the urbanisation process to suit their own preferences, which were, for the most part, to attract to their estates as permanent, suburban residents, the most important, wealthy and influential people which the town could provide. Thus the residential structure of large English and American cities was different at mid-century. In England, the majority of the rich were already at the periphery: the fundamental shift from 'pre-industrial' to 'modern' had already occurred ...¹

The remainder of the paper explores the use of the private estate development in the English urbanisation process with particular reference to the Edgbaston Estate in south Birmingham.

Northampton's urbanising experience provides an interesting counterpoint to this debate. With a population in the 'old borough' area of 8,400 in 1811, climbing to 26,700 at mid-century and reaching 61,164 in 1900,² the town would, at first sight, appear to fall within Cannadine's small town category. It is clearly a 'walking city', as the reminiscences of an old Northamptonian testify:

... While Northampton town, in relation to the county, was no less important 75 years ago (1882), it was in all material respects much smaller than it is now. The population did not exceed 50,000;³ the area of the borough was so restricted that a good pedestrian could walk from centre to circumference in ten minutes. On the Harborough Road it ended in Kingsthorpe Hollow. To the west and south the river was the boundary. There was no residential area on the Billing Road beyond St. Andrew's Asylum. From the middle of West Street, off Wellingborough Road, a pleasant path across fields led to the isolated and privately owned Abington Park. Off the Kettering Road, houses extended only here and there as far as the racecourse, though beyond it the Kingsley Park suburb was already built ...⁴

Traditionally, as has been shown in Chapter One, Northampton's function had been that of a market and administrative centre; a place for county society to meet socially and transact business. And strong elements of this 'pre-industrial' economy and character remained on the eve of the Great War. M. F. Collins has

1 Cannadine, op cit, p463 and 465. But note he cautions, "this it should be stressed, is only with regard to residential patterns. Clearly, towns such as London and Birmingham retained their 'pre-industrial' economic structure well into the second half of the nineteenth century.

2 For small towns cited by Cannadine see op cit, p459-60.

3 Population of old borough at 1881 Census was 51,881.

4 W. W. Hadley, "Northamptonshire Memories II", N.P. & P. (1957) II, 4, p179.

noted, "Bowley praised the town centre for the 'dignity and leisureliness', 'dead and aliveness', its rivals from Leicester call it, of an ancient county town".¹

Nearly a century earlier, elements of Sjoberg's model can clearly be interpreted as existing in Northampton's townscape. There was a central middle-class residential area, in streets such as Sheep Street, for the town's small, merchant and professional class laid out in the eighteenth century. Close by, in the area of the Drapery and Market Square, was based the central business district accommodating important trading, banking and legal activities, which provided services for the county's gentry and aristocracy.² In contrast, the town's poor lived at the periphery, particularly in crowded courts to the south around Bridge Street, towards the river Nene. V. A. Hatley notes:

... in 1831 the river level slum courtyards which flanked the lower portion of Bridge Street were said to be 'fronted by putrid vegetables and dirt which first invites dirt and then ensures its propagation'. Four persons (here) died of cholera in 1832. When this disease returned in 1849 it claimed 43 victims from the Bridge Street slums, 39 of whom had been living in one block of 103 continuous houses which occupied a space 150 yards by 50 yards ...³

But already at this date, available evidence firmly suggests that this traditional townscape was breaking up under the impetus of economic developments and the influence of landowners' development plans: that development at the periphery had commenced. M. F. Collins, however, views pre 1850 peripheral development as quantitatively small and therefore in a low key. Of building outside the town boundary on extra parochial land of St. Andrews he comments, "this period saw the (early) origin of Northampton's assymetrical growth".⁴ His

1 M. F. Collins, Changes in Land Use in the Borough of Northampton in last 100 years. Unpublished B. Litt. (Oxford 1970) p118, quoting A. L. Bowley: Livelihood and Poverty (1915)

2 See V. A. Hatley, Phoenix in the Drapery (1966), Northampton History Series Pamphlet No. 3.

3 V. A. Hatley, "Some Aspects of Northampton's History 1815-51", N.P. & P. (1965), III, 6, p253.

4 M. F. Collins, op cit, p58. But cf Hatley, op cit, p244. "By 1851 there were 504 occupied houses extra parochial in Northampton": circa 50% of all houses built in Northampton between 1831 and 1851.

implication is that the bulk of development was still within the traditional town area, which in turn strengthens his main thesis that post 1880 urban development occurring after the introduction of the tram system was more revolutionary and 'modern' in character. Of the mid-century he notes:

... by the early 1850's, Northampton was a town of contrasts; already straining to break out of its mediaeval confines, yet not recognisably the Victorian terraced encompassed town ...¹

This assessment, however, fails to take account of the crucially significant qualitative shift in residence patterns which took place. Two forces were operating to bring about this change, as has been stated above: one economic, the other social. It is the reaction to a dynamic local industry, serving more than just a local market, as well as the increasing housing needs of a growing population which initiated urban change. Moreover, it is this which differentiates the town, in terms of the urbanising process, from Exeter, Hertford and the other small towns Cannadine cites.

Collins himself implies that gradually, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the town centre became an increasingly less attractive residential area. Initially, the town centre still had large tracts of open land given over to gardens, orchards and nurseries. As a result of population and economic pressures, radical changes in land usage emerged. Much of this open ground either became built over by 1850 or had been purchased. In 1837, the last land estate in the centre was advertised for sale: it was situated in College Street.² And by 1849, the last remaining large open area was engulfed by the new Midland Railway station.³ Thus, with central areas becoming increasingly crowded and noisy, Northampton's middle class became attracted to the growing stock of modern housing at the edge of town. First, terraced accommodation on roads

1 M. F. Collins, op cit, p66.

2 N.M. 11 February 1837, quoted in M. F. Collins, op cit, p58.

3 M. F. Collins, op cit, p71.

leading from the centre and later semi-detached villas, standing in open ground overlooking open country.

Northampton's housing stock increased by 31.3% between 1811 and 1851.¹ It was not, however, just that more housing was being made available, there was a second force at work; that of social attitudes to the housing environment. Very quickly from the 1830's, in terms of both style and of geographical dispersal, the town's new housing revealed that distinct patterns of social residential segregation had become a present feature, giving rise to a perceived shortage of middle class housing. Of this new social feature Hatley uncritically notes:

... there does not seem to have been a housing shortage in the town at mid-century, except perhaps for middle class persons with limited means at their disposal. A correspondent in the Northampton Mercury, writing in 1851, complained that while there were plenty of 'small cottages, suitable for working men' and a number of 'splendid mansions, with their castellated fronts', there was also a scarcity of medium sized residences with gardens for middle class occupancy. The building of Langham Place, Primrose Hill, (Elysuim Terrace) and Castilian Street during the 1850's and 1860's presumably helped to relieve this deficiency ...²

Thus, as artisan housing was becoming concentrated to the north and east of the central area,³ beyond the town's mediaeval confines in an increasing patchwork of small streets, new exclusively bourgeois housing was erected on streets, or portions of streets on the main road leading north to Kingsthorpe village, as Hatley notes above, and at the eastern periphery of the town. At this early stage, this took the form of discreet development. One is informed that, in the absence of industrial pollution:

1 In 1811 there were 1,600 houses, by 1851, 5,016: an increase of 3,416. (Published census returns 1811 and 1851).

2 V. A. Hatley, op cit, p246: the developments mentioned were of a ribbon periphery nature. The building of Royal Terrace, below Langham Place, took place a little earlier.

3 V. A. Hatley, Ibid, p244: "The development of Northampton to the south and west was inhibited by the proximity of the River Nene, the valley of which was liable to flooding. In addition, much of the land flanking the river (to the south) was subject to right of pasturage exercised by the freemen of the town".

... many fine houses, most of them overlooking the Nene Valley, were built on the eastern suburbs after 1815. Victoria Place dates from 1837, Spencer Parade from circa 1840 and the houses in the south portion of Cheyne Walk (Melbourne Crescent) from the early 1840's ...¹

At the same time the first villas set in spacious grounds of half an acre in extent, were laid out on the north side of Billing Road. In 1845, the local Corporation encouraged this trend by selling an estate south of Billing Road for high class housing, on which a series of large villas set in over an acre of ground were erected. This marked the foundation of the town's premier suburb of Cliftonville. Though never as visually imposing as Edgbaston Park, Birmingham, or The Park, Nottingham; from the first, the social character of the estate was established and maintained by the developers use of covenants in the land conveyances and deeds which carefully circumscribed matters of land usage and the nature of building permitted there.²

By the early 60's an evolving pattern of middle class housing was well established. Concomitant with this process there was an increasing change of function within the central area, which was beginning to take on a more exclusively commercial function. The environs of the central Market Square and the adjoining radial main roads had progressively been given over to retail outlets, offices, hotels and licensed premises and public buildings.³ Other significant portions of the central town area had taken on an industrial character. By the 1890's, the town centre had become an almost purely service area, with little residential property left within the boundaries of the old town walls.⁴

1 Hatley (1965) Ibid. Cheyne Walk was completed by circa 1870.

2 Several Conveyances and Deeds of Covent lodged in N.R.O. provided examples of covenants. For example:

(i) N.R.O./ZA96/46 concerning the Northampton Land Investment and Advance Co. Ltd. estate at Semilong dated c1885.

(ii) N.R.O./ZB87/2L 23 April 1896. Covenant Agreement between E. Royds and H.H.P. Bouverie, and P. Phipps and A. Cockerill. "As to the erection of shoe manufactories" on land formerly part of Delapre Abbey Estate disallowed.

(iii) N.R.O./ZA9134/33 15 November 1894. Copy Deed of Covenant concerning building plots on the Monks Park Estate. The first schedule listed 15 covenants to be observed which ensure character of the lower suburban housing estate.

3 Collins, op cit, p71-73.

4 Collins, Ibid, p97.

In contradistinction to this is observed increased suburban development at the periphery: a process that was to continue well beyond 1914. Much of this housing was for working class occupancy and as this type of accommodation spread around and from the periphery, so middle class housing developments extended outwards towards Kingsthorpe in the north, Abington in the east, Far Cotton to the south and St. James in the west. The beginnings of such suburban development linking Northampton to neighbouring settlements can be noted in the 1860's, becoming more pronounced as the century passes. By the 1890's this evolving pattern of land use was underscored by depopulation of the town's Core, as the suburbs continued to attract population. In 1901 the Northampton boundary extension gave official recognition to this urbanising process.¹ An important point central to the discussion here is that whilst socially segregated housing patterns date from early century, these patterns become more pronounced and complex as the century progresses. Collins remarks:

... The housing built at this time varied greatly in size and quality from the villas of Cliftonville and Cheyne Walk and the larger town houses of Billing Road, Watkin Terrace and the terraces fronting Kingsthorpe Road, to the tightly packed terraces of Semilong and Oak Street ...²

His segregation between working class housing of Semilong and the Oak Street area and that of middle class housing is clear enough. But his journey to work study also implies that at this date, a segregation in housing existed amongst those within the middle class.³ His text, in fact, distinguishes three types of 'higher class housing areas':

- (i) villa housing of Cliftonville, Northampton's premier suburb.
- (ii) town housing.
- (iii) middle class terrace housing: to which can be added the middle class estate developments mentioned above.

1 cf Chapter 1, p 16 et seq.

2 Collins, op cit, p79.

3 Collins, Ibid, p90-91.

We observe this social segregation more sharply two decades later as suburban ribbon development gives way more completely to suburban estate development. Phippsville and Abington Park to the east were of a middle class character,¹ whilst Kingsley Park and Queen's Park to the north were of a mixed, lower middle class character.²

A synthesis of manufacturers' addresses drawn from successive enumerators' returns, directories, and biographical sources, suggests that as the century progresses the locii in which leading manufacturers can be found, shifts as new suburbs are built, new areas become fashionable and as new factory developments move eastwards away from the centre. The old inner suburbs, however, only gradually lost their appeal: some older manufacturers remained, as did Frederick Bostock senior in Sheep Street, whilst rising manufacturers occupy once fashionable terraces such as Langham Place. M. F. Collins journey to work analysis reveals two particular concentrations in the early 1870's.³ In terrace housing skirting Barrack Road - Kingsthorpe Road,⁴ and in town houses along the Billing Road. To some marked degree after this date the former declined in popularity whilst Billing Road and in particular Cliftonville's appeal increased amongst the elite. Houses here were spacious and grander in design and pretension when compared with other localities in the town.

The initial development of the Billing Road area dates from circa 1840. In 1845, the local Corporation encouraged this trend by selling an estate south of Billing Road for "high class housing on which a series of large villas were

1 Pevsner, op cit, p343 describes Phippsville as "to the east of Kettering Road a spacious well-to-do suburb built up slowly from the 1880's in a variety of styles".

2 cf Chapter One p 26

3 M. F. Collins, op cit, p91 et seq.

4 Similar housing was found on other main roads, principally Spencer Parade and Waterloo: see M. F. Collins, op cit, p100.

erected".¹ The detached houses here were substantially built with every modern comfort and were set in secluded ornamental grounds ranging from half to one acre, which provided extensive rural vistas across the Nene Valley. Surprisingly few written records of these houses in this suburb are extant but auction sales literature dating from the 1880's provides a valuable insight. Typical of these early villas was 'Springfield', the first to be completed; the one time home of T. D. Lewis and of Frederick Bostock junior. In 1889 the following description was given: it was a large seven bedroomed residence with bathrooms and dressing-rooms; there were three ample reception rooms, in addition to a study, billiard room, cellars, servants' hall and conservatory; the acre of grounds were complete with terracing, flower garden, kitchen garden and by the 1880's, a tennis court. There was also a large area of glass, which included vineries, peach houses, cucumber house and cold frames; in addition the property boasted stabling, a coach house and outhouses.² Like so many exclusive Victorian suburbs, the social character of Cliftonville was almost certainly consciously shaped and maintained by the legal means of inserting covenants in land conveyances that carefully circumscribed matters of land usage and the nature of building allowed on building plots.³

To some degree this social character was modified in the early 1880's by the laying-out of the Avenue, where the houses were less imposing than Springfield.⁴ With the development of modern factories from circa 1890 in St. James to the west of the old town, a similar suburb was developed in Dallington.

1 Collins, op cit, p59.

2 N.P.L. Sales Catalogues dated November 1889.

3 These devices were used by a Northampton land development company in other parts of the town: see Northampton Estates and Improvement Corporation Ltd. BT31/16312/64472. One of the directors was John Ellard, shoe manufacturer, who in the 1872 Return of Owners of Land was recorded as the owner of 49 acres in the town.

4 This is revealed by Sales Catalogues dating from the 1890's.

Pevsner notes that many prosperous houses were laid out from c1885 along the main Harlestone Road,¹ but the areas premier address was The Avenue.²

By contrast, manufacturers of a lesser stature took up residence in the estate developments, discussed above and by the period around the Great War the Abington Avenue area appears to have been particularly favoured.

XI

The foregoing study of the Northampton elite, therefore, lends support to recent historical research findings in two important ways.

An earlier portion of this thesis established that the elite played a dominant role in industrial change and what, initially, this chapter adds to that picture is that this progressive spirit was significantly engendered from within established firms founded in the transitional period and in some cases even earlier. What is revealed here is that despite the high number of business starts in the shoe industry, it was hereditary leadership, a continuity of control, that rose to the challenge of change. These firms stand in sharp contrast to the inability of many to survive and adapt to business life in the long term. And, moreover, despite the crucial presence of dynamic new generation firms, many of their founders came from manufacturing/small master families and received both financial and other assistance from family and business associates. As well as gaining entrepreneurial experience in some cases before setting up in business, elite firms in Northampton also reveal a middle, albeit of lower middle, class composition amongst principals. Only seven of 83 known controllers of elite firms can positively be identified as coming from SOCIALLY humble origins, as opposed to financially restrained backgrounds. (By contrast, 59%

1 Pevsner, op cit, p357: Charles Lewis occupied Naylands House and Edward Lewis, Oaklands. The latter's papers and plans concerning the construction of this house are extant (N.R.O. Lewis Papers, Acc. 1978/121).

2 For a description of its upmarket image see N.I. 28 February 1936 pl7. In 1914 J. H. C. Crockett lived at The Lodge and Simon Collier at Thornbank.

of the elite came from a manufacturing/trading family background, with a further 8% from other business backgrounds.) Thus, whilst the great preponderance of ALL Northampton's shoe manufacturers rose from the seat, the social origins of elite manufacturers stands in stark contrast to this.

Clearly all within the elite can be regarded as being successful, even if in some cases the word must be applied in its broader sense. Yet their achievement was not bounded purely by industrial endeavour. Although substantially parochial in outlook and not as wealthy nor as powerful as many elite groups, Northampton's leading manufacturers reveal very similar behavioural patterns as elite business groups in other parts of the country. Almost 74% were found to exercise some marked degree of influence, as opposed merely to membership, in local political and social power structures and institutions, whilst many elements combined to express the cohesion and separate character of this elite as a social group. In addition to this, by 1914 the elite had developed a clearly discernible social persona and this was most forcefully revealed by distinct patterns of residential location.

Finally, this rising social mobility and exclusivity was most pointedly revealed by the absorption of leading figures within the elite into local landed society. This social process was at once motivated by a need for social acceptance, as well as a pursuit of power. Although only a quantitatively minor trend, its qualitative impact upon the social character of the elite was nevertheless important. Current writing on this issue in other industries shows that this represents a flight from business which triggers decline within the firm. Such a view is not entirely substantiated in this account. Rather, it might be more accurate to say that there occurred a flight towards landed status and society. In all cases, the business left behind had to be sufficiently secure to fund such a new life style. Discounting that this gentrification represents an early phase of degeneration within shoe gentry firms, the available evidence shows that members of this small group maintained some level of active engagement in business and made adequate provision to

ensure future development within their firms by leaving competent managers in charge. In all cases, those managers appear unlike Hobsbawm's uncaring model. Some were rewarded by being treated as members of the manufacturers' extended family, whilst others went on to occupy central positions of importance in the shoe industry: for example G. Webb and S. J. Davis.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

If it is possible, or indeed desirable, to segregate local affairs from the general sweep of national history, then in one important sense this thesis purports to be no more than an extended exercise in local history. As such, the foregoing account stands as a detailed appraisal of how small producers in a major light consumer industry at a principal shoe centre faced change. Yet, it can be argued that this thesis does have a wider, methodological utility to historians generally. The study of light consumer industries in Britain have received relatively less attention when compared with the larger export staple sector that is perceived as having forged Britain's industrial position in the world economy prior to 1914. This is in part due to our perception of what is a fitting area of study; our central focus upon the mechanics of progress and of economic growth. Recently, however, several historians have begun to point to the weaknesses of such a concentrated vision: a departure which this thesis adopts and endorses. Yet, even with our perception altered by the recent work of C. H. Wilson, G. J. Crossick, C. Lee and others, a fundamental barrier remains. In the almost complete absence of small producer business records, what documentary evidence can be utilised to penetrate the experience and attitudes of these manufacturers? It is in this matter, that it is hoped that the approach and sources used in this thesis will provide some insight and assist the further study of small producers in Britain.

Inevitably, in a relatively new area of study, it is too early to claim that the conclusions reached here about shoe manufacturers will have a wider applicability to small producers elsewhere. Nevertheless, the conclusions that have been reached can stand as an interim statement as to the reaction of small producer industries to change.

And four main areas of conclusion can be drawn from this case study. First, that industrialisation was a long discontinuous process comprising three

discernible, yet interlinking periods, each of which called forth a different response from their industry. The initial period witnessed a growth in market demand that was met by the adoption of radically new production methods. In this, machine introduction was very much a secondary theme to the refinement of the existing outwork structure. There was an extensive growth of production units, with an increased reliance placed by wholesale manufacturers upon small master sub-contractors and component manufacturers. As important at this time, however, was the radically new developments in methods of distribution through which the wholesale industry came to dominate the domestic markets for footwear. The crucial turning point for the industry occurred in 1887 at the beginning of the second phase of change, which witnessed a machine revolution. A confluence of factors, which can be summed up as intensifying competition and rising factor costs, gave rise to a commitment amongst best practice firms to centralise production; a decision that signalled the partial eclipse of small masters within the industry. The inability of manufacturers to wrest control of the work-place from the shoe worker retarded the attainment of this goal in the short term. It was only the resolution of this conflict between master and man in 1895, linked to continued pressure on profitability, that led to the onset of the third and last phase: the organisational revolution. By 1905, a factory based industry for the production of volume footwear was a reality.

Yet there was no orderly, progressive concentration of capital; the second point of conclusion. For whilst machine-made volume footwear comprised the largest proportion of total production, Chapter Seven makes clear that the range of footwear markets that persisted in this country gave rise to a variety of production and distribution strategies. The character of British shoe markets was such that speciality shoe production enabled, albeit a reduced number of smaller manufacturers to profitably pursue alternative production and marketing strategies. Clearly, a wide spectrum of business experience continued to dominate the industry and continued to attract small masters into the trade.

This comment leads to the third conclusion. The shoe business community retained a heterogeneous and unstable characterisation through the period. What the evidence reveals is a sharply contrasting picture of notable individual success, tempered by the much more common experience of a short, frequently precarious business life, terminated by failure. Failure was as much part of business life as success and, as such, deserves to be chronicled. This study of the Victorian entrepreneur adds a new dimension to our perception of late nineteenth century business life. The extended treatment of failure above shows that business failure in the shoe industry was operating at three levels:

(i) Trade cycle failure. Here domino failure emerges as a particular feature, which highlights leather firms' financial hold over small masters.

(ii) Endemic failure caused by normal trading pressures. Such failures were particularly found to concern infant firms, 60 % of whom failed within five years of commencing trading. For many, the avoidance of failure in these early years was their main pre-occupation. The prevalence of high mortality rates in the small asset range is probably the most significant fact revealed. These enterprises were short lived and this constant stream of deaths and replacements seems to be directly associated with small capital and the ease with which these small enterprises could be started and abandoned. Such firms were found to have no defined strategy toward trading save that of raw survival. The trading pressures they encountered can be summarised as:- credit problems; the problems of establishing a market and questions of personal business skills and knowledge. By contrast, it was found that mature firms developed a degree of immunity against failure, that was only breached by a management hiatus or some other form of atrophy.

(iii) Technological failure. Here the shake-out of firms in the wake of change was investigated. Not only did potential entrants decide against commencing trading, but old-established unable to cope with modern methods were observed to fail.

Yet failure does not summarise all manufacturers' experience of trading. A fourth point of conclusion is that a small number, when compared with the large numbers who entered the industry, conducted their business over time with varying levels of success. A group whose experience has been given particular prominence in the above text is, of course, the small dominant elite of firms. This group was comprised of established firms predating 1887 that reveal what is called here responsible family ownership; patterns of good business practice that stand in sharp contrast to those who failed. In addition, there were new generation firms under dynamic founder control. Of an oligopolistic character, these firms increasingly dominated volume production within the industry, although the continuance of variety production ensured that efficient smaller manufacturers had a continued role. Most were family firms, but it can be argued from available evidence that there was no family drag upon business activities. These firms were able to strike a balance between business decisions and family commitments and aspirations. It was found that such firms were able to negotiate external trading pressures, family pressures and internal frictions and hiatuses. Finally, it was noted that most of the elite were of middle class origin and not ex-shoe workers. Nevertheless, an upward social mobility within middle class ranks across generations can be detected. At its most developed, this mobility took the form of a shift into county society, whilst for most the seeking of social approbation took the form of a dominance of town society and politics.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SMALL
MASTER ECONOMY IN THE BOOT AND SHOE
INDUSTRY 1887-1914 : WITH SPECIAL
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APPENDIX ONE: CORRECTED DIRECTORY ANALYSIS: A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE.

As has been noted in Chapter Three, firms in the shoe industry are popularly characterised, firstly by their high mortality and rapid turnover and secondly by their heterogeneous nature. Previous historians of the industry have tended to make these points without exploring the implications that are present. However, as Chapter Three reveals, several important questions are raised by such statements that form the basis of an investigation of a business community. By using the C.D.A. as a basic research tool, it is possible to look at shoe manufacturers with a fresh eye and reveal an important insight into the internal structure of the group over time.¹

In order to substantiate the first point, above, it is necessary to establish a data base and to achieve this, lists of shoe manufacturers, sub-contractors and others were utilised from Northampton's local commercial directories. In providing an adequate picture of movement in industry group and sub-group memberships, over time recourse was made to the literature of American directory studies conducted in the inter-war period,² to the commentaries on the utilisation of English directories.³ These sources provided a methodological base and the techniques found in that literature were modified to render the

1 See E. P. Duggan, "Industrialisation and the Development of Urban Business Communities". Local Historian (1975) 11 p457/65 and particularly at p464 where he notes "Much conceptual work also remains. We must develop more articulate questions to understand why business thrived or starved historically in particular environments and most importantly how they interacted with those environments in their daily operations". Note also the possible questions that Duggan sees arising from a directory analysis.

2 See particularly E. D. McGarry, Mortality in the Retail Trade (1930).

3 D. Page "Commercial Directories and Market Towns", Local Historian (1974) 11 p85/88; E. P. Duggan loc.cit; P. Wilde "The Use of Business Directories in comparing the Industrial Structure of Towns", Local Historian (1976) 12 p152/56; G. Shaw, "The Content and Reliability of Nineteenth Century Trade Directories", Local Historian (1978) 13 p205/09; G. Timmins, "Measuring Industrial Growth from Trade Directories", Local Historian (1979) 13 p349/52.

Northampton directories comparable over time. What follows, therefore, provides a resume of the technique employed here; its limitations and the methodological problems encountered in executing the study.

In essence the technique is one of comparing the sub-group lists found in successive directories. However, because of the irregular periods between directories and the different publishers issuing directories, it was found necessary to modify, amend and supplement the information found there. The analysis was undertaken in the following way:

- (i) Each Northampton trade directory between 1840 and 1914 was isolated and listed. Photocopies of the trade section relating to the shoe industry were obtained.
 - (ii) Data was then abstracted from these lists for each firm:
 - (a) An index card was assigned to each firm.
 - (b) Each card was assigned to one of the sub-groups. If a firm appeared in more than one sub-group, separate cross-referenced cards were raised.
 - (c) The following data was recorded: name, address, year of directory entry.
 - (d) Ancillary information culled from a diversity of sources was then extensively used to overcome the possible deficiencies of directories, which has been raised by a number of historians.¹
 - (iii) These cards were then subjected to an aggregate analysis, to provide information on entry and exit patterns of the sub-groups over time.²
- These results appear in the text at Chapter Three.

¹ On directories generally in our period see C. Erickson op cit p221: for earlier period, J. E. Norton, Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales - published before 1856 (1950) and G. Shaw loc.cit, particularly at p207/09: on Northampton directories particularly, M. F. Collins op.cit. p99.

² The work of E. D. McGarry (1930) op.cit. was taken as the basis of the analyses carried out in this thesis.

- (iv) Certain methodological problems arose.¹
- (a) The accuracy and reliability of directories.² This was surmounted by cross-referring to other sources as at (ii)(d).
- (b) Double-counting, as a result of name changes, amalgamations, was eliminated as far as was possible.³
- (c) Gaps in publication dates⁴ and different publishers meant that a carry-over technique was employed. Thus if a firm appeared in directories for 1884 and 1889 but not in 1886, it was presumed there was a continuity of trading unless documentary proof to the contrary was found. A suspension of trading followed by an immediate resumption was counted as one firm. Multiple starts by a manufacturer where there were periods between trading counted as separate companies.
- (d) A number of firms were included in the C.D.A. that did not appear in any directory. These were culled from other sources at (ii)(d).
- (e) Where two existing companies amalgamate, or where a partnership is dissolved and each partner begins again on his own account, these were treated as separate companies. Where a firm changes its membership over time, but an essential thread of continuity is present, then this study treats that as one company.
- (f) What exit means in a C.D.A. context. It is the last directory reference or ancillary information reference. This has been chosen in preference to the more unsatisfactory measure of counting the next directory date as the point of exit. The reasons for this decision are:
- (i) Ancillary information reveals that generally a firm exits within 12 months of the last directory reference.
- (ii) Methodologically, unequal publishing dates would cause problems. Nevertheless, there is an unavoidable residual error with some exits being cast into the wrong five year period for analytical purposes. This error is presumed to be sufficiently small as not to destroy the trends revealed by the analysis.

1 See particularly G. Timmins, loc cit; where he offers timely warnings about analytical technique in the use of directories.

2 See G. Shaw loc.cit.

3 See G. Timmins loc.cit.

4 A crucial problem to resolve is the presence of gaps between successive entries. It was resolved by the extensive use of ancillary information.

APPENDIX 11: THE 1914 CORE GROUP.

This group is composed of those firms trading continuously through the period. The basis of the listing for this group is a measure of each firm's weekly production capability: the nominal output capacity. This data is derived from G. B. Butnam, Shoe and Leather Trade in the U.K. (1912), special agent's series number 49, U.S. Government Department of Commerce and Labour page 76. A process of evaluation using the biographical sources available, was then imposed that subsequently amended the initial ranking to provide the list below. This, for example, accounts for H. E. Randall Limited's high position in relation to the pairage produced: like some other elite firms, Randall used sub-contracting to supply merchandise and was a prominent wholesale retailer.

C 1	C. & E. Lewis	C14	George Green & Sons (Northampton) Ltd
C 2	Crockett & Jones	C15	Hornby & West Ltd
C 3	Manfield & Sons	C16	R. Taylor & Son
C 4	H. E. Randall Ltd	C17	Allinson & Company
C 5	F. Bostock & Company Ltd	C18	T. Singlehurst & Son
C 6	G. T. Hawkins	C19	W. B. Stevens & Company
C 7	John Marlow & Sons Ltd	C20	Pollard & Son
C 8	A. & W. Church & Company	C21	C. F. Tompkins & Company
C 9	J. Dawson & Sons	C22	Conformable Boot Company Ltd
C10	Simon Collier Ltd	C23	R. Fisher & Company
C11	J. Robinson & Company	C24	J. Emmett Ltd
C12	G. M. Tebbutt & Sons Ltd	C25	G. H. Kendall & Son
C13	Crick & Company		

C.1: C. & E. LEWIS

Charles & Edward Lewis entered partnership in a small way of business in 1880 as retail shoemakers. They had a small shop in St. James with workshop premises nearby: some six men were employed.¹ Within a short while the increased scale of wholesale orders led to the cessation of their retailing activities. The company now rose to be one of the dominant forces in the Edwardian wholesale trade. This company played a significant role in defeating the strong foreign competition in the trade at this time. As one commentator noted:

(This).. business is one of the romances of the shoe trade. From small beginnings, Edward and his brothers have built up the present great progressive works which now ranks amongst the largest and most successful in the country ..²

In 1904, it was stated that in "each year they have been in business the output has advanced 50%".³ At this time 30/40,000 pairs were in production at any one time and circa 5,000 hides consumed weekly. The main factory employed 800 with a further 1,200 deriving a living from the operations of the firm.⁴ Such a rapid expansion meant that they had to change premises frequently. Initially, a warehouse in Whitford's Yard, then one in Tanner Square was utilised; then one in Green Street. A move to Byfield Terrace and Gregory Street followed, additional accommodation in Chalk Lane, then Doddridge Street being taken in quick succession. In 1889 their younger brother Thomas D. Lewis, entered the partnership. By 1895 the first part of what was to become the Progressive Shoe Works was erected in Marlborough Road, St. James. A single floor, purpose-built factory, it occupied a

1 B.S.T.J. 27/1/05 p115.

2 N.I. 3/12/27 p19. cf S.T.J. 20/10/22 p101. "The modern history of the trade has few more notable instances of enterprising progress than that of C. & E. Lewis".

3 B.S.T.J. 6/6/02 p832.

4 B.S.T.J. Ibid.

large green field site. Extensions followed in 1899, 1900 and 1901, by which time it had become one of the largest Midland boot factories. In 1904/05 a fifth major extension increased the floor space to 83,000 square feet and 284 machines were run by three gas engines generating 175 h.p.: both electric light and telephone system had been installed.¹ By 1908, 1,200 workers were employed and nominal output was placed at 15,000 pairs. Also, by this time a large wholesale warehouse was occupied in Liverpool and a branch factory at Towcester.² In circa 1911 other factory premises in Greenwood Road, St. James, were brought into use. The firm had become one of the dominant forces in the shoe industry.

The two founders and their younger brothers were primarily responsible for this rapid development. However, early this century, younger members of the family were being introduced into the management structure and more will be said of this below:

.. there are other and younger members of the firm following the good example of their sires and taking their share in the management of the business ..³

This rapid development was rooted in their practical skills and business acumen displayed by the partners. As a journalist concluded they "were all practical men with common-sense and progressive attitudes to production".⁴ Production was geared to volume batch production of a few good selling lines, rather than the established shoe industry custom of producing whatever the customer required. Nevertheless, something of a specialty was made of canvas footwear and of sportswear, which were made from material prepared at the company's own tannery and leather dressing departments. As pure wholesale manufacturers they relied upon product

1 B.S.T.J. 27/1/05 p117.

2 N.M. 2/12/27 p1.

3 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p552.

4 S.T.J. 20/10/22 p101.

quality, customer recognition of their footwear through branding and an effective marketing network. Yet, above all, success was based upon keen pricing: "Both at home and abroad they are appreciated for their honest, sterling qualities and splendid value."¹ Economy in production meant that they were able to combine cheapness and durability with style.² Both medium and high grade work was executed with an emphasis placed upon the 'Walkalong' range, described as the "range of guinea styles at half-guinea prices", and the 'Monarch' range, a complete line at the uniform price of 13s. 6d. Other prominent Lewis brands were 'Progressive', 'Phitwell' and 'Compliable'. Both an extensive home and foreign trade was cultivated with special lines prepared for South Africa, New Zealand and Egypt. Charles, the eldest brother and senior partner, was born at St. James, Northampton, in 1855, the son of George.³ Little is known of his early life in the trade, although he was probably trained by his father. Clearly at some point he had worked as a commercial traveller. One obituary fulsomely acknowledged that he was:

.. bred in the hard, practical school and with ripe experience on the road. .. (He) had a wonderful grasp of the boot business and its essentials ..⁴

A quiet, unassuming and shrewd man, his was the driving force behind the firm's success. In the early years he undertook much of the travelling and subsequently took charge of factory supervision and sales. In time he assumed sole charge of production and despatch in order that his two brothers might enter public life. Nevertheless, he was active in political and

1 B.S.T.J. op cit.

2 B.S.T.J. 23/7/98 p116.

3 George Lewis an expert hand-stitchman, born at Haverford West in 1832. His craft skill was much respected in Northampton. He was a founder member of the West End Industrial Coop. Society founded in 1870 and one of its first auditors. He died on 4/7/97 at his home, 6 Argyle Street, St. James End: Effects £31. George married a daughter of the 'widow Flavell', a well known Northampton Quaker.

4 S.T.J. 20/10/22 p101.

religious matters. For many years he was president of both the Daventry Divisional Liberal Association and the St. James Liberal and Radical Association. He was prominent in the movement to establish a school board in the suburbs of St. James in the nineties. In 1917 he was made a J.P. on the county bench. An ardent Primitive Methodist, he was for over 50 years a scholar, teacher and subsequently secretary of the Horsemarket Chapel, Northampton. A local obituary stressed his characteristic loyalty and humility:

.. kept Charles a member of a down-town church; it kept him in touch with the friends of his boyhood and early manhood: it won him a place in the hearts of his friends ..¹

He also served as circuit steward and in 1918, was made vice president of the Methodist (Primitive) Connexion: the highest lay position in the denomination. He was a trustee of many of Northampton's religious buildings, took an active interest in many church charities and served on several committees at both local and district level. A keen temperance advocate, he was president of the local Band of Hope.² He was a trustee and director of the Northampton County Building Society. A man ever proudly conscious of his humble working class origins, Charles commanded the loyalty and 'real love' of his workforce. He took a special interest in industrial relations matters and welfare schemes; Lewis' Benevolent Fund was one of the first set up in the trade. A range of welfare and sports facilities were introduced at the factory, to assist the sick, retired and those in straitened circumstances.³ In frail health for some years, he died at Bauff, Scotland, on 16th October 1922 one of the trades most respected figures. His home was at Nayland House,

1 N.M. 20/10/22 p9.

2 S.T.J. 20/10/22 loc cit.

3 This was clearly an attitude shared by the partners for an obituary (N.I. 3/12/27 p19) says of Edward that he was a straight-forward and philanthropic employer. "As an employer he looked for a good worker for good pay".

Harlestone Road, Northampton; a substantial residence he had specially commissioned some years earlier. He was survived by his widow and two sons, James Thomas and John, who entered the family business. This will was proved at £217,822 8s. 11d.

Edward was born at Northampton in 1861 and was educated locally at St. James School. First employed on the land (age 10), he quickly entered the shoe trade initially with Cove & West. He then served a five year apprenticeship as a clicker and pattern cutter, before entering business, briefly as a sole proprietor and subsequently in partnership with his elder brother when still only 19. Two years previously he won the first prize in shoe design and pattern cutting at a competition organised by the Northampton Sunday School Union.

Despite his apparent retiring disposition, his life was characterised by immense public service and philanthropy. Like some other manufacturers,¹ he expressed the sentiment that such civil duties provided a necessary balance to the considerable wealth and position he had generated from the town's staple trade. Quite clearly by the early twentieth century his position as a leading manufacturer and local politician were sufficiently secure for him to be able to carry out these duties with impartial vigour:-

.. He is a man of transparent sincerity and though of a really modest and retiring disposition, he never hesitates to fight firmly for any cause which he deems to be right. Being well off, he can indulge in the luxury of speaking his mind without fear or favour ..²

Edward was first elected a Liberal councillor to the old St. James U.D.C. in 1892 and subsequently represented the suburb on the Northampton Town Council for many years from the time when St. James was absorbed into the Borough in

1 See, for example, Sir J. H. C. Crockett (qv).

2 N.I. 5/12/08 p11. At this time he had just pioneered through the town council controversial new bye-laws which restricted the employment of children. Throughout the lengthy debate on this matter he explained his case with "intense earnestness". A politician who shunned expediency, in later years he opposed Lloyd George's coalition, taking an independent line.

1900. A popular councillor, he was frequently returned at the head of the poll, being twice unopposed. He served on numerous committees and was chairman of the Watch Committee for many years. His personality was firmly stamped upon his mayoralty in 1903/04: the annual Mayor's Banquet was cancelled, the money being used to alleviate the prevailing distress in the town caused by trade depression and the mayor's lunches became teetotal, with ladies being invited to attend for the first time.¹ He was for many years the leader of the Liberal Party locally, being at one time president of the County's Liberal Association and its chairman for thirty years, in addition to being chairman of the Northampton Liberal and Radical Association from 1909. Edward also served on the Executive Committee of the Midland Liberal Federation and was for many years their delegate to the National Liberal Federation.

Inevitably shoe trade matters claimed his attention. He was a past president of both the local Manufacturers' Association and of the Commercial Travellers' Association, in addition to being a supporter of technical education in the trade. His other interests included a directorship in F. T. Tebbett Ltd., a local shoe firm.² His prominence in a range of local institutions should, likewise, not escape attention. He was at some time the president of the local Y.M.C.A., Boys Brigade,³ Cymrie Society and Old Cambrian Society. He was a long standing director of the Northampton Town and County Building Society, at one time its president and chairman of directors in 1923 when the society became incorporated. A past president of the Northampton District of National Deposit Friendly Societies, he served as the Honorary Deputy Commissioner of the International Order of Good Templars. A generous friend

1 He was a magistrate for the Borough in 1908.

2 BT 31/13547/114665 cf B.S.T.J. 24/3/11 p511.

3 He was leader of one of the first Boys Brigade Companies formed in the town at the Doddridge Church.

of the local hospital, he was vice-president and honorary treasurer of its Hospital Week Fund, in addition to serving on the Board of Management and many other committees and being president of the Consumption Sanatorium.

Like his brothers, his was a devoutly religious life. He took a deep interest in the affairs of the Doddridge Memorial Congregational Church. A deacon from 1899, he was superintendent of the Sunday School for many years. In 1917 he gave property to the church, and later five almshouses. A gift of £1,000 was provided to improve village churches. In 1903 he was elected president of the county's Sunday School Union and subsequently fulfilled a similar position for both the county's Congregational Association and its Federation of Free Church Councils.

He married a daughter of George Leach of Northampton and had issue one son (George), who entered the firm and two daughters. His later years were marred by heart trouble. He died at his home, "Oaklands", Harlestone Road, Dallington, Northampton, on 30th November 1927. He left personal effects to the value of £247,015 3s. 10d.

The youngest brother, Thomas Davies Lewis, was born at St. James in 1870. Educated locally, he joined his brothers upon leaving school, being made a partner in 1889. He, too, immersed himself in local civic and religious life. Possibly greatly influenced by Edward, at various times in a long public life he can be observed to succeed his elder brother. At the time of the Education Act controversy in 1900 he became the president of the St. James Education League and expedited the erection of Council Schools in the suburb. Election to the local Board of Guardians followed. A Liberal politically, he became a member of the Duston U.D.C. in 1907 and a year later was elected to the Northampton Town Council.¹ He was quickly elected to the Highways, Water and Small-holdings Committees and later served as chairman of the Tramways Committee. In 1923 he became mayor and was made a J.P. for the Borough. He

¹ In 1912 J. V. Collier (qv) unsuccessfully served a writ for slander upon Thomas, following an angry exchange during which Thomas claimed that Collier had profited from his position as a Councillor.

retired from the Council in 1941 due to failing health. He was a devoted worker for the Congregational Cause. For 50 years he was president of the Young Men's Bible Class at the Doddridge Church. He succeeded Edward as president of the Sunday School Union there, and from 1912 until his death, was the treasurer and a deacon of the church. He also served on the Executive Committee of the Northamptonshire Congregational Association. Voluntary work at Northampton hospital also claimed his attention, being one time vice president of the Board of Management. He was a founder and later president of the Bethany Homestead. In his younger years he was a local cricketer of note.

In 1897 he married Catherine, daughter of John Adams of Northampton, and had issue one son, (Harry George) and two daughters. His last years were marred by failing health, although he retained an active role in the daily management of the firm, of which he was senior partner from 1927, until the day he died. He died following a heart attack, at his residence 'Springfield', The Avenue, Dallington, Northampton, on 17th June 1944.

His personal effects were valued at £245,531 4s. 5d.

Clearly, the strong nonconformist and Liberal sentiments inherited from their parents underpinned the psyche of all three brothers and pervaded their management style and their public life. The firm was noted for its straightforward, honest but vigorous trading regime. A strong view of philanthropic welfarism permeated labour relations, as the development of an employees' pension fund and generous fringe benefits at the factory prior to 1914 testifies. A local oral tradition remains, which tells of the way in which the brothers used the Doddridge Church as a recruiting ground for their foremen.¹

1 Some documentary evidence possibly supports this. e.g. the obituary notice of Enoch Jeason (1866-1949) ex foreman of Lewis' marketing dept. to 1934 in N.I. 9/9/49 p9 gives the following information: Born at Oldbury, Staffs, he spent most of his life in Northampton. He joined C. & E. Lewis in the early 80's. An ardent methodist worker and Sunday School superintendent, he was also a Temperance Friendly Society worker, having been the founder of the Palmerston Lodge of Foresters. A keen sportsman, he was one of the founders and playing members of the Saints Rugby Football Club: cricket and bowls likewise attracted him. A widower for 12 years he was survived by a son, Albert W. Jeason.

Contemporaries stress that though they made money quickly they were not socially ostentatious, but that the same sense of public duty convinced them of the need to 'put something back', gave rise to 'giving freely to good causes'.¹ Conscious then of the need to endow their community, the brothers engaged in many acts of public philanthropy, but undoubtedly their single largest act was the presentation of Dallington Park to the town in 1921 for recreation purposes. The 23 acre parkland and hall was formerly the residence of Viscount Althorp. In 1920 he had given the hall to Northampton General Hospital as a convalescent home; the brothers' benefaction followed Althorp's public call for someone to provide finance for the parkland to be presented to the public.²

The succession of the firm was secured in the first half of the twentieth century by the admission of the brothers' sons into the partnership. By the Edwardian period Charles' sons, John and James Thomas and Edward's son George, were thus actively involved in the firm's management. Thomas' only son, Harry George, entered the firm after the Great War. Unlike many leading footwear concerns in Britain, Lewis' was to remain a purely family partnership until incorporation in 1947. The business merger with the Saxone Shoe Company Ltd. dates from this time and a spread of control outside the family becomes observable.

Addendum

(1) John Lewis (1882 - 1951)

Son of Charles, born at Northampton and educated at the Grammar School. His working life was spent in the family firm, of which he was first a partner and subsequently a director. Also director of W. E. & J. Peabody, tanners of Olney and chairman of Cuthberts Ltd. shoe manufacturers of South Africa. He served in France in the Great War. He did not enter public life. He

1 N.I. 5/12/08 p11.

2 N.I. 9/7/21 p22 cf N.I. 15/11/24 p11.

died at his residence 29 Abington Park Crescent, Northampton, on 26th November 1951 and was survived by his widow, two sons, (James and John) and three daughters. Effects: £52,882 2s. 4d.

(2) Henry George (Harry) (1898 - 1960).

A native of Northampton and only son of Thomas D. Lewis. Educated at Mill Hill School and served in the South Nottinghamshire Hussars during the Great War, prior to entering the family firm as a partner and subsequently director. He was also a director of Saxone Shoe Company Ltd.¹ A bachelor, he had a variety of interests, including being vice president of the County Cricket Club and treasurer of the Doddridge Church after his father's demise. He was also a past president of the local manufacturers' association. He died at his residence 'Springfield', The Avenue, Dallington, (which he shared with his two sisters and cousin George) on 11th August 1960.

Effects: £163,086 16s. 7d.

(3) George Lewis

Chairman of C. & E. Lewis Ltd. and of Jacksons Ltd. by 1950. He also served on the board of Saxone Shoe Company Ltd. and W. E. & J. Peabody in which Lewis's had an interest. He was a member of the Institute of Directors. A Northampton man, he was for many years a J.P. and served as Deputy Lieutenant. He was a director of the British Legion Disabled Man's Industries. In 1957, he resided at 'Avalon', 15 The Drive, Dallington.²

1 Directory of Directors 1947

2 Directory of Directors 1947/57

C.2: CROCKETT & JONES.

The firm was founded in 1879 by J.H.C. Crockett and his brother in law, Charles Jones, "apparently on the strength of two £100 loans from the trustees of the Sir Thomas White Charity".¹ They began trading in a small way from two converted artisan cottages breached into one at Exeter Road. From that time they "made such rapid strides in boot and shoe manufacturing and left an impression upon shoe trade history".² By 1884 they occupied a factory in Carey Street, which had a production capacity of 400 to 500 pairs per week. To accommodate increasing trade a new, purpose-built factory was erected in what was then a green field site at Magee Street: it was occupied in late 1890. At this stage outworkers were still employed in significant numbers, although the firm was one of the first in Northampton to employ closers on the premises.³ In the nineties several large extensions were quickly added and adjacent factories purchased: the first being that of Garratt Brothers in Turner Street. The beginning of the century witnessed major changes in the firm's organisation as a result of the death in 1902, of Charles Jones. Born in 1851 at Irchester, the son of George, a native of Wellingborough, he lived in Northampton from the age of one. He was apprenticed to a shoemaker. Little is known of his activities prior to starting in partnership with Crockett. He devoted much energy and application to the business and was also known for his membership of the Northampton Arbitration Board.⁴ A popular man with a large circle of friends, he led an active public life. From the age of 18 he was prominently connected with The Ancient Order Of Foresters and for 20 years was a trustee of the local Court Pride of the Swan. A staunch nonconformist, he was

1 V. A. Hatley, Northants. P. & P. (1980) V1 3 p164 quoted from SL.N. 31/5/79.

2 B.S.T.J. op cit 25/6/09 p579.

3 B.S.T.J. 1/11/90 p446.

4 B.S.T.J. 1/8/02 p134.

associated with the Doddridge Chapel when young, but as an adult was a constant attender of the Kettering Road Primitive Methodist Chapel. Politically an advanced Radical, he was a former member of the Old Radical Three Hundred. As a member of the Executive of the Northampton Liberal and Radical Association he was on the Bradlaugh Memorial Committee in 1891.¹ In the last years of his life his long standing illness, anaemia, had forced him to curtail first his public life and in the last twelve months his business commitments. After being confined to bed for a month, he died at home, 'Ravenswood', 20 East Park Parade, on 23rd July 1902. He married Annie Marchall Crockett and had issue seven daughters and three sons. His eldest son, Frank (qv) followed him into the business. His effects were valued at £21,837 2s. 1d.

After Charles death, a new partnership deed was agreed between James, two of his sons - Harry and Frederick, and Frank Jones. Under this management the company's former development was maintained and it became one of the leading progressive wholesale houses of the Edwardian period. The younger partners played an important role in this sustained growth:

.. the younger members of the firm having shown their mettle in the rapid progress the₂ firm continues to make and by the increased trade which has been done ..

However, James role was central in this process, for by this time he had become regarded as "a man of outstanding ability and greatly esteemed in the shoe manufacturing trade".³

In step with other purely wholesale manufacturers in the town their marketing policy appears to have consistently favoured the intensive exploitation of the "quality-end" of both the home and foreign markets: an extensive shipping trade was done. Although a large trade was also done in lower grades of footwear, the firm developed a specialism in high quality Goodyear, that is to say

1 N.M. 25/7/02 p6.

2 B.S.T.J. op cit. 25/6/09 p579.

3 S.L.N. 12/2/31 p2.

machine welted, men's wear. A comprehensive network of agents and sales representatives was developed and maintained. Moreover, the use of branded goods and product advertising was exploited to the full.

The other complementary element in this strategy was the close attention paid to production techniques and quality. Extensive additions were required to existing factory space, machinery improved and alterations made in systems of working in order to remain efficient in increasingly competitive markets. By 1905, factory extensions had reached their limit: their premises stretched into neighbouring Perry and Turner Streets. Capacity had risen to between 6/7,000 pairs per week. Numbers employed had similarly expanded. The firm had commenced in 1879 "with a handful of operatives".¹ By 1891, they employed "nearly 200 hands",² on their premises, as well as unspecified numbers of outworkers. By 1907, the number had risen to 600 and further expanded to 1,100 by 1911.³ To cope with the rapid growth of the late Edwardian years, two new factories were occupied. First, in 1906, the lease of Messrs. Branch's factory at 62/64 Artisan Road, was taken over. This became known as the 'No.2 Factory', in which the machine sewn work was concentrated: Goodyear welted production was concentrated at the main premises. Then in 1909 a third factory was acquired in Whitworth Road as a warehouse and shipping department: space released elsewhere was turned over to production. Unlike some leading manufacturers, Crockett shunned hand-sewn work by this time. He argued that the future lay with efficient high grade machine work, executed by large manufacturing units able to achieve cost economies. In a 1907 newspaper interview he reflected:

1 N.I. 18/5/07 p22.

2 Boot and Shoe Retailer 9/12/91.

3 N.I. 28/10/11 p11. cf S.L.N. loc cit. 1,000 workers were employed in 1931.

.. the future rests with those manufacturers who are best equipped with the latest methods of producing boots and shoes. You must have enterprise as well as efficiency. The modern manufacturer to succeed must be ever alert in introducing novelties and meeting the changing modes of the day in the latest methods of manufacture .¹ the whole trend of modern boot manufacture is (with the biggest firms) ..

With the abolition of skilled hand labour, traditional centres of the trade had to relentlessly pursue modernity, he argued:

.. the practical abolition of skilled hand labour creates the prospect that there is now no obstacle to prevent any firm obtaining the requisite machinery and setting up in any part of Great Britain to turn out the same articles as in Northampton .. (We) can forestall this process by producing top quality goods and seeking new opportunities ..²

Certainly Crockett & Jones had evolved the reputation of being pioneers in the field of machine innovation, but the process went further than this. Primacy was also given to design development. Important last and pattern designs were originated and developed at the factory, rather than relying upon standard designs purchased from outside. Of the quality of the firm's production, a trade correspondent noted:

.. This firm have endeavoured and with great success, to keep up the standards and grades of English made boots and shoes. This endeavour, in these days of cutting prices, is very commendable, for by reason of excessive cheapening there is the ever present danger of losing the ability and knowledge of what is required for good class productions. We have frequently seen examples of their productions and we have no hesitation in saying that they compare favourably with any goods manufactured in any other centre in the world ..³

The fundamental aspect of this firm's - indeed any firm's success, therefore, was its continued vitality. Despite its age, it had successfully adapted to changed conditions. To contemporaries it was clear that future growth was assured. It was noted, "being in many ways the pioneers in the usage of the latest inventions, we may say that we look forward with confidence to seeing this firm becoming one day, one of the greatest and most prosperous firms in

1 N.I. 18/5/07 p23.

2 Ibid.

3 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 loc cit.

the whole of the shoe industry".¹

In studying the lives of the founders, one is again faced with the contemporary assessment of men of humble origins. James Crockett's obituary in The Times noted:

.. Of humble parentage, he began his working life as an errand boy ..²

An earlier press assessment was concluded in the same terms:

.. From humble beginnings, of which he is proud rather than reluctant to discuss, Sir James has achieved a foremost position in his native town by a stint of exercise and expression of the most desirable human qualities..³

In fact, the reality is somewhat different. James Henry Clifden Crockett was born at Northampton on 23rd June 1848, the son of James, one time Northampton shoe manufacturer of Church Lane.⁴ James senior was apprenticed to Henry Marshall, a leading manufacturer of his day who had come from Water Eaton, Buckinghamshire in 1818 to commence shoemaking in the town. Later he married Marshall's eldest daughter. Both of James junior's parents had had the advantage of a boarding school education. James senior appears to have been unsuccessful as a businessman: it was said of him, he "was too fond of speculation for his business to prosper". It would be truer therefore, to state that James junior started life in financially restrained, as opposed to humble circumstances.

He was educated locally at All Saints School and when aged ten found work as an errand boy for F. Cordeaux, printer, before being apprenticed as a clicker to a retail bootmaker in Commercial Street named Hart. As a journeyman, he worked in other shoe centres to gain experience: first at Hart's son's shop in Cheapside, London⁵ then in Birmingham, Worcester, Bridport and Kettering.⁶

1 B.S.T.J. 24/6/09 p324.

2 The Times 9/2/31 p6.

3 N.I. 30/6/28 p4.

4 N. Directories 1849 and 1850.

5 N.I. 7/1/22 p5.

6 N.I. 14/2/31 p3.

Early in his career as a manufacturer, he acted as a commercial traveller. In addition to his extensive business commitments, James had a strong sense of public duty and felt strongly that those in business and public life should weigh carefully the results of their actions and decisions. It was written of him:

.. Successful but never just a boot manufacturer, he had a very keen sense of the responsibilities of wealth .. He held .. that it was the duty of everybody who had opportunity to give a certain amount of his wealth and a certain amount of his time to public service ..

A Liberal, but not a strong party man, he played only a minor role in the town's political life. He had been a member of the Northampton School Board for some years and had unsuccessfully contested the St. Edmund's Ward in 1899. Strong supporter of the post Great War Coalition Government, he was president of the Northampton National Liberal Council. He was a member of the National Liberal Club.

A man of 'wide sympathy and culture',² he was widely known as a philanthropist. "He was full of kindly deeds; unstintingly generous, his many gifts to Northampton General Hospital will long remain a monument to his undying memory".³ He gave at least £9,000 in endowments in the last ten years of his life.⁴ In addition to many other gifts he gave £1,000 to Northamptonshire Church Charities in 1924. He was also closely associated with the management of the hospital over many years; he was the vice-president, Chairman of the House Committee and vice-chairman to both the Board of Management and the Finance Committee. He was also Chairman of the Northamptonshire Hospital Week Committee and Chairman of the House Committee of the Margaret Spencer Home of Rest. Other bodies likewise claimed his

1 N.M. 13/2/31 pl.

2 N.M. Ibid.

3 S.L.N. 12/2/31 p20.

4 S.L.N. Ibid. Gives details as to these endowments.

time, for example the local N.S.P.C.C. and C.O.S.: he was sometime the Chairman of both organisations. He was active in the local branch of the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association.

A 'keen churchman, he filled many offices',¹ for example, President of the Christian Social Union, vice-chairman of the English Church Union and trustee of the Northampton Municipal Church Charities. He was active in the Church of England Men's Society, was a Sunday School teacher for over 30 years and for six years Church warden of St. Michaels at the turn of the century. Inevitably, trade matters claimed a portion of his time. As early as 1908 it was written of him "for many years he has taken an active interest in the welfare of the industry with which his business is associated".² For many years a prominent member of the local manufacturers' association, he was president 1907/09. He also served in this capacity in the National Manufacturer's Federation 1911/13. For ten years he acted as Chairman of the local Arbitration Board. He was also treasurer of the local Commercial Travellers' Association.

A welfarist, he introduced many welfare schemes for his employees. To celebrate his golden wedding in 1921, each was given an extra week's pay.³ Seven years later, his eightieth birthday was celebrated by a gift of £3 to each male employee and £1 15s. Od. to each female.⁴ He encouraged inter-factory sports and was a keen bowls player; the Crockett Bowls Cup became the highlight of the inter-war Northampton bowls calendar.

In 1918, he was made a magistrate for the County and was knighted in the 1922

1 N.I. 27/1/23 p19.

2 Pike's, Northamptonshire in the 20th Century (1908) p205.

3 N.I. 29/10/21 p34.

4 S.L.N. 12/2/31 p20 cf N.I. 30/6/28 p4.

New Year's Honours List, in recognition of his many local public services.

He married Susannah Rosa, a daughter of Robert White of Norwich, at St. Marks, Clerkenwell, in October 1871. A person of strong character, she was prominent:

.. in the stirring days when Northampton was awakening from sleep to a vigorous, political, municipal and religious life .. In the old home near the racecourse,¹ her drawing room was often literally infested by young men and women, who were attracted by her original outlook upon life and by the vigorous encouragement she gave to daring and apparently revolutionary thought in social and religious matters.²

They had issue five sons and three daughters. Four of his sons predeceased him: Frederick in 1914, Cliff, who was killed in active service in 1916;

Lawrence in 1919; Harry in 1925. The family resided severally at 36 East Park Parade, 'Holmfield', Billing Road, and finally at Dallington Lodge.

By the 1920's Sir James' frail health began to give rise for concern.³

He finally died at home, Dallington Lodge, Dallington, on the 8th February 1931, aged 82. He was survived by four of his children. His wife died in

November 1925. Probate (limited to settled land) was granted at the Principal Probate Registry on 20th April 1931. Effects £285.

The firm's second generation principals were Sir James' sons, Frederick and Henry and Charles Jones' son Frank. At the time of writing no information concerning the latter is extant.

(1) Frederick James Crockett (1875 - 1914).

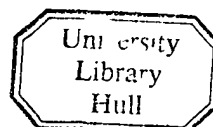
Born at Northampton, the second son. After being educated locally, he entered the family concern, being made a junior partner in 1902. "A shrewd man of business",⁴ his genial personality won him many friends in the trade throughout the country during the years he was a very able sales representative.

1 N.I. 7/1/22 p5.

2 N.I. 5/12/25 p11.

3 N.I. 5/1/24 p3.

4 N.I. 19/12/14 p19.



He was a leading member of the local Commercial Travellers' Association:

.. His death is a great loss to the trade because of his creative capacity, which found scope in many inventions which are now being used in the manufacture of boots. He was also a clever (shoe) designer ..

Although not actively involved in politics, he shared with his wife "very pronounced opinions upon the question of women's rights and was one of the active promoters of meetings for the furtherance of the movement".² He was also interested in theosophy and a great lover of music. An active member of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society, he took an interest in 'microscopical work'.

He died at Falmouth on 10th December 1914, where he had gone to convalesce after long ill-health. He lived at Park Avenue, Northampton. The funeral was at Abington Church; employees acting as poll-bearers. He married Mabel, the third daughter of John Archibold of Headingley, Leeds, in 1903 and had issue one son. His effects were valued at £10,063 16s. 1d.³

(2) Henry Robert Crockett (1875 - 1925).

Born at Northampton. He became a junior partner in 1902. He was associated with the Volunteer Movement, serving as a Captain until 1901: he was later active in the local Territorial Army. At this time he was a Church-warden at Abington Parish Church and resided at Babington. In 1903 he married Louisa Isabel, a daughter of John Newett of Collingtree; they had issue one son and two daughters. In 1922 he emigrated to the U.S.A. for health reasons and died there at 2260 Clermont Street, Denver, Colorado, on 11th August 1925. His personal estate was valued at £210,377 18s. 10d.⁴

1 N.I. Ibid 19/12/14 p19.

2 J.N.N.H.S.(1914) XVII p257.

3 N.I. Ibid. cf N.M.11/12/14 p6. "With his wife and other members of his family he took a rather active part in the suffrage movement. (He) disagreed with the extreme tactics but went a very long way with them in their militant policy and was well known to leaders of the movement."

4 Taken from N.I.21/2/25 p14 and S.T.J. 20/2/25 p39.

C.3: MANFIELD, SIR MOSES PHILIP (1819 - 1899)

Philip, the name by which he was known, was born at Bristol on 26th July 1819, a son of Moses Philip senior, a cordwainer (late shoe manufacturer) and Unitarian. His paternal grandfather had been a Bristol barber.

Two circumstances influenced his early years and shaped his life. First, the strong character and Unitarian faith of his mother. In the absence of any non-sectarian educational provision in the locality, Philip was taught basic literacy and numeracy at home by his mother, who was "a working woman educated far in advance of the circumstances of her day".¹ He also received instruction at the Bristol Unitarian Sunday School. Secondly, the poverty endured by the family; the result of his father's paralysis contracted when Philip was an infant. They made an inadequate and precarious living from a second-hand book-stall. After his seventh birthday he did many jobs in order to supplement his mother's earnings, including being a barber's boy and a stage-hand at the Bristol Theatre. At twelve, with the sovereign he had saved by writing window cards for local shopkeepers, he bound himself apprentice to a Mr. Harris, a boot closer of Bristol.

At 16 he went to London as a competent journeyman closer for a short while, to gain experience of making and retailing best quality work, before returning to Bristol. Here he quickly rose to the position of manager of Messrs. Brightman's shoe factory and unusually for a man of his background, had already purchased his own house. In 1843 he migrated to Northampton to take up the position of manager at Messrs. Swann's boot and shoe warehouse in King Street. Within six months this business had failed. In London he had been acquainted with a Miss Carpenter of the celebrated Unitarian family of Caleb, who provided him with letters of introduction to the Northampton Unitarian community, who now offered to assist him, including Baker, the noted Northamptonshire historian and antiquarian. He refused the offer of a

¹ Fortunes Made in Business (1905) p345

partnership with Swann's brother-in-law, Henry Harday, who later became one of the mid-century's largest wholesale manufacturers in the town. Instead, after encouragement from Mrs. Swann, he committed his savings of £150 and his "indomitable energy and great practical knowledge of his trade",¹ to setting up in business on his own account: the date 1844.

From these inauspicious beginnings, Manfield developed one of the dominant footwear manufacturing and distribution firms in both Britain and Europe. He can be regarded as "one of the great (Victorian) captains of this industry".² The firm's growth and significant success to the mid-eighties relied essentially upon his personal qualities of business organisation and acumen, his energy and his readiness to quickly adapt to the latest methods of production and distribution. It "might truly be said by his indomitable energy and zeal to have been the architect of his own fortune".³

The progress of the firm can be divided into three phases prior to the Great War, viz:- (i) 1844/58, (ii) 1858/85, (iii) post 1885. The first of these periods mark the rapid beginnings of the firm. Manfield initially traded from small warehouse premises in Silver Street, then from 1846, larger premises in Broad Lane. In 1849, another removal was made to premises in Regent Street. Like all wholesale manufacturers at this time, production was organised upon a purely outwork basis and his trade concentrated mainly in cheaper grades of footwear for colonial markets and government military contracts. He was one of Northampton's largest government contractors. The early success of Philip's infant enterprise is reflected in his improved social circumstances. By 1854 he was resident at 8 Royal Terrace, Northampton; a locality much favoured by the town's growing commercial and

1 Ibid.

2 W.R.D. Adkins, Our Country (1893) p59.

3 Fortunes made in Business (1905) p347.

business class. Also in these years he married twice. First, to Elizabeth Cambridge Newman of Wilson Street, Finsbury, a daughter of Henry Newman, a commercial clerk. The marriage was celebrated at the Parish Church of St. Saviour, Finsbury, Surrey, on 24th February 1845. An obituary incorrectly states that he was already married upon his arrival in Northampton.¹ In addition, the report states that there was one son of this marriage "who died at an early age". Searches of the Registrar General's records and other archive material have failed to provide more information. Elizabeth died prematurely at Northampton in the late spring of 1852, aged 33. He married secondly, Margaret Milne, then aged 33, a daughter of James Milne, the Northampton Borough Surveyor. The marriage took place at South Place Unitarian Chapel in the City of London on 28th January 1854. At the time, Margaret was employed in a "Ladies shoe warehouse" and resided at 3 Carpenters Buildings, London. There was issue of the marriage, namely, Harry, born on 1st February 1855 and James, born on 2nd June 1856: both at Northampton. The years 1858/85 witnessed a further substantial growth in trading, during which time Manfield's established its British and European multiple chain and became one of the largest producers of footwear in the country. This second phase was signalled by the move to a purpose-built factory in Fleetwood Terrace, Campbell Square; the first building worthy of the name factory, erected for the Northampton shoe trade. It was built "on the pretentious scale of the inworking system in the days when most shoemakers worked in their own homes and most manufacturer's premises were but warehouses, flush with mean dwelling houses".² The completion of a building of such radical design, after just fifteen years trading, is a reflection both of Philip's early business success and of his progressive outlook. Between its opening in 1858 and 1892, when the firm vacated the premises, it was one of the town's

1 Northampton Reporter 27/7/99 p3

2 E. W. Burnham, In the service of A Famous Firm (1936) unpaginated

model factories.

It was first occupied at a time when capital and labour was engaged in a bitter two year dispute concerning the trade's first machines; introduced to offset rising raw material costs and help solve long standing organisational problems. Local shoemakers regarded the confluence of such an innovation and the commissioning of this, and another, similarly designed factory, as a radical threat to their control over the work process. Already Manfield had emerged as a leading figure at periodic manufacturer's meetings, convened to decide matters of mutual interest, mainly prices; now he moved to centre stage. From this time to his death he was to remain in the centre of trade and labour relations matters within the trade. He was a founder of the re-vamped Northampton Chamber of Commerce in 1867 and the local manufacturers' association in 1879, of which he was president during the town's momentous 1887 strike. Part of the settlement agreement enabled the establishment of conciliation and arbitration machinery, despite the opposition of more extreme employers, largely as a result of Manfield's intervention. This was to be followed by similar Boards being established in other main shoe centres.

The Times has rightly noted:

.. He was mainly responsible for the introduction of arbitration in the settlement of trade disputes in the shoe trade ..

A moderate, he gave much time to the establishing of conciliatory labour relations policies in the public's consciousness. He also played a significant role as an arbitrator and umpire in settling wages questions in the Northamptonshire and other shoe centres, including a bitter dispute in Bristol in 1890.

In fact the trade's transition to full factory production was a relatively slow discontinuous process, becoming commonplace only after 1887. In the interim, a transitional phase, incorporating organisational elements of both the old and new, emerging industrial order persisted in the trade:

Manfield's development in this second phase must be judged against this background. Successful trading rested upon three related elements. First

was his commitment to modern techniques. He was in the vanguard which increasingly centralised production. By the eighties the firm's rate of machine introduction began to increase and the number of factory workers increased likewise; steam power probably having been introduced a decade earlier. Hand workers were accommodated in nearby rented warehouses, whilst new machinery was erected in adjacent houses which were purchased and adapted for use as workshops. Within the main factory, re-designing took place to accommodate power driven leather presses and machines to sew and otherwise attach the sole to the boot top; such work had previously been done by sub-contractors, known locally as 'sewers to the trade'. Only in 1888 when further extensions of this kind became impracticable did a major extension to the factory take place. This apparent delay in committing large sums to capital projects was not uncommon in the industry, for as a commentator noted:

.. Many of the factories seem to have been built room by room, as the necessity for extensions became too pressing to be further disregarded ..¹

At this time of 900 employees, 500 still worked outside and were to do so until the new factory was occupied, when the workforce had increased to 1,100. An old employee had written of the continued importance of outwork at this time. Manfield's had their better quality work made up by Northampton shoemakers, whilst cheaper grades were made in surrounding villages, particularly Abthorpe, under the control of agents. Later, this work was consolidated into rural branch factories at Ascote, Patishall and Harpole. Amongst Northampton shoemakers, increasing numbers were labouring in their own workshops, rather than their homes. A manuscript history of the firm suggests that Manfield gave financial assistance to outwork employees with which to erect these workshops. It is noted:

¹ Boot and Shoe Trades Journal 23/10/86 p328

.. By encouragement of the firm and perhaps by indirect subsidy, a shed workshop adjoining some workers houses .. was built or found where groups of men could work together. An enterprising example was that of Mark Main, who provided a communal workshop first at Bailiff Street, then Robert Street and later (a new building) at Abington Avenue for 12 lasters ..

In the trade he was widely known for the assistance and advice he gave to young manufacturers. The decade after 1885 witnessed the crucial period of machine adoption by best practice firms both in Northampton and throughout the industry. Not only had engineers perfected machines to perform the processes formerly difficult to mechanise - welt sewing, lasting, finishing - but from this time, the industry began to experience the continuous disturbance of new techniques and an endless flow of modifications and improvements to existing machines. The influence of Manfield's hand can be clearly seen in this process. In 1888, he was the leading figure in a syndicate of one Stafford and six Northampton manufacturers, who set up the Northampton Shoe Machinery Company Ltd. to market and later manufacture the chase lasting machine under licence from the Shoe Lasting Machine Company of Boston, Massachusetts. Success attended the venture and the company was influential in determining the pace of machine adoption in Northampton during the early nineties. Within a short period agreements to market the machines of other American companies were secured. Manfield was for a time the company's managing director and his son, James, a director. His other outside business interests included directorships in local firms, including the Northampton Turkish Baths Company and Smith's Timber Company Ltd.

Moreover, Manfield was in the vanguard of those manufacturers adopting American systems of production and management. In 1892, the firm moved to a four acre, green-field site at Wellingborough Road, Northampton, upon which was built a one storey 'American-styled' factory, replete with electricity, a telephone system and an 80 h.p. steam engine. Again the firm had set a

1 W. E. Burnham, A Century of Shoemaking 1844/1944 - Volume 11 p39

2 BT 31/4025/25654.

new standard in British shoe factory development. The factory was regarded as a test-bed by the wholesale trade for the new ideas spreading through the industry. E. W. Burnham notes:

.. it was then the ideal which shoe manufacturers dreamt about ..
Manfields was seen as the trial ground for the whole industry of new inventions and processes ..

The second element which enhanced the success of the years 1858/85 was the foundation of a multiple chain. James initiated and was responsible for the early development of this new departure. Between 1878 and 1883 three shops were opened in London under the name Cash & Company. This has been described as "the most important decision .. Within a year .. it was necessary to enlarge the office (staff) .. from six to eleven persons"..² By 1895, a further 29 people had joined the office staff. In step with these early retailing developments, in 1882, was the "revolutionary idea of producing men's branded footwear at a uniform price". Despite being quickly imitated Manfields can be regarded as the "original half-guinea boot".³ In addition to the increased use of branded goods, this firm were as conscious as any of the publicity advantages which accrued to securing exhibition awards and they met with conspicuous success in the period: for example at Cape Town 1877, Sydney 1879, Melbourne 1880, Paris 1889. From 1884, the family name was used and the British chain began with premises in Manchester, followed by Liverpool, Glasgow, Sheffield and Birmingham. By 1889, there were 16 branches, by 1895, 21 and 30 by 1900. Their policy appears to have been centred upon the quality and depth of service given at each branch, rather than seeking merely to numerically expand the branches as far as capital would permit. By the early nineties a slump in exports caused Manfields to concentrate

1 W. E. Burnham op.cit. Volume 11 p42

2 A. Nichols, "Reminiscences of 1875" Manfield Magazine April 1930 p99

3 Anon, "The Story of Our Firm Part 11," Manfield Magazine February 1930 p63

production to supplying the growing needs of their branches. Initially production sagged, 100 shoemakers were discharged and many more placed on short time. Partly to restore full-time working and to lessen seasonal fluctuations in production and partly to ensure supplies to branches, an in-stock system was inaugurated. In 1893 a stock of 200,000 pairs was maintained; total production at this time was circa 350,000 pairs per annum as compared with 250,000 25 years earlier. Making wholesale goods for export was not resumed until 1910, however trading outside Britain did not entirely cease. In 1898 a retail establishment was opened in Paris and in the years that followed shops were opened in provincial France, in Belgium, in Holland and in Germany. By 1916 there were 23 shops in mainland Europe. In 1920 the first shop in the U.S. chain was opened in Philadelphia.¹

The Edwardian shoe trade was characterised by over-production, cost cutting and keen foreign and home competition. Manfields were very much in the forefront of countering rising American footwear imports into Britain. Considerable improvements were made in shoe design and production organisation but ultimately, production was maintained at full strength as a result of the improvements made to retailing operations. In contrast to the past extensive growth of the chain, an intensification of selling operations was undertaken. The improvement of retail outlets - window size, interiors, position in towns etcetera was undertaken. New selling methods were introduced. In the nineties, better grades of footwear had been sold and the 10s. 6d. boot left to others to sell. Now the half-guinea boot was cultivated again. In 1911 a full range of welted wear was introduced at the uniform price of 10s. 6d. Some extension as to the range of footwear sold is also noticeable, for example in 1904 the successful introduction of the 'Manfield Hotspur' football boot. Despite the growth of the stock shoe however, Manfield continued to hold a very large proportion of the

1 N.M. 10/7/25 p8

bespoke custom which remained. At the factory both a last making hand-sewn and specials repair departments were maintained, a trend increasingly imitated by other, though by no means all leading wholesalers. Furthermore, in 1904 Manfields moved into the exclusive high class custom trade as a result of an alliance with the Waukenphast company of New Bond Street, London. In addition, as a result of their retailing activities, the firm moved into property developing and renting. The first such venture was in 1905, when a property on the corner of Piccadilly Circus and Haymarket was rebuilt: Manfield utilised the shop, whilst letting the rest of the building. However, probably the most prominent re-development, took place in 1930, when Manfield House was erected in The Strand on land originally taken by the firm in 1889 as shop premises.

Prominent in the trade from the mid-century, Philip Manfield emerged as a leading public figure in Northamptonshire from the 1860's. In the words of a political contemporary "originally a trader and then a politician, (Philip) developed his powers in several directions".¹ After his sons had been taken into partnership in 1878 his commitment to public affairs deepened and the time he devoted to these matters rapidly increased. By 1885, he had practically relinquished all active involvement in the management of the firm: he formally retired in 1890, although was to remain a partner. Indeed, Philip's public life was to continue unabated until shortly before his death, at which time it was said of him:

.. (he) took a great interest in everything which tended to promote the welfare of the town and the benefit of the inhabitants ..²

He was a Liberal member of the Northampton Borough Council from 1866/77 and again from 1882/92; he served two terms as an alderman, 1871/77 and 1886/92. He was elected Mayor 1882/85 and became a magistrate for the Borough in

1 W. R. D. Adkins op cit. p60.

2 Northampton Herald 29/7/99 p4.

November 1886. His first election was fought under the auspices of the newly established Northampton Reform League. Both he and his fellow Liberal candidate, Richard Turner, another prominent shoe manufacturer, stood in the town's Conservative dominated East Ward, yet were returned with substantial majorities. With similar results in the town's West Ward, this election was considered to have "changed the face of Northampton politics", re-establishing the Liberals as a political force in the Borough. Within three years, the party had dominated the town council and had elected their first Mayor for 14 years. The movement to extend working class freehold house ownership then became an important weapon with which to consolidate the Liberal vote and in this Manfield played a prominent part. He was successively the president of the Northampton Town and Country Benefit Building Society and president and chairman of the Northampton Freehold Land Society. Educational matters absorbed much of his political time. He was vice-president and a council member of the National Educational Association and was a prominent member of the Northamptonshire Education League. He supported the aim to establish a national system of non-denominational schools. In 1871, he unsuccessfully stood for the local school board as an 'Unsectarian Liberal', although his wife was to be a board member for a number of years. In later years he was a governor of both the Northampton and County Modern and Technical School and of the local Grammar School. In 1898, he helped to form the Northampton Committee of the Liberation Society. He also displayed much interest in adult education schemes; leading a local campaign for evening lectures in the mid-century. As president of the local Working Men's Club, he consistently fostered educational developments there.

Several biographic sketches and obituaries of Manfield suggest that he was an advanced Liberal throughout his life. In fact, although a life-long Liberal, his ideological position within the party shifted several times. As a young man, in the forties, he espoused the Chartist cause and was a supporter of G. J. Holyoake's views on cooperation. By his early years as

a town councillor he had become the leader of the moderate Northampton Liberal Association and can be regarded as an adherent of the ideals of the Liberal school. These were the Bradlaugh years in the town's political history and Manfield initially opposed his parliamentary candidature to the borough. Because of this opposition and his prominence in moderate Liberal circles, Bradlaugh supporters, newly formed as the Northampton Radical Association (N.R.A.), unseated Manfield at the 1877 Municipal elections. Within three years, however, increased Radical support for Bradlaugh led moderate Liberal opinion to recognise the need to accept his candidature if parliamentary representation locally was not to remain in Conservative hands:

.. So when Henry Labouchere was invited by Philip Manfield .. to accept the Liberal nomination, he did so on the condition that Bradlaugh should receive the other nomination. Faced with the alternative of a disastrous election campaign, a split vote and a Tory victory, the Liberals capitulated ..

From this time a radicalisation of Manfield's political views appear to have taken place, "though he was never with the most advanced". Certainly he joined the N.R.A., serving as both its vice-president and president and he was re-elected as a Radical member for the town's East Ward. In this period he also gave invaluable assistance to the Hon. C. R. Spencer M.P. in County hustings and meetings. For a time, he filled important positions in the South and Mid Northamptonshire Liberal Associations. Following Bradlaugh's death in 1891, Manfield was elected as junior member for the town in February 1891: his majority of 1,713 was described as "an unparalleled and overwhelming majority",² being widely regarded as an expression of his popularity. By this date, Who's Who described him as a Gladstonian Liberal, who fully endorsed Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Policy and who gave consistent support to progressive measures. He was again returned at the General Election of

1 E. Royle, Northants. Past and Present Volume VI 3 p148

2 N.M. 26/2/91 p5.

1892, but retired at the dissolution of Parliament in 1895, because of his "advanced age and weak heart".

Manfield brought to politics those qualities of ability, energy and perseverance which, it was stated, had underpinned his business success. Politically adroit, he was an assiduous attender in the debating chamber. Indeed, he was the speaker of the Northampton Debating Society for many years and was a lover of democracy, an excuser of its faults. To these qualities, W. R. D. Adkins allied the sincerity and conviction with which he held his political beliefs. Although Manfield had the temper of an opportunist, his political decisions were ultimately based upon Liberal principles. Adkins noted:

.. there was a strong touch of impulse in his character and gusts of sudden resolve occasionally ruffle the calm of his reflection and his judgement ..

He had the Unitarians love of the intellectual, being something of a bibliophile. His library was reputed to be one of the best local private collections at this time. This intellect combined with a platform manner gave Manfield an ability to stir an audience. An obituary notes:

.. He had an intellectual capacity of a high order, and amid all the concerns of a varied and active life he had found time to acquire a surprising store of literary and artistic knowledge. His conversation was most interesting and his public speeches, as a rule, much above the ordinary level, while at times he rose to a very considerable pitch of eloquence ..²

His mature years were marked by many acts of private charity and public philanthropy. Several contemporaries remarked that his personal wealth was considerably reduced by his open-handed benevolence. He assisted in the work of several local institutions, being a past president of the National Thrift Society; a former chairman of the Northampton Town Domestic Mission and the East End Domestic Mission; a vice-president of the Northampton Nursing Institution, the Northampton and Artisan Labourers Friendly Society and the Northampton Corps of St. John's

1 W. R. D. Adkins op cit. p61.

2 Northampton Mercury 4/8/99 p5.

Ambulance Brigade; a trustee of the Municipal General Charities and a Committee member of the Northampton Royal Victoria Dispensary, the Northampton Branch of the N.S.P.C.C. and the Northampton Poor Children's Christmas Dinner Fund from 1882. In addition, he devoted much time to the local General Hospital and from 1886, was the treasurer of its Hospital Week Fund Committee. These attitudes of benevolence infused his relations with employees. He was an autocratic paternalist by nature. The Times said of him:

.. he was extremely generous, especially to workpeople, many of whom, when too old for work, received pensions for life ..

It was widely accepted that he made financial provision for employees and their families during trade depression, strikes and when they retired. During the 1887 Northampton strike he provided funds for the dependants of all strikers. His firm became one of the very first to endorse current ideals of the industrial welfarist movement. Many sporting, social and welfare societies were formed within the firm. The Manfield family gave much assistance to Mrs. C. R. Spencer's inauguration of musical competitions for choirs in Northamptonshire: the firm's factory choir achieved conspicuous success at these and other competitions.¹ Philip Manfield was also one time president of the Northampton and County Amateur Athletic Association, which did much to foster inter-firm sporting links in the period. An increasing emphasis was placed, in this and other ways, upon the ideal of the Manfield community. To work for the firm came to be regarded as being synonymous with security and privilege amongst the town's shoemakers. One local newspaper noted:

.. Manfield's workers were regarded as the 'lucky ones' ..²

whilst another

.. Manfields make the lot of (workers) as good as possible. Thus a job (there) is a coveted one and employees remain with the firm for very long periods ..³

1 See D. Peel, "The Early Days of the Northants. Musical Competitions" NP & P 11 No.4 (1957) pp 168-73: cf N.M. 10/7/25 p8

2 N.I. 11/7/25 p34

3 S.L.N. 16/7/25 p38

This spirit was further enhanced and developed by James and Harry, subsequently by Philip's grand-daughter, Ellen Pigott-Lawrence. A house magazine, extensive health facilities, numerous clubs and societies for employees; all were features of the inter-war firm. In addition to which, the firm contributed £1,000 per annum to an employees benefit fund.

Much of Philip's philanthropic effort was fired by religious conviction. He was a life-long Unitarian and gave active support to that denomination locally. In 1897, he bore the whole cost, in excess of £6,000, for the erection of Kettering Road Free Church and schools.

Despite a full and active life, he found time to indulge a personal interest in horticulture. He was a past president of the Northants Horticultural Society and Northants Chrysanthemum Society. He was a member of the National Liberal Club.

Towards the end of his life many public honours and rewards were bestowed upon him. The most significant being a knighthood in May 1894 in recognition of his many public services. In July 1899, he was made the first honorary freeman of Northampton. Both honours bear public testament to a "long and eminently useful life". He died at his Northampton home 'Redlands', Cliftonville, his London residence being Bloomfield House, London Wall E.C., on 31st July 1899, aged 80. His public funeral was to prove "the occasion of much genuine regret and one of the most impressive demonstrations ever seen in Northampton".¹

His two sons survived him, but his wife, who had been such a strong force in his life and an active worker for the Sunday School Movement and the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, predeceased him by two weeks, leaving personal effects to the value of £1,216 9s. 5d. His estate was valued at £68,334 7s. 0d.

His sons succeeded to the business:

¹ Northampton Mercury 4/8/99 p5

Harry Manfield.

The eldest son, born 1st February 1855 at Northampton. A moderate scholar, he was educated privately, after which he entered his father's firm. He received a full training at the bench, as was common for manufacturer's sons in the period. Although apprenticed to one of Manfield's senior clickers, he trained in each department. In 1877, he entered into partnership with his father and brother. As is discussed above, within a few years he, with his brother, "released his father from a large portion of his business cares and enabled (Philip) to throw himself the more heartily into politics".¹ After his father's death, he became the senior partner of the firm,² but, increasingly, it was to be public life which dominated his later years. As was written of his public life: "he has an iron in almost every fire".³ A man of much energy and forcefulness, despite a delicate constitution, which caused much ill-health in adult life:⁴

.. he inherited his father's force of will and strong political convictions ..⁵

yet, also, traits of his mother's shyness and sensitivity. He was one of the county's political and social leaders in our period. Sir Rylands Adkins M.P., a friend and fellow Northamptonian, made the following obituary assessment:

.. Harry Manfield, one of the most marked personalities and one of the most useful of well-known local men, began life with some great advantages. His parents were people of influence and interesting character. .. Like both his parents he had an unfeigned interest in a great variety of subjects.. there were few houses in Northampton where

1 Gaskell unpaginated.

2 He was for many years also a director of Northampton Mercury Company Ltd.

3 Ibid; cf S.L.N. 15/2/23 p41; "For some years Mr. Manfield has taken no part in business of Manfield & Sons, his public life had practically occupied the whole of his time".

4 His frail constitution in childhood resulted in prolonged visits to the south coast and to South Africa.

5 N.I. 17/2/23 p7.

the duties and privilege of citizenship and public service were more ingrained in the minds of father and mother ..¹

Indeed, Rylands argues that much of his upbringing and early experience of life was but a preparation for public service. At Manfield's home:

.. neither the pursuit of wealth or pleasure nor even the realm of domestic affection could be allowed to impair the incessant obligation of working for all that was best in the community of which they were part .. all the time, though occupied in business with skill and success, he was really training for good public work ..²

Like his father he was a Gladstonian Liberal; "leaning towards the Manchester school, alike in its pacifist and in its individualist sides .. the fierce and strident Radicalism of Bradlaugh .. was something with which he had no special affinity; and he knew Mr. Labouchere far too well not to despise him heartily".³ Harry lived to some extent under the shadow of the reverence in which his father had been held in the town and county.⁴ In all things, he was very much his father's son in both temperament and attitude. During his formative years "he had the advantage of a careful training (from his father) both in business and in civic matters".⁵ His political career began in 1891, when he was elected a County Councillor at a by-election in the Hardington Division. He quickly made his mark, becoming one of the Liberal leaders. Early in the new century he became an alderman and was appointed a J.P. in 1900: one of the first shoe manufacturers and member of the urban bourgeoisie

1 N.M. 16/2/23 p9.

2 Ibid cf N.M. 10/7/25 p8 - in James's obituary an anon. writer strongly suggests a similar trait in the brother: "He loved intensely all those things which make life worth living - flowers, gardens, books, his china and art treasures, laughter and good company, but he remembered that all of these are only good when they do not blind one to the needs of others and he was generous to a fault".

3 Ibid.

4 N.I. 17/2/23 pl8. A memorial appreciation of Harry carried with it a large portrait of Philip, not him! cf N.M. 16/2/23 p9/10. An obituary appreciation by Adkins similarly stressed the qualities of his locally famed and respected parents.

5 S.L.N. loc cit.

to appear on the county bench.¹ At the County Council "his practical sense and zest in Committee work made him useful and for many years before his health failed was among those who counted for most in the responsibility of County government."^{1a} He was, for several years, the chairman of the Education Committee where he introduced a creche to the Domestic Economy School; much involved in county finances; and assisted in the administration of Berry Wood Hospital. Ill-health finally forced his retirement from the County Council in 1922.

Active in the political organisation of the Mid-Northamptonshire Parliamentary Division, where his father had done so much to secure the election and political acceptance of the Rt. Hon. C. R. Spencer,² Harry followed Spencer as M.P. for the division in 1906. His political agent, Councillor John Prentice, has noted:

.. At that time (1906) and for many years afterwards he had many public duties in connection with the County's government which occupied whole days and other interests. To all these he added the onerous work of Parliament ..³

No lover of the intellectual, he was a practical politician: "After he was 40 he had little time for political thinking; he was fully occupied in action .. (believing in) the business quality and realisation that to do any good, one must work".⁴ He did not seek parliamentary office, but was to remain an influential private member: he sat in the local legislation committee.⁵ This, of course, was the time of Liberal reforms, the People's Budget and

1 B.S.T.J. 27/10/00 p558

1a N.M. loc cit.

2 C. R. Spencer (1857/1922): Liberal M.P. Mid-Northants 1880/1906 and later Viscount Althorp (1906), 6th Earl of Spencer (1910). In 1887 married Margaret, two daughters. Edward Baring, 1st Lord Revelstoke. They lived for many years at Dallington House (later Margaret Spencer Home of Rest - cf Cl C. & E. Lewis), see Burke's Peerage (1929) p2177. On his Viscounty see N.P. & P. 11, No.4 (1957) p176.

3 N.I. loc cit.

4 N.M. loc cit.

5 Ibid. Although not exceptional "he achieved distinction as a private member."

confrontation with the House of Lords. Throughout, Manfield emerges as consistently in favour of reforms; he derived much personal pleasure from the introduction of Old Age Pensions. He was, moreover, a good and popular constituency M.P., who was very active in the interests of his constituents.

Prentice noted:

.. The sessions were strenuous times .. (In 1910) he had to fight two fiercely contested elections in one year. Added to all of this was the necessity of keeping in touch and visiting the electors in some 80 villages. In one period of three months a series of 40 meetings was held ..¹

The Great War brought with it an ever increasing burden of work for Manfield. He was active on local Recruiting Committees and later, on War Pensions Committees. Never a robust man, these added duties forced his retirement from Parliament in 1919. An obituary noted:

.. He over-tasked his strength in public work especially during the war and shortly after his retirement from Parliament he had a very serious illness and never fully recovered ..²

In addition to his political work, the most important of Harry's other public duties revealed his inherited sense of philanthropy. He was for many years a trustee and chairman of the board of management of the Northampton Local Hospital. In 1923, he became president of the board. He was also the honorary treasurer of the Northampton Hospital Week Committee: he succeeded his father. A prominent freemason from 1882, he was a former Deputy Grand Master and President of the Province of Northamptonshire, becoming Grand Treasurer of England in 1901. Membership of the Board of Management of the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys and the presidency of the Old Masonians claimed part of his time, as did work for a range of other voluntary organisations. As a young man he had held the post of Volunteer Captain. A potent symbol of his success and power was the 800 acres Moulton Grange

1 Ibid.

2 N.M. 9/2/23 p9. cf S.L.N. loc cit. "Mr. Manfield gave of his best to the town and county of Northampton and always exhibited a fine public spirit and an upright attitude in all he undertook".

Estate which he owned from 1909. Already by this date he had absorbed many of the cultural traits of the gentry; he was a field shooter and had for many years been well known on the hunting field.¹ A keen sportsman, he was a past president of the Northamptonshire Amateur Athletic Association. "Of a refined intellectual nature",² he shared his father's passion and knowledge of books, having a passion for history. He collected fine china and was regarded an expert photographer. As is demonstrated above, he wielded considerable power and political influence within the county, in addition to supporting philanthropic works: in 1908 he had built Pitsford Village Institute and gave £1,000 to furnish it; he endowed Pitsford Church. Physical weakness forced him to retire from all of his public activities for several years before his death, "and the place he filled in the life of Northampton and the neighbourhood has been largely but inadequately taken up by here one and there another substitute".³ He died at his country residence on 9th February 1923, aged 68. He was survived by his wife Louisa, youngest daughter of Sir John Barran Baronet, of Chapel Allerton Hall, Leeds, whom he married in 1909:⁴ there was no issue. His London residence was at 249 St. James Court, Buckingham Gate. He was a member of several clubs: Reform, Bath, Eighty and National Liberal.⁵ His effects were valued at £338,143 14s. 6d. gross. He made numerous bequests to family, servants and the charitable causes with which he was identified. He bequeathed his best work of art - Chateau Gailliard by Sir Alfred East, to the National

1 B.S.T.J. 27/10/00 p558.

2 N.M.loc cit.

3 N.M.loc cit. p9.

4 John Barran (born 1821) founded clothing manufacturing firm at Leeds in 1856 and regarded as the pioneer of that city's clothing industry. Success was based on the sewing machine and by 1893 he employed circa 2,000. President of local Chamber of Commerce; twice Mayor and a Magistrate. M.P. for Leeds 1876/85 and for Otley from 1892. He was a Gladstonian Liberal and created baronet in 1895. A son, R. H. Barran, also served as an M.P. (Anon., The Century's Progress: Yorkshire Industry and Commerce (1893) pl85; Who's Who (1902) pl20 and (1912) pl12).

5 Who's Who (1919) pl635 cf Who's Who of M.P.'s Volume 2 1886/1918.

Gallery. He was cremated at Leicester and his ashes interred at Pitsford Church-yard. A Unitarian in childhood, he had become an Anglican as an adult, although he retained the moral qualities of Unitarianism.

James Manfield.

The youngest son born at Northampton on 2nd June 1856, where he was privately educated. He was taken into partnership at 21 after a thorough practical and commercial training undertaken in the firm. He took charge of financial matters and inaugurated the firm's retail chain activities (see above). He developed into a clear-sighted and much admired businessman, who took over much of the responsibility for the firm as a result of Harry's ill-health and Parliamentary duties. Much of this ability, contemporaries thought, had its origin in parental training.

.. He had the advantage of a business training with his father .. and he early showed conspicuous ability in commercial affairs ..

Essentially a man of action, his boundless energy and ambition however, was not to be bounded by the cares of business. Almost as soon as he became a partner, he entered public life. Like his brother, he appears to have been little interested by trade affairs or politics. They neither held office, nor were they in any way prominent in trade associations at either local or national level. Between 1897/1912 he was a town councillor, first for East Ward and later St. Edmunds. He brought "his consummate business ability as a reformer and an organiser",² to local government and was very much involved with council reorganisation and the extension of the Borough boundary in the late nineties. Chairman of the finance committee and a member of the transport and electricity committees, he quickly became leader of the radicals in

1 B.S.T.J. 16/6/05 p426.

2 J.N.N.H.S. 23 (1925) p71. cf N.M. 10/7/25 p1 "the broad sweeps of his vision and his infectious courage made him a municipal reform leader of the first quality".

council. He was made a Borough J.P. in 1900 and in 1907 was appointed to the county bench. In 1905/06, he carried out the duties of Mayor with conspicuous success; all official entertaining was cancelled and the money diverted to relieving distress caused by depression and technological unemployment in the shoe industry. Ill-health curtailed his council duties after 1908 and was given as his reason for retiring in 1912.¹ Nevertheless from 1910 until 1925 he sat as a County Councillor and was High Sheriff of the county in 1916. In 1924, he unsuccessfully contested the General Election in the Northampton constituency against Margaret Bondfield.

His public service in local government admirably reflects the sense of duty and power-seeking found in many Victorian businessmen.² As a contemporary trade paper noted:

.. At much sacrifice of time and ease, Councillor Manfield devotes his energies to all that will in any way benefit the town of his birth. On Committees .. he is untiring in advocating the advancement of Northampton .. With great ability in finance and a thorough grasp of public affairs, he combines a quiet untiring disposition and a kind and gentle nature which is the respect and esteem of all whom he comes into contact. A high sense of duty and a perfect devotion to the public weal mark Councillor Manfield's public career and the future doubtless holds higher honours in the Northampton town council for him. He is a J.P. .. and both in business and private life is the best type of English gentleman ..³

Indeed, the pursuit of gentlemanly status became one of the driving forces of his later years. Already absorbed socially into County Society, through the family's political connections with C. R. Spencer, his membership of both the Pytchley and the Grafton Hunts, and so forth, in 1899 he established a country estate at Weston Favell.⁴

But his public appointments tell only part of his service to the community.

1 B.S.T.J. 15/11/12 p380, cf B.S.T.J. 6/11/08 p227.

2 on this issue generally see below Chapter 8 passim.

3 B.S.T.J. 16/6/05 p426.

4 cf Chapter 8 p 528.

He took a great interest in educational and cultural organisations. He was president of the Northants. Natural History Society 1915/19 and of the St. Giles Street Working Men's Club, like his father before him. He was one of the founders of the Northants. Record Society and for a short period before his death, hon. treasurer. He assisted the noted local historian Miss. Joan Wake at the Society's inaugural consciousness raising meetings. Of these meetings an intriguing anecdote has come down to us which reflects Manfield's rather naive, materialistic outlook on life. After first meeting Professor Frank Stenton, who did much to support the N.R.S., it has been written: "surprised that an impecunious scholar was prepared to work without payment, Mr. Manfield sent Frank (Stenton) a dozen of port and a brace of pheasants."¹

He was also a generous philanthropist, "although he had a large family of daughters".² Many local organisations benefited from his benefactions but "a life of good works was crowned by the princely gift of the large residence he erected at Weston Favell to the local Crippled Children's Fund for an orthopaedic hospital".³ six acres of ground was also donated. In 1918 property and four acres was given to Weston Favell Parish Council and six acres to the Northampton Rural District Council to build council houses.⁴ In that year he took up residence in London at York Street, Portman Square. He died at Uxbridge Road Railway Station, Middlesex, on 9th July 1925 in his 69th year. He was survived by his widow, five daughters and a son:

1 From reminiscences of Sir Frank Stenton by his wife in Proceedings of British Academy, L1V (1969) p384, cf N.P. & P. IV, 5 (1970/71) p258.

2 J.N.N.H.S. op cit. p73.

3 Ibid p72

4 N.M. 10/7/25 p8. The contract "stipulated that the council houses were to be built a six per acre, thus making them some of the finest in the United Kingdom".

Doctor Harold Manfield, who lived in Canada. His eldest son, Neville, was killed in the Great War, prior to which he had already entered the family firm. He married a daughter of Frederick Bostock senior, shoe manufacturer, thus linking four of Northampton's leading Victorian families.¹ His effects were valued at £436,030 2s. 2d. gross and re-sworn at £441,354 2s. 3d. He was succeeded as chairman of the company by his eldest daughter, Mrs. Ellen Louise Pigott-Lawrence.²

One final point needs to be made about the town's most prominent company; the extent to which effective delegation of control and authority within the company enabled the principals to pursue, and fund, such prominent public lives. It has already been noted that Sir Philip's public life was able to develop after his sons became partners. In their turn, his sons public life and it has been suggested above that following Philip's death and Harry's ill-health and many public duties, it was James who "carried the burden of control of the firm".³ However, this tells only half the story, for James became absorbed in public life as well. From scant evidence, one can observe the interesting way in which the firm's management structure was re-moulded in order to ensure an adequate delegation of control. What one is witnessing is the gradual passing of control within the firm into the hands of professional managers, who for the most part had no direct practical expertise in bootmaking. A short history of the firm mentions briefly the existence of a General Staff of principal managers. The booklet entones:

.. From the fatherly autocracy of the old 'Guvnor' we passed through successive stages of government into the congenial democracy of Mr. Harry and Mr. James Manfield's regime. Mr. James was the moving spirit of the two and had the gift of inspiring others to work, to lead, to take risks. So workers became leaders and the General staff came into being and from it, in more recent years, the Board of Directors was born ..⁴

1 cf F. Bostock & Company Ltd. Appendix 11 C.4. p

2 for life see, N.I. 8/10/29 p5 and N.I. 12/7/46 p9.

3 N.I. 11/7/25 p34.

4 (E. W. Burnham), In the Service of a Famous Firm (1936) unpaginated.

Although no evidence is extant, this management team was probably developed from the late nineties, for we are told they "had such capable staff that by 1906 both brothers were able to apply their abilities to public life".¹ When the company was converted in 1920, the first directors' list was as follows:²

Name	Position	Shareholding	
		Ordinary	Preference
H. Manfield	Joint Chairman	) 41000 - shared) with*	
J. Manfield	Joint Chairman		
A.S. Garrard	Managing Director		-	4000
Fredk. Williams	Director	-	4000
Charles Tazzari	Director	-	2000
R.J.H. Cole	Director	-	2000
B.H.C. Stringer	Director	-	2000
J.B. Cartwright*		-	2000

At the time of writing, biographical information is present on only two of these men.

Alfred Samual Garrard (1877 - 1957)

He joined Manfields in 1896 as an invoice clerk, after studying at the local technical college. He was the managing director from 1920 until his retirement in 1951, when a celebrity lunch was held at the Savoy Hotel by the Manfield family. He died at his home in Weston Favell in May 1957 aged 80. His two sons entered Manfields and in 1957 were: H. W. Gerrard,

¹ N.I. 17/2/23 p15.

² C.R.O. 164082 Directors' Lists: Conversion probably as a result of ill-health of principals: Authorised capital £2m: sale agreement consideration £2,179,363 15s. 5d.

director to the Managing Director; and A. J. Garrard, personal assistant to the Managing Director. The latter married a daughter of W. Parker, principal of the Mounts Factory Co.(qv).

John Bursby Cartwright (1877 - 1950)

A chartered accountant, he came to Northampton from Leicester as accountant with Messrs. Baker & Company. In 1920 he became company secretary and director at Manfields and was a prominent figure in the inter-war shoe industry.

He took an interest in welfare work and supported the Abington Avenue Congregational Church, where he was a deacon, treasurer and Sunday school teacher. He was also a scoutmaster. He died at his home, 8 Ardington Road, Northampton, on 1st June 1950, aged 73, and was survived by his widow and three sons.

C.4: H. E. RANDALL LTD.

Henry Edward Randall was born at Northampton on 26th December 1847. By the Edwardian period he had become one of the town's leading business and public personalities. At this time, several contemporary biographies stress the lowliness of his origins, for example:

.. A native of the town, he has risen from the ranks, for from a working apprentice he has by sheer grit carved his way to the front until today he is the head of one of the most important boot manufacturing and distribution companies in the country ..¹

On reality, however, Henry Randall can scarcely be regarded as a working shoemaker "risen from the ranks".² First, he was the only son of Henry Ross Randall, a successful draper of Bridge Street, Northampton,³ and Elizabeth, a daughter of Stephen Dickens Esq., Farmer of Wootton Grange, Northants. Secondly, his education was probably superior to that of most working shoemakers. After attending a private school in the town,⁴ he went briefly to Northampton Grammar School, before completing his education privately at Coventry. Thirdly, at 14 he was apprenticed, at 2s. 6d. per week, to William Jones J.P., his uncle, a prominent manufacturer of Newland.⁵ Jones, though married, had no children and one is left to speculate that Randall's

- 1 N.P.L. unsourced newspaper cutting dated 9/12/05, Northampton Public Library. cf Gaskell "Sir Henry is one of those forceful determined Englishmen who would carve their way to the front in any sphere and in any circumstances of life, who are the builders as well as the architects of their own fortunes".
- 2 Randall himself humorously attests to this in a speech he made at the 50th anniversary of the founding of the firm. - see N.I. 13/12/19 p38.
- 3 B.S.T.J. 28/6/01 p900 died on 20th June aged 80 at Brixton.
- 4 N.M. 25/7/30 p2. St. Gregory's School, described as 'dilapidated'. The schoolmaster was Rev. Charles Lutterwell-West, Vicar of Upton, Northants.
- 5 William Jones (1815/89) prominent export only business founded in the late 1840's. A much reduced company it failed in early 1894, although by this date Alfred Fowkes was the proprietor, Jones having sold up and retired some time earlier. (S.L.R. 23/3/94 p655 and 9/11/94 p1032). At one time a prominent local figure, Jones had been elected Mayor in 1872/73. He died at his home Sidney House, Belling Road, aged 73 on 14/1/89, a victim of congestion of the lungs. A widower, he had no issue. Effects: £33,025 18s. 11d., resworn at £32,660 0s. 6d.

apprenticeship was probably more in the character of that given to a manufacturer's son than that given to a working apprentice.

Moreover, his time served, he was in the position at the very early age of 21, although "on a very modest capital",¹ to commence manufacturing in partnership with Thomas Wickes, a fellow apprentice, from a small warehouse in Regent's Square.² Six years later larger premises were acquired in Lady's Lane/Wood Street. In 1881 the partnership dissolved, Randall continued the company as a sole proprietor. A disastrous fire in November 1887 found his stock inadequately insured, but production was maintained and new premises occupied within a year. By this time, large home and export markets had been developed; the result of a marketing strategy familiar enough within the trade.

He consistently exhibited at trade fairs throughout the world. Among the more important awards was a gold and silver medal presented at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition of 1888. Randall can also be regarded as one of the earliest manufacturers to open retail shops. The first such shop was established in 1873 or 74 at 39/40 Poultry, London E.C. By 1889, this number had reached twelve.³ By 1896, at least 20 were in use in London and provincial cities,⁴ and by 1914 the number exceeded 50.⁵

One element of retail chain trading which Randall throws into strong relief is the question of using the chain to market other manufacturer's goods and

1 N.I. 18/2/22 p9 cf N.I. 13/12/19 p39 - refers to insufficiency of capital in early years and the assistance which was proved by Northants. Banking Company.

2 The date November 1869. Some sources stated premises were in St. Andrew's Street.

3 B.S.T.J. 18/5/80 p413, cf N.M. 25/7/30 p2, where they are described as "twelve of the finest shops in London".

4 B.S.T.J. 23/5/96 p65.

5 S.L.T. Supplement 1916 p vii. cf C.R.O. No.97878 puts the number of retail shops in 1909 as 60. A fall in profitability in 1909/10 caused a rationalisation of retail activities.

more especially, to trade in imported goods. In the late twentieth century, the evidence of this latter practice is readily discernible in any of the outlets run by the British Shoe Corporation, but if this practice was widespread in our period, is more difficult to establish. The evidence on nominal output capacity in Butnam's 1912 Report must rouse our suspicions that Randalls did extensively use other manufacturer's goods to stock their chain. Contemporary journalists were agreed that the company was a firm in the first rank in Northampton, yet its output is twenty-second in Butnam's table: at 2,190 pairs per week, it is only circa one eighth of that of C. & E. Lewis, the firm which heads the list. Nevertheless, a 1909 assessment of the firm suggests "the business is a large one and with retail shops in all large towns in the kingdom, and abroad the specialities of the firm are well and favourably known".¹ It is interesting to compare Randall's output with Manfields; both firms had similarly sized chains. If one then looks at the company's published annual reports, it is clear outside stocking was an important element in their retailing activities. It is probable that Randall engaged in the familiar practice of factoring, though how many Northampton manufacturers were involved is not known. Almost certainly Hornby & West was such a firm. The firm failed in 1910 and was reconstituted as a limited company, with two Randall directors on the board: P. Hayman and F. W. Hurst. In 1912 Norman Dawson, soon to become a Randall director, became managing director and William Brown a director. In the inter-war period, the company became a wholly owned subsidiary of H. E. Randall Ltd.² A second, partially owned company at this time was the Cantilever Shoe Company Ltd., which was controlled by directors of Randalls, Cantilever Corporation of New York and Hornby & West.³

1 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p523 cf N.I. 13/12/19 p36, the factory employs 300.

2 B.S.T.J. 5/5/11 p175 cf C.R.O. 47878.

3 C.R.O. 201750 (dissolved).

So much for supposition, of more importance are the reports of a High Court action brought by H. E. Randall Ltd., against The British and American Shoe Company in Chancery, April/May 1902. It provides the only documentary evidence in our period of a British shoe firm dealing extensively in American shoes, as a means of offsetting a downturn in demand for the British styles then available. It, of course, raises very interesting questions concerning the reaction of retail chains to the U.S. Import Invasion, as opposed to the reactions of the "pure" wholesale manufacturers. The case arose because in March 1897, Randalls had renamed a number of their branches as the American Shoe Company and had begun to stock them exclusively with imported American lines. The Company now sought a perpetual injunction to restrain the defendants from using similar trading names, which might serve to mislead the customer and cause the plaintiff a loss in sales. From a journalist's report, one can derive adequate information to ascertain Randall's marketing policy. It was stated by the plaintiffs that:

.. In the month of April 1897 .. (they) .. commenced to deal in boots and shoes manufactured in the U.S.A. and established a large trade therein, which they had ever since carried on. Such trade had become a most important part of their business. They had incurred great expense in establishing shops exclusively for the trade in boots and shoes of American make and in advertising and getting up this trade. They set forth that many other firms had since followed their example and commenced dealing in boots and shoes of American manufacture, but the plaintiffs state that they were, and are well known as pioneers of the trade. For the purpose of the American trade and to distinguish the shops which were carried on from their establishments for the sale of British boots and shoes in which there was a large trade; the plaintiffs said that .. they had adopted the name of the American Shoe Company ..¹

In evidence Henry Randall asserted that "we are the first persons who opened an American store in this country for American shoes"² and had great experience in retailing U.S. footwear. Indeed, he stated that the firm had sold such footwear for years before and when demand grew beyond a certain

1 B.S.T.J. 2/5/02 p662.

2 Ibid.

point, shops were opened for their exclusive sale, but he did make it clear that such shops were not just a ploy to pass off British boots and shoes as U.S., which were then in vogue,¹ although he suggested that little effort was made to inform the public that the company owned the shops. Other witnesses stressed that Randalls were attempting to secure a monopoly in the retailing of American footwear in this country. To this end, several U.S. manufacturers had signed agreements which tied them to Randall's retail outlets, whilst others were manufacturing first class lines specially for the Company.

However, despite Randall's aggressive retailing policy and its importance to the company's Edwardian growth, the basis of this growth had been the successful commercial exploitation of one speciality line: the 'Tenacious' tennis shoe.² Randall was an innovative as well as an enterprising manufacturer.³ He introduced several speciality lines into the trade,⁴ but none caught the public's imagination like the 'Tenacious'. Patented in 1882 by 1889 annual production had reached 4,000,000 pairs⁵ and continued to rise. In the words of one contemporary biographer:

.. (In the boot trade) .. was scope for individuality and for striking out in a new direction and he struck out with a purpose blending industry with a brain made for business, grasping opportunities as they came, never letting a chance slip by he gradually forged ahead until he made his coup d'etat with a speciality and at the same time fame and fortune ..⁶

1 Ibid. "it would be impossible to make the same style of American boots. We do not make English boots to sell as American".

2 This shoe featured a stitched rubber sole, rather than the usual stick-on sole, which tended to fall off with wear.

3 N.M. 25/7/30 p2. He was "among the most versatile manufacturers in the country".

4 Between 1887/92 Randall was a promoter and director in the Ab Intra Bootmaking Process Co. Ltd., established to promote a radically new machine process for nailing shoes - see P.R.O. BT 31/3912/24735 cf N.M. 5/11/89 p5.

5 B.S.T.J. 18/5/89 p412.

6 Gaskell Northants. Historical Biography and Pictorial (n.d: 190?) no pagination.

Nevertheless, the need for a diverse and versatile product range was recognised, for in addition to strong sportswear the company produced a full range of footwear to delicate ladies shoes.

Just what rate of growth Randall achieved by these policies can be judged from the extant limited company papers and published annual reports. The sole proprietorship was registered as a public company on 12th May 1896, with a nominal capital of £70,000. The sale agreement valued the company at £89,529 and the vendor was paid in shares viz: 5,000 6% cumulative preference and 25,000 ordinary. The pattern of share and loan capital growth is shown below:

Share and Loan Capital Growth 1896-1914

Year	Nominal Capital	Total Calls	Total Debt Due Mortgages and Charges
1896 - 97	70000	70000	30000
1898 - 00	120000	70000	30000
1901 - 04	120000	105000	30000
1905 - 07	120000	120000	30000
1908 - 14	170000	135000	1908 - 30000 1909/10- 47250 1911/14- 76750

Source: Annual Returns - C.R.O. File¹

In February 1910, Debenture holders rejected a confidential offer made by Sir Henry Randall to exchange debentures and seek a stock exchange quota. Our information on profitability is less complete being taken from periodic trade journal reports of Annual General Meetings. In the years immediately preceding incorporation profits were running at about £6,500 per annum.²

1 H. E. Randall Ltd. C.R.O. No. 47878

2 B.S.T.J. 23/5/96 p65.

DECLARED COMPANY PROFITS FOR 1896 - 1914

Year	Gross Profit	Net Profit
1896	8603· 0 ·0	4291· 0 ·0
1897		
1898	10834·11 ·3	7045·11 ·8
1899	11594· 1 ·2	7602· 6 ·4
1900		
1901	16443·10 ·5	11232·13 ·2
1902		
1903	23941· 2 ·4	16272·10 ·3
1904	22936·13 ·0	15562· 2 ·6
1905		
1906	20317·15 ·1	13226· 7 ·1
1907	22487·15 ·1	14726· 7 ·1
1908		
1909	19354· 2 ·3	11864·14 ·0
1910		
1911	9097· 4 ·5	
1912	13803· 4 ·8	7603· 1 ·3
1913		
1914		

Source: Boot and Shoe Trades Journal

Within three years of going public profits had reached £11,594 1s. 2d.¹

Two years later the figure was £16,443 10s. 5d.² and by 1904 £22,936 13s. 0d.³

These early years can be clearly marked out as ones of progress for the company. In 1902 the Chairman noted:

.. The directors congratulate the shareholders upon the continued progress and success of the company and would remind them that since its formation six years ago, besides paying dividends of 6% on preference and 10% on ordinary shares in each year, they have written off as depreciation on machinery, plant, etcetera £12,159 10s. 7d., taken off the sum of £2,361 13s. 1d. from the book value of the goodwill (which now stands at £5,000); created a reserve fund now amounting to £10,000 and are carrying forward this year the sum of £4,945 14s. 11d. . the trade has shown an increase upon that of previous years ..⁴

Thereafter some loss making retail branches caused a set back: by 1911 profits stood at £9,097 4s. 5d.⁵ A rationalisation of the activities of the chain at this point, however, restored profitability. Through the period 1896/1914 a dividend was declared annually: 6% on preference shares, 10%/12½% on ordinary shares, save in 1911 when the ordinary dividend was temporarily cut to 5% to offset retailing losses. It was restored to its 'normal level' thereafter.⁶

Despite these trading problems at the end of the period, the overall pattern is one of development and growth and the central figure in this business success was assumed by contemporary trade and company reports to be Randall himself. The Annual General Meeting Report for 1901, for example, very

1 B.S.T.J. 3/3/00 p338: for year ending 31/12/99.

2 B.S.T.J. 7/3/02 p378: for year ending 31/12/01.

3 B.S.T.J. 24/2/05 p357: for year ending 31/12/04.

4 B.S.T.J. 7/3/02 op. cit. cf B.S.T.J. 26/2/04 p359. which recorded record business having been done; production increased by 20,000 pairs and 11 new retail branches opened.

5 B.S.T.J. 15/3/12 p532: for year ending 31/12/11.

6 B.S.T.J. Ibid.

clearly reveals the central role he played. In this report all comments about policy are in the first person, and it concludes but noting "the chairman in proposing a vote of thanks, bore testimony to the great ability and carefulness displayed by H. E. Randall".¹

Contemporary accounts refer to his "exceptional ability" and "forceful determination"; to his "cordiality and sympathy towards customers and staff"; to his "uncanny friendliness". Yet Randall was not purely a man of business,² for he did much in public life and enjoyed a full social life. As an appreciation of him stated in 1919:

.. he has never allowed himself to develop into a typical captain of industry. He has enthusiasms outside his business, an ingrained devotion to healthy sport and recreation and an almost passionate love of his native town. He has the happy faculty of being able to dismiss from his mind his business worries and anxieties. Had he devoted all his energy to his business and none to the social side .. H. E. Randall Ltd. might have been a greater commercial force than it is today, but Sir Henry Randall might not have lived to enjoy his triumph ..³

Like other prominent manufacturers in this study, Randall's ability to participate significantly in business and public life depended upon the presence of able professional managers or directors, who could undertake much of the company's daily management and to whom significant areas of responsibility could be delegated. This new professional class was beginning to permeate the board rooms of several of the larger footwear firms from the late nineties.⁴ It was the strength and depth of the Randall board, which contributed to the company's and the principal's success.

As has been noted, as managing director of the company, Sir Henry continued

1 B.S.T.J. 14/3/02 p388. A similar trend can be noted in other reports, e.g. Directors' Report year ending 31/12/10.

2 Directory of Directors (1926) Also a director of the Liverpool and Globe Insurance Company Ltd. (local board).

3 N.I. 13/12/19 p35. cf N.I. 26/7/30 pl. "He was probably more closely knit to the life and industry of the borough during eight decades of his life than any other man of his generation".

4 See for example, Manfield & Sons, Sears & Company, A. E. Marlow.

to "hold the reins as firmly as ever" through into the 1920's, although it had been over two decades since the company's conversion. His continued control was in part the result of the family having a controlling shareholding. Upon conversion they had an overall shareholding of 52% and although by the end of our period this had fallen to nearer 30%, Randall continued to hold in excess of 50% of the equity, which of course, carried with it voting rights,¹ but it was more than this. In a speech celebrating the firm's 50th anniversary, fellow director F. W. Hirst, stressed the ability, experience and guidance of Randall:

.. They (the directors) desired not only to express their appreciation of Sir Henry's energy, ability and business capabilities, but the good hard work he had put in to make the business such a success and to express their gratitude for the manner in which he had made it easy for his co-directors. They had found Sir Henry had made it easy for them and they were able to do what was required of them with a minimum of trouble .. he said that during the time they had been on the board they had never yet had occasion at any directors' meeting to vote. They had always in some manner or other arranged that all their resolutions were unanimous. He did not mean to say there had never been any differences of opinion, but when these cases had arisen they had talked it over until they had all agreed to a certain course of action. In this matter Sir Henry's experience and guidance had been invaluable and when he had brought forward propositions they had always been such that nobody could possibly disagree.²

This is one of several strands of evidence suggesting that this was a unanimity born out of Randall's sheer force of personality and imposition of will. The board and management team, strongly loyal to his policies, nevertheless had sufficient ability to play a dominant role in the company's affairs to enable Randall to carry out his public duties and to follow a social life.

The initial board was composed of Randall and H. C. Richards K.C., F.R.H.S., F.S.A. M.P., O. A. Drucker M.P. and C. M. Westfield. All three were London men and beyond having the necessary credentials with which to influence

1 H. E. Randall Ltd. C.R.O. No.47878. Shareholding lists.

2 N.I. Ibid p40.

potential investors, they had valuable business experience and contacts in the city. All three, moreover, were personal friends of Randall; the former two having had strong political ties with Northampton.¹

The second generation board was likewise composed of close personal friends of Randall; two of whom having been long-serving managers with the company. These men were to remain with the firm into the inter-war period.

Collectively described as "some of the keenest business brains of the day".² Unlike the initial board, they were local men, whose business experience was rooted in the shoe trade.³

Therefore, despite his continued commitment to the firm, Randall was able to enjoy a full and influential public life. It has been suggested that not only was he "admirably capable of discharging (his public duties) with requisite dignity and ability"⁴ but also that it was very much part of a central driving force within him, for here was a man who pursued and acquired goals all his life. Gaskell wrote of him:

.. (He) is an outstanding figure in the social and political life not only of the county capital but of the whole shire ..⁵

He was a "thorough Tory - a staunch supporter of the constitutional cause. As a worker, speaker and benefactor he has done great things for conservatism in the county".⁶ He sat as a Conservative member of the local school board 1885/89 and of the Town Council from 1886; being successively councillor, alderman and on two occasions (1893/94 and 1897/98) Mayor.⁷

1 See Addendum for details.

2 N.I. 13/12/19 p35.

3 See Addendum for details.

4 N.I. 21/11/08 p4.

5 Gaskell unpaginated.

6 Ibid.

7 During his second term he was centrally responsible for the donation by Lady Wantage of Abington Park to the town.

From 1894 he served as a borough magistrate, being for many years chairman of the Brewster Sessions: he was a life long abstainer. He did much to promote the work of the Northampton and County Conservative Club and was a director of the Northampton Conservative Building and Land Society. He was also a strong and generous supporter of technical education. He unsuccessfully contested Northampton at the General Election in 1900¹ and from this date is witnessed his gradual estrangement from the official Conservative cause on the issue of protectionism. His almost certain nomination in the 1906 General Election was rendered impossible because of his support of Free Trade policies. In contrast, the local Conservative Association supported Chamberlain's protectionist measures. Speculation existed as to whether he would stand as an Independent, but in fact, he never did. He had already retired as a councillor in 1901. It was noted:

.. The bitterness of party strife in those days drove Sir Henry out of municipal life, as it has done many another public spirited men who would not face the dirt through which one had in those days to plod and attain or retain civic dignity ..²

Nevertheless, he received political honours. In 1905 he received a knighthood in recognition of his political and public services. In 1909/10, he served as high sheriff of the county, the first Northamptonian to do so in living memory.³

A philanthropic man, he took a keen interest in all aspects of Northampton's welfare and trade, giving liberally of both his time and substance.

Contemporaries noted approvingly:

.. Few members of the trade have had such interesting and varied

1 N.I. 13/12/19 p36 - a postscript suggests that by 1919 Randall commented that "He was a strong Conservative (though) he was not sure he was so strong a one today".

3 N.I. 21/11/08 p4 cf B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p484.

2 N.M. 25/7/30 p2.

experience and none have striven harder for the welfare of the town and trade of Northampton ..¹

.. there has been no movement for the good of the town of Northampton during the last 30 years in which Sir Henry has not played a prominent part ..²

In addition to many private acts of benevolence, the biggest being the founding of the Randall Annuity in 1919, he helped direct the activities of many local charities and hospitals. He was founder of the Northampton Good Samaritan Society; a trustee of the Northampton and Municipal and St. John's Charities; a trustee of the Weston Favell Nursing Home; a past president of the Boot and Shoe Trades Benevolent Institution. He supported the district's two nursing organisations, being one of the founders of the Queen Victoria Nursing Institute. As Mayor, he introduced the Poor Childrens' Christmas Dinner Fund. A welfarist he provided a range of benefits for his employees. In his will he provided all old serving employees between 1896/1930 a £1 for each year's service.³

He was a member of the Northamptonshire Territorial Association. In 1911 he was President of the Northampton Natural History Society, and as a long standing member gave much sympathetic help, though was not active in the Society's deliberations.⁴ A lover of music, he helped the work of the Northampton Musical Society, being its Hon. Treasurer for over 20 years and its president in 1922⁵ A devout churchman, he was sometime churchwarden of St. Paul's, Northampton. A keen golfer and croquet player, he was also a founder of the Northampton Amateur Athletic Association and County Cricket Club. He devoted much of his spare time to gardening, but his real passion

1 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p532.

2 N.I. 13/12/19 p36.

3 N.I. 23/8/30 p10.

4 J.N.N.H.S. Vol.25 (1929/30) p190.

5 N.I. 18/2/22 p9.

was horse racing. A life time devotee of the turf and a prominent amateur race horse owner and breeder, in 1903 he was the leading U.K. owner, securing more winning horses than anyone else. The following year, his horses won both the Ascot and the Goodwood Stakes: in 1906 he won over £2,800 in prize money. His son, Herbert, was a prominent amateur jockey.¹ A robust and colourful character, he pursued an active business and public life until shortly before his death. He died on 18th July 1930 at his residence, The Hall, Monks Park, Northampton, aged 83, following a severe heart attack. He married Elizabeth, a daughter of John Wright of Northampton, on 31st May 1873.² They had issue three daughters and three sons: Percy (qv), who became head of the firm, Herbert, and Ross, who had emigrated to Australia many years previously. All survived him. He left personal effects valued at £70,400 9s. 1d., resworn at £72,101 8s. 10d.

Addendum

Henry Charles Richards (1851 - 1905)

Born in Hackney on the 10th April 1851. He was educated at the City of London School and College. Called to the bar in 1881, he took silk in 1898 (for his legal career and publications see Who's Who,)³ For over 12 years with a large city firm, he was elected a member of the council of the London Chamber of Commerce in 1902. An ardent political activist, he addressed 3,000 meetings over a 20 year period on behalf of the constitutional party. He was a Conservative candidate for Northampton (1883/92) and unsuccessfully stood against Bradlaugh on three occasions; Randall's friendship dates from this time. He was elected M.P. for East Finsbury from 1895. In Parliament he supported army reform, old age pensions and a modified tariff reform; he was very keen on middle class representation in the cabinet. An antiquarian

1 The World 15/3/10.

2 Grant (1904) gives surname as Wright and Kelly's Knightage (1923) p149 as Knight.

3 Who's Who 1897 p562 and 1902 p1085.

and churchman, he founded the City Church and Churchyard Preservation Society (1880) and was chairman of the city branch of the Church Defence Institution in the late seventies. He was a member of several London Clubs. A resident of St. Leonards-on-Sea, he died at Marylebone, Middlesex, on 1st June 1905. A limited administration was granted on his effects of £48,715 15s. Od. gross.

Adolphus Drucker, L.L.B., M.P. (1868 - 1903)

Born Amsterdam on 1st May 1868, the third son of Louis Drucker author of many works in finance. Educated at Leyden Gymnasium and University. He successfully contested Northampton parliamentary constituency in 1892 and held the seat until 1900. He had a range of business interests and was much interested in the development of British Columbia. He died, in mysterious circumstances on 10th December 1903: no trace of a will has been found.

Charles Marcus Westfield

Charles Westfield of 'Saintsbury', High Road, Upper Clapton, Middlesex; was a gunpowder manufacturer. He died on the 22nd February 1903. His personal effects were valued at £23,735 9s. 5d. gross; resworn at £24,683 6s. 6d.

H. C. Percy Randall

The eldest son of Sir Henry, he was born at Northampton and was educated at the Northampton Technical and County School. In early life he was trained as a concert violinist, studying first in Germany and then at the Guildhall School of Music, London, under Johannes Wolfe. A Wagner enthusiast, he gave many concerts in the midlands before his election as a director of the family firm in 1902 encroached, forcing him to leave the concert platform. He relinquished his directorship for a short while after 1912, but rejoined and after his father's death in 1930 became chairman and managing director. He retired from business in 1941, though one imagines his business life, whilst competent, was somewhat irksome. He remained a leader in local cultural circles: organising charitable concerts, supporting

the poetry society and so forth. He was also a life president of the Northampton United Tennis Club.¹ From 1926, he represented St. Michaels Ward on the local town council.

He died at his residence, 29 Holyrood Road, Northampton, on 3rd August 1943, being survived by his widow Phylliss (née Moser) of Redhill, Surrey. His effects were valued for probate purposes ten years later at £407 2s. 9d. gross.

Phineas Hayman

Hayman joined the company in 1879, and from the 1887 fire, came more prominently into its management. It has been written:

.. The fire was, of course, a great loss and trouble to (Randall) .. but it brought his friend, Mr. Hayman, more into the business than he had been before, because he saw what difficulties they were under .. He came down and was with them ten years and gave them very valuable help during that time ..²

All the information we have regarding Hayman's residence, places him as a London man: was he in charge of the London retail outlets or was he the firm's London agent? The latter is more plausible as he was for many years a member of the British American Export and Import Company, 8 Long Lane, E.C.1.³ In 1902 shareholding lists record him already at this address, a gentleman, and one of the firm's principal shareholders with 1,200 ordinary shares.⁴ He joined the board sometime between 1903 and 1910. He was also a director of the Company's subsidiaries, Hornby & West (qv) and the Cantilever Shoe Company Ltd.⁵

1 N.M. 6/8/43 pl.

2 N.I.loc.cit. p39.

3 D.D. 1921.

4 H. E. Randall Ltd., C.R.O.No.47878, shareholding lists of B.S.T.J. 8/8/02 pl59.

5 Cantilever Shoe Co. Ltd. C.R.O. No.201750 (dissolved).

He died on the 13th September 1924 at his home, 22 Sidmouth Road, Brondesbury Park, Middlesex. He was survived by his widow Janice Rosalie and his three sons; Lewis Frank, Philip G. and Harry L., all of whom are described as "merchants" in his will. His personal effects were valued at £13,887 11s. 6d. and resworn at £15,637 4s. 4d. gross.

Frederick William Hurst

His connection with the firm dates from 1878.¹ Like Hayman, he was a senior manager who joined the board between 1903/10; he was also a director of the two subsidiaries. In 1888, he married a first cousin of Sir Henry's.² He died on the 24th July 1941 at his home 1 Fontaine Road, Streatham, London. No trace has been found of a will.

Beresford Norman Dawson

Born 1889, a member of the famous London shoe manufacturing family (qv), in which firm he was a partner until 1912. After being in business as a sole trader³ for a matter of months he joined the Randall board and those of its subsidiaries. Sir Henry was an old friend of the Dawson family.

1 B.S.T.J. 19/4/13 p113.

2 Ibid

3 B.S.T.J. 30/8/12 p293.

C.5: FREDERICK BOSTOCK & COMPANY LTD.

Frederick Bostock Senior was born at Stafford in 1812, a son of Thomas, who was "one of the earliest and most successful wholesale manufacturers in the country. (He) made a fortune, retired early and left the business to his sons, who appear to have inherited his rare business capacity".¹

Frederick migrated to Northampton in 1835 and commenced manufacturing there from small premises at the corner of College Street and Swan Yard: the 1912 prospectus states that the company was formed by Thomas in 1836. As the business expanded, the firm moved to successively larger warehouses; first in Regent Street, then Wellington Street and in 1859, Victoria Street.

Regarded in the trade as a "man of great ability and enterprise", he was one of the earliest users of machinery in this period. Finally in 1882, possession was taken of a purpose-built factory at Victoria Street/Newland, which remained the nucleus of manufacturing activities in the town, well into the twentieth century.² Both working conditions and labour relations here were regarded by contemporaries as being exemplary: both the founder and his sons embraced welfarist ideals.³ In the eighties, two hundred were employed at the factory, whilst many more still laboured outside. Also by this time retail shops had been opened up at London, Manchester and Birmingham. Frederick "paid special attention to this line of trade".⁴

1 S.L.R. 6/9/90 p311.

2 B.T.31/20790/123106 Sale Agreement dated 8/6/12 lists the Northampton property held by the partnership as follows:
 2(a) "That freehold factory or warehouse in Victoria Street and Newland Nos.60,62,64,66,68 and 70 Newland and a range of business premises in Newland Terrace at the rear of and adjacent to 64/70 Newland, which six messuages and range of business premises were purchased by the vendor from Henry Vorley or William Turner and others.
 2(b) That freehold factory or warehouse on the east side of Victoria Street and also in the occupation of the vendor.
 2(c) That freehold factory and premises in Countess Road let to Sutor Ltd. and the landlord's machinery and fixtures in the premises.

3 see for example N.I. December 1962 p49.

4 N.M. 29/8/90 p6.

Under his guidance the firm established a world-wide reputation for good quality and well-crafted footwear, especially Wellingtons and handstitched work. An extensive export trade, first with Brazil, Argentina and later with Australasia and India, had been developed. Bostocks was one of Northampton's largest exporters by the late 19th century.

An "unaustentatious character, of a retiring disposition",¹ though prominent in trade matters Frederick senior played little part in local political and public life. In 1863, however, he had reluctantly contested the town's East Ward as a Liberal, but was beaten into third place. A moderate, in his later years he opposed Gladstone's home rule policy. A Baptist, he was actively involved in the work of the College Street Chapel. He died on the 26th August 1890, aged 78, at his residence 'Kerr House', Sheep Street, following a severe affection of the throat. His public funeral was attended by "vast crowds",² underscoring his position as one of the town's leading and oldest manufacturers. His personal effects were valued at £44,762 14s. Od. He was survived by his wife, Ellen Meine Bostock and nine children: his second son Neville, predeceased him. His youngest son, Arthur, educated at Oundle and Cambridge, did not enter the firm. Consequently, control passed to his eldest son Frederick junior. Frederick junior was born at Northampton in 1859 and educated at Bassage House School, Gloucestershire. "After experience in Paris and other places, he joined his father in the business".³ In 1880 he was taken into partnership and later in the decade "bore the brunt of the conduct of the immense trade".⁴ From his father's death until his own demise in 1940

1 B.S.T.J. 30/8/90 p209 and 219.

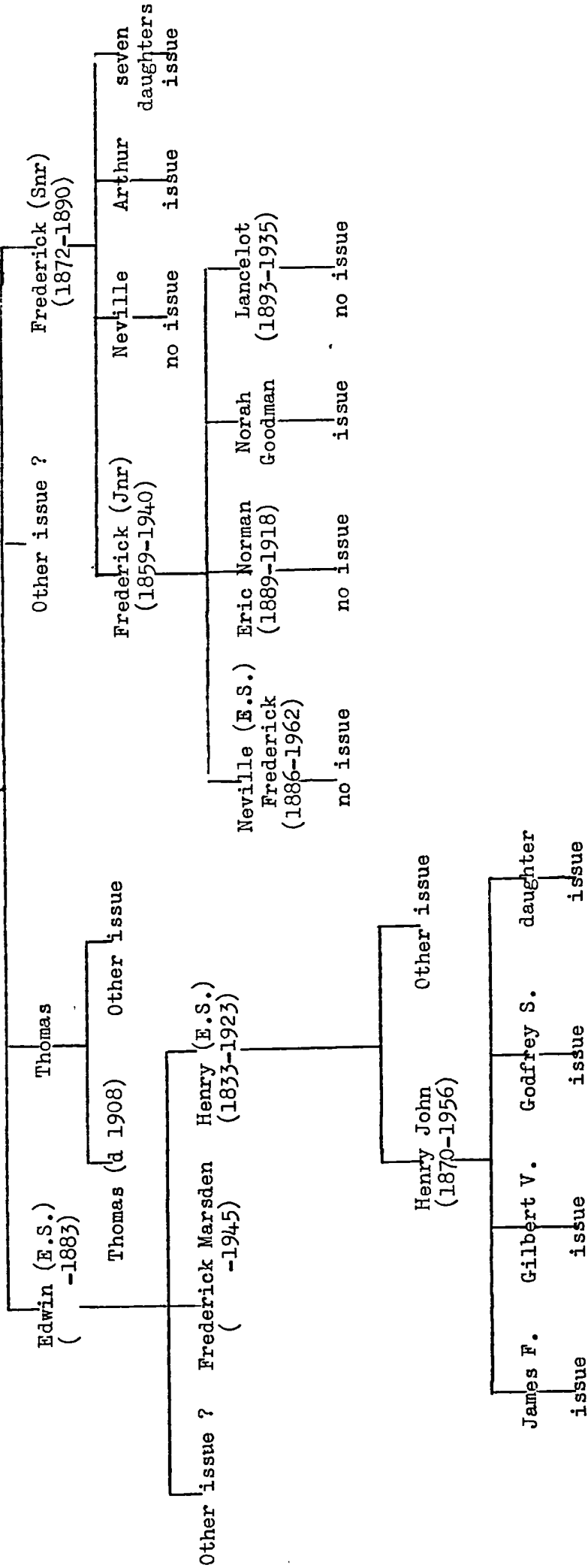
2 N.M. 29/8/90 p8.

3 Pike, Northants in 20th Century (1908) p201.

4 N.M. Ibid.

BOSTOCK ORGANISATION

Thomas (Stafford)



an obituary states that "he carried through the heavy responsibility of controlling and developing the business".¹ He was described as a businessman with "shrewd, sound judgement, combined with a never failing old world courtesy".² This statement however, tells only part of the development of the firm during these years.

Through the 19th century a close working relationship had evolved between the two independent family firms of Edwin Bostock & Company of Stafford³ and Frederick Bostock & Company of Northampton. Managerial links existed - that is to say, the active participation of individuals from each branch of the family in the other's business, but equally important were the trading links which served to compliment the effectiveness of the marketing effort of each firm.⁴ In the early 20th century, mainly due to Henry J. Bostock's⁵ direction and energy, these informal trading links became organisationally strengthened, as increased competition and rising costs underlined the strategic importance of the marketing and sales function within firms in the industry generally. It was Henry John Bostock's inspiration which led to the formation of a subsidiary company, Lotus Shoemakers Ltd. in 1903 to market leading Bostock branded products,

1 N.I. May 1940 p6. full quote reads:

"Since the death of his father 50 years ago, he had carried through for a greater part of that long period, the heavy responsibility of controlling and developing the business which has established a proud reputation throughout the shoe trade of the world for excellence of its product."

2 Ibid.

3 Edwin, Frederick senior's elder brother, had taken over the business interests of his father at Stafford and his brother Thomas at Stone in 1837, remaining head until his death on 22/10/83. (Effects £43,402 8s. 5d.) Control then devolved to his sons, Edwin junior, Thomas (died 1908, effects £38,802 10s. 4d.) and Henry (1833/1923, effects £116,115 12s. 5d: member of tariff commission, Who's Who 1912 p218).

4 N.M.Ibid, Frederick made men's boots "but in conjunction with Edwin Bostock, his recently deceased brother, at Stafford, Frederick Bostock supplied all varieties of boots and shoes".

5 (1870/1956), son of Henry (1833/1923) qv, of Stafford. See biography by Keith Brooker in D.B.B. Vol.1 (1984).

the Lotus and Delta boots: he became its managing director. The branded production of both companies was now marketed by the new company, using the then innovative 'in stock system', which enabled shop retailers to draw on stocks held by manufacturers as required, rather than the traditional practice of placing advance orders. This not only enabled the manufacturer to improve stock control and regulate seasonal fluctuations in levels of manufacturing activity, but obviated the need amongst retailers to commit working capital to large stocks. Ladies footwear was supplied from Stafford and menswear from Northampton: traditionally, firms at each footwear centre in Britain had tended to concern themselves primarily with the manufacture and distribution of either men's or women's wear. The Bostock collaboration reflects a general trend made by manufacturers in this period toward eradicating this historic, and in retailing terms, outmoded product specialisation.

In 1911, F. Bostock & Company established a manufacturing subsidiary, Sutor Ltd. "for the purpose of manufacturing for the Lotus Shoemakers Ltd. in a separate factory at Countess Road, Northampton, the well-known Lotus men's boots and shoes which prior to that date were exclusively manufactured by Mr. Frederick Bostock, in the Victoria Street factory".¹ The nominal capital of the new company was £10,000; its registered office, 17 Market Square, Northampton. Initially, the fully paid-up shares were held by Neville (250 shares) and Eric (250), who were appointed joint managing directors at registration on 11th December 1911, with a remuneration of £100 per annum: Frederick (3,500) joined the board in late January 1912.² With the incorporation of F. Bostock & Company,³ all 4,000 shares were

1 P.R.O. BT 31/20790/123106 prospectus p2.

2 C.R.O. 119040: Memorandum of Association; list of directors 29/1/12 and first Annual Return 26/1/12.

3 Ibid - Special Resolution 3/2/12.

transferred to the new parent company and a minority shareholding of 500 preference shares given to Lotus Shoemakers Ltd.¹

Indeed the incorporation of F. Bostock & Company as a public company on 9th July 1912, with a nominal capital of £100,000,² marked a further stage in inter-company cooperation between the Bostock family business interests.³

The prospectus which was issued inviting the public to subscribe in 40,000 preference shares, provides an indication of the company's size at this date.⁴ The assets were valued as follows:⁵

	£
Freehold land and buildings at Victoria Street and Countess Road, Northampton.	21,746
Machinery, plant and fixtures.	9,831
Stock in trade at cost price.	28,126
Book debts (guaranteed).	19,883
Cash and bills in hand.	441
4,000 shares of £1 in Sutor Ltd.	<u>4,000</u>
	84,027
Plus Goodwill.	<u>10,156</u>
	<u>94,183</u>

The purchase price of £94,183 was payable as to £50,000 in ordinary shares, credited as fully paid and as to the balance by the company discharging the liabilities to creditors on loan account which amounted to £25,701 and by taking over the liabilities to trade creditors which amounted to £18,482. Similarly, evidence as to profitability was detailed as follows:

1 Ibid 22/3/13 - Particulars Shares of Debentures.

2 50,000 ordinary and 50,000 7% cumulative preference shares.

3 Edwin Bostock & Company had been incorporated in 1898.

4 In fact the take up of shares was greater than this. 21/2/13 48,115 preference had been allotted, calls worth 47,115 had been made (C.R.O. Annual Return 1912). At 13/12/14 48,695 had been allotted with 48,505 having been made (C.R.O. Annual Return 1913) This of course, was in addition to 50,000 ordinary shares allocated to Frederick junior as consideration for the sale of the concern.

5 BT 31/20790/123106, prospectus p2 of Sale Agreement balance sheet, Annual Returns 1912-13. Note: freehold property was mortgaged in the sum of £8,000.

For year ending 31st December 1909	£9,094 0s. 6d.
" " " " " 1910	£9,774 9s. 8d. ¹
" " " " " 1911	£8,798 19s. 8d. ¹

The principal directors of the Stafford parent company; Henry and Henry John, joined Frederick junior, Neville and Eric, on the new Northampton board and this board also controlled Sutor Ltd. In addition Frederick joined members of the Stafford family on the boards of Edwin Bostock and Lotus Shoemakers, acting as vice-chairman. Frederick was chairman and managing director of the new company at a remuneration of £1,000 per annum: other board members receiving £100 per annum.

In this way a virtual merger of control in matters of general policy was achieved. F. Bostock's prospectus emphasised that marketing was the prime consideration in this strategy:

.. Messrs. Henry Bostock and Henry John Bostock, directors of Edwin Bostock & Company Ltd. and Lotus Shoemakers Ltd., have joined the board of this company (and agreed to act as directors for seven years) for the purposing of securing closer cooperation between Edwin Bostock & Company Ltd., .. and this company, as past experience has proved that selling expenses are reduced when the two firms work in conjunction. As an instance of this it may be mentioned that considerable advantages have accrued to the two firms through their association with the Lotus Shoemakers Ltd., who have acted as distributors for goods bearing the Lotus trade mark ..²

A total merger of interests occurred in 1919 when Lotus Ltd. (the name had been changed in 1914) acquired all companies operated by the Bostock families. The company's capital had grown steadily from 1912: nominal capital was increased on three separate occasions between then and 1919 from (£10,000 to £100,000), with calls in 1919 amounting to £100,000. Upon the merger a further increase to £1,000,000 was sanctioned to provide working and development capital:

1 Ibid; profits net of depreciation and other expenses but before charging income tax and interest. cf B.S.T.J. 7/2/13 p204 net profits for 1912 £7490.

2 B.T.31 Ibid - prospectus pl.

.. The object of the present issue is to provide funds for the extension of the factories at Stafford, Stone and Northampton, and further working capital, as the company's policy of supplying the public with boots and shoes of quality at fixed prices through retailers drawing their supplies from central stocks at Stafford and Northampton has (increased to a) demand that the present factories cannot meet ..

The total of assets of all companies taken over by Lotus in 1919 was as follows:²

	£	s.	d.
(a) Land and buildings	152,875	8	7
(b) Machines, tools, fittings etcetera	48,428	5	8
(c) Stock in trade	259,166	12	4
(d) Book debts	132,881	17	3
(e) Investments in subsidiary companies	39,002	0	0
(f) Investments: war loan	29,834	0	0
(g) Cash and bills	3,775	13	11
	665,963	17	9
Less liabilities	169,970	19	11
	495,992	17	10
Plus proceeds of 1919 issue	188,150	0	0
	684,142	17	10

Consideration for the sale was by the allotment of £176,000 in shares and a balance of £2,734 in cash to F. Bostock & Company Ltd; and the allotment of £45,474 in shares, 89,860 in £10 shares and £9,123 in cash to Edwin Bostock & Company Ltd. The 1919 prospectus also gave details as to the profitability of the merging companies as is shown below:

Gross Profits* of Lotus and the four amalgamating companies 1912/18.³

Year ending 31st December	£	s.	d.
1912	38,591	18	10
" " " " 1913	45,039	3	5
" " " " 1914	45,444	5	2
" " " " 1915	58,892	8	2
" " " " 1916	66,904	9	5
" " " " 1917	70,531	6	0
" " " " 1918	75,955	7	7
	401,358	18	7

Notes: (i) *after paying excess profits duty and all working expenses.
(ii) average annual of £57,339 16s. 11d.

1 Lotus Ltd. C.R.O. 78857 prospectus (1919) p2.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

The controlling interest in the new company rested in the hands of the Stafford family, though Frederick junior was vice chairman and joint managing director to 1931, after which time Neville took over these responsibilities. Henry Bostock was elected chairman of the new company until his death in 1923, when his son, Henry John, took over from him; retaining the post until 1953. His was the dominant personality of the inter-war period: he was responsible for directing the successful post merger rationalisation of the Company's activities. Under his chairmanship, Lotus became one of the brand leaders in the 20th Century footwear industry.¹

Control of the Northampton interests remained under the direction of Frederick junior and his sons Neville F. and Lancelot: Eric had been killed by enemy action in 1918.²

Besides heavy business commitments, Frederick junior had a long association with the Northampton Gas Company, of which he was chairman for 22 years from 1918. He was also the honorary chairman of the St. Matthew's Nursing Home from 1920. He was, for many years, a member of the western area committee of the Territorial Army Association. In 1937 he was made a deputy lieutenant for Northamptonshire. A devout churchman, he took an active interest in the work of the Holy Sepulchre Church, Northampton, and later Pitsford Parish Church. He was one of the trustees of the local church charities.³ He, however, took no active part in politics, though was asked to stand as a candidate for both the town and county councils. Much of his later years were spent indulging his love of the arts; he was

1 The other dominant member of the board at this time was Frederick Marson Bostock of Stafford, who died in 1945 (see N.I. 28/9/45 p15).

2 N.I. 18/6/21 p6. Lt. Eric Bostock M.C., killed in France 1918.

3 Pike 1908 p201: Pike also designates him president of the N. Skating Association.

a collector of engravings and antique china; and of gardening. Locally noted for his 'aesthetic taste', he had at one time served as a coopted member on the town's Art Gallery Committee. A fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society, the garden at Pitsford House enjoyed a local reputation for its excellence. He had also been interested in shooting from an early age and was a pioneer of local golf, being a founding captain of the Kettering Road and county Golf Clubs.

He died at his residence, Pitsford House, Northamptonshire,¹ aged 80, on 18th April 1940, after a six months illness: gastric influenza. His effects were valued at £93,064 15s. Od. (resworn at £97,151 ls. 2d.) He was survived by his wife, one of his three sons and one daughter. He married Annie, a daughter of George Norman, who was Mayor of Northampton in 1890/91, in 1885.² It has been noted that:

.. Both the Norman and Bostock families and their kinsmen, the Faulkeners, were among the foremost in church, cultural and social activities in Victorian Northampton ..³

It should be further noted that an aunt of Frederick junior, married Dr. Faulkener: whilst another married into yet another prominent family: she married James Manfield, shoe manufacturer (qv). Moreover, his sister, Norah Goodman Bostock, married N. Mobbs, a member of the prominent Kettering last-making firm.

As has been noted, Frederick juniors three sons were all engaged in the business by the early part of this century. Brief biographical notes on Neville F. and Lancelot are appended.

Neville Frederick Bostock (1886 - 1962)

Born at Northampton in 1886. He was educated at Charterhouse. After he spent his working life in the firm. He was a director of F. Bostock & Company

¹ He resided at his father's house in Sheep Street until 1902, and prior to that at 'Springfield', Northampton.

² Annie Bostock (1860/1952) died at Spratton, aged 92.

³ N.I. 13/6/52 p16.

and a director of Sutor Ltd. He became a director of Lotus Ltd. in 1931, following his father as managing director of the Northampton factory. He retired in 1950. He served in the Royal Artillery in the Great War, attaining the rank of captain. He took no part in public life, but was a keen amateur sportsman: shooting, fishing and golf. He was a former captain of the Northamptonshire Golf Club. Formerly of Pitsford House, he spent his last years at 'Cotfield', Spratton, Northamptonshire, where he lived with his mother (and sister). He died at Northampton General Hospital on 7th November 1962. His effects were valued at £97,589 6s. 0d. He was a bachelor.¹

Lancelot Bostock (1893 - 1935)

Born at Northampton in 1893. He was educated at Charterhouse and at Brasenose College, Oxford, where he took a B.A. He joined the Northamptonshire Regiment from University in 1916, attaining the rank of captain. He was wounded in March 1918 and awarded the D.S.O. In business, he was a buyer for Lotus Ltd. and a director of the Northampton Gaslight Company, but he was best remembered for his sporting prowess:

.. (He) was one of the best and most popular sportsmen in the county. He was a great lover of all forms of sport and he leaves behind him an indelible memory of games cleanly and well played ..²

He followed the family's passion for shooting, fishing and golf; he was captain of Northamptonshire Golf Club in 1929. He also excelled at cricket, football, rugby, squash, and was an expert billiard player. Obituaries speak of his modesty and kindness. He died at Northampton General Hospital on 1935, from septic pneumonia. He was accorded semi-military honours at his funeral, which was attended by a "large assembly of representatives of the boot and shoe industry and semi-public bodies in the town and county".³ A bachelor, he resided with his parents at Pitsford House.

1 N.I. December 1962 p49 and S.L.N.15/11/62 p8. .

2 N.I. 12/3/35 p4.

3 N.I. Ibid.

C.6: G. T. HAWKINS

George Thomas Hawkins founded the firm as a sole proprietorship in 1882 at small workshop premises in Oakley Street, Northampton, producing high grade men's wear. Two years later he moved to factory premises in Woodford/Ethel Street and in 1886 further moved to purpose-built premises in Overstone Road and Dunster Street. A large extension was required in 1888 "in order to obtain room for power-finishing machinery which Mr. Hawkins first introduced into the town".¹ A further extension was commissioned in 1891 to accommodate female closers on the premises. Added extensions were required into the Edwardian period to meet the needs of an ever expanding business. In 1895 part of an existing factory, five stories high, in St. Michael's Road was purchased. Then, in 1913 the adjoining factory at the corner of Overstone Road and St. Michael's Road, formerly in the possession of Hornby & West Ltd., was acquired. Output by this time had reached 10,000 pairs per week.

A pure wholesale manufacturer, Hawkins' products were in the forefront of branded footwear sold both in Britain as well as throughout India, Australia and Southern Africa by the Edwardian period. He was alert to the changing public taste in footwear. His universally known trademarks 'Waukerz', 'College' and 'Predominant' became synonymous with the quality men's footwear. Initially a men's wear manufacturer, he extended his range to ladies' wear in the nineties: the dominant brands being 'Ezontos' and the 'Prima' range of goods. A speciality was also made of sportswear at this time.

He was born at Higham Ferrers in 1857, the son of James, a currier, formerly of Aston, Staffordshire. He was educated privately, but this was cut short for at seven years he began employment as a stitching boy. At twelve he became apprenticed to a clicker. When efficient he secured a position

¹ B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p523

at Manfield & Sons, Northampton, soon after becoming a pattern cutter. Following this he became a foreman prior to going into business on his own account. He quickly made his mark as a manufacturer. A quiet, unassuming man without the flair and public image acquired by some of his contemporaries, he was nevertheless clearly a businessman of considerable acumen. As early as 1889, one trade journalist noted:

.. There are few young manufacturers, who have made rapid strides and success in business within such a short period as Mr. G. T. Hawkins .. the business, which is of only a few years standing is one of considerable importance ..¹

An able and respected employer, Hawkins attributed his success to his practical trade knowledge, to "having a thorough knowledge of the art of bootmaking".² His approach to manufacturing was, however, entirely modern and progressive.

.. The factory is fitted throughout with the latest improvements in machinery and when advances are offered in that direction Mr. Hawkins seldom fails to secure them ..³

He played no formal part in the town's public life, nor in trade matters. Indeed one commentator noted that George Thomas Hawkins had "a hatred of publicity that has unfortunately hindered him from applying his administrative abilities to civic life". The local Conservative association sought his nomination as a municipal candidate on several occasions without success. Although an obituary suggests he fulfilled a covert and advisory role:

.. Though never accepting public office, G. T. Hawkins took no inconsiderable part in the life of his trade and his town. His advice was often sought upon matters of importance ..⁴

1 B.S.T.J. 3/8/89 p96 cf N.I. 7/9/29 p11. "He was one of the prominent figures in the story of Northampton's development as a centre of the modern boot trade".

2 N.M. 6/9/29 p1 describe "The rapid rise of a man who knew his craft right through".

3 B.S.T.J. 3/8/89 p96.

4 S.L.N. 5/9/29 p38 cf N.I. 5/1/24 p3

A member of the local manufacturers' association from 1887, he was fined by the association for failing to cease production during the extensive Northampton lock-out of that year. From 1902 he was a director of the Rushden based Standard Rotary Machinery Company Ltd. A prominent freemason, he was attached to the Pomfret Lodge and was one of the founders of the Kingsley Lodge, of which he was past-master. A conservative, he was a member of the Junior Constitutional Club and the Northampton Conservative Association. He was a sympathetic helper of charitable causes, in particular the Northampton General Hospital. He donated £3,960 towards providing a pathological laboratory in 1913 and further gifts totalling £6,557. In 1902 he was chairman of the Clicker's Society, which assisted distressed clickers and their families. He was an Anglican and regular communicant at Saint's Church, Northampton. He also had a great recreational interest in outdoor sports: he was president of the Northampton and County Amateur Athletic's Association. Orchid growing also attracted his leisure time. He died at his home 'Rowans', Cliftonville, Northampton, aged 72 on the 3rd September 1929, the result of a heart condition of some years standing. His wife, Mary, daughter of George Brown of Northampton, died in 1927; she was well known in the town for her philanthropic work concerning the Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic. Her sister married George Weed, a well known conservative shoe manufacturer. His children survived him: C. Rowland G. Hawkins - a resident of Heme Bay, Kent, did not enter the business, and Gladys, who married Edward Reynolds, the former headmaster of Northampton Grammar School. He left personal effects to the value of £115,979 15s. 10d. In the absence of any member of his family to succeed him, ownership and control of the company on death passed to George's principal managers, H. G. White and H. Edwards. Both men had been associated with the management of the company for some years. Hawkins health had deteriorated to a point where in 1916 a private limited company was registered.¹

¹ P.R.O. BT31/22841/140390 registered 14/5/15 nominal capital £100,000.

Edwards & White were made directors, with George life long managing director "as long as he has 10,000 shares". The Sale Agreement valued the company at £80,190 6s. 2d.¹ satisfied by the allotment of 80,000 shares, the residue being paid in cash. The shareholding was as follows:

G. T. Hawkins	31,900 preference,	32,001 ordinary
H. Edwards	5,000 "	5,000 "
H. G. White	3,100 "	3,000 "
Harry Thomas Jones (clerk) 1 subscribing share.		

Continued ill-health forced Hawkins to retire from business in 1920, at which time a reconstituted company was registered:² the 1915 one being liquidated and its name transferred to the new. The transferred assets of the liquidated company were allotted as shares by agreement, in the new:

	£
G. T. Hawkins	62,320
H. Edwards	33,800
Mrs. L. M. Edwards	1,088
H. G. White	28,610
Mrs. Reynolds	10,680
H.Y. Jones (Company Secretary)	<u>2</u>
	136,500

The detailed valuation was as follows: buildings, machinery, plant, etcetera £84,451 15s. 0d., stock £51,877 14s. 5d., cash £170 17s. 4d. Hawkins remained a (non-executive) director, whilst Edwards and White became joint managing directors.

Herbert Edwards was born in America of British parents. His father was a Northamptonian: a nephew of Henry Martin, a prominent local builder and cousin of J. J. Martin of Great Houghton Hall. Herbert came to Northampton in 1895 to be apprenticed to Hawkins. He received thorough instruction on

¹ Ibid; assets were broken down: (1) goodwill, trademarks, factory stock - £49,518 12s. 4d. (11) Contracts, fixtures and fittings and sundry assets - £30,671 13s. 10d.

² C.R.O. File No. 16629 Registered 12/4/20, nominal capital £300,000.

the practice of boot making and in 1908 became factory manager. As the director and later joint managing director of the firm, he had responsibility for production and allied matters. He was prominent in local trade circles, being president of Northampton Manufacturers' Association 1926/27 and chairman of the local Arbitration Board 1924/29. He died at a London nursing home aged 58 on 29th December 1937, after a short illness. His widow, Lillie May, daughter of C. R. Nunn of Northampton, his son Charles H., and two daughters survived him. The family home was 'The Gables', Abingdon Park Crescent, Northampton. Effects £14,539 12s. 9d., resworn at £13,740 17s. 3d.

His son had joined the firm in 1927, becoming a director in 1933. In 1938 he resigned and the Edwards family shares were acquired by H. G. White. By contrast, Henry (Harry) George White, a good example of the new managerial class, began to penetrate the industry in our period. He started work for Hawkins in 1888 probably as an office junior. A man of clear numerate and organising ability, he was promoted to chief costing clerk and then joined the management team with Hawkins and Edwards by the early 1900's. His family was to dominate the post 1922 firm, taking complete ownership after 1938, when Harry became sole managing director. His two sons, Bernard H. and Rosslyn C., joined him on the board.¹ Henry took no active role in public life, but served as president of the Northampton Manufacturers' Association 1944/6. Like Hawkins before him, he was a freemason and regular attender of All Saint's Church. Active in business until three weeks before his death, he died at Northampton General Hospital on 8th August 1952. He was survived by his two sons and three daughters. He resided at 39 Billing Road, Northampton, formerly at The Towers, Abington Park Parade. Effects £67,714 7s. 9d.

¹ In 1983 H. G. White's grandson, A.J.R. Wills was the company's managing director.

C.7: JOHN MARLOW & SONS LTD. (formerly Hasdell & Marlow)

John Marlow and Hasdell founded the business in 1866 "in a small workshop at the bottom of the garden of 35 Regent Street".¹ In partnership until 1875, John then took sole charge until his eldest son, John H., was taken into partnership in 1886.² Something of the early growth of the firm can be gleaned from the factory developments recorded in the contemporary trade press. Based initially in small rented premises,³ a new freehold factory was erected at Ethel and Edith Streets in 1876, which were extended in 1886: a second factory was occupied in Woodford Street. Owing to increased trade, new three storey premises were built in St. George's Street and occupied in 1890: the Phoenix Boot Works.⁴ With a frontage on two sides of 100 feet, each floor had a nominal area of circa 3,000 square feet.

In an industry characterised by endemic business failure, Marlows provides us with a good example of a firm with the ability to survive in the face of change. The firm, like many, concentrated production on the volume production of men's medium to best grade welted work; although some machine sewn work was also undertaken. Unlike many firms, however, Marlow was fully able to make the transition from hand welted to machine welted work. A contemporary observer noted:

.. it's gratifying to note that time, which has marred so many trade reputations, through failure of adaptation to ever changing conditions of industry, has, thanks to a spirit of keen perception and enlightened enterprise dealt kindly with the firm .. so today it is one of the most progressive in the country ..⁵

1 N.I. 6/7/45 p5.

2 Albert E. (qv) the second son, was a partner 1892/99, before founding his own business. The youngest son, Percy (qv) was a partner circa 1898/09. He then unsuccessfully manufactured on his own account for a short while.

3 Two separate warehouses in Victoria Road.

4 B.S.T.J. 1/10/09 p24. It was written of him "that he was probably responsible for building more factories in Northampton than any other manufacturer".

5 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p536. It would appear however, that Marlow had been alive to machine techniques where suited to his trade, prior to this - see example B.S.T.J. 16/3/89 p233. "Their factory is replete with all the latest improvements in machinery".

Most significantly, when the Goodyear system of machine welting was finally matured in the mid-nineties, Marlows became the first British firm to introduce a complete plant for this class of work,¹ and quickly developed a reputation for machine welted work:

.. Messrs. Marlows have acquired a reputation second to none for the production of welted work and they are the largest manufacturers of Goodyear work this side of the Atlantic ..²

To accommodate this work a major four storey extension was added to the factory, which had a nominal floor area of circa 26,000 square feet. Built to a high specification, it was lit by electricity, the machinery was powered by a Crossley gas engine and it had excellent sanitary and ventilation arrangements for the 350 staff.³ This lead once gained was not relinquished in our period, with a strong and continued emphasis being placed upon updating both welted production methods and footwear styles:

.. Messrs. John Marlow & Sons have for years done one of the largest turnovers in men's welted footwear and to the perfection of their methods in the production of this class of goods, their continually growing trade in this branch is due. Operating what is claimed to be the largest and most up to date plant of welted machinery, they are able to offer exceptional value. Noted for careful attention to details and the evolution of new ideas in styles, buyers may rely on securing the newest and most up-to-date lines for doing a progressive trade, while they make a special study of the wearing qualities of their productions and their high reputation .. is of considerable service to customers in marketing their footwear ..⁴

Despite this whole-hearted embracing of machine methods some hand welted work was still executed as contemporary trade reports adequately testified to.

On 4th July 1898 the company was registered as a private limited company for

1 S. & L.T. Supplement 1916 plX.

2 B.S.T.J. 25/1/96 pl03 cf B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p537. "Indeed, the firm hold a pre-eminent position amongst manufacturers of welted goods, of which their output is claimed to be larger than that of any other firm in Europe".

3 Ibid - 400 in 1909.

4 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p486.

"purely personal reasons".¹ Nominal capital was set at £60,000, half being in £10 preference shares and half in £10 ordinary shares. The Sale Agreement valued the company at £44,300, satisfied by an allotment of shares: £28,300 in preference and £16,000 in ordinary. With the addition of £70 paid for subscribing shares the equity in the company remained constant until 1914, nor were any mortgages or charges taken out.² Similarly, the shareholding remained entirely within the company and once A. E. Marlow and his wife left the company in 1899, only relatively minor adjustments were made between the shareholding of individuals.³ Initially in 1898 there were three major shareholders: John Marlow, 2,200 preference and 601 ordinary shares; J. H. Marlow, 500 preference and 501 ordinary; and A. E. Marlow, 130 preference and 501 ordinary. After A. E. Marlow departed, the other two remained the majority shareholders throughout our period.⁴

A 'pure' wholesale manufacturer, vigorous marketing underpinned their development by the Edwardian period. A London showroom at 76 Finsbury Pavement and agencies in the capital, Glasgow and Sydney had long been present; as had a team of sales representatives. Increasingly, newspapers and "unique advertising facilities"⁵ were now also employed. Like other manufacturers they were keenly aware of the need to cultivate the firm's reputation and ensure a consistent product quality. As has been noted with other firms manufacturing in the higher quality area of the market, Marlows well understood

1 It is entirely possible that this registration was undertaken in order to provide A. E. Marlow, then a partner, with the necessary capital to begin on his own account. It is feasible that in order to sanction the transfer of his share, the bank - the most probable source of the money - required the security provided by limited liability status.

2 C.R.O. No. 58062: 'F' Volume, general documents.

3 C.R.O. No. 58062: 'A' Volume, annual returns.

4 For A. E. Marlow see App 111, N.G.2.

5 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p486

that quality and style, not simply price alone, were the criteria: in a word, value. A trade report noted of their products:

.. Value is written all over them, although it is not a question altogether of working down in price but of going up in quality .. 'Your success in selling our shoes' is one of the firms watch words .. (and) the new lines now on the market .. give evidence of proving satisfactory under all conditions of rough winter wear, while being produced in smart tasteful styles ..¹

In order to maintain market share, trade marks were utilised: 'Acme', 'Citizen', and 'Waukeezi', being the best known. The securing of exhibition awards as a means of advertising was also resorted to; the most prominent successes being at Melbourne in 1888, Milan in 1906, Brussels in 1910 and Turin in 1911. In addition, a specialist line, the Southall Patented Boot, was manufactured. The firm was prominent in countering increased foreign competition in British markets and was the first to import British machine welted work in the U.S.A. in 1910.² They were amongst the firms which were trading with increasing strength in Europe at this time: they also continued to trade strongly in both home and colonial markets. Indeed, such was the increase in trade that a large extension to the factory, first contemplated in 1908, was occupied in 1912.³ Although the company had been amongst the pioneers of ladies' footwear production in Northampton,⁴ apparently by 1908 they had for some years made only men's goods.⁵ A facet of the then prevailing competition within the industry was the increased speed with which manufacturers were dispensing with the traditional and now outmoded product division of making just men's and ladies' footwear: increasingly shoe retailers were calling for the same brand

1 B.S.T.J. Ibid.

2 S. & L. T. Supplement op.cit. cf B.S.T.J. 3/3/09 p202.

3 B.S.T.J. 28/6/1912 p601.

4 B.S.T.J. 16/3/89 p233. "This was one of the first (Northampton) firms to commence the manufacture of best ladies' goods".

5 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p486. "specialising in medium and best grade gentlemen's (sic) shoes only".

to be made in both men's and ladies' styles. In step with other major firms, Marlows now moved decisively into ladies' shoe production again. In 1909, the designs and trade-marks (for men's and ladies' goods) of William Hickson & Son Ltd. (in liquidation) were purchased. Three years later, the ladies' shoemaking company, Henry W. Rooding & Sons was purchased. In 1913 they acquired the goodwill and trade-marks 'Aurora' and 'Lastwell' of F. W. Panther & Company, for ladies' high class footwear.¹

Having examined production methods and marketing techniques, contemporaries then looked to the entrepreneurial qualities of John Marlow and his eldest son John H., in order to explain the firm's longevity.

John Marlow was born at Northampton on 1/11/39 into a shoemaking family. His father was a bespoke shoemaker and retailer with premises in College Street in the mid-century; and his elder brother, Samuel, appears in directories in the 1860's as a retailer of College Street, but whether he traded in partnership with his father is not known (Samuel attended John's funeral in 1909). John junior was trained as a bespoke boot-maker and worked as a journey-man before going into partnership. He represents amongst the best in the 'old school' of practical shoe manufacturers; though, unlike many, he was sufficiently accommodating of change to adapt rather than see his business fail.² "Alert and able",³ he displayed considerable flair and drive.⁴ He was a founder member of the Northampton Manufacturers' Association and played a prominent role in the activities of the Northampton Arbitration Board. Beyond this, though, he played no other part in public life, but "supported good causes".⁵ He was a staunch Radical. A modest, unprepossessing man he

1 F. W. Panther & Company had been taken over by J. Sears & Company Ltd. (qv) in 1912.

2 Compare John to, example, Robert Derby (qv).

3 N.I. 2/10/09 p18.

4 See for example the assessment of the firm in B.S.T.J. 16/3/89 p233.

5 B.S.T.J. 1/10/09 p24 "a genial, sympathetic nature". N.M. 1/10/09 p9.

lived simply in the shoemaking district of St. Andrews for some years, (1898 at 102 Abington Street), before removing to the shoe manufacturer's suburb of Billing Road. He was a devout congregationalist, being associated with Castle Hill Church for many years and in later life, Victoria Road Church. He took an interest in Sunday School work. A keen bowls player, he was a prominent member of the County Ground Club.

He retired from active participation in the firm at the turn of the century, though remained as a consultant to his eldest son.¹ Invalided for the last 18 months of his life by a haemorrhage of the lungs, he died on 25th September 1909 at his home, 10 Billing Road. He had suffered a stroke. His widow and six issue all survived him. The four sons all becoming manufacturers: the third son, Frank, was a partner in the London firm of Jell & Marlow. His effects were valued at £35,966 16s. 1d. (resworn at £33,966 16s. 1d.).

The pioneering zeal of John was given due credit² but increasingly as his son, John H., took more responsibility so contemporaries stressed his qualities and business acumen. One trade journalist wrote:

.. In Mr. J. H. Marlow's hands is centred the general management of the business at the works and to his aggressive policy the largely increased trade built up in recent years is primarily due, while 'on the road' and in the large centres at home and abroad his forceful personality is continually found advocating the intrinsic merits of the productions of the firm ..³

John Henry Marlow was born at Northampton on 12th November 1865. Educated locally - possibly at the British School, Campbell Square as his brother was⁴ - he was apprenticed a clicker at his father's factory, where he received a thorough practical training in all aspects of shoe manufacturing. After, he

1 N.M. 1/10/09 p9. "He regularly visited the factory to the last".

2 see example N.M. Ibid.

3 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p486.

4 Pike 1908 p214 - states he was educated locally.

became one of the firm's travellers.¹ Upon his father's retirement he became chairman and managing director of the company. He was also a director of the Eagle Star Insurance Company Ltd., and of two other shoe manufacturing companies: John Cave & Sons Ltd.² and W. Abbott & Sons Ltd. He devoted much of his time to public work. A member of the local Manufacturers' Association, he was president 1908/10, as well as serving on a number of committees of the Manufacturers' Federation. He was also a past vice-president of S.A.T.R.A. and in 1935, president of the Shoe and Leather Fair. He was one time chairman of the local branch of the Federation of British Industries and a past national vice-president. He was also one of the founders of the reconstituted Northampton and County Chamber of Commerce; he was its vice-president at the time of his death. He was a founder member of the Northampton Rotary Club and a past president.

Born a Congregationalist, he attended Henry Cooper's Bible Class when young. Throughout his early life he devoted much time to the Young Man's Mutual Improvement Movement. It has been written of him:

.. for many years he acted as secretary of one of the leading societies in town, becoming one of their leaders in thought, in debate, in lectures and in essay writing ..³

In 1906, he founded the Northampton 'Mens Own' and was its chairman for eight years. In later life he became an Anglican.

Until circa 1908 he lived at 'Woodlands', Billing Road, when he purchased Sedgebrook Hall, which lies between Church Brampton and Pitsford, with a view to farming the estate.⁴ In later life he amassed a considerable collection of art treasures at Sedgebrook. He married Naomi Ellen, daughter of John Bellamy of Brigstock, Northamptonshire. There were two surviving daughters

1 S.L.N. 5/7/45 p33.

2 His brother Albert purchased the company in 1907.

3 B.S.T.J. 25/1/96 p103.

4 cf son-in-law retires from firm in 1954 to farm at Sedgebrook Grange.

of the marriage:- the eldest married a Lieutenant Colonel Gracie, the younger, J. D. Houison-Craufurd,¹ who joined the Marlow board in 1928. John H. Marlow died on 29th June 1945 at St. Matthew's Nursing Home, Northampton, after a short illness. He was buried at Pitsford Parish Church. His effects were valued at £122,161 7s. 1d.

¹ John Douglas Houison-Craufurd (1904-07). Born at Dunlop, Ayrshire, of old Scottish landed family. Son of Brigadier General J. A. Houison-Craufurd C.M.G., C.B.E., D.L., J.P. and Eleanor Louisa (née Hay). His mother was successively headmistress of Westonbirt School, Tetbury and Downham School, Bishops Stortford. John was educated at Eton and Trinity, Cambridge. In 1928, he married Irene, youngest daughter of J. H. Marlow, resigned his commission and joined the Marlow board. He later joined the Norvic board, when that company took over Marlows. He was also a director of the Waukeezee Shoe Co. Ltd. He was president of the local manufacturers' association in 1948/9. He retired in 1954, to concentrate on farming at his residence, Sedgbrook Grange. (Who's Who 1930-1957: N.I. 12/7/57 p7: D.D. (1954).

C.8: A. & W. CHURCH & COMPANY.

The company was founded in premises at 30 Maple Street in May 1873. By 1877, a warehouse in Duke Street was acquired, where operations were to be concentrated until the early 1950's. A partnership confusion exists as to who the founders were. Some sources cite Alfred and John William,¹ while the firm's short official history states that these two and their brother, Thomas Dudley - then aged seven - commenced manufacturing.² In fact, according to surviving business records Thomas has been wrongly identified: he was the brother's father, Thomas senior.³ Other sources again suggest that Thomas and Alfred had been partners previously.⁴

Thomas retired as an active partner in 1892, at which time a partnership agreement was signed between the two remaining partners and Thomas D., who was to act under Alfred's direction.⁵ Thomas senior's capital remained in the firm until his death in 1905, at which time it was apportioned between his sons. Thomas Dudley's initial capital was provided by Alfred.

Alfred, the senior partner, was clearly the driving force behind the enterprise. This is reflected in the 1892 Agreement at a number of points. He was to receive a salary of £350 per annum, the other two £250 per annum: "and such salaries shall be paid and allowed before any division of profit

- 1 S.L.N. 4/10/28 p40.
- 2 A. W. Chapman and G. Harmer A Century of Quality, 1873-1973: Being a Centennial History of A. & W. Church & Co. Ltd. Northampton (1973) p v and vi.
- 3 Church & Company Private Ledger Vol. 1. Northampton directories cite Thomas senior as a boot closer at 18 Wellington Place (1869) and 27 Maple Street (1874). A William Church appears as a boot closer at 11 Regent Street (1874) and one at Charles Street (1884). cf N.M. 31/3/05 p6, states that Thomas was THE founder of Church & Company: Similarly S.L.R. 31/3/05. Moreover, N.M. 1/10/37 states that he was at one time a manufacturer at St. George's Place.
- 4 B.S.T.J. 31/3/05 p578 and 593. Also states "some 33 years ago, in partnership with his eldest son Mr. Alfred Church, started the well known firm of shoe manufacturers, Church & Company in Duke Street".
- 5 Church & Company Private Ledger and Articles of Partnership dated 28/11/92.

is made. Again, net profits were divided into 40 parts, with Alfred receiving 25 parts in 1893, John 10 parts and Thomas D. 5 parts. By 1902, this had been adjusted to 20, $12\frac{1}{2}$ and $7\frac{1}{2}$ respectively. Partnership interest was paid at the rate of 5% per annum.¹ In 1902, a Memorandum was agreed which varied and renewed the 1892 agreement. Salaries were increased: Alfred to £600, John £300 and Thomas D. £250. The division of profit was also adjusted, with Alfred receiving half and the other two, 10 parts each.²

By this time trade papers referred to the company as one which "has grown from quite small proportions to a very gigantic concern".³ The factory was one of the largest in Northampton and clearly reveals a piecemeal growth so characteristic of the industry. In 1891, a four-storied central warehouse/office block was flanked by a three-storied factory to one side, with sundry buildings at the rear. To the other side were "six dwelling houses, which the demands of the business have compelled Messrs. Church & Company to convert into work and other rooms".⁴ This style of temporary conversion appears to have been common in the town. About 300 workers were regularly employed at this site, with at least that number again toiling as outworkers. Within a decade these temporary workshops had given way to factory extensions, which absorbed adjacent vacant land as well. The final and most notable extension was achieved in 1904 by the purchase from T. P. Heggs, currier, of an adjoining three-storied factory.⁵ The factory then had a frontage on Duke Street of 208 feet and a floor space of some 38,000 square feet.

1 Articles of Partnership, Ibid.

2 Church & Company, Memorandum varying and renewing Articles of Partnership dated 30/6/02.

3 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p517.

4 Where to Buy in Northampton (1891) p25/26.

5 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p535.

Throughout the period the business was "eminently successful", a success which was "built upon the unvarying principle of high quality".¹ A trade in both machine and hand-made footwear continued to be done up to the Great War. A pure wholesaler, although producing footwear of various grades,² most of their branded production was increasingly geared to meet the requirements of high class retailers. It will be noted below, that the extensive trade once done in working boots appears to have contracted. Despite the trend towards the making of a few lines, Church & Company reveal a breadth and diversity of manufacturing that was still a feature of some leading shoe manufacturer's operations. The description of the firm in 1891 reveals the range of production. First were a range of at least nine branded boot lines, each with its special feature. The 'Adapted'³ range for men and women, which was made in six width fittings, then an unusual British practice. Made on hand-sewn principles, it came in a number of varieties for city and country use: waterproofing was available. Several modern commentators have noted that this move towards different width fittings, in imitation of American practice and the making of identical ranges for men and women was an Edwardian departure, but it is clear that several manufacturers, including Church, anticipated these developments by several decades.⁴ A high class version, the 'Walkinease' was also available. The 'Flexible Boot' with a rubber waist was one of several using rubber soles. The 'Aqua' was thoroughly waterproof and used for country sports. More particular, was the

1 S.L.N. 4/10/28 p40. Their products were regarded by contemporaries as being in the first rank: footwear which did much to uphold Northampton's good trade name (see example N.M.5/10/28 p1).

2 Where to Buy in Northampton (1891) describes a range of gas-driven machinery, which suggests that both machine sewn and screwed work was made in some quantity as well as machine welted work.

3 Gold Medal winner, Crystal Palace Exhibition 1884.

4 Where to Buy in Northampton loc cit p26.

'Latchet', a button boot with novel fastening and the 'Ventilated boot'. Second, was long work; riding and hunting boots in 'West-end styles'. Third, was sportswear, the demand for which had blossomed in the eighties generally. A large range of running pumps and sports shoes for all activities were made, including the rubber soled 'Grasshopper' tennis shoe, and 'Wheel Brand' cycling shoes with rubber waists. Fourth, were a range of specialist working boots for seamen, firemen, mounted police etcetera. In addition, "the firm are also very large makers of coloured calf and fancy goods"¹ and did an extensive trade in ready made uppers for the trade and were makers of leggings.² By the Edwardian period, this diversity was still present.³ Their premier specialty was a range of machine welted shoes for ladies and men sold under the brand name 'Footform', through a staff of sales representatives and U.K. agents.⁴ Large stocks were maintained at Northampton and an in-stock system utilised. Using the Goodyear process, to cope with demand, the welted department was twice enlarged in the decade after 1895. In addition to this they had a large department making men's and ladies' machine-sewn work for the home trade and export,⁵ and a turnshoe department producing court shoes and ladies' walking pumps. In addition, a large range of sporting and country specialities were still turned out, particularly tennis shoes. The trade in leggings had been maintained and to it had been added the production of rubber soles and heels, made to Scafe's patent. The departments

1 S.L.R. 4/5/03 p631.

2 The firm was described in directories of the period as a shoe and upper manufacturer.

3 Church & Company papers: Edwardian Sales Catalogues; cf B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p535.

4 At this time the company had a main agency in Paris and a sales representative based in South Africa. In 1908 he was W. G. Hollis, son of the Northampton manufacturer W. G. Hollis senior (qv).

5 The wide range of specialist working boots produced in 1891 was somewhat contracted in terms of scope by this time.

making these speciality lines were all enlarged and extensively re-equipped in the Edwardian period; modern lasts and patterns were introduced. A further adjustment in partnership structure was made in 1913.¹ Alfred's son Leslie Humphreys, who had joined the firm in 1900, was admitted as a partner. Leslie's share of profits was to come out of his father's share. Under this agreement the other two partners were allowed to introduce one of their sons into the business as an active partner to take part of his father's share, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) must be 27 to 30 years of age.
- (II) "such son shall for at least seven years have been actually engaged in shoe manufacturing or travelling in shoes".
- (III) "the son shall be deemed fit by his father and one other partner. An independent person shall be called in case of dispute".²

Under the same Agreement a number of general matters concerning the partnership's management was consolidated. If a partner died or retired £18,000 of his capital was to remain in the partnership as a loan yielding 5% per annum.³ Salaries were advanced; a sign both of strong trading and general inflation: Alfred was to receive £600 and the three other partners £400.⁴ Moreover, the partnership bank account was to be transferred into the name of the company, with any partner being allowed to draw upon it: previously it had been in Alfred's name.⁵ Finally, regular monthly business meetings were instituted.⁶ This agreement was to subsist until 1925, at which time there occurred something of an hiatus in family relations within the business. John, unwell

1 Church & Company Agreement dated 30/6/13.

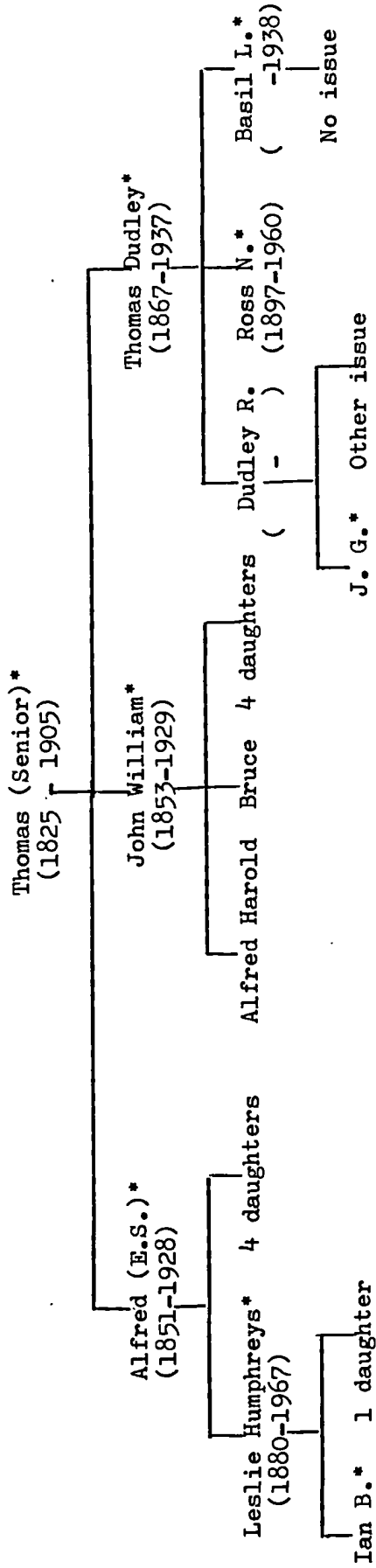
2 Ibid, Clause 7.

3 Ibid, Clause 8.

4 Ibid, Clause 5.

5 Ibid, Clause 6.

6 Ibid, Clause 9.



(*were late active members of the firm)

THE CHURCH FAMILY OF NORTHAMPTON

for some time, retired¹ and a power struggle developed between Alfred and Thomas D., which resulted in litigation.² The new company was registered on 16th January 1926, with a nominal share capital of £250,000, half being in preference shares.³ The sale agreement, made between Alfred Thomas D. and Leslie H.,⁴ and the new company, provides a valuation of the company's assets:

Freehold properties		£		s.	d.		
Office furniture		13,135		0	0		
Plant, machinery, lasts		185		8	0		
- fixed	£		s.	d.			
- loose	3,338		6	0			
Stock in trade and lorry	6,839	12	6	10,177	18	6	
Investments				89,392	4	2	
Sundry loans etcetera				19,790	5	8	
Cash				1,530	7	9	
				<u>1,500</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>11</u>	
				135,712	0	0	

Thomas Church (1825-1905)

Formerly one of the town's leading manufacturers. From his retirement in 1892 he had lived quietly; his wife died in 1896.⁵ He was of "a quiet and unassuming disposition."⁶ Although he took no part in the town's public life - "he had very little love for public life or politics"⁷ - he was a well known and liked figure; a generous supporter of every good cause. He was a regular worshipper and staunch supporter of the Grafton Street Chapel. He died on 23rd March 1905 at his residence, 'Ryecroft', St. George's Avenue,

1 S.L.N. 4/10/28 p40.

2 Church Papers, particularly a document relating to the formation of the private company dated 22/12/26.

3 The following details are taken from the C.R.O. File No. 211135. cf Stock Exchange Year Book 1978/79 p1098. The company went public on 3/12/51.

4 Made directors for life. Basil Church also became a director with Ross Church and Reg Norris, the company solicitor, being elected directors on 29/9/28 when Alfred died.

5 Registrar - General Census, Deaths Calendar 1896.

6 B.S.T.J. 31/3/05 p578.

7 Ibid p593.

aged 81. He was survived by his three sons (qv) and only daughter, who had married the clerk to the Northampton magistrates, G. R. Bishop. He was an executor, with Henry Wooding (qv) an old friend of Thomas. He left effects to the value of £10,305 10s. 1d., resworn at £10,455 10s. 1d.

Alfred Church (1851-1928)

Of Cheyne Walk, eldest son of Thomas (qv). He was born at Horsemarket Gardens, Northampton, in 1851¹ and educated locally. He was the firm's senior partner, being regarded as a man of "fine business capabilities. A hard worker and excellent employer. He got the best out of his men because they respected and admired him".² In consequence, Church's was long regarded as a firm which employed the best quality of shoemaker. He took a leading and ostentatious part in all trade developments in the 50 years prior to his death. He took an active and influential part in the local Manufacturers' Association of which he was a founding member, serving many years on the executive committee. He also served on the local Arbitration Board. He represented the manufacturer's side in the protracted negotiations concerning the clickers quantity statements in the early 20th century and "was for long regarded as one of the manufacturer's chief representatives in matters affecting the relations of the association and the men's association".³ He was the Hon. Treasurer of the Federation of British Boot Manufacturers 1903/24 and also sat on the original executive board of management of the Boot Trade Benevolent Society.⁴ He was also one time director of the General Accident, Fire and Life Assurance Corporation Ltd.⁵ and of the Northampton

1 1851 Census Enumerators Returns P.R.O. H0107/1740.

2 N.M. 5/10/28 p1.

3 N.M. Ibid.

4 Shoe Manufacturer's Monthly August 1924 p105.

5 Pike (1908) p203.

Shoe Machinery Company Ltd.^{1a}

He was well known in the county, being a long standing subscriber to the Pytchley Hunt and he rode to hounds for many years until failing health prevented him. He also took an interest in the work of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society, of which he was a member.

A Congregationalist, he was initially associated with the old King Street Chapel and with the Abington Avenue Church from its foundation in 1900. He was treasurer of the building fund and liberal in his donations to the Church. Generous and sympathetic by nature, he carried out many acts of private benevolence. He was "a quiet philanthropist and only those close to him knew of his acts of charity".¹

A Liberal of the old school, who became a tariff reformer, he was rarely to be seen on a political platform and took no part in the town's civic life:

∴ though the value of his judgement in civic matters was fully realised. He shunned the limelight and delighted in unostentatious and unseen acts of goodwill and generosity, the measure of which will never be known ..²

Alfred married a daughter of Joseph William West, a local shoe manufacturer.³ West's son, Henry Thomas and son-in-law, Thomas Hornby⁴ founded the firm of Hornby & West (qv). Alfred was also related by marriage to the well known shoe manufacturing family of Tebbutt: A. E. Tebbutt was his brother-in-law. (qv). Alfred continued to be actively associated with the firm until falling ill six months prior to his death on 29th September 1928. His widow and five children survived him. His effects were valued at £112,665 15s. 7d.

1a BT 31/4025/25654.

1 N.M. op cit.

2 S.L.N. op cit.

3 Traded from 7 Kerr Street 1866/71 and from 20 Victoria Street 1874/79.

4 In Alfred's funeral notice Thomas's son, F. W. Hornby was reported as Alfred's cousin.

John William Church (1853- 1929)

A quiet, retiring man, much plagued in adult life by ill-health, he played no part in public life. Consequently, little is known of him, although from the provisions of his will made in April 1900 it would appear that he had, by that time, cultivated an interest in antique collecting and music. Formerly of 'Nine Springs', Cliftonville, his last years were spent in residence at Oadby Hall, Oadby, Leicestershire, where he died on 10th January 1929.¹ His effects were valued at £90,074 3s. 10d. and resworn at £90,499 10s. 5d. gross. He was survived by his widow Catherine Alice (nee Hubbard). There was issue of the marriage, two sons, Alfred Harry and Bruce and four daughters. William's 1900 will reveals that he anticipated that his son Alfred Harry should become a partner according to the provisions of the Partnership Agreement, but this, in fact, did not come to fruition.

Thomas Dudley Church (1867 - 1937)

Thomas's youngest son born at Northampton where he was educated. He entered the firm in 1892 and was associated with it until his death. He succeeded Alfred as the chairman in 1928. In January 1893 he married Rhoda Wooding, a daughter of Henry Wooding, a family friend and shoe manufacturer. He took no part in the town's public life, but was a keen supporter of the Victoria Road Congregational Church. For some years prior to his death he lived at 'Redlands', Cliftonville, Sir M. P. Manfield's old home. He died in Surrey on 26th September 1937, following a heart condition of some months standing. His effects: £76,553 18s. 11d. gross. His wife died in August 1937. Of his three sons, Basil Lance and Ross Norman entered the family firm after the Great War. His eldest son, Dudley R., although a director of Church's spent his working life at Sears & Company, where he was made a director in 1929 and managing director by 1937.

¹ No newspaper obituary appeared locally, although a funeral report appeared in N.M. 18/1/29 p4.

Leslie Humphreys Church (1880 - 1967)

The only son of Alfred born at Northampton; of the second generation, he was the only one to join the firm in our period. He began work in the clicking room in 1900 and was given a practical training in all departments of the factory. A partner in 1913; a director in 1928; he took over as chairman of the company following Thomas's death in 1937, a post he retained until 1964, when he retired.¹ A committee member of both the local and national Manufacturers' Associations, he was president 1940/41. He was also one time chairman of the Northampton Electric Light Company and St. Matthew's Nursing Home Ltd. In addition, he was Hon. Secretary of the Gayton Branch of the British Legion. At one time he resided at the Manor House, Gayton, Northants.² At the time of his death he was living at Church Brampton, where he died on 15th May 1967, aged 87. He was survived by his widow, son and daughter. His effects were valued at £36,074.

1 N.I. June 1964 p46.

2 Directory of Directors (1954) p143. cf Directory of Directors resident at Boughton Grange, Northants. (1927)

C.9: JOSEPH DAWSON & SONS, LONDON AND NORTHAMPTON

Despite the firm's longevity little information is to hand at the time of writing. That which is available provides a somewhat fragmentary picture, which gives an outline of the firm's development.

The firm was established in London in 1780 by Roger Dawson. He was connected with the firm until 1836. Ten years prior to his demise, Joseph Dawson senior entered the firm, being associated with it until 1860. His sons, John and Joseph junior were in effective managerial control from 1844 until 1887. In circa 1849 a branch warehouse was opened at 10 Park Street, Northampton and it is possible that basket work had been sent to the town at an earlier date under the direction of a resident agent. At some later date, possibly in the late seventies, or when control passed to Joseph junior's sons John and Norman senior in 1887, a branch factory began to manufacture footwear throughout. London premises were retained throughout our period. Certainly by circa 1889 new factory premises in Clare Street/ 1 to 3 Overstone Road had been taken and remained in operation until 1914. By 1908, the Northampton factory, in addition to a general trade, had commenced as licensees, the manufacture of a patented specialty boot known as the 'Fusswohl' (Footcomfort): a waterproof boot. At this time, the firm was described as having "a great reputation for fine footwear and for producing some of the smartest lines in the trade".¹

Throughout the 19th century the firm had concentrated upon overseas markets. Indeed, it was one of the first British companies to export footwear: their name became a household word in India.² By the Edwardian period a home trade was initiated as competition in overseas markets tightened up.

1 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p530.

2 B.S.T.J. Ibid.

Two other pieces of information give us some further information about later changes in the firm's organisational structure. First, in 1912, Beresford Norman Dawson, a son presumably of Norman senior, dissolved his partnership with him and went into business on his own account for a short while before joining H. E. Randall.¹ Secondly, on 25th March 1920 the company was incorporated, with an authorised capital of £70,000, of which £42,299 was taken up: £25,663 in consideration of sale and £16,636 by subscription. There were no mortgage or charge debts. The registered office was at 95-97 Finsbury Pavement, London E.C.2, and the directors in 1922 were registered as: J. Dawson, C. Dawson, J. K. B. Dawson, G. E. M. Robertson and A. Jones.²

1 B.S.T.J. 30/8/12 p293. He took Carter & Sons old factory in Queen's Park. He joined Randall Board in 1921. cf Randall biography.

2 S.T.J. 15/9/22 p345.

C.10: SIMON COLLIER LTD. (formerly William Collier)

Contemporary biographies of Simon Collier well encapsulate the Victorian's penchant for portraying men of business as Smilesian models of humble origins and small beginnings. One such trade journal article assesses Simon in the following way:

.. A firm which has been built up by hard work and constant enterprise from a very small beginning to one of great extent and importance, not only in this country but in the most prosperous of the colonies ..¹

The article goes on to stress that Simon had had none of the advantages of an inherited firm, but had built up his trade from obscurity. In fact, the business had been founded by his father earlier in the century.² Alderman William Collier was one of Northampton's prominent mid-century citizens: he was a town councillor for 30 years and was Mayor in 1861/62. In 1871 control of the firm devolved to Simon, who had a "life-long experience gained with his father".³ Born at Northampton in 1838, he had joined his father's firm after an elementary education. One obituary states that when 25 years old (1863) he went into the licensed trade in Wolverhampton, returning to Northampton in 1871 to take over his father's business.⁴ Prior to this date, he had received a thorough practical training under his father, then been associated with the management of the firm. This is not to deny his enterprise in developing the firm, but rather to stress the advantages bestowed upon a son who inherits his father's business.⁵

Under Simon's autocratic rule, which spanned some 40 years, the firm "prospered exceedingly", rising to be one of the town's leading volume producers of cheaper grade footwear. Although making some welshed work,

1 B.S.T.J. 30/1/97 p143.

2 S.L.T. Supplement 1916 pxxi, suggests 1856; the earliest directory entry is 1847 and B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p549, states 1830. Over the years he traded from premises in Woolmonger Street, St. George's Street, Weston Street.

3 B.S.T.J. 30/1/97 op cit.

4 S.L.N. 3/1/29 p44.

5 See discussion at Chapter 7 p

production was concentrated for much of the period on the lower grade 8s. 6d./12s. 6d. trade (machine sewn) and heavy nailed work. In the years before the Great War however, there was a marked increase in Veldtschoen work and first quality welted and tackless footwear, which reflects the general shift within the market place for better quality footwear: a trend much influenced by the U.S. invasion.

Until circa 1880 he traded from 1/2 Craven Street, Bailiff Street, when he purchased two adjacent freehold plots of land at Harlestone Road, Dallington, St. James.¹ A factory and warehouse complex was then developed piecemeal over a 15 year period as increased trade demanded. Gradually, more freehold land was purchased to accommodate this expansion: in 1884, 1885 and 1895.² After building extensions in the following year the factory probably reached the full extent of its pre-Great War size. As several contemporaries concluded, what resulted was an adequate but somewhat haphazard, inconvenient unit, which was aesthetically less than pleasing:

(It is) .. spacious enough to afford accommodation for over 500 workpeople .. yet it has the disadvantage of having been built in sections as the firm has grown in extent and for that reason is perhaps not so imposing as some of the newer premises.³

In addition, workmen's cottages were erected: Collier was the first manufacturer to establish himself in this suburb⁴ and as occurred elsewhere, he had to provide accommodation for at least some of his workforce. In 1889, a further factory development was undertaken at Kislingbury, a boot and shoe outworking village circa 4 miles south west of the town. Some two and a half roods of land were purchased and "together with the manufactory, cottages and premises erected by the vendor on the said plot of land (is)

1 P.R.O. BT31/16026/58252; Sale Agreement Property Schedule Part 1.

2 Ibid: in all 52802 square feet of land was purchased.

3 B.S.T.J. 30/1/97 p145; of the 500, at least 50 were clickers, 130 closers, 50 finishers and 50 leather workers. The Kislingbury site employed at least 150 on the premises.

4 S.L.N. op cit - on his move to St. James he had 150/200 employees.

now in occupation of the vendor and his under tenants".¹ The firm's lower grade work was concentrated here: that is to say, nailed and other varieties of split boots were produced.²

A unique feature of the Harlestone Road site was that incorporated was a model tannery and leather dressing plant employing 50. Collier was an acknowledged leather expert and was the only Northampton shoe manufacturer in our period to engage in leather making. In addition, there was forward vertical integration into distribution activities. The company's low grade wear was aimed at expanding urban working class markets of industrial North England and Central Scotland. Here a large wholesale trade was done with independent retailers. Although branded lines were utilised, both the 'Duration' boot and the 'Selborne Up Top' boot were known in the U.K. and throughout the British Empire: no special lines were made. Rather, Collier aimed to produce whatever was currently marketable. This flexibility of policy and his ability to spot consumer trends were regarded by many as the cause of his success. In addition, by 1897, there was in existence a long established chain of 23 retail outlets: 14 in Glasgow, 8 elsewhere in Scotland and one in Sunderland.³ Collier had established a major warehouse depot and office in Queen Street, Glasgow, in the seventies and by the mid-nineties his third son, Thomas Lawrence, was in charge there. Extensive export orders were also executed, Colliers being regarded as the largest U.K. exporter of footwear to Southern Africa from the mid-eighties to 1914. As early as 1889, this trade was consolidated by placing Simon's eldest son Charles in charge of their African interests: he took up residence in the Cape. When he died in 1904, Simon junior took over.

1 P.R.O. BT31 op cit - Property Schedule Part ii.

2 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p484.

3 P.R.O. BT31 op cit - Property Schedule Part iii. In 1898 the current gross annual rental paid by Collier's for the leased shops and Glasgow warehouse was £2,241.

A peak in the firm's activities was possibly reached in the late nineties, after which a decline in trading may have taken place.¹ In 1897, it was recorded that the nominal factory output was 7,000 pairs per week,² by 1912 this figure stood at the much lower level of 3,000 pairs.³ It is difficult to be certain on this point. Certainly as is recorded above, some increase in quality welted work occurred and this may have gone some way to offset this fall in quantity. Moreover, as figure 1 below, reveals share capital grew in the period by 27.5%, in addition to a large increase in loan capital debt. To what extent this capital growth was necessary to offset and halt decline⁴ rather than to fund a growth in activities, is not clear. Certainly, trade papers to some degree, belie any discussion of decline. For example in 1909 it was noted that:

.. their goods meet with continual favour and increasing favour, this⁵ season having been one of the very best in the history of the firm ..

Until 1898 Simon conducted the business as a sole trader, with his sons taking a share in the management after a practical and commercial training in the firm. Now, on the 18th July 1898, the company was incorporated in order to determine succession, to provide investment income for members of the family and to give a portion of control to the sons: Charles, John Veasey, Thomas Lawrence, William Veasey, who became directors in 1898 and Simon junior in 1902. A sixth son, Joseph Veasey, was a member of the Indian Forestry Service, but was a shareholder in the family firm. The nominal capital was registered at £100,000; 40,000 preference and 60,000 ordinary shares. In the sale agreement the following valuation was given:

1 It is interesting to speculate whether this decline continued through to the inter-war period. In 1919 Collier's crucial trade with South Africa was decimated, the result of import restriction measures. Thereafter the company traded falteringly through the 1920's before going into voluntary liquidation in 1932.

2 B.S.T.J. 30/1/97 op cit.

3 Butnam op cit p76.

4 Something similar occurred in this period at Pollard & Sons (qv).

5 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 op cit.

	£
1. Goodwill and all contracts.	10,000
2. Business premises.	10,000
3. All fixed plant, machine fixtures and fittings.	3,000
4. All loose plant, tools and machinery	2,660
5. All stock in trade.	43,145
6. Book Debts and Cash (to be given to vendor)	<u>-</u>
	68,805

This sum was to be paid to the vendor in the following way:

- (a) £35,774 of the vendor's liabilities to be discharged.
- (b) £10,000 to be allotted to vendor as preference shares.
- (c) £23,031 to be allotted as ordinary shares.

The capital of the company remained in the hands of the family: Simon was the largest single shareholder and in addition he transferred shares to the family. In the Edwardian period two other shareholders were introduced. The company's capital growth up to 1914 is detailed in figure 1.

Year	Nominal Capital	Total Calls Paid or Agreed	Total Loan Debt
1898	100000	33031	1000*
1903	"	42486	1000
1908	"	45536	10000
1913	"	45536	17000

Source: P.R.O. Bt 31/16026/58252

Note: * Mortgage created 28/9/98 secured on freehold factories satisfied 20/8/08

FIGURE 1: SHARE AND LOAN CAPITAL GROWTH 1898 - 1914

It is of interest to note the framing of certain of the clauses in the Articles of Association, which ensured that Simon retained virtually full control of the company. Beyond being the largest shareholder of voting shares and being made both managing director and chairman for life.¹ Article 102

¹ Maximum permitted annual salary £1,000.

ensured his complete ascendancy. It states:

.. In accordance with the terms of the said agreement the said Simon Collier whilst acting as managing director, shall have authority to exercise alone all the powers by these presents conferred upon the directors in relation to the conduct of the commercial side of the business ..¹

In turn, the relevant clause of the Sale Agreement quoted above stated:

.. The vendor shall be chairman and managing director of the company with all the powers of the Board in relation to the management of the commercial business of the company and upon the terms of a certain draft agreement ..²

Indeed, the strength of Simon's character was indelibly imprinted upon the firm's policies and performance. He was a practical shoemaker, who knew leather and had a keen costing ability, which ensured good quality products competitively priced. It was written of him:

.. (He) is one of the very best judges of leather we have met and by his skill in this direction he is able to secure the most advantageous terms for much of the material required in the production of the large numbers of boots and shoes prepared by his house..³

Moreover, he was quick to apply machine production techniques, which prior to the eighties, were particularly apt for the grade of footwear he produced.

He was widely regarded as:

.. amongst the first, if not the first manufacturer to apply machinery successfully to the manufacture of boots and shoes in Northampton ..⁴

It is in his handling of the 'machinery question' and of labour that his uncompromising and shrewd business qualities are best examined. Brusque by nature, he was severally described as being; "a man of strong and decided individuality, shrewd and fearless in expressing his opinion"; on another occasion "a man of wide views and great tenacity of purpose". His character made him a controversial figure in matters of labour management. He was

1 P.R.O. BT31 op cit. Articles of Association, Art 102: Simon junior or Joseph V. to succeed Simon senior.

2 P.R.O. BT31 Ibid. Sale Agreement, Part 1V Clause 15; his four director sons were given the status 'sub-managers'.

3 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 op cit.

4 B.S.T.J. 30/1/97 op cit.

less ready to utilise the welfarism and the conciliation and arbitration practices exercised by other Northampton manufacturers. He pressed ahead vigorously with machine introduction when others moved more cautiously in the face of trade union strictures against their unqualified use. His method was straightforward. He offered high wages to those prepared to operate machines, whilst dispensing with those who refused. As a result it was often stated that his machine operators earned between 15s./25s. above the prevailing Northampton rate by the eve of the 1895 conflict. For many years he refused to accept union officials and negotiators on his premises. In the 1887 Northampton strike, he sharply deviated from the local manufacturers' association's low key approach to mass intimidatory picketing. He insisted on keeping his factories open, personally led police against pickets, and vigorously pursued prosecutions against pickets. Yet his autocratic nature, and muscular management style did not blind him to the need for change, nor apparently the need to listen and act upon the ideas of others. Several reports mention the successful way in which he and his sons were able to work together:

.. Mr. Collier is assisted in the business by his four sons and it is very pleasant to reflect that, although getting on in years, the firm is young in intellectual vigour and general up-to-dateness. They have one of the very largest businesses in the country and are ever in the front rank of progress ..¹

In fact, five months after this comment was written a special resolution provided for the semi-retirement of Simon. First, Article 108 was amended in order to provide an annual 5% dividend on preference shares. Secondly, the absolute control given by Article 102 to Simon was revoked,² and from this date Thomas L. and William V. Collier became "mainly responsible for

1 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 op cit.

2 P.R.O. BT31 op cit. Special Resolution 29/11/09.

the conduct of the business".¹ Nevertheless, Simon was to continue to assist the factory daily and to take part in business decisions.

As one of the leading and outspoken manufacturers in the town, it is not surprising that Simon played a full role in the town's public life. Converted to the temperance cause in the seventies, he was active locally, being the promoter of the Northampton Church of England Temperance Society and one of the founders of the People's Café. Bred a liberal, the influence of the ideas of Bradlaugh and Labouchere amongst local Liberal supporters converted him to Conservatism.² He did much work for that party locally and was chairman of the local Conservative Association for eight years: his son, John Veasey, followed him into that post. St. James, the suburb Simon lived in from 1880, was formally absorbed into Northampton County Borough in 1901 and a year later he was elected councillor for the new St. James Ward. Over a number of years the "thoroughness and devotion (he brought) to the cause of duty gave rise to feelings of general emulation"³ in the town. He was chairman of the Tramways Committee and had been managing director of the old Northampton Street Tramway Company.⁴ In 1908 he was made a borough magistrate,⁵ and for a number of years served as a trustee of the Northampton Municipal Church Charities.⁶ A man not given to relaxation, his leisure hours were spent in agricultural pursuits; he was for some years a stock breeder.⁷ He died at home 'Thornbank', The Avenue, Dallington, on 26th December 1928, aged 91. His wife, Jane Brindley Collier, predeceased him. He was survived by seven of his eight children: five sons and two daughters. His effects were valued at £9,411 3s. 5d., resworn at £9,293 6s. 11d.

1 S.L.T. Supplement loc cit.

7 B.S.T.J. 30/1/97 loc cit.

2 S.L.N. loc cit.

3 B.S.T.J. 6/11/08 p227.

4 N.I. 5/12/08 p11, cf B.S.T.J. 5/12/08 p433.

5 N.I. Ibid.

6 B.S.T.J. 8/12/11 p466. He was known for his many acts of private philanthropy - S.L.N. 3/1/29 p18.

C.11 JONATHAN ROBINSON.

Jonathan Robinson was born at Kislingbury, some four miles from Northampton in May 1825. He was apprenticed at an early age to a Mr. Moore, a Northampton shoe manufacturer and currier. Clearly able, an obituary notes:

.. this assiduity with which his duties were performed and the knowledge gained by observation, enabled him, upon the completion of his indentures, to commence business upon his own account, as a shoe manufacturer, in Bath Street where, by close attention to his work, he gradually built up a lucrative business.¹

A prominent dissenter and philanthropist, his financial and legislative abilities were eagerly sought by many of the county's societies. "Throughout his life he (was) a consistent and unostentatious worker in all movements that had for their object the amelioration of the condition and the moral elevation of his fellow men".² His association with the Doddridge Congregational Church spanned many years; being its Sunday School Superintendent for over 50 years and a Deacon from 1854. Although a consistent Liberal, politics held no charm for him, although he unsuccessfully contested a municipal election on one occasion. He had been ailing for a considerable period and the ailment finally developed into a stomach cancer, which caused his death. This occurred at his residence in Spencer Parade, Northampton, on 1st March 1891. He was survived by Susannah, his widow, one son, John Perry, and three daughters.³ His personal estate was valued at £10,687 18s. 1d. and later resworn at £11,167 3s. Od. At the time of his death, Jonathan with M.P. Manfield and Henry Marshall, was the oldest manufacturer in the town.

1 B.S.T.J. 7/3/91 p275 - First directory entry 1850, Bath Street.

2 Ibid.

3 One daughter, Miss. E. Phipps Robinson M.B.E. (died 1942) was a prominent local worker for religious matters and crippled children. "She worthily emulated her father the late prosperous shoe manufacturer, in her religious activities (at the Doddridge Church)". (see obituary N.I. 7/8/42 p4. Another daughter, Miss. I. J. Robinson became an Indian missionary for the London Missionary Society. (Ibid).

John Perry Robinson succeeded his father and ran the business as sole proprietor until his retirement in 1935. Born at Northampton in 1867, he joined his father after completing his education and received a full, practical training in manufacturing. For some years prior to his father's death, he assumed the full management of the firm. Several extensions had been necessary at the Bath Street premises, but finally in 1901 a new larger factory, known as the Spencer factory, was occupied in Countess Road. This enabled the firm to develop and produce a range of tennis goods. By means of this specialist sports market, Robinsons was able to counter the dominance of large volume producers in the more general ranges of goods. Nevertheless, in addition, both a home and export trade in high and medium grades of men's and women's footwear was maintained. The principal trademarks by 1914 were 'Spencer', 'Anti-Tak' and 'Eclectic'; shoes which enjoyed royal patronage. The firm had both a London and a Paris office, from which a full complement of sales representatives operated.¹

A member of the local manufacturers' association, he played little part in trade and civic matters, although he was a member of the local manufacturer's association. He was, however, like his father, dedicated to the cause of Congregationalism. An active worker for the Doddridge Church for some 63 years, he was successively Deacon, Sunday School Superintendent, Secretary and Honorary Treasurer for that church. He died at his residence, 9 Holyrood Road, Dallington, Northampton, on 31st December 1949 aged 83. His wife, a daughter of Mr. Pressland of Northampton, had died in 1930, but he was survived by one son (Arthur P.) and two daughters. His effects were valued at £665 10s. Od.²

1 S. & L.T. Supplement (1916) p xxxviii

2 N.I. 6/1/50 p11 cf S.I.N.5/1/50 p50.

John Perry Robinson succeeded his father and ran the business as sole proprietor until his retirement in 1935. Born at Northampton in 1867, he joined his father after completing his education and received a full, practical training in manufacturing. For some years prior to his father's death, he assumed the full management of the firm. Several extensions had been necessary at the Bath Street premises, but finally in 1901 a new larger factory, known as the Spencer factory, was occupied in Countess Road. This enabled the firm to develop and produce a range of tennis goods. By means of this specialist sports market, Robinsons was able to counter the dominance of large volume producers in the more general ranges of goods. Nevertheless, in addition, both a home and export trade in high and medium grades of men's and women's footwear was maintained. The principal trademarks by 1914 were 'Spencer', 'Anti-Tak' and 'Eclectic'; shoes which enjoyed royal patronage. The firm had both a London and a Paris office, from which a full complement of sales representatives operated.¹

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1 S. & L.T. Supplement (1916) p xxxviii.

2 N.I. 6/1/50 p11 cf S.L.N. 5/1/50 p50.

C.12: G. M. TEBBUTT & SONS LTD.

Founded in 1872 by George Minards Tebbutt at premises in Robert Street, manufacturing best quality hand-sewn and machine sewn men's and boy's footwear. Increased trade necessitated the building of a new factory in Clare Street in 1889, replete with the latest machinery. Machine welted production was begun using a Goodyear plant of machinery.¹ Following the general agreement in the town to end outworking, factory extensions and alterations became necessary in 1895. At this time the firm became one of the first to lay down a complete mechanised finishing plant.² Within a few years, a further extension in Grove Road was erected, at which time the internal production system of the factory was remodelled on the latest principles. In 1913, the factory was extended by the acquisition of adjacent property.

Despite the increased emphasis upon machine-welted goods, large amounts of best hand-sewn work continued to be produced through the Edwardian period: an important trade with prominent London West End stores was done. In particular, the firm cultivated specialist markets in sportswear and riding boots.³ A further development was the production of ladies' footwear, which was begun in 1892. By 1908, a parity had been reached with the men's footwear produced.⁴ A wide overseas trade was also done at this time with the empire and far east. Again one observes the importance which was attached to exhibition awards and trade-marks as advertising aids to marketing. In 1883, the 'Walk Easy' range of goods was introduced, which remained successful for many years despite the many

1 N.I. 20/9/35 pl3. "One of the first firms to instal B.U. welting and finishing plant".

2 S.L.R.

3 In 1949, the year of the firm's amalgamation with Richard Taylor & Son (qv) it could still be said "An old established firm which has won a world-wide reputation for superior footwear and craft in design and manufacturing". (N.I. 10/6/49 p9).

4 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p486.

imitations which were marketed.¹ Gradually the control within the company shifted. In circa 1889 George's sons, Albert Edward, the eldest and F. M. were taken into partnership; the latter leaving after some years to become involved in other manufacturing interests within the town. By 1908, the active management of the firm was in the hands of A. E. and another son, Alfred C.² By this time George's health and eyesight were beginning to deteriorate and for this and other "purely family reasons", the partnership was converted into a private limited company on 19th June 1912. The incorporated company had a nominal capital of £30,096, composed of 30,000 5% £1 cumulative preference shares and 96 £1 ordinary shares. The sale agreement valued the partnership at £25,516.³ In satisfaction, the vendors were allotted 25,450 preference and 96 ordinary shares viz:

G. M. Tebbutt	19,000	preference	and	53	ordinary	shares.
A. E. Tebbutt	4,000	"	"	31	"	"
A. C. Tebbutt	2,450	"	"	12	"	"

There were no mortgage debts or charges registered in the period prior to 1914. Until George's death in 1923, he acted as company chairman and managing director and his two sons as assistant managing directors; in addition Albert was the company secretary. After 1923, Albert became the company head. The Tebbutts were a well known 19th century Northamptonshire boot and shoe manufacturing family, which spawned several commercial undertakings.⁴

1 This remained true in the inter-war period; example N.I. Ibid, regarding the 1935 London exhibition.

2 A fourth son, E. Spencer, never appears to have been associated with the firm.

3 Broken down as £96 goodwill; £6,700 freehold factory, fixed machinery etcetera; £18,720 stock, loose plant/tools, horses and waggons etcetera.

4 The family originated from Earls Barton owning several manufacturing properties there (see N.R.O. Leases).
cf N.I. 28/7/23 p6. An ancestor was lord of the manor of Whilton, near Daventry. In addition to the companies mentioned in his biography, other members of the family who had manufacturing interests included:

(i) Abraham Tebbutt of 6 Louise Road, Northampton, who died 29/5/02. A former clicker and brother of William (qv) the probate of his will was granted to his widow Rebecca. Effects were valued at £1,671 5s. Od.

(ii) William Tebbutt of Brixworth, Northants. who died on 20/10/83. Effects were valued at £1,571 0s. 3d.

G. M. Tebbutt, the founder of the firm under discussion, was born at Northampton in 1839. He was the eldest son of Thomas, who commenced as a manufacturer at Wellington Street in 1843:¹ ultimately five of Thomas's sons were associated in his business.²

After a private education, George was apprenticed as a clicker and pattern cutter to Mr. Faulkner, then Northampton's largest manufacturer, where he learnt all the practical aspects of the trade before joining his father's firm, of which he later became a partner.

Like his father, George took an interest in public matters. Although on the sidelines of politics, he was for some years a member of the local School Board (1880/85) and of the Museum Committee. In his early years he supported the Northampton Radical Association in sundry ways, but must ultimately be classed as a "nonconformist and Liberal of the old school".³ Indeed, by the eighties he can be regarded as being firmly in agreement with the established, old-guard principles of Liberalism. A commentator noted in later years: "He was an ardent Liberal who attempted to stem the boisterous Radicalism of the eighties".⁴

/Continued 4

(iii) K. Tebbutt proprietor of K. Tebbutt & Company, 15 Kettering Road, Northampton, circa 1905 to circa 1907.

(iv) John Thomas Tebbutt of Raunds, who founded Tebbutt and Hall Brothers. A staunch Wesleyan and devoted worker for temperance causes: "Practically every office in Wesleyan cause open to a layman had been held by the deceased". B.S.T.J. 4/8/11 pl46. He died at a Northampton nursing home, having been retired for some years, on 22/7/11. He was survived by a widow, Eliza Ellen and one invalid son. His effects were valued at £25,280 17s. 8d. resworn at £27,609 10s. 9d.

- 1 Other sources give the date as 1844 and 1846.
- 2 See Addendum for Thomas Tebbutt and three of his sons.
- 3 S.L.N. 26/7/23 p26.
- 4 Ibid p54.

In 1893 he was created a borough J.P. and assiduously carried out his duties on the bench for many years. For many years he was an active member of the local Manufacturers' Association. A strong and long standing supporter of the College Street Baptist Chapel, he was the senior deacon.

He married Miss. Sophia L. Butt of Folkestone in 1861. Of French Huguenot stock, it was stated that she inspired his business success.¹ There were six sons and four daughters of the marriage. Sophia died in November 1918. An invalid in his last years, he required the constant attention of a daughter. He died, aged 85, at his residence, 'The Hollies', Cheyne Walk, Northampton, on 21st July 1923. He left personal effects valued at £40,309 9s. 9d.

After his death, indeed throughout the inter-war period, the firm remained, as it had done so since circa 1908, under the control of Albert E. Tebbutt and Alfred C. Tebbutt.

Albert Edward Tebbutt.

Born at Northampton, and after a private education joined his father's firm in 1879.² In the Great War he sat on the tribunal and was a member of the Government's Costing Committee and by the time he had become head of the firm in 1923,³ had risen to the stature of a leader in the town's staple trade. He was president of the local Manufacturers' Association 1920/24 and for over 50 years a member of its General Purposes Committee. In 1933 he was made an honorary life member of that committee.⁴ Between 1920/26 he also was on the General Purposes and Labour Committee of the National Footwear Manufacturers' Federation.

1 Ibid.

2 N.I. 16/11/29 p17: party to celebrate A. E. Tebbutt's 50 years with the firm.

3 At this time he was also on the board of R. Thomas & Son Ltd.

4 N.I. 28/11/33 p9.

He was a founder member of the reformed Northampton Chamber of Commerce. "A craftsman and artist of shoemaking, shoe research was his passion".¹ In the late 19th century he had been one of the founders of boot and shoe-making classes at the old Abington Square Technical School in the town. In the inter-war period he lent strong support to the British Shoe and Allied Trade's Association, serving on its council for some years; its chairman in 1925/26.² At this time he had published a series of footwear text books written for technical students. He was for a time, a member of the Council of the Federation of British Industries.³

Unlike many members of his family he was a staunch Tory, politically, having been a past vice president of the local Conservative Association. A religious man, he was an Anglican and gave active support as a parish councillor and in other ways to St. Matthew's Church.

He lived at 'Harewood House', The Drive, Phippsville, Northampton. He died in a London hospital on 29th April 1939 and was survived by a widow, two sons, A. C. and John, and four daughters. He left effects to the value of £46,242 18s. 7d.

Alfred C. Tebbutt (1872 - 1949)

A. E. Tebbutt was succeeded by his brother Alfred as company chairman in 1939. Alfred was born at Northampton and spent a working life of 45 years in G. M. Tebbutt & Company Ltd. Whilst Albert took responsibility for production matters, Alfred took charge of all matters of administration.⁴ A retiring man, he took no part in public life, but played golf and indulged a liking for antique glassware. He died at his home, 7 Cheyne Walk, Northampton, aged 77, on 3rd June 1949. He was a widower: there were no children of the marriage. His effects were valued at £47,518 14s. 4d.

1 N.I. 5/5/39 p7.

2 N.I. 26/9/25 p32.

3 Directory of Directors 1931.

4 S.L.N. 9/6/49 p37.

AddendumThomas Tebbutt (1814 - 1889)

The son of a working shoemaker, born in the neighbourhood of Earls Barton, he spent all of his life in the shoe trade. He was apprenticed to J. Faulkener of Regent's Street, Northampton and subsequently became foreman, then manager at Isaac Wright's warehouse. In 1843 he commenced business at Wellington Street, moving to Kingswell Street in 1846 and finally in 1858 to King Street. He was proclaimed as "a self-made man, who rose to be a prominent manufacturer".¹ By 1873 the growth of the firm was such that a new factory was built in King Street. At this time, George M. left the firm and Charles J. (qv) virtually took over control in order that Thomas could devote his time to local public life and politics. Here is another example of a successful partnership in which the presence of more than one able businessman enabled one of the partners to reduce his business commitments in order to enter public life. A member of Northampton's Radical Association and an avowed Radical Liberal, he served as a councillor for the West Ward between 1873/87; he was a member of the Watch and Sanitary Committees. The peak of his long and successful public career was marked by his mayoralty in 1877/78. As mayor, he took charge of law and order in the town during the militia riots of June 1878. Upon his retirement from business in 1885, the firm was re-structured as partnership between his sons, Charles J. and Harold V. Tebbutt; trading as Tebbutt Brothers. The partnership was dissolved upon Charles' death early in 1893 and the assets sold.

Charles Joseph Tebbutt (1843 - 93)

Born at Northampton and after a private education, entered his father's firm, of which he subsequently became a partner. He inherited many of his father's

1 S.L.R. 23/2/89 p220 cf B.S.T.J. 16/2/89 p303. "The architect of his own fortune". N.M. 16/2/89 p6. "A man of considerable business acumen and startling personal warmth, by sheer power of will, severe application to business and perseverance, aided by natural aptitude, he elevated himself to an honourable position in our municipal and commercial life". N.M. Ibid.

characteristics, including his love of politics. Once established in business, he entered public life and by the time of his death it was said of him, "he was known much more as a town councillor than a shoe manufacturer".¹ He sat on Northampton Town Council from 1877 until his death. He was a visitor in lunacy and trustee for various of the town's charities. He was also a member of several council committees, including the Market and Fairs Committee, where he did much work for the Northampton Fat Stock Show and the Highways and Buildings Committee, of which he was chairman. His reputation as "an excellent and judicious chairman" and the fact that, although a radical Liberal, he was not "a blatant, rabid radical", ensured that all political groups favoured his chairmanship of various committees. He died at his home, 6 Royal Terrace, on 8th September 1893 after a short illness. He was survived by his widow, Alice Eliza, the eldest daughter of James Mott of Northampton, whom he married in 1867 and five children. His effects were valued at £260 4s. 6d.

Harold Vincent Tebbutt (1849 - 1901)

Born at Northampton he spent all his life in the trade, first in his father's firm and subsequently in partnership with his brother Charles (qv). Following his brother's death he commenced as a sole trader at Robert Street in September 1893. The business failed in March 1897 (liabilities £2,221 5s. 1d. and assets £1,184 1s. 2d.).² His son, H. W. Tebbutt, then took over a portion of the business but that in turn failed in April 1898 (liabilities £1,154 10s. 7d. and assets £680 3s. 5d.).³ In bad health for some years, he died at Northampton in January 1901 aged 52. He was survived by his widow and three sons.

1 N.M. 15/9/93 p6.

2 B.S.T.J. 6/3/97 p355.

3 B.S.T.J. 9/4/98 p506.

Frederick Thomas Tebbutt

Born at Northampton and like his other brothers was initially associated with his father's business before commencing in partnership with Harold Law at premises in Henry Street in the early nineties, under the style Law and Tebbutt. Law retired in 1896 and a new partnership was agreed with Frederick W. Osborne under the style F. T. Tebbutt & Company. For some time a good high-grade export and home trade, including retail premises, was done and new factory premises were acquired in Countess Road. In 1902 a profit of £1,244 was taken on a turnover of £21,560, but thereafter the firm encountered the considerable trading problems experienced by many firms. After losing money in trading for four years the firm failed in September 1906. (liabilities £8,793 15s. 8d. and assets £4,073 18s. 1d.)¹ Trading was restarted after payment of a composition, 10s. in the £1, but within four years a further stoppage occurred (liabilities £9,902 0s. 10d. and assets £3,646 12s. 0d.)² The firm was re-constituted in March 1911 as a private limited company with a nominal capital of £5,000. The assets of the partnership were purchased for £1,000 and shares issued to Tebbutt & Osborne in settlement. These, together with other cash allotments brought the share capital to £3,357. Despite the active help of three Northampton manufacturers, E. Lewis, J. Manfield and D. A. Berry, the new company fared no better, going into voluntary liquidation on 30th May 1912.³ F. T. Tebbutt then retired from business, but in retirement was active in the social, sporting and religious life of the town. He gave support to various Anglican churches and acted as a church warden and bible class reader for some years, "A brilliant cricketer",⁴ he was secretary of the County Club and took an interest in local rugby clubs. He lived at Pattishall for some years, but removed to 38, Billing Road in 1897. Several years prior to his death, he went to live with his only child, Mary Isabel and her husband Reverend A. F. Alston, (formerly curate of St. Katharine's, Northampton) at St. Leonards-on-Sea, where he died on 15th August 1934. He was a widower. His effects were valued at £1,949 ls. 11d.

1 B.S.T.J. 21/9/06 p457.

3 B.S.T.J. 26/4/12 p417 P.R.O. BT31/13547/114665.

2 B.S.T.J. 30/9/10 p543.

4 N.I. 17/8/34 p3 cf N.P. & P. (1956) II No.4 p156.

C.13: CRICK & COMPANY (formerly (i) Latimer, Crick & Gunn
(ii) Crick & Gunn)

The firm was founded in 1881 at small premises in Green Street, Northampton; a partnership between Walter D. Crick, W. Latimer, Thomas Gunn and others. By 1885 the business transferred to larger premises in St. Giles Street. When Latimer retired in 1892, considerable extensions were made in the factory and the firm commenced to open retail shops in London. The partnership with Thomas Gunn was dissolved in 1897. Born in Northampton in 1841, Gunn spent the whole of his working life in the shoe trade. In bad health for some time, he suffered a stroke two weeks before his death 13th December 1906, aged 65.¹ He lived at 47 Holly Road, Northampton. His effects were valued at £4,640 6s. 4d.

From 1897 Crick traded as a sole proprietor with the assistance of his eldest son, Walter junior, who was learning the business. By this time, a high-class home and export trade was conducted from the large St. Giles Street factory, "replete with every requisite for the production of the best grades of footwear".² At the turn of the century an extensive trade was opened up with India. Crick died in 1903. As Walter junior was then only 19 years, his mother became the legal owner of the company, until his majority when the two entered into partnership. From this time, Walter "with the assistance of the able staff of managers of departments"³ successfully carried on the business. By 1914 a second brother, H. Crick, had joined the partnership, whilst a third, A. Crick, assisted in the firm's management; a fourth brother, W. E. Crick, entered the legal profession.

Walter Drawbridge Crick was born at Pinion End Farm, Hanslope, on 15th December 1857; the son of a farmer. After being educated locally at Hanslope and Stoke Bruerne, some three miles distance, he started as a clerk in the

1 B.S.T.J. 21/12/06 p482.

2 S.L.T. Supplement 1916 pxxviii.

3 J.H.N.N.S. 1903/04 Volume 12 pl34.

Goods Departments of the London and North Western Railway Company, being stationed first at Higham Farrers and afterwards at Northampton. Subsequently, he entered the firm of Messrs. Smeed & Warren, shoe manufacturers, of Newland, Northampton, and after a short while commenced travelling for them, mostly in Scotland, Ireland and the North of England. As a businessman his contemporaries regarded him as very successful. His was the dominant influence in the partnership formed in 1881 and referred to above. As one obituary records:

.. There is little doubt that in its early days the success of the firm of Latimer, Crick & Company was largely due to Mr. Crick's success as a traveller. He always had a way of selecting one or more things in a problem and concentrating his whole energy in impressing them upon people, so that they tended to assume an importance above their intrinsic merits and most probably this characteristic greatly contributed to his success as a seller. Although a keen businessman, well able to take care of himself in any transaction, he had left behind him a most honourable and untarnished record ..¹

Crick's was an expansive personality and much outside the leather world claimed his attention. He "was many sided; he took much interest in a variety of things besides boot and shoe manufacture. (He was) a student of many things, decidedly an exceptional man".² He gave time to the study of geology and chemistry. His scientific studies commenced upon his arrival at Northampton, where he attended the science class conducted by a Mr. Charles Lee in Waterloo and after at the science school in Abington Square. In later years, he combined the study of palaeontology and microscopy with geology. His knowledge of the geology of the region was extensive. A field naturalist of some note, he visited geological sections in many counties with another local geologist of note, Beeby Thompson. He was a keen conchologist and built up a large collection which ultimately was placed on long loan in the Northampton museum. He published several learned articles on land and freshwater shells. He found two new forms of gasteropods, which have been named after him:

1 J.N.N.H.S. op cit p135.

2 Ibid p134;135.

Mathilda Cricki, Hudl and Trochus Cricki, Wilson. His published papers on the fora minifera of Northamptonshire written in collaboration with C. D. Sherburn, and his other work earned him membership of the Geologist Association of London in 1886 and the fellowship of the Geological Society of London in 1892.

As his success in business enabled him to indulge his tastes more fully, so his field of interests and of collecting expanded:

.. He attended sales in London and other parts of the country and by sound judgement and a good knowledge of pecuniary value of things, he gradually filled his house with choice examples and rare specimens of a variety of articles ..¹

A fine library was assiduously collected which included first editions and M.S.S. collections relating to the history of Northamptonshire: principally the Powel M.S. and Baker M.S. Likewise, stamps, coloured prints, coins, English porcelain and furniture, all attracted his attention: "nothing but the best of its kind would satisfy him in later years".²

A Liberal, he took no part in politics. His chief contribution to the town's public life mirrors his increasing passion for the world of learning. He was a coopted member of the Free Library Committee from 1896/1903, being its vice-chairman in 1901. He was probably centrally responsible for the committee's regrettable sale of a portion of the Clare library, composed mainly of first editions of standard works. Naturally enough, he was an early member of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society; a contributor to its journal; for many years president of the conchological section; and for the last years before his death, a member of the Editorial Committee. A Congregationalist, he was a member and trustee of the old King Street chapel and subsequently the Abington Avenue Congregational church, where he was a deacon from 1894, co-secretary of the building fund (with Alfred Church qv) and secretary of the

1 Ibid pl36.

2 Ibid pl36.

legal committee. He was a liberal benefactor to this institution.

Afflicted by heart trouble for some time,¹ he died at his home, Nine Springs Villa, Cliftonville, Northampton, from syncope following an attack of angina pectoris, on the 15th December 1903, aged 46. He was buried at Northampton General cemetery and his widow, four sons and a daughter survived him. His estate was valued at £24,909 8s. 5d.

1 Northampton Daily Chronicle 26/1/04 p4. Personal reminiscences by Beeby Thompson touch upon the pressures under which Crick must have existed and which probably contributed to his illness:
"Crick never (well hardly ever) indulged in alchoholic drinks or smoking. I used to chaff him and say he would do both when he got married, but he didn't; however, about two years ago he told me that he thought that perhaps he had made a mistake, especially in regard to smoking, as with other people it did seem to allay worrying so much".

C.14: GEORGE GREEN & SONS (NORTHAMPTON) LTD.

The prominent parent company was founded in Leicester by George Green in 1859, to manufacture ladies' wear. For 10 years following 1862, George traded in partnership as Green & Mould. In 1872 this partnership was dissolved and one with his eldest sons constituted. At this date a branch establishment under the direction of his son, Samuel H. Green, was begun at Northampton, to manufacture medium and high grade men's ware. Originally occupying premises in Commercial Street, the introduction of machinery necessitated the construction of a new one-storey factory, to cope with altered conditions, and the business was transferred in 1892 to Stimpson Avenue; the site occupied in 1914. Two extensions were made to this building, but a fire completely destroyed it on the 3rd March 1913. Of the firm's response to this set back a contemporary journalist noted:

.. The position created by this overwhelming disaster was tackled with customary energy and temporary premises were secured on Campbell Square, where business on a reduced scale was carried on, pending building of the present fine factory in Stimpson Avenue. This was ready for occupation in February 1914. It is one of the largest in the district and certainly the most modern, its perfect equipment throughout rendering it particularly suitable for the production of high grade footwear in which this firm specialises.¹

In 1902, the firm was converted into a separate private limited company² under the directorship of George's sons, Samuel H. (managing director), James and Arthur: Samuel had resided in the town from 1895. Both James and Arthur, George's eldest sons, were also directors with him of the parent company, which had been similarly converted a year earlier. George's other sons, Septimus J. and George E., assisted in the management of the Leicester firm. Conversion would appear to have taken place in order to divide the family's interest, in the wake of George's advancing years: no mortgages or charges were registered

1 S. & L. Trades Supplement 1916 pxi

2 The P.R.O. company file has been destroyed, thus all information is derived from the trade press.

in the period. In 1911 N. Johnson, the Northampton firm's manager, was appointed director. He had been associated with the company from 1905, prior to which he had spent 13 years in the U.S.A. The large experience gained there had "considerably assisted the business in its rapid development, his first hand knowledge of their methods being of exceptional advantage in an industry which owes so much to the initiative of our American compeers".¹

The company's authorised capital was £12,000. The annual returns and shareholding lists show that extra capital was gradually injected into the company by slowly calling up payment on shares issued: In 1902, only £3,856 was paid up on 8,546 £1 issued shares. These shares were held by family and close associates. The following charts this gradual expansion of share capital in our period:

Date	Calls Paid	Calls Agreed Paid	Total Share Capital
1902	£1510	£2346	£3856
1906	£5805	£2346	£8151
1910	£6455	£2346	£8801
1912	£6985	£2346	£9331

Source: Annual Returns in B.S.T.J.

George Green was born at Market Harborough on 1st August 1816, the son of John, who came from an old Leicester family: he was made a freeman of that town in 1796 and died in 1854. George was educated locally and then apprenticed for a short while to a well known Leicester printer named Winks. He then entered a corn merchant's business at Harborough.² In 1859, he started business on his own account as a boot and shoe manufacturer. He became a Leicester town councillor in 1871; was elected an alderman in 1891; became high bailiff of the borough 1892/94; was appointed a J.P. in 1895 and retired from political life in 1900. Shoe trade matters occupied some of

1 S.L.T. Supplement (1916) loc cit.

2 H. Hartopp, Roll of Mayors of Leicester (1905) p224.

his time; a past chairman of the Leicester Boot Manufacturers' Association, he was largely responsible for the establishment of the Board of Arbitration.¹ He married twice and had issue seven sons and one daughter, all of whom survived him. He died at his residence, Lansdowne House, Stoneygate, Leicester, on the 19th August 1911, aged 95. His effects were valued at £36,638 18s. 2d. gross.

Addendum

James Green (1845 1932)

Died late November 1932, a retired shoe manufacturer of Stimpson Avenue, Northampton.

¹ B.S.T.J. 6/1/11 p33.

C.15: HORNBY & WEST LTD.

The firm was founded by Thomas Hornby and his brother-in-law, Henry Thomas West in 1874 at small premises in Wellington Street, Northampton.

Little information has survived regarding the activities of this firm. Trade would appear to have been concentrated upon high grade handsewn and bespoke work for the home market: they were purely wholesale manufacturers. A successful firm in the early years, sometime in the eighties they took possession of extensive premises in Overstone Road, "the first factory built in that (predominantly shoe manufacturing) district of the town".¹

Henry Thomas West, of East Park Parade, Northampton, died on 22nd November 1887 at the comparatively early age of 50: the outcome of an enlarged liver and stoppage of the bowels. He was the son of a journeyman shoemaker born at Northampton in 1837. He commenced in the trade in 1853, working first for Parker & Sons, Wood Street, Northampton, but spent most of his working life, prior to setting up on his own account with Turner Brothers, Hyde & Company, Northampton and Henry Willis & Company, Worcester.² He was essentially a quiet man of retiring disposition and took no part in the town's public life. He was survived by his widow, Emma and two sons (born circa 1877 and circa 1881). His personal estate was valued at £8,949 13s. 5d.

Following West's death, Thomas Hornby, the senior partner, entered into a new partnership agreement with his son, Frederick and Mrs. Emma West. Under this arrangement, the latter received a quarter share of the profits with which to provide for her family and the firm avoided the disruption of having to pay back West's share of the capital in the firm.³ In the nineties, trading continued but clearly not at the same very successful pitch which had characterised the firm's development prior to 1887. The Edwardian years

1 N.M. 26/11/87 p7 cf N.M. 18/1/29 pl. At this time the company had a branch factory at Towcester and extensive outwork was given out in the vicinity.

2 Note relationship with Allinson family (qv).

3 Much of the evidence present in this and subsequent paragraphs has been gleaned from a report of creditor's meeting held London, Dec. 1909 appearing in B.S.T.J. 24/12/09 p562

witnessed further decline in the firm's fortunes, which finally led to a meeting of creditors being called later in 1909. The report of the creditors meeting provided one with sufficient information to be able to piece matters together.

The background to this gradual atrophy can be traced to a cause which was common enough in the period. The company's pre 1887 success had been based upon the production of the highest quality hand made footwear. This policy appears to have persisted, largely unchallenged,¹ despite the fundamental shift in production and patterns of demand which had taken place generally. Mr. Ledsham F.C.A., the company's accountant, summed up the position in 1909 thus:

.. The debtor attributes his present position to loss in trading, consequent upon the limited demand for high class goods, to the steady increase in the price of leather during the last few years and also to multiple trading, together with loss of discounts due to lack of capital. Since 1903 Hornby's accounts have not been regularly audited but from time to time balance sheets have been submitted to his bankers, who have rendered the business considerable assistance ..²

The firm had failed to meet the challenge of change which had swept through the industry. Weakened by this, what stability the firm had was further undermined from 1902 by a crucial reduction in its capital, following the death of Thomas Hornby.³ At once Mrs. West notified her intention to retire from the partnership. Thus between January 1902 and 31st December 1905, a sum of £5,214 was paid by instalments to her as retiring partner. Frederick Hornby continued now as a sole proprietor. In 1903 the last full balance sheet

1 Other high quality producers of Hornby's size reveal a similar trait: for example - Pollard & Company (qv).

2 B.S.T.J. Ibid.

3 At the time of writing little is extant concerning Thomas Hornby's life beyond that he was the foreman clicker at Somervell Bros., Kendall, for a short period in the mid-fifties (J. Somervell, After 90 Years: The Evolution of K Shoes (circa 1932) p14). This source states that he was "founder later of the important firm of Hornby & West, Northampton". Strangely, in the 1960's, Somervell took over H. E. Randall Ltd., the firm which purchased Hornby & West in 1910.

showed Frederick's capital to be £1,893: in 1887 the capital of the company had stood at £10,608. This combination of factors, internal and external, which precipitated the 1909 failure, quickly became reflected in falling profit levels as the table below reveals:

Profits Earned by Hornby & West 1903 - 1909.

Year	£
1903	1157
1904	22
1905	357
1906	305
1907	17
1908	- 518
1909	- 776

In these years, F. Hornby borrowed heavily in an attempt to remain in business and to overcome his short fall in capital. In addition to considerable trade credit being given - which stood at £8,585 9s. 3d. in December 1909 - the Northamptonshire Union Bank had secured loans to the value of £8,008 18s. 5d. (£5,508 18s. 5d. after security). In addition, one of his commercial travellers, Mr. C. Wood, made a cash loan of £1,000 and his sister one of £400. By the time of the 1909 meeting, net liabilities totalled £14,074 7s. 8d. against net assets of £8,781 10s. 1d. Hornby affirmed his intention to carry on the business and an interim composition arrangement was put forward, under which if no agreement was sanctioned by 1st January 1910, the creditor's trustee was empowered to sell the estate as a going concern. The latter step appears to have been taken for on 28th January 1910, the company was registered as a limited company. It had been purchased by one of Northampton's most successful companies, H. E. Randall Ltd.¹

¹ The Companies House file is not extant having been destroyed by the P.R.O. in 1963, but contemporary press reports and Randall's extant Companies House File reveal the purchase.

The nominal capital of the converted company was £20,000 in £1 shares. A return dated 22nd March 1911 revealed that 10,011 fully paid up shares had been taken up and that no mortgages or charges had been issued.¹ Press reports are contradictory, but possibly Hornby remained with the reconstituted company until 1912 as managing director, at which time Norman Dawson took over that post.² The other directors, T. H. Lloyd, Frederick William Hirst and Phineas Hayman, were also directors of about to become directors, of H. E. Randall Ltd. By 1922, Henry Randall was a director of Hornby's and Dawson of Randall's.

1 B.S.T.J. 5/5/11 p175.

2 B.S.T.J. 4/10/12 p4, records the appointment of Dawson (qv) and notes "this arrangement will enable F. W. Hornby to visit his many friends in the trade more frequently".

C.16: RICHARD TAYLOR & SON

Richard Taylor was born at Bingley in 1829. Apprenticed to the trade at an early age, he spent many years as a journeyman cordwainer in the "first class Northern trade". In circa 1864 he migrated to Northampton, where he worked as a foreman, first to R. Derby & Company¹ and then Hollis & Sons,² becoming the latter's work's manager by the early seventies. A skilled craftsman of the old school, in 1873 his entries won the highest award for general excellence at the Northampton Leather Traders' Exhibition. Two years later, he commenced his own business from small premises in Victoria Road, Northampton. In 1879, a new factory having been commissioned was occupied: the Victoria factory, 23 Kettering Road. It underwent extensive enlargements in 1887/88 and continued to trade successfully through until 1914.

Though Richard took no prominent part in the public life of the town, as a founder member of the local manufacturers' association, he played an important role there. For some years an arbitration referee, from 1895 he acted as umpire for the finishers and lasters section of the Arbitration Board. In this position as final arbiter:

.. Mr. Taylor performed his duties with unique ability and discrimination and none, workman or employer, ever questioned the honesty and fairness of his judgements .. his sturdy conscientiousness and rigid adherence to principle earned the admiration of (all) ..³

Unwell for some months, following an attack of influenza he died on 13th June 1899, following a severe internal inflammation. His residence was at Duston Lodge, Weedon Road, Northampton. He was survived by his widow, one son (John Edward) and one daughter, Miss. Sarah Taylor. Effects £26,476 10s. 4d. His son, who had been active in the management of the firm since its inception both as a commercial traveller and later as works manager, took control.

1 B.S.T.J. 17/6/99 p861.

2 B.S.T.J. Ibid.

3 B.S.T.J. 17/6/99 loc cit p860.

Born at Keighley, Yorkshire in 1853, he was educated at Halifax National schools. Trained as a handstitchman like his father, he enjoined a reputation for "sturdy independence and transparent honesty in the trade",¹ and for "earnestness and business acumen".² A staunch conservative, he was first elected to the Town Council in 1908 and was a founder director of the town's Conservative Building and Land Societies. In trade matters, he served on the executive committee of the local manufacturers' association for a number of years. At the time of writing, no information is to hand concerning his last years.

As is discussed elsewhere, the fundamental changes in production and market competition heightened concentration in the trade and underscored the dominance of the larger firm, whilst smaller producers, as a group, faced an extensive period of concentration in numbers through business failure. The survival of firms like Taylors in this climate depended upon an ability to find a market in which they could exploit their scale and mode of operation where successful. This strategy enabled them to trade successfully alongside the larger producer: complementing rather than directly competing in a market which was stratified and diverse, rather than monolithic and uniform. Like for instance, W. B. Stevens (qv) and Pollard & Sons (qv), this firm was engaged in general high-class trading. A wide and flexible range of goods was produced, with an emphasis upon first grade, style-conscious footwear. In all grades, however, a policy of high quality matched by competitive prices was pursued.

The prime qualities of manufacturers such as Richard and John Edward Taylor are reflected in this policy. The first was the high level of practical competence in shoemaking and knowledge of leather qualities and costings possessed by them. Both men were skilled handstitchmen "who took a pride

1 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p526.

2 B.S.T.J. 6/11/08 p227.

in a high-class product",¹ yet they appreciated and responded to the need to use new methods. Richard's attitude, in particular, was essentially unsentimental and pragmatic: a blend of the old and the new. Unlike many manufacturers of his generation, who having been trained and steeped in the traditions of the handstitchmen, he was able to successfully accommodate change. He was an early and staunch advocate of machine production, bringing his traditional knowledge to bear upon new machine techniques.

.. Since his altered circumstances, he's not relinquished his personal labours in the factory, but still makes it his pride to turn out work of the highest order. Unlike many stitchmen, Richard Taylor is a staunch advocate of the employment of machinery² .. working in his mechanical knowledge and skill of the trade ..

In addition to a readiness to accommodate new manufacturing techniques, an awareness of the crucial importance of marketing was clearly appreciated by the Taylors. The strategy, so typical of the industry during this period, was composed of three elements. First, the establishment of the reputation for the general excellence of the firm's products by winning recognition at one of the many trade fairs of the period. In the case of Taylors, they secured a first class medal at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition of 1888, together with a certificate. Secondly, the need to advertise and popularise their products. This was achieved by the use of trade-marked goods, with which to differentiate their lines from those of their competitors. Taylor's trade-marks in the period included 'Reliance', 'Phealatees', 'Wide Tread', 'Easy Wear', 'Kempton Park' and 'Anatomical R.T.N.' and thirdly ensuring the quality of their products. A trade correspondent noted:

.. The reliability of this firm's goods is a by-word in the trade and there are no finer produced in the home of fine footwear - Northampton.

1 B.S.T.J. 18/3/88 p231 cf B.S.T.J. 17/6/99 p860 "In own factory, right up to his death, none worked harder than he. Often the first in the morning and the last to leave, he had a thorough grasp of every detail of his business and in practical knowledge, few manufacturers were superior to them".

2 Ibid p230.

.. Messrs. Taylor & Son make a very wide range of goods, comprising both gent's and ladies' and in each class the careful selection of material and the close attention to workmanship ensure the reliability and stylish appearance for which the firm is famed. (Their) trade-marks are exceedingly well known amongst high-class retailers, who safely rely upon these goods to please the most fastidious customers ..¹

(In the late 1940's the firm amalgamated with G. M. Tebbutt to form Tebbutt-Taylor).

1 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p526.

C.17: ALLINSON & COMPANY

The firm was founded by Alfred Allinson, who purchased the business of Edward Haynes, St. George's Terrace, in 1880.¹ Haynes company was the oldest established manufacturer of ladies' footwear in Northampton and Allinson continued to make ladies' goods exclusively. By 1909, however, it was noted that the production of men's wear had begun some time previously "which has grown to be as important as the ladies' department".² In 1892, a larger factory at the corner of Earl and Clare Streets was occupied in the wake of increased trade: two extensions were added prior to 1914.

He was born at Idle, Yorkshire in 1836,³ but beyond this little is known of the founder's social origins or early life. Prior to coming to Northampton in 1880, he had been a commercial traveller for Henry Willis of Worcester and "had opened all their accounts in every part of England".⁴ Although a staunch Liberal, he took no active part in municipal or political matters. He was, however, an active supporter of the local manufacturers' association, undertaking much work for the organisation.⁵ He died on the 4th June 1907, following a short illness, at home 'Mayfield House', Watkin Terrace. He was 71 years old. His estate was valued at £7,317 19s. 1d. gross.

Sometime earlier, Allinson's son, George Frederick, had taken over control of the firm. The continued success depended upon two features. First, a concentration on producing high grade branded footwear,⁶ and secondly the selling abilities of G. F. Allinson. An able and knowledgeable salesman, he

1 N.I. 9/11/12 p13 - obituary of W. H. Haynes.

2 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p543.

3 R.G. 11/1549. Northampton Census Enumerators Returns 1881.

4 N.M. 7/6/07 p6.

5 B.S.T.J. 7/6/07 p397.

6 Principal brands: 'Hercules', 'Osoesi', 'Acriness', 'Celebrated'.

was one of the founders of the Northampton branch of the U.K.C.T.A. and a past branch chairman and trustee. At his instigation, the Commercial Traveller's Schools and Benevolent Institute were formed in 1891. A popular personality, he took a keen interest in the many social and business activities in the town.¹ He died on the 27th January 1930 at his home in St. George's Avenue, aged 61. His effects were resworn at £22,284 ls. 8d. gross. He was survived by his widow, Mary Ann and two sons, Graham and Leslie. His sons had both entered the family firm prior to the Great War, and now took full control.

Addendum

Charles Graham Birkett Allinson (1891 - 1965)

Born in Northampton 1891 and became a senior partner after 1930. An active man in trade matters, he was the youngest ever president of the local manufacturers' association and its treasurer. For 20 years he was a member of the Northampton and District Employment Committee. Made an O.B.E. in 1953 for public services. He died on the 27th November 1965 at Park Avenue. His estate was valued at £27,359 gross. He was survived by his widow, Dorothy Annie, one son and one daughter. His son, John Graham, took control of the family firm.²

1 N.I. 1/2/30 p3.

2 N.I. January 1966 p53.

C18: THOMAS SINGLEHURST & SON

The firm was founded in 1879 by Thomas Singlehurst, who after a short while was joined in partnership by James Gulliver, trading as Singlehurst & Gulliver from premises in Northampton. Increased trade necessitated the erection of a new factory in Burns Street in 1886, and subsequently even larger premises known as the Speedwell Works in the Queen's Park district of the town.

In 1898 James Gulliver dissolved the partnership owing to ill-health: at the time of writing no further biographic data was available regarding this subject. Thomas continued the business as a sole proprietor. His only son, Arthur, entered the firm a year later as a factory lad, being trained in the various departments and later undertaking commercial travelling in the North of England. In June 1911 he was taken into partnership. In the period after 1903, Thomas's son-in-law, Harry Blake, ably managed the factory "controlling hundreds of employees".¹

Like so many pure wholesale manufacturers, Singlehursts sought productive standards which gave "solidity with character", whilst marketing was promoted by the use of the trademarks 'Speedwell' and 'Westminster'. From the late nineties the in-stock system was introduced in order to improve the quality of service for home market customers. An overseas trade was also developed and in the years prior to the Great War, a French warehouse was opened, a growing trade with that country.

Thomas Singlehurst was born at Northampton in 1860 and probably came from a shoemaking family. Although a matter of conjecture, it is possible that members of his family were farmers in the Oundle area of the county. A town councillor and alderman for many years, he resigned public office in 1913 owing to failing eyesight. He was to remain partially sighted for the rest of his life. In 1924 he endowed the Northampton General Hospital's new

¹ Shoe and Leather Trades Supplement 1916 pl vi.

ophthalmic wing.¹ He was also an active temperance worker and served as a Sunday School superintendent in the town for over 30 years.

At the time of writing, details of Singlehurst's later life remain uncertain. According to Waddy's History of Northampton General Hospital,² he was still alive in 1930 and actively funding ophthalmic developments there. The firm ceased to trade some time between 1928/1931.³ It would appear that Harry Blake had been made a partner by the inter-war period.⁴

1 N.I. 25/1/24 p3.

2 F. F. Waddy - A History of Northampton General Hospital 1743/1948 (1974) p88, 121.

3 See Kelly's Directories for those years.

4 Blake is described as a boot manufacturer in the principal Probate Registry's calendar of 1923, where he appears as the sole executor of a Mary Ann Singlehurst, widow, died 16/6/28, at 68 Oliver Street, Northampton; Effects £846.

C.19: W. B. STEVENS & COMPANY (formerly W. Stevens)

William Stevens, the firm's founder, was born "of a good family"¹ at Newland, Northampton in 1839. He received a boarding school education at a local Abingdon Street School. For many years he was Messrs. Homan & Company's works manager at their St. Giles Street factory.² When this firm ceased trading in the early eighties, William commenced, rather late in life, as a manufacturer; first occupying premises in Wellington Street, then Cyril Street and later in St. Andrew's Street. Remembered in trade circles for honest trading and the quality of his products, William played no part in public matters. An enthusiastic sportsman, he enjoyed shooting and cultivated an interest in horticulture. He died in Northampton, the result of senile decay, on 7th January 1913. He was survived by his widow and three children; one son (William Brevington) and two daughters. His daughters, Mrs. H. Bass and Mrs. Edgar E. Morris,³ both married into the local shoe trade. A devout Anglican, his funeral took place at St. Matthew's Church. No details of a will have been traced in the principal Probate Registry's calendar.

At the time of his retirement in circa 1889, the firm was already trading strongly in all grades of men's, youth's and ladies' footwear under several distinctive trademarks, the most prominent being 'Unity', "one of their oldest and most popular brands and superior to the boot usually retailed at 16s. 9d."⁴ By the Great War other distinctive brand lines had been successfully developed, notably 'Trojan', 'Alliance', 'Connaught', 'Piccadily' and 'Baronet'. Whilst the firm's marketing base was its home trade, a useful overseas trade had been initiated, particularly with South Africa and India.

1 B.S.T.J. 10/1/13 p67.

2 Later occupied by William Hickson & Company Ltd., then Crick & Company (qv).

3 Edgar E. Morris was a partner in the shoe firm of Morris Brothers.

4 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p555.

In circa 1889 ownership and control passed to William's son, William Brevington. Some time before 1914 he was joined in partnership by his works manager, Arthur Edward Jackson. William B. was born locally and spent his entire working life in the shoe trade. He was probably associated with his father's firm from its inception. Thoroughly trained in the practice of shoemaking, William B. displayed a marked business ability. A contemporary made the following assessment:

.. Mr. Stevens is an alert businessman, keen and energetic and able to hold his own against all comers. He has a good technical and practical knowledge and has won the honours medal in technical examinations ..¹

Under his guidance, the firm's activities were progressively modernised and expanded. The St. Andrew's Street premises were extended and "most fully equipped with the latest free machinery, (to) enable the firm to produce goods second to none in style, quality and price."² We also learn from his obituary that he "had interests in London retail shops and other enterprises".³ Moreover, in the Edwardian period, Stevens became one of the Northampton firms which successfully penetrated the European market: by 1914 they were trading in Belgium, France and Italy.

Yet it is important to put any such assessment into perspective, for Stevens was a small man. Fortuitously, surviving insurance records enable one to gauge some idea of the company's size and development.⁴ In 1889, the warehouse and workshop premises in Cyril Street were insured for £100 and the stock in trade for £400. The premises were adjacent to his residence - a common feature amongst the town's smaller manufacturers - as the inclusion of household goods to the value of £150 on the same policy testifies.⁵

1 Ibid cf N.I. 4/7/41 p2 "a successful manufacturer".

2 Ibid

3 N.I. 4/7/41 p2.

4 N.R.O. Norwich Union Fire Insurance Records: Insurance Instruction Ledgers.

5 N.R.O. Ibid ZA 3320 folio 15.

Successive policy instructions give clues as to the character of organisation. It is clear that an outwork structure was maintained until the late nineties, when powered machinery was introduced. To accommodate this an adjacent three storey factory in St. Andrew's Street was occupied, although until 1908 this was jointly occupied with G. Bishop & Company, manufacturers.¹ In fact one is able to build up a partial picture of the piecemeal development of the firm, which like so many, appears to have acquired space and buildings as necessity dictated. Three main buildings were in use by 1908 viz: the main factory, an adjacent two storey stock room, comprising office, warehouse, leather dressing shop and cutting room; and the original warehouse at Cyril Street. The latter was not in use in 1901, but was by 1908.²

Insurance records also provide some data which gives one some notion of the capital employed by the company: Figure 1 refers.

Year	Stock in Trade	Machines	Buildings, fixtures and fittings
1893	£ 650	£ -	£ 150
1895	1050	-	150
1896	850	-	150
1899	3450	500	1250
1900	1500	-	-
1901	3450	500	1250
1906	6700	550	890
1908	4500	750	-
1911	2600	100	-

Figure 1: W. B. Stevens & Company: Insurance valuation of stock, machines and buildings used in shoe manufacturing

1 N.R.O. Ibid ZA 3322 to 24.

2 N.R.O. Ibid ZA 3323 folio 7 1901 "On a private dwelling near but not adjacent to the factory £200. On a two storey building and adjacent but not communicating with the assured's factory, formerly a shoe factory; notice to be given when used for trade purposes £225.

At no time were more than 100 persons employed.

W. B. Stevens was a private retiring man, who took no part in public or trade matters. He was nevertheless a supporter of the Northampton Conservative and Unionist Association. Like his father, he enjoyed shooting and gardening and certainly the success and wealth he amassed from trade enabled him to indulge his interest in collecting art treasures. He married Miss. Margaret Annie Pashler of Brook House, Catworth, Hants., who survived him. He had three sons: Frederick Brevington, who entered the firm; Dr. W.P.: and Mr. R., who joined the Forestry Commission. He died at his residence, Brook House, 437 Wellingborough Road, on 28th June 1941. Effects £15,844 17s. 7d. gross.

Addendum

Arthur Edward Jackson (1856 - 1954)

Born at Northampton, an uncle of H.C.O. Jackson, trade journalist and sometime managing director of the Shoe and Leather News. He retired as a shoe manufacturer and partner in W. B. Stevens in 1919. He married Ellen Elizabeth, who did not survive him: there were no children of the marriage. He died aged 98, at his home 12 Bostock Avenue, Northampton, on 26th July 1954. Effects £22,974 19s. 4d.

C.20: POLLARD & SON

This firm was founded by Edmund Pollard, who was born at Whitfield, a village near Brackley, Northamptonshire in 1824. Apprenticed to shoemaking in Northampton, he worked as a journeyman until 1858, when he commenced business from small premises in St. James Street, Northampton. Successive factories were occupied in Commercial Street and Queen Street as trade developed. Finally, in 1883, he commissioned the construction of a modern factory in St. Michael's Road, which the firm's successors still occupy at the time of writing.¹

At this point the first phase of the firm's development may be said to draw to a close, for on the 3rd June 1886 Edmund died at his residence, 29 Victoria Road, Northampton, after a short illness. His effects were valued at £1,671 15s. 4d. He was a quiet man not given to public life, though an obituary describes him as a "consistent Liberal who was widely respected".² That respect was clearly shared by his workforce, who deemed him a 'good gaffer'. Another obituary notes:

.. but perhaps the most grateful tribute to his qualities as a man and an employer were the four wreaths .. on behalf of stitchmen, riveters and machine room employees of the firm, and of the workmen living at Long Buckby ..³

Many of these men walked the 12 miles from Long Buckby to attend the funeral. His son, Frederick William, succeeded Edmund and this marked a new period of growth and profitability for the firm.⁴ Productivity and quality were increased. Trade was opened up with Australia and New Zealand, Mr. William Halsey being the representative. A great stimulus to this work was the first

1 1982 - author.

2 Northamptonshire Guardian 12/6/86 p3.

3 N.M. 12/6/86 p9.

4 Uniquely, Pollard's business records are extant. Comments made here on matters of profitability and policy are drawn from an analysis of those records. A fuller treatment can be found in Ch 2: p 111 et seq.

award of merit by Pollards for footwear at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition in 1888. By 1890 trade with South Africa had begun. Trading continued strongly in the home market, with a large business being done with the best London and provincial houses in finest quality men's and boy's wear. A native of Northampton, Frederick had entered the business at 14 and after practical training in shoemaking commenced travelling for the firm four years later. Covering the whole country, he opened up a considerable amount of new business. In the early eighties this role was passed to a team of representatives, whilst Frederick took charge of operations at Northampton. From 1886, Frederick continued the business single-handed until joined by his son, Alfred Edmund in 1900. Alfred was born at Northampton in circa 1882. He was educated at Bedford Modern and Mill Hill schools. This was followed by a thorough practical training in the skills of shoe manufacture. Commencing at the clicker's cutting board, he took a special interest in last making and fitting. He took special lessons in pattern cutting from the world renowned E. J. Swaysland of Northampton. Becoming a very proficient pattern cutter, in 1902 he gained the City and Guilds first prize and silver medal for general boot and shoe knowledge and pattern-cutting at Northampton Technical School.

By this time, market conditions had swung against Pollard's labour intensive and therefore expensive production methods. The outwork system was still in use and only modest use was being made of machinery. In consequence, both sales and profitability were hard hit. It was to be Alfred's gradual re-organisation of the firm in the first decade of the new century which was to enable them to successfully adjust to a newly mechanised industry dominated by large volume producers. By circa 1912, with rationalisation complete a secular decline in the firm's volume of business had been halted, its profitability restored and their production adjusted to meet new conditions of manufacture and trading.

The key policy element in achieving this stability was that of making the finest quality goods for a narrow, though profitable, sector of the market.

A trade article in 1908 clearly lays out the main elements of this policy.

First:

.. From the commencement a determination has always existed to produce a first-class article and the firm's care is still to maintain the standard of excellence which it has reached and notwithstanding the general tendency of the demand for lower grade lines, Messrs. Pollard & Son maintain that there will always exist a certain call for first-rate goods whilst people realise that cheap boots are not an economical purchase ..¹

Until 1900, this policy meant that Pollards had maintained the traditional hand methods and organisation characteristic of the industry's transitional phase of development, which was by then over. Alfred's arrival however, changed this. New patterns and last styles were introduced and although bespoke work was maintained, the making of special lines was increasingly switched to machine making techniques. He "systematically (re-organised) production upon modern principles and the newer methods of production".²

Thus outwork was substantially curtailed and closing operations at the factory increased, thus ending the reliance upon closing sub-contractors. Machine-making capacity was similarly increased, though here sewers to the trade were still utilised during seasonal rushes of work. Thus, the trade journalist of 1908 was able to conclude, that whilst stress was still placed upon product excellence:

.. they are always availing themselves of modern methods of production, utilising those which, whilst reducing the cost of labour, in no way impair the value of the finished product. After an existence of 50 years .. Messrs. Pollard & Son naturally value the reputation they have as one of the standard houses of the day, and mean to continue the sound principles of business which have carried them to their present honourable position in the trade ..³

Secondly, this determination was underpinned by the ability to sell in increasingly competitive markets. Rather than developing retail shops, advertising or branded goods, Pollards continued to rely upon the traditional

1 B.S.T.J. 26/8/08 p485.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

methods of direct representation, in which Frederick was so well versed. Such selling required good representatives and the expertise and competence of Pollard's salesmen was acknowledged on all sides. By 1908, the firm had in its employ some of the foremost commercial travellers in footwear of the day:

.. Always fortunate in its choice of representatives and relying on direct representation and the sterling quality of its productions to foster business instead of resorting to catchy advertisements, the firm has been successively represented by Mr. J. Maillard, Mr. W. Halsey, Mr. Joseph Cramp, Mr. A. Cowper, Mr. W. Spencer Thorpe and Mr. Fred Cramp. The last two named are the present representatives, the latter being a son of the late Mr. Joseph Cramp, whose genial character and natural ability as a traveller will be always remembered by those who were privileged to know him. .. Of Mr. W. S. Thorpe, the present South of England representative, it is correct to say he is one of the best shoe travellers covering that district, for his tact and gentlemanly manners have won for him regard, friendship and goodwill everywhere ..¹

Indeed, Pollards are a classic example of a smaller firm responding to the increased dominance of much larger units of production by seeking a market in which they could continue to compete with these much larger firms. A generation prior to this most wholesale manufacturers could, and did, produce for a range of market situations from volume orders through to special orders for one pair. Pollards conformed to this pattern. Their reduced turnover from circa 1895/1910 charts the permanent loss of elements of this type of volume trade to the larger firm which was able to use scale economies to full effect. As larger competitors increasingly sought to curtail, though never wholly abandon in our period, their specials and bespoke activities in preference to the batch production in volume of a few standardised lines, Pollards found themselves increasingly able to compete in this small, contracting, though still profitable, specialist market. Their size and structure made them better able to accommodate individual customer style variations and to offer a greater spectrum of styles, fittings etcetera within their range.

1 Ibid.

F. W. Pollard remained actively involved in the business until five weeks before his death in April 1920, at which time he was described as a "grand old man of Northampton, its oldest shoe manufacturer".¹ Alfred succeeded him. A quiet man, Frederick played little part in the town's public life; although he was President of the Northampton Temperance Cricket Club, for whom he played for over 30 years and treasurer of the local Band of Hope Union for over 20 years. A staunch non-conformist, he was an active member of the Commercial Street Congregational Church. He was a founder member of the local manufacturers' association of 1879. His wife died in 1917, but he left issue, one son (A. E.) and one daughter (Elsie). No details of a will appear in the Principal Probate Registry Calendar.

¹ N.I. 17/4/20 p10.

C.21: C. F. TOMPKINS (formerly Charles Tompkins & Son)

The firm was founded in 1883 by Charles Tompkins in a small house in 26 Shakespeare Road, Northampton. As trade improved two removals were made to bigger premises: first in Exeter Road which was occupied from circa 1885 to circa 1897; second at 22a Pytchley Street from circa 1898.

Formerly a partner in his father's business, C. F. Tompkins purchased his father's share upon the latter's retirement from business in 1913. C. F. completely re-organised the factory and installed a plant of new non-royalty machinery. The firm did a considerable home and export trade in medium and best class machine stitched and welted work under the trade-marks 'Success', 'Gang Forward', 'Gordon', 'Ecton', 'Stirling' and 'Buffalo'.¹

¹ Material draws on S.L.T. Supplement 1916 p1xi.

C.22: CONFORMABLE BOOT COMPANY LTD.

This company traded from the early eighties until its business failure in November 1908 as F. W. Wheeler, Hull & Company, 20/22 St. Michael's Road, Northampton. Initially, the concern had been a partnership, but for many years Frederick William Wheeler had traded as a sole proprietor. For seven years prior to the failure, he had knowingly traded whilst being insolvent. In the face of increased competition from larger, more efficient firms, Frederick had found his trade and profitability dwindling. In an unsuccessful attempt to stem the tide he abandoned shoe manufacturing in 1903 and turned to shoe factoring. In the last year's trading, gross sales stood at £3,985 (as opposed to circa £6,000 some eight years before) and gross profit £523. After expenses had been taken into account a loss on trading of £371 had been made. The immediate reason for failure had been the calling in of a debt by the Northampton Corporation. Total liabilities were assessed at £3,619 18s. 9d., against assets of £952 12s. 5d.

A settlement having been made, Sydney Arthur Wheeler purchased the failed company and on the 22nd November 1909 a private limited company was formed to manufacture footwear, with a nominal capital of £2,000. The new company purchased S. A. Wheeler's interest for £398 and began trading from the St. Michael's Road premises. Equal shareholders, S. A. and F. W. Wheeler, were the company's two directors.² Within two years, the purchase of shares by Frederick's wife, Mary Elizabeth Wheeler, increased the capital of the company to £930.

Initially, the directors had been described as boot manufacturers, but from 1916 are referred to as boot factors, suggesting that, once again, manufacturing had given way to factoring. Between 1916/31 Mary replaced

1 B.S.T.J.

2 C.R.O. 106056 (dissolved).

Frederick as a director, but he returned at that time. In 1939, the shareholding of the two was transferred to Sydney and his wife, Kathleen E. Wheeler, who died in 1940.

In the 1950's Sydney's children, David, Richard and Olive, all served on the board for varying periods, prior to the voluntary winding up of the company in 1963. Sydney was still alive at this date: presumably he retired from business.³

³ C.R.O.106056 (dissolved).

C.23: ROWLAND FISHER & COMPANY

The firm was founded by Rowland Fisher junior at 3 Bulls Head Lane in 1874. His father, Rowland senior, traded as a retail shoemaker at 44 Drapery from circa 1840 to circa 1871: he had been a wholesale manufacturer for a short period in the early fifties. Other members of the family traded as manufacturers for short periods. Henry at Mayorhold in circa 1852 and P. E. Fisher at Duke Street from circa 1889 to circa 1893.

In the late nineties larger premises were taken at 14 Bearward Street, which the firm retained until liquidation. Fisher can be regarded as being in the old tradition of manufacturers, making for a high-class trade. A specialty was made of white goods and slippers and a considerable export trade to various parts of the world had been cultivated.

Born at Northampton in 1846, Rowland junior died there, at his residence 85 Adams Avenue on the 10th September 1903. His personal effects were valued at £6,175 4s. 10d. His son, William, took control of the business but died 18 months later at his home, 19 Purser Road, on the 22nd January 1905 at the early age of 34. He was born in the town in 1871. His effects were valued at £2,627 7s. 9d. The business then passed to two of Rowland's senior employees who had acted as his executors: James Kitchen, commercial clerk and Edward Charles Saunders, company secretary. Within a few years, the company had been incorporated and control concentrated into Kitchen's hands. His two sons joined him as directors.

The firm traded until 1937, when it went into voluntary liquidation; all creditors being paid in full. A trade correspondent noted:

.. The old established firm of Rowland Fisher Ltd. of Bearward Street is closing down at the end of the year. Mr. James Kitchen, director of the firm states that the decision to close down is due to the impossibility of combating with intense competition .. Some 50 employees will be affected by closing down ..¹

1 S.L.N. 16/12/37 pl2.

At the time, there was speculation that R. J. and E. W. Kitchen, sons of James, would purchase the goodwill of the company for the development of a new firm, but this idea did not come to fruition.

C.24: JOHN EMMETT LTD. (formerly Harrison & Company: Jesse Harrison & Company: Harrison & Flack)

Jesse Harrison's trading activities stand in sharp contrast with the other companies in the Core Group; representing a very different type of business experience. For here is a manufacturer who faces business failure and through surviving limited company, bankruptcy and other records, one is able to partially reconstruct his survival strategy, which enabled him to re-establish his business.

He commenced manufacturing in 1874 with a capital of £25, as a sole proprietor. For a brief period around 1880, he traded in partnership with J. E. Flack,^{1a} from premises in Broad Street.

After the partnership was dissolved, Harrison continued to trade strongly as is witnessed by the new, freehold factory completed at Broad Street, Northampton in 1891. A trade paper report at this time clearly marks him out as being a prominent manufacturer:

.. In the front rank of the successful businessmen in Northampton may be placed the name Jesse Harrison. His success has been almost phenomenal, which is due mainly to his untiring energy. From time to time, additional premises have been purchased in Broad Street, until the factory now covers an extensive area .. These have recently been extensively enlarged ..¹

His trade well represented the mixed character of many of the town's manufacturers. Alive to modern techniques, the latest machines and an 'Otto' gas engine were utilised to produce machine sewn goods on the premises. In addition, a large hand-sewn, specials and bespoke trade was undertaken, mainly by outworkers, although in 1891 30 men were engaged in the factory on combination work. The Northampton factory directly employed at least 100 and that number again were to be found in his branch factory at Towcester, which had been built in 1888. The factory had revived shoemaking in that area, but in addition, Harrison made cardboard boxes on the premises as well; an unusual example of diagonal

¹ B.S.T.J. 24/1/91 p105.

^{1a} Following this J. E. Flack had a varied and chequered business career, being associated with a variety of small manufacturing ventures: see Chapter 5 p

integration in this core group study. Including outworkers, "Mr. Harrison finds employment for 500 hands and this number it is expected will soon be considerably augmented".¹

By this time, he also carried on the business of a wholesale boot and shoe dealer at 9 Long Lane, Barbican, London and that of retail boot and shoe dealer at 15 Tottenham Court Road and 22 St. John's Road, Clapham. The central warehouse in Barbican had considerably improved his trade for he was able to supply "his numerous customers who require filling-up sizes and small orders which they can now get from stock without delay".² This rendered the work at the factories easier and more regular, with all small orders for three or four pairs being supplied from stock and only orders of considerable size going through the factory.

On 14th August 1891 the firm was registered as a limited company with a nominal capital of £40,000, at which time it was solvent. The sale agreement valued the company's assets at £24,970: the consideration for the sale being an allotment of 4,994 £5 shares in the company to Harrison, who with his wife, was the only substantive shareholder.³ The need for a conversion was the common enough confluence of a high bank overdraft of £7,000, which the bank wished to see reduced; a continuing cash-flow problem and the need to raise further capital. As the registrar noted a year later at the bankruptcy examination:

.. all the six shareholders of the company were in the employ of the debtor .. it was intended to be and was, in point of fact, a private company and Mr. Harrison's object was to get limited liability .. to enable him in the form of a company .. to raise money on debentures which he could not do as a private individual ..⁴

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 B.T. 31/5130/34616 Annual Return 1/2/92: John Harrison 2,501 shares; Elizabeth Harrison (wife) 2,474 shares; a balance of 26 shares were held by six employee subscribers.

4 B.S.T.J. 22/10/92 p496.

Thus, immediately after registration, in accordance with clause 8 of the Articles of Association, the new company secured debenture loans totalling £21,500.¹ In late January 1892, the Northamptonshire Banking Company, a major creditor, brought a High Court debt action against the company, which as a result, went into receivership. The heavy costs incurred in company formation and underwriting debentures were highlighted as the immediate cause of the stoppage. Under examination Harrison explained that these costs had extinguished the firm's credit balance:

- .. The Official Receiver: .. The position was simply this: because you were being pressed by the bank and your business was congested, the liability was shunted from Jesse Harrison & Company to Jesse Harrison & Company Ltd.
- .. The Debtor: .. I did that to raise more capital.
- .. The Official Receiver: .. And that little game cost £900 in the law costs and £1,050 in debentures.
- .. The debtor: .. Yes sir, what was represented to me would be about £300 ended in a cost of £2,000. That was where (sic) the pinch came in. I was thousands - £2,000 - to the good when the company was formed ..

Realised assets of £25,000 were initially anticipated, but in point of fact there were only sufficient funds to discharge debenture liabilities. As debenture issues constituted a mortgage over the company's property, debenture holders were entitled to preference in the matter of debt settlement. In addition to heavy formation costs being paid from company assets, two other elements were ascertained which reduced the total of realisable assets. First, it was asserted that the company's assets had been ruinously realised by the Debenture Corporation. In the process, a venture which it was recognised could have made Harrison a rich man had left him impoverished; for after paying the formation costs of £1,500 and the bank overdraft of £7,800, a further £2,000 was advanced against his personal property, which was subsequently lost in the course of trading.²

1 S.L.R. 12/2/92 p390: The loan debt comprised:

1st debenture issue; London and Northern Debenture Company -	£ 10,500
2nd debenture issue; various (Northants Union Bank £3,500; C. Smith, Northampton £1,200) -	6,000
3rd debenture issue; various holders -	<u>5,000</u>
	<u>21,500</u>

2 The registrar commented adversely regarding the protection the bank had received upon conversion, which worked against the interests of the ordinary creditor.

Secondly, certain very questionable bill transactions were entered into with the prominent leather merchants, Neepe & Denton, and a Birmingham businessman, which significantly reduced the assets available for distribution.¹ In fact, ordinary creditors received no dividend at all: the two largest were leather merchants, S. Barrow £1,800 and M. Sunn £1,700. The official receiver drew the following conclusion:

.. The whole story is in its essence a very simple one, but in view of the immense figures involved it is of considerable importance to the trading community. If the bankrupt, when pressed by the bank to pay the original overdraft, had called his creditors together, he could have paid a handsome dividend .. to the whole of his creditors. By adopting the course he did, however, the bank was paid in full, an immense sum of money was paid in costs and the unsecured creditors .. were left without any assets to satisfy their claims ..²

When Harrison applied for a discharge from bankruptcy in 1894, the Registrar, having regard to "questions as to book-keeping, trading after knowledge of insolvency, contracting debts, and rash and hazardous speculations",³ suspended his discharge for two years. By October 1892, the bankrupt company's Broad Street premises were purchased by Parker, Johnson & Clarke. Harrison secured employment as a commercial traveller with £200 a year salary, and no commission.⁴ At this stage, the evidence is scant, but it would appear that within a short while Harrison re-commenced manufacturing in a small way, as Harrison & Company, from premises in Turner Street: possibly his wife formally owned the business. Then early in the new century a third enterprise was formed, John Emmett, trading from premises in Grove Road and Artizan Road. This private company was converted in 1909, "to take over the business of a boot factor, dealer and manufacturer carried on by Mrs. Elizabeth A. Harrison at 76/78 Artizan Road as John Emmett, private company".⁵

1 S.L.R. 27/7/94 p193.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 B.S.T.J. 22/10/92 p497.

5 B.S.T.J. 28/5/09 p387: The P.R.O. have destroyed the company file.

The first directors were Jesse Emmett Harrison and Mrs. E. A. Harrison; the former holding the post of managing director at a salary of £4 per week. The authorised capital was put at £3,000 and by 1912 1,249 shares had been taken up: £249 fully paid up and £1,000 agreed as paid. A legal mortgage for £1,200 had been registered.

In 1912, Ernest C. Tabbern joined the board of directors.¹

¹ B.S.T.J. 22/11/12 p433.

C.25: GEORGE HENRY KENDALL & SON (formerly C. E. Kendall & Son)

This firm was founded at Alfred Place, Castle Street, Northampton, by Charles Edwin Kendall, father of George, in circa 1849. Initially a manufacturing concern, from 1854 until 1879 it is listed in successive trade directories as both a manufacturing and a retail boot-making concern, with premises at 50, The Drapery and latterly also at 3 Market Square.¹ From 1879 until the last entry under C. E. Kendall in 1884, the firm appears only as a retail boot-making concern. Directory entries for G. H. Kendall commence in 1889 and from that date, until 1914, it is listed in successive directories as both a manufacturing and retailing concern.

George Henry Kendall was born at Northampton in 1847 and after elementary schooling, probably spent his entire working life in the family firm. His father took him into partnership in the late sixties and he succeeded his father upon the latter's death in the eighties. Though taking no part in the town's public life, he was well known and highly respected in local trade circles.² He died at his residence 3 Spencer Parade, after being in failing health for some time, on the 22nd June 1918, aged 71 years. He was survived by his wife, three daughters and a son, who succeeded to the business. He became a partner in early Edwardian period. His personal estate was proved at £16,664 17s. 10d.

It is interesting to note that past historians of the Northampton trade and indeed the trade generally, have given no consideration to the role of the retail bootmaking class in the wholesale, and of the relationship between them and the wholesale manufacturers. Given the strong seasonal fluctuations in

¹ An Edwin Joseph Kendall is also recorded in Northampton trade directories as a wholesale manufacturer between circa 1861/circa 1879: initially at Alfred Place (to 1871), at 3 Market Square in 1874 and at 143 Wellingborough Road from 1874 until 1879. Whether Charles and Edwin were related and whether they traded in partnership or close collaboration is not known.

² S.T.J. 28/6/18 p340.

demand, the commonalty of making processes used by the two groups and the element of cross membership between the two groups,¹ it is entirely possible that retail makers were used by manufacturers to produce goods at times of seasonal rush. Certainly there is evidence of substantial manufacturers setting up and aiding ambitious workmen as small masters and old small manufacturers making entirely for larger manufacturers. Of the link between manufacturers and retailers, no evidence had so far been aduced; merely several unsubstantiated hunches. Possibly men like Kendall, who combined both functions, hold some clue.

Note also that in a local obituary, George H. Kendall senior is designated a manufacturer,² whereas in Wills Calendar, G. H. Kendall junior is listed as a boot and shoe dealer.³

1 See Chapter 3 p 208 *et seq.*

2 N.I. 29/6/18 p10.

3 Wills Calendar (Somerset House) Volume 4 1918 p411.

APPENDIX 111: THE 1914 NEW GENERATION GROUP.

This group is composed of those firms which are established after 1884 and which trade through to 1914. As in the case of the Core Group listing (Appendix 11), ranking is essentially derived from Butnam, op cit.

N.G. 1	Sears & Company Ltd	N.G.15	G. & W. Morton
N.G. 2	A. E. Marlow (& Mounts Company)	N.G.16	G. H. Gainsford & Company
N.G. 3	Padmore & Barnes Ltd	N.G.17	C. Gibbs & Company
N.G. 4	James Branch Ltd	N.G.18	J. Holmes & Company
N.G. 5	G. Swan & Company	N.G.19	W. Beale & Company
N.G. 6	A. & W. Arnold & Company	N.G.20	Eales & Son
N.G. 7	Arnold Bros	N.G.21	W. J. Marks & Company
N.G. 8	Oakeshott & Finnemore	N.G.22	C. W. White & Company
N.G. 9	Roe Bros. Ltd	N.G.23	F. Cook Ltd
N.G.10	W. Barratt & Company Ltd	N.G.24	W. P. Dalton & Company
N.G.11	A. Lee & Company	N.G.25	C. E. Gubbins
N.G.12	H. Sharman & Company	N.G.26	J. J. McMain
N.G.13	John Branch & Company Ltd	N.G.27	Pioneer Co-operative Boot Society Ltd
N.G.14	J. & W. Read		

N.G.1: J. SEARS & COMPANY (True Form Boot Company) Ltd.

John George Sears was born at 41 Silver Street, Northampton, on the 6th February 1870, the eldest son of James Sears, a leather seller (later shoe manufacturer) and his wife Amelia, formerly Cushion. He was educated at a local board school and attended the Congregationalist Sunday School in Victoria Road, Northampton. In adult life, however, he became a professed Anglican, worshipping at St. Matthews, Northampton and later at Collingtree, Northamptonshire.

Apprenticed to Manfield & Sons as a clicker, he rose to the position of foreman before commencing as a manufacturer from small premises in Derby Road and later Market Street, Northampton. If one can believe the scattered circumstantial evidence of local trade directories his father's manufacturing career had been a chequered one.¹ In 1891, James was trading as a manufacturer from premises in Derby Road until his failure in late September. Unsecured liabilities were declared at £739 9s. 4d. against net assets of £211 12s. 7d.² Trade papers provided no further information, but it is probable that John made a private arrangement with his father's creditors and then took over his stock, plant, premises and trade customers as the basis of his own manufacturing operation.³ Within a short while his brother, William Thomas Sears, a shoe retailer joined him and they traded in partnership as J. Sears (The True Form Boot Company). Their ready success necessitated several moves of factories: first to Spencer Street, then Grey Street, where ultimately two factories were occupied. Whilst at the latter site, the Company's manufacturing capacity was doubled by successive extensions, including the conversion of adjacent cottage properties.⁴

1 Kelly's 1870 leather seller: Kelly's 1874 manufacturer: Kelly's 1876 manager to John Poole, shoe manufacturer.

2 S. & L.R. 25/9/91 p750 - 2/10/91 p804.

3 N.C. 19/2/16 p3 states that as a manufacturer "he followed in the wake of his father" cf N.D.E. 19/2/16 p5 "he commenced business on his own account in a small factory in Derby Road" cf S.T.J. 25/2/16 p246 "in devoting his attention to the manufacture of shoes he followed his father".

4 N.C. loc cit.

In 1902 the factory in Stimpson Avenue, Adnitt Road, was erected, to which considerable extensions were made in 1908, 1910, 1912 and 1914, "till now it is one of our largest and most elaborately equipped factories".¹ In addition, the Grey Street premises were retained until at least 1906.² In 1913 a local ladies shoe manufacturing firm, F. W. Panther & Company, was acquired to provide yet more factory space in Barry Road, in addition to strengthening the Company's ladies footwear activities.³

This rapid accretion of factory space raises the important issue as to what increases in productive capacity and trading this represents. As one contemporary journalist noted, the acquisition of F. W. Panther provided Sears with more DIRECT productive capacity. A crucial phrase, because Sears, like other leading Midland manufacturers, was an important purchaser of small manufacturer's stocks. In fact, in the nineties, Sears, in turn, had made orders for Manfield & Sons.⁴ In this way some small manufacturers made exclusively to the order of a larger house, thus reducing the role of the former, in reality, to that of little more than a sub-contractor. Some years later when Sears purchased the Leicester based firm of Freeman, Hardy & Willis, this whole question was raised in a way which reveals something of the relationship Sears had with some fellow manufacturers at Northampton.

1 N.C. Ibid: located in a built up area, these extensions required considerable acquisition and demolition of adjacent property. For example S.M.M. mid-March 1916 p303 records that the first extension was achieved by "a row of houses on one side and then houses and a complete shoe factory on the other were razed to the ground to make room for extensions".

2 Kelly's Northants. Directory 1906 p746. This factory had been loaned free of rent by Sears to the local Blind Association for some years by 1916.

3 S.M.M. loc cit: F. W. Panther & Co. was founded in 1902 trading from premises in King Street. By 1910 the Company had acquired factory premises in Barry Road. That the need for factory space primarily prompted Sears purchase is underlined by the fact that Panther's goodwill and trademarks were purchased by John Marlow & Sons Ltd. Northampton.

4 Manfield Account Books in the possession of the British Shoe Corporation.

.. What concerns (Leicester) manufacturers most is, will the buying policy at Freeman, Hardy & Willis continue as heretofore, or will the policy ruling at Northampton be accepted (at Leicester). It was customary for Freemans to place their orders pretty generally to all who cared to cater, sample and price being satisfactory. Sears, as is known, place the "real bulk orders" with the houses they favour, practically taking the entire output, so that, if a manufacturer was a member of the very select small number of the 'band of hope', as it is humorously termed locally, he could invariably report "very busy" indeed ..¹

Nevertheless, although no business records for the period are extant, some indication as to nominal output capacity can be had from G. B. Butnam's report on the industry in 1912.² He estimated Sear's capacity at 12,500 pairs per week: a capacity second only to C. & E. Lewis (qv) in the town. Furthermore, an article concerning the retirement of George Miller, Sear's Clicking Department manager states that the weekly through-put of pairs rose from 300 in circa 1900 to some 18,000 by 1922.³

In 1897, the brothers took possession of their first retail branch, thus beginning what was to become one of the dominant multiple chains in the U.K. footwear industry. Whilst John Sears:

.. Was not the first to see the advantage of bringing under the same control the manufacture and distribution of footwear, he was the pioneer of the modern multiple shop business which caters for the middle class man and makes specialities of lines at fixed prices ..⁴

Gradually sites were acquired in most of the leading shopping thoroughfares of London and the country's principal towns. By 1912, 80 branches had been established, 47 of which were in the London area. At the time of John's death in 1916, this number had reached 100. At this time, a total of 1,000 were employed in the Northampton factories, with a further 1,000 finding employment in the retail chain. In addition, a comprehensive in-stock system was adopted

1 S.L.N. 3/1/29 p24/5.

2 G. B. Butnam, S. & L.T. in U.K. (1912). U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labour, Special Agents Reports No: 49 p75.

3 N.I. 8/4/22 p10.

4 N.C. loc cit cf S.M.M. mid-March 1916 p303. "Sears was the first manufacturer to adopt this system for middle class boots and shoes".

and extensive warehouse facilities established at Liverpool and London. In 1908 a large warehouse was constructed next to the main Northampton factory, where footwear was prepared, packed and stored ready for distribution. It was extended two years later, by which time it could hold a quarter of a million pairs of footwear. Moreover, a repairs factory serving the retail chain was opened in Edgware Road, London. Much of the daily management of the chain was undertaken by William who "has a lifetime of experience in the retail business".¹ However, it would appear that John was the prime architect of the chain: many testified to this ability to select prime retail sites.²

In 1912 the company was converted into a public limited company: one of only three in the Northampton trade. The purchase price was £350,000 of which £136,775 was goodwill and was payable as to £175,000 in fully paid up ordinary shares and the balance in cash. Of this, John took 153,375 ordinary shares and £164,033 in cash and William 21,625 ordinary shares with £10,917 cash. In addition, the two vendors were allotted 175,000 preference shares, for which an initial part payment of £160,090 was received. They became joint managing directors, with John, in addition, serving as chairman. The 1912 prospectus noted that both were to act initially until 1919 with an annual remuneration of £800. The prospectus also gave clear evidence of the company's profitability³ and it continued to trade successfully following the conversion, with annual dividends running at 12½%. In 1912 there was a record turnover with the trading estimates given in the prospectus easily being exceeded and by 1916 it was stated that the annual balance sheet "was a recurrent sensation in the trade".⁴

1 S. & L.T. Supplement 1916 p xv.

2 see for example N.M. 25/2/16 p8.

3 Net Profit year end 1909 £42,626 9s. Od: 1910 £45,683 9s. 3d: 1911 £54,971 13s. 10d.

4 Profit year end 1912 £56,229 2s. 4d: 1913 £61,006: 1914 £70,103: 1915 £92,461: see Financial Times 29/1/13 p7, The Times 15/1/13 p17, The Times 15/1/14 p16, The Times 14/1/15 p13, The Times 13/1/16 p14.

John Sears was most decidedly the architect of this rapid and meteoric growth. His obituaries all pay tribute to a man of charismatic personality and prodigious energy.

.. No matter what his personal reputation and associations had been, the death of a man with his remarkable business record would have been a notable event; but besides success, Mr. Sears had many qualities that drew men to him. There is scarcely a parallel in the British boot trade for his wonderful business achievements. In one quarter of a century he built up a great and profitable business. It is sad to think that a man of this calibre, with possibilities of much public service, should have been cut off in the prime of his years ..¹

Any assessment of Sears must lay stress upon three qualities. First, his clear business acumen:

.. In all departments of his business, Mr. Sears displayed good judgement and a capacity for bold and sweeping movement. He was never slow or timid, and in big moves of the game he seemed to have a sort of intuition for doing the right thing. In the details of management also it was Mr. Sears himself who laid the foundations of the great success which the firm attained ..²

Thus, both matters of policy and daily management attracted his attention, to this "keen grip he kept on trade from first to last accounts, in large measure, for his success", but secondly, linked to this was "his energy and enterprise (which) were enormous".³ Contemporaries write of "his infinite capacity for work and for taking pains".⁴ Again, to draw upon the opinion of a contemporary:

.. Mr. Sears possessed extraordinary energy. When he first opened the London shops he would visit London on the first four days of the week, spend Friday and Saturday morning in the factory and rush off to catch a Saturday afternoon train to London, staying 'till the midnight train. This hard work probably told its tale on his constitution but it played a part undoubtedly in his success ..⁵

1 N.M. op cit p4.

2 Ibid p8 cf S.T.J. 25/2/16 p246 "an enormous business ability and keen foresight (which) conquered all handicaps of competition and built up from small beginnings a business concern which ranks as one of the finest in the shoe trade, in comparatively few years".

3 S.T.J. 25/2/16 p226 cf Ibid p246. "Mr. Sear's career illustrates very forcibly the triumph of indomitable energy".

4 S.M.M. March 1916 p303.

5 N.C. 19/2/16 p3.

However, his drive and the dominance of his personality in the success of the enterprise did not blind him to the need to delegate to competent managers and executive directors. As is made clear above, by the late nineties the daily management of the factory was in the hands of managers. To return to the

Northampton Chronicle's assessment of his success:

.. Another factor was his remarkable ability in judging a man. He gathered around him experts of his own selection and was ever a believer in his own selection and was ever a believer in the maxim that the best is worth paying for ..¹

Indeed, Sears readiness to delegate appears to have been much greater than many of his trade contemporaries. Similarly, the need for a strong board of directors was appreciated: Sears' board is one of the outstanding early examples of the new professional class of businessmen, who were beginning to enter the trade, thus breaking the traditional mould of family connections and artisanal skill. Therefore, when his health began to break down at the time of the floatation of the company "there was, of course, no need to worry about the business for the success of Sears & Company continued and magnified".²

Consequently, the question of succession after John's death in 1916 was solved and the hiatus his demise caused was eased. His brother, William Thomas,³ became chairman and Frank William Panther,⁴ joint managing director with William.

1 Ibid.

2 N.M. op cit.

3 W. T. Sears (1876 - 1949) younger brother of John and company chairman until 1948. A prominent local Liberal politician and a man of wide philanthropy. President of Boot Trade's Benevolent Society 1935 and of Boot Trade Research Association in 1936. A keen sportsman. Owner of a stud farm at Weston Favell, Northants. He died on the 24th December 1949 being survived by a widow and two daughters. Effects £63,143 8s. 1d.

4 F. W. Panther (1868 - 1944) born at Nature Warkton, near Kettering, the son of a tanner. Formerly a commercial traveller, then a shoe manufacturer; in 1913 he joined Sears as factory manager and buyer following the acquisition of his firm. Also chairman of Freeman Hardy & Willis 1929/41. He played a role in both local and trade affairs. He died at Boughton Hall, Northants. on 24th May in the year 1944 and was survived by his widow and daughter. Effects: £383,335 7s. 7d.

The other directors included John Dickens,¹ Hartley Aspden,² G. T. Flowright,³ and E. G. Elliott.⁴

These men, who had played an important role in the pre-Great War company were to be the architects of its growth and successful trading in the inter-war period. In 1929 the major Leicester footwear concern Freeman, Hardy & Willis was acquired in a multi-million-pound deal. In 1955 the company was acquired by Sir. Charles Clore. With its name changed to that of Sears Holdings it has since become the centre of an extensive manufacturing, distribution and leisure conglomerate: one of Britain's major holding companies.

Despite heavy business commitments, John Sears played an important role in the affairs of the local manufacturers' association. For some years he was prominent in the development and deliberations of the clickers' arbitration board at Northampton. A good arbitrator, he was respected by both sides, being "quick to grasp a point, a man of extremely fair mind, ready at all times to adjust a grievance, he had the confidence of union officials, as well as of his colleagues".⁵ For a few brief months before ill health forced his resignation he was the president of the local manufacturers' association. He was also chairman of Bassett Lowke Ltd., a local model-building concern of some repute.⁶

1 J. Dickens (1859 - 1934) migrated to Northampton aged 15 and later founded a printing company. A close friend of John Sears. He joined the Sear's board in 1915 and Freeman's in 1929. Prominent in local affairs, a past president of the Northampton Chamber of Commerce. He died on the 31st March 1934 and was survived by his widow and two sons. Effects: £108,329 14s. 1d.

2 H. Aspden J.P. O.B.E. Director of Public Companies within the Harmsworth press group. For biographical details see Who's Who 1912 and subsequent editions and Who Was Who 1930/39.

3 and 4 Both men were former Sear's managers of some years standing.

5 N.C. op cit.

6 Directory of Directors 1914.

He was an ardent freemason, and had been master of the local Eleanor Cross Lodge, as well as holding high office in the Province. He had been a generous supporter of the Freemason's Orphanage and Schools; being a life governor of both institutions. Although a self confessed 'Radical to the back-bone', John was not keen to be active in local politics. Approached to stand as a municipal candidate, initially pressure of work, then ill-health prevented him. A generous hearted man, unspoilt by his success, he gave freely to philanthropic causes, particularly to the local blind association. A keen sportsman in his younger days, he supported many local sporting associations. He also espoused the current welfarist ideals of inter-factory sporting and social activities. He was a past chairman of the Leather Trade's Athletic Association. In 1913, he purchased Collingtree Grange, a 58 acre estate south of Northampton, formerly owned by the local brewer and M.P., Pickering Phipps. Improvements were quickly made to the house and like so many successful businessmen before him, John spent an increasing proportion of his time running the estate. Extensive improvements were made to the estate farm and a prize herd of Shorthorn dairy cattle - potentially regarded as one of the country's premier herds - was being built up at the time of his death. He was taking an increasing interest in the work of the Shorthorn Society and it had been his wish to retire from business and devote all his energies to agriculture, but the demands of wartime production had forced him to remain an active member of the firm: a factor which almost certainly hastened his death.¹

He died at his home on the 19th February 1916, not unexpectedly, after suffering from heart trouble for some years. On the 3rd November 1896 he married Caroline Wooding, daughter of George, a licensed victualler of Northampton, who survived him. They had issue two sons and one daughter. His personal effects were valued at £490,718 17s. 4d.

¹ The Times 21/2/16 p5.

N.G.2: A. E. MARLOW

Albert Ernest Marlow was born at Northampton on the 11th December 1870, the second son of John, a shoe manufacturer (qv). After being privately educated at Kingswell College, Northampton, he entered his father's firm, at 14, as an apprentice, receiving a practical training in all aspects of shoemaking. Concurrently, he attended Northampton Technical School, where he took a first class honours certificate in the City and Guild's principle of bootmaking.¹ In 1892, he was made a partner in his father's firm and took control of the internal management of the factory.² John Marlow & Sons was converted to a private limited company in 1898, Albert becoming joint managing director with his elder brother John Henry (qv) at an annual salary of £500. In 1899, he started manufacturing on his own account from small, temporary premises in Overstone Road. Within a year occupation was taken of a purpose-built factory at Vicarage Road, St. James, Northampton. Contemporary press reports tend to suggest that the rapid rise to prominence of Marlow was a rise from the obscurity of being a small back street manufacturer to that of being the proprietor of a large efficient factory complex.³ Here is another instance where contemporaries stressed the small, humble origins of a manufacturer in order to exaggerate his achievement. His trading success was swift: he was one of a small group of Edwardian manufacturers who countered heavy imports,⁴ but the reality of the development is quite different from these contemporary accounts. He was already a well-known and rising manufacturer, whose father was the proprietor of one of the premier shoe

1 Included in his marks were a record four firsts in shoe designs: S.T.J. 14/7/22 p47.

2 B.S.T.J. 25/1/96 p103.

3 B.S.T.J. 23/3/01 p293; cf N.I. 15/7/22 p5 "after being with his father a few years (he) launched out in business on his own over a butcher's shop at the top of Overstone Road".

4 N.I. 11/1/19 p9 "one of our most far-seeing captains of industry .. one of Northampton's young men who helped in the revolution in the trade a decade ago". cf N.M. 14/7/22 p5.

businesses in the town. It is clear from the outset that he had planned and had the ability to trade on a significant scale. Moreover, he had a starting capital, large by shoe trade standards, which enabled him to pitch production and distribution at a level attained by others only after some years trading. In 1898, the shareholding of Albert and his wife in John Marlow & Son Ltd. was valued at £6,320. According to the Company's house file, a year later when Albert started his business, this shareholding had been transferred by sale to his father and brother.¹ Clearly his realisation of shares provided the basic capital with which Albert could build and equip an impressive factory within two years of commencement.

Ample testimony exists in the trade press as to the achievement of this sole proprietorship in the years before the Great War.

In 1912 Butnam estimated the nominal output capacity to be 7,000 pairs per week: the fifth largest in the Northampton trade. Success was based on:

- (a) thorough mechanisation.²
- (b) careful marketing - he did much overseas travel for orders.
- (c) personalised advertisements and gimmicks.

Although the scale and development of Marlow's activities was impressive, by 1908 he had, in addition, gained control of two other shoe firms, making him one of the prominent manufacturers in the county, if not the country. He took a controlling interest in Cave & Sons Ltd. of Rushden in 1907, after the company had got into financial difficulties. The founder's death in 1904 and that of his eldest son, Paul, shortly after, together with a serious factory fire, had caused a hiatus in the firm's affairs.³ The remaining directors all

1 John Marlow & Sons Ltd. C.R.O.No.58062 particularly shareholding lists. Indeed one is left to speculate if this was the cause for the 1898 conversion.

2 S.T.J. Ibid. "a firm believer in modern methods, organisation was one of the keys used to open the door of success". - a great judge of men.

3 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p517/18. The firm was founded by John Cave (1822-1904) in 1850. He died in January 1904. The firm was then incorporated for the first time and his five sons took control. The nominal output capacity of the factory was variously described in the period as (i) 15/20,000 pairs per week (B.S.T.J. Ibid), (ii) 10/15,000 pairs (B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p533) and (iii) 7,500 pairs (Butnam 1912). At the time of the fire in 1901 the insurance valuation was circa £80,000.

sons of the founder, sold out to Marlow and a new company was registered on the 16th April 1907 with him as chairman and managing director.¹ He took a keen interest in the firm's operation, spending much time in Rushden. Under his guidance:

.. it is needless to state that this business is quickly attaining an unprecedented position in the world of footwear ..²

In home markets the trade was chiefly with the largest factors and multiple shopkeepers. The company also executed government contract work and ranked amongst the premier exporting manufacturers in the world. The firm's principal overseas markets were the British Empire, the Far East and Europe.

In addition, when in 1907 the old-established business of E. West & Co. Ltd., Northampton (qv) went into liquidation, Marlow purchased it as a going concern. Despite its moderate output capacity of 700 pairs weekly, the importance of the firm to Marlow was its long established reputation for high quality hand work: for acquisition of this company provided Marlow with a handsewn and specials capacity to complement his machine capacity.³ Despite some improvement in production, methods and machinery it was noted that:

.. under the new auspices the old time quality and perfection are being maintained at all costs and the firm are today specialising on sporting goods, tennis (shoes), leggings, shooters (sic) etcetera. They make very fine real handsewn and combination welted work and today produce some of the finest goods in the trade ..⁴

William Parker (qv), one of his managers, was transferred to the Mounts Company as it became known and took full charge. On Marlow's death in 1922, Parker purchased the firm, remaining in business until his death in 1959.⁵

1 B.T. 31/7825/55999.

2 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p534.

3 Despite the shift to machine production, a demand for hand goods remained. Independent retailers showed a marked preference for dealing with wholesale manufacturers who could supply both machine and hand goods. This both simplified purchasing and gave a conformity to the goods he sold.

4 B.S.T.J. 26/6/08 p434. The firm had a particular reputation for long work.

5 N.I. 25/9/59 p5.

Marlow was a man of tenacious and boundless energy and like more than one Midlands boot manufacturer, his consistent over-working contributed to his early death. His life had been described as the "exemplification of the gospel of work".¹ Known as 'the chief' he was no figure head, but took a central and active role in all three companies. This achievement alone was singled out for comment in an obituary:

.. it was a great feat for one man to have three such important concerns ..²
 Yet, such a man could scarcely be contained by the duties imposed upon him as a manufacturer and it was wholly inevitable that he should quickly come to play a major role in the trade and in the region's public life.³ Before considering his public life, it must again be noted that the readiness with which he could undertake this work - he was mayor within four years of the firm's birth (and heavily committed to town affairs between 1901/07), a time when many infant shoe firms could be vainly trying to cope with the pangs of that birth - rested upon the presence of an able managerial staff to whom he could effectively delegate an increasing proportion of the firm's direction, as his public duties increased in responsibility and scope. William Parker was one of these men, F. Cater, cashier, another but the central figure was George Webb, of whom more below. As a trade journalist noted:

.. Mr. Marlow is able to surround himself with young energetic men, each an expert in his own department and by his personal magnetism is sure to get the best out of each worker and by his great organising powers is able to direct the energy displays into the best channels .. There are no drones or ornamental figure heads at this firm, but all are animated with desire to emulate their chief in sound business-like enterprise and devotion to the best interests of the firm ..⁴

1 S.T.J. loc cit.

2 S.T.J. loc cit.

3 S.T.J. loc cit. "a life of tremendous energy and enthusiastic public service (He possessed) the born leader temperament to a high degree .. that personality that commends respect and achieves harmony and unanimity".

4 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p531.

In Marlow one sees the potent combination of strong non-conformist beliefs and liberal political ideals.¹ He was first elected a Liberal councillor of the local town council in 1903,² and a year later he became Northampton's youngest mayor (1904/05). Already at this date those qualities which were to ensure a prominent and useful public life were apparent to contemporaries:

.. he has won the esteem of all sections by his business and devotion to work of the town. All efforts towards progress and the keeping of Northampton's name to the front have received Mr. Marlow's ungrudging support and the future of the town will be safe in his hands. He has proved himself one of the most level-headed members of the town council and he has a great capacity for detail work of all descriptions. Those who have watched the wonderful growth of his business and seen the acumen and ability he has displayed in it will acknowledge he has fairly won the high honour conferred upon him ..³

In 1918 he was elected a County Alderman and four years later became chairman of the Public Health and Local Government Committee. He had been appointed a County Magistrate in 1912, following his taking up residence in the county at Preston Deanery Hall.⁴ It has been written of him that "his kindly nature made his magisterial duties rather adverse to him".⁵ A free trader, in 1920 he was adopted as Liberal Parliamentary Candidate for Wellingborough. His speeches there gave consistent support to industrial reorganisation and to Lloyd George's coalitionist position. In March 1922, at the personal insistence of Lloyd George, Marlow fought unsuccessfully an acrimonious by-election at

1 N.I. 25/10/19 p20 "a man of robust individuality".

2 B.S.T.J. 11/11/04 p279 suggests that his initial move into public life was a little diffident "only last week Mr. Marlow (was returned) at the head of the poll at the municipal election. The Mayor by no means sought the office to which he had been elected, but yielded to the pressure put upon him by the Liberal party and placed himself in their hands". cf N.M.: op cit. states the date was 1901. Marlow served two terms before pressure of work forced him not to seek re-election.

3 Ibid.

4 Dating from this time was his active support of Harry Manfield M.P. (qv) in the Mid-Division Liberal Association and of the Northampton Liberal M.P. McCurdy, a personal friend.

5 N.I. 15/7/22 p5.

Leicester East: Labour won by a landslide.¹ A Congregationalist like his father, he was for many years a deacon of the Doddridge Chapel and head of the largest Young Men's Bible Class in the town. He gave generous support to the local Y.M.C.A. In his later years it would appear that he became an Anglican. An oak screen, choir stalls and altar rails in St. James Church, Northampton, were his memorial gift commemorating the death of his son. His funeral service was conducted at the same church. Although a man of generosity, he did not get tied up in philanthropic or welfare causes to the same extent as other manufacturers. Indeed he considered that industrial activity itself was a major force for good.²

His service to the shoe industry was wide-ranging and in this, as in many ways, Marlow was very much regarded as a natural successor to Philip Manfield (qv), who made such an indelible mark upon the Victorian industry in both the town and the county. Contemporaries were particularly quick to draw this parallel in industrial relations matters.³ A moderate, he was a believer in the methods of arbitration and conciliation, serving for a number of years on Northampton's Arbitration Board. He was also a prominent man in negotiations at national level, where his judgement, tact and ability to see the union's position were much in demand. He did much to advance the cause of technical education, which he viewed as a natural successor to the apprenticeship system.⁴ He was president of the local manufacturers' association from 1913/19 and during the war years gave all of his time to the many problems of wartime production with

1 N.I. 18/3/22 p2 and local Leicester press cf Fox; op cit p459.

2 see for example N.I. 15/7/22 p6 for his views on the need for industrial reconstruction.

3 see N.M. 14/7/22 p5; N.I. 15/7/22 p6; S.T.J. 21/7/22 p73, appreciation by A. E. Tebbutt.

4 see N.M. Ibid; N.I. 1/10/21 p8.

which the association had to deal. He was a member of several important government committees concerned with war-time production,¹ served on the County Appeals Tribunal. He also sat on the county's Red Cross General Committee and in July 1918 was elected chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee for training disabled soldiers and sailors in the footwear trade. As a measure of its gratitude, the association presented him with a portrait and other gifts when he stood down as president in 1919.² A year later he was made president of the British Boot Manufacturers' Federation by which time he was essentially responsible for the industry.³

He was also actively engaged in the work of many public undertakings: director of Northampton Electric Light and Power Company Ltd; of the Rushden and District Light and Power Company Ltd; of the British Shoe Manufacturers' Syndicate Ltd;⁴ of the Shoe and Leather Fair Society. Chairman of the Allied Traders' Insurance Company, he was crucial to its success. He was the first chairman of the Northampton and County Nursing Home. He was director and chairman of the Northampton Mercury Company Ltd. He gave active help to the reconstituted Northampton Chamber of Commerce, of which he was the first president in 1919/20. In 1919, he was made an honorary vice-president of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. He was a founder member of the Northampton Rotary Club. He was also an active member of the Federation of British Industries. At the time of his death he was serving on the planning committee of the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. It was believed that his public life was still at an early stage and was widely rumoured that he was about to be knighted.

His last years were dogged by a heart condition, which necessitated the presence of a nurse on his household staff. He died at London, the result of a heart attack, on 11th July 1922. He married in 1894 Miss. Katie Bailey, daughter of

1 Times 13/7/22 p10.

2 N.I. 11/1/19 p9.

3 N.M. 14/1/22 p5.

4 B.T. 31/22889/140800.

John Bailey of Firthville, Lincolnshire. She survived him, as did four daughters and a son, Hector, who was at Uppingham School at this time. His eldest son, Stanley John, who had briefly joined the firm prior to the Great War, was killed in action in 1917: two infant children also predeceased him. A younger daughter, Katie, an Oxford graduate was killed in 1935. His eldest daughter, Elsie, married in 1920 Denys Baldcock, a Sumatran rubber planter, a son of the rector of Ashton. Formerly of Skitterdene, Dallington, Albert purchased Preston Deanery Hall in circa 1920. In 1919 he took up agriculture there on a 300 acre farm: "he met with some notable successes at local and other shows and was beginning to make a name as a breeder of pedigree stock".¹ His personal effects were valued at £169,971 6s. 10d. gross, resworn at £180,473 17s. 1d.

Following Marlow's death, the firm was incorporated with George Webb as the managing director. Webb resigned his post in 1927, after which the firm continued to trade, until it went into voluntary liquidation eight years later. The company file has been destroyed by the P.R.O. and at the time of writing no other details are available concerning the company's last years. The Mounts Company was purchased by its managers and converted (qv). George Webb joined Marlow in 1899 and throughout acted as Marlow's principal manager: prior to that he was probably a foreman at John Marlows. Upon standing down as managing director in 1927, he formed a company, George Webb & Sons Ltd., with his sons, Denis George and Frank Edwin. He died at his home, 42 Kingsley Road, on the 13th April 1940, leaving effects to the value of £50,768 16s. 10d: resworn at £50,918 16s. 10d.

¹ S.T.J. op cit.

N.G.3: PADMORE & BARNES LTD.

William Barnes commenced manufacturing from premises in Thomas Street, Northampton in 1894. On the 27th February 1897, the firm, then under the sole direction of George Padmore junior, was converted.¹ It is not known whether he purchased the firm from Barnes, or if the two had been business partners. It is possible that Barnes had become insolvent and sold out to Padmore. Whatever the truth, between 1897/1901 Barnes held 501 shares in the company and is recorded in the shareholding lists as being a boot and shoe manager (for the company) of 8 Bostock Avenue, Northampton. Beyond that, no evidence is extant at the time of writing as to William.²

The authorised capital was £20,000 and the sale price of £15,000³ was satisfied by an allotment of 6,000 preference and 9,000 ordinary shares: seven subscribing shares were fully paid up. A number of points should be made about the control and ownership of the company. First, George Padmore junior was the managing director from 1897, with an annual salary of £300, but he lived in Leicester until 1905, when he took up residence in his father's home at Cropstone, Leicestershire. In terms of daily management of the factory it is not known to what extent he can be regarded as an absentee manufacturer. His manager from 1897 was Sydney James Davis, who became a director in 1906. Of the shareholders, these two were the only ones with shoe manufacturing background. Increasingly in the inter-war years Davis took control and was left in sole

1 This, and the other company information is taken from B.T. 31/36605/51507; B.S.T.J. 29/10/98 p601; B.S.T.J. 21/2/08 p356; B.S.T.J. 22/4/10 p137; B.S.T.J. 23/2/12 p399.

2 It is possible that he was related to Thomas Ross Barnes (1849/1908) leather agent who died 24/2/08; effects £503 8s. 8d. B.S.T.J. 25/9/08 p489.

3 Sale price was made up of the following elements:	£	s.	d.
(i) stock, machinery etcetera at factory	6,742	13	5
(ii) letters patent and trade-marks	5,000	0	0
(iii) book debts	3,991	19	4
(iv) goodwill	1,265	7	0
	16,999	19	9

charge after George's death in 1944. He was still alive when the company ceased trading in 1952 (as a result of his retirement). It is possible that he was related to William Barnes (a son-in-law) as both shared the same address in 1897.

Secondly, the majority shareholding was divided between the Forsell family (Joshua, John Thomas and Alfred) who were Leicester hosiery spinners and the Padmore family (George senior, Edward and George junior). From the pattern of shareholding in Figure 1 below, it is clear that the Forsells provided significant levels of share capital for the company's operation. The capital funding of the company was done by allotting shares and by the capitalisation of reserves. In 1907 there occurred a major allotment of shares to the value of £4,993 fully paid up and in May 1909 a special resolution capitalised the accumulated credit in the profit and loss account to the value of £7,089. To accommodate this, authorised capital was increased to £30,000: a further rise to £50,000 was approved in January 1914.

Figure 1: Shareholding in Padmore and Barnes Ltd. 1897/1914

Shareholder	1897 - 1906		1907 - 08		1909 - 14	
	Pref	Ord	Pref	Ord	Pref	Ord
Forsell family	6000	4002	10000	4503	10000	9208
Padmore family		4504		4897		9792
(G. Padmore jnr)		(3901)		(4294)		(8588)
W. Barnes		501 ⁱ				
S. J. Davis		-		500		1000

- Notes: (i) transferred to Forsell in 1901.
(ii) George Padmore junior was the largest single holder, with his wife, of controlling ordinary shares.
(iii) Pref = Preference Share: Ord = Ordinary Share.

Thirdly, the board was composed of the major shareholders. Of the Forsell family, John and Alfred served from 1897 to 1918 and Joshua from 1906 to 1916.

In 1918 the family's connection with the firm was severed. George Padmore senior,¹ George's father, served from 1897 to 1905. Edward Padmore, a younger brother, was a shareholder but did not serve on the board. The executive directors were George and from 1906, S. J. Davis, who comprised the board in the inter-war period. During this period, both men held directorships in other shoe firms.²

In 1903 the firm moved to new premises in St. James Road, from which it continued to operate until ceasing to trade in 1952. During the Edwardian period four extensions were required to meet the firm's growing volume of business.³ 'Pure' wholesale manufacturers, the firm's branded goods - 'Moccasins' - became highly successful, as did their methods of meeting the strong competition from both foreign competitors and the British multiple chains. An early advocate of the in-stock system,⁴ a comprehensive range of in-stock styles, all in half sizes with up to six width fittings, were maintained at the firm's warehouses ready for despatch by return. Any order from one pair to a gross could be catered for in this way. It was this ability to respond quickly to retailer's needs which lay at the centre of Padmore's marketing strategy:

.. Retailers apparently recognise the advantages of the in-stock system and Messrs. Padmore & Barnes claim to have a better variety and more uniform goods than any multiple house in the kingdom, placing their

1 He was a Leicester hosiery manufacturer and died at home, 'Limes', Cropstone, Leics. Effects valued at £36,426 11s. 2d. Control of the firm passed to a younger son Edward. The Probate Calendar states that administration of the will was granted to George junior, a hosiery manufacturer. Another son, J. T. Padmore, was a director of Thomas Brown & Company (Leicester) Ltd. shoe manufacturers. He wed at Cropstone, Leics., where he died in 1928, aged 57. He was associated with the company for 30 years.

2 B.T. 31 op cit. Annual Returns 1920/29: Joseph Cullen Ltd., Mason & Mason Ltd. and R. P. N. P. Ltd.

3 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p550.

4 cf Appendix ii C.3 and C.4 on in-stocking and Keith Brooker "Henry John Bostock (1870/1956)" D.B.B. Volume i (1984)p388/91.

customers upon the very best terms of doing business. In-stock lists are supplied with retail prices printed, so that they may be perused by any customer and a pair can be obtained by the next express train...¹

Another facet of Padmore's marketing strategy was a recognition of the need to fully publicise products at the point of sale; something multiple houses in the period had already become adept at doing. Probably the first Northampton manufacturer to establish an advertising department, an abundance of price tickets, show cards and other advertising and promotional literature was supplied to retailers for window and shop display purposes. To some small degree this new marketing departure begins to anticipate aspects of the inter-war Norvic Concentration Plan.² George Padmore junior, was very much a Leicestershire man, living most of his life there, although he lived for a time at Blisworth and shortly before his death resided at Whiston House, Whiston, Northants. He died on the 28th May 1944 at St. Andrew's Hospital, Northampton. Effects £67,907 Os. 9d. He married Emma, who predeceased him.

¹ B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p550.

² see F. W. Wheldon, A Norvic Century (1947) p112/13 cf Keith Brooker, "Cecil Colman (1878/1954)", D.B.B. Volume i 1984 p 747/49.

N.G.4: JAMES BRANCH & SONS LTD.

James, the founder, was born at Bethnal Green, London, in 1844. His father was a master bootmaker/manufacturer. Apprenticed to one of his father's cordwainers, he acquired a practical knowledge of bespoke bootmaking: In addition, he was also a master of other grades of work. He was the youngest of three brothers, all of whom entered business on their own account in the early eighties:¹ Joseph (died 1910) and John (qv). The companies of all three were to trade successfully until the post second World War period.² It was already a substantial business based at 19/23 Bethnal Green Road, when in 1889, the firm was transferred, in part, to Artizan Road, Northampton. A freehold factory was purchased from Henry Martin, builder, and John Becke, solicitor, secured by a £4,000 mortgage.³

James remained the sole proprietor until the company's conversion on the 18th October 1898. The nominal capital was £30,000, composed of 8,000 5% cumulative preference shares and 22,000 ordinary. Consideration for the sale amounted to £35,890 and was satisfied by the allotment of 8,000 preference and 21,994 ordinary shares to James: the subscribers held the small balance. The balance was paid in cash. The sale agreement valuation of the company was as follows:⁴

	£	s	d
(a) Goodwill, name, trademarks and designs	2,000	0	0
(b) London leasehold property	3,300	0	0
(c) Northampton freehold property	4,000	0	0
(d) London retail premises		262	0
(e) Plant, machinery, stock-in-trade and effects	17,933	18	1
(f) Book debts, existing contracts etcetera	7,745	0	6
(g) Cash		649	1
			5
	35,890	0	0

¹ N.I. 29/10/48 p10, incorrectly states the firm was founded in 1860.

² This paragraph draws on S. & L.R. 24/10/57 supplement pxiii.

³ During its first year in Northampton, the firm occupied temporary premises at 26 St. Michael's Road.

⁴ C.R.O. File No. 59205.

In our period, James' shareholding was gradually eroded by transfer to his sons and other members of the family, as they entered the company. No further increase in nominal capital was sought until 1916, when it was increased to £52,000. Originally converted for family reasons, fixed capital growth in the period was made by way of debentures, as opposed to raising share capital which would probably have necessitated the introduction of 'outside' investors. Mortgages held in 1898 stood at £5,896 4s. 2d. and tended to fluctuate downwards. A first debenture issue in 1900 raised £8,000. Thereafter, the total mortgage and charge debt fluctuated between £6/16,500 and in 1914 stood at £11,000.

In 1898, James' eldest sons, Archibald James and Ernest William, became the first directors. Provision within the Articles of Association stated that as long as James held over 8,000 ordinary shares he had the right to nominate directors, who were to be known as "Mr. Branch's directors". The Articles also made him managing director for life, with an annual salary of £500. These sons had already assisted in the company's management. Progressively, his three other sons came on to the board, after having previously taken an active role in the company: Herbert in 1901; Sydney in 1905; Charles in 1910. Some took responsibility for the London operation, whilst others resided in Northampton, taking charge there: the following chart elucidates.¹

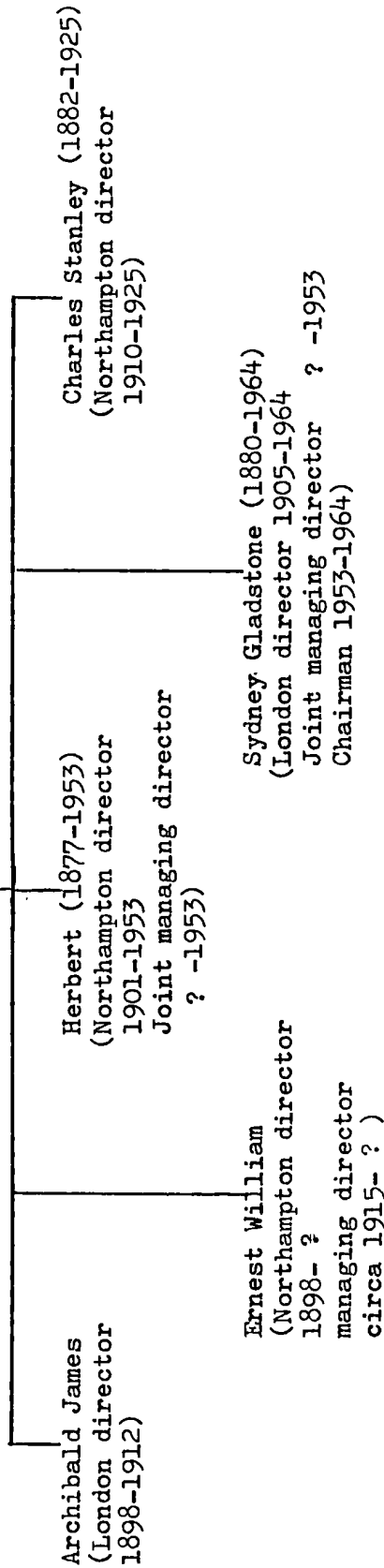
In 1906, manufacturing in Northampton was transferred to the suburb of Kingsthorpe. At this time, manufacturing in this part of the town was new and working class housing in short supply. Thus the firm erected several streets of houses around their new Bective Boot and Shoe Works, which became known as the Bective Estate.² In the 1940's the whole of the business was transferred here, at which time the company's registered office was established here too.

¹ Company information taken from C.R.O. File op cit; and B.S.T.J. 29/10/98 p382; B.S.T.J. 2/6/00 p766; B.S.T.J. 9/8/07 p215; B.S.T.J. 16/9/10 p474.

² B.S.T.J. August 1906 p383: the company purchased 35 acres at Kingsthorpe for this development.

JAMES BRANCH & SONS LTD.

James Branch (1844-1918)
 (sole proprietor 188 -1898
 managing director 1898-1918)



- Notes:
- (i) By 1948 Phillip James Branch (son of Herbert)(born 3/11/06) and Graham Edward Branch (son of Sydney)(born 10/11/08), both of Northampton, were on the board.
 - (ii) Both Herbert and Sydney were associated with the company in 1898 and served as company secretary before their directorships.
 - (iii) Post 1953, non family board members introduced: by early 1960's Branch control had gone.

Like all purely wholesale manufacturers,¹ the ability of James to trade successfully was based, in part, upon the quality and excellence of his product and upon its recognition by the customer in the market place. He adopted what was to become the distinctive trademark 'Bective' in honour of Lady Bective, a notable promoter of British industry at that time. He also firmly believed in the publicity advantages to be gained in the pursuit of honours and awards for his products at the leading trade exhibitions of the day. Many awards were secured by 'Bective' footwear, including in the eighties, Gold Medals at Cape Town, Adelaide, Paris, and the Crystal Palace. The former awards reflect the strong colonial trade done by the company at this time. James was also a member of many exhibition committees, including the influential Leather Trades Exhibition of 1881.² In addition to being the head of a successful company, James distinguished himself in other spheres as well. A trade paper obituary describes him as "a leading and vigorous personality in boot manufacturing, religion and politics".³ An ardent advocate of arbitration and conciliation, he was centrally influential in setting up the National Boot Manufacturer's Federation in 1891 and earlier, the local London Manufacturer's Association. Politically a Liberal, he was "noted for the breadth of his views of all public questions".⁴ He particularly espoused the cause of land nationalisation. He sat as a member of the L.C.C. 1889/1907 and the Metropolitan Water Board, 1889/1906. He was a J.P. for the County of London. He served as parliamentary member for Enfield, Middlesex, 1906/10,⁵

1 The firm had only one known retail outlet in our period at 161 Roman Road, Bow, London.

2 S.T.J. 22/11/18 p266.

3 S.T.J. Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Who's Who of M.P.'s Volume ii and Who's Who 1913.

when he was unseated. Formerly of 24 Fountayne Road, Stoke Newington, he resided at 'Canford', Etchingham Park Road, Finchley, at the time of his death on the 16th November 1918. He left personalty to the value of £32,700 14s. 2d. gross.

At his death, control of the firm passed to his younger sons, Herbert (1878/1953), Sydney (1880/1964) and Charles S. (1882/1925). Charles resided at Northampton for a number of years and was chief salesman. He was one-time president of the Leather Trades Athletic Association. He died prematurely at Westcliff-on-Sea on December 14th 1925, leaving a widow and two sons.¹ His wife, Doris Ivy, was a daughter of G. H. Frecknall, well known in the Northampton shoe industry circles: they married in 1910.² His effects were valued at £7,732 8s. 5d. gross.

The two remaining brothers then shared control, as joint managing directors, until 1953. Herbert took charge of the company's Northampton activities. He died at his residence, Mill House, Kingsthorpe, on the 10th March 1953: his estate was valued at £13,187 13s. 5d. gross.³ Sydney survived his brother by 11 years, during which time he served as chairman of the board. From 1948 he was chairman of the Boot and Shoe Manufacturer's and Leather Trades Protection Society. He died in London on the 18th April 1964 at 2 Durwood Court, Kensington Court Road. Probate was granted to his widow, two sons and daughter and his estate was valued at £35,153 0s. Od.⁴ Family control continued until the 14th December 1974 when Scholl (U.K.) Ltd., purchased the entire shares in the company.⁵

1 N.I. 19/12/25 p5, cf N.I. 4/6/10 p2.

2 N.I. 4/6/10 p20. This marriage linked the Branch family to the Bostocks (App.ii C.4) and the Manfields (App.ii C.3).

3 N.I. 13/3/53 p7.

4 N.I. May 1964 p61.

5 C.R.O. File op cit.

N.G.5: GEORGE SWAN & COMPANY

George Swan was a practical shoemaker, born in 1861 at Northampton into a master shoemaking family.¹ He commenced work at 10 years old after elementary schooling, fixing hobnails into army boots destined for use in the Franco-Prussian war. He began trading on his own account from premises in Duke Street in 1888; subsequently trading from factories in Craven Street (circa 1893/95), Carey Street (circa 1896/99) and Artisan Road. Sometime before 1910 a second factory was brought into use in Brockton Street.² By this time he employed around 250 employees.³ Little written evidence survives as to his business activities. A medium sized wholesale firm without retail outlets, production was concentrated upon high grade wear and hand-sewn work. His only child, William George, assisted his father, but apparently was never taken into partnership.⁴ In 1935, the firm was acquired by Hutton Welted Footwear Company Ltd.⁵ Both George and William became directors in that company: though George's post was probably a non-executive one and he partially retired from business. William was still a director in 1958.⁶ George married in 1891 Susannah (1864/1954), daughter of Mr. W. Rainbow, who served on the Northampton Town Council and Board of Guardians for over 25 years. Although George played no part in public life, his wife followed her father; being a Guardian and then member of the local P.A.C. for 33 years, as well as serving as a J.P. for 18 years. He died, aged 97, at his residence Abington Cottage, Wellingborough Road, Weston Favell, on the 5th March 1958. Effects £5,622 8s. 7d.⁷

1 A relative possibly owned the firm to which Moses Manfield came in 1843 (qv): Kelly's Directory 1845 records a manufacturer Swan in King Street, Northampton.

2 Source - Northampton Local Directories.

3 N.I. 8/8/41 p6.

4 In later years William became a President of the local manufacturer's assoc.

5 C.R.O. File No. 303591 cf No. 278388.

6 Principal Probate Wills and Admin. Calendar 1958.

7 N.I. 14/3/58 p7 cf N.I. 8/8/41 p6.

N.G.6: A. & W. ARNOLD (formerly Arnold & Company).

The firm was founded in 1889 by three partners; James William Arnold (William senior), a practical shoe riveter; his uncle Anthony Arnold, a clicker; and Mr. Flint, clerk and book-keeper. The initial capital was £94¹ and trading was started from small premises in Duke Street,² later removing to Military Road. William senior's autobiography, unique amongst shoe manufacturers of the period, well illuminates the anxieties and difficulties faced by infant firms, despite the retrospective colouring of events that Arnold indulged in.³ The business was begun "as a sort of overtime employment for us", but their employers - Manfield & Sons (qv) - soon learnt of the venture and dismissed them.⁴ These early months were fraught with worry and low wages.⁵ Competent shoe-men, a cove of custom was established, but all business matters had to be put in the hands of Flint, as William and Anthony "lacked entirely all business training".⁶

1 This is the figure quoted in William Arnold Recollections of William Arnold (1915) p59. cf S.L.R. 2/9/92 p591 where it is stated the figure was £105.

2 Autobiography p60 "one room up some steps".

3 Autobiography p79 "yes, our business is prosperous. When I think of it I am astounded: that the poor little village boy should reach where I am today".

4 Autobiography p60.

5 Initially £1 rising to 25s. after circa one year, then 30s. But S.L.R. loc cit p582 states 29s. rising to 50s. "Both could earn considerably higher wages previous to starting in business on their own account".

6 Autobiography p63. Despite this, William senior did bring to business, beyond practical skill, an obvious native facility to handle money. At several points in the autobiography he mentions his natural frugality, a residue of his poor childhood. In an industry racked with credit problems this facility was of inestimable use. "There is one thing about my business practice which I think important. No one ever suggested it to me, but somehow I saw it was a good thing to do. I have always had enough money at the bank or I have always been able to get enough to pay my biggest creditor instantly, if required - all that was owing him". Autobiography p80.

Compounding this, William was barely literate and Flint's erratic drinking habits caused problems: he left the partnership within a short while, but continued to do their accounts. Then in 1892 the firm suspended trading, the result of a 'domino failure' following the insolvency of a principal customer who owed £1,000.¹ The autobiography captures the mood of the partners at this stage:

... We had to call a meeting of creditors and explain to them the whole position. Well, working in the factory all day, struggling and worrying, was bad enough, but it was nothing to those awful days before the creditors' meeting. The factory was closed because there was no money for wages and I thought everyone I met was talking about us, calling us thieves, which we were not and I knew we were not. I was ashamed to be seen, so was my uncle and we used to get up early in the morning and go out into the country for the day, returning only at night, when dark. My wife suffered the same: it was a terrible time. It settled me: I decided that I would never have anything to do with business again, but would go back to the bench and be a workman ...²

The total liabilities were assessed at £2,831 14s. 3d. against assets of £686 7s. 5d. In three years, turnover had been £15,350 and gross profits £767 (circa 5%).³ Their creditors however, preferred any course before bankruptcy and (the debtors) finally offered 4s. in the £ "which was accepted".⁴ It was recognised that the nucleus of a good business had been developed, that the suspension was unfortunate and that trading should continue.

1 cf S.L.R. loc cit p583 states "The immediate cause of the stoppage was the heavy loss through failure of A. & J. Amsden, the debtors' claim being £998".

2 Autobiography p63/4.

3 S.L.R. loc cit p583.

4 Autobiography p84/5. Despite no legal obligation to do so, between 1892 and 1915 William gradually paid, in full, all debts resulting from this suspension: "There is another thing. Ever since the old firm of Arnold & Company had the misfortune to call its creditors together, it has been my great desire, my chief ambition, to reach a position so that I could repay all who lost money by us. The failure was owing to no fault of mine and the creditors were all kind and were quite prepared to put down their losses to the ordinary hazards of business. But I have always felt that it would be my duty to repay them every penny. I am thankful to say, that by the goodness of God, I believe I am within sight of the ability to do this and I have every hope of repaying all claims against the old firm, with interest, at the end of this year". (i.e. 1915).

Within a short period, the reconstituted firm¹ faced a major re-structuring of organisation. First, larger premises had to be found in order to comply with the 'indoor working' agreement.

This caused renewed struggles and of the period William senior later reflected:

... This time, like all that had gone before, was one long struggle. All who are in business will understand, when I say that for a long time there was nothing but work and worry, planning and scheming, pinching and saving, forecasting and grinding, to hold our own and make just a little headway. Practically everything depended upon the energy of one pair of hands and every week brought its crop of difficulty and care. The struggle in the home, with a growing family, was quite as great as our fight to keep the doors of our factory open and I remember my pleasure and my wife's relief, when I began to draw £2 a week from the business instead of 30s. ...²

Secondly, following in quick succession, came the national lockout of 1895 and the general move to mechanised shoe manufacture thereafter. It was at this time, along with many other average practice firms, that William senior shifted to modern machine working. Again, William senior's recollection of these events is coloured by the risk and worry that surrounded the life of a manufacturer:

... I could see that if I did not go in for machinery I should be quickly left behind and go under. This was an important time in my life, I must make the change or lose my business. I made it a matter of prayer and confident that I was doing the right thing, I speculated on thousands of pounds' worth of machinery when I had not a spare shilling. Happily I came through it. It was a great plunge, but it was a plunge that enabled me to keep up with the others ...³

1 A partnership between William senior and Anthony until 1895. The latter then retired and William senior continued as a sole proprietor until circa 1909 when a partnership with three of his sons was agreed. (see below).

2 Autobiography p65. Contrast this with the initial carefree optimism that he states pervaded the partners thinking when business was commenced: "We discussed the thing all round and decided to make a start. Between us, we thought we knew a lot and that the three of us working together could almost beat creation making boots. As for capital, the two others had some money; I had little or none, but I was so necessary for the concern as an expert workman, that I believe they would have taken me in without any. Everything looked so rosy". (Autobiography p59.)

3 Autobiography p79/80.

Following this period of rationalisation with many of the early struggles passed, the firm entered a period of successful trading. The firm became the second largest maker of men's machine welted boots with a capacity of 5/6,000 pairs weekly in these goods alone. Production overall was concentrated upon high grade men's and youth's footwear, the quality and style of which was recognised both in home and overseas markets. Full use was made of branding: the 'Majestic' and 'Welfit' ranges being well established. A contemporary attributed this change of fortune to William senior's ability:

... The sturdy independence and hard work of Mr. Arnold have had their reward, for today the firm have a fine up-to-date factory with all the latest and best machinery and appliances for producing high-grade footwear. From the smallest beginnings (he) has built up a business of great importance and has every reason to be proud of his achievement. The grit and persistence he has brought to bear have borne good fruit and placed his (business) amongst those to be reckoned with in the production of footwear in this country ...¹

By this time three of his sons had been taken into partnership: Thomas, Harry² and Alfred Walker. The two eldest sons, Matthew and William junior, had also been associated with the firm until 1909, when they commenced manufacturing as Arnold Brothers & Company.³ It was said of Thomas, who acted as manager:

... (He) is invaluable to the business and in the commercial department particularly displays that energy so necessary for the firm's welfare ...⁴

The firm was converted in February 1921; the nominal capital being £25,000. The sale agreement valued the company at £46,533 13s. 4d. which price was satisfied by the allotment of 24,998 shares, the balance being paid in cash. William senior was the first chairman and Thomas Alfred Walker and William senior the first directors: Alfred retired in late 1921.⁵

1 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p545.

2 Harry was no longer a partner at the time of the conversion.

3 See N.G.7 below.

4 S.L.T. Supplement (1916) pxiv.

5 Conversion details from C.R.O. No. 172949 (dissolved).

Of his six sons, only James appears not to have been associated with the business.¹ At the time of writing, no extant biographical details are available regarding Harry Arnold and only partial accounts of the other partners:

James William Arnold (William senior).

He was born at Everdon, Northamptonshire, 12 miles south-west of Northampton, in December 1860. A son of Matthew "a poor working man, a typical old fashioned English village shoemaker"² who was employed as an outworker by C. Rodhouse of Daventry. He was one of 14 children, who were brought up in poor and restrained circumstances. The Autobiography recounts Matthew having to resort to poaching and stealing to provide for his family. Of shoe-manufacturers at 1914, he emerges as one of the few whose origins can be finally described as 'humble'. He retained a bluff, proletarian countenance throughout his life. His education at the local charity school was minimal. A practical rivetter, he learnt his trade in Daventry from eight years of age, walking the eight miles each day from Everdon. After a brief spell as a cattle drover's boy, his father taught him the rudiments of hand-sewn work before he migrated to Northampton at 13 to live with his Uncle Anthony. There he worked at Joseph Gibb's, then Laycock & Company. His autobiographical account of his early Northampton years provides an interesting and one of the few insights of an outworking shoe worker in the late Victorian period.³ Although an excellent worker much of his life in the town prior to marriage, he was increasingly dominated by a growing drinking problem. His marriage in late 1884 and an increasing interest in religion however, overcame this problem.

1 He does appear as a director of Arnold Brothers (Northampton) Ltd. C.R.O. 172951 Directors' List, 12/11/23.

2 Autobiography p2.

3 Autobiography chapters 5/7 passim, cf Keith Brooker "The Northampton Shoemakers' Reaction to Industrialisation: Some Thoughts" N.P. & P. (1980)VI No. 3, p151-59.

The Autobiography provides some covert evidence of Arnold's driving force as a manufacturer. It reveals the extent to which family needs intertwined and dictated company policy. Constant references are made regarding the financial pressures of a large, growing and young family in the early years. Indeed, this would appear to have provided at least part of the original motivation for entry into business:

... We kept struggling on and our second and third children were born. Of course our expenses were increasing and there never seemed to be enough trade to enable me to earn the large sums that I did when I was single. I was not satisfied, neither was Uncle Anthony and we talked of starting manufacturing ourselves. Others were doing it and were getting on, why should not we? ...¹

As his ten children grew to adulthood, it is to be imagined that the costs incurred by a now successful manufacturer also grew. Little information has come down to us, but Arnold does tell us that he financed the firm begun by his two eldest sons:

... I had just started my sons in business, which was a drain on my resources, but because of that, I was extra careful and had taken more than ordinary precautions (against falling into debt) ...²

Finally, he tells us of his purchase of land in his native village just at a point when the business was under financial pressure. So, using his wife's savings he purchased two orchards, a 32 acre farm and later, two adjacent cottages with attached land. He notes:

... When we were struggling our hardest, I was conscious of an intense desire to own land in my native village. I purchased these and felt I should like to build a little home and come and live out here some time or another ...³

Up to 1915, his family had not done this, although a country residence had been built, because of his wife's health and because of business commitments, residence in Northampton was imperative. Thus, the property was managed by two

1 Autobiography p56.

2 Autobiography p81.

3 Autobiography p78.

brothers-in-law: "another instance of Mr. Arnold's desire to help all the members of his family".¹ This sense of helping others and his religiosity developed within him a belief in systematic charity and philanthropy:

... They soon made use of me at Grove Road chapel.² I have been honoured by the church as a trustee, society steward and class leader. But I am no public speaker, my efforts are not in that direction. We help in other ways. My dear wife, since she was 21 years old, has had a system of giving one-tenth away. I have done the same regarding my income, but frequently overstep the mark. I believe that our giving has been as important as anything that has gone to make up our lives. I firmly believe in the grace of giving ...³

He died in the 1940's.

Thomas Arnold (1889 - 1940).

The third son of J. W. Arnold. He was educated at Elmfield College, York and from there at 16, went into the family firm, spending his life there, except for war service in the Inns of Court O.T.C. in the Great War.⁴ He was a partner and from 1921 a director and joint managing director with J.H.C. Newton (company secretary), until his death. An obituary noted:

... His association with the management of the business in conjunction with his father and J.H.C. Newton had led to the firm becoming one of the best known in the trade of Northampton ...⁵

He was for many years the firm's principal commercial traveller. He also held directorships in other associated companies: Frisby & Company Ltd. of which he was managing director and Arnold Brothers (Northampton) Ltd. He took no prominent part in public life, but was a sometime committee member of the local manufacturers' association and was active in the Park Avenue Methodist church, where he was a trustee and treasurer. He was a freemason. A friendly,

1 Autobiography p82 cf "I don't get anything out of the farm, I can assure you, but it interests me and it gives, besides others, a living to these two men".

2 Primitive Methodist.

3 Autobiography p71/72.

4 N.I. 8/3/40 p5.

5 S.L.N. 7/3/40 p23.

charitable man, he was particularly generous to the local Methodist aged rest home. He died on the 3rd March 1940, aged 51, at Ilkley, Yorkshire. He resided at Sheiling, Billing Road East. He was survived by his widow Evelyn (a daughter of Reverend J. E. Saxton, minister of the Kettering Road Methodist church), two sons (Michael and William) and two daughters. His effects were valued at £22,100 12s. 6d.

Alfred Walker Arnold (1894 - 1955).

The fifth son of J. W. Arnold, born at Northampton. He joined the family firm and was a partner by 1914, but resigned shortly after the firm's conversion in 1921. He ran a boot and shoe repairing business at Harrow, Middlesex, for some years.¹ He died at his home, 85 Woodbury Avenue, North Harrow, on the 21st March 1955. Administration of his will was granted to his widow, Florence Mabel. Effects £2,121 15s. 6d.

¹ N.I. 25/3/55 p4.

N.G.7: ARNOLD BROTHERS.

The firm was founded in 1909 at premises in Henry Street, by Matthew and William junior Arnold, the eldest sons of J. W. Arnold, in association with F. Mortimer. By circa 1911 a large factory at the rear was taken: the two were linked, improved and rationalised providing a frontage in both Henry Street and Talbot Road. It had originally been intended to specialise in machine sewn goods, but a rising demand for cheap and medium class welted goods caused a switch to this more profitable class of production. Two branded ranges of menswear - 'Master' and 'Cathedral' - retailing at standard prices between 8s. 11d. and 12s. 6d. resulted.¹ As was common by this period, an in-stock system was adopted.

The firm enjoyed an immediate success² and from the scant evidence, appears not to have faced the problems common to infant firms. The reasons for this were twofold. First, their father provided the finance for the concern³ and clearly the training received in the family firm stood them in good stead:

.. Schooled in their father's business, they have his assistance and practical knowledge to draw on ..⁴

In addition to which, Mr. F. Mortimer, a man of some years standing in the industry and possibly a senior employee of William senior, provided valuable experience. Secondly, from the first, a close collaboration existed between A. & W. Arnold and this firm. William senior writes of the joint achievement of both firms:

1 B.S.T.J. 25/6/09 p545 S.L.T. Supplement 1916 pxvi.

2 B.S.T.J. loc cit, "The firm went at once to the fore and is exceedingly busy".
S.L.T. Supplement loc cit, "has made rapid progress from the commencement".

3 See N.G.6 above.

4 B.S.T.J. loc cit.

... After 26 years of business experience, our name stands second to none in the trade for honest dealing and good workmanship. It is an untarnished name, honourable and clean. I, with my sons, have now three factories and together we employ 800 people; we pay £1000 in wages every week and we produce considerably over half-a-million pairs of boots and shoes per annum. We trade practically all over the world ...¹

Moreover, when the two firms converted in 1921, the partners of each firm became directors in both.² Thus, Thomas Arnold was allotted 5,000 shares and Alfred W. Arnold 2,750 shares in Arnold Brothers.³

Addendum.

Matthew Arnold.

No information extant at the time of writing.

William Arnold.

Born at Hunter Street, Northampton in 1886, the second son of William senior. He was educated at Kettering Road Board School and at 12 joined his father's firm. After a thorough practical training that emphasized clicking and pattern cutting, William junior concerned himself with leather buying. Public life held few attractions for him, although he was vice-president of the local manufacturers' association in 1929 and was a non-conformist lay preacher and life abstainer. He was politically Liberal. In 1907 he married Annie, the youngest daughter of William Hawes, the noted local musician, teacher and maker of violins. They had issue four sons and one daughter. A son, Malcolm, is the noted composer.⁴ His eldest son and two nephews went into the firm.⁵

1 Autobiography p80.

2 Sale Agreements of M. & W. Arnold (C.R.O. 172949) and Arnold Brothers (C.R.O. 172951) cf A. W. Arnold Director's List for 1923.

3 C.R.O. No. 172951 share allotments 6/4/21.

4 For his life see for example Who's Who 1972 p97.

5 N.I. 29/1/54 p5.

N.G.8: OAKESHOTT & FINNEMORE.

The firm was founded at premises in Talbot Road, Northampton, in 1902 by Henry Oakeshott and Walter Finnemore. Both men had been connected with Turner Brothers, Hyde & Company's large export trade for many years. That expertise was now brought to bear upon their own enterprise. Henry, the elder partner, was responsible for production, Walter for selling: his knowledge of the shipping trade and his untiring energy contributed significantly to the company's success.

Until 1914 the firm traded, "exceedingly profitably", entirely in overseas markets; primarily South Africa, India, China and Japan. The Great War interrupted much of this trade and after came the imposition of tariffs world-wide. South Africa, the company's largest customer market, began home production and accordingly also imposed high tariffs. This hindered things to such an extent that the company found great difficulty in marketing their goods. The company thus entered the home market. In 1922, Cecil Colman¹ of the Norwich firm Howlett & White² (later the Norvic Shoe Company Ltd.) established an association with the company, resulting in Oakeshott & Finnemore making 'Norvic' and 'Mascot' menswear for the home market and later the noted 'Sir Herbert Barker shoe'. The company was converted into a limited company, Colman and Sir Ernest White joining its board. In 1935, Howlett & White and its associate companies merged to form the Norvic Shoe Company Ltd., and Oakshott & Finnemore, like other associates became a subsidiary company. Control was shared between the holding company's board of directors and local boards. Like other subsidiaries, the local Northampton board was to retain control over local production and finances. Both Walter Finnemore and Frank Haynes joined the Norvic board.

¹ Keith Brooker "Cecil Colman", D.B.B. op cit.

² F. W. Wheldon Norvic Century (1948) cf Keith Brooker "Sir George White" D.B.B. forthcoming.

In 1931 Henry Oakeshott retired and Frank Haynes, an old business associate of Colmans who had joined the firm two years previously, was made a director in his stead. An old-fashioned non-conformist, tough headed businessman and an originator of the in-stock sales system in the shoe trade, he quickly emerged as the company's leader in the second generation. By this time Finnemore's son, Kenneth, had joined the company and was for many years to manage the Northampton factory. It has been said of him "his knowledge of materials and manufacture in the men's trade is both practical and encyclopaedic".¹ At a later date still Frank's son, Arthur, became a director.

Henry Charles Oakshott (1863 - 1936)

Born at Stoke Newington, North London, in 1863, he migrated to Northampton as a young man to work for Turner Brothers, Hyde & Company. Although he played little part in public life, he was well known in trade and charitable circles. As a businessman, F. W. Wheldon gives the following assessment:

.. He was a man of high principle, just in all his dealings and with an intimate and practical knowledge of making men's shoes. He was aptly described by a friend who knew him well as a benevolent and generous soul with more than a touch of the autocrat in him ..²

He was an active worker for the Northampton General Hospital, being vice-president and a member of its board of management, chairman of its House Committee and vice-chairman of the Hospital Week Committee. In 1929 he donated £3,500 towards the construction of new wards. He was also a supporter of the Y.M.C.A. locally and the Grafton Boy's Club. A religious man, he was a member of the Plymouth Brethren's Duke Street Community in the town; but in his later years worshipped at the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church.

Retired from business in 1931, he died on the 10th April 1936 at his home, 11 Abington Park Crescent. He was survived by his widow and two daughters.

His effects were sworn at £52,859 12s. 5d. and later resworn at £53,179 16s. 10d.³

1 F. W. Wheldon Norvic Century p153.

2 F. W. Wheldon Ibid p150.

3 N.I. 17/11/36 p2.

Walter Finnemore (1876 - 1961)

At the time of writing few details of this subject are to hand. He was born locally and spent his working life in the shoe trade. A founding partner and subsequently a director in the firm, in 1935 he became a Norvic director; a post which he retained until the early 1950's. He spent his retirement at Berkhamstead, where he purchased a residence; 'Blegberry', Shooters Way. Here he devoted much time to gardening. He was a staunch churchman, but took no part in public life.

He died on the 15th February 1962 at the West Hertfordshire Hospital, Hemel Hempstead, aged 85, after a short illness. A widower for some time, he was survived by two sons and two daughters. Kenneth was a director in the company and in charge of Norvic production in Northampton; Rex was a London-based accountant. He left effects to the value of £163,378 0s. 3d.¹

¹ N.I. November 1961 p19.

N.G.9: BRITISH SHOE COMPANY (J. & G. H. ROE) LTD. (formerly J. & G. H. Roe & Co.)

A partnership between two brothers, the firm was begun in a modest way from small premises at 37 St. James Street, Northampton, in 1891. Two years prior to this date, George H. Roe was trading as a shoe manufacturer and leather seller under the style of Simpson & Company from 35 St. James Street. A creditor's meeting was called in late July of that year and liabilities were recorded at £1,082 7s. 6d. against assets of £554 19s. 4d. A private arrangement was negotiated between the parties, with a deed of arrangement being finally accepted by the creditors.¹ Local directories reveal that Simpson & Company continued to trade from 37 St. James Street in the early nineties.² The partnership traded successfully and in 1895 it was necessary to move to "greatly enlarged" premises in Gregory Street and Free School Street. From doing a general trade in first grade men's wear, they developed as multiple shop owners and exporters in the late nineties, with branches throughout the country: by 1914 they had at least 21 retail outlets in the greater London area, with a further 20 plus in principal provincial towns throughout the country.³ A trade journalist of the time gave the following assessment of the firm:

.. Messrs. J. & G. H. Roe are modern in every sense of the word and produce the best and medium-grade footwear for all parts of the world. They make a speciality of welted goods of the most up to date and approved styles. Special attention is paid to lasts and shapes. The 'Guildhall' brand is well known in this respect. (The principals of the firm) are energetic and hard working young men, fully alive to the ever changing needs of the trade and running their business on smart, up to date lines ..⁴

By the Great War the partnership had been converted into a limited company, with John and George as the principal directors.⁵ By this time, George's youngest

1 S.L.R. 20/7/89 p76 and 100; cf B.S.T.J. 27/7/89 p76.

2 Kelly's Northampton Directory 1890 and Steven's Northampton Directory 1893.

3 S.L.T. Supplement 1916 pl.

4 B.S.T.J. 2/7/09 p25.

5 C.R.O. File has not to this date been traced.

son, John Leonard and John's only son, William John Roe, were both associated with the firm.

John Roe (1859 - 1935).

Born at Northampton in 1859, a son of Albert J. Roe, who traded as a shoe manufacturer in St. George's Street in the 1870's. From inconspicuous beginnings he rose to be one of the town's "prominent manufacturers",¹ though no record is extant to suggest he played a prominent role in either local public or trade life. He retired some years before his death, devoting most of his time to gardening and to bee-keeping. He died at his home, The Priory, Weston Favell, on the 8th January 1935, aged 76, after having been in poor health for some time. He married Laura Gertrude, nee Waters and had issue one son, William John and one daughter, all of whom survived him. His effects were valued at £45,703 16s. Od.²

George Henry Roe (1863 - 1923).

Born at Northampton in 1863. Like his brother he received a practical training in the trade. He led a private, secluded life: indeed, very little has come down to us about his attitudes, life style etcetera.

He died at his home, 'Zaremba', 9 Percy Road, Boscombe, Hampshire, aged 60, on the 12th September 1923 after a short illness. He had undergone a throat operation one month before. He married Elizabeth Emma, nee ? and they had issue three sons, (George, Jack and Leonard) and two daughters. His effects were valued at £38,190 5s. 9d.³

It is possible that John and George were related to Richard Roe (1827/1910) a sewer to the trade who introduced the Blake sewer, standard screwer and gas engine into the Northampton trade. He traded at Newland until the mid-eighties, whereafter his son(?), Thos. D. B. Roe, took over the business and ran it from the same premises until circa 1910. A generation earlier, a James Roe traded as bootmaker at 46 Bridge Street, in the early sixties.

1 N.I. 18/1/35 p9.

3 S.L.N. 13/9/23 p24 cf N.I. 22/9/23 p15.

2 S.L.N. 18/1/35 p30.

N.G.10: BARRATT, ARTHUR WILLIAM (1877 - 1939).

Born at 61 Ethel Street, Northampton, on the 8th October 1877, the fourth son (of seven) of John Russell Barratt, a shoe machine operator (later footwear retailer), and Elizabeth (née Yeomans). His father, formerly a silk weaver from Desborough, had migrated to Northampton in search of work some years previously. William, the name by which he was known, was educated at local board schools. An able scholar, he started work in his father's business as a half-time shop assistant on his tenth birthday.

At 19 he became the manager of his father's third shop in Gold Street, Northampton. Within three years he moved to London to gain a broader experience of retailing. He obtained a sales assistant's post in a Manfield's footwear shop at a weekly wage of 17s. 6d. plus commission. His father's retail shop in the Drapery was acquired upon his return to Northampton in 1901 and within a year William had entered into partnership with his elder brother David.¹ By June 1905, despite a severe fire at the shop, a planned expansion into footwear manufacturing took place at new premises: the Sterling Shoeworks, College Street, Northampton.

Two basic problems hindered the early development of the firm. First was the heightened competition experienced by all small Edwardian footwear retailers, as the already large and well established shoe retailing chains progressively consolidated their control of the urban consumer market in footwear. The Barratt's solution was to depart radically from accepted British shoe retailing practice. A mail-order business was entered into. The principle aim was to reach the potentially large rural market which lived at a distance from these new retail outlets. Sound quality, keenly priced footwear supported by a full money-back guarantee, quickly established public goodwill and confidence, as did the great care with which customer's orders and individual needs were attended to. Central to this sales strategy was the extensive use of

¹ Acquired father's failed business - see B.S.T.J. 18/7/02 p76.

catalogues and advertising in both national daily newspapers and periodic journals of all kinds. A meticulous card index system was adopted to record individual customer's addresses and past purchases: by 1906, 40,000 customers had been thus indexed.

The second problem to face the partnership was that of undercapitalisation. Within a year of moving into a factory manufacturing operation in 1905 (the Sterling Shoe Works, College Street, Northampton), the partnership was declared bankrupt: liabilities were assessed at £9,610 with £4,547 being owed to advertisers and assets of £2,761, of which fixtures and fittings constituted only £250. Discharge from bankruptcy was suspended for two years because of rash and speculative trading by the partners. Trading had become increasingly dominated by the need to counter the competition of other firms quick to imitate the boots-by-post principle. In the last year of trading sales had exceeded £27,000 with gross profits in excess of £7,000, but overhead costs were high: over £12,000 had been expended in advertising alone, of which £4,547 was still owing. Clearly such aggressive expansion was based upon the continued deferment in settling creditors' accounts. Yet the Official Receiver noted that despite:

... this rash and hazardous speculation, the case differs from most trade bankruptcies. No doubt the debtors intended to do right and if proper capital had been employed they might have laid the foundation of a prosperous business ...¹

Indeed, the future viability of the enterprise if based upon judicious business practices was conceded on all sides. The high level of debts, it was argued, represented in effect, a heavy essential investment in newspaper advertising techniques, which were now beginning to show a return. The partnership had acquired much expertise in this field; in particular, William's remarkable advertising flair and facility was recognised. Orders had continued to increase through the period of the bankruptcy and were expected to remain at a high level

¹ B.S.T.J. 14/12/06 p460.

for some time to come.

Consequently, as the discharge hearing ended a new private limited company was formed to take over the business of the bankrupt partnership. The company was registered on the 25th January 1907 under the style W. Barratt & Company Ltd. Several friends, principally the Sheffield accountant, John H. Freeborough, who had acted for the insolvent Barratts, contributed a substantial portion of the purchase price of £2,287. He became a director, with a shareholding of 1,130 preference and five founder's shares. Until the Barratt's discharge from bankruptcy in late 1909, interest in the new company was vested in Tom Johnson, William's father-in-law, who became the other, a 'caretaker' director. His shareholding of 1,130 preference and 15 founder's shares gave a controlling interest in the company to him and subsequently, to William and David: each founder's share carried 50 votes to the single vote of each preference. Two younger brothers, Albert and Richard Barratt were given a nominal shareholding and joined the company. In 1910, John Clark joined the board. These three new members provided much needed manufacturing and shoe design expertise.

The combination of Freeborough's financial judgement matched by the Barratt's enterprising management clearly underpin the 'immediate and striking success' of the reformed company's first six years: by 1914 the company's assets were valued at £34,000. The rapid and consistent demand for the company's products led to the decision in 1913 to substantially increase the scale of the business by the provision of a new factory and warehouse to give adequate provision for future expansion. This £9,000 development known as the Footshape Boot Works, took place on a one and a quarter acre site at Kingsthorpe Road, Northampton and was financed by two Northamptonshire Union Bank mortgages. In May 1914, the concern was converted to a public limited company. Nominal capital was increased by £46,000 to £50,000. "Of this sum, the Prospectus informs, £18,000 has already been subscribed by founders, directors and their friends and the remaining £14,500 shares are now available for subscription, primarily by the

customers of the company.¹ By December 1914 all but £884 of this latter sum had subscribed. This pattern of share allocation and the retention of founder's shares ensured a continued concentration of control within the company.

Following continued wartime demand, Barratts traded strongly in the inter-war period. Mail-order activity remained the sheet-anchor of trading now under the direction of Richard, joint managing director with William, following David's retirement in 1911. A retail chain was begun in 1914, which grew to 150 shops by 1939. This development, along with their rapid development as a volume wholesale producer and exporter, was controlled by William. Albert assumed control of production and quality control. In addition, Freeborough remained on the board and was joined for a period by A. E. Catt.

This continued success is reflected by four increases in authorised capital in the period, undertaken to finance further additions in factory warehouse capacity and to finance the expanding retail chain. At £100,000 in 1919 authorised capital had grown to £1,000,000 by 1928: on each occasion the new share issue was eagerly sought.

Despite his sustained business success, many in Northampton and in the trade generally regarded Barratt personally with only a qualified esteem. In part, this is a reflection of the stolid hostility with which some viewed his radical and very competitive marketing and particularly his personalised advertising techniques. Possibly, of greater significance, however, was his active participation in socialist politics. He joined the vigorous Northampton Branch of the Social Democratic Federation in 1902, becoming one of their most effective and uncompromising public speakers. A press election biography of 1904 suggests Barratt's beliefs derived from his experience of shop assistant's conditions in London and his study of contemporary Socialist literature, principally Bellamy's Looking Backward. He sat as a Labour councillor at Northampton 1929/1934, being made a J.P. in 1930. He unsuccessfully contested

¹ C.R.O. 91791 Prospectus 1914 p2.

the 1931 General Election as the Labour candidate for Bethnal Green North East. His public life was marked by a vociferous criticism of the poor managerial quality and nepotism of local government and by vehement opposition to growing militarism: his was 'a satirical and cynical spirit'. Similar criticism was apparent in trade matters. As president of the Northampton Town Boot Manufacturers' Association in 1933, he aroused the hostility of many manufacturers by advocating a shorter working week and improved working conditions for shoe workers.

He retired from active public life a year later. His last years were marked by increased and unremitting business commitments (which hastened his death), following the early enforced retirement of Albert in 1934 and the death of Richard in 1936. Inadequate regard seems to have been given to the question of succession: certainly William showed a marked disinclination to delegate responsibility during these last years.¹

The material wealth from business and the idealism of his socialist beliefs were reconciled by extensive philanthropy and concern for his workpeople. His model factory helped pioneer air-conditioning and fluorescent lighting. He provided comprehensive social and welfare facilities, including a contribution free pension scheme. In 1934, he provided £60,000 to endow the Barratt Maternity Hospital, Northampton, "which shall be open to persons in all stations of life and not regarded as a charity".² As a youth, he had been a keen sportsman and pioneer motor-cyclist. In later life he gave generously

1 N.I. 15/12/39 p3. "For sometime his intimate friends have been trying to persuade him to relax some of his intense activities in business, but they only partially succeeded, for he is a strong believer in the personal touch". cf N.I. Ibid p9. "As founder of the business he blazed its trail, but not content with that, he would continue to work hard to consolidate every new development with the result that he wore himself out at the age of 62 and robbed himself of the life of leisure to which he was looking forward".

2 N.I. 26/10/34 p11 cf N.I. 3/5/35 and 3/7/36.

to localsports and was president of the local rugby, football and athletic clubs.

He married Alice, daughter of Tom Johnson, a Northampton shoe finisher, on July 16th 1899. They had no issue, but there were two adopted daughters of the marriage. All survived him. Barratt died at Northampton on the 10th December 1939, the result of heart disease. He left an estate of gross value of £303,646 with nett personalty of £247,585. Subject to numerous munificent legacies, his estate was left in trust for his wife and on her death in 1958, the residue of over £300,000 passed to the Northampton General Hospital.¹

Addendum:

John Henry Freeborough F.S.A.A., J.P.

He became associated with Barratts at the time of the business failure; probably acting as their accountant. For many years Freeborough was the senior partner of a successful accounting firm at Haxworth Chambers, Figtree Lane, Sheffield. His father, Benjamin of Park Grange, Park Grange Road, Sheffield, was a steel-maker and director of Hadfields Ltd.² By the 1930's he had become interested in a range of industrial concerns. In addition to his directorship at Barratts, which he retained until his death, he also served on the boards of Advance Motor Manufacturing Company Ltd., Beeley Foundry Company Ltd., British Time Recorder Company Ltd., Metal Heat Treatment Company Ltd., and Standard Values Ltd.³

He died suddenly on the 17th October 1939 at his office. Formerly of 61 Montgomery Terrace Road, Sheffield, he later lived at 39 Marlborough Road, Sheffield. His effects were valued at £27,638 9s. 5d. gross.

1 N.I. 29/7/60 p8.

2 Directory of Directors 1914.

3 Directory of Directors 1921/31.

A. E. Catt.

A. E. Catt was a prominent local businessman, inventor and engineer, and a long-standing friend of Barratt's. He resided for a number of years at Weston Road, Northampton, before removing to Passenham Manor, Passenham, Northamptonshire.¹

David Barratt.

Sometime resident at 113 Holly Road, Northampton and director of Treburgett Consol Mines Ltd.²

1 Directory of Directors 1921/26.

2 Directory of Directors 1921.

N.G.11: ABRAHAM LEE & COMPANY

Abraham Lee was born at Northampton in 1864 of shoemaking parents. A man of little or no education he started learning the shoemaker's craft from his father, a cordwainer. He learnt quickly "and showed such astonishing aptitude that when only 15 shopped his first pair of handsewn shoes at the wicket of Cove & West, the Mounts factory".¹

After working for many years as a journeyman shoemaker, in 1895 he started on his own account from small premises in Turner Street. Choosing to trade in the restricted, competitive, but still profitable handsewn and first grade markets, he soon made his mark. Larger premises were sought in quick succession, first at Clare Street, Bailiff Street and then Military Road. Then in circa 1906, the firm moved to the Enterprise factory, Bective Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton. New styles had been introduced, in line with the major fashion changes of the time and his volume of trade was such that his four brothers, George, John, William and Thomas joined him in partnership at this time. Trading continued until 1937, by which time his brothers had either retired or were dead. At this point a new company was formed, with which Abraham was actively connected for a number of years: A. Lee (Northampton) Ltd. His two sons, Abraham junior and John Lewis, who had been associated with the partnership, joined their father as co-directors.

Of a retiring disposition, Abraham played no role in public life. Beyond his commitments to business, he was an active supporter of the Kingsthorpe Baptist church, of which he was treasurer and a life deacon. He was fond of gardening. He died at his home, 'West View', 67 Queens Parade, Northampton, on the 8th January 1948, aged 84. His wife had died the previous summer: he was survived by his sons. At the time of his death he was the oldest member of the local manufacturer's association. His effects were valued at £12,416 3s. 6d.

¹ N.I. 16/1/48 p9.

At the time of writing little detail is available regarding his brothers.

His brother John died on the 27th October 1947 at his home 'Stoke House',

145 Harborough Road, Kingsthorpe. His effects were valued at £22,574 18s. 4d.

It is possible that his only son, John Hollowell Lee, was a director in

the 1937 company.¹

¹ Probate Calendar 1948.

N.G.12: H. SHARMAN & COMPANY.

The firm was founded in East London in 1872, but traded in Northampton from circa 1885 at Spencer Road and from circa 1889 at Shakespeare Road and Cowper Street. Run as a sole tradership by Henry Sharman, he was joined by his only son, H. B. Sharman, who subsequently became a partner.

Henry retired in 1910 from which time H. B. Sharman became the sole partner.¹

No biographical detail.

cf (i) Jos. Sharman & Company - of which some biographical detail is extant.

(ii) John Lewis Sharman.

¹ S.L.T. Supplement 1916 p xviii.

N.G.13: JOHN BRANCH LTD.

John Branch, the founder, was born at Bethnal Green, London, in 1841, the eldest son of a master bootmaker/manufacturer. He commenced as a bespoke shoemaker at an early age, learning the various branches of the trade under men employed by his father. He started a small business on his own account in the late sixties, probably after completing his apprenticeship. He traded first from premises in Bethnal Green Road and later in Hackney Road. By the time the firm moved to a new factory at 43 Bethnal Green Road (the Queen Boot factory) in 1883, John was considered to be in the front rank of London manufacturers. By this time, warehouse facilities had been secured in Melbourne, Australia, to furnish the large trade done in that country. Within three or four years, John opened a branch factory at Northampton: trading first from premises in Victoria Road, before purchasing a freehold factory from Henry Martin for £2,550 in 1893.¹

John traded as a sole proprietor until 1896, when the company was registered as a private limited company on the 21st August. The initial nominal capital was £25,000. The sale agreement drawn up at this time gave an insight into the asset value of the company. The sale price of £18,653 11s. 1d. was composed of the following elements:

	£	s.	d.
(i) Goodwill and company name	7000	0	0
(ii) Leasehold of the London property (£100) and the freehold Northampton factory (£2550)	2650	0	0
(iii) Plant, machinery, trademarks, trade stock, fixtures and fittings	8342	11	6
(iv) Trade debts and securities	660	19	7
(v) Pending contracts	<u>no value given</u>		
	18653	11	1

The vendor was satisfied by payment in cash £6,003 11s. 1d. and an allotment of shares to John and his nominees of 2,350 preference and 10,300 ordinary

¹ C.R.O. File No. 49201 Sale Agreement p2. Deed dated 22/9/93.

shares. Fortunately, from 1908, the company auditor submitted annual balance sheets to the C.R.O. and these are extant.¹ Extracts are compiled in Figure 1 below. It is entirely probable that the immediate need for this conversion was "purely for family reasons". Certainly, the Annual Returns reveal no immediate and sharp rise in capital growth resulting purely from registration, although such growth was probably made easier when undertaken in the Edwardian period. Figure ii provides a synopsis of share and loan capital growth between 1896/1914. In this period share capital rose by 31.7% of its 1896 value and loan capital by 90% of its 1901 value.²

Registration probably therefore took place to more easily allow close friends and senior employees to share in the running of the business. Unlike many Northampton manufacturers, John had only one son and as his brothers and nephews were already in business, he needed to look outside the family for directors. The character of the board of directors is consequently of interest but more so, because the two close friends who became associated with John had no direct link with shoe manufacturing. This is one of the few examples in the Northampton study where those outside the trade were recruited. Elsewhere the motivation lay in the professional and business expertise they could bring to bear upon the business. Here that is also true, but foremost, these men were close, trusted friends of John Branch. It is also possible that the limited company gave John a vehicle by which to allow his employees (particularly commercial travellers and foremen)³ and retailer customers a 'stake' in the company. At this time Branch was described as a manufacturer who:

.. devotes all of his personal attention to business₄ and (who) is always mindful of the interests of the people he employs ..

1 Although not falling within the provision of the Companies Act 1907 regarding disclosure of accounts, Branch's auditors appended a balance sheet with the Annual Return from December 1908.

2 The first year in which such returns had to be made.

3 19 out of 41 shareholders were shoe trade workers.

4 B.S.T.J. 20/4/89 p337.

Figure ii Share and Loan Capital Growth 1896 - 1914

Year	Nominal Capital	Total Calls Paid or Agreed	Total Loan Debt
1896	25000	16785 5 0	
1897-1900	"	17075	
1901	"	"	2000
1902	"	"	"
1903	"	"	12000
1904	"	"	"
1905	"	"	"
1906	"	17575	"
1907	"	17595	"
1908	"	17695	"
1909	"	18720	"
1910	"	19020	"
1911	"	20364	"
1912	"	"	20000
1913	"	21954	"
1914	"	22104	"

Source: Annual Returns C.R.O. File Number 49201

Certainly the number of shareholders at ⁴⁸ was close to the maximum of 50 then allowed by law for companies which did not offer shares for sale to the general public. Despite this, however, control remained in the hands of John Branch, the largest single shareholder. Indeed, a group of seven shareholders, composed of the immediate Branch family¹ and the Johnson family,² dominated the ownership of the company. As Figure iii clearly shows, whilst the other 41 shareholders increased their holdings of investment shares, Branch and to a lesser extent Johnson, had a controlling interest of the ordinary voting shares, which gave them effective control of the company in our period. Upon conversion, therefore, John became the managing director; a post held until he died. His initial salary was £500 per annum.³ He remained the dominant controller of both daily management and policy matters. Two senior employees were given directorships. James William Horsfield, who in 1896 was Branch's works manager at the London factory. After Branch's departure to Northampton in 1898, he took complete charge of production in London.⁴ John Mumford Bailey, his senior commercial traveller and a resident of Bristol. T. A. Carter of Ealing, West London, a second of the firm's commercial travellers joined the board in 1913, becoming company secretary in 1919. A third commercial traveller, Harry Legge of Northampton, was to join them in 1919. In addition, John's wife joined the board, although she had retired by 1901. So also did two friends: William C. Johnson, a London wholesale provision merchant, who was chairman from 1896 until 1943 and Richard Fawsitt, a Bermondsey leather merchant.

Outside his business life, John took little part in public life, although he was the honorary secretary of the Boot, Shoe and Leather Trades Association,

1 John, wife Sabina, son and successor Oliver and sisters, Maud and Evelyn.

2 W. C. Johnson - Chairman 1896/1943 and his wife.

3 Sale Agreement p2.

4 N.R.O. John Branch Papers LA 9649-51: cf discussion in Chapter 7.

London, for some years. For a number of years, he lived at 'Ambleside', The Drive, Walthamstow, but took up permanent residence in Northampton in 1898; first at 7 St. Michael's Avenue and later at 'Ambleside', Abington Park Parade. He was an invalid for many years prior to his death on the 21st May 1922, aged 81 years. He was survived by his widow, son and three daughters. His effects were valued at £9,117 11s. 8d.¹

The second generation management of the firm was dominated by John's only son, Oliver John Branch. Born at London on the 27th February 1877, he was already associated with the firm by 1896. He was made a director and company secretary in 1901 and effectively took control when his father became an invalid. On his father's death he succeeded to the managing directorship, a post he retained until his death on the 15th April 1960, which took place at his home, 'Grassmere', Watersmeet, Billing Road, Northampton, where he had lived for many years. His widow and two children survived him. A man with no public life, his business duties appear to have monopolised his time. His effects were valued at £2,868 14s. Od.²

Addendum: Branch Directors

Bailey, John Mumford.

Commercial traveller: director of firm 1896/1936: resided at 'The Lundens', Fishponds, Bristol: died on the 14th October 1936. Personal effects £3,419 1s. 2d., resworn at £12,825 4s. Od.

Carter, T. A.

Commercial traveller: director of firm 1913/? and company secretary 1919/?

Fawsitt, Richard.

Leather merchant and Tanner: director of firm 1896/1926. Business based at Tanner Street, South Bermondsey: resided at Meredith House, Grove Park, Lee, Kent: died on the 19th December 1925. Personal effects £93,477 19s. 11d.

1 N.M. 26/5/22 p9 cf S.T.J. 26/5/22 p180.

2 S.L.N. 21/4/60 p14 cf N.I. May 1960 p38.

Horsfield, James William.

Boot and shoe works manager, later manufacturer: director of firm 1896/1930: resided first at 7 Shore Road, South Hackney and secondly at 56, Moresby Road, Upper Clapton, London: died 25th October 1930. Personal effects £8,370 18s. Od.

Johnson, William Cottishaw.

Provision merchant: director and chairman of firm 1896/1943: possibly Branch's brother-in-law: resided first at Thorpe Coombe, Walthamstow and secondly at Park End, Sydenham Park, London. Thirdly, at 'Rookwood', Watford, Hertfordshire: died 31st January 1944. Personal effects £54,427 15s. 2d.

Figure iii Shareholders Control of John Branch Ltd. 1896 - 1910

Year	Shares Issued	% Held By Branch Family (a)	% Held By Johnson's (b)	% Held By Absolute	Remaining 41 Average per head
1896	5075 pref	46.3	4.9	48.8	1.2
	12000 ord	75.7	8.3	16.0	0.39
1899	"	28.2	4.9	66.9	1.6
	"	76.0	8.3	16.7	0.41
1901	"	28.2	4.9	66.9	1.6
	"	76.4	8.3	15.3	0.37
1904	"	10.9	4.9	84.2	2.1
	"	76.8	8.3	14.9	0.36
1910	6370 pref	4.6	7.1	88.3	2.2
	12650 ord	73.7	10.6	15.7	0.38

Notes: (a) Branch family were the biggest shareholders and John the largest single holder.

(b) Johnson family were the second largest holders.

N.G.14: J. & W. READ.

Two practical shoemakers John Thomas and his brother William, commenced this business in 1893 with their father Thomas, in small premises in Cowper Street. By 1895 they shifted to a larger factory in Duke Street and two years later, removed to a newly built factory in Billington Street and Adam's Avenue, owing to increasing business.

In 1910, the partnership was dissolved, the result of William's ill-health.

The business was continued by the senior partner, John Thomas, who in July 1913 was joined by his son, John William, "who has taken a great practical interest in making the firm's well-known, 'Belrok' brand of men's and women's footwear".¹

At the time of writing, little information is extant regarding the partners.

Both were born in Northampton, the sons of Thomas and Ann Read.² Thomas had a newsagent's business near Campbell Square.³ William and possibly John Thomas were educated at the British School, Campbell Square. The family were devout Methodists and both brothers were active members of the Queen's Road Methodist Church. Seriously ill at the time of his retirement, William recovered and lived for many years at 16 The Broadway, Northampton. In grateful remembrance of their help, he made several charitable donations to local hospitals: £500 in 1928 to Manfields Ophthalmic Hospital and £1,600 to Northampton General Hospital in 1938.⁴

¹ S. & L.T. Supplement 1916 pl vi.

² William in 1867.

³ B.S.T.J. 15/5/97 p690. Thomas Reed (1835-97). He was a practical shoemaker, having been employed for twenty years with Manfields (qv) and then A. Fear. He died at 111 Alcombe Road, Northampton, on the 29th April 1897, leaving a widow and two sons. Effects £121 14s. 7d. His obituary cites him as a shoe manufacturer, but the Principal Probate Calendar of 1897 as a warehouse man.

⁴ N.M. 7/1/38 p7.

N.G.15: G. & W. Morton.

Beyond directory entries from 1903 to 1914 no information is extant regarding this company at the time of writing.

N.G.16: G. H. Gainsford & Company.

The firm began trading in circa 1884 from premises in Cowper Street; later moving to Hood Street and Shakespeare. Beyond this, no information is extant at the time of writing.

N.G.17: Charles Gibbs & Company.

The firm began trading in circa 1893 from premises in Lawrence Street. In 1902 the firm moved to a factory in Cyril Street. Beyond this, no information is extant at the time of writing.

N.G.18: James Holmes.

Holmes commenced trading as a sole trader in March 1896 from premises in Louise Road, after twelve years experience in the London West End bespoke trade. The holder of a bronze medal for pattern cutting and a City and Guild's Certificate, his early trading sought to capitalise upon this expertise. He specialised in making ladies' high class hand-sewn and fancy court shoes. Changing market conditions forced him to diversify into men's medium-grade, machine-sewn footwear. Modern plant and machinery was brought into use and the trademarks 'Rambler' and 'Today' cultivated. The success of his ability to survive in an industry increasingly dominated by larger firms can be seen in the need of the firm to make four removals to cope with its increasing trade and the successful sales of his branded footwear at home and abroad. As was so often the case with the small manufacturer, much of his production catered for the specialist sporting, country and military markets: in all 21 speciality lines were offered by 1914.¹

¹ This paragraph draws on S. & L.T. Supplement 1916 px/iii.

N.G.19: W. BEALE & COMPANY.

The business was founded in March 1887, a partnership between Walter Beale and his younger brother Thomas Gascoine Beale. The firm catered for a general trade in men's medium class goods for both home and export markets. As was common in this period, a number of branded lines were used: 'Unicorn', 'Astonisher', 'Lite 'n' easy' and 'Easy on'.¹

Walter was born at Northampton in 1855, the eldest son of Thomas, a boot closer to the trade (?)² Such was the success of his partnership, he was, unusually for the industry, able to retire in 1907 amid much press comment.³

Beale's experience clearly shows that smaller manufacturers could generate a level success. He was active in trade matters locally, being sometime president of the local manufacturers' association and the Commercial Travellers' Association. He was also a member of the local arbitration board. Politically Conservative, he entered civic life after his retirement in 1909: first as a councillor,⁴ and later an alderman, retiring in 1926. He was at one time deputy chairman of the Tramway's Committee. He was a Freeman. He died, aged 78, at his home, 16 Hazelwood Road, on the 15th December 1933. He was survived by two sons, James C. and Thomas R. His personal effects were valued at £4,621 16s. 10d.

From 1907, T. G. Beale continued the business as a sole proprietor, being joined by his eldest son, Norman G. Beale. Thomas Beale died in 1932. He was one of the founder members of Northamptonshire County Cricket Club:

.. Dangerous slow to medium bowler, reputedly the first googly bowler; useful bat. Played Northamptonshire 1883-96; 106 wickets at 15.36 runs each and 799 runs. Took 7 for 10 for Gentlemen of Northamptonshire v Parsees, 1886 ..⁵

1 S. & L.T. Supplement 1916 pxxxii.

2 Directory entry 1862/79.

3 See B.S.T.J. 17/12/07 p302; N.I. 11/1/08 p12 cf N.I. 23/12/33 p8. "He started manufacturing when young and built up such a successful business (that he was) able to retire several years ago".

4 Elected North Ward in 1909, defeating the Socialist candidate A. G. Slinn, by 16 votes. He subsequently represented the St. Lawrence Ward for 11 years.

5 N.P. & P. (1976) v No.4 p363, cf N.P. & P. (1956) ii No.3 p131-37.

N.G.20: EALES & SON.

The firm was originally a partnership, Eales & Law, which was dissolved in 1895, when Eale's sons were introduced as partners. Little information is extant relating to its trading activities, but some indication as to the firm's development can be had from insurance records.¹

Years	Stock in Trade	Machines and Fixtures	Buildings
1892	150	20 (i)	-
1895	675	20 (i)	-
1896	900	-	500
1897	2310	250 (ii)	500
1899	2310	-	500
1900	2250	450 (iii)	500
1901	2000	-	-
1903 (iv)	1000	-	-
1904	2300	950	500
1906	2500	1350	500

Figure i: Eales & Sons: Insurance Valuation of Stock, Machinery etcetera and Buildings used in Shoe Manufacturing.

Notes: (i) hand machines.
(ii) valuation includes 'gearing and countershafts'.
(iii) valuation includes £50 for a gas engine.
(iv) maximum number of workers placed at over 50 but under 150.

In 1892 a rented factory in Spencer Road was occupied and £50 of machinery was hand-operated. It was noted that the two-storey "small factory is warmed by an open fireplace".² By 1895 new premises in Harvey Street were occupied; the increased level of stock suggests that an increased trade was being done. Within seven months, a four-storey freehold factory in St. Edmund Road was taken, valued at £500: both machinery and stock valuations had risen. At this time it was noted:

¹ N.R.O. Norwich Union Fire Insurance Records: Insurance Instruction Ledgers, ZA3321 (1892) to ZA3324 (1906).

² N.R.O. Ibid ZA3321/2643132.

.. it being declared that two rooms on the ground floor of this factory are sub-let to Messrs. Peach & Knightley (machine closers), the rate of this insurance is increased hereby 6% ..¹

This sub-letting arrangement lasted until at least 1899. The entry for 1897 gives the first indication that powered machinery was in use. The sustained increase in trading indicated by the increased value of stock, up by 1440% in part provides the answer to the considerably increased value of machinery, up by 100%, laid down between 1897/99: this, of course, being the years when average practice firms such as this shifted from a transitional industrial structure based on outwork.² In 1899, a fire sprinkler system and electricity installation were included in the valuation.³ A year later, a gas engine is specifically included in the valuation for the first time.⁴ Between 1899 and 1906, the valuation on machinery rose by %. It was noted in 1903 that the maximum number of workers employed was "over 50 but not exceeding 150".⁵

1 passim ZA 3321/3070487.

2 cf W. B. Stevens & Co. (C.19) and F. W. Pollard (C.20).

3 passim ZA 3322/3357178 and 3875983.

4 passim ZA 3323/4185920 cf ZA 3323/4623788, described as a "steam, gas and oil engine".

5 passim ZA 3323/4623788.

N.G.21: W. J. MARKS & COMPANY.¹

William James Marks commenced as a sole proprietor in 1886. A small but secure trade was developed in high grade men's footwear, using the trade-marks 'St. Bernard', 'Consistent' and 'Wyvern'. A practical shoemaker, he was born at Northampton in 1847 and spent his life in the trade. He died, aged 60, at his home 2 St. Andrew's Terrace on the 14th April 1907, following a protracted illness.² He left effects to the value of £2,582 Os. 11d. Amongst his executors was William James Marks, clicker, (his son?) and Gilbert Ernest Marks, farmer.

His wife conducted the business during the five year illness which preceded his death. After his demise, J. J. B. Croall joined the business as a partner, following which the business was radically reorganised and the factory re-equipped.

N.G.22: C. W. WHITE & COMPANY.

Charles William White, a former journeyman shoemaker born in Northampton in 1845. He commenced manufacturing as a sole trader from premises in Bath Street in 1889. Prior to that he had been a manager and partner in Dawson & Sons (qv).³

Late in 1893 severe heart trouble left him an invalid and he died, aged 49, at his home, 45 Holly Road, on the 8th December 1894.⁴ Effects were valued at £3,960 13s. 6d. He was survived by his wife Mary and two sons, Edward L. White, a photographic publisher and Charles H. White. The latter had managed the business and took control after his father's death. Charles H. born in Northampton, died aged 24, in November 1901.⁵

Thereafter, it is believed that the firm was taken over by senior employees but no information is to hand at the time of writing.

1 Much of this information is derived from S. & L. Trades Supplement 1916 p xxxv.

2 B.S.T.J. 19/4/07 p80.

3 S.L.R. 21/12/94 p1342.

4 S.L.R. 14/12/94 p1290.

5 B.S.T.J. 1/11/01 p561.

N.G.23: FREDERICK COOK LTD.¹

The business was established in 1893 by Frederick Cook as a sole proprietorship. It was converted into a private limited company,² at which time D. G. Ramsey joined the firm as a director and H. Hughes as company secretary. Ramsey continued in charge of the firm's London warehouse at 1 South Place, Finsbury, E.C. Until 1907, manufacturing was concentrated at Broad Street, Northampton. In that year, a modern factory, South Place shoe works, was built at Long Buckby which was extended in 1914.

The firm specialised in high-grade footwear, having a 'world-wide reputation' for riding and military boots. At the end of the period, production of ladies' footwear was successfully begun.

N.G.24: W. P. DALTON & COMPANY

William Pitts Dalton commenced manufacturing on his own account in January 1895, having previously been in partnership with C. Griffen from 1885. Prior to that he had been employed for many years with W. Hollis & Sons, having latterly been their traveller.

Specialising in high-grade footwear, he was regarded as a manufacturer "of the old school, a hand-stitchman, who knew the trade from A to Z".³ He was born at Northampton in 1839 and had spent all his working life in the shoe industry. He died, aged 62, on the 28th July 1901, at his home 16 Abington Avenue. His wife, Jane, survived him: there was issue of the marriage. His effects were valued at £3,574 13s. 1d. His widow took control of the business and it was managed by J. Dalton junior and G. E. Barbey, who had known the business from its commencement.

¹ Much of this information is derived from S. & L. Trades Supplement 1916 lxiv.

² C.R.O. File destroyed.

³ B.S.T.J. 2/8/01 p123.

N.G.25: C. E. GUBBINS.

The business was founded as a sole proprietor by the late Joseph Gibbs in 1868,¹ and taken over by Charles Edward Gubbins in 1899, also a sole trader. Under his guidance, the firm's trade steadily increased, necessitating many additions in manufacturing accommodation. In 1912, the firm removed to larger premises, the Key Boot factory at Queen's Park, where the latest and best non-royalty machinery and plant was installed. Mr. Gubbins was by this date assisted by his two sons; all had a thorough practical knowledge of men's medium and high-class welted trade for the home and export markets. The firm used the trademarks 'Key' and 'Unique'. Gubbins had a high reputation in the trade; he was a man "who specialised in certain directions with great success".²

Charles Gubbins was born at Northampton in 1853, the son of a working shoemaker. Before starting on his own account, he had gained considerable experience and was described as "a thoroughly practical man, who had the business of shoe-manufacturing at his finger tips".³ Initially a soldier in the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars, from which he was demobilised in August 1875, he entered the shoe trade; first with Johnson, Clarke & Parker and from 1880/1891 was the manager of Manfield & Sons workout department. In late 1891, he became manager to the Kettering Boot Manufacturing Company Ltd.⁴ He retired from manufacturing in 1923, at which time his sons, Walter Charles and Lancelot Ward Gubbins, took control: by the time of his death the former had retired and Lancelot continued the firm under the title W. Gubbins & Company, as a sole proprietor.⁵

1 S.L.N. 18/1/35 p30 states 1861 cf N.M. 18/1/35 p4 Joseph Gibbs (1843/93). "From small beginnings to an extensive manufactory .. one of the old school". (S.L.R. 24/3/93 p742). Born 1843, he died, aged 50, at Cliftonville, Northampton, on 19/3/93. His personal effects were valued initially at £13,934 17s. 8d., resworn at £14,020 3s. 1d. His executors, two of his senior employees, continued to run the firm - Thomas Britten (foreman) and James Giles (cashier).

2 S.L.N. 18/1/35 pl2.

3 Ibid.

4 B.S.T.J. 12/12/91 p652.

5 N.I. 18/1/35 p9.

Charles spent much of his retirement in Bournemouth, but whilst at Northampton had taken a prominent part in the local Unitarian church: a member for over 70 years, he was the church's trustee and the superintendent of its Sunday School for many years.

He died on the 13th January 1935, aged 82, at London: his Northampton residence was at 13 Langham Place. His effects were valued at £395 16s. Od.

N.G.26: JAS. J. McMMAIN.

McMain established the business as a sole trader at the Bespoke Boot Works in 1907.¹ Rising from the seat, a thoroughly practical bootmaker, he was able to successfully establish a market with retailers for bespoke work, despite the problems inherent in such an undertaking by this date. It was noted of him in 1916:

.. Mr. McMMain caters for ladies' and gent's bespoke uppers and boots and shoes in hand-sewn, hand-welted, goodyear welted and machine-sewn of every description. Retailers' requirements are carefully and expeditiously prepared by the firm. (He) is thoroughly practical in every branch of the trade and may be trusted with the most difficult bespoke boots from high-class retailers ..²

1 Directories show evidence of several specialist firms for hand-sewn, bespoke and specials work emerging. McMMain is one of the few who make it to maturity.

2 S.L.T. Supplement 1916 p1xvi.

N.G.27: PIONEER COOPERATIVE BOOT SOCIETY LTD.

This cooperative production society was instigated and launched by James Gribble.¹ The initial object was to provide materials and make boots for S.D.F. members nationally and then pass on the entire profits to the Federation for propaganda and other purposes. The active help of David and William Barratt, prominent Northampton manufacturers, was reflected not only in David's significant shareholding in the venture, but also in the adoption of a 'boots by post' marketing structure, which the Barratts had pioneered. At this stage the society was merely an undercapitalised marketing organisation: Gribble, at the time unemployed, gave his services free. S.D.F. bootmakers in Northampton independently made boots, which were sold through the marketing co-operative to S.D.F. boot clubs. These clubs quickly sprang up in S.D.F. branches throughout the country: the Federation paper, Justice, provided an excellent means of communication between customer and maker. At a time of unemployment a change in the trade, the society's provision of jobs based on hand-work and the traditional, independent, outwork system, met a real need in the town. In the recruitment of labour, once manufacturing was undertaken by the society, Gribble followed this dictum:

.. All the workmen have to be members of their trade union and preference is given to those who, while good at their crafts, have not satisfied pace requirements elsewhere. No machine is used, but what is absolutely essential ..²

In July 1905, with a capital of £145, including Gribble's life savings of £15, the Pioneer Society as a manufacturing concern was started at premises in Wellingborough Road. In 1906, a five year lease was obtained in factory premises in Clare Street to accommodate the expanding business.³ Then, when

1 On Gribble's life see: D.L.B. Volume VII cf Keith Brooker, "James Gribble and the Raunds Strike of 1905", N.P. & P. vi 5 p275-90.

2 N.D.E. 13/5/05 p3, cf N.D.E. 23/5/08 "Thirteen men are employed on the premises and outside they have a closer and two welt sewers".

3 N.D.E. 25/5/08 p6.

the S.D.F. splintered into three separate organisations, in 1917, the basis of the society was reconstituted as an ordinary co-partnership concern, with profits being distributed thus: to workers 25%, customers 30%, shareholders 30%, provident fund 10% and educational fund 5%.¹

By this time the society's lack of machinery was hampering profitability so in 1919/20 a programme of factory extension and machine installation ensued. The completion of this project was hindered by the post war slump. The society's resultant financial crisis was further exacerbated by increasing marketing difficulties. This worsening situation ultimately forced the society into liquidation in early 1924.

¹ N.D.E. 17/3/24 p5. Correspondence between author and Registrar of Friendly Societies, 8/6/78: "The Pioneer Co-operative Boot Works Ltd. was registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act on 30/1/06. A Court Order to wind up was registered on 2/4/24 and the Society's registry was cancelled on 1/1/25". The Registrar's file on the company is not extant.

APPENDIX IV: THE 1914 MISCELLANEOUS LISTING.

This group appear here because they cannot be readily ranked in the New Generation Group (Appendix III above). Some biographic information is extant for some of these entries, but it is either insufficient or of the wrong nature to permit ranking.

- 1 W. Bosworth & Company
- 2 E. De Loos & Sons
- 3 P. Frisby & Company
- 4 W. G. Garratt & Company
- 5 H. Gorbald & Company
- 6 Griffen & Fox
- 7 J. Jelley & Company
- 8 J. & J. Mann
- 9 T. Richardson & Company
- 10 W. Todd & Company
- 11 R. E. Tricker & Company
- 12 I. L. P. Boot Society Ltd

Miscellaneous 1: W. BOSWORTH & COMPANY.

Directory entry 1903/14, trading at 70-72 Kettering Road.

Miscellaneous 2: E. DE LOOS & SONS.

Directory entry 1898/1914, trading originally from St. Michael's Road, then from 6 Parade in 1910 and Market Square by 1914.

Miscellaneous 3: PICKERING FRISBY.

Directory entry 1894/1914, trading from St. Edmund's Street and Stockley Street. Little is known at present of the firm's activities beyond the detail provided by a brief business failure report of 1912. By that date, the business was run by Mrs. E. Elizabeth Frisby, assisted by a son: just before that time two other sons were also in the management, but had begun on their own account taking some of the firm's trade customers. The firm was regarded as "not being in a

large way of business".¹ Liabilities were assessed at £414 and assets at £108. Mrs. Frisby had taken over at the time of her husband's death in 1910 and the firm had struggled from that time;² close friends and family had provided credit.

Miscellaneous 4: W. G. GARRATT & COMPANY.

Directory entry 1900/14, trading at Victoria Road. William Charles Garratt (1873/1909), died in April 1909, the eldest son of W. T. Garratt: one of three brothers who were in the business with the father. William was an ex-chairman of the local branch of U.K.C.T.A. He was an active Wesleyan Methodist, being both a Sunday School teacher and trustee of the Regent Street Chapel.³

Miscellaneous 5: HENRY GORBOLD & COMPANY.

Directory entry as a wholesale manufacturer at Northampton from 1903/14, trading from Artizan Road and St. Michael's Road and at Hackney, London. Prior to that date Gorbold had traded as a manufacturer at London from circa 1870. Little is known at present of the firm's activities beyond the detail provided by a business failure report of 1911. The disastrous deficiency of £11,205⁴ of that year took the trade by surprise. The accountant in the matter (Mr. A. C. Palmer), pointed to high wages as a principle problem,⁵ but with turnover still at £30,000 recommended a continuation of trading to creditors. Yet he pointed to the need for 'drastic reorganisation' if the business were to continue: this to some measure had been achieved by 1914. Creditors included his wife for £3,024 6s. Od. and his son for £50 10s. Od.

1 B.S.T.J. 7/6/12 p410.

2 B.S.T.J. Ibid p421. Although few books of account had been kept, the firm was insolvent in 1910 to the sum of £350.

3 B.S.T.J. 23/4/09 p108.

4 B.S.T.J. 17/3/11 p448: liabilities £15,367, assets £4,162. The loss on trading in the last seven months had been £1,829. Profits had been returned up to 1906.

5 B.S.T.J. Ibid p456: "Mr. Gorbold had told Mr. Palmer he had a number of estimable workpeople about him, but they have, unfortunately, become too old for their work and he had undoubtedly been paying them more than they earned".

Miscellaneous 6: GRIFFEN & FOX.

Directory entry 1900/14, trading from Hervey Street.

Miscellaneous 7: J. JELLEY.

Directory entry 1889/14, trading from Wood Street and retail premises in Gold Street.

Miscellaneous 8: J. & J. MANN.

Directory entry 1885/1914, trading from Shakespeare Road.

Miscellaneous 9: THOMAS RICHARDSON.

Directory entry 1898/1914, trading from Thenford Street and later Victoria Road.

Miscellaneous 10: W. TODD & COMPANY.

Directory entry 1898/1914, trading initially from Duke Street, then Earl Street and finally Victoria Street. The firm was founded by George who died prematurely in June 1895.¹ His widow, Louisa, took charge of the concern, but trading was suspended in March 1897, following a loss in trading of £121 in 1896 and of £83 in the first quarter of 1897. Liabilities were assessed at £955 2s. 8d. and assets at £417 11s. 7d. Creditors included the Stamford and Spalding Bank (£59).² William, (George's brother?) then purchased the estate from George's executors and traded as a sole proprietor through to 1914.

Miscellaneous 11: R. E. TRICKER & COMPANY.

Directory entry 1903/14, trading from St. Michael's Road, but founded in London circa 1835, by Raymond E. Barltrop. The firm traded in best quality welted men's footwear, making a speciality of stout country wear. As it was felt that the name Barltrop would constitute a bar to selling, Raymond's wife's maiden name was adopted.³ A complete transfer of the business to Northampton was made

¹ B.S.T.J. 9/6/95: of Cowper Road, died on 3rd June 1895. Born Northampton 1859. His executors were his widow, William Todd shoe manufacturers and James West shoe manufacturer's foreman. Effects: £936 16s. 2d.

² B.S.T.J. 3/4/97 p481.

³ Information from correspondence between author and present head of the firm in 1975.

in 1903, although warehouse and retail shop facilities in London were retained. Raymond died in circa 1925, although no biographic details at present extant. He was succeeded by Ernest Ray Barltrop, who joined his father in partnership in 1903. He continued as a sole proprietor until 1939, when the firm was converted: his two sons, Arthur Ray and Ernest Don, became directors.¹ Ernest took little part in public life, although he unsuccessfully contested a ward in local municipal elections in 1936. He died on the 7th February 1956, aged 86, at Fremeaux Terrace, Kingsthorpe, leaving a widow, two sons and two daughters. Effects: £17,073 9s. 5d.²

Miscellaneous 12: I. L. P. BOOT SOCIETY LTD.

Directory entry 1910/14, trading from Holly Road under the managership of H. E. D. Lodington. It is believed that the society was founded in 1908. It "was registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act on 3rd October 1910 and was dissolved by instrument registered 10th March 1922."³

It was one of two Edwardian co-partnership boot firms in Northampton (cf Pioneer Co-operative Boot Society Ltd. N.G.27).

1 C.R.O. No. 348624.

2 N.I. 17/2/56 p18: cf N.I. 17/8/51 p10, Elbert Henry Barltrop (1882/1951), Ernest's brother. Native of Northampton, became president and managing director of Manfields (qv), Belgium and French subsidiary companies. Also director of Fiteisi Company. (N.I. 16/1/42 p9). Committed suicide at Billing on 10/8/51, leaving a widow, son (accountant) and daughter (who married into a local shoe manufacturing family of Jelley). Effects: £15,997 10s. Od.

3 Correspondence between author and registrar of Friendly Societies, 8/6/78. Registrar's file not extant.

APPENDIX V: NORTHAMPTON LIMITED COMPANIES.

The following alphabetical listing of registered footwear companies provides basic data concerning the organisation and capital of each.

Source:

- (i) B.P.P. Board of Trade Annual Joint Stock Company Returns 1889/1914.
- (ii) P.R.O. Kew; BT 31 Series.
- (iii) C.R.O. London and Cardiff: Limited Company Files.

Notes:

- Column 1: Name of company.
- 2: Year of initial incorporation.
- 3: Type of company, i.e. new company or conversion of existing one.
- 4: Private company - shares not publicly issued.
Public company - shares publicly issued.
- 5: Subscribers and directors:
- (a) family members.
 - (b) professional directors.
 - (c) employee director.
 - (d) other.
- * special share provisions.
- 6: Sale agreement valuation.
- 7: Nominal or authorised capital.
- 8: Share denomination: o = ordinary p = preference f = founders.
- 9: Share take-up:
- (i) at time of incorporation.
 - (ii) at 1914 (or other specified time).
- 10: Mortgages and charges. The registration of mortgages and charges with the Registrar was first made obligatory under the Companies Act 1901 S14. Such registration excluded ordinary mortgages on freehold property. The registration of property mortgages became required by law under the Companies Act 1907 S12.
- 11: Working fixed capital.
- 12: Remarks.

Columns 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Advance Shoe	1909	new	priv	d*	-	£25000	o	£6000	-	£6000	wound up 1913 cease trading Feb 1910
W. Barratt	1907	conv	priv pub 1914	a;b/d*	£2280 (1914: £79932)	(i) £4000 (ii) £50000	o:p:f	(i) £2280 (ii) £28884	(i) - (ii) £10764	(i) £2280 (ii) £39648	conversion following failure
H.J. Bateman	1904	conv	priv	c		£2000					conversion result death principal and business failure
F. Bostock	1912	conv	priv	a*	£50000*	£100000	p:o	▽(i) £98115 (ii) £98505	Nil	(i) £98115 (ii) £98505	asset valuation • 1912 = £94183 calls unpaid £1000 ▽
Lotus Stafford	1903	new	priv	a	-	(i) £10000 (ii) £50000		(i) £600 (ii) £50000	-	(i) £600 (ii) £50000	Bostock marketing organisation
Sutor	1911	new	priv	a	-	£10000	p:o	(i) £4000 (ii) £4500	-	(i) £4000 (ii) £4500	Bostock subsidiary
James Branch & Sons, London	1898	conv	priv	a	£29994	£30000	p:o	(i) £29994 (ii) £29994	(i) £8000 (ii) £11000	(i) £37994 (ii) £40994	
John Branch (London)	1896	conv	priv	a:d:c	£18643	£25000	p:o	(i) £16785 (ii) £22104	(i) - (ii) £20000	(i) £16785 (ii) £42104	Private Co. with large share-holding
Broad Street Company	1910	conv	priv	d*	£4777	£5000	p:o	£2604	£3177	£5781	Compulsory Wound Up 1913
J.N. Brown & Co. Birmingham	1896	new	priv	a:d	-	£10000	o:p	(i) £2160 (ii) £17144	-	(i) £2160 (ii) £17144	Trade in Northampton in 1911
British Heel Company	1896	conv	priv	d	-	£2000	o	£503	-	£503	Ceased trading Dec 1898

Columns 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Simon Collier & Company	1898	conv	priv	a*	• £68805	£100000	o:p	(i) £33031 (ii) £45536	(i)- (ii) £17000	(i) £33031 (ii) £62536	• includes debts of £35774 which discharged
Conformable Boot Co.	1909	conv	priv	a	£398	£2000	o	(i) £800 (ii) £930	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £800 (ii) £930	Formerly Wheeler, Hull & Co. conversion following business failure
John Cooper & Sons	1896	conv	priv	a*	£120780	£140000	p:o	(i) £100780	(i) £20000	(i) £120780	1906 Head Office to Leicester: all trading in Northampton ceases
Derham Bros Bristol	1898	conv	priv	a:d*	£58975	£80000	p:o	(i) £58970	(i) £10000	(i) £68970	Cease trade in Northampton c.1905
John Emmet	1909	conv	priv	a:d	£1000	£3000	o	(i) £1249 (ii)	(i) £1200 (ii)	(i) £2449 (ii)	Jessie Harrison: factor dealer and manufacturer
A. & W. Fletan London	1909	conv	priv	a*	£87071	• £60360	o:p	(i) £60360	(ii) £10000	(i) £70360	Ceased trade in Northampton c.1903 (• rest valuation satisfied in cash)
Green & Sons (N) Ltd. ▲	1902	conv	priv	a	£2346	£12000	o:p	(i) £8856 (ii) £9331	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £8856 (ii) £9331	Subsidiary of Leicester parent. ▲
J. Harrison	1891	conv	priv	c*	£24970	£40000	o:p	(i) £25005	(i) £11025	(i) £36030	Attempt avoid worsening trade; leads to business failure (qv) 1892 Receiver 1894 Wound Up
G.T. Hawkins	1915	conv	priv	c*	£80190	£100000	o:p	(i) £80002	(i)-	(i) £80002	
W. Hickson & Sons, London	1896	conv	priv	a	£22784	£30000	o:p	(i) £22784	(i) £17500	(i) £40284	Business failure late 1909 lead to winding up

Columns 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Hornby & West	1910	conv	priv	b/d	-	£ 20000	o:p	(i) £10011 (ii) £10011	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £10011 (ii) £10011	Conversion follows business failure: taken over by H.E. Randall Ltd.(qv)
Elijah Irons & Company	1899	conv	priv	a	£5000	£ 10000	o:p	(i) £5007	(i) £2700	(i) £7707	Wound up: manufacturer dealer c.1904
Jack Jacobus London	1898	conv	priv	a:d	£ 36000	£ 20000	o:p	(i) £10366 (ii) £10366	(i)- (ii) £2869	(i) £10366 (ii) £13235	Trade in Northampton as S. Doris c.1898/c.1910 still trades London to 1914
Johnson Clarke & Parker Ipswich	1889	conv	priv	b/d	£ 17667 £ 12808	£ 80000 • £100000	o:p	(i) £35197 (ii) £61282 (•1909)	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £35197 (ii)-	Merger of Ipswich & Raunds companies of G. Johnson Ipswich. Traded Northampton c.1894/c.1909 Wound up 1909
Major Howe & Company	1898	conv	priv	d	£ 18700	£ 40000	o:p	(i) £17462	(i)-	(i) £17462	Henry Marshall a director. Business failure 1902: dis. 1904 1901 debens. val.£11500
J. Marlow & Sons	1898	conv	priv	a	£ 44300	£ 60000	o:p	(i) £44370 (ii) £44370	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £44370 (ii) £44370	
Maximum Shoe Company	1914	new	priv	a	-	£5000	o:p				
S.T. Midgley & Sons Leeds	1903	conv	priv	a*	£ 44244	£50000	o:p	(i) £44250 (ii) £49460 (•1913)	(i)- (ii) £28000	(i) £44250 (ii) £57460	Voluntary wind up 1913 Trades at Northampton c.1910/1913
Padmore & Barnes	1897	conv	priv	a:b/d	£ 17000	(i)£20000 (ii)£50000	o:p	(i) £15007 (ii) £30000	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £15007 (ii) £30000	eg plough-back undistributed profits

Columns 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Petch & Co. London	1900	conv	priv	a	£27000	£30000	o:p	(i) £17546 (ii) £21852	(i)- (ii) £ 7500	(i) £17546 (ii) £29352	Trade at Northampton c.1902/10. Large share- holder list.
Priddle & Co.	1891	new	priv	d	-	£3000	o:f	(i) £307	(i)-	(i) £307	1899 Wound Up.
H.E. Randall	1896	conv	pub	a:b/d c	£89529	£70000 £170000	o:p	• (i) £68221 (ii) £135000	(i) £30000 (ii) £76750	(i) £98221 (ii) £211750	• Plus £1779 unpaid
J. Sears & Company	1912	conv	pub	a:b/d c	£213224	£350000	o:p	(i) £350000 (ii)-	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £350000 (ii) £350000	
A. Stanton & Company	1900	conv	priv	c:d	• £29999	£40000	o:p	(i) £29999 x (ii) £29999	(i) £21000 (ii) £24000	(i) £50999 (ii) £53999	• Plus residue for debts £20200. 1902 voluntary liquidation: x1902
G.M.Tebbutt	1912	conv	priv	a	£25546	£30096	o:p	(i) £25546 (ii) £25546	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £25546 (ii) £25546	
F.T.Tebbutt	1911	conv	priv	d	£1000	£5000	o:p	(i) £3357	(ii)-	(i) £3357	1912 Voluntary liquid. LC # staying off process - BF
E. West & Company	1896	conv	priv	d*	£24000	£50000	o:p	(i) £20000 • (ii) £20000	(i)- (ii)-	(i) £20000 (ii) £20000	• 1907 BF and takeover by A.E. Marlow

(Only those companies whose file is extant have been recorded here)

APPENDIX VI: NORTHAMPTON GENERAL ELECTIONS 1868-1914

DATE	ELECTORS	TURNOUT	CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES	% VOTES
1868	6621		C. Gilpin	L	2691	28.5
			Lord Henley	L	2154	22.8
G.E.			C. G. Merewether	C	1634	17.2
			W. E. Lendrick	C	1396	14.8
			C. Bradlaugh	L	1086	11.5
			F. R. Lees	L	492	5.2
1874	6829		P. Phipps	C	2690	25.3
G.E.			C. Gilpin	L	2310	21.7
			C. G. Merewether	C	2175	20.5
			Lord Henley	L	1796	16.9
			C. Bradlaugh	L	1653	15.6
(Death of C. Gilpin)						
7/10/74	6829		C. G. Merewether	C	2171	37.6
			W. Fowler	L	1836	31.8
			C. Bradlaugh	L	1766	30.6
1880	8189		H. Labouchere	L	4158	29.8
G.E.			C. Bradlaugh	L	3827	27.4
			P. Phipps	C	3152	22.6
			C. G. Merewether	C	2826	20.2
(unseating Bradlaugh for voting in H.C. before taking Oath)						
12/4/81	8185		C. Bradlaugh	L	3437	51.00
			E. Corbett	C	3305	49.00
(expulsion Bradlaugh from H.C.)						
4/3/82	8361		C. Bradlaugh	L	3796	50.7
			E. Corbett	C	3688	49.3

DATE	ELECTORS	TURNOUT	CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES	% VOTES
(Bradlaugh seeks re-election following resolution to exclude him H.C.) 21/2/84	8886		C. Bradlaugh H. C. Richards	L C	4032 3664	52.4 47.6
1885 G.E.	9582	89.3	H. Labouchere C. Bradlaugh H. C. Richards	L L C	4845 4315 3890	37.1 33.1 29.8
1886 G.E.	9582	87.1	H. Labouchere C. Bradlaugh R. Turner T. O. H. Lees	L L L U C	4570 4353 3850 3456	28.2 26.8 23.7 21.3
(Death of Bradlaugh) 12/2/91	10895	84.1	M. P. Manfield R. A. Germaine	L C	5436 3723	59.4 40.6
1892 G.E.	11180	81.2	H. Labouchere M. P. Manfield H. C. Richards C. G. A. Drucker	L L C C	5439 5164 3651 3235	31.1 29.5 20.9 18.5
1895 G.E.	11442	83.5	H. Labouchere C. G. A. Drucker E. Harford J. Jacobs F. G. Jones J. M. Robertson	L C L/Lab C SDF Ind/L	4884 3820 3703 3394 1216 1131	27.0 21.0 20.4 18.7 6.7 6.2
1900 G.E.	12180	83.1	J. G. Shipman H. Labouchere	L L	5437 5281	28.2 27.3

DATE	ELECTORS	TURNOUT	CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES	% VOTES
1900 G.E.	12180	83.1	R. R. B. Orlebar	C	4480	23.2
			H. E. Randall	C	4124	21.3
1906	11954	92.0	H. W. Paul	L	4479	20.7
			J. G. Shipman	L	4244	19.5
			R. R. B. Orlebar	C	4078	18.8
			F. G. Barnes	C	4000	18.4
			J. E. Williams	SDF	2544	11.7
			J. Gribble	SDF	2366	10.9
1910 (J)	12580	92.7	H. B. Lees Smith	L	5398	23.3
			C. A. McCurdy	L	5289	22.9
			R. R. B. Orlebar	C	4569	19.8
			F. G. Barnes	C	4464	19.3
			J. Gribble	SDP	1792	7.7
			H. Quelch	SDP	1617	7.0
1910 (D)	12580	87.7	C. A. McCurdy	L	6179	28.6
			H. B. Lees Smith	L	6025	27.8
			F. C. Parker	C	4885	22.6
			J. V. Collier	C	4550	21.0

NOTES

Throughout the period, Northampton returned two members

L U = Liberal Unionist

Ind L = Independent Liberal

L/Lab = Liberal - Labour

SDF = Social Democratic Federation

SDP = Social Democratic Party

SOURCE: F.W.S. Craig (i) Parliamentary Elections 1832-85
(ii) Parliamentary Elections 1885-1918

APPENDIX VII : THE MAJOR TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE
SHOE INDUSTRY

The mechanisation of volume production within the shoe industry was a long discontinuous process, beginning in 1857, stretching for nearly fifty years. As Chapter Two has shown, machine introduction comprised two phases. The first a period of extensive growth, the latter of intensive growth. Widespread mechanisation in the industry was, therefore, of a two-sided character: machine production within some form of outwork system, and the adoption of machinery within an integrated factory. As is argued above, the latter period of change, dating from 1887, witnessed a complex interplay of three main technological features. First, the final solution of machine designs for lasting, welting and finishing machine systems that were industrially acceptable. The introduction of clicking machines is also a feature of the period, although these were only used in a limited way industrially before 1914. Secondly, the increased introduction of second generation machines, which tended not only to have faster operating cycles, but to be synchronised in their operation to other machines in the process for which they were built.¹ And, thirdly, the period ushers in an era of what W.E.G. Saltar has described as "a continuous flow of disturbances" within the shoe industry.

What follows, therefore, provides a chronological account of the industry's main technical developments

1. Any one of the main manufacturing processes required more than one machine.

(a) The Sewing Machine for Closing Operations

The modern machine was developed in 1830 by a Paris tailor, Bartholomy Themmoniar.¹ Within ten years eighty were in use in Paris, but all appear to have disappeared following an anti-machine riot there.

However, he produced an improved model made for the 1851 Exhibition, but it attracted little attention, and Themmoniar died in poverty in 1857.² A parallel development was the lockstitch machine by Walter Hunt of New York, but it was never fully commercially developed, and attempts to revive his patent in 1853 failed. In 1841, working independently of Hunt, Elias Howe of Cambridgeport Massachusetts, evolved a lockstitch machine, which was patented in 1846. Howe spent the next two years in London as mechanic to William Thomas, a footwear and ladies clothing manufacturer, who became the assignee of the British patent rights: Howe sold them for £250, plus a royalty of £3 on each machine.

This machine was widely adopted in the clothing trades, but required several modifications before it was successfully exploited in the shoe industry. The most significant advance was that of Lynn Shoemaker, John Brooks Nichols, who, in 1851, made important modifications to the needle. But most notable was the work of the New York Singer Company, whose first British patent was filed in 1851.³ By mid-decade, the company had begun marketing in this country, in competition with the Thomas-Howe machine. Given rising leather prices⁴ and the increasing

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1. Earlier patentees of sewing machines were Charles Weisenthal in 1755 and Thomas Saint in 1790, a chain stitch machine for upper leather: neither was commercially adopted.
 2. The foregoing draws upon Hodgkin loc cit p.40.
 3. This was the first of twenty Singers registered in the period 1851-63.
 4. The Economist and N.M. January to March 1857, for example, widely reported meetings between shoe manufacturers called at several centres to discuss advancing leather prices.

demand for cheap grade footwear, the machine's advantages were quickly realised by wholesale shoe manufacturers in Britain's main production centres.¹ The impact upon costs and upon the quality of work produced was very great indeed.² Not only was the work more uniform in quality, but it was completed in a fifth of the time that it took a hand-closer to complete. In addition to which it enabled closing labour to be further diluted.

As the discussion in Chapter Two suggests, between this date and 1887 many modifications were made and many different designs of machine introduced to perform the increasing number of sub-divided processes within closing.

(b) Rivetting and Screwing Machines

At mid-century the other major technical development was that of attaching the sole to the top of the boot. Two possible solutions presented themselves. Attaching by sewing, or by a method other than thread.³ The early developments in the latter reflect both the relatively straightforward technical problems involved in developing such machines and the rising demand for cheaper grades of footwear: nor is it insignificant that rising leather prices in the 1850s accompanied the introduction of these machines.

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1. See, for example, the articles in Footwear Organiser March and April 1932. The 2nd Report of the R.C.Children's Employment 1864 3414 XXII, gives estimates of the number of closing machines at main centres: C330 at Stafford; C800 at Leicester; and C1000 at Northampton. Cf W.L.Sparks op.cit. p.40 estimates that 400 were at use in factories and a further 300 in private homes in Norwich.
 2. G.B.Sutton (1959) op.cit. p.38. Cf Sparks op.cit. p.41 "... a pair of boots could be cut out from the skins, and the uppers, after fitting, sewn together...in an hour...." Cf Grainger loc cit. notes that it did away with the process of stabbing.
 3. Initially metal rivets were used, and later screwed wire.

The American, David Meade Randolph took out a patent in 1809,¹ but Marc Brunel's rivetting machine of 1810 is commonly regarded as the first serious attempt at mechanisation in the industry.² An extensive manufactory was opened at Battersea. The machines were worked by hand or treadle. Disabled soldiers were employed. After 1815, the machines were stored and within a few years had been accidentally destroyed by fire.³ Church suggests that the method was not universally accepted because of the injury caused to wearer's feet.⁴ However, within circa twenty years the need for a cheap product for the growing working boot market, once again had manufacturers at several centres investigating the use of a commercially acceptable riveted boot to compliment the inadequate supply of translated boots;⁵ the more expensive welted article was generally beyond the pocket of many working people. At Leicester, Thomas Crick,⁶

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1. 1809 English Patent No.3207: cf A. Rees The Cyclopaedia (1819) p.321 and S.M. February 1903 p.277.
 2. 1810 English Patent No.3369: Clapham notes, "...Advance for riveting the soles to the uppers had been invented during the French wars by D. M. Randolph. Brunel the elder took it up and added other machines ...the standardised demand for the forces had given the stimulus to mass production. But...Brunel's...methods went out of use and almost out of memory..." Clapham ii op.cit., p.93-4 Cf S.T.J. 26 September, 1919 p.579 regarding the use of riveted boots for military use in the Great War "...th* selection of the riveted seam was a bold and fortunate move, as our war experience quickly proved...among the boots examined in February 1915, those made on the riveted system had proved the superiority of their construction, while the welted showed themselves to be the least capable of standing the strain..." : Cf D.M.Smith op.cit., p.255.
 3. A.E.Hodgkin "The Birth and Development of Shoe Machinery", JBBSI 4 (1949) p.39.
 4. R. A. Church (1970) op.cit., p.31.
 5. Translated boots were old worn boots that had been re-built. They found a ready market amongst the urban working class. Kavanagh of Colchester was widely supposed to have been the largest maker of such goods, largely for the London market.
 6. Thomas Crick is regarded as the "father of the Leicester wholesale trade". He started business in a small way at Peacock Lane at the same time as J.Walkers of Loseby Lane (Whites Leicester Directory 1835). By 1846, he was the only wholesale manufacturer (VCH Leics. ii p.23). Leicester's early growth was based upon the riveted trade he developed, and on children's townshoes (Cacks) (A.Grainger, op.cit., p.468).

...whose occupation as a translator was to convert old shoes into new, made several advances in the techniques of riveting...

1

A commercial system of riveting was devised, and by 1850 Crick was producing riveted goods on a large scale for a market beyond Leicester.² Manufacturing operations were further extended in the early fifties by the firm of D.Crick & Co. in High Cross Street. Leicester: the active partners being Thomas's son John Throne Crick and his cousin Throne. By 1860, Leicester had made the process famous, and it was coming into use at other centres. At Northampton, riveted goods were made from the late 1840s though probably on a somewhat smaller scale initially. Of the town's early experience of this class of trade it has been noted:

Several Northampton manufacturers sent workmen to Leicester for instruction, and the riveted boot at once sprang into popularity. The men could earn better wages in working on riveted boots than in making cheap hand sewn, and the boot, through somewhat rough and heavy, would stand a good deal of hard wear....This new style (as also the pegged) brought about a further division of labour, the laster or riveter, after completing his process handing the boot to be trimmed up, blacked at the edges and burnished, to a person henceforth known as the finisher....

3

The earliest firm to make riveted boots in Northampton was Mason & Co. of London, who had a branch warehouse on Newland. In 1861, Turner Bros., Hydex Co. secured a "tremendous order" for riveted goods for the Confederated States. From this time the use of the riveted method on cheaper grades of work, and the division of labour it spawned, gained a

1. Footwear Organiser January 1932; cf A.Grainger op.cit., p.470: (i) use of iron-faced lasts (entire iron ones date from C1865); (ii) riveting machine; and (iii) 1853 Patent for inside riveting.
2. Smith op.cit., citing Brodolic op.cit. p.22.
3. V.C.H.Northants,iii; p.328.

rapid ascendancy.¹ Whilst at Street, Sutton cites Clark and Co. as one of the first firms in the country to sell hand riveted footwear on a large scale.² At Bristol, the hand riveted trade was introduced by Derham Brothers in circa 1858.³

Along with the revival of riveting came the idea of attaching the soles using lengths of wire screwed into the upper, but this method appears to have gained a much slower ascendancy. Two patents had been taken out regarding hand screwed methods of making earlier in the century, viz. in 1810 by Richard Woodman, and in 1856 by C.J.Dumery.⁴ In 1853-5, Clarks of Street investigated the merits of this method using a machine; a machine exhibited at the Paris Exhibition of 1855 was placed on trial. Again in 1859 the firm conducted trials between a Sheffield-made screwing machine and hand riveting: the latter 'won'.⁵ Both riveting and screwing machines were not perfected until the 1870s, at which time they began to replace hand riveting.⁶ Hand riveting, nevertheless, was to remain common in the outwork system of Northampton and district until the 1890s:⁷ the hand rivet being replaced by the sprig in the 1870s. The Standard Screw machine was introduced from America in 1876 by the Blake and Goodyear Company, heralding success for the process in some

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1. Thomas Wright, The Romance of the Shoe, p.163
 2. G. B. Sutton op.cit., p.46: In 1848, William Clarke patented a riveting method, possibly one of a number of manufacturers to do so at this time.
 3. Bristol Telegraph, 14 October 1877 p.4
 4. Shoe Manufacturers Monthly, February 1903, p.277
 5. G. B. Sutton op.cit., p.49.
 6. T. Wright, op.cit., p.
 7. For a description of the two hand methods of riveting practiced in Northants at this time see William Arnold's Autobiography Chapter Four Passim. Cf. Church (1968) op.cit., p.229 suggests the riveting machine only gained a wide acceptance in 1890s, despite its products being one fifth the cost of machine sewn.

cheaper classes of work. Acknowledged as an improvement upon prevailing methods of riveting, the machine automatically screwed wire into the sole and cut it flush.¹

(c) Pegging Machine

An alternative method of attaching was that of pegging: the use of small wooden pegs to secure the sole to the upper. This also came into modern use in the late 1840s at various centres of the trade, although the method was of some antiquity: the earliest reference to it probably being by Randle Holme in 1688. A trade journal has noted:

...In the year 1847 pegged footwear was introduced from America and rapidly replaced much of the cheap handsewn shoemaking, particularly on footwear likely to be subject to constant use in wet conditions, as wooden pegs survived longer than stitching. This form of shoemaking developed particularly strongly at Earls Barton, which is said to have obtained large orders for pegged boots...

2

Indeed, this hand method of making was first introduced in the Northampton district by J. Walker of Earls Barton in 1851, and was also extensively used by Northampton agents in Olney workshops.³ The process was mechanised in the 1870s. The first machine was patented in America by Samuel B. Hitchcock in July 1811.⁴ It was not perfected, however, until 1870 by H. Kulhmann.⁵ It is reputed that Thomas Tebbitt introduced the first such machine into the Northampton trade.⁶

1. T.Wright, *op.cit.*, p.98. Cf VCH Northants iii p.328.

2. Footwear Organiser, October 1932.

3. Thomas Wright, *op.cit.*, p.132.

4. B.S.T.C. 15 April 1877 p.41.

5. B.S.T.C., June 1876, p.31

6. Thomas Wright, *ibid.*

(d) Blake Sewing Machine

The single most important advance in the development of machine sewn work was the introduction of the Blake Sole Sewing Machine.¹ This machine sewed the inner sole, already attached to the upper, directly to the outer sole, without the use of a welt. It was patented in America in 1858 by Lyman R. Blake.² Credit for inventing the machine goes to Blake, but not for a new method of bottom sewing, for the method he employed was common many years before in the construction of channel pumps.³ It is mentioned by Rees and Devlin:

...overshoes were lasted and braced, after which the sole was rounded and channeled...⁴ it was then tacked on and holed all the way round...with a straight flat awl held cross wise, going right through both soles against the last itself....⁵

In the Blake machine two threads were used, sewn from each side of the leather to form a chainstitch. This stitching action follows that of the hand produced stitch exactly. For some years problems were encountered on this and other sole-sewing machines concerning the strength of available threads. The thread had to have contrasting qualities. It had to be soft so that wax could penetrate it and so that it would lie flat on the insole; but, at the same time display sufficient strength not to break under tension; yet not so strong as to cut the leather. Lastly, it had to endure wear and damp, yet have sufficient elasticity

1. Many writers have attested to its importance. J.H.Thornton notes, "... it marks the real beginning of the mechanisation of the shoe trade..." Clapham writes of "Blake's decisive machine...", and again "...this, and Crick's riveting machine, were the first machines of importance special to bootmaking, the closing of uppers being a fairly straightforward problem in sewing..." (Clapham ii p.95).
2. See for example, A.E.Hodgkin loc.cit. p.40. "...in 1858 Lyman R.Blake, who had a small closing factory in Abingdon Mass., U.S.A., conceived the idea of developing Howe's m/c to enable soles to be sewn. Eventually he evolved the m/c which was destined to revolutionise shoemaking..."
3. American Shoemaking, 15 September 1920, p.16.
4. Rees, op.cit., p.45.
5. Devlin, op.cit., Pt.I, p.46.

for it not to unduly increase the rigidity of the boot.¹ Flax answered these qualities, so initially only a linen thread was used in the absence of a suitable cotton one. However, over the years the qualities of cotton became more acceptable and limited quantities began to be used. Thus, by 1909 it was noted:

...Cotton thread is now extensively used...not only on stitching machines, but on sole sewing and welt sewing machines....Recently, however, a braided cotton thread has been put on the market; it is claimed that it is 15 per cent stronger than ordinary twisted cotton thread.... 2

At the time of his invention Blake was impoverished, and in the absence of capital with which to exploit it, he sold the patent rights to a Col. Gordon McKay for \$8000 cash and \$6,200 to be paid out of future profits.³ It was McKay who was responsible for the commercial success of the machine in the U.S. and in Europe. Again, it is probable that Leicester introduced this machine into the trade ahead of other centres,

1. J.S.Clark, History of Manufactures in the U.S. Vol.2 1860-93 (1929) p.131-32. "...in 1864 the McKay sole-sewing machine was finally perfected by Lyman Blake...after six years of improvement upon the original design. To be sure even in 1866 machine sewed boots were still imperfect, and if exposed to dampness the outer sole often ripped off when it was scarcely worn..." By 1867 the thread improvements mentioned above had remedied these defects. But Clark stresses that despite the ascendancy of Blake's process through to the 1880s, its wearing qualities never matched handsewn welted work. At p.469, he notes "...it was equally durable but not as flexible in use and left an inside seam that was apt to be uncomfortable for the wearer..." Its big advantage over handsewn work was its cheapness. (the Blake cost 3¢ to sew, the handsewn 75¢). U.S. attempts to improve the Blake, such as the Day process, were never adopted in England (p.470).
2. Shoe Manufacturers Monthly, August 1909 p.305.
3. American Shoemaking 22 August 1922, p.41: "...Possible prejudice against Blake sewn...work was swept aside by the needs of the time; for the American Civil War greatly assisted the adoption of the machine. Boots had to be made quickly to fulfil military contracts and this machine provided the means. Subsequent improvements and its widespread adoption thereafter both in U.S. and Europe ensured a long term profit return for McKay...for when he died he left \$5m to Harvard University..."

although some confusion appears in the record. Crick was already using it by 1860, but one source claims that it was first introduced into the town by Stead and Simpson a year earlier: certainly this firm did most in the early years to foster its popularity.¹ It has also been suggested that there immediately

...followed a battle royal between machine sewn and hand riveted footwear, with public preference leaning steadily towards the greater comfort of Blake sewn shoes..... 2

In fact, the English patent for the Blake was not filed until the middle of 1859,³ thus suggesting that the first Crick, and Stead machines were specially acquired from America on a trial/experimental basis. Certainly a variety of improvements were needed before a commercially acceptable machine was available and placed on the market in 1862.⁴ Clapham's cautionary note appears correct, for he asserts that although

...known in Britain before the American Civil war, it only became thoroughly successful as a result of improvements made public during the war, in 1864... 5

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1. Anon. Stead & Simpson : A Century of Shoemaking (1932) unpaginated; But BSTJ 5 November 1898 p.625 states, "The introduction of the Blake sole sewer, which was first put down in the factory of Stead & Simpson in 1863 created a revolution in the trade...", seems to be more in line with the text below.
 2. Footwear Organiser, February 1932; cf. VCH Northants, iii p.328, "...For more than twenty years the machine sewn boot was held in high repute, not only in this country, but in the United States..."
 3. English Patent No.IIIII 3 May 1859. This is the originative invention of the Blake Sole Sewer.
 4. Improvements included English Patent No.1740 9 July 1861 (which many historians have asserted, wrongly, was the first English patent for the machine), and English Patent No.1113 16 April 1862 which Hogkin op.cit. states is the improved type of Blake machine, which featured "...the rotary horn enabling the sewing to be carried right round the sole, which Blake's original static horn did not allow..."
 5. Clapham ii, op.cit., p.94-5. Cf. E.J.C.Swaysland (1905) op.cit. p.8, who attests to the importance of the war in promoting the machine: "...it gave an opportunity to the boot stitching machine which precipitated its introduction by many years..."

Certainly some initial opposition was met in the trade, which was not least a result of manufacturers and shoemakers having to adjust their technical skill in this, their first encounter with machine sewing. In the early days work was frequently split as a result of it being wrongly done. There was a tendency for stitching to be executed too closely together - a mark of quality in hand sewn work - and of shoemakers not tempering the thread correctly before use. What was needed were simple adjustments in techniques. So, to eradicate splitting, it was quickly found that a separately stitched middle sole took the strain off the outer stitching. Moreover, because a machine was being used, more account had to be taken of the class of leather being worked. Certainly its adoption in Northampton coincides with Capham's account.

Muscott notes that the Blake

...did not make much headway until after the exhibition of 1861...but soon after it was freely taken up by the trade in Northampton and elsewhere... 1

In the town, it was first used by Richard Roe, a trade sewer, who had premises in Bird's Pierce and later Newland until the 1880s. 2

1. VCH Northants, iii, 328.

2. Richard Roe (1827-1910) born at Woodford, nr.Thrapston Northants, the son of a shoemaker. Started work as his father's stabbing boy. By 8yrs. he was sewing flat seams, and a year later putting tongues into jockey boots. At this time he walked four miles to Raunds to shop and collect work. In 1837 migrated to Northampton, where at age 15, was able to make a boot right through. Rose to be a foreman for Philip Manfield before becoming one of the pioneer trade sewers in Northampton. In addition to introducing the Blake, obituaries also state he was a pioneer of the Standard Screwer and the first local user of the gas engine in the trade. (N.I. 12 March 1910 p.26; cf BSTJ 11 March 1910, p.398). When he retired in 1885, his son, Thomas B.Roe, took control of the business, which moved to premises in Victoria Road in 1898: last directory entry 1910. Politically radical, Richard was a Chartist and later "...a firm friend and supporter of Bradlaugh" (N.I. ibid.) He served as a Councillor 1884-87; was a Poor Guardian for St.Andrew's ward; and a director until his death of the Northampton Benefit Building Society. He married a Miss Frost of Grendon in 1848, and had issue seven children: Thos.B. only survived him. He died at his home 63 Colwyn Road on 7 March 1910, his effects £2,453.10.0d. (resworn at £2,509.15.0d.).

(e) Welt-Sewing Machines and Systems

Clapham asserts that British machine makers played a key role in improvements of the basic Blake design, and, indeed upon other machines.¹ An early and important example of this improving work was that of the Keats Brothers at Stafford, and of Owen Robinson at Kettering. Like others in 1860s the Keats' were attempting to overcome the limitations of the Blake in the quest to develop a sole sewing machine which could do work equal to that of hand-sewn. Shoes produced on the Blake principle fell short for two basic reasons. First, it used a chain stitch, attaching the upper to the sole without a welt. So, whilst its wearing qualities might be superior to riveting, it was generally regarded as inferior to handsewn, because it was not as pliable and comfortable to wear. And, secondly, it had to be sewn off the last. This not only slowed the pace of work, for it had to be returned to the last for finishing, but also rendered the boot liable to mis-shaping and splitting. To overcome these imperfections, William and John Keats embodied a number of improvements into machines they built at this time. In 1864, they patented an improved lockstitch machine, "The Crispin", which produced a pliable boot.² In 1871 they introduced an improved needle, which enabled "The Crispin" to sew on the last.

In addition to improving work, Keats' were important originative inventors in their own right, for this initial work improving the Blake led to the

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1. J. H. Clapham, ii, op.cit., p.95. This represents the beginning of a trend which was to subsist with each American machine imported into this country, at least to the end of the century. This tended to give rise to a multiplicity of effort, with a number of rival machines being placed on to what was prior to 1887, a less than active market.
 2. English Patent No.2817 11 October 1864: cf Patent No.938 of 1863 filed by Keats and Clark laid the foundation. At about this time, the Blake was also fitted with a lockstich mechanism. Clark's of Street were early operators of "The Crispin".

development of a range commercially viable machines designed to fabricate welted boots the equal of handsewn work. Important, early collaborative work was undertaken between John and William S. Clarke, the Street shoe manufacturer,¹ but it was the design and marketing relationship between Keats, and Batlay and Greenwood, the Leeds engineers that was to be crucial. By 1874, they were manufacturing a machine welting plant, although this does not appear to have been received with wide favour by the industry.² By the early 1880s a wide range of Keats sewing machines, all of which worked on the lockstitch principle, were in production: they produced work "...which for solidity seem fully equal to hand work..."³ According to the contemporary trade press, these machines enjoyed a wide acceptance within the industry, particularly at centres like Northampton making a medium to high quality of work. Four machines were highlighted as being of particular utility:

Keats No.1 - a small post machine, power or treadly powered, for stout closing work.

Keats No.3 - a "heavy horn" machine for stout military and working boots: power driven.

Keats No.4 - "the Bespoke Shoemaker", for general sole sewing, strong closing and fair stitching. It was said of this machine "...it is easily worked by foot power at a fair rate of speed..."

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1. John Keats and W.S.Clark continued to collaborate on machinery developments until the Edwardian years. On 27 March 1901 private limited company, the Phoenix Boot Machinery Co.Ltd., was incorporated to manufacture machinery to five patent specifications. The company had a nominal capital of £2,000, and by mid 1903 the issued capital was £1,512, in addition to £1,500 in debentures, and a £5,000 mortgage. The company ceased trading sometime in late 1910. (BT 31/9383/69693; BSTU 5 April 1901 p.484).
 2. Practical Magazine, May 1874.
 3. BSTU 30 September 1882, p.177.

Keats No.7 - a fair stitching machine, "...which has already established a reputation for itself in Northampton... where fair stitched work is made in quantities.... The work the machine does resembles most closely both on the welt and in the channel, the stitching of the old crafts..." 1

Machine welting was a more sophisticated process when compared with Blake sewn work. What was required was a set of machines, each synchronised to the other in order to manufacture machine welted work at a measured pace. Keats' machines were only ever unsynchronised and required intermediate hand processes in manufacture. The system that finally gained ascendancy was, therefore, the American Goodyear System, and the key to that system was the Goodyear Welt-sewing machine.

The machine was invented by Auguste Destoney in Massachusetts in 1865, the first British Patent being granted in 1867.² Further developments were patented by J.H.Hanan, a New York boot manufacturer, in 1869,³ after which he induced Charles Goodyear to form an American company to exploit it.⁴

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1. BSTJ ibid: The other early English welt sewing machinery introduced was that of David Mills, which was widely adopted in Northampton: the first by Turner Brothers and Hyde (VCH Northants iii, p.328). As Chapter Two shows Mills was associated with the Blake Co., which acquired five of his originative patents for welt and turn-shoe machines (BT 31/3026/17125: Sale Agreement dated 18 August 1882).
 2. English Patent No.2779 of 1867.
 3. English Patent No.1856 of 1869.
 4. J.S.Clark op.cit., p.470 "...Charles Goodyear jnr., a practical shoeman living in New York City, developed this machine with the aid of an English engineer Daniel Mills, so that, although still imperfect, it was sufficiently advanced by 1871 to be employed more or less experimentally in manufacturing..." Although in use by the 1880s, Clark implies at p.470-471 that the Goodyear Welting system was only widely adopted in America between 1890-95. Cf J.W.Oliver History of American Technology (1956) p.348, where it is stressed that "...numerous modifications and accessory improvements were necessary, however before the Goodyear system came into general use. The pioneer factories were equipped with it in 1876/77...Nevertheless adoption was slow, and it was more costly...than the McKay system..." Goodyear production only surpassed McKay in 1914 in the U.S.A.

Further British patent specifications were filed in 1872,¹ and two years after the Blake and Goodyear Company Ltd. opened a shop in Northampton, becoming possibly the main outlet for such machinery in the Midlands. By the mid-eighties, following more improvements and the addition of a sole stitching and lasting machine, this complete system for machine welting quality footwear could produce a stitch scarcely distinguishable from handwork. In this form, the system consisted of eight machines:-

Insole channelling m/c)	
)	
Outsole -do-)	
	)	Hand powered
Welt skiver)	
)	
Welt Groover/Beveller)	
)	
Welt (or) m/c 350rpm)	
)	
Outsole stitcher 260rpm	)	Powered
)	
Copwinder for stitcher)	
)	
Welt beater)	

Nevertheless, the Goodyear system did not become universally accepted for a further decade. The reason was primarily technical, it has been argued by A.E.Hodgkin:

...The Goodyear welt system of machinery did not come into any general acceptance until after the production of a suitable rough rounding machine, which came in 1894... 2

It was a machine for trimming and channeling soles and was developed in Boston Mass. by Z.T.French and W.C.Meyer, in association with Charles

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1. English Patent No.996 of 4 April 1872 cf.3280 13 September 1875. Both gave British licences, 14 year licences to manufacture Goodyear machinery in Britain.
 2. Hodgkin, op.cit., p.42.

Goodyear: the British patent was taken out in 1896.¹ This obviated the need for laborious preparatory handwork which had acted as a crucial drag on the system's productivity. Rounding had always been a slow, laborious operation when performed by hand. The introduction of this machine into the Goodyear welting system seems to have been the one thing necessary to arouse a greater interest and increased confidence on the part of British boot manufacturers. General recognition of the new economic value established in Goodyear footwear marked a distinct epoch in the industry, for many manufacturers now promptly adopted this method.²

(f) Lasting and Pulling Over Machines

The most difficult process to mechanise was that of lasting, and certainly most writers would agree with J. H. Thornton's observation:

...The complete mechanisation of lasting proved to be a tougher nut to crack...³

Technical solutions only began to be found in the 1880s and commercially successful lasting machines only began to be marketed in Britain at the end of the decade.⁴ Gouldbourn has outlined the basic problems which

1. English Patent No.3497, 15 February 1896 filed by Z. T. French.
2. For example John Marlow & Sons Northampton: See Appendix II Cf.
3. J. H. Thornton, *op.cit.*, p.59. in America, very little patent activity is observable in the 1880s concerning lasting machines. Only two awards were given for lasting machinery: in 1879 and 1889 both to J. W. Copeland. However, by the early 1890s, some 150 patents a year were being filed concerning improvements in lasting machinery. J. S. Clark, *op.cit.* notes at p.471 "But lasting the shoe, continued to be a hand operation until the 1880s. Several machines were invented for performing this operation between 1878 and 1890. Their introduction encountered the active hostility of hand lasters between 1885 and 1892 who were strongly organised; but this resistance was soon overcome: workmen could actually earn more on the machines than they could at a lasting bench.
4. Bradley, 1930, p.79. "There was a considerable effort by numbers of inventors in the late 1880s and the early 1890s to obtain a suitable mechanical means of lasting for this was obviously a necessary accompaniment of mechanised sewing machines if full benefit of these was to be realised in rapid mass-production of...boots and shoes..."

beset the engineer.¹ First, the machine must be capable of stretching the upper round the last and securing it to the insole. This is mechanically difficult to achieve, because the upper is composed of a number of flat pieces of leather sewn together, which has to fit round the intricate curves of a last; and, moreover, this must be achieved by an even tension on the leather, which must not be allowed to wrinkle. Secondly, the machine "...must be capable of dealing with all kinds and sizes of shoes, whether made from the lightest fabric or the heaviest leather..."² In seeking a solution the basic principles of hand lasting were imitated; so in yet another process hand principles were translated into machine working.³

The hand process can be reduced to three operations:

- (i) pulling over : following the preparatory work, the upper is accurately positioned on the last, and secured to the insole, already in place, by 7 tacks positioned at the toe and forepart of the shoe.
- (ii) lasting : consists of the full fitting of the upper to the last using pincers. Care has to be taken to ensure that an equal tension is placed upon the leather and that it does not become visibly wrinkled or split. The difficulty encountered by a hand laster is that he must simultaneously use hand pincers to maintain the tension in the leather and tack it to the bottom using a hammer.
- (iii) tacking : co-extensive with (ii) is the securing of the upper by means of tacks. In the case of welted work these are withdrawn after sewing, whilst in other types of attaching they remain in place.

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1. J. Gouldbourn "Principal Types of Shoe Construction, Machinery Used in Shoe Construction, and Some Problems in its Design" Coventry Engineering Society Journal 16:4 (1935) p.109-12.
 2. Gouldbourn, p.109.
 3. Thornton, *ibid.* p. : "The basic principles of hand lasting, directions of strains and so on, were maintained in all these machines..." But note Gouldbourn *loc.cit.* p.92, that many of these machines were "...very complicated in construction, the number of parts ranging from 1500 to nearly 3000 per machine..."

In seeking a solution to the problem of mechanising lasting, engineers had to produce a range of machines which were ultimately to work in conjunction with one another. In the interim, factory lasting was conducted by sub-dividing the processes, some of which were carried out by machine, others by hand. A system of working that generated work practice problems. By the late 1890s a variety of team systems were to be found; no one standard system was common to any one centre, although it may be concluded that, over time, whilst the content of machinery work generally increased, some ancilliary hand sub-processes were to remain.

A solution to this problem only began to emerge in the 1880s.¹ The Blake and Goodyear Co. were marketing the Boston Laster or Magnetic Tacking machine in Britain by 1878.² However, it was in reality only a tacking machine, for the boot was hand lasted on the machine prior to machine tacking: initial preparatory work and the first stage of pulling-over remained a hand bench process.³ Ure stated that the machine's advance over bench work throughout lay in its superior speed and quality of results; for in hand lasting on the machine using its treadle-driven tack driving hammer, the laster's hands were left free for the vital pincer work. Ure notes:

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1. Hodgkin, op.cit., p.42 "...In 1885 machines of various types for lasting began to appear..." Ure p.119 describes, and illustrates, a lasting machine invented by Keats and marketed by the Crispin Co. in the 1870s. In reality, this was a hand tool which merely provided an extension of current practice, enabling less skilled labour to be employed. Despite Ure's claims for the machine it was not widely adopted in this country.
 2. Ure's Dictionary (1878) p.120. But note, the English Patent (11 September 1888 No.13139 by G.W.Copeland) was not taken out until 1888, which possibly suggests that it was not marketed on a wide basis until that date. Note also that the Patent specification refers to its being a nailing machine.
 3. Hodgkin ibid. "...with these machines the uppers were still lasted by hand pincers, but with the help of a jack on the machine the operator was able to present the shoe to the nozzle in place after being pincerd by hand..."

...The Tacking machine now referred to is manipulated with great rapidity, there being no loss of time, the hammer picking up the tacks...at the rate of 3 per second...This tacking machine, when skilfully worked, can tack from 150 to 200 pairs per day, employing two operatives - the one to prepare the uppers for the last, and the other to do the necessary pulling of the upper and tacking by the magnetic hammer.... 1

The lasting machines proper which were introduced into the trade after 1885 can be divided into 2 types, viz: bed lasters, in which the boot is placed in the machine on a horizontal flank, and the Consolidated Hand Method Lasting Machine (the Consul), where the work was presented to the machine in a more vertical plane.² Again all were all American origin. Bed Lasters were the first to make an appearance. G.V.Larkin informs us that "...the earliest bed lasting machine of which we have any knowledge is the Chase Laster...",³ which was first widely marketed in this country by the Northampton Shoe Machinery Co.Ltd. from early 1888. It was a fully hand-operated machine, but, whereas the Keats machine a decade before was essentially a machine aid to handlasting, here we see a machine using mechanical pincers operated by a skilled operative. Lakin describes its mechanical action in the following way:-

...This machine...contained a toe head and a heel head... and also incorporated side pincers devised to hitch on to the uppers and impart drafting strains during the toe and seat lasting operations.... 4

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1. Ure, op.cit., p.121.
 2. The English and American Company introduced a variant of the Consul into the U.K. in 1888 called the McKay-Copeland Laster, though it was never widely adopted. The machine was worked in pairs by one operative, with a boy following doing the tacking. It could last 250 pairs of plain work a day, or 175 pairs of toe-cap work. (BSTJ) 21 January 1889 p.v.)
 3. C.V.Larkin "Development of the Bed Laster", B.B.S.I.J. Vol.5 (1953) p.301. This was the machine marketed by the Northampton Shoe Machinery Co.Ltd. from 1887. The first U.S. patent for the Chase was filed in 1883, after which several improvements were made. The first English patent, held by J.Yate Johnson (on behalf of Frank Chase, the inventor, and O.E.Lewis, director of the Shoe Lasting Co., New York) was filed in March 1886, No.3706, two further patents for improvements to the machine were filed in early 1887: No.1160, 25 January 1887 and No.7187, 17 May, 1887.
 4. Larkin, *ibid.*

This, and other similar machines used what has been known as the wiper method. A compressed air hand tacker, incorporated in the machine, was used to tack the laster upper to the insole prior to bottoming. By the early 1890s 23 other bed lasters, variants of the Chase, came into commercial use: the Copeland Triumph and Ferguson whose initial English Patents date from a decade before.¹ The Ferguson sold by Pearson and Bennion from 1895 deserves special mention

...because it incorporated an entirely new feature. The air pump attached to the machine was made to provide sufficient power for operation of both toe and seat wipers and also the tacker... 2

In 1897-98 A. L. Strickler, former manager of the Northampton Shoe Machinery Co.Ltd., marketed the Strickler and the Triumph, which was an up-dated version of Copeland's design.

Bed lasting machines provided manufacturers with an alternative to the Consol. The mechanical first principles of the machine were invented in America by J. E. Matzeliger.³ Then in collaboration with C. H. Denow, U. S. Nicols and G.S. Forbuch of the U.S.M.C. a commercially viable machine was slowly devised; patents concerning improvements following in 1891, 93, 94 and 1896. The fully developed commercial machine was

1. Triumph English Patent No. 13473 6/11/85: Copeland English Patent No. 9557 6 July 1885. Both patents were submitted by George W. Copeland.
2. Larkin, loc.cit., p.392.
3. English patent No.1468, 20 March 1883. Cf J. W. Oliver History of American Technology (1956) p.398. "...Skilled hand lasters could only attach soles to sixty pairs of shoes a day, whereas the machine operators could attach soles to four hundred pairs a day..." As with welting systems, the tenor of the American literature is that U. S. and English best practice acceptance of these machines to perform good quality work was very much nearer in time than the orthodox case put forward by Head and Church suggests. British shoe manufacturers are alert and ready to use machines, it is in matters of factory organisation and new work practices that one observes a difference of practice.

patented in Britain in 1897.¹ Pearson and Bennion of Leicester became the English Agents of the machine on behalf of the U.S.M.C.

In terms of straightforward output the Consol was superior to all bed lasters. Swaysland noted in 1905 "The bed lasting machines have a capacity about half the Consolidated machines..."²

Although Swaysland suggests that it was possible to work a bed-laster in double teams, the Consol's greater productivity found immediate favour in the trade. The Consol's popularity was further enhanced by BUSMC's leasing policy in the Edwarding years. Formed in 1899, it took a near monopoly control of Lasting machinery leases - bed and Consol - and the decision was taken to promote the use of the Consol, over bed lasters.³ This policy was modified only in 1912 with the introduction of the No.5 Bed Laster, which was a non-powered up-date of the Ideal.⁴ This reversal of policy came about as a result of an alteration in the mode of machine lasting in British shoe factories. For in the last years of our period it became customary to use the Consol and the bed-laster in conjunction with one another. Thus the machine lasting process by 1914 consisted of:-

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1. English Patent No. 14453 - all subsequent patents regarding the Consol deal with improvements in detail. Gouldbourn describes its operation thus: "...The clutch on this machine is tripped by a pedal to give either a single revolution or a continuous running speed of 140rpm; during each revolution pincers pull the upper to the last at one point and a staple is driven in. The skilled operator then re-positions the shoe for the following revolution and so spaces staples around the shoe..."(p.111). Consols were sometimes worked in conjunction with heel seat lasting machines. Here Consols lasted the forepart of the shoe and the latter machine the heel. (p.112-14). See Below.
 2. Swaysland, (1905) op.cit., p.173.
 3. Despite this a new bed laster, The Ideal, was launched in 1901 and modifications were made to the Ferguson.
 4. It was built in U.S.A., and remained the best bed laster in the trade until the inter-war period, despite the introduction of a No.6 and a No.7 type. The first No.5 used in Britain was at Crockett and Jones, Northampton in 1912.

- (a) Hand assembly : tack insoles to last, insert stiffeners,
and toe cases into uppers
- (b) Pulling over on the REX machine
- (c) Last sides on the Consol
- (d) Last the toe and seat on a bed laster¹
- (e) Pounding up - pounding-up machine : the preparation of
the insole for bottoming.²

What now remained was the mechanisation of the first preparatory process in lasting. This operation consisted of drafting, or pulling-over, the upper onto the last by hand. Once in position, the work was tacked at the toe and heel by hand, or by using a Boston Tacker. The first pulling over machine - the Rex - was invented in 1900 by R.F.McFeely of Beverley Mass., U.S.A.³ Swaysland informs that

...The coming of the pulling over machine marked a great advance and formed an important link in the lasting team.... 4

Pulling-over now became more or less automatic. These machines allowed fully mechanised lasting and were thus readily adopted in the industry. In 1905, however, fully mechanised lasting was still

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1. Ultimately B.U.'s development of the bed laster reflects this change in practice as a separate toe and heel laster (No.8 and 9 Bed lasters) was produced. See BBSIJ Vol.4 p.266 at et.seq.cf Larkin op.cit.passion.
 2. It is probable that the practice of using the two lasting machines together in this way began in U.S.A., and through the publicity it received in trade journals found its way into British practice - see American Shoemaking 23 March 1910, p.700. Cf.A.S. 19.12.14 p.559, where 8 assemblers, 4 pull over, 4 consols and 4 beds used to achieve an output 3000 prs per day.
 3. English Patent No.7005 14 April 1900: Gouldbourn loc.cit.p.109 notes pulling over "...consists of accurately positioning the upper on the last, and securing it to the insole by seven tacks at the heel and forepart of the shoe..." The pulling over machine has a wiper/tacking action. The operator guides the upper into the pincers, and before tacking checks for wrinkles which are eradicated by hand manipulation of individual pincers. Once done, the machine tacks up.
 4. Swaysland (1905) op.cit., p.174.

sufficiently new, and hand lasting still sufficiently common, for Swaysland's textbook of that year to fully describe hand pulling over before the machine method.¹

(g) Finishing Machinery

Many writers on the industry have tended to regard finishing machinery, if they comment upon the process at all, as the least troublesome part of the industry's mechanisation. Many, such as Andrew Ure writing 1878, have tended to assert that a steady accretion of machines to supercede hand processes was under way from the early/middle 1860s. Three issues, however, argue against such a viewpoint. First, it can be observed that mechanised finishing was not widely adopted until the 1890s. Although finishing machines were available from an early date, the wide variety required for a viable machine finishing department did not become available until the century's end.² What occurs in the late 1880s and early 1890s was the introduction of a generation of machines, which together with entirely new machines, were to transform finishing.³ In fact, effective mechanisation here represents a last crucial element in the development of complete mechanised production. Thus finishers in all centres were out-workers and handworkers until very late. Indeed,

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1. Swaysland, (1905) *ibid.*, p.172 et seq.
 2. As is noted below finishing is a collective word used for a quite wide and diverse range of processes undertaken after the shoe's construction.
 3. Finishing machines of the period are good examples of the new, improved machines then introduced. Many were automatic or semi-automatic in operation. It was common for the machines to be double, in some cases triple-headed so work could be prepared, whilst other work was being machined. This, of course, gave rise to a much greater pace of work. Examples of such machines can be found in the trade, e.g. S.L.R. 27 July 1892, p.190g, the Rockingham Finishing machines and Keats new paring machines and BSTj II February 1889 p.101, the Tapley Burnisher.

traditional shoemakers appear to have retreated into this process in the face of mechanisation elsewhere. Worker resistance to change was felt as keenly here as in any process.

Secondly, whilst early machines were, questionably, of utility on lower grades of work, they were entirely unable to provide a level of finish, comparable to hand work, that was expected in English markets on most grades of work.¹ And, thirdly, the term finishing encapsulated a wide range of small processes, and until a co-ordinated system of machines had been developed, many were disinclined to fully mechanise their finishing departments.² Partial mechanisation, it was argued, often led to difficulties in establishing an even flow of production between hand and machine finishers.

There were two approaches to mechanisation: the use of a range of individual machines, or the purpose built plant of machinery. Taking the former first, contemporary textbooks show that machine finishing consisted of the substitution of mechanical motion for the manual action

1. Both Swaysland (1905) op.cit. p.200 et seq and Hodgkin loc cit. passim stress the late development of commercially viable machinery.
2. The first indications of success in doing this emerges only in the late 1880s: BSTJ 4 February 1888 p.82. "The first set of finishing machines ever introduced into Northampton are now being run at the factory of Messrs. Dean and Adams. The machines are the invention of Messrs. Keats...The set comprises three pieces... - a paring machine a sandpapering machine, and a burnishing machine..." The set worked in conjunction with hand labour; SLR 30 March 1889 p.350. Pearson and Bennion, the Leicester shoe machine engineers set up a machine finishing warehouse in East London to publicise the new complete plant of finishing machinery made by Larabee of Frankfurt: Pearson's were the sole U.K. selling agents. The report notes that this was "... a complete set of finishing machines worked on the team system.... It is impossible to describe...the whole of the machinery employed. Some of it is familiar; other machines are old friends which have been improved, while others, again, are quite new. The advance in machine finishing which a visit to the works discloses has chiefly in the organisation which has been brought to bear upon the whole... In a nutshell this seems to summarise the practice and theory of finishing boots and shoes by machinery..." Subdivided labour permitted the use of boy/youth labour, and each set had a capacity of 1000 pairs per day. An early user of Larabee finishing plant was H.E.Randall of Northampton.

of the handworker. In most cases the machines closely copied the action of hand processes. Increasingly production capacities were linked to give a matched flow of production in the department. Yet, with such a large number of machines available, considerable variation in the flow and cost of work was possible. Manufacturers tended to adopt that layout best suited to their particular needs. Thus, whilst the main machine processes adopted were very similar in all grades of work, there was considerable variation in the order of processes, and the utilisation of labour. It is difficult to describe the ideal departmental layout, but Swaysland list the following general range of machinery in use in 1905:¹

Main Process	Machine
(1) Knifing Up	(a) Heel Parer (b) Knife Grinder (c) Edge Trimmer (d) Heel Scouring, Sandpapering & Buffing Machines (e) Bottom Buffing Machines (f) Bottom Scouring, Roller machines etc. (g) Stitch Separation machines
(2) Setting into Colour	(a) Buffing machines (b) Fudging machine (c) Inking machine (d) Heel Burnisher
(3) Ironing Up	(a) Edge Setters (b) Pads and Brushes
(4) Marking Out	(a) Machine Seat Wheels and Heels Keying (1)
(5) Rubbing Up	(a) Rubbing up machine (2) (b) Embossing machine

Note: (1) machines of limited use here, and thus hand work was crucial on better grade work.
(2) Much of the work still hand processes.

1. Swaysland (1905) op.cit. p.201-09

In addition to these machines, dust exhaust equipment was in widespread use, and shellac inks had gained a wide acceptance.

Despite the wide variety of machinery made available however, Swaysland argues that handwork and hand finishing standards persisted in the industry:

Although machine finishing has practically superceded handwork during the last few years, the ideal finish is still a perfect imitation of the highest class of hand finish.... 1

As a result of the limited utility of some machines and the prevailing fashions in footwear hand finishing in conjunction with machines was still regarded as imperative on good class work.² Hand finishing under machine conditions was here different when compared with lasting for example. There handwork was done in support of machine operations, being required regardless of the grade of work undertaken. In finishing it was different, for although some handwork, for example inking and cleaning, was inevitable, it was used to give added embellishment and refinement to the shoe. Lower grades of work were quite readily finished throughout by hand. Many finishing touches, that distinguished this from the general run of work, were still carried out by hand. This, of course, considerably added to the cost of the work.

1. Ibid. p.194.

2. Ibid. p.196. "...it is a somewhat curious fact that there appears to be a tendency among buyers of good class work to desire the points and the peculiarities of the hand finish..." cf.p.201 the typical layout of a finishing room .. provides for a considerable amount of hand work, which in a lower class trade might be dispensed with; but it has been found that for high class finishes a certain amount of handwork is an advantage..."

The second approach to mechanisation was the purpose built plant of machinery. Here all the machine operations were built into one continuous bench.¹

(h) The Gas Engine

Lastly it is important to consider the impact of motive power upon shoe mechanisation. Although the commercial career of the gas engine dates from Samuel Brown's atmospheric-vacuum engine of 1823, its full industrial potential and widespread application only began to be realised as a result of the further development work of Etienne Lenoir (1859), and Alphonse Beau de Rochas (1862). But above all it was N.A. Otto's horizontal four stroke engine of 1878, which firmly established gas as an industrial prime mover that could begin to challenge the sole dominance of the steam engine. As D. C. Field has noted its diffusion was both rapid and impressive:

...the superiority of the new engine above other types was soon apparent; more than 35,000 of them, manufactured by the German firm of Otto and Langen, were installed all over the world in a very few years....Thereafter, with many detailed improvements and with steadily increasing horse-power, the gas engine was able to compete successfully with the steam engine.... 2

In this country, Crossley Brothers of Manchester were only the most prominent firm to build large numbers of engines of many types and sizes under the Otto patents. In addition to this form many small firms serving their local industry emerged. Each shoe centre had its gas engine manufacturer.

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1. Machines of this character were manufactured by Jackson and Pockin of Leicester (the Combined Finishing Plant Bench), and O. Robinson and Co. Kettering.
 2. D.C. Field 'Internal Combustion Engine' in C. Singer (ed.) History of Technology. (1958) Vol. 15, Ch. 8, p. 159.

Not that gas was to supplant steam, but rather that it broadened and made more flexible the application of inanimate power to manufacturing processes during a period of structural change in the artisanal trades' sector of manufacturing enterprise. For the first time industry was potentially released from a centrally important locational restraint: the need for the manufacturer to use and be near sources of fuel coal. True, gas companies relied on coal to produce their product, but a well developed transportation network and commercial system of merchandising, in addition to their ability to achieve economies by buying in bulk, ensured a broad customer-price parity for gas between counties without coalfields and those with.¹ The Northamptonshire footwear industry, was, of course, at the centre of this process of structural change. Technical improvements had begun in the sixties based on hand-powered technology, but by the seventies there are clear indications that steam power was being introduced. The Leather Trades Circular & Review noted of Northampton in 1875:

...New manufactories are rising here and there;... machines will doubtless be freely employed, and the fact the machine is fast supplanting all sorts of hand labour in shoemaking makes it certain that manufactories suitable for steam machinery must be built in order to employ it, and so by degrees the thousands of hands still working out...will gradually be absorbed in manipulating machinery in the future great buildings... 2

But the cost and high power range of the steam engine ensured that it never attained anything like a universal acceptance. In 1876 at Northampton only twenty-five out of a total of 141 manufacturers were using steam power.³ In contrast, once gas engines had made their appearance on the

1. For information on fuel prices see B.P.P. Annual Reports of Gas Undertakings.

2. L.T.C.R. January 1876, p.249.

3. B. and S.T.C. 1 November 1876, p.4.

market, the evidence points to a ready acceptance by progressive shoe manufacturers. The rash of reports in the trade press, which chronicled the increased pace of industrialisation in the trade around 1890, constantly made reference to the introduction of power, particularly gas engines, into shoe manufactories. The Chief Inspector of Factories Report of 1890 noted that in Northamptonshire:

In my report to you last year I referred to the wonderful prosperity of the boot trade. This still continues. Whole streets of workshops have been opened out and many new factories erected, and other places formerly large workshops are now factories, by means of the introduction of gas engines... 1

By 1893 the local inspector cautioned:

...Gas engines are now so numerous, and the starting of them, by pulling the fly-wheel round by hand, is attended by so much danger, that it is desirable to find some suitable means of starting the engine... 2

In addition, some manufacturers were replacing their steam engines by gas, or merely retaining a small steam plant to start new gas engines.³ The advantages of the gas engine were various. First, it was significantly cheaper than a steam engine, not only to buy and instal but also to maintain and run. In an industry dominated for the most part by manufacturers of limited financial means the question of cost was paramount. Secondly, there was the question of the scale of power. Characterized by a small scale of industrial enterprise, the typical manufacturing unit needed only a limited power capacity not readily provided economically by a steam engine: advertisements and reports in the trade press stress the applicability of gas engines at the lower end of the power

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1. B. P. P. Chief Inspector Factories Annual Report for 1889-90; 1890-91 (C 6330) XIX, 483.
 2. B. P. P. CIF Annual Report for 1893; 1894 (C7368) XX38.
 3. Ibid., p.42.

range, i.e. between 1/4 and 3 horse-power. Indeed in 1890 when John Marlow & Son, a prominent Northampton firm, built a new factory it was described as being "...Amongst the largest and most imposing devoted to the manufacture of shoes in this country...", yet its machinery was driven by a 9h.p. Crossley engine, "...this being...the most powerful gas engine in the town...."¹ Thirdly, was the question of flexibility of use. As the smaller gas engines did not need the considerable foundations and service areas required by steam, they could be easily installed in the corner of a workroom on any storey of the factory. They could be more easily moved as workshop layouts altered and needed not to be located at ground level, thus reducing the system of shafting and pulleys to a minimum. Moreover, it could provide power instantly thereby saving time and the cost of firing a boiler, clearing ash and so forth. In addition, if more power was required, it was a relatively easy matter to instal a second machine, or replace with a larger one without undertaking extensive engineering work: with steam a manufacturer tended to instal with future power needs in mind. The very presence of two engines offered further flexibility and cost saving in providing power. Returning to the example of John Marlow's, by 1895 in the wake of an increase in business, the firm increased its power supply by the installation of a second engine in part of a basement store. Only the need for yet more power resulted in the erection of a special engine house: a 1912 report stated "...there is also an engine house with a new type Crossley gas engine of 150hp, and a gas plant for the economic working of the same..."² A final example of flexibility in use is exhibited by the increased use of gas engines to power dynamos for electrical

1. S.L.R. 20.9.90, p.394.

2. B.S.T.J. 26.6.12, p.605.

lighting in the 1890s.

Even in the Edwardian period when electricity began to make headway, its ascendancy was not dominant. Given the continued problems of the public supply of electric current, the use of gas engines to power dynamos was common. More importantly, there developed a measure of commercial competition between the electric motor and gas engines. A Home Office Accidents Committee of 1911 noted that "there had been in a large number of trades an increase in the use of machinery... (for) ...the use of the electric motor and gas engine has made it more easy to obtain power."¹ This dual adoption of electric and gas prime movers was noted in many towns by factory inspectors in the period. The introduction of suction gas plants made gas engines particularly competitive:

...The new suction gas plants making producer gas on a small scale, suitable for one gas engine are cheap to operate, and appear to give very satisfactory results. They promise to run electric motors a close race in smaller factories, as they show a distinct saving.... 2

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1. B.P. P. Report of Departmental Committee on Accidents in Places under the Factories and Workshops Act, 1911. (Cd 5535) XXIII, 22.
 2. B.P.P. Chief Inspector Factories Annual Report for 1904, Part I; 1905, (Cd 2569), X, p.52.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

I UNPUBLISHED SOURCES(A) OFFICIAL RECORDS1 At P.R.O. Kew

(i) The Limited Company Papers of:

Ab Intra Boot Making Process Co Ltd	BT31/3912/24735
Advance Shoe Co Ltd	BT31/12724/102255
Allied Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Co Ltd	BT31/25605/164194
Blake Sole Sewing Machine Co Ltd	BT31/1380/3837
Boot Heeling Co Ltd	BT31/3070/22764
F Bostock & Co Ltd	BT31/20790/123106
Bradbury & Co Ltd	BT31/14487/8327
Broad Street Co Ltd	BT31/13215/109143
British Boot Industry Ltd	BT31/7372/52268
British Boot and Shoe Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/2251/10732
British Heel Co Ltd	BT31/9124/50247
British Shoe Manufacturers Ltd	BT31/25053/159098
John Carter & Sons Ltd	BT31/15712/50666
John Cave & Sons Ltd	BT31/7825/55999
Simon Collier & Co Ltd	BT31/16026/58252
John Cooper & Sons Ltd	BT31/5130/34616
Cowper Shoe Co Ltd	BT31/32541/184540
Cutlan's Patent Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Co Ltd	BT31/5061/34010
Cutlan Lasting Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/7316/51796
Cutlan Sew-Round Machinery Syndicate Ltd	BT31/6034/42642
English American Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/3026/17125
Flexible Boot and Shoe Rivetting and Nailing Machine Co Ltd	BT31/24023/24023
Gare Machine Co Ltd	BT31/4526/28112

Gimsons Ltd	BT31/5791/40587
Gimson Shoe Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/32296/156422
Gros Universal Sole Sewing Machine Co Ltd	BT31/2452/12478
Jesse Harrison & Co Ltd	BT31/5130/34616
G T Hawkins Ltd	BT31/22841/140390
Hexagon Sewing Machine Co Ltd	BT31/27190/181507
William Hickson & Sons Ltd	BT31/7182/50741
Jackson & Pochin	BT31/11445/88002
Keats Brothers Ltd	BT31/6293/44541
Keats Brothers (Stafford) Ltd	BT31/23283/143946
Northampton Estates and Improvement Corporation Ltd	BT31/16312/64472
Northampton Shoe Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/4025/25654
Northamptonshire and Leicestershire Boot and Shoe Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/3184/18493
Owen Robinson Ltd	BT31/17872/90300
Petch & Co Ltd	BT31/16445/66824
Phoenix Boot Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/9383/69693
Priddle & Co Ltd	BT31/5031/33757
Robinson & Gamble	BT31/25966/167920
F C Rubbra & Co Ltd	BT31/26196/170324
Standard Rotary Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/16264/74477
Arthur Stanton & Co Ltd	BT31/9024/66766
Superb Footwear Ltd	BT31/26177/171012
F T Tebbutt & Co Ltd	BT31/13547/114665
Turner & Co (Shoe Mercers) Ltd	BT31/12116/94910
Union Boot and Shoe Machinery Co Ltd	BT31/3798/23779 and BT31/8443/61452
Vose & Co Ltd	BT31/14487/8327
George Webb & Sons (Northampton) Ltd	BT31/36121/419182

(ii) Census Enumerator's Returns for Northampton: 1851 HO107/1735-44
 1861 RG9/933-39
 1871 RG10/1481-84
 1881 RG11/1547-54

(iii) Dangerous Trades Committee 1898 3rd Interim Report: Sole Stitching by
 American Machinery HO45/9939/B27960

(iv) Ministry of Health. Correspondence between Local Government Board and
 Northampton Poor Law Union and Town Council MH12/8789-8797: 1873-92

2 At Board of Trade Companies Registration Office, Companies House, London and
 Cardiff

The Limited Company Papers of:

A & W Arnold Ltd	CRO 172949 (diss)
Arnold Brothers (Northampton) Ltd	CRO 172951 (diss)
W Barratt & Co Ltd	CRO 91791
James Branch & Sons Ltd	CRO 59205
John Branch Ltd	CRO 49201 (diss)
British United Shoe Machinery Co Ltd	CRO 63772
J N Brown & Co Ltd	CRO 47115 (diss)
Cantilever Shoe Co Ltd	CRO 201750 (diss)
A & W Church & Co Ltd	CRO 211135
Conformable Boot Co Ltd	CRO 106056 (diss)
Derham Bros Ltd	CRO 57747 (diss)
A & W Flatau & Co Ltd	CRO 103216 (diss)
G T Hawkins	CRO 166291
Haynes & Cann Ltd	CRO 158033
Hutton Welted Footwear Ltd	CRO 303591
J Jacobus Ltd	CRO 97880 (diss)
Jones Sewing Machine Co Ltd	CRO 29301
C & E Lewis Ltd	CRO 432301
Livingston & Doughty	CRO 80205
Lotus Ltd	CRO 78857
Manfield & Sons Ltd	CRO 164082

J Marlow & Sons Ltd	CRO 58062 (diss)
Mounts Factory Co Ltd	CRO 475255
H E Randall Ltd	CRO 47878
J Sears & Co (True Form Boot Co) Ltd	CRO 120271
Singer Sewing Machine Co Ltd	CRO 84930
Standard Engineering Co Ltd	CRO 73805
Sutor Ltd	CRO 119040
G M Tebbutt & Son Ltd	CRO 122682

3 At Northamptonshire Record Office

(i) Company Papers

J Branch & Co Ltd, shoe manufacturers, Books of Account and Minute
Books 1888-cl895 ZA 9649-51

C & E Lewis, shoe manufacturers, Miscellaneous Family Papers
ZB 29/1-26

Pettit & Son, leather merchants, Private Ledgers 1896-1919
ZA 2270-71

Pollard & Son, shoe manufacturers, Acc. 1969/81
Pol 1-311

G Michel & Co, leather merchants, Customers Account and Bought
Ledgers 1891-1922 S327-46

B E West & Co Ltd, shoe manufacturers, Assorted Papers Acc 1969/146
Bundle 3

(ii) Insurance Records

Norwich Union Fire Insurance Records, Insurance Instruction Records
1851-1912 ZA 3317-3325

County Fire Office, Fire Insurance Policy No 199787; E Stimpson,
shoe factor, 1839 ZA 9199

Miscellaneous Fire Insurance Policies for shoe industry premises,
1870-1919 X6186 Bundle 6

(iii) Leases, Conveyances, Mortgages, Title Abstracts

Abstract of title of the Northampton Land
Investment and Advance Co Ltd to an estate
in Semilong ZA96/46 1882

Charles Payne to Edward Haynes, lease of
tenement in Newland, Northampton ZB 37/9 1864

Charles Payne to George Turner, Conveyance of land and two shoe factories at Newland	ZB37/11	1871
Agreement as to the erection of shoe manufactories on land in Parish of Hardingstone	ZB87/21	1896
Mortgage transfers regarding land in Woodhill between F & E Farelli of London and H Walter	ZB6/34-40	
Conveyance of land, part of Monks Park Estate. Plots Nos 714-719	ZA9135	1895
Copy Deed of Covenant regarding Monks Park Estate	ZA9133-34	1894
Abstract of title to land forming part of the Monks Park Estate	ZA9136	1894
T M Tebbutt's Earls Barton Land Deeds	ZB91/65	
Conveyance of land in Kettering Road to Henry Martin - builder	ZB91/70	1885
Transfer of mortgage of Upton Hill Estate between William Wright, Henry Scampton and George Turner	YZ9662	1889
Conveyance of Estate at Upton between William Wright and George Turner	YZ9661	1881
Draft lease of dwelling house at 7 Weston Terrace, W R & E Lawford to Richard Turner	YZ3551	1865
Title deeds, conveyances, mortgage documents concerning Turner Brother and Hyde's factory property	ZB37/12-19	
Lease of property in Woodhill to F A Tebbutt, shoe manufacturer	ZB6/44	1886
Shoe factory lease - Bundle 53	X6561	1880
Shoe factory lease - Bundle 129	X6572	1881
Conveyance of land in St Edmunds End to Richard Turner	YZ3742	1834
Lease of shoe manufactory in St Andrews Street - Bundle 7	X6559	1894
Lease of shoe manufactory in Sawpit Lane between C W Fox and Arthur Stanton - Bundle 88	X6581	1884
(iv) Partnership Papers		
Partnership dissolution agreement for Law, Tebbutt and Pearson, Northampton - Bundle 25	X6560	1888
Articles of Partnership A & J Knight, Northampton, 1889 draft notice of dissolution - Bundle 20	X6560	1888

OR: C L Bradfield, manufacturer of Rushden, (m) 209-12 1903/11
deeds and papers of partnership

OR: W & G Smith, Higham Ferrers, deed of (m) 225 1898
dissolution of partnership

(v) Probate Papers

Tebbutt family probate papers X6173 and
Bundle 5 X6193

George Turner, Upton Hall, probate papers X6173

(vii) Triennial Visitation Returns: Incumbants Report
(for 16 Northampton and adjacent parishes)

ML598	1878
ML600	1882
X909	1886
X910	1894
X911	1901
X911-12	1905
X913	1910

(viii) Miscellaneous

Northampton Town Boot Manufacturers' Association Records ML2175-99

Northampton Trades Council Records NTC1-314

Parish of Northampton, Commercial Property Revaluation for Rating Assessment September 1911

N Frost, Long Buckby Scrapbook - MS ZA2/66 (1958)
X4462

4 At Northampton Public Library

(i) E W Burnham A Century of Shoemaking 1844-1944 (being an MS history of Manfield & Sons) c1944

(ii) L E Lawrence Brief History of Irthlingborough (MS history dated 1972)

(iii) Northampton Medical Officer of Health Reports 1890-1914

(iv) Register of Deposited Building Plans for Northampton
(i) 1860-73 Northampton Improvement Commissioners
(ii) 1873-1902 Northampton Urban Sanitary Authority
(iii) 1902-14 County Borough of Northampton

(v) Biographical and Newspaper Cutting Files

(vi) Village Files MSS

5 At Northampton Borough Council: Technical Services Department

Deposited Factory Plans 1880-1914

6 At Leicester Record Office

George Thorp Reminiscences of the Shoe Trade in North Evington Fifty Years Ago (MS history dated 1960) Box 49A

7 At Leeds City Library, Archives Department

Greenwood and Batley Ltd, Leeds, Order Ledgers - Main Series (41 Volumes) 1856-1914

Sectional Order Book: Boot Machinery 1910-14

8 At Cumbria Record Office

William Sutton Ltd, Scotsby, (leather merchants): Records of Northampton Agency DB/33/1 to 15.

(B) PRIVATE PAPERS

1 Church & Co papers (in possession of Church & Co plc, St James, Northampton)

2 Manfield & Sons papers (in possession of BSC Footwear Supplies Ltd, Northampton)

3 Livingston & Doughty Ltd: sales catalogues and machine production data (in possession of Livingston & Doughty Ltd, Oadby, Leicestershire)

4 Henry Broadhurst papers: LSE Coll LS

5 Midland Bank PLC Archives

(i) London City and Midland Bank Ltd, Woodhill Branch, Northampton:

(i) Branch Manager's Reference Books 1890-1914

(ii) Security Ledgers 1890-1914

(iii) Letter Books 1910-14

(ii) Leicester Banking Co Ltd, Northampton Branch, overdraft and security ledger, c1840-c1898 (K49)

(iii) Leicester Banking Co Ltd, Kettering Branch, overdraft and security ledger, c1880-1900 (K47)

(iv) Leicester Banking Co Ltd, Wellingborough Branch, overdraft and security ledger, c1889-1900 (K51)

(v) London City and Midland Bank Ltd, reference books for Leicester/
Sheffield Region
Book I 1904-09 (Acc 26/11)
Book II 1909-16 (Acc 26/12)

(C) UNPUBLISHED THESES

W A Armstrong The Social Structure of York 1841-51 (PhD Birmingham University 1967)

J Buckman The Economic and Social History of Alien Immigrants to Leeds 1880-1914 (PhD Strathclyde University 1968)

- M P Cairns History of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in the Boot and Shoe Industry (DPhil Oxford University 1953)
- T J Chandler Population Changes and Industrial Growth in Leicestershire Since Late Eighteenth Century (MSc London University 1955)
- M F Collins Changes in Land Use in the Borough of Northampton in the Last 100 Years (BLitt Oxford University 1970)
- P Cronkshaw History of the Boot, Shoe and Slipper Industries in Rossendale (MA Manchester University 1945)
- A Essex-Crosby Joint Stock Companies in Great Britain 1890-1930 (MComm Birmingham University 1938)
- W Griffin The Northampton Boot and Shoe Industry and its Significance for Social Change in the Borough from 1800-1914 (MA University College, Cardiff 1968)
- P J Harris Distribution and Functions of Urban Settlements in the East Midlands (MSc London 1941)
- P Head Industrial Organisation in Leicester 1844-1914 (PhD Leicester University 1960)
- P L R Horn Agricultural Labourers Trade Unionism in Four Midland Counties 1860-1900 (PhD Leicester University 1968)
- J B Jefferys Trends in Business Organisation in Great Britain since 1856.... (PhD London University 1938)
- A Mejia The Upper Class in Late Victorian and Edwardian England: A Study of the Formation and Perpetuation of Class Bias (PhD Stanford University 1968)
- P R Mounfield Location of Footwear Manufacture in England and Wales (PhD Nottingham University 1962)
- C P Sargent A Geographical Study of the Boot and Shoe Trade in England (MSc London University 1932)
- D M Smith East Midlands Industrial Area: A Regional Study of Industrial Location (PhD Nottingham University 1961)
- G P Stanlake Structure of the British Boot and Shoe Industry (MA Leicester University 1961)
- G B Sutton Shoemakers of Somerset: A History of C & J Clark (PhD Nottingham University 1959)
- A J Topham The Credit Structure of the West Riding Wool Textile Industry in the Nineteenth Century (MA Leeds University 1953)

II CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

The Accountant
All Year Round
American Shoemaking
Atlantic Monthly
Boot and Shoe Recorder
Boot and Shoe Retailer
Boot and Shoe Trades Chronicle
Boot and Shoe Trades Journal
Boot and Shoemaker
Chamber's Journal
Economic Journal
Financial Times
Footwear
Footwear Organiser
Good Words
Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society
Journal of the Royal Statistical Society
Kettering Circular
Kettering Leader
Kettering Observer
Leather Trades Circular and Review
Leisure Hour
Manchester Guardian
Manfield's Magazine
Moody's Magazine
Northampton County Magazine
Northampton Daily Chronicle
Northampton Daily Echo

Northampton Herald
 Northampton Independent
 Northampton Mercury
 Northampton Notes and queries
 Northampton Pioneer
 Northampton Reporter
 Northamptonshire Guardian
 Practical Magazine
 St. Crispin
 Shoe and Leather News
 Shoe and Leather Record
 Shoe and Leather Trades Supplement of 1916

 Shoe Manufacturers Monthly
 Shoe Trades Journal
 The Times
 Wellingborough News
 The World

III NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMERCIAL DIRECTORIES

1840	Pigot
1841	Pigot
1845	Burgess
1847	Hickman: Kelly
1849	Whellan
1850	Slater
1852	Phillips
1854	Kelly
1858	Taylor
1861	Melville
1862	Slater

1864	Taylor: Kelly
1866	Royal
1869	Kelly
1870	Mercer and Croker
1871	Mercer and Croker
1874	Whellan
1876	Harrod: Royal
1877	Kelly
1878	Provincial and Metropolitan
1879	Provincial and Metropolitan
1883	Stevens
1884	Wright: Roberts
1885	Kelly
1886	Wright
1889	Stevens
1890	Kelly: Deacon
1893	Stevens: Leas
1894	Kelly
1896	Stevens: White
1898	Kelly
1900	Leas
1902	Kelly
1904	Bennett
1905	Town and County: Leas
1906	Bennett: Kelly
1907	Leas
1910	Kelly: Bennett
1911	Bennett
1912	Leas
1914	Kelly

IV OFFICIAL PRINTED REPORTS

(A) BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

1 Annual and Periodic Reports

(a) Annual Reports of Inspector General in Bankruptcy 1890-1914

(b) Preliminary and General Reports and Printed Returns of the Census of England and Wales

1851	(1399)	XLIII
1852-53	(1361)	LXXXV
1852-53	(1691-I)	LXXXVIII
1861	(2846)	L
1862	(3056)	L
1863	(3221)	LIII Pt I
1871	(c38)	LIX
1872	(c676)	LXVI Pt I
1873	(c872-I)	LXXI Pt II
1873	(c872)	LXXI Pt I
1883	(c3562)	LXXVIII
1883	(c3563)	LXXIX
1883	(c3722)	LXXX
1883	(c3797)	LXXX
1890-91	(c6422)	XCIV
1893-94	(c7222)	CVI
1893-94	(c7058)	CVI
1893-94	(c6948)	CIV
1893-94	(c6948-I)	CV
1901	(Cd 616)	XC
1902	(Cd 1359)	CXX
1903	(Cd 1523)	LXXXIV
1904	(Cd 2174)	CVIII
1911	(Cd 5705)	LXXI
1913	(Cd 7018)	LXXVIII
1913	(Cd 7019)	LXXIX
1914-16	(Cd 7929)	LXXXI
1917-18	(Cd 8491)	XXXV

(c) Annual Reports of Chief Inspector of Factories 1880-1914

(d) Annual Trade and Navigation Returns 1870-1914

(e) Annual Joint Stock Company Returns 1856-1914

2 Royal Commissions, Select Commissions and Other Reports

1864 (3414)	XXII	Children's Employment Commission Report
1865 (3548)	XXXIII	Children's Employment Commission 4th Report
1871 (440)	LXII	Returns of Factories and Workshops
1876 (c1443-I)	XXX	R. C. Workings of Factory and Workshops Act: Minutes of Evidence
1877 (152)	LXIX	Report to Lord Chancellor of Committee Appointed to Consider Working of the Bankruptcy Act 1869

1880	(123)	VIII	Select Committee Reports on Bankruptcy
1880	(324)	VIII	Select Committee Reports on Bankruptcy
1882	(204)	XII	Select Committee Report on the Partnerships Bill
1883	(224)	XI	Select Committee Reports on Bankruptcy
1886	(c4715-I)		R.C. Depression of Trade and Industry: 2nd Report, Appendix D Part II
1888	(361)	XX	House of Lords Select Committee Report on Sweating System
1889	(165)	XIII	
1889	(331-III)	XIV	
1890	(169)	XVII	
1890	(266)	X	Select Committee Reports on Bankruptcy
1892	(c6795-III)	XXXVI Pt III	R.C. on Labour: Digest and Minutes of Evidence Before Group C Volume II
1892	(c6795-VI)	XXXVI Pt II	
1895		LXXXVIII	Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by Board of Trade (The Davey Committee)
1906	(Cd 3053)	XCVII	Report of the Company Law Amendment Committee (The Warmington Committee)
1908	(Cd 3864)	CVII	Board of Trade Enquiry into Working Class Rents, Housing and Retail Prices Together with Standard Rates of Wages Prevailing in 1908 in Principal Industrial Towns
1908	(Cd 4088)	XXXIV	Departmental Committee on Bankruptcy Law Amendment (The Mackenzie Committee): Volume I The Report
1908	(Cd 4069)	XXXIV	Mackenzie Committee: Volume II Minutes of Evidence
1909	(Cd 4844)	LXXX	Board of Trade Enquiry into the Earnings and Hours of Labour of Workpeople of U.K. in 1906: Part II Clothing Trades
1910	(Cd 5110)	XXIX	Summary Report of Chief Inspector of Factories on the Administration of the Factories and Workshops Act 1901. For 1908 (Workshops and Outwork)

3 Foreign Official Reports

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| (a) France | Annuaire Statistique de la France 1878-1914 |
| (b) Germany | Statistisches Jahrbuch fur das Deutsches Reich 1880-1914 |
| (c) U.S.A. | (i) U.S. Senate Papers: Foreign Commerce and Navigation (Home Exec Documents) 1880-1914 |

- (c) U.S.A.
- (ii) G T Butnam: Shoe and Leather Trade in the United Kingdom (1912)
 - (iii) C D Wright: Industrial Depressions: being the 1st Report (annual) of U.S. Comm of Labor (1886)

(B) OTHER STATISTICS, ALMANACS, DIGESTS, CALENDARS AND STANDARD BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

Industrial Fatigue Research Board Report No 10: Preliminary Notes on Boot and Shoe Industry (1920)

Interdepartmental Committee on Social and Economic Research Guide to Official Sources No 2: The Census Reports of 1801

Interdepartmental Committee on Social and Economic Research Guide to Official Sources No 2: The Census Reports of 1801-1931 (1931)

Registrar General of Censuses Classification of Occupations (1959)

Board of Trade Working Party Report on Boots and Shoes (1946)

Central Office of Information Boot and Shoe Industry (Reference Division: No R1642) (1948)

Principal Probate Registry, London: Annual Calendar of Wills and Administrations c1880-c1960 (various)

Registrar General of Censuses, London: Annual Calendar of Births, Marriages and Deaths c1840-1960 (various)

A R D Adkins: Our County (1893)

Burke's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage (1929)

Burke's Landed Gentry (various)

Chamber's Dictionary of Biography (1969)

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Directory of Directors 1900-

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Hartopp: Roll of Mayors of Leicester (1935)

Kelly's Handbook to the Titled, Landed and Official Classes (various)

Kelly's Knightage (various)

H I Longden: Northamptonshire and Rutland Clergy in 16 Volumes (1938-44)

Pike: Northamptonshire in the 20th Century (1908)

J & J A Venn: Alumni Cantabrigienses Part II 6 Volumes (1946-54)

Walford's: County Families (1879)

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Who's Who 1897-1972

Who Was Who 6 Volumes 1897-1960

Who's Who Of MPs

(C) REPORTS OF POLITICAL, TRADE UNION AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives (pre 1889 - National Union of Operative Boot and Shoe Rivetters and Finishers)

- Monthly Reports 1874-1914

- Biannual Conference Reports 1st to 21st, 1874-1914

Northampton Labour Representation Council

- Annual Reports 1915-20

Northampton Trades Council

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ANON STORY OF NORTHAMPTON TOWN BOOT MANUFACTURERS'ASSOCIATION: JUBILEE YEAR 1929 (1929)V Secondary Printed Sources

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- Anon "Boots and Shoes" Leisure Hour 10 (1869)
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- Anon The Century's Progress: Yorkshire Industry and Commerce (1893)
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1899-1918 (c1920)
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- Anon One Hundred Years: The History of Shoes at Street (1925)
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- W R D Adkins Our County (1893)
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(ii) "The Entrepreneur and the British Economy 1870-1914" E.C.H.R. 2nd series 18 (1965)
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(ii)
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 (i) Then and Now
 (ii) A Tale of Northampton and its History
 (iii) Northampton, Famous For Fine Footwear
 (iv) Footwear Down the Ages
 (v) Old Friends
 (vi) Once Upon a Time
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 (vi) "The Northampton Shoemakers Reaction to Industrialisation: Some Thoughts" N.P. & P. VI:3 (1980-81)
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 (xii) "The Effects of Technical Change Upon the Northampton Shoemaker" - unpublished seminar paper (1976)
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(iii) "The Firm of Gotch & Sons 1797-1888" J.B.B.S.I. 7:11 and 12 (1961)
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(v) "Labour Supply and Innovation 1800-60 in Boot and Shoe Industry" Business History XII:1 (1970)
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(vii) Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town: Nottingham 1815-1900 (1966)
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