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Working-Class Community in the Era of  
Affluence: Sociability and Identity in a Yorkshire  
Town, 1945-1980

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## Synopsis

This thesis presents a qualitative case-study of the impact of post-war affluence on working-class ways of life in the small town of Beverley, focussed particularly on sociability and identity. The thesis argues that sociological and historical concern with the decline of forms of 'traditional working-class community' amongst mobile populations in the 1950s and 1960s has obscured recognition of the continuing importance and vitality of local community for many working-class people in this period.

Those who argued that there was a decline of community during the age of affluence (approximately 1955-1975) posited a transition from 'traditional' to new forms of working-class life – the present thesis suggests that in so doing, authors exaggerated both the communality of the 'traditional' working classes and the individualism of newly affluent workers. In Beverley, individualism and status divisions existed alongside communal sociability and mutuality in working-class streets before the age of affluence. The rising living standards of the 1950s and 1960s did not coincide with an appreciable shift towards 'privatised nuclear families'.

I am not arguing only for continuity. In the years of austerity of the 1940s, prior to the affluent decades, some streets were the focus of female sociability and mutual assistance to an extent not apparent in the 1970s. From the 1950s, rising wages, improved housing, and the availability of consumer goods such as cars and televisions allowed many to engage in new forms of sociable leisure. Post-war ideological emphasis on the companionate marriage and child-centred parenting also influenced social behaviour. But companions for both new and old forms of sociability were largely family, friends and acquaintances who also lived in the town – Beverley as a whole remained a remarkably complete social world for many of its residents

The thesis explores connections between structural features, local social networks, and an apparently strong sense of 'Beverlonian' identity during the affluent era. Beverley was a relatively small town with considerable demographic continuity, and residents reported that it felt like a knowable community; post-war council and private housing estates were built close to older neighbourhoods and therefore did not disrupt the social networks and connection to place of those who moved into them, as was often the case in larger cities; a range of industrial workplaces and a civil society of clubs and associations were contexts for the formation of local social networks and also gave residents a sense of their town as a distinct community with its own history and a measure of self-determination; civil society promoted the idea of a town community discursively through civic ceremony and in the pages of the local newspaper.

## **Abbreviations**

CLB	Church Lads' Brigade
CWG	Cook, Welton and Gemmell, company operating Beverley Shipyard from the early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century until 1963
ERALS	East Riding of Yorkshire Archives and Local Studies
ERYMS	East Riding of Yorkshire Museums Service
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationary Office
Nomis	Online service provided by Office for National Statistics
OS	Ordnance Survey
SEG	Socio-economic group
VCH	Victoria County History

## Reflexive Introduction

As an explanation of how I came to research and write about working-class community in this particular small Yorkshire town, I will evoke another small Yorkshire town where I spent much of my early life. This element of autobiography is offered in the spirit of 'reflexivity'. Qualitative researchers advocate reflexivity as a way of ensuring transparency – no investigator is without preconceptions and no knowledge can ever be objective and neutral. By placing oneself into the research account, the researcher acknowledges that their particular predispositions, life history and aptitudes influence the course and outcome of the investigation. Writing oneself into the research allows the reader to judge the work in full knowledge of how and why it has been prepared.<sup>1</sup>

In 1985 I moved to Driffield from a nearby village and entered secondary school in the town. Driffield, then with a population of around 10,000, is one of several small towns in the East Riding of Yorkshire, a county described as a 'rural backwater' in 1970, and as 'one of the most completely rural areas in England' two decades later.<sup>2</sup> Growing up in this town I was aware that there were families who were much more integrated into local life than mine was. Some friends had grandparents, aunts and uncles living in the town. They had cousins living locally who were so much part of everyday life that they were barely acknowledged if met in the street. This was different to my family's experience since we were immigrants from Hull – only 25 miles away, but this meant that family relationships were maintained with more effort. Friends who had family living locally also seemed to know lots of people living in the town. It was apparent that there were many different strata of community – farmers and business men socialised in the golf club, rugby club and in a particular pub, those who grew up on the council estate all seemed to know one another, students and counter-cultural types had their own places to meet and sense of community. The town had well-known people, including teachers who had taught several generations in the local schools, particular pub landlords, notorious families and individuals, councillors,

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<sup>1</sup> Valerie Yow, "'Do I like them too much?': effects of the oral history interview on the interviewer and vice-versa," in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 54-72.; Mary Stuart, "You're a big girl now: subjectivities, feminism and oral history," *Oral History* 22, no. 2 (1994): 55-63. p.62; Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different?" in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. A. Thomson and R. Perks. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 32-42. pp.38-41.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Lewis and Philip N. Jones, *Industrial Britain. The Humberside Region*. (Newton Abbot: David and Charles Ltd, 1970) p.11; Stephen Counce, *Amongst Farm Horses: The Horselads of East Yorkshire*, (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1991) p.1.



doctors, local newspaper journalists and those who played in bands. I worked in a local factory, and experienced a level of camaraderie and sense of community there.

Overall, Driffield seemed to me to contain elements of ‘community’, the ideal form of which appeared in television programmes and sociology text books. But I never felt it quite lived up to the promise of community. Many faces in the street were known, but many were not, and one only needed to leave the town for a while (for example to go to university) and everything seemed to change. I worked in another local factory where the atmosphere was less friendly than I had experienced in my first bout of factory work. Like many of my friends I had an ambiguous relationship with Driffield, enjoying the sense of place but feeling that it was small and parochial.

After university I became a museum curator for the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, working in Beverley, another small East Riding town. As I worked with local people and interviewed residents about their history for exhibitions, I became interested in the working-class, industrial community that they described – a ‘world we have lost’, to borrow Peter Laslett’s term. It seemed to resonate with both my own experiences in Driffield and also with societal change more broadly. Beverley’s industrial structure had mirrored that of England, and it underwent deindustrialisation at the same time as many other parts of the country.<sup>3</sup> In Beverley the decline in manual work and corresponding rise in middle-class occupations also closely matched national trends.<sup>4</sup> The town had become a commuter town in a way that seemed to typify a more mobile, less rooted society. Beverley was not ‘typical’ any more than any single place can ever be taken as typical, but it did seem to crystallise more general societal changes.

Although resolutely also a ‘small town’, Beverley was larger than Driffield. The town’s population grew from c.15,000 in 1951 to c.20,000 in 1981 and c.30,000 in 2001.<sup>5</sup> Beverley is recognised as a historic town, famous for its medieval Minster church which is claimed by some as one of the finest in Europe. The Minster helped to make Beverley a relatively important town in the middle-ages; survivals from that period also include the street plan, remains of a Dominican friary and a 15<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Four, ‘Communities of Work’, p.106.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 1 ‘Change in Socio-Economic Groups, 1961-1991’.

<sup>5</sup> *Census 1961 England and Wales. County Report. Yorkshire, East Riding* (London HMSO 1964); *Census 1981: Key Statistics for Urban Areas: The North: Cities and Towns* (London: HMSO, 1984); Office of National Statistics website (<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>) [Accessed: 28 September 2008].

town gate. The town enjoyed prosperity in the Georgian period, becoming a local centre for East Riding's landowning society who were growing rich on the profits of agricultural improvement, and many fine buildings from this period survive.<sup>6</sup> Yet Beverley had a more significant industrial history than other towns in the East Riding. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the town had the usual industries related to its agricultural hinterland – grain milling and the production of cattle feeds – but also tanning and engineering on a large scale as well as steel shipbuilding, all of which gave the town the largest industrial proletariat in the county (with the exception of Hull).<sup>7</sup> This working-class population became concentrated to the east of the town as a result of council house building programmes which accelerated after the Second World War. In 1964:

There were 5,415 houses in the borough, of which 1,132 had been built by the council since the war... most building took place, however, on the big new Riding Fields and Swinemoor [council] estates, where nearly 800 houses were put up.<sup>8</sup>

In recent years the scale of Beverley's transformation has been more dramatic than elsewhere in the East Riding. A larger industrial sector meant that deindustrialisation had more impact; the combination of an expanding number of middle-class jobs in the local authority, proximity to the city of Hull and its attractiveness as a place to live meant that Beverley grew beyond local and national averages.<sup>9</sup> Between 1991 and 2001 the town's population expanded by 36%, as opposed to 6% for the East Riding as a whole and 2% for Great Britain.<sup>10</sup> Most of this expansion was into new private housing estates built on green-field sites around the perimeter of the town, as

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<sup>6</sup> K.J. Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York East Riding: Volume Six: The Borough and Liberties of Beverley* (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research, 1989), online edition, URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=36436> [Accessed: 16 August 2011] p.1.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter Four, 'Communities of Work', pp.103-104.

<sup>8</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*, pp. 154-160. [Accessed: 17 September 2008].

<sup>9</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*, pp.154-160. [Accessed: 7 September 2008].

<sup>10</sup> Vision of Britain Website

[http://vision.edina.ac.uk/data\\_cube\\_table\\_page.jsp?data\\_theme=T\\_POP&data\\_cube=N\\_TPop&u\\_id=10217660&c\\_id=10001043&add=N](http://vision.edina.ac.uk/data_cube_table_page.jsp?data_theme=T_POP&data_cube=N_TPop&u_id=10217660&c_id=10001043&add=N) [Accessed: 29 September 2008].

comparison of statistics for growth in the different parishes which make up the Beverley urban area reveal.<sup>11</sup>

These transformations were viewed as significant by older residents. Many of the aspects of the recent past these residents described resembled the small-town community I had perceived in Driffield in the late 1980s and early 1990s (indeed, some interviewees later told me that they had moved to Driffield to try and regain the country-town atmosphere they felt had been lost in Beverley). So in Beverley I sought to examine a working-class localised life which had once been more general in industrialised Britain, but also to explore the particular experience of working-class populations living in small towns.

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<sup>11</sup> See population data for civil parishes of Beverley CP, Molescroft and Woodmansey for 1991 and 2001, available on Office of National Statistics website (<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>) [Accessed 28 September 2008].

## **Chapter One. Intellectual Context.**

This thesis delineates the ways in which the post-war affluent working classes in Beverley both socialised and identified with their local communities of family and friends. This depiction is set against sociological and historiographical accounts which have portrayed fundamental discontinuities in post-war British working-class community. My thesis argues that such narratives have over-emphasised a shift from ‘traditional’ to ‘new’ working classes by presenting extreme examples of each. I argue that working-class people in more stable contexts enjoyed the benefits of rising wealth without sacrificing their communities. In Beverley, working-class people took advantage of an expanding range of social opportunities, blending new with old forms of sociability. Though this sociability took place less within immediate neighbourhoods than previously, individuals’ networks of friends and family were nevertheless largely contained within the town, and Beverley remained an important reference for identity. I feel that it is important to emphasise this vitality of community since the post-war working classes have often been portrayed responding to affluence by withdrawing from community into materialistic, ‘privatised’ and individualised lifestyles.

In this introduction I will outline some of the ways the term community has been defined and deployed, before stipulating how it is used in this thesis. I will then discuss how post-war change in British working-class life has been characterised in sociology and historiography, paying particular attention to narratives which depict a transition from ‘traditional working-class communities’ to individualistic ‘privatised’ lifestyles. I will next present the methodology employed in the research and outline the structure of the thesis. Finally, this introduction will essay a brief history of Beverley’s working-class communities from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century until 1980 in order to contextualise the discussion in the substantive chapters.

### **Community of place**

Community has a great variety of meanings in both popular and academic usage. It is a central problem in sociology which has resulted in a plethora of uses and meanings, though common ground can be discerned.<sup>1</sup> David Lee and Howard Newby reduced the multiplicity of available definitions into three main conceptual strands: community as

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<sup>1</sup> Graham Day, *Community and Everyday Life*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p.1.

a geographical definition, referring to people living in a particular bounded space; community as a local social system, suggesting links and relationships between residents of a particular area; community as a quality of social relationships, a feeling of belonging and identity which is summed up by the term 'communion' and need not overlap with locality.<sup>2</sup>

The first of Lee and Newby's definitions is descriptive, a short-hand term to describe a local population. It encompasses references to a particular place as 'a community' which are commonplace in, for example, news reports, and by which nothing more is signified than that people live in a town or area. The second and third definitions imply theories about the connections between people, and suggest problems for empirical research. A large number of sociological studies, particularly in Britain in the mid-twentieth century, addressed community in the second, local social system, sense – analysing sociability in order to provide descriptions and models of local social worlds. Dimensions of sociability included family life, neighbourhood interaction and exchange, networks of friendship and acquaintances, sociability connected to the workplace, and associational life.<sup>3</sup> Concepts such as close-knit and loose-knit networks, strong and weak social ties, and role-density were developed as ways of understanding these social systems.<sup>4</sup>

In more recent decades, the third of Lee and Newby's understandings of community – a sense of belonging to and identifying with a group – has come increasingly to the fore as a topic of empirical research and theoretical consideration. Whilst group belonging had long been understood as a component of community, the

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<sup>2</sup> David Lee and Howard Newby, *The Problem of Sociology : an Introduction to the Discipline*, (London: Hutchinson, 1983) pp.57-58.

<sup>3</sup> For a focus on family, see Michael Dunlop Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, (London: Penguin, 1962); Elizabeth Bott, *Family and Social Network : Roles Norms and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families*. Second Edition. (Thetford: Tavistock, 1971); for neighbourhood interaction and exchange, see Margaret Stacey, *Tradition and Change: A Study of Banbury*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp.91-115; for networks of friendship and acquaintanceship, see Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers : Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans*, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962); Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *The American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360-1380; Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship : Hidden Solidarities Today*, (Princeton, N.J. ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006); for workplace sociability, see: Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques, and Clifford Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life : An Analysis of a Yorkshire Mining Community*. Second edition. (London: Tavistock, 1969); Stephen Hill, *The Dockers : Class and Tradition in London*, (London: Heinemann, 1976); R. K. Brown and P. Brannen, "Social Relations and Social Perspectives Amongst Shipbuilding Workers," *Sociology* 4 (1970): 71-84; for associational life, see Stacey, *Tradition and Change*, pp.75-91.

<sup>4</sup> For close- and loose-knit networks, see Bott, *Family and Social Network*, pp.3-4; for strong and weak social ties, see Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties,"; for role density, see Ronald Frankenburg, *Communities in Britain*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), pp.248-253.

later twentieth century brought a renewed focus on the imaginative and symbolic construction of community, superseding the mid-century preoccupation with networks and social systems.<sup>5</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis, I understand community as social interaction which is frequent and meaningful and results in some sense of group identity. In its most basic form, community inheres in the tendency of regular sociability to lead to communal sentiment, as Max Weber suggested.<sup>6</sup> This thesis will explore sociability and feelings of group identity in reference to place. Although the first and second of Lee and Newby's two understandings of community invoke a local context, the third sense, 'group belonging', need not do so, since people may identify with geographically dispersed groupings. However, I am interested in the local dimensions of sociability and identity because specific claims are made about 'communities of place' and their declining salience in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> I will now turn to a consideration of some of these claims.

### **The literature on working-class community in the age of affluence**

The focus of this study is working-class community of place, as it has been argued that local community remained strong amongst the working classes into the mid-twentieth century, but declined as living standards rose in the 1950s and 1960s.

Historians described the 'age of affluence' as that period in 1950s and 1960s Britain (and in much of the western world more generally) when full employment, rising wages and declining commodity prices raised standards of living.<sup>8</sup> The period

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<sup>5</sup> Interest in subjective aspects of group belonging dates back to nineteenth century sociologists including: Emile Durkheim, *Division of Labour in Society*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), pp.55-64; Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Association (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, trans. Charles P. Loomis. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1955), pp.17-28; Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (London: University of California Press, 1978), pp.40-41. For the late-twentieth century, see: Gerald Dale Suttles, *The Social Construction of Communities*, (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp.28-32, p.52; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, New Edition, (London: Verso, 2006), pp.6-7; Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, (London: Routledge, 1985), p.15; Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.9-10; Jeanette Edwards, *Born and Bred : Idioms of Kinship and New Reproductive Technologies in England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Ben Rogaly and Becky Taylor, *Moving Histories of Class and Community : Identity, Place and Belonging in Contemporary England*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, p.41.

<sup>7</sup> The term 'community of place' is borrowed from: Victoria Nash and Ian Christie, *Making Sense of Community*, (London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 2003), p.1.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, (London: Abacus, 1995), p.6; Peter Howlett, "The 'Golden Age', 1955-1973," in *Twentieth-Century Britain: Economic*,

was understood as such by contemporaries; the 'affluent societies' of the USA and Britain were the respective subjects of books by J.K. Galbraith in 1958 and Ferdynand Zweig in 1961.<sup>9</sup> However, Eric Hobsbawm, commenting on the third quarter of the twentieth century, wrote:

It was not until the great boom was over, in the disturbed seventies, waiting for the traumatic eighties, that observers...began to realise that the world, particularly the world of developed capitalism, had passed through an altogether exceptional phase of its history, perhaps a unique one.<sup>10</sup>

Hobsbawm noted that in most industrialised countries this 'Golden Age broke all records'.<sup>11</sup> Peter Howlett, whilst cautioning that the Golden Age was not so pronounced in Britain as in some countries, nevertheless wrote that economically 'it stands out as a period of great success'.<sup>12</sup>

*From traditional working class-community to privatised worker*

Many contemporary sociologists, and subsequent historians, thought that rising living standards transformed working-class life, undermining the solidary communities which inhered in particular neighbourhoods. Sociologists writing in the 1950s and 1960s depicted what they saw as traditional ways of life in these communities. Authors portrayed a rich variety of distinctive places with a range of socio-economic characteristics, from Richard Hoggart's ethnographic description of the Leeds suburb of Hunslet, to Peter Willmott and Michael Young's Bethnal Green, Madeline Kerr's poor catholic community in Liverpool, Dennis, Henriques, and Slaughter's account of a Yorkshire coal-mining town, and many others.<sup>13</sup>

Despite considerable variation in these studies, Josephine Klein attempted a synthesis of the principal monographs into a model of the 'traditional working-class community'. Klein's source materials were British community studies including works by Willmott and Young, Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, J.M. Moge, Elizabeth

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*Social and Cultural Change*, ed. Paul Johnson. (London: Longman, 1994), 320-340.p.321;Robert Taylor, "The Rise and Disintegration of the Working Classes," in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 371-388, p.376.

<sup>9</sup> John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1958); Ferdynand Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society. Family Life and Industry*, (London: Heinemann, 1961).

<sup>10</sup> Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, pp.257-258.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p.258.

<sup>12</sup> Howlett, *The 'Golden Age', 1955-1973*, 320-340, p.320.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy : Aspects of Working-Class Life With Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin books, 1958); Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*; Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life*.

Bott, Margaret Stacey and Ferdynand Zweig. Klein's model of traditional working-class community described a central strand of 'self-respecting' working-class people who were neither among the wealthy nor the very poorest in society.<sup>14</sup> Traditional communities had a strongly local dimension. They existed in neighbourhoods characterised by 'close-knit' social networks – there was a great likelihood that those people known socially by an individual would also know one another. Such close-knit networks were a product of

the concentration of people in the same or similar occupations in the same local area, little migration into or out of the area, local inter-marriages, the propinquity of extended family, continuity of social relations, opportunities for relatives and friends to help one another, little demand for physical mobility, little opportunity for social mobility<sup>15</sup>

In places where everyone knew everyone else, Klein argued, there was social pressure to conform and this perpetuated traditional norms.<sup>16</sup>

According to Klein, the sociable cultures of such places tended to follow a pattern. Extended family members were responsible for the majority of mutual assistance, but neighbours helped in an emergency.<sup>17</sup> Sociability with those outside the family was conducted away from the home – in the street, in pubs, in local shops – and was abundant and informal.<sup>18</sup> This brought easy companionship and the speedy transfer of local knowledge which could result in help in times of need, but also led to gossip, which might be prying, intrusive and bullying.<sup>19</sup> Those living in traditional communities showed a marked reluctance to join formal organisations, or engage in social situations which might bring contact with the middle classes, who were designated as 'them'.<sup>20</sup> Men and women socialised separately, men with mates from work, hobbies, sports, pubs and clubs, and women with relatives and female neighbours.<sup>21</sup> Husbands and wives had strictly defined roles in the domestic sphere.<sup>22</sup> Klein suggested that because 'interaction, liking and understanding normally vary

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<sup>14</sup> Josephine Klein, *Samples From English Cultures*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p.123.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.* p.130.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.* p.216.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* p.135

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* p.141, p.206-208.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.* p.135.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.* p.210.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.* pp.171-172.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.* p.167.



together', the conjugal bond was therefore rather weak in traditional communities.<sup>23</sup> Wives relied on their female relatives (usually mothers) for social, material and psychological support.<sup>24</sup>

Although she was keen to emphasise the localness of the working classes, Klein did not tightly define the size of locality which formed the setting for the traditional mode of community. She appears to have conceived of community at the level of a small cluster of streets. In her account of traditional working-class community, most had kin living no more than five minutes away, and many had relatives in the same street.<sup>25</sup> The small shops and pubs used regularly as sites for informal social interaction were 'just around the corner'.<sup>26</sup> Much of the daily interaction of women took place at an even more local level, amongst 'neighbours' (presumably meaning others living on the same street).<sup>27</sup>

Like many of the authors she referenced, Klein depicted post-war changes undermining these traditional communities. For Klein, post-war urban reconstruction saw large numbers move away from old established communities into new housing estates at the same time as standards of living rose.<sup>28</sup> Klein wrote that these changes led away from highly localised traditional communities in several ways. Firstly, those moving to new housing estates often withdrew from sociability with their neighbours since they were unsure of the norms of their new milieux, and there were in any case fewer contexts such as pubs and local shops in which to socialise informally.<sup>29</sup> This reinforced wider social trends towards a more home- and family-oriented existence and increasing emphasis on the conjugal bond.<sup>30</sup> Secondly, the propinquity of extended family which was such a part of the old communities was disrupted by the movement of many working classes to the new estates which were often many miles from their old neighbourhoods.<sup>31</sup> Thirdly, affluence brought many the opportunity to pursue a more wide-ranging sociability with chosen friends who might neither be related nor live locally (this could work through ownership of cars and the financial means to

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.* p.245, pp.171-172.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* p.185.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.* p.130, p.185.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* p.229.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p.171.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* pp.271-272

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* p.222, pp.254-255, p.284, p.294.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p.284, p.287, pp.301-302.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.* p.229.

travel for leisure).<sup>32</sup> Such increased social selectivity led to working-class people having more geographically dispersed friendship networks, whose individual ‘nodes’ would not necessarily know each other; this contrasted with the close-knit networks of the old communities in which almost everyone knew everyone else.

Although Klein felt that the move away from old communities brought new tendencies more sharply into focus, she considered that change in working-class attitudes and life-styles was more general: ‘Housing estates are not to be thought of as the only places where changes take place.’<sup>33</sup> General rising affluence caused ‘anomie’ by presenting an increasing number of choices.<sup>34</sup> The coherence of the older communities that migrants left behind were threatened because there were fewer households of kin and long-standing neighbours to share in the mutual cultures of these districts.<sup>35</sup>

Klein’s account reflected the preoccupations of the contemporary sociologists she cited. The argument that the close-knit social networks of traditional working-class communities tended to lead to distinct conjugal roles and sociability, with men spending time with their friends and women with family, was first made by Elizabeth Bott.<sup>36</sup> The term ‘traditional’ to designate purportedly stable and long-standing local cultures was used by Margaret Stacey, who described many of those who had been born and bred in Banbury as ‘traditionalists’ because of their adherence to established local social norms.<sup>37</sup> The contrast of traditional and new working-class neighbourhoods preoccupied Willmott and Young and Mogey.<sup>38</sup> Klein relied heavily on Mogey’s distinction between the ‘status assenters’ who inhabited traditional communities, and the ‘status dissenters’ living on the new estates. The attitudes of status assenters were the product of social pressures in long-established working-class areas leading to conformity and a tendency to accept things as they stood. Status dissenters were those less willing to abide by established ways of doing things and more likely to strive for personal social advancement; such attitudes were most

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* p.284, pp.273-275, p.278.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* p.220, p.224.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.* pp.271-272.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* p.136.

<sup>36</sup> Bott, *Family and Social Network*, pp.3-4.

<sup>37</sup> Stacey, *Tradition and Change*, pp.167-169.

<sup>38</sup> Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, pp.147-169; John Macfarlane Mogey, *Family and Neighbourhood. Two Studies in Oxford*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp.152-156.

common amongst, but not confined to, populations who had moved away from older residential areas to new housing estates.<sup>39</sup>

Klein's account is an interesting and insightful synthesis, indicative of much contemporary thinking about working-class social change, and it influenced subsequent scholarship.<sup>40</sup> The substantive chapters will therefore use Klein's thesis for points of comparison against which to analyse the Beverley evidence. One shortcoming of Klein's thesis can be briefly mentioned in advance. Klein recognised that the move to new residential environments entailed a temporary disruption of cultural patterns, but argued that this need not necessarily be permanent. She referred to Peter Willmott's study of the Dagenham housing estate, which had been populated between the wars, and where, by the 1960s, Willmott considered that many fundamental regularities of working-class life had reasserted themselves.<sup>41</sup> Klein wrote that Willmott's study was published too late to affect her own conclusions; in any case, she considered that the disruption to traditional culture caused by the move to the Dagenham estate had not endured because it did not coincide with increasing affluence and the spreading influence of mass-media. It was the confluence of these trends that would ensure the move to post-war estates marked a more permanent break with tradition.<sup>42</sup> However, Klein's evidence regarding life on new estates was drawn exclusively from studies of new 1950s housing estates whose residents were still in the throes of recent upheaval. Her confident prediction that the 'fundamental regularities' described by Willmott would not re-install themselves was therefore speculative rather than empirically grounded.<sup>43</sup>

Significantly, Klein's account was used by Goldthorpe *et al*, whose three-volume report on their research into affluent workers in Luton is one of the most read

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<sup>39</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.238-245.

<sup>40</sup> Notably, Goldthorpe *et al* used Klein's account in their influential *Affluent Worker* studies: John Harry Goldthorpe *et al*, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p.86, (see below). Historians Elizabeth Roberts and Melanie Tebbutt each made use of some of Klein's concepts and interpretations: Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families : An Oral History, 1940-1970*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp.199-201; Melanie Tebbutt, *Women's Talk? : A Social History of 'Gossip' in Working-Class Neighbourhoods, 1880-1960*, (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), p.62, p.155, p.164.

<sup>41</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.221-222; Peter Willmott, *The Evolution of a Community : A Study of Dagenham After Forty Years*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p.109.

<sup>42</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.222.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* p.259.

and discussed work of British sociology.<sup>44</sup> The authors of this report followed Klein in describing ‘the “traditional” type of working-class district’ in which successive generations lived alongside one another. Citing Klein, they wrote that such districts were characterised by mutual aid, institutions, communal solidarity which reflected the absence of social and status divisions, and strong normative cultures.<sup>45</sup>

However, whilst Klein’s interpretation leaned towards what came to be known as the ‘*embourgeoisement* thesis’, which stated that manual workers enjoying post-war rising living standards were ‘adopting a middle-class way of life’, Goldthorpe *et al* posited the alternative thesis of ‘privatism’.<sup>46</sup> The team studied Vauxhall car-plant workers in Luton; this was a well-paid, semi-skilled workforce, chosen because their ‘social characteristics and social setting were such as to favour, in almost every respect, the validation of the *embourgeoisement* thesis’.<sup>47</sup> Many workers had recently moved into the town, were without the socially conservative influence of a local community of family and friends, and were earning relatively large wages. The study concluded that the *embourgeoisement* thesis could not be supported because the workers neither adopted specifically middle-class forms of sociability, socialised with white collar workers, nor aspired to middle-class lifestyles.<sup>48</sup> Goldthorpe *et al* suggested instead that the workers’ lifestyles were ‘privatised’ – centred on the home and nuclear family, with little of the communal sociability and close relations amongst extended family that were associated with the traditional working classes.<sup>49</sup> The social habits of these ‘new working classes’ differed significantly from those in ‘more traditional working-class communities’, and were not culturally circumscribed by ‘the fixed horizons of deferential proletarian traditionalism’.<sup>50</sup> However, the affluent workers had not learned specifically middle-class approaches to choosing and actively making friends, in the sense Klein envisaged they might, and so their sociability tended to be sparse – most evenings and weekends were spent watching the television

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<sup>44</sup> Fiona Devine, *Affluent Workers Revisited : Privatism and the Working Class*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), p.20.

<sup>45</sup> Goldthorpe et al., *The Affluent Worker*, p.86..

<sup>46</sup> For working classes adopting middle class lifestyles and aspirations, see Mark Abrams, Richard Rose, and Rita Hinden, *Must Labour Lose?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p.23,p.100; Klein, *Samples From English Cultures*, pp.420-422; Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, p.209-210.

<sup>47</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.161.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* p.113, p.115, pp.140-143, p.160.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.* pp.96-97.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.* pp.158-159.

and doing tasks related to the home.<sup>51</sup>

This movement towards privatism was linked to post-war rising affluence at the level of values. The Vauxhall workers had actively chosen privatised lifestyles, leaving their old close-knit communities in search of better pay.<sup>52</sup> For Goldthorpe *et al*, this showed that the workers valued affluence and improved material conditions over communal sociability with friends and relatives. The authors considered that the Luton workers were probably an extreme example of working-class privatism, but suggested that privatisation may have been a more general trend in working-class life.<sup>53</sup> Goldthorpe *et al*'s thesis of privatism has been influential, and both the idea and the term itself have often been used by subsequent writers.<sup>54</sup>

So, both Klein and Goldthorpe *et al* contrasted older, communal working-class communities, grounded in highly local contexts, with newer forms of working-class life in which many of the socially supportive features of these older communities (propinquity of kin, close-knit networks, easy informal sociability) were missing. For Klein, mass population movement away from older streets and into new post-war housing estates was a key factor in the shift away from traditional forms of community, but for both Klein and Goldthorpe *et al*, affluence itself was also a factor. Klein thought that rising living standards brought choice in sociability and leisure, meaning that working-class people no longer need associate only with those immediately at hand; Goldthorpe *et al* argued that the attainability of affluent lifestyles had stirred new materialist values amongst the working classes, many of whom would no longer be satisfied to remain in the old supportive but restrictive working-class neighbourhoods. Both Klein and Goldthorpe *et al* described social milieux where new attitudes could most clearly be perceived, but each indicated that the shifts they described were more general.

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<sup>51</sup> Goldthorpe *et al*., *The Affluent Worker*, pp.91-103.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.* pp.118-121.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p.164.

<sup>54</sup> A few examples of the term used in subsequent sociological and historical discussions: Gordon Marshall *et al*., "Class, Citizenship, and Distributional Conflict in Modern Britain," *The British Journal of Sociology* 36, no. 2 (1985): 259-284. p.276; Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families*, pp.14-15; Eric Hopkins, *The Rise and Decline of the English Working Classes 1918-1990 : A Social History*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991) p.270; Chris Harris, "The Family in Post-War Britain," in *Understanding Post-War British Society*, eds. Jim Obelkevich and Peter Catterall. (London: Routledge, 1994), 49-56, p.56.

### *The legacy of 1960s sociology*

Whilst the thesis of privatism proved particularly influential, it has been critiqued. One line of attack was to deny that traditional working-class communities were as those who documented them imagined. If accepted, this argument that the communality and stability of 'traditional working-class community' has been overdrawn implies that post-war affluence was not the turning point in the story of traditional working-class community that Klein and Goldthorpe *et al* suggested.

Authors pointed to wide variety in localised forms of such communities in the early and mid-twentieth century, and doubted the utility of models such as Klein's which attempted to synthesise this diversity. For example, John Clarke commented that 'working-class community' may have only developed in places where there was a 'close, dovetailed relationship between work and non-work and a geographical concentration of intra-class social relationships'.<sup>55</sup> Ray Pahl suggested that the portrayal of traditional working-class communities as communal and mutually supportive was based on limited evidence, and pointed instead to historical evidence of long-standing individualistic tendencies in working-class life.<sup>56</sup>

Joanna Bourke was foremost amongst historians pressing the charge that traditional working-class communities were not all that sociologists had claimed. For Bourke, the evidence of personal antipathy, privacy, feuds, the eagerness with which many working-class families sought to escape their old communities, and the relief they expressed on having done so, all outweighed evidence of communal sociability and mutual aid in the first half of the twentieth century. Bourke argued instead that the mutuality and friendliness attributed to traditional working-class communities were largely the products of nostalgic imagination – what Talja Blokland, following a similar line, called 'memory magic'.<sup>57</sup> Bourke wrote that in Britain in the first half of the twentieth century 'a shared identity as "working class", even if rooted in a single geographical space, could not surmount the difficulties inherent in competitive

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<sup>55</sup> For eg. John Clarke, "Capital and Culture: The Post-War Working Class Revisited," in *Working-Class Culture. Studies in History and Theory*, eds. John Clarke, Chas Critcher and Richard Johnson. (London: Hutchinson, 1979), 239-253, p.240; David Gilbert, "Imagined Communities and Mining Communities," *Labour History Review* 60, no. 2 (1995): 47-55, p.51.

<sup>56</sup> Ray Pahl, *Divisions of Labour*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.3-4, p.325.

<sup>57</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity*, (London: Routledge, 1993); Talja Blokland, "Memory Magic: How a Working-Class Neighbourhood Became an Imagined Community and Class Started to Matter When it Lost its Base," in *Rethinking Class. Culture, Identities and Lifestyle*, eds. Fiona Devine, Mike Savage, John Scott and Rosemary Crompton. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 123-138.

society'.<sup>58</sup> Employing a more quantitative approach, Dudley Baines and Paul Johnson demonstrated that there was considerable geographical and inter-generational occupational mobility among working-classes in early 1930s London, and argued that therefore the demographic stability on which models of traditional working-class community were predicated was imagined. Either stable communities had never actually been the norm, or London society had already become significantly individualised by the 1930s.<sup>59</sup> Baines and Johnson's critique targeted Willmott and Young's study of East London, but could also be applied to Klein's model of traditional communities, which was in part based on Willmott and Young's monograph.<sup>60</sup>

An alternative line of attack has been to emphasise the sociability of newly affluent working classes.<sup>61</sup> Adrian Franklin argued that well-paid female tobacco factory workers in inter- and post-war Bristol engaged in forms of sociability which were historically new.<sup>62</sup> Instead of affluence leading to a more restricted sociability, Franklin showed that workers entered into friendships with female co-workers which they sustained throughout their lives. Female tobacco workers socialised together in works' sports clubs; after marriage they left factory work, but maintained their old friendships, meeting as couples along with their respective spouses. Relative affluence enabled these women and their husbands to buy homes away from their working-class communities of origin, and these homes became venues for sociability. Because friends lived at some remove, meetings were regularised and lasted several hours.<sup>63</sup> Just because workers did not engage in the communal sociability associated with the traditional working classes, this did not mean that they were privatised, since they maintained external links with friends.<sup>64</sup>

Although he dismissed the concept of privatism, Franklin, like Klein and

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<sup>58</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, p.169; see also Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures : England, 1918-1951*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.164-205, who considered traditional working-class sociability 'thin'.

<sup>59</sup> Dudley Baines and Paul Johnson, "In Search of the 'Traditional' Working Class: Social Mobility and Occupational Continuity in Interwar London," *The Economic History Review* 52, no. 4 (1999): 692-713, p.711.

<sup>60</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.130.

<sup>61</sup> As noted above, Klein herself acknowledged the possibility that sociability could simply have shifted away from neighbourhoods: Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.264.

<sup>62</sup> Adrian Franklin, "Working-Class Privatism: An Historical Case Study of Bedminster, Bristol," *Society and Space* 7 (1989): 93-113.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.* pp.105-108.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* p.111.

Goldthorpe *et al*, nevertheless emphasised a disjuncture between traditional and new forms of sociability. Whereas the older forms were concentrated in particular localities, the new were ‘ego-centred and scattered’ – friends were spread geographically.<sup>65</sup> Just as Klein and Goldthorpe *et al* examined recently migrant populations (to new suburban housing estates, and to the new industrial town of Luton respectively), Franklin concentrated on a small sample of affluent workers who had moved away from their communities of origin. He did not indicate the geographical distribution of the friendship networks he described, nor suggest the extent to which the experiences of his small sample were representative of wider change.

Like Franklin, Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl sought to show that the decline of ‘traditional’ communities did not leave people individualised and isolated, and that our ‘personal communities’ (the ties we maintain with friends and family) form vital bridges between each other and wider society. Spencer and Pahl highlighted two separate meanings of individualisation, which they considered were often conflated in discussions of late twentieth century social change. The first meaning denotes increasing personal choice and freedom (reminiscent of Klein’s ‘individuation’), the second implies social isolation, and is closer to the implications of the privatisation thesis.<sup>66</sup> Whilst Spencer and Pahl found evidence of widespread personal choice and freedom in terms of sociability, as opposed to the more ‘given’ social relationships located in place associated with traditional communities, they argued against the assumption that a rise in social isolation had inevitably resulted. Instead the authors concentrated on the ways in which friends and family formed reliable, mutually supportive communities which acted as bridges between individuals and society.<sup>67</sup>

Newer forms of sociability might not be concentrated on the immediate neighbourhood to the extent described in the model of traditional working-class communities. But working-class sociability might still be connected to place. Spencer and Pahl suggested class differences in the extent to which personal communities were centred on place, and posited that in general the social worlds of the working classes remained more localised than those of the middle classes.<sup>68</sup> A number of other empirical sociological studies from the later twentieth and early twenty first centuries

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* p.94.

<sup>66</sup> Spencer and Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship*, p.15.

<sup>67</sup> Spencer and Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship*, p.195.

<sup>68</sup> Ray Pahl and Liz Spencer ‘Capturing Personal Communities’ in C.C. Harris (ed.) *Family, Economy and Community* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990), p.89



have also described the importance for many of face-to-face relationships in localities.<sup>69</sup> For example, Mike Savage, Gaynor Bagnall and Brian Longhurst noted that the degree of family connectedness they observed in an early 21<sup>st</sup> century working-class district of Cheadle was reminiscent of that found in Willmott and Young's 1957 study of Bethnal Green.<sup>70</sup>

Conceptualising communities as subjective constructs – the ways individuals identify themselves with groups – can also reduce the perception that post-war affluence destroyed localised community. In the later twentieth century, ideas about the social and symbolic construction of community provided new ways of thinking about social relationships and place. For writers adopting this more anthropological approach, and prioritising cultural over structural and network interpretations, community was, and may have always been, partially imagined. From this perspective there appeared to have been less change as a result of modernising processes.

For example, in the early 1970s Gerald Suttles described how residents made city space meaningful by dividing it mentally into community areas. This 'cognitive mapping' included assigning social characteristics to neighbourhoods, and could result in the adoption by residents of labels others gave them.<sup>71</sup> Such division of urban space did not necessarily correlate closely with actual patterns of sociability, but could come to influence these patterns. In the 1980s, Anthony Cohen observed that the reduction of communities' isolation and distinctiveness as a result of globalising tendencies in the latter half of the twentieth century did not necessarily result in a reduction of their own sense of uniqueness. Communities retained identity through symbolic assertions of uniqueness and difference in relation to others.<sup>72</sup> Cohen described how residents of the Scottish island of Whalsay maintained a sense of community despite increasing

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<sup>69</sup> For example: Daniel Wight, *Workers Not Wasters: Masculine Respectability, Consumption and Unemployment in Central Scotland: A Community Study*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993); Tim Strangleman, "Networks, Place and Identities in Post-Industrial Mining Communities," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25, no. 1 (2001): 253-267; Nash and Christie, *Making Sense of Community*; Beate Volker, Henk Flap, and Siegwart Lindenberg, "When Are Neighbourhoods Communities? Community in Dutch Neighbourhoods," *European Sociological Review* 23, no. 1 (2007): 99-114; Andrew Clark, "From Neighbourhood to Network: A Review of the Significance of Neighbourhood in Studies of Social Relations," *Geography Compass* 3, no. 4 (2009): 1559-1578.

<sup>70</sup> Mike Savage, Gaynor Bagnall and Brian Longhurst, "Local Habitus and Working-Class Culture" in Fiona Devine, Mike Savage, John Scott and Rosemary Crompton, eds, *Rethinking Class. Culture, Identities and Lifestyle*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 95-122, p.108.

<sup>71</sup> Gerald Dale Suttles, *The Social Construction of Communities*, (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp.28-32, p.52.

<sup>72</sup> Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, (London: Routledge, 1985) pp.36-37.

incursions of the wider world into island life, and the shift in patterns of sociability from a focus on neighbours to wider, more dispersed groups. The form and meaning of rituals used to symbolise community, such as the ‘Whalsay Spree’, were changed to accommodate the new realities of local social life, but were no less vital.<sup>73</sup>

Despite these challenges to the privatism thesis, the argument that post-war affluence brought about a significant decline in working-class community remains highly influential, colouring subsequent interpretations – especially those of historians. The hypothetical nature of both Klein’s and Goldthorpe *et al*’s conclusions, based as they were on recently migrant populations, tended to be overlooked in the subsequent use of their concepts. We can see this particularly in the work of Eric Hobsbawm and Elizabeth Roberts.

Eric Hobsbawm used Goldthorpe *et al*’s term ‘privatization’ to characterise post-war change in working-class communities. Hobsbawm considered that what became known as traditional working-class culture developed in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as ‘industrial capitalism became the common and accepted way of life of the labouring classes’.<sup>74</sup> This was a local culture, focussed on neighbourhoods, and reached its apogee in 1945-1951.<sup>75</sup> Although this working-class culture was shaped by an intense localism, it was ‘remarkably standardised’ across Britain.<sup>76</sup> Hobsbawm argued that working-class life was dominated by a ‘profound sense of the separateness of manual labour, an unformulated but powerful moral code based on solidarity’, the mutual aid of neighbours and workmates (a ‘vast amount of working-class life...even until 1945, was lived in a network of mutual aid and trust’), the separation of male and female sociability (and the impoverishment of the latter).<sup>77</sup> Although Hobsbawm considered that the ‘privatization of working-class life’ had begun between the wars with the advent of municipal housing, he argued that working-class culture was fatally undermined after the Second World War by unprecedented levels of affluence and consumerism: ‘Prosperity and privatization broke up what poverty and collectivity in the public place had welded together’.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p.95.

<sup>74</sup> Eric Hobsbawm “The Formation of British Working-Class Culture” in Eric Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1984), 176-193, p.181.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.* pp.179-181, p.185.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.* p.187.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.* p.191, pp.188-190.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.* p.188, p.185; HOBBS 1994, p.307.

Similarly, Elizabeth Roberts, one of the few historians to use new empirical research to specifically address the subject of working-class community in the latter half of the twentieth century, considered that older forms of neighbourhood sociability declined in the 1950s and 1960s. She connected this to privatism and a rise in individualism, citing Goldthorpe *et al.*<sup>79</sup> Chris Harris, a sociologist developing a retrospective argument, also used Goldthorpe *et al.*'s term, writing that the increased fragility of marriage in the second half of the twentieth century was 'one aspect of the decline of local community and the growth of individualism and its correlate, the privatised nuclear family'.<sup>80</sup>

Even in works that did not specifically evoke the concept of 'privatism', there was often a broader sense that post-war changes eroded working-class community of place. Whilst not traceable to specific authors, this sense appears to arise more generally out of the narrative which has been traced here through Goldthorpe *et al* and Klein back to the empirical sociological works of Willmott and Young, J.M. Mogey, Margeret Stacey, Ferdynand Zweig and others. For example, Arthur Marwick's argument that the 'great release from older restraints and controls' of the 1960s eroded stable, paternalistic, traditional cultures resembles Klein's thesis that mobility and affluence loosened the grip of traditionalism.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, Avner Offer recently argued that affluence and consumerism weakened working-class collective culture in the 1950s and 1960s, and Claire Langhamer contended that the age of affluence enabled the working classes to realise a culture of domesticity.<sup>82</sup>

The present thesis will address the charge that in the 1950s and 1960s working-class people abandoned local community in favour of privatised, individualised lifestyles. This is a thread running through much of the influential sociology of the time, but was perhaps stated most trenchantly by Eric Hobsbawm, as noted above. For Hobsbawm, working-class communities since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had been based on mutuality, 'collectivity: the domination of "us" over "I"', and an informal sociability lived in the public spaces of neighbourhoods. They were replaced in the third quarter

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<sup>79</sup> Roberts, *Women and Families*, p.14, pp.199-229.

<sup>80</sup> Harris, *The Family in Post-War Britain*, 49-56, p.56;

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.* p.10, p.245.

<sup>82</sup> Avner Offer, "British Manual Workers: From Producers to Consumers, c.1950-2000," *Contemporary British History* 22, no. 4 (2008): 538-571; Claire Langhamer, "The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (2005): 341-362.

of the twentieth century by 'a society consisting of an otherwise unconnected assemblage of self-centred individuals pursuing only their own gratification'.<sup>83</sup>

An empirical historical appraisal of this charge is valid and interesting for two reasons. Firstly, whilst sociologists in recent years have suggested that working-class community of place is not as dead as some had assumed, there has been little empirical historical work investigating its evolution in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the exception of Elizabeth Roberts, who investigated working-class community up to 1970 for her book on women's lives in the North West, the focus of historians of working-class community tends to stop in the mid-twentieth century.<sup>84</sup> Historical perspective brings continuity into focus in the post-war period in a way that would not have occurred to sociologists writing at the time. For example, from the vantage point of today's de-industrialised Britain the survival of significant 19<sup>th</sup> century manufacturing industries into the post-war decades is notable.<sup>85</sup> As late as the 1970s, many working-class Beverley residents worked in the same factories that had employed their parents and grandparents, something that would not be possible for later generations.

Secondly, the empirical evidence for a decline in local community came from populations in the throes of geographic relocation – Klein used sociological evidence from newly-settled post-war housing estates, Goldthorpe *et al* studied recently immigrant workers in the new town of Luton. Franklin, who did not support the privatisation thesis but nevertheless described significant qualitative changes in sociability, examined a small population of unrepresentative affluent and mobile workers in Bristol. It is interesting therefore to assess these authors' arguments in reference to a population which was not geographically mobile, but which nevertheless experienced many of the other changes associated with the age of affluence. Therefore, the primary question which the thesis addresses is: how did the social, economic and cultural changes associated with the decades of post-war affluence affect working-class community in a more settled social environment than those which informed the influential interpretations of Klein and Goldthorpe *et al*? Leading on from this, the second question motivating the study is: How might structural factors

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<sup>83</sup> Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, p.16. pp.305-306.

<sup>84</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*; McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*; Robert Colls, "When We Lived in Communities. Working-Class Culture and its Critics," in *Cities of Ideas : Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain, 1800-2000 : Essays in Honour of David Reeder*, eds. Robert Colls and Richard Rodger. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 283-307.

<sup>85</sup> Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*. Second ed. (London: Penguin, 1990), p.5.

specific to this small town setting be related to the particular patterns of local sociability and identity discovered there?

## Methodology

Beverley is an interesting site for the case-study because of its contrast to many published studies of working-class community. British community studies sociology tended to concentrate on the more dramatic cases – single-class ‘urban villages’ within larger cities, and areas associated with traditional male industries such as mining, fishing and shipbuilding.<sup>86</sup> As a county town and an attractive place to live, Beverley had both working- and middle-class populations, and was small enough for different strata of local society regularly to encounter one another. This set it apart from the studies of single-class neighbourhoods and towns such as Wilmott and Young’s Bethnal Green and Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter’s ‘Ashton’. Working-class employment was in medium-sized traditional industries, in contrast to Goldthorpe *et al*’s study which concerned workers in a large-scale, modern industry.

As noted above, many of the sociological accounts positing a shift from traditional working-class communities to privatised, individualised lifestyles were based on populations which saw significant disruption in the post-war decades, most notably with the movement of populations to new residential milieux. Beverley did not undergo the same degree of disruption. There was large-scale post-war council house construction, but the distance from older neighbourhoods to the newly built homes was not great (usually less than a mile). In comparison with the sociological studies referenced by Klein, or Goldthorpe *et al*’s Luton, there was limited out-migration on the part of Beverley working classes. Compared to Stacey’s Banbury and Elias and Scotson’s ‘Winston Parva’ there was no large influx of newcomers.<sup>87</sup>

In order to investigate patterns of place-based sociability and identity in the post-war decades, a qualitative methodology was selected. There are two advantages to this methodology. The first is that it is exploratory. In seeking to discover how people socialised in, and identified with, place, I wished to remain open to findings and

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<sup>86</sup> Authors commenting on community studies sociologists’ selection of case-study areas include: Robertson, Smyth, and McIntosh, *Neighbourhood Identity. People Time and Place*, p.6; Crow and Allan, *Community Life : An Introduction to Local Social Relations*, p.25, p.28; Michael Savage, *Class Analysis and Social Transformation*, (Buckingham: Open University, 2000), p.128; Graham Allan and Chris Phillipson, "Community Studies Today: Urban Perspectives," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 11, no. 2 (2008): 163-173, p.169.

<sup>87</sup> Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders: a Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems*, (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1965); Stacey, *Tradition and Change*.

interpretations not previously considered. Qualitative research aims to start with a minimum of preconceptions and examine a wide range of variables, therefore allowing the evidence to suggest themes which might not have been previously considered. Quantitative research, by contrast, proceeds from a hypothesis or framework which it tests by measuring a limited number of pre-selected variables, circumscribing the range of possible discoveries.<sup>88</sup> The second advantage of qualitative research for this kind of project is that the emphasis is on description rather than abstraction; an attempt is made to capture some of the contradictions and complexity of lived human experience.<sup>89</sup>

The period chosen for the study was 1945-1980. This included the 1950s and 1960s, when affluence first became politically and sociologically significant. Overall, the period could be seen as a unity locally since it was towards the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s the larger, long-established manufacturing industries closed in Beverley.<sup>90</sup> The town's history reflected national trends – the mid-70s saw the start of the end of the postwar boom and the beginning of the dramatic de-industrialisation nationally as well as locally. The period was of sufficient length that change might be discerned but not so long as to preclude a detailed account.

The specific foci of the investigation arose from the overall attempt to understand how the economic, social and cultural changes associated with the affluent era affected sociability and identity amongst a small-town working-class population. I was interested in sociability and mutuality amongst family, neighbours, friends and workmates, and participation in associational life.

Semi-structured oral history interviews were used to gather evidence, a research tool consistent with the principles of qualitative methodology.<sup>91</sup> Oral history enables access to everyday life in the past to an extent that is impossible using only documentary sources. However, historians are often suspicious of reminiscence, in oral and written forms, because of distortions caused by memory, imagination and the

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<sup>88</sup> Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997), p.104; Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History : A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, Second ed. (Walnut Creek ; Oxford: AltaMira Press, 2005), p.7.

<sup>89</sup> Iggers, *Historiography*, pp.103-108; Charles C. Ragin, *Constructing Social Research : The Unity and Diversity of Method*, (London: Pine Forge Press, 1994), pp.81-103.

<sup>90</sup> In this respect, the town's economic history fit within the national narrative in which the mid-70s saw the start of the end of the postwar boom and the beginning of dramatic de-industrialisation. See for example: Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, pp.151-166.

<sup>91</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, p.2.

interviewer/interviewee relationship.<sup>92</sup> What is forgotten, what is remembered, and how, are determined by present needs; memory is used to forge identity and confirm a sense of self. Recollection of feelings and emotions in the past may therefore be influenced by subsequent evaluations.<sup>93</sup> Memories are not only held individually. The past is publicly discussed, written about and presented in ways that influence individuals' memories.<sup>94</sup>

Oral history may thus appear to be beset with problems as evidence, but it can be countered that no source offers unmediated access to the past. Oral testimony has been used successfully by historians in a variety of ways and is still the only kind of evidence available for certain areas of historical experience.<sup>95</sup> Memory studies suggest that reminiscence can be remarkably accurate, but that particular types of experience are more likely to be remembered reliably than others – so for example, work processes and habitual behaviour important in everyday life are often recalled more accurately than events.<sup>96</sup> Individuals are capable of reflexivity and can discuss what they felt at a particular time even though they now feel differently.<sup>97</sup> If the historian is aware of the problems inherent in a source these can be moderated by the application of fundamental historical principles. As Thompson wrote: 'The historian's resources are the general rules in examining evidence: to look for internal consistency, to seek confirmation in other sources, and to be aware of potential bias'.<sup>98</sup> In addition, many oral historians suggest that the occasions when reminiscence is not accurate can be used for exploring the ways in which history is absorbed and made meaningful by those living through it.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, Fourth ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2006), pp.310-312; Alice Hoffman, "Reliability and Validity in Oral History," in *Oral History. An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, eds. David D. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum. (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1996), 87-93, p.88.

<sup>93</sup> Yow, p.44.

<sup>94</sup> Thompson, *Voice of the Past : Oral History*, p.163; Yow, *Recording Oral History : A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, p.53; Popular Memory Group, "Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method," in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. (London: Routledge, 2006), 43-53, pp.44-53.

<sup>95</sup> Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, pp.82-117, p.171.

<sup>96</sup> Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, p.132; pp.158-159; Yow, *Recording Oral History*, p.42, p.51.

<sup>97</sup> Portelli, *What Makes Oral History Different?*, 32-42, p.38.

<sup>98</sup> Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, p.119.

<sup>99</sup> For eg., Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories : Form and Meaning in Oral History*, (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp.1-26; Daniel James, "Listening in the Cold: The Practice of Oral History in an Argentine Meatpacking Community," in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. (London: Routledge, 2006), 83-101, p.94; Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, "Telling Tales: Oral history and the Construction of Pre-Stonewall Lesbian History,"

In a practical sense, the research was conducted in keeping with principles of 'grounded theory', in that broad research questions and assumptions were progressively modified as data was collected and analysed, and new data was sought out as a result of themes emerging through the course of the work.<sup>100</sup> Interviewees were selected on the basis of a "community stratified sample", in which the aim is not to secure a mirror of its broad distributions, but to ensure the representation of all significant social layers within it.<sup>101</sup> I adopted a heuristic, occupational definition of 'working class' for sampling purposes, seeking to interview workers and the families of workers who had manual jobs in Beverley or elsewhere but who lived in the town at some time between 1945 and 1980.<sup>102</sup> I sought to interview those from skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled backgrounds and took efforts to locate those who might not necessarily come forward to be interviewed, those with less settled and less 'respectable' personal histories (the 'action seekers' as opposed to the 'routine seekers' to use Herbert Gans' terms).<sup>103</sup> I also interviewed some former residents who had grown up and spent the early part of their life in the town but had subsequently moved away, as well as those who had not been born in the town but who had moved in. A few interviewees with working-class backgrounds had subsequently achieved social mobility. I interviewed local councillors, historians and social workers who had an external view of aspects of local working-class community and the historical development of the town. I believe that my interview sample of approximately 90 people contained a broad spectrum of experiences, but it must be conceded that the majority of interviewees came from a more respectable mid-stratum of the working-class population; as other interviewers have found, these are the people most likely to volunteer to be interviewed.<sup>104</sup>

Interviewees were recruited in a variety of ways, so as to avoid simply recording the experiences of one clique or social group. I had a number of contacts

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in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. (London: Routledge, 2006), 271-282, pp.278-279.

<sup>100</sup> See for example: Kathy Charmaz, "Qualitative Interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis," in *Handbook of Interview Research. Context and Method*, eds. J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein. Anonymous (London: Sage, 2002), 675-694, p.65; Yow, *Recording Oral History*, p.8; Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, p.151.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.* p.151.

<sup>102</sup> See for example: Kenneth Roberts, *Class in Modern Britain*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp.23-24.

<sup>103</sup> Gans, *The Urban Villagers*, p.29.

<sup>104</sup> Linda Shopes, "Oral History and the Study of Communities: Problems, Paradoxes and Possibilities," in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. (London: Routledge, 2006), 261-270, p.263; Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, p.148.



from my previous work in the town; I appealed for new interviewees through posters, letters to the local press, visits to pubs, social clubs, residential homes and community groups. Most interviews were conducted in the homes of interviewees, which could mean that spouses and other family members were present – this provided additional voices, but some aspects of testimony may have been more guarded as a result. I visited some interviewees several times; most recordings were between one-and-a-half and three hours in length. Interviews followed a chronological life-story approach, with questions concentrating on aspects relevant to the study. Space was allowed for interviewees to develop their own narratives and interpretations. The appendices contain notes on individual interviewees (all names are pseudonyms). Extensive notes, just short of full transcription, were made for each recording, sufficient for analysis. Sections to be quoted in the thesis were transcribed as accurately as possible.<sup>105</sup> After some interviews I made research notes recording relevant contextual information and impressions. Interviewees were made aware of the purpose of the research and asked to sign permission forms. Most indicated that they were happy for the recordings, along with interview notes which redacted personal details, to be deposited with East Riding Archives Service, thus making the evidential base of the research available for verification.

I also referred to an existing collection of approximately 60 oral history interviews about life in Beverley held by the East Riding Museums Service. Some of these interviews were conducted by myself in previous employment as a museum curator and some by other staff and volunteers. In addition, I searched and sampled local newspapers, works magazines, council archives and the records of clubs and societies in the collections of the East Riding Archives Service. Unfortunately some records which could have yielded valuable qualitative data, such as magistrates' court records, were not available for the relevant period of Beverley's history.

Research and interview notes were managed using NVIVO software.<sup>106</sup> Analysis was ongoing throughout and took the form of reading and re-reading interview and research notes as well as listening to recordings several times. The interpretation of the research presented in the thesis is thus the result of immersion in the data. All general statements are made on the basis of judgements about the weight

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<sup>105</sup> Using methods informed by: Portelli, *What Makes Oral History Different?*, 32-42. pp.33-34; Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, pp.257-263.

<sup>106</sup> For NVIVO software, see: <http://www.qsrinternational.com/about-qsr.aspx>.

of evidence, and have been supported in the text by footnotes to points in at least two interviewees' testimony. More references would usually have been possible but were not given for practical reasons of space. References to oral testimony are located by time, for example '1 hour 15 mins' – this denotes the time marker in the interview notes immediately preceding the relevant section of testimony. Time markers were placed in the interview notes approximately five minutes apart. It is thus easy to locate relevant testimony in the interview notes and, if necessary, in the recordings themselves.

As a result of the methodological approach, the limitations of the research presented in this thesis can be sketched in advance, and should serve to pre-empt any misunderstanding about the kinds of claims to knowledge that are being made. The principal findings of the research are descriptive, an attempt to capture elements of social life in the town experienced by those interviewed. The sample was not sufficient to infer statistically sound conclusions about social life in Beverley as a whole, and therefore all conclusions are tentative. Nevertheless, the descriptions of social life contained in this thesis are grounded in a significant body of evidence, and the testimony of over 90 interviewees (in addition to substantial documentary evidence) is a good basis from which to develop themes. As Ray Pahl and Liz Spencer suggested, in the small-scale studies typical of qualitative research 'the detailed description of concepts and cases' should be assessed by readers in terms of whether the conclusions help make sense of other social milieux.<sup>107</sup> The nature of reminiscence as evidence, particularly when this relates to a period several decades earlier, tends to militate against delineating dates and chronological trends with sharp precision. Nevertheless, indications of the chronology of particular developments are possible.

The usual relationship between the two research paradigms – qualitative and quantitative – is that qualitative research is used for exploring a problem and suggesting interpretations and hypotheses, and quantitative research provides instruments to test these interpretations and hypotheses. With this relationship in mind, individual conclusions can also be seen as invitations for further research which could include a greater component of quantification.

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<sup>107</sup> Spencer and Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship*, p.6.

## **The organisation of this thesis**

The merits of prevailing interpretations of change in working-class community, understood as sociability and identity vested in place, will be discussed in reference to the detailed case-study of Beverley. The argument advanced in this thesis is that the purported transition from an older ‘traditional working-class community’ to newly privatised, individualistic working classes exaggerates the scale of transformation of community in the age of affluence. Instead, it will be shown both that many older forms of local sociability and identity persisted in this period, and also that the working classes took advantage of favourable post-war economic circumstances to pursue new patterns of leisure and sociable interaction with friends and family living locally. As the period progressed, working-class people became less oriented towards their immediate neighbours and instead pursued sociability with more geographically scattered networks, but these were still largely concentrated within the town. Beverley therefore remained an important reference for residents’ identity and belonging.

In order to investigate the overall charge, made most forcibly by Eric Hobsbawm, that post-war affluence destroyed working-class community, each chapter will explore a different dimension of community, delineating changes and continuities across the period in the case-study population. Chapters Two to Four will respond to specific claims made in two influential works of sociology positing transition from a traditional working-class community to more individualist cultures during the age of affluence – Klein’s detailed and theoretical account of community change in the 1950s and 1960s, and Goldthorpe *et al*’s description of the ‘privatised’ affluent worker. The final three substantive chapters move away from these sociologists’ focus on informal sociability towards a consideration of how local institutions – traditional workplaces, civil society, constructions of community identity – shaped patterns of sociability and identity in the town as a whole.

Chapter Two, ‘The Family’, will investigate the charge that during the era of affluence the working classes placed a new emphasis on the conjugal partnership and nuclear family and that extended family relations and wider sociability suffered as a result – did nuclear families in Beverley become ‘individuated units’, to use Klein’s terminology, or ‘privatised’, to use Goldthorpe *et al*’s?

Chapter Three, ‘Neighbours’, will take as a starting point Klein’s claim that post-war affluence and geographical movement precipitated a reduction in the communal

sociability and mutuality with neighbours which was a feature of traditional working-class communities.

Chapter Four, 'Friends and Acquaintances', will examine Klein's suggestion that the post-war working classes moved from a position in which friendships were 'given', to a position in which friendships were chosen and sustained across greater physical distances, and consider the extent to which this reduced the salience of place for community.

Chapter Five, 'Workplaces', will consider Klein's omission of the workplace as component of community, and Goldthorpe *et al*'s denial of a connection between workplaces and the sociability of home and leisure spheres.

Chapter Six, 'Civil Society', will address Herbert Gans' notion that the working classes were typically oriented around small peer groups, instinctively avoiding the associational commitments that might have oriented them towards a wider community life.

Chapter Seven, 'Identity and Place', will consider Mike Savage's suggestion that working-class identification with place was simply 'functional' in the post-war years.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis by synthesising the different strands of the argument. It will be argued that in this context, post-war changing patterns of sociability represented a remaking of working-class community rather than a retreat from it.

### **Schematic history of working-class community in Beverley**

Because the contours of the developments and continuities I am proposing may at times lose their sharpness in the detailed discussion contained within the substantive chapters, I provide below a brief schematic history of working-class community in Beverley from 1945-1980. This history is presented chronologically. Table one synthesises the social and cultural features I propose for the early and latter part of this period in order to further delineate developments; this table is presented thematically, reflecting the organisation of chapters two-seven. Firstly, the 19<sup>th</sup> and early twentieth century origins of Beverley's working-class population are outlined.

## 1880 to 1945

Little has been written about the working classes in Beverley before 1945, but a few words can be offered detailing the town's expansion into a centre for industrial production, the location of working-class residential areas, and aspects of cultural life.

Beverley in the 19<sup>th</sup> century contained only a small industrial sector, producing goods related to its function as a market town for an agricultural area (leather-making and the manufacture of agricultural goods were foremost).<sup>108</sup> The expansion of Beverley's industries, and therefore the town's working-class population, took place in the years after World War One.<sup>109</sup> In the 1930s there was an increase of 734 insured workers in the town.<sup>110</sup> Hodgson's tannery doubled its production of hides between the 1920 and 1937, as well as diversifying into glue, gelatine and tanning extract production.<sup>111</sup> Local engineer, Gordon Armstrong, founded a factory producing shock absorbers in the early 1920s and became Beverley's leading employer by 1937.<sup>112</sup> However, there were periodic bouts of high unemployment, and Beverley shared in the slump of the early 1930s, with 931 residents out of work in 1933 (from a total population of c.14,000).<sup>113</sup>

Beverley's working-class population in the late Victorian period lived either in the town centre, often in courts situated behind the main streets, or in an area around Hodgson's tannery and the Beckside district to the east of the railway line which bisected the town.<sup>114</sup> Following the First World War, the drive to build 'homes fit for heroes', and an expanding industrial sector in the town, ensured that Beverley Corporation became responsible for housing many working-class families. Between

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<sup>108</sup> Beverley's population grew from 8,915 in 1851 to 13,654 in 1911: Lucy Brown, "Modern Beverley: Economy, 1835-1918", in *A History of the County of York East Riding: Volume 6: The borough and liberties of Beverley*, ed. K.J. Allison, (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), 136-141, p.136.

<sup>109</sup> Hugh Douglas Watts, 'The Industrial Geography of Rural East Yorkshire' (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Hull, 1964), p.39.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.* p.39. Watts specified 'the decade before the outbreak of the Second World War' but did not provide a footnote for this statistic. In his Appendix 2, Watts wrote that he used Ministry of Labour statistics relating to insured workers for 1929, 1938 and 1939 – so we can presume that the rise in insured workers took place between 1929 and either 1938 or 1939.

<sup>111</sup> Lucy Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley, 1918-1945", in *A History of the County of York East Riding: Volume 6: The borough and liberties of Beverley*, ed. K.J. Allison, (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), 150-154, p.153.

<sup>112</sup> Watts, 'The Industrial Geography of Rural East Yorkshire', p.44.

<sup>113</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley 1918-1945", p.154.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.* p.152; Janice Elizabeth Crowther, *Beverley in Mid-Victorian Times*, (Beverley: Hutton Press, 1990), p.116.

1919 and 1938, 539 council houses were built, the majority on estates to the east of the town, adding 18% to the working-class housing stock.<sup>115</sup>

During the interwar years some elements of an older 19th century working-class culture became less important.<sup>116</sup> There was a marked reduction in engagement in organised religion, particularly after the 1920s.<sup>117</sup> Beverley, and the East Riding in general, had a strong non-conformist tradition, but attendances at chapels declined from the 1920s, with chapel closures providing the most cogent evidence for this.<sup>118</sup> Another significant shift was a dramatic drop in Friendly Society membership in the East Riding after the First World War, as the National Insurance system reduced the need for organised self-help.<sup>119</sup> New types of commercial sociability became available, with the opening of three cinemas in the town in as well as a dancehall.<sup>120</sup> Employer paternalism supplemented commercial innovations in the leisure sphere – Hodgson's tannery provided a social club for workers during the 1920s.<sup>121</sup> There was, however, continuity of an open-air culture which one local historian described as a feature of Victorian life in the town.<sup>122</sup> The community of bargees who lived around the Beckside neighbourhood organised water sports every August bank holiday on the river Hull, with a marquee for refreshments, up to the eve of the Second World War.<sup>123</sup> Surviving photographs of these sports show hundreds of spectators.<sup>124</sup> Oral history reveals the continuity of outdoor activity on the town's common pasture known as Westwood, a popular place for promenading and for the courtship ritual of 'monkey

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<sup>115</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley 1918-1945", p.152.

<sup>116</sup> See also, Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture", p. 188.

<sup>117</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley 1918-1945", p.150.

<sup>118</sup> G.H.R. Kent, "Religious Life", in *A History of the County of York East Riding: Volume 6: The borough and liberties of Beverley*, ed. K.J. Allison, (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), 231-250, p.246.

<sup>119</sup> David Neave, "Friendly Societies in the Rural East Riding, 1830-1912", (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1985), p.186.

<sup>120</sup> K.J. Allison, "Social Institutions", in *A History of the County of York East Riding*, ed. K.J. Allison, 206-210, p.207.

<sup>121</sup> Watts, 'The Industrial Geography of Rural East Yorkshire', p.41.

<sup>122</sup> Crowther, *Beverley in Mid-Victorian Times*, pp.121-123.

<sup>123</sup> Fred Schofield, *Humber Keels and Keelmen*, (Lavenham: Terence Dalton, 1988), p.131.

<sup>124</sup> Derek W. Grindell *Beverley's 'Carpenter's Yards' (1756-1956) and the story of the last wooden keel: the evolution of the Beverley navigation and East Yorkshire drainage*, (Beverley: East Yorkshire Local History Society, 2008), p.22.

walks'.<sup>125</sup> An annual 'rag day' appears to have involved a large proportion of the town's population in a parade held to raise funds for the town's cottage hospital.<sup>126</sup>

#### *1945-1980 – overview of economic context*

In the period with which the present thesis is primarily concerned, the three post-war decades, Beverley shared in a period of prosperity and almost full employment which was general across much of the nation and indeed the western industrialised world.<sup>127</sup> Most of the old staple industries of Beverley remained after the war, and some expanded.<sup>128</sup> The three largest employers in the town – Beverley Shipyard, Hodgson's tannery and Armstrong's – employed 570, 729 and 1,987 workers respectively in 1960.<sup>129</sup> The industrial sector in Beverley provided ample skilled working-class jobs; the Census showed that in 1961, 31 % of occupied males living in the town were skilled manual workers, the same percentage as the city of Hull and above the percentage for the East Riding of Yorkshire as a whole (25%).<sup>130</sup> Oral evidence suggests that boys leaving Beverley schools and seeking apprenticeships, and girls looking for office work, rarely had to travel beyond the town for opportunities – in fact Beverley became a net importer of workers.<sup>131</sup> However, the abundance of manufacturing jobs and low level of unemployment across the three post-war decades must be seen as historically exceptional, locally as well as nationally, given the economic instability of the interwar years and the sharp decline of industrial employment in the late 1970s and 1980s.<sup>132</sup>

Beverley remained a small town, but its population expanded at a rate consistent with wider national trends in the three post-war decades, from 15,504 in

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<sup>125</sup> For monkey walks, see Douglas A. Reid, "Playing and Praying," in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain. Volume III. 1840-1950*. ed. Martin Daunton. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 745-810, p.762; Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, c.43 mins.

<sup>126</sup> Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.0 mins.

<sup>127</sup> Lucy Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley after 1945", pp.157-158; Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, pp.257-258; Howlett, *The 'Golden Age', 1955-1973*, 320-340, p.320.

<sup>128</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley after 1945", p.157.

<sup>129</sup> 'Summary of number of employees in major industrial undertakings in Beverley May 1960' Local Government Commission 1960, ERALS: CCER/9/2/1.

<sup>130</sup> Census 1961 *England and Wales. Occupation, Industry and Socio- Economic Groups. Yorkshire, East Riding*. (London: HMSO, 1966).

<sup>131</sup> Dodd, *The Changing Structure of Industry in Beverley* p.26.

<sup>132</sup> Ray Pahl pointed out that this period was unusual in the degree of economic stability it provided: Pahl, *Divisions of Labour*, p.313.

1951 to 17,130 in 1971 and 19,687 in 1981.<sup>133</sup> There is no suggestion that push factors led to significant out-migration from the town. General industrial stability and rising standards of life meant that those who wished to remain living locally could do so, and the oral evidence makes clear that in the three post-war decades many were able to build a materially and socially nourishing life in the town in which they grew up.

Satisfactory housing was an important component of such a life. There was a shortage of housing in the 1940s and early 1950s, which meant that many young married couples were forced initially to live at home with their parents.<sup>134</sup> The borough council attempted to remedy this by re-starting the slum clearance and house building programme which had been suspended by the war. Between 1945 and 1964, the council built 1,132 houses, bringing the total housing stock of the borough to 5,415.<sup>135</sup> Much of this housing was concentrated to the east of the town, on large new council estates.<sup>136</sup>

#### *Beverley working-class community, 1945-1955*

In the first post-war decade, patterns of local sociability and identity in Beverley often appeared similar to those in historians' descriptions of the 'traditional' working classes of the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>137</sup> During the immediate post-war decade, which included the austerity years of the late 1940s, the poverty of many living in working-class neighbourhoods resembled earlier times. Housing was in short supply, and often of poor quality and overcrowded – in 1950, approximately 85 Beverley homes were described as having an 'inadequate water supply', and by 1955 there were still 156 properties with pail closets and 20 with privies out of a total of 4,890 occupied houses.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Census 1961 England and Wales. County Report. Yorkshire, East Riding.* (London: HMSO, 1964); *Census 1971 England and Wales County Report. Yorkshire East Riding. Part 1.* (London: HMSO, 1973); *Census 1981, Urban Areas. The North,* HMSO.

<sup>134</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 30 March, 1946; Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c.72 mins; Eva White, 18 June 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>135</sup> Lucy Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley after 1945", p.155.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.* p.156.

<sup>137</sup> See, for example, Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture"; McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, pp.164-205.

<sup>138</sup> WM Ferguson, *Borough of Beverley Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health For the Year 1950 (including annual report of Chief Sanitary Officer)* (Beverley, Beverley Borough Council, 1951), pp.3-4; WM Ferguson, *Borough of Beverley Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health For the Year 1955 (including annual report of Chief Sanitary Officer)* (Beverley, Beverley Borough Council, 1956), p.20, (Wellcome Library Collection).



In poor working-class neighbourhoods, married women worked long hours in the home and relied on neighbours for social and material support. Whilst women's and children's sociability was often contained within their streets, many men spent much time away from the street amongst their own peer groups in pubs, works clubs, sports teams and pursuing hobbies. Women might accompany their husbands to his local pub on one designated night each week (usually Saturday); pubs during this period often did not allow women into the bar room. Female neighbours sometimes organised social events for themselves and neighbourhood children, independent of their husbands. But there were suggestions that working class life in this first post-war decade did not completely match the stereotype of separate male and female worlds, and men aloof from their families. Some men socialised more extensively with their wives than the ritualised once a week visit to the pub, and many were attentive to their children, taking them on walks for example. Similarly, on closer inspection, poor working-class streets were not simply undifferentiated, close-knit groups but contained a measure of status competition, jealousy and privacy.

Few working-class people had cars or televisions in these years, and cinemas were popular, as were open-air entertainments such as walking on the town's open spaces, watching civic events, ship launches and swimming races on the River Hull. Sociability in young adulthood was extensive, conducted in the open air and in the town's dancehalls and cinemas.

During this early part of our period, a degree of insularity was reported which matches the localism historians have imputed to the working classes in the interwar decades.<sup>139</sup> Manifestations included the use of the term 'foreigner' for incomers to the town, and some antipathy shown towards migrant shipyard workers from the North-east and towards bombed-out refugee families from Hull who had settled in Beverley during the Second World War. There was also internal division: the railway track which divided Beverley into an industrial, working-class eastern half and a more middle-class western part also operated as a symbol of class difference.

However, working-class life in the town in these immediate post-war years was changing. Some aspects of the earlier, open-air communal culture did not resume after 1945. Becksides sports and the 'Rag Day' to raise money for the cottage hospital were

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<sup>139</sup> Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture", p.181; Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, pp.136-169; Keith Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.13-16.

last held in 1939. National Health Service provision from 1948 reduced the need for aspects of neighbourly mutual assistance such as unofficial neighbourhood midwives. The onset of a more adversarial working-class voice in local politics was signalled by the election in 1951 of Beverley's first Labour councillors.<sup>140</sup> The socio-spatial division of the town into two was accentuated further by the building of council estates east of the railway (the majority of the 75 temporary and 258 permanent houses the Council built between 1945 and 1950 were on greenfield sites to the east).<sup>141</sup>

*Beverley working-class community, 1955-1970*

Improvements in living standards in the 1950s and 1960s included rising wages, good quality housing for the majority, new consumer goods and a new economic role for married women.<sup>142</sup> In Beverley, these changes had implications for the sociability of the working classes, most notably for married working-class women, who were now less reliant on neighbours for mutual assistance and sociability than their mothers had been.

Many women who married and set up home in this period were not quite so closely involved with their neighbours as was the case in earlier years. A number of developments encouraged this. There was less need for inter-household loans of consumables than previously because poverty receded, rationing came to an end in 1954, and many bought fridges in the 1950s and 1960s. The availability of newly built, good quality working-class homes gave couples an incentive to move away from childhood neighbourhoods, and reduced the incidence of extended family living in the same street. Married women increasingly went to out work, and so did not spend so much time with neighbours and were able to make friends away from their streets.

The decline in older-style neighbourhood sociability and mutuality was compensated by new forms, frequently conducted between relatives and friends who did not live on the same street but were scattered across the town. Many recalled that relatives and friends helped each other with gardening, decorating and home improvement. Married women's work outside of the home meant that they relied on

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<sup>140</sup> Beverley Labour Party Branch Minutes, 1947-1956.

<sup>141</sup> Ferguson, *Report of Medical Officer of Health 1950*, p.17.

<sup>142</sup> For the improvements of the 'era of affluence' see, for example Taylor, "The Rise and Disintegration of the Working Classes", pp.376-378; Hopkins, *The Rise and Decline of the English Working Classes*, pp.266-269; for married women's new economic role, see: Pat Thane, "Women Since 1945," in *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, ed. Paul Johnson.(London: Longman, 1994), 392-411, pp.393-395.

relatives, usually their own mothers, to provide babysitting services. Whereas some degree of gender separation in sociability remained in this period, there was also a new emphasis on the conjugal bond and home and family. This led not only to some men spending more time with their wives and children than had their fathers, but also to married couples socialising with other couples, and families socialising with other families. The kinds of clubs the working classes joined were also changing – older class divisions were not so closely maintained, and it was reported from the 1950s onwards that working-class men (and to some extent women) gained access to previously more or less exclusively middle-class sporting clubs such as the tennis, cricket and golfing clubs. There are signs that new forms of leisure probably reduced, though they did not extinguish, the popularity of works social and sporting clubs.

Affluence brought new material possessions which fed into changing patterns of sociability. A much greater proportion of the working classes purchased their own homes in the later 1950s and 1960s than in previous decades, and the town council continued to add to the town's stock of rental housing.<sup>143</sup> Improved housing enabled working-class couples to entertain friends in their homes, a significant break from the earlier periods when this was rare. Similarly, interviewees recalled owning cars from the late 1950s, and private transport enabled friends and family to socialise together in new settings away from the town. The 1950s saw a great increase in television ownership, which has sometimes been connected to privatised home-centred lifestyles; but television could also provide a stimulus to the breaking down of an older cultural reluctance about entertaining in the home.<sup>144</sup> However, one development which probably owed much to the impact of television on leisure habits was the closure of the

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<sup>143</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley after 1945", p.155. In the north of England generally, the percentage of home owning households rose from 26% in 1947 to 49% in 1971, and households renting from local authorities rose from 13-31% in the same period: Julia Parker and Catriona Mirrlees 'Housing' in A.H. Halsey, *British Social Trends Since 1900, Second Edition*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 357-398, p.378.

<sup>144</sup> In 1950, 4% of the UK population owned a television, rising to 82% in 1960 (statistics quoted in Claire Langhamer, *Women's leisure in England, 1920-1960*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.175. In Beverley, 1,701 T.V. licences were issued in Beverley in 1954, an increase of 591 on the previous year, at a time when there were 4890 occupied houses in the town, though this figure probably includes licences been for homes in the surrounding area also: *Beverley Guardian*, 22 January 1955. Many interviewees recalled that they had their first sets in the later 1950s. Jeffrey Hill argued that TV was not necessarily a pernicious influence on sociability: Jeffrey Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp.107-109. Many Mass Observation respondents claimed they did 'nothing much' in their spare time before television: Tom Harrison, *Britain Revisited*, (London: Victory Gollanz, 1961), p.207.

town's three cinemas: the Picture Playhouse in 1963, the Marble Arch in 1964 and the Regal in 1968.<sup>145</sup>

Other aspects of communal sociability declined during these years. Crowds of teenagers engaging in outdoor 'monkey walks' were recalled by interviewees growing up in the 1940s but not by those growing up in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>146</sup> The more long-term decline in church attendance, which had begun in the 1920s, continued, and few interviewees had attended church regularly as adults. Several non-conformist chapels closed or amalgamated in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>147</sup> However, youth sociability continued to contain a significant communal aspect, in council-run youth clubs that opened from the mid-1950s, and dancehalls which remained popular. Interviewees recalled that during the 1950s they used their wages to fund participation in a broader popular youth culture, travelling to visit popular entertainers, and from the mid-1960s, forming rock bands.

Working-class localism was still in evidence during these years, and as previously, Hull was a frequent reference point for this identity. There were well-worn local jokes about the large numbers of working-class Hull women who came into the town to work in Armstrong's, and who were presumed to be of low social standing. Servicemen stationed nearby who used the town for drinking could also become the butt of a sometimes violent youthful 'local xenophobia' during the 1960s.<sup>148</sup> As the council housing estates to the east of the railway lines continued to expand, the railway as a marker of social-class difference maintained its resonance. During the 1960s, as home ownership became an achievable goal for many working-class people, some reported that tenancy on a council estate was considered lower-status and undesirable. This contrasted with the immediate post-war decade when, although particular streets or neighbourhoods were acknowledged to be rough, skilled as well as unskilled working-class people sought council house tenancy and some skilled workers bought homes only because they could not get a council house. From 1961, a newly assertive middle-class conservatism was expressed through a Civic Society which sought to

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<sup>145</sup> ERYMS staff and volunteers 'Entertaining Beverley From Stage to Screen. A History of Theatre and Cinema in Beverley' (East Riding of Yorkshire Council, 2004). .

<sup>146</sup> 'Monkey walk' was a name given to the practice whereby teenagers assembled to walk in particular parts of northern towns in order to meet members of the opposite sex; see Reid, "Playing and Praying", p.762.

<sup>147</sup> Kent, "Religious Life", p.246.

<sup>148</sup> For 'local xenophobia', see Keith Snell, "The Culture of Local Xenophobia," *Social History* 28, no. 1 (2003): 1-30.

preserve and enhance the town's historic architectural ambience in ways that sometimes conflicted with working-class residents' use and valuation of place.<sup>149</sup>

So, during the years of rising affluence of the later 1950s and the 1960s, patterns of working-class sociability were shifting away from separate male and female social worlds, the latter often contained within close-knit streets, and towards a more selective sociability with a range of friends and family scattered across the town. However, such changes were partial and took place alongside considerable continuity of older cultural forms. Working-class residents continued to identify with the town as a whole, though there were new sources of internal social distinction.

#### *Beverley working-class community, 1970-1980*

By the late 1970s, affluent working-class lifestyle had become established for the many who owned their own homes, cars and pursued a relatively varied social life including friends, sports and hobby clubs and joint-conjugal sociability. But aspects of a more long-standing culture were still visible.

Conjugal shared sociability continued to find new expression during the 1970s, when some couples reported going out for meals, as well as cooking dinner for friends at home. Married women in the 1970s socialised independently of their husbands in new ways, often with friends they made when they returned to work after having children. Female employees were now a visible presence in the larger factories in a way they had not been in the first post-war decade, and some participated in works sports and social activities.

Although streets were rarely the complete social worlds of their residents in the way sometimes found in earlier decades, neighbourhood relationships could still be important. Women at home with young children might find companionship amongst other women in a similar position in their street. Many men seemed able to combine sociability of a more traditional kind with their mates in pubs, hobby and sporting clubs, with newer home- and family-oriented sociability, including friendly relations with particular neighbours.

The pattern of sociability of young adults was similar to that in the first post-war decades, in that many were working and living at home and thus had spare money to spend with peer groups and in the context of their own generational communities;

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<sup>149</sup> For the foundation of the Beverley Civic Society, see: Beverley Civic Society *Beverley Civic Society website*, <http://www.beverleycivic.co.uk/a-short-history-of-beverley/> (accessed 2 July 2012).

the Regal dancehall remained the town's principal venue for young adults' sociability, though it was rebranded as Beverley Hills discotheque in 1979.<sup>150</sup>

Young men continued to demonstrate the more negative aspects of 'local xenophobia', and frequent weekend drunken violence between servicemen and local youths was enshrined in the local term 'squaddy-bashing'. The working classes could also express civic pride in terms reminiscent of the more middle-class aestheticisation of Beverley. Socio-spatial distinctions between west and east, and the stigmatisation of council estates, remained salient.

The 1970s saw changes in patterns of domestic life. The stable nuclear family of the 1950s and 1960s could no longer be taken for granted. Whilst the vast majority of interviewees who married in the 1950s did not get divorced, of the seven interviewees born after 1954 none had the stable nuclear family common amongst earlier generations. Each was either divorced, never married or married late and did not have children. This was suggestive of trends such as nationally rising divorce rates from the later 1960s.<sup>151</sup> Younger interviewees recalled living together before marriage in the 1970s, whereas in earlier decades most were married from their parents' homes.

Reflecting wider economic trends, Beverley's three largest industrial concerns closed in the later 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>152</sup> The town was saved mass unemployment by increasing service sector employment in local government across the 1970s and early 1980s (Humberside County Council and an enlarged Borough of Beverley Council were based in the town from 1972), and also by the fact that many of the jobs lost from the larger factories were those of workers commuting from Hull.<sup>153</sup> However, the few younger interviewees who left school in the 1980s were not as sure of the availability of local well-paid skilled working-class jobs as their parents had been, and unemployment did increase in the 1980s.<sup>154</sup> Some of the interviewees who had been made redundant in the late 1970s were forced either to travel to find work or move into different types of employment.

Very few interviewees described family members going to university in decades before the 1970s, when the horizons of working-class ambition had usually been set no further than skilled work, but several interviewees' children moved away

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<sup>150</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 3 January 1980.

<sup>151</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, pp.168-169.

<sup>152</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley after 1945", p.159.

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.* p.160

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.* p.160.

to study in the 1970s onwards – few of those who moved subsequently returned to live in Beverley. This element of increasing social mobility, and the decline of large employers of manual labour in the town, reflected a national re-balancing of the economy towards the service sector which saw the working class shrink as a proportion of the workforce and lose some of their cultural visibility from the later 1970s.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> *ibid.* p.160; see also: Avner Offer, "British Manual Workers: From Producers to Consumers, c.1950-2000," *Contemporary British History* 22, no. 4 (2008): 538-571; Michael Savage, *Class Analysis and Social Transformation*, (Buckingham: Open University, 2000), pp.132-139; Arthur Marwick, "Class", in *Companion to Contemporary Britain*, Paul Addison and Harriet Jones, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 76-85, p.85.

**Table one. Schematic of Beverley working-class community. Periods 1945-1955 and 1970-80 compared.**

	1945-1955	1970-1980
<b>Family</b>	Nuclear families were a focus for some male leisure, though much time was spent apart with mates. Divorce was rare. Extended family frequently lived in the same street and helped with day to day life.	Nuclear families were a major focus of male leisure. Conjugal shared sociability was common. Divorce rates were increasing. Extended family were less likely to live in the same street, but frequently also lived in Beverley and were a source of services and sociability.
<b>Neighbours</b>	Neighbours were frequently also kin. Married women frequently stayed at home and interacted extensively with female neighbours.  Many neighbours loaned each other small items of consumables: e.g. foodstuffs & coal.	Neighbours were rarely also kin. Many married women worked at least part-time, so interaction amongst neighbours was less intensive. However, neighbours could be an important source of sociability, particularly for women at home with young children. Exchange of foodstuffs amongst neighbours was rare. Neighbours assisted in emergencies, or with occasional DIY and gardening tasks.
<b>Friends</b>	Married men had friends from work, pubs, associational life. Married women's friends were concentrated amongst family and neighbours, but some had a particularly close, long-standing friend. A minority of couples had shared friends, and these were rarely entertained in the home.	Married men still had friends in work, pubs, associational life. Women had friends from work and associational life to a greater extent than previously.  The majority of couples shared at least some friends. Many now used the home to entertain these friends.
<b>Workplaces</b>	Works were important sites of sociability, and also providers of leisure and sporting facilities for their employees, though these were mostly utilised by male employees.  Industrial leaders supported the public life of the town, and workplaces were a component of local identity. Large industries provided a good range of working-class employment .	Works sports and social clubs competing with a greater range of alternative leisure. Female employees were now included in work-place culture.  Traditional workplaces closed at end of period, bringing to an end many connections between industry and community, and reducing the range of working-class jobs available.
<b>Civil society</b>	Working-class men were involved in associations with predominantly working-class membership. Women were less often involved in associational life, with the exception of the church and informal women's clubs. A strongly conservative ethos permeated civil society.	Many working-class men were involved in associations which also contained middle-class membership. The range of women's involvement in associational life was growing.  Conservative ethos of civil society expressed less confidently.
<b>Identity</b>	Identity as born-and-bred Beverlonian was strong for many. The railway line acted as a symbolic boundary divide between classes. There was a strong identification with some working-class streets on the part of their residents.	Beverlonian identity remained important.  The division of the town by the railway line remained significant. Strong identification with particular streets was less evident. Council estates grown up since the war had become a new focus for social judgements about residential space.



## Chapter Two. Families

The family was at the heart of community for many British post-war sociologists. Josephine Klein argued that in traditional communities ‘the networks of component families are often so close-knit, and the relationships within the local population group so clearly distinguished from external relationships, that the local population can almost be called an organised group’.<sup>1</sup> High rates of endogamy and the propinquity of multiple generations of families created local social networks in which most people were known to one another.<sup>2</sup> Families living close to each other were the source of mutual assistance, and were at the root of the ‘neighbourliness’ often attributed to working-class communities.<sup>3</sup> Married women in close-knit communities habitually sought assistance, advice and support from their mothers whilst bringing up their own families.<sup>4</sup> The fact that relatives lived close by militated against a close conjugal bond – wives socialised with their families, and husbands with their mates.<sup>5</sup>

With the post-war movement of many working-class families to new council estates, Klein argued that the density of familial ties within particular districts was diluted and that the close-knit texture of traditional communities disappeared.<sup>6</sup> As a result of moving away from old support networks, husbands and wives forged closer bonds.<sup>7</sup> Increasingly child-centred attitudes were also observable. Parents sought to spend more time with their children, putting them first, unlike in traditional communities where the father ‘got the best of everything’.<sup>8</sup> For Goldthorpe *et al.*, the willingness to exchange extended-family propinquity and mutuality for better wages and housing was part of the ‘privatisation’ of working-class life, which resulted in a more isolated, home-centred nuclear family.<sup>9</sup> Not only were helpful and supportive links with extended family members disrupted, but sociability declined as a result, and

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<sup>1</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.128.

<sup>2</sup> See also: Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, p.116.

<sup>3</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.134.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* p.185.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p.139.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* p.193.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* pp.294-297.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* p.301.

<sup>9</sup> Goldthorpe *et al.*, *The Affluent Worker*, pp.96-97, pp.158-159.

there was a turning in towards the home and nuclear family for both husband and wife.<sup>10</sup>

Although Klein and Goldthorpe described these shifts in families who had recently moved away from their older communities, both saw them also as more general trends.<sup>11</sup> Other sociologists and historians noted aspects of these changes even where no major population upheaval had occurred.<sup>12</sup>

So, the charge investigated in this chapter is that during the post-war age of affluence the working classes placed a new emphasis on the conjugal partnership and nuclear family and that extended family relations and wider sociability suffered as a result. To what extent did such a development take place in Beverley? I will examine the constituent aspects of the charge: that there was a new emphasis on the conjugal relationship, and that new child-centred attitudes developed, both to the detriment of wider sociability; that support and sociability provided by the extended family became less important. For each aspect, I will compare the patterns revealed in the oral history from the 'pre-affluence' part of the period (approximately 1945-1955) with the 'affluent era' (approximately 1955-1980) as a way of highlighting change.

## **The conjugal relationship**

### *Pre-affluence*

Klein's model of the traditional working-class community suggested that married couples occupied separate spheres. Because of high endogamy rates (the extent to which local people married each other), both spouses had pre-existing social and family networks to hand which tended to militate against their spending significant time together and bonding as a couple.<sup>13</sup> Men pursued external sociability with male friends and workmates through sport, hobbies, pubs and working men's clubs and women stayed at home with the children, spending time with female relatives and neighbours.<sup>14</sup>

Certainly, there were high endogamy rates among the working-class population of Beverley up to 1955. A sample of five years' marriage registers for St Nicholas

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.* p.108.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* *The Affluent Worker*, p.164.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *The Symmetrical Family. A Study of Work and Leisure in the London Region*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp.28-31; Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families*, p.113, p.157; Harris, *The Family in Post-War Britain*, p.53.

<sup>13</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.158-160.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.171-172.

Church, which ministered to the working-class eastern part of Beverley, shows that of a total of 84 weddings, 53% were between two people with Beverley addresses.<sup>15</sup> The oral evidence suggests that almost all young people were married from their parents' homes, and therefore in over half the marriages in this church, each spouse would have had parents and a pre-existing social network in the town.<sup>16</sup>

The extent to which working-class Beverlonians in this period had local family networks which they brought with them into married life is suggested by the oral history evidence. Although the interview sample and interviewing strategy were not designed for statistical analysis, some indicative statistics are possible. From a sample of thirty four of the oral history interviewees born up to 1940, many of whom married in the 1950s, 94% were born and bred in the town, and 73% indicated that they had at least one parent who was also born and bred in the town. Whilst not all were asked where their spouse was from, it was possible to deduce that at least 32% definitely married another Beverley person, whilst 26% had clearly married non-Beverlonians.

So before we begin to look at the qualitative evidence, statistical information alone suggests that a high proportion – perhaps close to half – of working-class marriages in late 1940s and early 1950s Beverley were between two people from the town. Many of the partners in these marriages were at least second generation Beverlonians and so had family and social networks locally. We might therefore expect, following Klein, that marriages would have been imposed on pre-existing networks and that the couples would follow the traditional pattern of seeking sociable fulfilment outside the marriage.<sup>17</sup>

Amongst the interviews there were several accounts of families in which married couples' sociability scarcely overlapped. Interviewees described how, in the 1940s and 1950s, their father spent much of his time in the pub, and their mother had a few regular companions perhaps from amongst family and neighbours. Joan Gibson's account of her father's priorities in the 1940s was typical of these descriptions:

Of course, Dad went to the pub, Beehive, when he was at home. It's what men did. Dick's dad was the same. Come home from work and go to the pub...

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<sup>15</sup> St Nicholas Church Marriage Registers, ERALS PE 193/7; PE 193/8. The preceding two years had an abnormally high proportion of working-class women marrying servicemen from elsewhere in the country – Beverley was a garrison town during the war.

<sup>16</sup> The actual figure may have been higher, as it does not include the 10% of marriages whose partners recorded the same address in the marriage register; oral history interviews indicate that some fiancés moved in with their parents-in-law if there was pressure on space in their own homes.

<sup>17</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.160, p.171.

I know my mum used to say he'd rather spend his money on pints for his friends than on us...most of the men were like that then, a bit like Andy Capp in the paper you know, they do what they want.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps a quarter of the conjugal relationships described in the 1930s through to the mid-1950s were highly separate in this sense.

There were also married men who did not seek the pleasures of the pub in the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s, and who were described as home-centred.<sup>19</sup> Often these interviewees emphasised that their fathers' involvement with hobbies, such as keeping birds, gardening or allotments. Sometimes men's hobbies involved their wives, as Marianne remembered of her father in the 1930s and 1940s:

His life was the birds. I mean he was president, chairman, of the Caged Bird Society, he kept budgerigars, canaries and stuff, that was his big hobby. So, and in a way that was my mum's social thing, you know, being with him, one of the tea ladies, you know like the women in the background of all these local clubs.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps the most typical pattern of conjugal sociability for couples with children in the pre-affluent period was mixed. It was presumed that male sociability would take them away from the home to a pub or to some form of associational activity sometimes, and that women's life would be to a greater extent centred on the home, but that some regular time was set aside for joint conjugal sociability. It was common for a man to spend one night a week taking his wife to the pub, cinema or even playing whist with friends.<sup>21</sup> For example:

He went on his way from work, maybe had a couple of pints...they [mum and dad] used to come here [the Humber Keel pub, early 1950s]...Saturday night, concert night you know...someone playing piano and drums and then volunteers singing and that...they was all neighbours that lived round us, and they brought their wives and that, and that bar through there, the men used to play dominoes, ad the women used to sit through here and have a few drinks and that, and then the men used to come through and have a sing.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Joan Gibson, 17 March 2010, c.56 mins.

<sup>19</sup> For example, Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c. 40 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.40 mins

<sup>20</sup> Marianne Woolly, 22 February 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>21</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.0 mins; Anna Mason 12 July 2010, c. 20 mins; Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.35 mins; Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.37 mins.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Stephenson, 27 May 2010, c.5 mins; see also: Les White, 21 October 2010, c.62 mins; Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.70 mins.

Although Jack Blakeston's father went to the pub most week nights in the 1940s, he also accompanied his wife on a weekly visit to the home of neighbours, where they listened to *The Man in Black* on the radio together. The neighbours visited them in turn.<sup>23</sup>

### *Affluent era*

Some of those interviewed in Beverley lived on new housing estates after the war whereas others lived in older areas of terraced housing, but regardless of residential neighbourhood there were some changes in patterns of conjugal sociability appearing across the 1960s and 1970s. A large proportion of the interviewees born after 1940 – who married in the 1960s and later – described how sociability had been shared with their wives. It seems likely that the sentiment expressed by Patrick Mateer, who married Elaine in the 1970s, would find more support amongst these interviewees than it might have done amongst their parents: 'We've always done everything together...what's the point getting married if you're going to end up going different ways?'<sup>24</sup> Whilst in the 1940s and early 1950s, time spent with the wife was commonly accepted as the lesser part of a man's social life, by the 1970s the time spent with male friends was, at least ideally, the lesser part.

Klein and Goldthorpe *et al* thought that this new emphasis on the conjugal bond reduced the communal sociability which was part of the traditional working-class community, a sociability lived by men in the pubs and clubs for men and by women amongst family and neighbours.<sup>25</sup> Some interviewees did indeed describe a rather attenuated sociability in the 1960s and 1970s, but this was most acute when children were young and there was little money or time for wider social interaction.<sup>26</sup> For others however, cultural changes from the 1960s led in the direction of an outward looking sociability conducted *with* one's spouse, rather than separately. Women benefited from these changes, accessing a wider range of leisure and sociable opportunities than had been available previously.

Interviewees stressed that whereas their parents typically took their mothers out only once a week, often to pub or club on a Saturday night, they themselves socialised

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<sup>23</sup> Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c.45 mins.

<sup>24</sup> Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.66 mins.

<sup>25</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.287; Goldthorpe et al., *The Affluent Worker*, pp.96-97, pp.158-159.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Bill and Jane Holland, 11 November 2009, c.10 mins; Pete Lawson, 4 May 2010, c.1 hour 38 mins.

much more extensively as couples. John and Margaret Day did not have their first child until nine years after they married in the early 1960s, describing this time as ‘our real socialising years’.<sup>27</sup> Dennis Duke, a former barge skipper, married in the early 1970s, recalled that he and his wife occasionally went out separately but usually socialised together, and that they had a group of friends whom they saw regularly.<sup>28</sup> Gerald Ibbotson, a tradesman printer during the 1970s, often went out with his wife and friends for meals.<sup>29</sup> Jim Fisher and his wife married in their early twenties in 1971, but waited until they were in their thirties to have children, spending the intervening years socialising together.<sup>30</sup> Starting a family might initially curtail joint conjugal sociability, but the availability of babysitting services from family members living locally meant that as children grew up couples were able to continue socialising.<sup>31</sup>

Whilst few interviewees who grew up before the Second World War lived in homes that their parents owned, from the 1950s many interviewees bought houses. At least 60% of the interviewees born after 1940 had eventually bought their own homes. For many young married couples, buying and working on a property was a shared project which appeared to have strengthened the conjugal bond.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, improved housing enabled couples to entertain friends at home, as will be discussed further in Chapter Four, ‘Friends and Acquaintances’.<sup>33</sup>

Although a movement towards shared leisure for many married couples was clearly discernable, this does not mean that the older gender divisions in sociability simply disappeared. Many men spent a large amount of time in the company of their mates at the pub or in sports teams in the 1960s and 1970s. There was a male drinking culture which some men indulged in as often as finances and their wives allowed. Bob Garbutt and David Hughes were friends who told stories of drinking exploits in Beverley pubs across the period, a habit which marriage and the advent of family life did not seem to have disrupted unduly.<sup>34</sup> Their stories contained bravado and celebration of a hedonistic approach; the time they spent in the pubs away from their

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<sup>27</sup> Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.48 mins.

<sup>28</sup> Dennis Duke, 14 July 2010, c.75 mins.

<sup>29</sup> Gerald Ibbotson, 7 July 2010, c.135 mins.

<sup>30</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.1 hour 1 min.

<sup>31</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.70 mins; Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>32</sup> George Little, 12 March 2010, c.124 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.70 mins; Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c. 80 mins.

<sup>33</sup> Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.48 mins; Elaine Mateer, 29 March 2010, track 3, c.25 mins; Gerald Ibbotson, 7 July 2010, c.140 mins. See Chapter Four, pp.116-117.

<sup>34</sup> Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c.60 mins; David Hughes 24 June 2010, c.50 mins.

families was corroborated by their wives.<sup>35</sup> Other interviewees remembered that despite marriage there was still plenty of time for friends and male-only drinking in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>36</sup> Although most of his spare time was spent with his wife and family, Gerald Ibbotson remembered that he and two neighbours ritually spent Thursday night visiting local pubs for many years.<sup>37</sup> The practice of taking wives out on a set night of the week and seeing male friends on other evenings, familiar from older generations, was still continued by at least some from the generation who married in the 1960s.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, sports and hobbies continued to take some men away from their families and wives – sometimes excessively so.<sup>39</sup> Even otherwise family-centred men spent time away from the family, fishing or on the golf course, football or rugby pitch.<sup>40</sup> Neither the radio nor the television ended participation in sports or destroyed the trade of pubs as Jack Binnington remembered:

Tellies came late into our house at Beckside because we had a brewery to keep you see...Father saw it as an irrelevance, he could spend that money in pub...He became addicted to it [*television*], but his pub life still went on.<sup>41</sup>

A new trend, but also serving to perpetuate the older gender division, was that of married women enjoying some measure of sociability away from the home with female friends – playing bingo, darts or going on occasional holidays or trips out with workmates.<sup>42</sup>

## **Child-centred attitudes**

### *Pre-affluence*

Alongside the separation of male and female social worlds in traditional working-class communities, the traditional male also had limited involvement in bringing up his children. According to Klein: ‘In the more traditional areas, children are more or less

<sup>35</sup> David Hughes, 24 June 2010, c.50 mins; Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c.58 mins.

<sup>36</sup> Mick Underwood, 21 July 2010, c.70 mins; Derek Saltmer, 25 January 2010, c.70 mins; Les White, 29 October 2010, c.7mins; Michael Hudson, 17 December 2010, track 1 c.0 mins.

<sup>37</sup> Gerald Ibbotson, 7 July 2010, c.140 mins.

<sup>38</sup> Les White, 29 October 2010, c.7 mins.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Hudson, 17 December 2010, track 1 c.0 mins; Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010, c.87 mins; Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>40</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.15 mins; George Little, 12 March 2010, c.140 mins; Margaret Day, 23 November 2011, c.44 mins.

<sup>41</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.15 mins.

<sup>42</sup> Jean Benson, 4 January 2010, 1 hour 9 mins; Doris Daniels, 13 November 2009, c.39 mins; 1 hour 30 mins. See Chapter Four, pp.118-119, for more details.

exclusively the wife's domain.'<sup>43</sup> Klein believed that more traditional attitudes survived in the north more than the south: 'In the north at least, not many husbands will be seen pushing the baby around in its pram.'<sup>44</sup> The older Beverlonian male resembled in some of his features aspects of Klein's 'traditional' working-class male. But overall the evidence suggests that her model exaggerated the degree to which men were aloof to their families, and that she was perhaps overly-influenced by extreme examples such as the West Yorkshire mining community described by Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter.<sup>45</sup>

Testimony about working-class upbringings in the early part of the period in Beverley often did emphasise an aloofness on the part of fathers, with mothers paying more attention to their children. Ivy Shipton's account of family life in the late 1940s and early 1950s was typical:

My dad was a man with his own interests. He liked the horses, and he liked the greyhounds, and he liked his garden. I would say probably a typical working man's interests really...he did gamble. And even up to just before he died...I think he had left the family quite short of funds from time to time...But, I suppose that was the way it was then...He went to the races...in August, he always went...I suppose sometimes at the expense of family holidays really. I don't remember ever going away on holiday as a child...We went to the cinema quite often me and my mother, and then my dad would often meet us afterwards, or we would go to the cinema then we would go down to [cousin] Ken's mum's, Aunt Cora, and then my dad would come from the pub or the club and meet us and walk home.<sup>46</sup>

In the 1930s through to the mid 1950s it was usually mothers who took children away for a day on the bus, paid into a 'didlum' for summer coach trip, or took them for a week away with a relative somewhere.<sup>47</sup> Most children spent a large amount of time independent of parents altogether, playing in the streets and surrounding countryside.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.177.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.* p.179.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.* p.292, p.295; Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life*; Ray Pahl argued that Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter's study was disproportionately influential on ideas of 'traditional working-class community': Pahl, *Divisions of Labour*, pp.3-4.

<sup>46</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>47</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.44 mins; Joan Gibson, 17 March 2010, c.10 mins; Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.31 mins.

<sup>48</sup> For eg, Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c.1 hr; Jack Binnington, 22 June,2010, c.31 mins; Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.15 mins.



However, the separation of men from their families in pre-affluent Beverley was not as extreme as in Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter's 'Ashton'.<sup>49</sup> Interviewees who grew up in the 1930s and 1940s recalled that fathers took an interest in their children and that the nuclear family did spend leisure time together. A common way interviewees reported spending time with their fathers in the 1930s and 1940s was on walks through the town and surrounding countryside on Sundays whilst mothers prepared lunch.<sup>50</sup> Other interviewees recalled that their mothers and fathers went on these walks, and some remembered family day-trips and holidays.<sup>51</sup> Even Ivy Shipton, who was quoted above describing a childhood in which her father largely detached himself from close involvement, recalled weekend walks.<sup>52</sup> Several interviewees' fathers had taken them to watch sports matches.<sup>53</sup> Lorry drivers and barge skippers sometimes took their children with them on trips away.<sup>54</sup> Fathers might take children to visit relatives.<sup>55</sup> Families ate together, played games together, undertook domestic chores and worked together on gardens, allotments and small holdings.<sup>56</sup> Whilst television in the 1950s is often thought to have brought families together and discouraged broader sociability, it was preceded by the radio which in many ways had the same function in giving nuclear families an activity which could keep them at home.<sup>57</sup>

### *Affluent era*

Alongside the purported shift from separate male and female social spheres towards shared sociability, Klein commented that children were becoming the focus for couples' attention. Shorter working hours allowed fathers more time to spend with their children; the weekend became family time. Children were the focus of couples' aspirations for the future, and this shared interest brought couples closer.<sup>58</sup> This was as

<sup>49</sup> Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life*, pp.171-226.

<sup>50</sup> Joan Gibson, 17 March 2010, c.5 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.40 mins.

<sup>51</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.15 mins; Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.51 mins; Marianne Woolly, 22 February 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>52</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>53</sup> George Little, 12 March 2010, c.24 mins; Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.35 mins.

<sup>54</sup> Joan Gibson, 17 March 2010, c.5 mins; Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c.35 mins.

<sup>55</sup> Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.0 mins; Matthew Walton, 22 July 2010, c.23 mins; George Wigton, 15 February 2010, c.15 mins.

<sup>56</sup> Matthew Walton, 22 July 2010, c.55 mins; Fred Reid 26 January 2010, c.25 mins; Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010, c.41 mins; Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c.5 mins; Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview 2a, p.5.

<sup>57</sup> For eg. John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.1 hour 40 mins.

<sup>58</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.300-301.

true in older neighbourhoods as in the new, and Klein quoted one of Willmott and Young's Bethnal Green informants:

We're different with our boy, we make more of a mate of him. When I was a kid, Dad always had the best of everything. Now it's the children who get the best of it.<sup>59</sup>

Beverley interviewees who brought families up from the mid-1950s also stressed that they had a different approach to parenting to that they had experienced during their own upbringing. They frequently recounted striving to give their children the things their own parents had not been able to give them. Sarah Baker, who along with her tannery worker husband Vic brought their family up in the 1960s and 1970s, spoke for many other interviewees:

I've always said I would like to give our children as much as we can afford, what we knew our parents couldn't give us... My mother, she used to say, 'Oh, I can't afford to give you this, I can't afford to give you that,' but they used to smoke and drink... if I couldn't afford to give our bairns sommat, I wouldn't smoke.<sup>60</sup>

Jack Binnington, a barge skipper, recalled that during the 1970s:

I wanted my family to have things and look smart and go to school clean and tidy... and be happy at school, not worrying 'what am I going home to?'... pub and things like that didn't enter my mind.<sup>61</sup>

As well as the perceived duty to provide materially for children at a time when the minimum expected level of material comfort was moving upwards, interviewees took pleasure in their parental role. Dennis Duke, a barge skipper and later a lorry driver, brought up a family in the 1970s and expressed a common attitude of parents from his generation towards their children: 'We wanted to spend as much time with them as we could when they was growing up.'<sup>62</sup>

Prioritising and spending time with children was made easier by improvements in the kinds of home to which working people could aspire. Whilst older interviewees typically grew up in rented terraced housing, often poorly maintained and without electricity or running water, at least 60% of those born after 1940 had been able to buy

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.* p.301.

<sup>60</sup> Sarah Baker, in Vic Baker 29 May, 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>61</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.84 mins.

<sup>62</sup> Dennis Duke, 14 July 2010, c.81 mins.

their own homes. These homes might be new, and by this time were always at least supplied with water and electricity. Ellen Ingleton remembered how she and her husband, an electrician at Armstrong's, made considerable sacrifices in terms of their social life to buy their home. They then put off having children for several years whilst working to get their home into a fit shape.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, the council house building programme in the town after the war greatly improved the living standards of many residents (800 homes were built on the Swinemoor estate alone between 1945 and 1964).<sup>64</sup> Tenants generally appreciated their council houses in the 1950s and 1960s as good places to bring up families; most could compare them with the lower standard of private rented housing they had grown up in. Keith Barrett recalled that as a small boy in the late 1950s he was moved with his family to a council house from a condemned property:

It was a big improvement from the other place...apparently it was, like, full of insects, cockroaches, and there was no heating in there except, like, the fire in the front room, no hot water... I can remember the tin bath...[the house] had gas lighting.<sup>65</sup>

As the quality of housing increased, it became more practical and desirable to use homes as a site for leisure time and a context for nuclear family sociability. Private and council houses with gardens and driveways meant that DIY and gardening became necessary tasks; homes with gardens enabled men to undertake pigeon keeping, motor mechanics and craft hobbies which required at least a small amount of land. Sometimes children were involved with these activities, but even where they were not, time spent in these kinds of activities kept fathers close at hand.<sup>66</sup>

Other innovations of the affluent era enabled families to spend more time together. The impetus to buy a car often came from the wife, who seemed to have envisaged this purchase in terms of provision of leisure for the children.<sup>67</sup> The family outings which interviewees recalled from childhoods in the 1930s and 1940s had frequently been with their mothers on the bus; by the 1960s mothers and fathers

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<sup>63</sup> Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.70 mins; Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.1 hour 15 mins.

<sup>64</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley after 1945", p.156.

<sup>65</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.0 mins.

<sup>66</sup> Lynne Norton, 9 November 2009, c.47 mins; Patrick Mateer 13 January 2010, c.15 mins; Ellen Watton, 8 March 2010, c.20 mins; Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.8 mins.

<sup>67</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.84 mins; Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, c.48 mins; Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, 65 mins; Tom and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.1 hour 20 mins.

together regularly took their children on weekend and evening trips to the coast and countryside by car. Jack Binnington recalled his first family car in the 1960s: 'We had a little red Mini for our first car, and we loved that little red Mini, four people fit into it lovely and so you'd go off for days.'<sup>68</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster bought a car in the early 1960s when their children were small and their weekend family excursions to local countryside and seaside sites were fairly typical:

H: We used to go to Brid a lot at weekends

E: Yes, early on a Sunday morning we used to go.

H: Rides round Rosedale [in the North York Moors National Park] and round there.<sup>69</sup>

In this way ownership of cars provided a shared weekend activity for many nuclear families. This point is emphasised by comparison with those families who did not have a car – Keith Barrett grew up in the 1960s in such a family and recalled: 'Most of the time I just played with all local kids and your mums was at home...maybe people would come round or she'd maybe go gossiping at someone else's house...we didn't do a real lot as families.'<sup>70</sup>

When asked about what they had done together as families, interviewees' automatic response was to discuss holidays – holidays were the archetypal family time. Rising living standards and car ownership in the 1950s through to the 1970s provided opportunities for many more to spend a week away with mother, father and siblings. Whereas 15% of interviewees mentioned holidays with parents in the 1930s and 1940s, at least 36% of interviewees went on holidays with the whole nuclear family in the 1960s and 1970s. Elaine Mateer recalled only day trips until the family got a three-wheeled car in the late 1960s, from which point in time they began to have annual trips, camping in Scotland and the Lake District amongst other places.<sup>71</sup> Likewise George Little recalled how he was given a van by his father-in-law in the 1960s which made family holidays viable:

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<sup>68</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.84 mins.

<sup>69</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.105 mins.

<sup>70</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c. 31 mins.

<sup>71</sup> Elaine Mateer, 29 March 2010, c.20 mins; see also: June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.125 mins; Bob Miles, 11 February 2010, c.46 mins.

It was ideal for us with the kids. We went for miles in it...and then we progressed to going every year for a week to Scarborough, and we used to go in this van...Because it had a good luggage space in the back.<sup>72</sup>

Although holidays were increasingly taken further afield than the local seaside resorts reported in the 1940s and 50s, family holidays abroad were only recalled by one couple, June and Dave Ireland, who took their family on a coach trip to Italy in the 1970s; this couple had achieved social mobility through grammar school into lower white-collar positions.<sup>73</sup>

The fruits of affluence – improved homes, cars, holidays, televisions – provided enhanced possibilities for spending time as a family. This enjoyment of the nuclear family could limit broader sociability for couples with young families. Jack Binnington described his attitude to his young family in the 1970s:

Having a big group of friends? No we never...it was us four that I lived for and worked for...We didn't say to people: 'I'll see you Saturday night in the pub.'<sup>74</sup>

It must also be noted that spending more time with families was not always a positive choice. For some, the expense of bringing up children and striving to provide materially for families in times of rising expectations about living standards could mean that both partners in the marriage worked full-time; particularly during the early years of marriage and child rearing there might be less time for socialising with friends.<sup>75</sup> Children, mortgages, holidays and cars were expensive and these investments could soak up the benefits of affluence, leaving little money for sociability.<sup>76</sup>

In some respects, this evidence of increasing emphasis on time spent as a family unit appears to lend some credence to the privatism thesis, which posited a broader withdrawal from communal sociability. However, such home-and-family focus was at its height whilst children were young, and other parts of the life-cycle were much more sociable, as will be seen in Chapter Four, 'Friends and Acquaintances'.

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<sup>72</sup> George Little, 12 March 2010, c.147 mins.

<sup>73</sup> June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.121 mins.

<sup>74</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.91 mins.

<sup>75</sup> Bill and Jane Holland, 11 November 2009, c.10 mins.

<sup>76</sup> Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.25 mins ; Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c.105 mins.

Furthermore, an orientation towards the nuclear family did not necessarily preclude wider sociability – there was evidence of socialising with others as a family unit. Men bringing up families during the later 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were more involved with their wives and children than were previous generations, and they tended to participate in their family's social activities. Interviewees spoke of family trips and holidays with friends' families in the late 1950s through to the 1970s:

[In the early 1960s] We did have friends nearby who had a car, and occasionally they'd take us out for the day ... they had a big Vanguard estate...we'd all pile into there for the day, and zoom off to Hornsea, spend the day on the beach...talk about over-crowding a vehicle.<sup>77</sup>

[In the later 1970s] When the kids were little we all went on holiday together...the Yorkshire Dales, we used to rent a cottage there...a big house, slept ten, we used to go, us four, Pat and Bruce with their two girls, and two of the chaps that I've just been talking about. We all used to go.<sup>78</sup>

We went to Cornwall quite a lot with friends didn't we? In various cars, sometimes we used to take a couple of days to get there...Ray's main friend from CLB [Church Lad's Brigade], and his wife, who I'd got to be a really close friend of...the Bielby family, he was like another brother to me...he was godfather to a couple of our kids, he had a car and used to take as many people as he could with him in his car.<sup>79</sup>

Post-war developments also meant that families could exchange visits with friends and family who lived in other towns and villages. The improvement in housing standards for many meant that the home could be used for entertaining friends and families, and cars facilitated visiting. Hilda and George worked in Beverley and brought their family up in the town, whereas Hilda's friends' husbands' jobs in the RAF took them to other parts of the country. During the 1970s the couple would visit these friends in Lincoln and York, using the car to take their children with them. As their children grew up, the couples arranged an annual weekend together, meeting at one or the others' homes.<sup>80</sup> Bernard Hunt recalled that whilst bringing up his family in the 1960s and 70s he was able to maintain links with a family in Holland. As a child

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<sup>77</sup> William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>78</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.70 mins

<sup>79</sup> Ellen Malster, 21 May 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>80</sup> Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c. 110 mins; George Little, 12 March 2010, c.150 mins; Anna Mason, 12 July 2010, track 2.

Bernard had become friends with the Dutch family who had a market gardening business near Beverley. Bernard, a groundsman at Hodgson's, took his wife and children for four trips to Holland a year: 'Even when I couldn't afford it I took the boys, the boys were brought up there really.' These Dutch friends visited the Hunts in their Beverley home in return.<sup>81</sup>

## **Extended family**

### *Pre-affluence*

The high proportion of interviewees born before 1940 whose parents were also born and bred in Beverley (almost three quarters) compares with Willmott and Young's Bethnal Green, which the authors depicted as a stable and homogenous community because fifty percent of married residents had parents also living in the borough.<sup>82</sup> Many Beverley residents in the 1940s and 1950s would have had relatives living in the town, and interviewees often mentioned parents, grandparents and other relatives living nearby in the 1940s and 1950s.

In fact, there were many examples amongst the interviews of two or more generations of families living on the same street in the 1940s and 1950s. Approximately one fifth of interviewees said other relatives lived on the street in which they grew up in these decades, which may underestimate the true figure since not every interview covered this topic. The example of one street of small two-up, two-down rented terraced housing illustrates how extended families often did not move very far from one another. Three interviewees grew up in St Andrew's Street in the 1940s and all remembered that extended family occupied other houses in the same street. Betty Carr lived in a house opposite her paternal grandmother.<sup>83</sup> Carl Bowser lived in the house next door to Betty Carr, and remembered that although his mother's parents had died: 'There was all my relations down there – either there or just into Keldgate... my uncles and aunts, and my mother's uncles and aunts as well.'<sup>84</sup> Ellen Ingleton grew up in a house on St Andrew's Street in the 1940s with her mother's sister living three doors down and her mother's mother living on Lurk Lane,

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<sup>81</sup> Bernard Hunt, 12 January 2010, c.53 mins, c.75 mins.

<sup>82</sup> Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, p.36.

<sup>83</sup> Betty Carr, c.23 mins.

<sup>84</sup> Carl Bowser, ERYMS interview, CD 2.

immediately adjacent to St Andrew's Street.<sup>85</sup> She recalled that such physical proximity lead to inter-household support:

I don't know about neighbours – my Aunty used to borrow sometimes off my mother. Because mother only had us two...she had a lot of children, and my Uncle Cliff worked away but it wasn't a very big wage...cup of sugar, things like that, "can you lend me a shilling 'til the weekend?", things like that.<sup>86</sup>

Betty Carr recalled how, as her parent's house became too small for her and three siblings, she began sleeping in her grandmother's house, also on St Andrew's Street.<sup>87</sup>

Most did not have extended family living on the same street but nevertheless relied on relatives in the town for mutual support and sociability. Doris Daniels was married in 1951 at the age of 19 and recalled how her mother and her sister were frequent companions when she was bringing up her family, and would help with loans and housework:

Mam would come, or I went to Mam's, she only lived round the corner in a flat, cup of tea with me Mam when I'd got all finished, and Mam would come here...Anna was a good girl, always helped with the children ...sometimes when I went to my mother's I used to put a bit of butter, or a bit of sugar, [to return an earlier loan] and when I came back it was still under the cover. There was no way she would take this bit of butter or this bit of sugar.<sup>88</sup>

Similarly, many interviewees recalled how families living locally shared garden produce, coupons and other windfalls during rationing, including the following slightly chilling instance:

My mum's father he had a smallholding, and so they made their own butter and things like that...My other grandma, [whose husband was a joiner and undertaker], if ever she was lucky enough to get anything, she would always share it with the whole family...whenever they had a funeral and they had to pack any of the bodies in ice, she used to make us ice-cream...she'd come round with it specially.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.6 mins.

<sup>86</sup> Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.15 mins.

<sup>87</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.23 mins. For similar examples for different streets, see Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.50 mins; Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c.1 hour 35 mins.

<sup>88</sup> Doris Daniels, 13 November 2009, c.48 mins.

<sup>89</sup> May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.0 mins; see also: George Little, 12 March 2010, c.45 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.15 mins



Sociability with family members living in the town was casual. Families did not usually undertake visits as a whole unit. More commonly, mothers and fathers took their children on separate visits to their respective parents. For example, Les White recalled how he and his sisters and mother were ‘always’ round at his maternal grandmother’s house, but that ‘the only time I went to my dad’s side was with my dad’.<sup>90</sup> Often, though not always, the emphasis was on the mothers’ relatives (given the already noted tendency for mothers in this period to spend more time with their children than fathers), as Anna Mason recalled of the 1940s: ‘My mother had a sister she was particularly close to...we used to see a lot of her and her family...My dad’s family, we had very little contact with them.’<sup>91</sup>

Of course, the intensity of this casual sociability with family members living locally varied considerably. Some interviewees who grew up in the 1940s and 1950s would agree with Les White or Ivy Bingley whose parents socialised with a range of local relatives, and said they were ‘always’ at a relative’s house.<sup>92</sup> For others, sociability with extended family was less frequent. Men in particular often failed to keep in touch with their siblings in adulthood; some interviewees recalled that when they were growing up in the 1940s their mothers had spent a lot of time with a favoured sister but little time visiting other relatives.<sup>93</sup> In the 1940s, Anna Mason mother, despite having fourteen siblings living in the town - ‘eight from the first marriage... and then five, six from the other marriage’ – only socialised regularly with one sister.<sup>94</sup> These findings correspond with J.M. Mogey’s study of a working-class district of Oxford in the 1950s: Mogey wrote that, despite the presence of many local residents who were related to each other, adults’ interest in extended family concentrated on the parents firstly and siblings secondly.<sup>95</sup>

### *Affluence*

In the years of rising affluence from the mid 1950s until the 1970s, the evidence suggests that, despite increased emphasis on the conjugal bond and child-oriented attitudes, working-class nuclear families in Beverley did not form privatised units in the ways Klein and Goldthorpe described. Most still had relatives living locally with

<sup>90</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.41 mins.

<sup>91</sup> Anna Mason, 12 July 2010, c.12 mins.

<sup>92</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.41 mins; Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>93</sup> Ellen Watton, 8 March 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>94</sup> Anna Mason, 12 July 2010, c.17 mins.

<sup>95</sup> Mogey, *Family and Neighbourhood*, pp.78-79.

whom they were involved to varying degrees. By the late 1970s, the St Nicholas parish registers show a slightly reduced but still very high percentage of people from local addresses marrying one another, suggestive of a high proportion of couples both of whom had family living in the town. In the five years from 1975 to 1979, 49% of couples entered separate Beverley addresses in the register.<sup>96</sup> Amongst the interviewees born between 1941 and 1965, most of whom started families of their own in the 1960s and 1970s, 80% had at least one parent who was born and bred in Beverley.

The demolition of some older homes and the building of post-war private and council housing estates seems to have contributed to a decline in the extent to which relatives lived in the same street. Whereas almost a quarter of the interviewees mentioned family living in the streets where they grew up in the 1940s and early 1950s, only a tiny proportion (around 3%) of those setting up home for themselves in the 1950s and 1960s mentioned that relatives also lived on the same street.

Nevertheless, as in the 1940s and early 1950s, in the period of rising affluence from the mid-1950s onwards, family ties were often important in keeping people in the town. Peter Lawson married a Beverley girl in the late 1960s and said that he and his wife had never considered leaving Beverley because both liked being close to their mothers.<sup>97</sup> Ellen Malster's desire to remain close to her family led her and her husband to turn down the opportunity to emigrate in the 1960s, although some other family members had done so.<sup>98</sup> James and Peggy Alexander considered emigrating to Australia in the 1960s for their daughter's health, but gave family as the reason for staying in the town.<sup>99</sup> Louise Christopher said that her close relationship with her parents was the reason she did not move south to join her husband in the 1970s.<sup>100</sup>

Whether or not interviewees consciously made a choice to remain living near to their parents, this proximity remained important and useful to most during the 1960s and 1970s. In some respects, reliance on relatives living locally increased as more

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<sup>96</sup> Beverley St Nicholas Register of Marriages. No 6, 6 Sept 1969- 28 July 1979, ERALS: PE 193/10/1.

<sup>97</sup> Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c. 1 hour 56 mins.

<sup>98</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>99</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c. 110 mins; see also Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.108 mins.

<sup>100</sup> Louise Christopher, November 25 2009, c.32 mins.

mothers with school-aged children went out to work.<sup>101</sup> The rise in married women's work outside of the home was a significant post-war economic and social trend, with 26% of British women working in 1951, rising to 49% in 1971 and 62% in 1981.<sup>102</sup> The Beverley census statistics suggest a similar expansion locally.<sup>103</sup> Amongst interviewees' own families, a conservative interpretation of the data suggests that at least one third of mothers of small children (up to the age of ten) went out to work in the 1960s and 1970s, as opposed to about ten percent of mothers before the Second World War.

Whilst some young couples' parents were not willing to babysit, it appears that most were and it was this service in particular which could be invaluable if a woman wanted to return to work while her children were still young – nurseries were not widely available in the 1950s through to the 1970s. Childcare was required at the beginning or end of the day, and might involve children going to their grandparents' home. Some paid their mothers for this kind of regular childcare, reasoning that the money was better spent within the family than outside.<sup>104</sup> Other grandparents provided this service for free. For single mothers, having parents living nearby was perhaps even more important, as Elaine Mateer found when her marriage broke down in the 1970s.<sup>105</sup> Sally Adams discovered that having her mother at hand was extremely useful when she had to juggle the demands of a severely disabled child with the need to go back to work in the 1970s.<sup>106</sup> Even those who did not work found their mothers could be an everyday source of help and support. Parents were by far the most usual providers of babysitting services for couples who wanted to go out and socialise.

Help from extended family was not restricted to babysitting. Parents and siblings helped in other ways, most notably at the time when a couple were setting up home. Collecting for the 'bottom drawer' was mentioned by some interviewees. This was the tradition by which relatives collected and bought household items (for example, bedsheets, towels and other small items) for a couple who were awaiting the

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<sup>101</sup> The rise in married women's labour outside of the home was a significant post-war economic and social trend, with 26% of British women working in 1951, rising to 49% in 1971 and 62% in 1981 (Thane, "Women Since 1945", pp.393-395).

<sup>102</sup> Thane, "Women Since 1945," pp.393-395.

<sup>103</sup> See Chapter Five, pp.135-136.

<sup>104</sup> Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>105</sup> Elaine Mateer, 29 March 2010, track 3.

<sup>106</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.102 mins.

move into their own house.<sup>107</sup> Other gifts and loans from parents to couples setting up home included help with purchasing items of furniture and even the gift of an old vehicle.<sup>108</sup> In an era of rising home ownership, parents and siblings helped with decorating, gardening and DIY tasks.<sup>109</sup> There were many more examples given of practical help and assistance from family members than from neighbours, and it seems that family were the first port of call for serious material help (whether with substantial babysitting, loans of money or help with tasks). This reflects Klein's observation that neighbourhood mutual assistance in traditional communities was often in fact supplied by relatives living locally.<sup>110</sup> Jim Fisher recalled that when he and his wife had children:

If you wanted an hour, Mary [the next door neighbour] said, 'leave the kids for an hour,' or sommat like that, she was there like, but when it came down to serious babysitting it would be my mother-in-law or father-in-law.<sup>111</sup>

Whilst the parent-child bond continued to provide certain kinds of support for most across the period, the extent to which regular contact was maintained with adult siblings was highly variable. Sisters in particular continued to be close to one another. Doreen Lee and Doris Daniels lived on the same council estate throughout most of their adult life and there were periods when they saw each other every day.<sup>112</sup> Other siblings might have little contact in day to day life, but still considered that brothers and sisters living locally were useful for emergencies, and that the family would all pull together when necessary. The idea that you should not 'live in each others' pockets' was stressed by these interviewees.<sup>113</sup>

Most of the interviewees had grown up in Beverley and remained in Beverley throughout their adult life, as had their parents. In addition to facilitating that day to day mutual assistance which would have been more difficult at a greater distance, propinquity enabled a similar casualness in extended family sociability to that noted in the earlier part of the period. Irregular but frequent calling in to parents' houses was

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<sup>107</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.45 mins; June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.97 mins.

<sup>108</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.45 mins; George Little, 12 March 2010, c.140 mins.

<sup>109</sup> For eg. Lynne Norton, 9 November 2009, c.49 minutes.; Dick Gibson, 11 May 2010, c 1 hour 51 mins.

<sup>110</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.134.

<sup>111</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c. 1 hour 7 mins.

<sup>112</sup> Lynne Norton, 9 November 2009, c. 1 hour 10 mins.

<sup>113</sup> Gerald Ibbotson, 7 July 2010, c.55 mins; Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.62 mins.

common.<sup>114</sup> Into the 1970s, the kind of casual sociability with local family members that many described seemed little different to that in the 1940s and 1950s.

However, some changes were observable. Amongst the migrant populations which Klein and Goldthorpe *et al* analysed, the new emphasis on home, spouse and children took wives away from ‘Demeter system’ relationships with their natal families, and men away from their mates. But in the more stable social environment of Beverley, a shift in male leisure towards the nuclear family could bring husbands into the ambit of their wives’ extended family sociability. James and Peggy Alexander, married in the 1960s, recalled:

We used to visit my mother and father, your aunt and uncle at the shop...we did spend quite a lot of time visiting...We would go round to my parents for tea on a Sunday, and stay just a bit of the evening.<sup>115</sup>

As Klein acknowledged, rising living standards could promote easy sociability in the place of material mutual assistance with family.<sup>116</sup>

In addition, rising living standards brought new ways for working-class extended families to spend time together. From the 1960s, some went on holiday as a whole nuclear family unit with other members of the extended family, a phenomenon which was not reported in the previous decades. Julie Davies, born in 1965, recalled annual holidays, with several members of the extended family staying in a number of caravans together.<sup>117</sup> Sally Adams remembered similar holidays with her parents and her father’s sisters and their children at a local beach resort in the 1960s.<sup>118</sup> When Sally was married she took her own husband and family on holidays with her sister and parents.<sup>119</sup> Ivy Shipton, born in 1963, said she had done very little as a family unit with both her parents when she was small, but that:

We did more with them when our children were small...they went on holiday with us a couple of times, just up to Scarborough...my mother enjoyed it... my Dad did too... but it was a new experience for them really, going in a unit.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> For eg. Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c. 10 mins; Elaine Mateer, 29 March 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>115</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.110 mins.

<sup>116</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.275.

<sup>117</sup> Julie Davies, 27 November 2009, c.10 mins.

<sup>118</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.10 mins

<sup>119</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, 108 mins.

<sup>120</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.15 mins.

The rise of working-class car ownership from the 1950s and 1960s did not only provide a new way for husband, wife and children to spend leisure time together, but could also facilitate time spent with other relatives. Jim Fisher remembered Sunday afternoons visiting Hornsea with his parents and grandparents in their car in the 1960s.<sup>121</sup> Also in the 1960s, Ellen and Harry Malster remembered:

Harry: We used to go to Continental in Hull...

Ellen: I suppose you'd call it a club nowadays, it was like a variety thing, they had acts on the stage, but the novelty was, you got food. It was the days they started doing what you called scampi in baskets...there was a bit of dancing...the whole family used to go there...there must have been about twenty of us sometimes...various cars and things, you didn't have to worry about drink driving.<sup>122</sup>

Car ownership enabled maintenance of regular family contact over a greater distance. Unlike the more casual sociability with family living in Beverley, visits to extended family living in different towns or villages required more organisation, but again were a way in which the nuclear family socialised as a whole unit with others. Peter Lawson recalled that when growing up in the 1960s the main weekend family activity was going out in the car with his parents and paternal grandmother who lived in Hull.<sup>123</sup> Ron Pearce remembered how he and his wife and child would drive to Ullswater to see his wife's sister for the weekend in the 1970s.<sup>124</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The markedly separate conjugal sociability which Klein attributed to the traditional working classes was more in evidence in Beverley in the 1940s and early 1950s than by the 1960s and 1970s. The emphasis on the home and children which Klein highlighted amongst those who had moved away from traditional communities during the affluent era was also notable in Beverley, where most had not moved away from family and old friends. Thus it is possible to concur with Klein's suggestion that the close involvement of working-class husbands on new estates with their home and nuclear family was a more intense expression of what was happening in society more generally. Indeed, Claire Langhamer has argued that post-war affluence and improved

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<sup>121</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.0 mins.

<sup>122</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>123</sup> Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c.17 mins.

<sup>124</sup> Ron Pearce, 2 December 2010, c.1hr 30 mins.

housing enabled the partial fulfilment of working-class cultural aspirations for a home-centred life that pre-dated the Second World War.<sup>125</sup>

However, the contours of change appeared much less sharp in Beverley than in the working-class populations displaced from their old communities discussed by Klein. This was partly because the affluent-era workers in Beverley were not separated from their natal communities, and so maintained some of their older patterns of sociability. But it was also because in comparison with the Beverley evidence Klein's depiction of traditional working-class family life appears exaggerated. Most married men in pre affluent-era Beverley did not maintain quite the separation from their wives and children that Klein attributed to the traditional working classes. They put time aside for socialising with their wives, and many were attentive to their children, taking them for walks and days out.<sup>126</sup>

Whilst Goldthorpe *et al* highlighted the abandonment of close ties with extended family as a price that affluent workers were prepared to pay to get on in the 1960s, in Beverley we see that many either did not have to make this choice, or when it came to it were not prepared to relinquish the propinquity of family. The nuclear family unit in Beverley was far from privatised and isolated. Many derived considerable support and sociability from parents and siblings living locally. The affluent era created new requirements for assistance from relatives, particularly in terms of childcare from mothers who wanted to return to work. The shift in male sociable emphasis towards wife and family could mean that the family socialised together with extended family and shared friends, rather than separately as individual members.

Therefore the sharp separation between traditional and new forms of working-class family life which Klein and Goldthorpe *et al* documented, and which has been accepted by many as a wider pattern in the post-war decades, did not stand out so clearly in Beverley. Instead, a more gradual evolution of older patterns took place. The nuclear family did not become privatised and socially isolated.

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<sup>125</sup> Langhamer, *Women's leisure in England*, pp.360-361.

<sup>126</sup> See for example, Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c.35 mins

## Chapter Three. Neighbours

This chapter will compare the Beverley evidence against Josephine Klein's claim that post-war affluence and geographical movement precipitated a reduction in the communal sociability and mutuality with neighbours which was a feature of traditional working-class communities.

Klein posited fundamental shifts in working-class neighbourly relationships in the age of affluence.<sup>1</sup> In traditional communities, relatives (or 'kin' to use Klein's term) often lived the same street.<sup>2</sup> Streets were often socially homogenous, and residents tended to live there for many years. The frequency of neighbourly contact made it possible for neighbours to be helpful, creating a feeling of solidarity. Everyone knew everyone else. However, the privacy of the home was guarded – sociability was restricted to the communal spaces of streets and shops for women, and to streets, pubs and clubs for men. Informal 'communal' sociability in these public spaces was frequent, and gossip enabled news to travel quickly, ensuring the availability of assistance in times of need, and reinforcing neighbourhood norms. Shared norms facilitated a comfortable social atmosphere because residents were in little doubt about the rules of engagement.<sup>3</sup>

On the new estates however, Klein wrote that there was far less communal sociability. There were often no local pubs or shops. Women did not have their mothers and sisters to hand. Because residents of new estates came from different districts, there was normative confusion regarding the correct levels and patterns of neighbourliness. Many found it was easier to withdraw from interaction rather than risk new neighbours snubbing them, or alternatively seeking to establish an unwanted degree of intimacy. Uncertainty about norms, and the presence of people who did not know each other, resulted in a heightened anxiety about how one was perceived, and an increasing concern with status differentials judged by outward signs of consumption – in the older neighbourhoods such status concerns were less important because people were known to one another as whole personalities. Although Klein did not consider that the mutual assistance offered by non-kin in older neighbourhoods was substantial,

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<sup>1</sup> See also: Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, p.116, p.194; Roberts, *Women and Families*, pp.229-231.

<sup>2</sup> Klein referred to a Sheffield study showing that in a working-class area that housewives often lived no more than 20 or 30 yards from the majority of their friends and kin: Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.132.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* pp.128-133; p141; p.253.



it was reduced still further on the new estates. Overall, the easy communal sociability of street and pub and the mutual assistance of kin and neighbours declined – ‘the neighbourly tie is weakening as the family tie becomes stronger’.<sup>4</sup>

It was not only on new estates that such withdrawal from neighbourly sociability was in evidence. Klein quoted Cyril Smith, co-author of a 1954 study of neighbourhood and community in Sheffield:

Now more than ever before we have the ideal of the individual household – the family – supplanting the notion of wider responsibilities... This trend in family life is obviously connected to the improved standards of living.<sup>5</sup>

Klein wrote that Smith’s evidence highlighted how ‘changes of behaviour may occur independently of geographical mobility’.<sup>6</sup> Overall, Klein agreed with Zweig’s proposition: “‘the higher the level of prosperity, the higher the fences’”.<sup>7</sup>

Klein did not stipulate definitions of the terms ‘neighbours’ and ‘neighbourhoods’, referring sometimes to those living on the same street and other times to a collection of streets. For the purposes of this chapter I will follow Elizabeth Roberts and use the term ‘neighbours’ heuristically to refer to those living in a particular street who were familiar with one another by virtue of frequent interaction; ‘neighbourhood’ here will mean street.<sup>8</sup> These uses of the term ‘neighbour’ and ‘neighbourhood’ correspond approximately with interviewees’ own uses. The evidence shows that streets often formed a convenient category for organisation, with certain communal activities organised by and for particular streets.

In the first two sections, the neighbourly sociability depicted by Klein as typical of traditional working-class communities will be compared with that in old working-class streets in Beverley in the early, pre-affluence part of the period (1945-1955). This was the decade Hobsbawm considered the apogee of a traditional working-class culture dating back to the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> I will make particular reference to Beckside, a street adjoining the town’s canal head in the industrial east of the town, since this was a district with a particularly developed sense of community. Beckside,

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* pp.221-222; p.229; pp.226-227; pp.253-257; pp.246-247; p.224.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p.224.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* p.224.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* p.224, p.263,

<sup>8</sup> Roberts, *Women and Families*, pp.199-201.

<sup>9</sup> Hobsbawm “The Formation of British Working-Class Culture”, p.185.

along with the other streets described in the first two sections, were either old terraced housing from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, or council estates built between the wars. Patterns of sociability in these streets confirmed Klein's account in many respects, but there were some differences: mutuality was more evident amongst non-kin neighbours than Klein suggested; the acute consciousness of status differences which Klein argued was a feature of the new estates was also plainly visible in the pre-affluent 'traditional' neighbourhoods.

In the final two sections, the Beverley evidence from the age of affluence between 1955 and the 1970s will be compared against the changes which Klein described. The comparison provides a framework for assessing changing patterns of neighbourly sociability in the town; it also allows reflection on the extent to which Klein's claims had general purchase beyond the migrant populations which she analysed. Those who moved to new post-war council estates in Beverley had usually not moved far from their previous neighbourhoods, and were living amongst other Beverlonians, often people who were known to them; there was no suggestion of the normative and social disruption described by Klein. Furthermore, whilst Klein's evidence came from sociological snapshots of estates in transition in the 1950s, the historical perspective allows us to see what happened subsequent to the initial disruptions caused by relocation. Over time, older patterns were sometimes re-established, and developments not apparent in the 1950s and early 1960s came into focus.

I will argue that by the 1970s, streets were rarely such all-encompassing social worlds as they were for women and children in the early part of the period. But change in Beverley was more evolutionary than that described by Klein: there was not such a clear divide between old and new cultural attitudes towards neighbours; patterns of neighbourly interaction in the 1970s could sometimes resemble those in the 1940s. Post-war changes associated with affluence – including improved housing and a heightened emphasis on home and family – could encourage forms of sociability and mutuality between neighbours that Klein did not consider.

### **Neighbourly sociability and mutuality – pre-affluence, 1945-1955**

Elizabeth Bott wrote: 'Localised networks are most likely to develop in areas where the inhabitants feel they are socially similar to one another; such feelings of solidarity appear to be strongest in long established working class areas in which there is a

dominant industry or a relatively small number of traditional occupations.’<sup>10</sup> Beckside was such an area, a street of rented terraced housing clustered around the centuries-old dock area of Beverley, around a mile away from the town centre. The neighbourhood contained a number of households whose members were related and who had a long connection to the barge industry which centred on the canalised waterway which terminates here.<sup>11</sup> In addition to the industrial warehouses associated with the canal, other workplaces, including an engineering works, an animal feed mill, and Hodgson’s tannery were present in or near to Beckside. Oral reminiscence suggested a strong sense of community, which makes it a useful case-study for establishing the possible extent of neighbourhood sociability of the ‘traditional’ kind. Although much of the evidence discussed below relates to Beckside, testimony from other working-class neighbourhoods in the town is incorporated, suggestive of both similarities and differences from street to street.

#### *Settled residence of neighbourhoods*

Klein suggested that long residence in particular streets allowed neighbours to get to know each other and to be helpful to one another, and that this lay behind their solidarity.<sup>12</sup> Jack Binnington recalled that on Beckside there was long continuity of residence of particular families, including different generations of the same family, and that this meant everybody knew everybody else: ‘If I looked at Beckside I could tell you everybody who lived from corner of Hull Road, where the fountain is, all the way down up to Potter Hill.’<sup>13</sup> In the 1950s, several generations of some Beckside families had been bargees, and these families were sometimes inter-married.<sup>14</sup> As Jack Binnington said of his neighbours: ‘They weren’t just neighbours, they was your relations really.’<sup>15</sup> Jack’s own father and grandfather had been barge skippers living in or around Beckside; other local families were also descended from long lines of ‘bargees’ including the names Gillyon, Tattersall, Scaife, Verity and Peck.<sup>16</sup> Jack recalled that during the 1950s another Binnington family lived opposite him on Beckside, and that there were several Lascelles households, two Peck households and

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place : An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p.194.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix Four ‘Map- East Beverley c.1966’.

<sup>12</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.133-134.

<sup>13</sup> Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, c.55 mins.

<sup>14</sup> Schofield, *Humber Keels and Keelmen*, pp.120-129; Jack Binnington, 3 August c.20 mins.

<sup>15</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June, 2010, c.45 mins.

<sup>16</sup> Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, c.11 mins. and 20 mins; *ibid.* pp.120-129.

several Gillyon households.<sup>17</sup> Some of these families were well known across Beverley for their connection both with Beckside and the barge industry and were mentioned by many other interviewees.<sup>18</sup> As described in the previous chapter, many other working-class streets at this time also contained multiple households of extended family.

However, it was not necessary to have families of several generations living on the same street for a sense of familiarity to exist. Streets were remembered as neighbourly when interviewees recalled knowing every resident and where residential turnover was low:

People tended to stay put on the estate [an inter-war council estate] and we were a close community. I can still remember most of our neighbours [in the 1930s and 1940s], starting with the Smiths at number one, then there were the Cherries, Hiltons, Robinsons, Spinks, Walkers, Kendrews, Marsdens, Hunts, Greys, Rustons, Galbraiths, Buntings.<sup>19</sup>

Such streets, in which everyone was known to everyone else, were the contexts for neighbourly traditions such as collecting for a wreath for a deceased resident. At the time of the interviews John Day still had a list of those who had donated to a collection for his maternal grandfather's funeral in the 1950s. The list was a long one, containing his grandfather's neighbours on Grovehill Road, all of whom John remembered.<sup>20</sup>

### *Neighbourhood as the social world of women*

The principle, still adhered to by many in the mid-twentieth century, that a woman's place was in the home meant that women were often present in streets and in a position to interact with each other.<sup>21</sup> Judy Whittles' grew up in Beckside in the 1940s and recalled how women of her mother's generation were rooted in their residential streets, looking after homes and children:

The women, I won't say they was housebound, but they didn't move off Beckside. They weren't going to bingo, or going to the pub, or, they'd maybe go to pictures occasionally...but most of them, like Mrs Hancock and all them,

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<sup>17</sup> Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, c.11 mins.

<sup>18</sup> Jean Benson, 14 January 2010, c.5 mins; Pete Botterill, 14 July 2010, c.125 mins.

<sup>19</sup> Joan Binns written reminiscences, ERYMS; see also: Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.0 mins; June and Dave Ireland, 15 July, c.56 mins; Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, c.55 mins.

<sup>20</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, track 2 c.12 mins.

<sup>21</sup> For women's position at this time, see, for example: Langhamer, *Women's leisure in England*, pp.133-180; Roberts, *Women and Families*.

they never moved, you could have knocked on their door any time of day and they'd be in.<sup>22</sup>

Mothers socialised in the public spaces of their neighbourhoods. Jobs undertaken outside – washing the windows, sweeping the space outside of the house, hanging out clothes – were all occasions for talking to neighbours. Doris Daniels remembered that her mother would brush the pavement in front of their home in the 1940s:

And she'd say to me dad 'I'll only be two minutes.' 'Oh,' he said, 'There's an hour gone by,' ... no sweeping was done, she'd stand talking.<sup>23</sup>

Jack Blakeston's mother put time aside each evening to talk over the fence to her next door neighbour: 'She used to spend an hour every night propped over this fence...supping this tea and having a natter.'<sup>24</sup> Doris Daniels brought up a family of her own on the Swinemoor Council estate in the 1950s. With a large family she claimed there wasn't really the time for a lot of sociability in the home, but remembered chatting outside with female neighbours on an evening:

After tea you would get the youngsters to bed, and Mrs Keddy would come to gate...and suddenly Bet across the road would come across to her, then they'd maybe see me...by the time we'd finish there'd be five of us...And when it was cold... .. well they'd wrap their arms in the pinnies, you see, and stand talking.<sup>25</sup>

Many others recalled that their mothers would stand talking in shared yards, over garden fences or in the street outside the house with neighbours.<sup>26</sup> On warmer summer evenings, mothers would sit outside with other women and children, sometimes listening to the radio.<sup>27</sup>

Klein noted that women living in the same neighbourhood might meet and interact on a daily basis in local shops.<sup>28</sup> Some interviewees recalled that their mothers living in Beckside in the 1940s and 1950s did much of their shopping in the neighbourhood shops, which inevitably brought local women into casual meetings

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<sup>22</sup> John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.1 hour 26 mins.

<sup>23</sup> Doreen Lee and Doris Daniels, ERYMS interview, c.8 mins.

<sup>24</sup> Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c. 1hr 15 mins.

<sup>25</sup> Doris Daniels, 13 November 2009, c.1hr 5 mins.

<sup>26</sup> Joan Gibson, 17 March 2010, c.70 mins; James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.60 mins; Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.10 mins; Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>27</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.61 mins and 80 mins.

<sup>28</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.141.

with each other.<sup>29</sup> There were approximately twelve shops in or very close to Beckside in the 1940s and 1950s, including a post office, a grocer's, a wet fish shop, and a butcher's shop, as well as small businesses selling fruit and vegetables, ice cream or soft drinks from the front rooms of houses.<sup>30</sup> Peggy Alexander recalled that in the 1940s and 1950s every shop on Beckside had a chair for old people to sit on while they talked to other customers, and that when she took over a shop near Beckside in the early 1960s the extent to which local women used the shop for talking became something of a nuisance.<sup>31</sup>

Most interviewees corroborated Klein's suggestion that homes were little used for sociability in this period, but some neighbouring women who became particularly friendly would visit each other when their husbands were out at work or in the pub.<sup>32</sup> Ivy Shipton recalled her mother visiting and being visited by other neighbours for cups of tea in the 1950s, as did Patrick Mateer.<sup>33</sup> On the Cherry Tree council estate in the 1940s, George Hunter recalled that his mother had neighbours around for tarot card readings.<sup>34</sup> Jack Binnington's mother exchanged visits with neighbours, and they would knit and darn together.<sup>35</sup>

A complex of factors connected to their role as housewives meant that women sometimes required the help and cooperation of those around them. Although the conditions which made exchanges necessary were not perhaps the pressing material need associated with times of unemployment in the 1930s, there were a number of reasons why borrowing of foodstuffs might be necessary. During much of the period until 1954, rationing on a variety of foodstuffs and consumables such as coal could make household management difficult.<sup>36</sup> The absence of fridges for storing perishable foodstuffs and the lack of shops open on Sundays presented further challenges to household management which meant that provisions could easily run out.<sup>37</sup> There was almost full employment during this period in contrast to the 1930s, but wages were not

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<sup>29</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.14 mins; Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.55 mins.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview 2a, p.12; Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, track 3; Jean Benson 14 January 2010, c.1 hour 18 mins.

<sup>31</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.32 mins and c.115 mins.

<sup>32</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.141.

<sup>33</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.25 mins; Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>34</sup> George Hunter, 14 January 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>35</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.76 mins.

<sup>36</sup> Tom Potter, 24 October, 2010, c.9 mins 13 secs; David Kynaston, *Family Britain 1951-1957*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), p.392.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview 2B, c. 12 mins.

high for many workers, and if they had several children it could be a challenge to ensure that wages lasted the week.<sup>38</sup> There were no banks offering credit for working-class people and so cash-flow problems could develop.<sup>39</sup> In the households where men gave a proportion of their wages over for housekeeping, the problem of budgeting was sometimes seen as solely the mother's.<sup>40</sup> While credit was available through 'club men', used to buy more expensive items such as children's clothes, contingent borrowing from neighbours of consumables and sometimes small amounts of money could still be required.<sup>41</sup>

Most interviewees who grew up, or had their own families, in the 1940s and 1950s could remember loans of small items between women in neighbouring households. Interviewees mentioned that neighbours borrowed foodstuffs such as milk, eggs, flour, margarine, gravy powder and sugar. Households also loaned and borrowed coal.<sup>42</sup> Post-war rationing encouraged the swapping of unneeded coupons.<sup>43</sup> This kind of small-scale exchange took place in both the older terraced housing and on the inter-war and post-war council estates. Loans did not seem to be systematic; they were occasional and sought by mothers who had run out of something they needed immediately.

In addition to small-scale material help, neighbouring women provided mutual assistance in terms of services. Some women still assisted with laying out those who had died at home during this period. Betty Carr remembered that when she was a child in the 1940s her grandma was sometimes called on to perform this task, and Keith Barrett remembered that his mother did it during the 1950s.<sup>44</sup> Babysitting could be a service provided by neighbouring women, especially where they also had children. William Vincent recalled staying with neighbouring families while his parents went out for evenings in the 1950s. Neighbours could also provide childcare for mothers who worked – Iris Brown remembered a female neighbour looking after her after

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<sup>38</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>39</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>40</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.15 mins; Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.35 mins; Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.31 mins.

<sup>41</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.20 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.70 mins; Patrick Mateer 13 January 2010, c.20 mins; Doris Daniels, 13 November 2009, c.1 hour 5 mins.

<sup>42</sup> Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.15 mins; Les White, 29 October 2010, c.54 mins; Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.5 mins; Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.1 hour 5 mins. John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.139 mins. Peter Stephenson, 27 May 2010, c.21 mins; William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.20 mins; Janet Hill, 3 March, 2010, c.60 mins; Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>43</sup> John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.139 mins.

<sup>44</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.29 mins; Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.31 mins.

school until her mother or older sister returned from work.<sup>45</sup> Interviewees recalled shopping for elderly neighbours.<sup>46</sup>

A sad court case reported in the *Beverley Guardian* illustrated how women could use their neighbourhood networks to obtain assistance. In a 1945 Assizes Court case, Mary Harrison of Hull was charged with causing the death of Bessie Lawson, of Schofield Avenue on Beverley's Grovehill council estate, through a botched abortion. The evidence given in the court case showed how female networks in the street operated to help the unfortunate woman obtain an abortion. Bessie's friends Edith Gillyon and Mrs Wright, both also residents of Schofield Avenue, had approached another Schofield Avenue resident, Mrs Boddy, a month prior to the incident to ask for her assistance in regards to Bessie's pregnancy. Evidently they knew that Mrs Boddy's sister, Mary Harrison, could be called on in these instances. On the day of Bessie's death, Mary Harrison came from Hull to visit her sister Mrs Boddy in Schofield Avenue, and during the day the two sisters visited Mrs Gillyon and Mrs Wright. Mary Harrison finally visited Bessie's house in the evening, when the botched abortion was undertaken. The case illustrates the use of female neighbourhood networks to seek assistance not obtainable through other channels. Furthermore, neighbours were plainly the first port of call in an emergency: Bessie's son, on discovering his mother in a stricken state, knew that Mrs Wright was thought to be a nurse and sought her out.<sup>47</sup>

Women were sometimes motivated to act in a neighbourly way by a charitable impulse. Hannah Witham described how her mother gave coal to a poorer neighbour who had three children and whose husband was an invalid, even though it was not returned and Hannah's father was strongly opposed to this practice.<sup>48</sup> Fred and May Peters each recalled that in the neighbourhoods in which they had grown up in the 1940s, their mothers checked on older people and did shopping for them, and that older clothes were passed on to poorer families. May remembered her grandmother

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<sup>45</sup> William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.20 mins; Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>46</sup> Tom Potter, 24 October 2008, c.9 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.15 mins; Betty Carr 19 March 2010, c.55 mins.

<sup>47</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 21 and 28 April 1945.

<sup>48</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.20 mins.



gave fruit to someone whose husband had died in the war.<sup>49</sup> Others reported how clothes were passed onto large families in working-class streets in the 1940s.<sup>50</sup>

There was a suggestion of a ‘moral economy’ in some of the interactions between female neighbours. Further to the social function of neighbourhood shops as meeting places, noted above, shops were often run by women who acted in ways which suggest moral considerations rather than simply pursuit of profit. Shops on Beckside did not compete over products sold, ensuring that each shop could make a living from the neighbourhood by selling different goods.<sup>51</sup> During rationing, shopkeepers here were reported as showing particular concern to ensure that each family got its fair share of any restricted items that became available – sweets, oranges or bananas – and did not mark ration cards.<sup>52</sup> The difficulty of managing weekly budgets in a time before widespread bank credit underpinned reliance on the institution of ‘tick’ in neighbourhood shops, a further example of neighbourhood material mutual assistance. Enid Bolton ran a shop on Grovehill Road in the 1950s and remembered running weekly bills for customers.<sup>53</sup>

The close relationship between sociability and mutual assistance amongst women living in the same street is illustrated by the ways in which they combined to provide social activities for themselves and their children. Two women who each kept small shops in Beckside in the 1940s and 50s, Nelly Hancock and Madge Jackson, organised summer coach trips to the seaside for mothers and children (it was remembered that occasionally fathers came along). Mothers paid in to a weekly ‘didlum’ at the shops for these trips.<sup>54</sup> Mrs Blakeston ran a weekly whist drive in a room above the Mariner’s pub for Beckside women, funds from which were used for an annual coach trip for the street’s families.<sup>55</sup> Trips were commonly to Bridlington or Scarborough, and were popular because neither children nor their mothers often left Beverley and might not have holidays:

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<sup>49</sup> Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.37 mins

<sup>50</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>51</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.31 mins.

<sup>52</sup> John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, track 2, c. 0 mins.

<sup>53</sup> Enid Bolton, 10 March 2010, c.15 mins; see also James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.120 mins.

<sup>54</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.43 mins; Geoffrey Holgate, Bill Cooper and Jim Gillyon, ERYMS interview, c.25 mins; John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.1hr 46 mins; Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.31 mins.

<sup>55</sup> Joyce Sumner, 13 August 2010, c.10 mins; Jack Blakeston 10 August 2010, c.17 mins.

And for us to go to Brid! And all the mothers went, there'd be just from Becksides about three busloads...If it was a nice day ... they'd all get their deckchairs and all sit together and they maybe did that six times a year.<sup>56</sup>

Women sometimes cooperated to provide social activities for themselves independently of their children. In the 1940s the landlady of the Foresters pub organised a club for women living locally who met upstairs and rehearsed small performances which were held in the pub.<sup>57</sup> Doreen Lee recalled that in 1950s most of those who went on the women's trip from the Forester's pub were Becksides residents.<sup>58</sup>

### *Children's neighbourhood communities*

If streets largely defined the social worlds of many women, they were even more all-encompassing for children in the 1940s and 1950s. Few had parents with cars, and interviewees recalled childhoods in the 1940s and 1950s in which most time outside of school was spent playing locally with other children from their street. On evenings, weekends and school holidays, streets were colonised by children – there was little traffic to interfere with their play. Children living in Becksides and Flemingate met on a large area at the junction of three streets known as Potter Hill. Bill Cooper remembered that in the 1940s, despite recent slum clearance in the neighbourhood, there were approximately forty children living on Becksides in his age group who would meet up on Potter Hill.<sup>59</sup> Jack Blakeston remembered the same neighbourhood during the war, and recalled a group of around twenty-five local children who regularly used a covered passageway as their meeting place.<sup>60</sup> Older boys organised their own football teams; Bill Cooper remembered there were two teams from Becksides in the 1940s who played on a makeshift pitch on Figgham, a common pasture nearby.<sup>61</sup> Children living on the council estates also had streets and green spaces as their play areas.<sup>62</sup> Games recalled

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<sup>56</sup> John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.1hr 46 mins.

<sup>57</sup> Doris Daniels, 16 December 2009, track 2, c.6 mins.

<sup>58</sup> Doreen Lee, 9 November 2009, c. 1 hour 25 mins.

<sup>59</sup> Geoff Holgate, Bill Cooper and Jim Gillyon, ERYMS interview, c.13 mins.

<sup>60</sup> Jack Blakeston, 10 August, 2010, c.52 mins.

<sup>61</sup> Geoff Holgate, Bill Cooper and Jim Gillyon, ERYMS interview c. 14 mins. See Appendix Six 'Map – East Beverley c.1966'.

<sup>62</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.7 mins; Judy and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.5 mins.

included football, cricket and 'relivio' or 'revalio', a hide-and-seek game which might include a large number of the children living in a particular street.<sup>63</sup>

Territoriality was a key feature of children's sociability, and there were fights between gangs of children from different streets in this period.<sup>64</sup> One interviewee recounted how his Beckside gang sought to build a bigger bonfire than the gang on the Cherry Tree estate, and would set fire to their rivals' bonfire if they could.<sup>65</sup>

Territoriality governed children's use of swimming places: children from the council estates used their nearest swimming spot – a wide pool near a brick-built bridge on Swinemoor pasture known as 'Bricky' – and children from the older neighbourhoods of Beckside and Flemingate swam in the drain further down in Figham pasture.<sup>66</sup> Jack Binnington grew up on Beckside in the 1940s and 1950s and remembered that: 'There was no other place than Beckside...your six weeks holiday was based swimming in Barmston Drain.'<sup>67</sup> Les White, who grew up on the Swinemoor council estate at the same time, recalled: 'I learned to swim at Bricky...there was sometimes maybe up to a hundred people there.'<sup>68</sup>

Children were also incorporated into their mothers' neighbourly activity. Children were often asked to shop for elderly neighbours without receiving payment.<sup>69</sup> In the years of coal rationing during and after World War Two, town residents formed long queues at the town gas works to purchase cinders – some reported that they collected these for neighbours as well as for their own households. While George Hunter did this for pocket money, Tom Potter said he was expected to do it for free.<sup>70</sup> Socialisation through schools (all primary schools were denominational), home and Sunday School as well as children's organisations with a connection to the Church (Scouts and Guides, Church Lads' Brigade and Girl's Friendly Society) exposed children to the message that it was correct to help one's neighbour. Iris Brown remembered:

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<sup>63</sup> Mavis Martin and Anna Fewster, ERYMS interview, 2<sup>nd</sup> CD, c. 1 min 50; John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, track 2.

<sup>64</sup> Matthew Walton, 22 July 2010, c.55 mins; William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>65</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June, 2010, c.61 mins.

<sup>66</sup> Bill and Jane Holland, 11 November 2009, c.2 mins; Jack Binnington 22 June 2010, c.45 mins; Judy and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>67</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.45 mins.

<sup>68</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.41 mins.

<sup>69</sup> Tom Potter, 24 October 2008, c.9 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.15 mins; Betty Carr 19 March 2010, c.55 mins.

<sup>70</sup> George Hunter, 14 January 2010, c.15 mins; Tom Potter, 24 October 2008 c.9 mins.

At Sunday school and things like that they always used to be the same: help the neighbour... We use to go and knock on the door and say would you like anything brought from shop Mrs Ought? ... it was always knocked into us... Me mother was funny like that... you know, you do things for people you don't expect anything in return. A thank you is good enough she used to say.<sup>71</sup>

### *Male involvement in neighbourly sociability*

Men in this period were less involved in the community of their residential streets than were women and children. Work took them away from the street and into contact with people from a wider area on a day to day basis. The male fellowship of pubs, clubs, sports teams and hobby societies was not usually restricted to the residents of a particular street. There were four pubs in Beckside in the 1940s, but these serviced a wider area and the regulars were not only from the street itself.<sup>72</sup>

However, there were ways in which men became involved in the mutuality of the street. Some with smallholdings on Beckside kept pigs and collected leftover food from neighbours who were repaid with fruit from orchards or with pieces of the slaughtered pig's internal organs known as 'fry'.<sup>73</sup> Judy Whittles recalled that a neighbouring market gardener on Beckside in the 1940s would leave apples, a swede or a cabbage on neighbours' doorsteps after harvest.<sup>74</sup> Surplus allotment produce and gifts of peanuts from barges were handed around neighbours in the 1940s.<sup>75</sup> Jack Blakeston's father became ill with tuberculosis in the 1940s and so made mats out of agricultural binder twine at home as a way of supporting his family of six children – Jack's mother sold these mats 'up and down the street'.<sup>76</sup> Men's use of council house gardens could bring them into exchange or economic interaction with neighbours. John Day remembered in the 1940s his father giving away chrysanthemums and tomatoes which he grew in the garden of his Cherry Tree estate council house in the 1940s. He would not take payment, although John said his mother might have liked him to.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.31 mins; see also: Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.45 mins; *Beverley Guardian* 17 May 1963 (headmaster of Beverley Grammar School extolling the virtues of the Scouts' ethos of helping others at all times)

<sup>72</sup> David Hughes, 24 June 2010, c.5 mins; Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>73</sup> Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c.52 mins; John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.139 mins.

<sup>74</sup> John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c. 139 mins.

<sup>75</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>76</sup> Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c. 17 mins.

<sup>77</sup> John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.0 mins and c. 18 mins.

Some men kept chickens in their council house gardens in the 1940s and 1950s which they sold to neighbours.<sup>78</sup>

Men were involved the tradition of making a collection for the family of a deceased neighbour.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, the *Beverley Guardian* reported that in 1945 many returning soldiers were given gifts by neighbours – for example Edgar Benson gave thanks in the personal column to ‘friends and neighbours’ on Lurk Lane who gave him a filled wallet on his return from Germany.<sup>80</sup> Men helped with entertaining the children during the V.E. Day celebrations which most working-class streets in the town held in 1945.<sup>81</sup>

Men, like women, could also use outdoor public spaces of streets for informal social interaction. Interviewees commented that older men would gather on two benches on Becksides near the beck head. As many of these were former bargemen, this location was useful for its view of the beck and the boats which moored up there, giving a connection to their former trade.<sup>82</sup> Work on council house gardens might also bring men into sociable contact with neighbours.<sup>83</sup>

### **Privacy and status differentiation in ‘traditional’ neighbourhoods**

Klein perceived a traditional English inclination towards privacy, and a preference for neighbourly relations defined by ‘distant cordiality’.<sup>84</sup> Those living in traditional working-class communities deployed a variety of distancing strategies to maintain privacy and a level of social interaction that was enough but not too much.<sup>85</sup> However, whilst Klein did not see neighbourly relations in traditional working-class communities as always happy and harmonious, she did imply that the degree of status consciousness she perceived on the new post-war estates was not such a feature of older communities.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.31 mins; Vic Baker, 19 May 2010, c.47 mins.

<sup>79</sup> Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c.70 mins; Bernard Hunt 12 January 2010, c.99 mins;

<sup>80</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 26 May 1945.

<sup>81</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 26 May 1945.

<sup>82</sup> Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, track 3 c.10 mins and c.25 mins; Mr Lyons, ERYMS interview.

<sup>83</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c. 31 mins;

<sup>84</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.257.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.* p.139-140. For similar interpretations see: Kerr, *The People of Ship Street*, p.34; Pahl, *Divisions of Labour*, pp.325-326; Franklin, "Working-Class Privatism" ; McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures* , p.181.

<sup>86</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.224, p.249, p.253.

## *Privacy*

The preference for privacy which Klein described in traditional communities was evident in working-class Beverley of the 1940s and early 1950s. Many interviewees recalled a general presumption against inviting neighbours into the home. Fred Reid commented that in the 1930s and 1940s:

You sort of kept yourself to yourself in the house. My mother used to say to me: 'Don't you go in people's houses, and don't be nosy.'<sup>87</sup>

For many, like Fred, it was simply not really the done thing to socialise within homes with anyone apart from family.<sup>88</sup> Others offered reasons for the lack of sociability within the home – James and Peggy Alexander thought that there was no incentive to socialise in homes in the days before televisions, and Janet Hill also suggested that the advent of televisions gave some stimulus to home entertaining.<sup>89</sup> Others reported that poverty and wartime rationing meant that it was impossible to show the requisite hospitality.<sup>90</sup> Poverty combined with pride could have prevented some housewives from wanting others to see inside their homes.<sup>91</sup>

Even interviewees who gave the most celebratory accounts of local sociability in the 1940s and 1950s acknowledged that some people kept themselves apart.<sup>92</sup> As Klein suggested, the public nature and degree of mutual knowledge in neighbourhood life was not always welcomed. One former resident of Beckside recalled that Nelly Hancock, the keeper of a small shop who some remembered more positively for her organisation of children's summer trips, nosily concerned herself with others' business.<sup>93</sup>

It was clear that any neighbourhood group identification and sense of mutual obligation, forged through sociability and long familiarity, came some way behind the responsibility felt towards the nuclear family unit. There were limits to the practical assistance supportive neighbours could offer, and for large families engaged in struggles to put food on the table and pay the bills, inquisitive neighbours could

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<sup>87</sup> Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>88</sup> Amy Easterling, 15 February 2010; Les White, 29 October 2010 c.54 mins; Anna Mason, 12 July 2010, c.20 mins; John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010 c.1 hour 26 mins.

<sup>89</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.27 minutes; Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>90</sup> Marianne Woolly 27 February 2010, c.10 mins; Judy and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.56 mins.

<sup>91</sup> Marianne Woolly, 27 February, c.35 mins.

<sup>92</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>93</sup> Notes from meeting with Beverley Day Club 12 February 2010.

present danger. Jack Blakeston's father had a smallholding on Beckside in addition to a job at Hodgson's tannery, and sometimes slaughtered a pig illegally during rationing. Jack recalled his father's fear that neighbours might hear and report his activities:

He went, bang, hit it there right between its eyes and then cut its throat and then it took off screaming and running round this wash house and he was diving on it, trying to quieten it down, because neighbours would have spragged...My job was going round all the neighbours, and taking pig fries and all like that to keep them sweet ...

SR: So people would have spragged would they?

Yes.

SR: Why was that?

Jealousy, I suppose. Well, they maybe wouldn't have done but he was frightened of that.<sup>94</sup>

Neighbours could not be trusted to put fellow-feeling above a broader sense of fair play which existed during the years of rationing.

### *Status distinction*

Authors, including Klein, have often noted distinctions amongst the working classes between 'rough' and 'respectable'.<sup>95</sup> However, the Beverley evidence suggests that status concerns were more prevalent and divisive within old established neighbourhoods than Klein suggested. Working-class streets in the 1940s and 1950s were not perceived as socially homogenous by their residents. For example, Derek Mitchell recalled of his mother, whose husband owned a plumbing business and who lived in the working-class neighbourhood of Holme Church Lane in the 1940s: 'She thought she was a cut above everybody you see being the boss's wife, she was a bit of a snob and she was always dressed up, you never saw her untidy.'<sup>96</sup> There were families in most streets who others thought of as rough. Patrick Mateer grew up in a council house on King's Square in the 1950s and thought that: 'Everybody was in the same boat 'cause nobody had nowt. Nobody had any money'.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, he

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<sup>94</sup> Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c.5 mins. 'Spragged' is an East Yorkshire term for reporting someone to the authorities for a forbidden act.

<sup>95</sup> Margaret Stacey, *Tradition and Change*, pp.105-106; Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum : Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), pp.29-30; Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.202-204.

<sup>96</sup> Derek Mitchell, ERYMS interview, track 2, c.2 mins.

<sup>97</sup> Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.10 mins.

remembered that there were rougher families on the Square: 'Even amongst the working class there was the working working class, even lower down the scale.'<sup>98</sup> Peggy Alexander grew up on Beckside and recalled that her mother was 'snobby' about some of the neighbours and didn't want her to mix with them.<sup>99</sup>

Those in lower social strata in the neighbourhood could be distinguished in a number of ways. Behaviour suggesting a lack of self control – swearing, petty criminal behaviour, public fighting, frequent drunkenness, doubtful sexual morality, having large numbers of children – all informed judgements of a particular household as rough.<sup>100</sup> Cleanliness was an important category of distinction – rough homes were those which were unkempt and dirty. Ellen Ingleton remembered: 'I know my mother always said she wouldn't drink any tea out of Mrs Clark's house, cause she said I don't trust her to wash the things out properly.'<sup>101</sup> Obvious poverty was revealed through the standards of children's clothing, which could also be an indicator of poor parental care.<sup>102</sup> Those who did not themselves need to borrow from neighbours looked down on those who were frequently 'on the borrow'.<sup>103</sup>

The Beverley evidence shows how frequent talking reinforced shared values regarding 'respectable' and 'rough' behaviour. Women living in the same street formed peer groups which assessed performance in relation to expected standards. Interviewees recalled that their mother's topics of conversation could include the sexual morality of neighbours or the standards of cleanliness displayed by other housewives.<sup>104</sup> Peggy Alexander remembered that a topic of disapproving conversation for her mother and a group who met around the yard to the rear of their houses was a neighbour who visited the pub with an American soldier while her husband was away serving in the war.<sup>105</sup> Marianne Woolly recalled that neighbours on the council estate in the 1940s would laugh together about a couple on their square who had lots of

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<sup>98</sup> Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.18 mins.

<sup>99</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>100</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.15 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.20 mins; Les White, 29 October 2010, c.54 mins, John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.1hr 56 mins; Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.15 mins; Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>101</sup> Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>102</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.10 mins; Ken Ingleton, 23 March, 2010, c.15 mins.

<sup>103</sup> Jean Benson, 14 January 2010, c.30 mins; Marianne Woolly, 22 February 2010, c.35 mins.

<sup>104</sup> Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.10 mins; James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.60 mins; Marianne Woolly, 22 February 2010, c.35 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.20 mins. See also, Tebbutt, *Women's Talk?* pp.86-97.

<sup>105</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.60 mins.



public arguments.<sup>106</sup> Ellen Ingleton remembered that on her street during the 1940s Mrs Clark's washing was not as scrupulously clean as the others and neighbours noted this.<sup>107</sup> As a result of the myriad conversations which went on in streets and more broadly, some families became stigmatised with reputations which transcended particular streets.<sup>108</sup>

The social construction of certain households as rough was matched by individuals' concern to display their own respectability. Jack Binnington remembered that for his mother and other women on Beckside in the 1950s:

Everything had to be spotlessly clean...certainly kids had to be looking smart, boots polished...houses had to be smart...They'd do their full day's washing on a Monday, Tuesday morning they'd be out doing step-stoning. People used to remark, 'She hasn't done her step-stoning this morning' ... 'Look at them bloody curtains, she's had them curtains up for weeks' ... Mother is 93 now and on her last legs but she still remarks about cleanliness.<sup>109</sup>

Other testimony suggested the importance of keeping homes externally clean, and of high standards in the washing of clothes and sheets – these were available for public inspection when hung out to dry.<sup>110</sup>

Although lending and borrowing between households was a generally noted facet of life during the 1940s and early 1950s, there was for many a strong presumption against borrowing items if circumstances did not absolutely demand it.<sup>111</sup> Husbands sometimes strongly discouraged their wives from either lending or borrowing.<sup>112</sup> If borrowing was necessary, most preferred to go to those one had a close relationship with. These could be relatives, close friends or particular neighbours. Ellen Ingleton remembered that her aunt who lived down her street and had a large family would borrow from Ellen's mother.<sup>113</sup> Iris Brown recalled that her mother was left alone after her father's death in 1946 and occasionally needed to borrow small food items, but would only do so from friends and relatives: 'Aunty Maggie used to say... "if you

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<sup>106</sup> Marianne Woolly, 22 February 2010, c.41 mins.

<sup>107</sup> Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>108</sup> William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.48 mins.

<sup>109</sup> Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, c.32 mins.

<sup>110</sup> Fred Barnes, ERYMS interview (with Marianne Clayton); Brenda Chambers, 23 November 2009, c.17 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>111</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.20 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.15 mins; Judy and Dave Ireland 15 July 2010, c.65 mins; Marianne Woolly, 22 February 2010, c.21 mins.

<sup>112</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.20 mins; Judy and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.65 mins.

<sup>113</sup> Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.15 mins.

want help, you come to me, right, you don't go to anybody else...you know what folk are like.'"<sup>114</sup>

In extreme cases, a concern to maintain social status and resist the judgement of others, reinforced by poverty, could lead to social isolation. Betty Carr recalled how, during the early 1940s, her mother would not allow neighbours into the house and indeed had little to do with them socially. Betty attributed this to her mother's intense concern with status as well as her highly strung personality. Betty's mother had been acutely aware of households of higher and lower status on St Andrew's Street where they lived, a street of small two-up, two-down terraced housing noted elsewhere for its close-knit community.<sup>115</sup> With four children and a husband who spent some of his small wages in the pub, she deeply resented her poverty:

My mother was very proud, she didn't bother a lot with neighbours...some of the neighbours weren't very choice... the one reason why she wouldn't bother with neighbours was she didn't want them to know how poor she was... At one side of us was a big poor family... On the other side of us was a family who had only one child and the husband worked at Hodgson's...and he was a foreman, so he had a good job. And so they were better off than us. And so my mother was in the middle you see, and so she wouldn't let them know she had no money...my mother never went out for fourteen years, because she had no clothes to wear... she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown on more than one occasion.<sup>116</sup>

The wholesale rejection of neighbours because of status concerns was also noted by Judy Whittles. Judy's father's income as a coal merchant enabled a slightly higher standard of life than that of some of the neighbours. Although Judy liked living on Beckside, 'my eldest sister hated it... 'cause she was a bit of a snob I think, she was more ladylike.'<sup>117</sup>

As well as distinctions relating to economic status and categories of 'roughness', a further distinction in the old neighbourhood of Beckside could exist

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<sup>114</sup> Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.20 mins; see also: Marianne Woolly, 22 February 2010, c.35 mins; Peter Stephenson, 27 May 2010, c.21 mins; Doris Daniels, 13 November 2010, c.33 mins; Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>115</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.10 mins; see also: Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.20 mins; Johnston Birchall, *Building Communities : The Co-Operative Way*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988), 135-140. .

<sup>116</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>117</sup> John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.1 hour 56 mins.

between the established families and more recent incomers. Jane Holland recalled her awareness of ‘established’ families after marrying a ‘Becksider’ in the 1950s:

All the people in Beckside, they had all lived together...they were very clannish... you’d got the Gillyons, the Hancocks... Binningtons, and they were all inter-related... You knew that if you hit one of them, they’d all shout ‘ouch’...

SR.: Did you feel in any way an outsider...?

No. In a way. I used to say to them: ‘You’ve got to be bloody born and bred and die here before they invite you in for a cup of tea.’<sup>118</sup>

During the war Doris Daniels’ family moved to Flemingate, just adjacent to Beckside, from Hull, and remembered her mother falling out with a neighbour who called her ‘Hull Bulldog’, illustrating this categorisation of outsiders.<sup>119</sup>

### **Changes in neighbourliness in the era of affluence, 1955-1980**

Klein compared neighbourly interaction in traditional communities with that in new estates. On the post-war council estates she suggested that there was a tendency to engage less with neighbours – a result of fewer spaces in which to interact, uncertainty about the norms of interaction, a turn towards home-centred attitudes, and an increasing polarisation between rough and respectable.<sup>120</sup> I will argue that Klein underestimated the extent to which older norms might re-establish themselves on new estates subsequent to initial disruption. However, changes during this period meant that neighbourhoods containing the degree of social and material interdependence noted in Beckside in the first post-war decade were less apparent by the 1970s. These changes included the stimulation of residential turnover in some streets, the rise of married women’s employment outside of the home, and the reduced need for material exchange between households.

#### *New neighbourhoods*

There was considerable change in the housing of Beverley’s working-classes in the post-war decades. The demolition of older slum housing, or its purchase for renovation, thinned out the long-standing populations of the older cohesive streets:

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<sup>118</sup> Jane Holland, 19 November 2009, c.27 mins.

<sup>119</sup> Doris Daniels, 16 December 2009, c. 12 mins.

<sup>120</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.229, p.255, p.259, p.284.

[In the 1940s] If I looked at Beckside I could tell you everybody who lived from corner of Hull Road, where the fountain is, all the way down up to Potter Hill...those families lived in them houses basically until the late sixties, early seventies, when basically them houses was seen as slum areas. They needed a lot of money spending on them to modernise them...[a builder] bought all these properties up you see, as an investment, and he was doing them up as he was buying them you see...late sixties, early seventies.

Stefan: Would you say a lot of the old families moved out at that time?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Stefan: Where did they go?

Council houses, moved into council houses on the estate most of them.<sup>121</sup>

Beverley's population increased only modestly in the 25 years from 1945 (from approximately 15,500 to 17,000), but over 1000 council houses were built in the town between 1945 and 1965, the majority of these on new council estates on green-field sites to the east.<sup>122</sup> The effect was that much of Beverley's working-class population moved east into the large area of council housing estates.<sup>123</sup> New suburban private housing estates were also built in the 1960s and 1970s (see Appendix Three) around the outskirts of the old borough, and some working-class interviewees bought houses on these estates.<sup>124</sup>

The normative disruption which Klein noted as a consequence of bringing together populations from different areas in new sub-urban council estates was probably not such a feature of the post-war Beverley council estates. Most new residents were from the town – George Little perhaps exaggerated this point by claiming that '99 percent' of those who moved onto the new council estates in the 1950s were 'Beverley people', but it was broadly corroborated by other interviewees.<sup>125</sup> For example, Janet Hill recalled that when she moved into a house on

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<sup>121</sup> Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, c.55 mins, c.60 mins.

<sup>122</sup> Census 1961 England and Wales. County Report. Yorkshire, East Riding (London HMSO 1964); Census 1971 England and Wales County Report. Yorkshire East Riding. Part 1 (London: HMSO 1973); Beverley Guardian, 20 August 1965. See also Appendix Three.

<sup>123</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley after 1945". The Cherry Tree, Grovehill and Swinemoor council estates formed a single geographical block of pre-war and post-war housing – see Appendix Three.

<sup>124</sup> For example, Les White, Dennis Duke.

<sup>125</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008.

Swinemoor council estate in 1950s, the neighbours ‘were all Beverley people’, and that she already knew some of them.<sup>126</sup>

By the 1960s, something of the old balancing of neighbourliness with privacy was evident on the new council estates. In the 1960s, council estates had housed many of the unskilled workers whom I interviewed, because many of the more affluent skilled workers had been able to buy their own homes. Local women organised coach trips to take council estate children to the beach in the 1960s, as they had on Beckside in the earlier period.<sup>127</sup> Lending and borrowing of small items between different households continued amongst those living on council estates in the town at least into the 1960s.<sup>128</sup> Keith Barrett’s testimony regarding his mother’s sociability on Athelstone Road in the 1960s is worth reproducing at length since it captures the mixture of women’s sociability and mutuality with neighbours and relatives, as well as the presumption towards the privacy of the home and against borrowing:

They [mum’s sisters] were only round the corner...so they was always to and fro... My mum would get all the stories from King’s Square off them... [My parents] both worked, we always had a coal house full of coal, and regularly in winter you used to get neighbours borrowing a bucket full of coal...you used to get neighbours knocking all hours ‘can you just lend us a couple of cigs while pay day’...I’ve never seen them refuse anybody...People used to run what they called ‘didlums’, which was like small savings things, and you’d maybe get someone up the street would save for people, maybe they’d put half a crown away a week.<sup>129</sup>

There was a woman across the street...their mum lived with them as well and she was real old...and my mum used to go out and help out with the old woman a lot...and my mum as well, had like a bit of a name for, when people died, she used to go round and lay them out.<sup>130</sup>

One of my sisters lived down Athelstone Road as well...and my mum would be, like, over at her house, or they’d be over at our house...It was usually relatives who used to be in your house for any length of time...Some neighbours, like

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<sup>126</sup> Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c.60 mins. See also June Whitelaw, 14 January 2010, c.30 mins; Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.102 mins.

<sup>127</sup> Peter Stephenson, 27 May 2010, c.11 mins; Pete Daniels, 28 July 2010, c. 6 mins.

<sup>128</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.20 mins; William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.40 mins.

<sup>129</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>130</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.31 mins. Keith’s parents were unskilled tannery workers who moved to this street of council housing in the late 1950s when their old home was condemned.

Overtons next door, would knock and then open the door ‘Hello Muriel’ and then walk in, but others would just usually knock and wait... There was twenty houses down the street, and you knew everybody in every house... but no, I’ve never known them borrow off neighbours... my dad was dead against borrowing.<sup>131</sup>

Amongst those who moved to Beverley’s new 1960s private housing estates there was more evidence of the normative confusion Klein described. These estates often contained a mix of those from different classes and social milieux. Les White, a barge skipper, bought a home on the Model Farm estate in 1965 and recalled:

They wasn’t my kind of people. They were bank managers or deputy bank managers, one was a customs man, one was a dock manager, you know, they were all above me, all above my stakes.<sup>132</sup>

In addition to the class difference, the other denizens of Les’s street ‘were all outsiders, they’d all come in to live... there was no Beverley kid down our street’.<sup>133</sup>

Les recalled perplexity at his new neighbours’ sociable priorities which were alien to his own background and expectations:

I didn’t realise, when I used to say to them on a Friday night, maybe out doing something in the garden, ‘coming for a pint tonight?’ ‘No’, ‘no’, ‘no’. [I] never thought, they were paid monthly, they had no money... [I thought] ‘Why aren’t they going for a pint, why aren’t young men, as they’ve always done, going for a pint with your neighbours or your mates or whatever?’<sup>134</sup>

Whereas Les expected, having bought his house, he would stay in it for many years, he found that his neighbours did not have such expectations:

We went onto Model Farm... we get this new house and we were a happy family, and there was happy families around us, and after about five years, four years, people started to put their house up for sale, and I thought, ‘hey up there, what they moving for?’ And I got talking to one ‘oh, we’ll sell this house and we’ll be able to buy a new car and then we’ll go and get another 25 year mortgage’... I didn’t realise life worked like that.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.47 mins.

<sup>132</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>133</sup> Les White, 29 October 2010, c.0 mins.

<sup>134</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>135</sup> Les White, 29 October, 2010, c.0 mins.

Like Les, newly-married Jim Fisher bought a house on a new Beverley housing estate in the 1970s and found the neighbours less friendly than those on Beckside where he grew up: ‘It was one of those neighbourhoods where people are every Sunday out cleaning their cars.’<sup>136</sup> In the later 1970s when they decided to have a family Jim and his wife moved back to the working-class east of the town where he felt more at home: ‘We moved down here and the neighbours down here are just like they used to be in the olden days... I mean you know everyone and they’ll help each other.’<sup>137</sup>

Klein argued that the newer housing estates offered fewer opportunities for social encounters than the older streets.<sup>138</sup> But while there was a lower density of shops and pubs on the new estates than in older Beverley streets – Beckside, for example, had four pubs and approximately 12 shops in the 1950s – estate pubs, in particular, do appear to have become social centres. The council built the Humber Keel pub on the Swinemoor estate in 1952.<sup>139</sup> Peter Stephenson remembered that it was well used on Saturday nights by his parents and other neighbours from the estate during the 1950s.<sup>140</sup> By the later 1960s the pub was attracting crowds from the estate and elsewhere, as a former barmaid recalled:

It was a busy pub, yes it really was. There was cars up that street, all the car park used to be full...

Stefan: Was that busy with people from the estate...?

Yes. Actually a lot of people came from Hull...they had a music room and the piano going, a sing along you see.<sup>141</sup>

Other venues for sociability were later added for use of council estate residents. The Methodists built a church on Queen’s Road in the heart of the post-war estates in 1961 which lasted until 1982.<sup>142</sup> The local authority opened an infant and a junior school on the estate in the 1967.<sup>143</sup> Residents had to wait until the 1960s for a shopping precinct.<sup>144</sup> A pub and shopping precinct was also provided on the 1960s Model Farm

<sup>136</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.57 minutes.

<sup>137</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.57 minutes.

<sup>138</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.222-223, p.229.

<sup>139</sup> Notes on visit to Humber Keel 29 April 2010, conversation with landlord and customers; for map of location of these facilities and the new post-war council estates see Appendix Five ‘Map – Swinemoor council estate c.1974’.

<sup>140</sup> Peter Stephenson, 27 May 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>141</sup> Doreen Lee, 9 November 2009, c.16 mins.

<sup>142</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*: pp.231-250. [Accessed: 22 August 2011].

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.* pp.250-261.

<sup>144</sup> Joyce Summer, 13 August 2010, c.1 hour 15 mins.

private housing estate, an estate which housed a mixture of working-class and lower middle-class residents. Into the 1970s this pub provided a place for neighbours to meet and socialise:

With it being an estate pub, you had all your mates...I think he [dad] was in darts team...I think in those days the pub was the hub of the community.<sup>145</sup>

Whilst some semblance of the older forms of street community could be re-established in the new neighbourhoods, paradoxically the older streets were often affected by residential instability.<sup>146</sup> Some older streets of small terraced houses which were formerly settled communities of long-standing residents became streets where young couples could buy their first home before moving on to larger family properties:

Around the sixties and seventies this [Martin Street] is where couples started their married lives, in these small houses. 'Til they got their sens together and they moved upmarket you see...Certainly Beaver Road was well known for young people buying into them houses because they was cheap.<sup>147</sup>

In addition to post-war shifts in housing patterns, there were other developments which militated against day-to-day neighbourly interaction. The indications are that married women in Beverley participated in a national trend towards working outside the home.<sup>148</sup> In 1951, 31% of Beverley women aged over 15 were 'occupied'; by 1981, 58% of married women aged 16-59 in Beverley were in employment (over half of whom were part-time).<sup>149</sup> A rough estimate on the basis of the interview evidence suggests that around one tenth of mothers in the 1930s worked while their children were younger than ten, whereas one third of interviewees or the wives of interviewees did so in the 1960s and 1970s. This left less time for interaction with neighbours. Jane Holland told how she had been too busy with her job in a local factory and bringing up children to have much involvement with neighbours in the 1960s and 1970s: 'By the

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<sup>145</sup> Michael Hudson, 17 December 2010, c.0 mins

<sup>146</sup> For increasing residential turnover connected to decreasing neighbourliness, see for example: George Wigton, 15 February 2010, c.95 mins; Jean Benson 14 January 2010, c.1 hour 13 mins.

<sup>147</sup> Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, track 3, c.50 mins. 'Sens' is the plural of an East Yorkshire term for 'self'.

<sup>148</sup> The new pattern was for women to work after marriage until having children, and then to work in part-time positions once children were older. See Dolly Smith Wilson, "A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain" *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2006, 206-229, pp.207-209.

<sup>149</sup> Census 1951, *England and Wales: Occupation Tables*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1956), p.439; Census 1981, *Census 1981: Key Statistics for Urban Areas: the North: Cities and Towns*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1984), table 3; Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory. Britain 1900-2000*, Second Edition, (London: Penguin, 2004), p.62.



time you've done your days work and gone home and got your work done at home, we used to watch telly a bit and then it was time for bed.'<sup>150</sup>

Women encountered each other during frequent visits to local shops in the early part of the period, but with the spreading ownership of fridges housewives had less need to visit local shops so frequently. In 1965 the first supermarket, Frank Dee, opened in Beverley town centre.<sup>151</sup> Keith Barrett recalled his mother did most of her shopping in the supermarket in 1960s, using the more expensive corner shop for occasional smaller purchases.<sup>152</sup>

The social world of women expanded, both through the friendships they struck up at work, and through the softening of a gender divide in sociability described in the previous chapter. Conjugal joint sociability was often conducted with friends living at a greater remove than the immediate street or neighbourhood, as Vic and Sarah Baker described:

Vic: You didn't socialise [with neighbours], but you had a good natter across garden fence...

If you saw them you didn't ignore them...

Sarah: But not like our parents, they used to go in each other's houses and have cups of teas, we didn't ever do owt like that'...

Vic: I think in our days people didn't socialise, not like our parents did...

Sarah: You'd perhaps spend more time with your friends who lived a few streets away, and you didn't with your absolute direct neighbours.<sup>153</sup>

Furthermore, much of the inter-household mutuality conducted between neighbouring women in the early part of our period was not necessary in an era of rising living standards and the welfare state. Interviewees recalled that local women sometimes acted as mid-wives in the 1940s; this service became redundant with National Health Service and the provision of a free professional mid-wifery service.<sup>154</sup> Rising wages, the end of rationing in 1954, the increase in working-class ownership of fridges and freezers across the post-war decades all meant that most working-class

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<sup>150</sup> Bill and Jane Holland, 11 November 2009, c.1 hour 16 mins. See also: Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.50 mins; Hannah Gavron noted the tendency for working women to have less time for neighbourly interaction in her study of wives and mothers in London in the 1960s: Hannah Gavron, *The Captive Wife : Conflicts of Housebound Mothers*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966)

<sup>151</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 30 July 1965; James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.100 mins, c.120 mins.

<sup>152</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.40 mins.

<sup>153</sup> Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.145 mins.

<sup>154</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.29 mins; Eva White, 18 June 2010, c.35 mins.

housewives in the 1960s and 1970s had less need to borrow milk, sugar and other small items of food than had their mothers.<sup>155</sup> Approximately one third of interviewees recalled their mothers lending or borrowing foodstuffs and other small items in the 1940s or 1950s, but only about ten percent claimed that the households they themselves established in the 1960s practised such exchange with neighbours. Historians have connected women's mutual assistance with poverty; as wages and living standards increased, it seemed inevitable that the cultural preference for household independence noted throughout the Beverley interviews would lead to less reliance on exchange with neighbours.<sup>156</sup>

So, forms of community familiar from the older streets – women assisting each other, organising coach trips for children, and socialising outdoors – were still taking place in the poorer council estate streets into the 1960s. Similarly, pubs as venues for informal sociability, similar to those in the older streets, became established on the Swinemoor council estate and on one working-class private housing estate. But overall, the degree to which women were rooted in their neighbourhoods and depended closely on female neighbours for material assistance and social interaction seems to have been reduced across the period, and streets in the 1970s were not quite the small social worlds they appeared to have sometimes been in 1940s. However, affluence could work to encourage new forms of neighbourly interaction.

### **New forms of neighbourliness**

Although the necessity for borrowing consumables such as foodstuffs and coal from neighbours eased as the post-war affluent era progressed, other types of mutuality could come into focus. The rise in married women's work outside of the home meant that they needed more help with child-care. We saw in the previous chapter that this need was often met by relatives living locally. However, relatives were not always available, and neighbours were often called on for child-minding of a short duration. Elaine Mateer remembered that as a child in the 1960s she would go round to a neighbour for half an hour on an evening after school before her mum finished work.<sup>157</sup> Ellen Malster, a working mother during the 1970s, said that the proximity of

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<sup>155</sup> David Kynaston, *Family Britain 1951-1957*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), p.392; Harrison, *Britain Revisited*, p.207; Roberts, *Women and Families*, p.22, p.223.

<sup>156</sup> Roberts, *Women and Families*, p.201; Ellen Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War One" *History Workshop* 15 (1983): 4-27.

<sup>157</sup> Elaine Mateer, 29 March 2010, c.25 mins.

neighbours she knew well was a source of reassurance which allowed her to leave her twelve-year old child at home alone for five minutes every day between the end of the school day and her return from work.<sup>158</sup>

In the early part of the period in the streets most resembling Klein's model of traditional working-class community, most inter-household mutual assistance was effected between women. But in the affluent era the improved quality of post-war working-class housing, and men's increasing concern with maintaining and improving their properties, led to new forms of mutual assistance between male neighbours. John Day and his neighbour in a street of post-war privately owned houses cooperated to build a double garage in the 1970s. John also helped his next door neighbour with wall papering.<sup>159</sup> Skilled workers sometimes used their skills to help neighbours – in the later 1950s and 1960s, George Hunter, a painter and decorator, painted rooms for neighbours on the Cherry Tree council estate in exchange for a token payment in the form of tobacco.<sup>160</sup> The need to tend gardens on the council estate and in new private housing developments led to the lending and borrowing of tools between households.<sup>161</sup> Vic Baker lived on the Cherry Tree estate with his young family in the 1960s:

Where we lived in Cherry Tree, if you wanted a rabbit hutch, or a bit of fancy fencing, I was the lad. And I had two sheds full of stuff, and people used to come and say 'I'm looking for something like this.'<sup>162</sup>

Dave Lee recalled how his father and other men on their council estate street would cooperate over gardening methods, lending each other seeds, tools and tips:

There was a lot of guys then that was into gardening, and there was a guy at the end of the garden, Mr Horsley ...and there was another bloke, and all the gardens sort of merged, and before there was any digging, or any planting...they had a meeting about see what was what, a chat about did you want some of this, and I've grown some of that.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.95 mins. See also Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.1 hour 7 mins; Jean Benson, 14 January 2010, c.38 mins.

<sup>159</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, track 2. c.5 mins.

<sup>160</sup> George Hunter, 14 January 2010, c. 80 mins.

<sup>161</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.110 mins; Lynne Norton, 9 November 2009, c.49 mins.

<sup>162</sup> Vic Baker, 19 May 2010, c.39 mins

<sup>163</sup> Doreen Lee, 9 November 2009, c.49 mins.

So, mutuality between neighbours more in the spirit of friendly cooperation may have replaced the more pressing need for assistance which characterised the earlier years when poverty was more acute for many. Similarly, whilst frequent interaction of female neighbours who spent much of their time in and around their streets may have been less often noted as feature of working-class neighbourhoods in the later part of the period than it was in the earlier, neighbours could still be a source of sociable friendship. It appeared that neighbours might be incorporated in the turn towards joint conjugal sociability which was a feature of the affluent era and was noted in the previous chapter.<sup>164</sup> The improved quality of working-class homes, and their opening up as a venue of sociability, probably contributed to this tendency. In the later 1950s television ownership could bring neighbouring couples into sociable contact. Hilda Little recalled that the highlight of her and her husband's week during the later 1950s was popping next door on Monday night to watch *Wagon Train*.<sup>165</sup> Dennis Duke remembered that his parents' sociability in the late 1950s involved entertaining neighbours and other friends at home, watching the television or sharing a meal.<sup>166</sup> Ivy Shipton was not the only interviewee to recall that her and her husband's sociability with other neighbours included parties in their home in the 1960s:

We had quite a social area in Norwood Far Grove, where we lived, and indeed we would gather at each others' houses and someone would cook and experiment with something, and we always had a Christmas party on Boxing night and it was like open house, the kids would sit up the stairs, they were suppose to be in bed but would end up sat at the top of the stairs, and the kitchen was the bar and the living room was where the food was and the front room was for dancing.<sup>167</sup>

Couples might also socialise with their neighbours by going out together.<sup>168</sup>

Similarly, the post-war shift towards child-centred attitudes which Klein noted, and which was corroborated by the Beverley evidence, could also work to bring men into the world of neighbourly sociability. Dick Gibson spoke for other interviewees when he remembered that in the council estate street he moved to in the 1960s, it was

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<sup>164</sup> See Chapter Two, pp.51-52, and Chapter Four, pp.113-116.

<sup>165</sup> Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c.86 mins; See also: Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010, c.92 mins.

<sup>166</sup> Dennis Duke, 14 July 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>167</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010 c.60s mins. See also: Les White, 23 October 2010, c.50 mins; Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.47 mins

<sup>168</sup> George Hunter, 14 January 2010, c.80 mins; Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c. 81 mins.

neighbours with children the same age as his own with whom he and his wife became friendly.<sup>169</sup> Margaret and Dick Gibson became so friendly with neighbours who had children of a similar age to their own that Dick built a gate through the fence dividing their properties.<sup>170</sup> In the later 1950s and early 1960s William Vincent recalled family trips to the coast with a neighbouring family.<sup>171</sup> Interviewees also recalled annual bonfire nights and occasional street parties:

Helen: When we first got married in Grovehill [a relatively working-class street in the 1970s], once we had our children, I mean we got to know most of the people on the row, on the terrace, people with children growing up...

Eric: We organised a party at the twenty fifth anniversary of the queen's thing [coronation], and we had all the people from all the row and we put bunting up and things like that...

Helen: Guy Fawkes night we always had a bonfire, you always had a bonfire didn't you, and all the row again, they all came with their children and brought so many fireworks what you could afford, and I always, we used to do baked potatoes, mushy peas.<sup>172</sup>

Helen and Eric were from working-class backgrounds but attained social mobility through Eric's job in Hodgson's during this period. Theirs and others' testimony provide a counter-point to Ferdynand Zweig's proposal that 'the higher the level of prosperity, the higher the fences'.<sup>173</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The charge examined in this chapter was that made by Josephine Klein in *Samples from English Cultures*, that affluence and geographical mobility in the post-war decades reduced levels of mutual assistance and communal sociability between neighbours in working-class communities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was more continuity in patterns of interaction amongst the Beverley working-class neighbours than Klein described. She focused on places where the most dramatic changes might reveal themselves – populations in the moment of transition. In the longer-term, some of the 'fundamental regularities' of working-class life that Peter Willmott discovered

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<sup>169</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.1 hour 21 mins. See also: Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.50 mins; June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.116 mins.

<sup>170</sup> Joan Gibson, 17 March 2010, c.126 mins.

<sup>171</sup> William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>172</sup> Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>173</sup> Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, p.116.

in the 1960s on the 40-year old Dagenham council estate may well have re-established themselves in the populations she described, as they did in Beverley.<sup>174</sup>

But despite this background of continuity, some changes in neighbourliness were apparent across the three post-war decades in the town. It was not necessary to invoke Klein's argument of a break with traditional attitudes to explain a decline in close inter-dependence of female neighbours. The economic need for lending and borrowing simply became less pressing as living standards rose, and allowed many to achieve the household independence which older norms had connected with respectability. New levels of residential turnover in older working-class streets and in newer housing estates could reduce familiarity with neighbours, and extended family were less likely to live in the same street in the 1970s than in the 1940s. More married women worked away from the home by the end of the period than in the first post-war decade, thus broadening their opportunities for sociability. By the 1970s, although women turned to female neighbours for companionship and support during their child-rearing years, few were as dependent on neighbours for their sociability and mutual assistance as mothers in Beckside had been in the earlier part of the period.

But the Beverley evidence suggests that change did not move in a single direction for everybody. Whilst neighbourhood sociability and mutuality became less pressing for women, a rising emphasis on domesticity, joint-conjugal sociability and child-orientation could draw men into sociable interaction with their neighbours.

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<sup>174</sup> Willmott, *The Evolution of a Community*, p.111.

## Chapter Four. Friends and Acquaintances.

The discussion so far has concentrated on relationships with family and neighbours, with occasional reference to wider sociability. This chapter will turn to a more detailed consideration of that wider sociability, putting relationships with friends and acquaintances under the spotlight. The chapter will use the Beverley evidence to examine claims that a new emphasis on sociability with chosen friends weakened community of place during the affluent era.

Josephine Klein suggested that affluent workers who moved to new post-war council estates often exercised greater freedom of choice in selecting friends than was usual in traditional working-class neighbourhoods. Because they travelled beyond the bounds of particular estates to socialise with friends, they were less likely to engage in the informal sociability with neighbours that created the solidarity of the 'traditional working-class community'.<sup>1</sup> Klein's analysis here was largely speculative, but her interpretation anticipated some more recent studies which I will briefly outline below.

Adrian Franklin provided empirical evidence that movement of the affluent working classes away from their traditional communities need not result in the 'privatised' lifestyles described by Goldthorpe *et al.* His historical case-study of affluent tobacco workers in inter- and post-war Bristol showed that these workers were often able to purchase homes away from their 'natal communities', and that they used these homes for sociability in a way that was not reported in the traditional neighbourhoods. Friends were shared between husband and wife, maintained over a long period of time and a wide geographical area, and entertained in the home. Franklin considered this pattern of friendship to be historically significant, and contrasted it with the sociability of the traditional working-class community, which he designated as 'poorly developed' in terms of the depth of relationships it facilitated. The thesis of privatism was mistaken, he argued, because it contrasted the old sociability in 'communal' and 'public' spheres only with a 'private' sphere; a fourth sphere, 'external', needed to be conceptualised, which included sociability conducted away from public and communal settings.<sup>2</sup>

Graham Allan cited Franklin's study as evidence of a shift in prevailing patterns of working-class friendship in the latter half of the twentieth century, away

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<sup>1</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.265.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin, "Working-Class Privatism", p.111.

from what he described as ‘mateship’. Allan drew the distinction between ‘mates’ and ‘friends’, and considered that the traditional working classes had more of the former and relatively few of the latter in comparison to the middle classes. Mates were social ties largely restricted to a particular context, such as workplace, pub, sports teams, and neighbourhood. Because they did not want to enter into potentially expensive obligations of reciprocal entertainment, many working class people rarely invited neighbours into their homes, and did not socialise with workmates outside of work.<sup>3</sup> Such ‘mateships’, tied to specific contexts, tended to be transitory – moving job or neighbourhood usually resulted in loss of contact with mates from that context.<sup>4</sup> The more affluent, especially the middle classes, did not have the same anxieties about reciprocity and therefore were able to invite workmates out for a drink or into the home to socialise. Those who socialised in multiple contexts in this way were more likely to use the term ‘friend’ to describe their relationships, and these relationships were more likely to be durable.<sup>5</sup> Allan pointed to Franklin’s study as evidence that rising levels of affluence allowed working-class people to develop social relationships which were more friend-like. But he thought that a corollary of such a shift towards sociability with chosen friendships was a decrease in network density – an individual’s friends were less likely to also know and to be friends with each other.<sup>6</sup> Thus close-knit communities centred on particular neighbourhoods would be weakened by the tendency to socialise with chosen friends made in a variety of contexts.

Ray Pahl, writing alone and with Liz Spencer, argued that the informal, freely chosen ties of friendship became the defining social bond of late modernity: ‘we are increasingly socially and culturally determined by our friends...this was not the case 100 years ago’.<sup>7</sup> Pahl and Spencer, like Klein, Franklin and Allan, did not consider that individuals with geographically dispersed friendship networks were necessarily more socially isolated, and instead argued for the strength of ‘personal communities’ of informal, chosen friendship ties as a contemporary ‘social glue’.<sup>8</sup>

So, Klein and the authors discussed above considered that new forms of sociability amongst freely chosen networks of friends could weaken the close-knit

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<sup>3</sup> Graham Allan, *Kinship and Friendship in Modern Britain*, (Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.86-90.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* p.95.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p.90, p.87.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* p.129.

<sup>7</sup> Ray Pahl, *On Friendship*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), p.172.

<sup>8</sup> Spencer and Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship*, p.1, pp.194-195.



social ties of working-class neighbourhoods, but that this was not necessarily deleterious to social cohesion at a broader level. However, as noted elsewhere in this thesis, many of the empirical bases for such interpretations (the community studies referenced by Klein, and Franklin's affluent tobacco workers) were populations which had recently uprooted and moved to new settings. By contrast, Beverley provides a case-study of relative stability during this period, an alternative perspective from which to consider the impact of rising levels of affluence on patterns of sociability with friends, and the implications of any such changes on local community.

Before embarking on exploration of the empirical evidence, it is necessary to note some of the conceptual problems of studying the informal relationships of friendship and acquaintanceship. Allan noted that 'friend', unlike 'sister', 'spouse' or 'neighbour' is not easily defined. Friendship does not exist as a structural relationship and depends on subjective conceptions. Notions of friendship not only differ between groups (social class and gender differences have often been posited), but individuals are also inconsistent in their use of terms such as 'friend' and 'acquaintance', and may use both terms at different times to describe the same person.<sup>9</sup> Pahl pointed out that the meaning of friendship is also historically variable, and friendship patterns cannot be discussed 'without recognizing the distinctiveness of the social, political and economic circumstances of the time'.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, empirical research by Spencer and Pahl showed no simple correlation between the different patterns of 'personal communities' they discovered and social class or gender, belying sometimes simplistic notions of working-class and middle-class patterns of friendship.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Pahl has suggested that there is an elusive quality to the topic of friendship, which has often evaded 'the heavy-handed intrusions of social science'.<sup>12</sup>

For the sake of the present chapter, a commonsense approach will be adopted, led by interviewees' own uses of the terms – 'friends' and 'acquaintances' are seen as stronger and weaker variations of social ties with people who were not family, although it is recognised that the borderline between friends and acquaintances is fluid. Despite the provisos detailed above, some themes can be observed in the data relating to patterns of sociability with friends and acquaintances in Beverley across the period of the study. As in the previous chapters, it will be seen that change was more

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<sup>9</sup> Allan, *Kinship and Friendship*, pp.84-85.

<sup>10</sup> Pahl, *On Friendship*, p.61.

<sup>11</sup> Spencer and Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship*, pp.167-171; pp.181-189.

<sup>12</sup> Pahl, *On Friendship*, p.167.

evolutional than was implied in Klein's portrayal of novel patterns in working-class life in the affluent era. In the early, pre-affluent part of the period there was evidence of chosen, friend-like relationships even amongst the groups who might most be expected to conform to the 'traditional' model; the affluent period did bring more opportunities to choose and develop friendships, but friendships were still structured by life-cycle and by place.

The chapter is organised as follows: section one explores some of the ways in which lifecycle structured patterns of friendship, showing that in adolescence and young adulthood sociable leisure with friends was particularly important; section two explores the ways marriage could limit the social worlds of women in the early, pre-affluent part of the period; section three outlines some of the emerging possibilities for sociability with friends in the affluent era; section four argues that whilst networks of social ties were usually spread over a wider area than the street or immediate neighbourhood in this later period, these networks were still largely contained within the town itself.

### **Sociability with friends in the early life-stages, 1945-1955.**

In the following two sections I will concentrate on female patterns of sociability during the pre-affluent decades. This is partly because characteristically male forms of sociability in the workplace and in clubs, pubs, sports teams and hobby associations will be dealt with further in chapters five and six. But it is also because Klein claimed that working-class women in traditional neighbourhoods had few friends. Klein wrote that in working-class communities 'men have traditionally had their own male groups outside the home, leaving the main responsibility for kin and neighbourly relations to their womenfolk' and quoted one of Willmott and Young's interviewees: "'Men have friends, women have relatives.'"<sup>13</sup> For the Beverley context during the early part of our period, this formulation correctly points to limitations on the sociable worlds of working-class married women, but it ignores the importance of friends to women in young adulthood, and also underestimates the ability of married women, even in more 'traditional' settings, to choose and sustain friendships. Some degree of choice was always exercised in whom, and how, one engaged in friendly relationships.

A life-cycle approach helps provide a more detailed understanding of the limitations and possibilities which structured working-class friendship patterns. As

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<sup>13</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.139.

described in Chapter Three, 'Neighbours', children drew their friendship groups almost exclusively from the streets in which they lived.<sup>14</sup> Younger Beverley children attended different neighbourhood schools, but the opening of Longcroft Secondary School in 1949 meant that a large proportion attended the same school from the age of 11 to 15.<sup>15</sup> This opened up access to a wider pool from which to select friends. Fred and May Peters (born 1937 and 1938) recalled:

M: I went to St Nicholas School...then to Minster Girls, and then Longcroft, that's how I got to know you then. I didn't know you [Fred] before then, no, 'cause you lived in a different part of Beverley to me...

S: When you went to Longcroft, did you get to know people from other parts of Beverley?

(both): Oh, yes.

F: And from out in the country, yes.<sup>16</sup>

Other testimony corroborated this point.<sup>17</sup>

Sociability in adolescence and young adulthood was conducted amongst a wide group of acquaintances known from school, workplace and the town more broadly. Interaction often took place in communal settings containing large numbers of others, such as dance halls, youth clubs, or in the open air spaces, and so enabled wide-ranging social contact and the possibility of meeting members of the opposite sex. In the 1940s, groups of teenaged friends congregated to walk in certain parts of the town. George Hunter recalled this activity in the mid-1940s, which he called 'galling':

'Galling' [was] looking for lasses on Westwood...Westwood was popular then...you used to walk around... with your mates, like, and try and pick a lass up...and they used to all walk over there, gangs of them...it was so popular, especially in summer.<sup>18</sup>

This practice continued into the 1950s, and was known by some of the older respondents as 'the monkey walk' – same name was given to this custom in other

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter Three, pp.80-81.

<sup>15</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*, pp.250-261. [Accessed: 8 June 2011].

<sup>16</sup> Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.51 mins.

<sup>17</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.1 hour 1 min. See also: James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.80 mins; William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>18</sup> George Hunter, 14 January 2010, c.40 mins. Westwood is one of the town's common pastures, see Appendix Two, 'Beverley map c.1970'.

northern towns in the early twentieth century.<sup>19</sup> From the 1950s, mixed-gender youth clubs were held in church halls, schools and in purpose-built accommodation.<sup>20</sup> Other clubs existed for young men and women, including religious and political groups, sports clubs, Church Lads' Brigade and youth clubs attached to workplaces.<sup>21</sup> From the age of 16 or 17, the majority of interviewees began to attend dance halls on Fridays and Saturdays with friends of their own age.<sup>22</sup> Younger teenagers learned to dance at Hodgson's dancehall, but then progressed to the Regal. Ellen Watton met her husband there in the early 1950s and remembered:

Regal dance on a Saturday night, that's where most people were...

(Stefan) Would you know most people there?

Yeah, yeah, usually the same crowd.<sup>23</sup>

Not only locals, but servicemen stationed near the town attended these dances, as Betty Carr remembered in the early 1950s:

I knew a lot of local boys...but then, when you got a bit older and started going to Regal, to dance, you met up with the lads from the RAF Leconfield, or the army. And then the local lads didn't like it you see...it was exciting meeting someone from a different part of the country, who had lots of different things to talk about.<sup>24</sup>

Adolescents thus participated in leisure which brought them into contact with a number of others at the same life-stage, but this wider 'communal' sociability was experienced and mediated through smaller peer-groups, as Gwen Harris intimated:

The Regal or Hodgson's...we'd just meet other girls inside, or talk to different ones. But we never went out in big gangs, groups.<sup>25</sup>

Although she did not consider herself to be particularly sociable, the following quotes from Gwen's testimony illustrate the range of social activities enjoyed with a

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<sup>19</sup> Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c.45 mins; Enid Bolton, 10 March 2010, c.6 mins; Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, c.43 mins; Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.0 mins; Reid, "Playing and Praying," p.762.

<sup>20</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c. 86 mins; Margaret Day, 9 November 2009, c.32 mins; Pete Daniels, 28 July 2010, c.52 mins.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter Six 'Civil Society', p.168.

<sup>22</sup> Evelyn Frith, February 10 2010, c.10 mins; Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.70 mins; Ellen Watton, 8 March 2010, c.50 mins; Les White, 29 October 2010, c. 1 hour 5 mins.

<sup>23</sup> Ellen Watton, 8 March 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>24</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.75 mins.

<sup>25</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.40 mins.

few close friends, typical of other interviewees who recalled this life-stage in the early 1950s:

One of my friends, Sylvia, who's died now, her and me we got on really well, we used to go on our bikes, and I had a cousin who lived near Thirsk, sometimes we'd go on our bikes and cycle there for the weekend. We'd go on a Saturday afternoon after the shift finished, come back on a Monday morning before next week's shift started at two o'clock...She was the main friend at that time, and we just used to go bike riding out together, or just go to the pictures, or just wander about, go up to the Westwood for walks, or, just like kids do.<sup>26</sup>

Sylvia and me mainly were together, and occasionally Margaret, and then later on Mary, she came from Sunderland with her family, and I made friends with her, and so they were the main ones, and then there was a girl called Pauline...oh, and there was Betty, she used to come dancing with us sometimes.<sup>27</sup>

Mary, she came from Sunderland... she kept in touch with one of her friends, and there was one year her friend Audrey came down and there was myself, and this other girl Dorothy and we all went to Llandudno on holiday, and that was sort of something special, it was really a first holiday away with friends...I must have been about eighteen...that holiday was a really good one.<sup>28</sup>

We went to the cinema a lot...nearly every week, sometimes every week, depending on the pictures, you see. Mostly on a Saturday nights, sometimes during the week...Sylvia by that time was married, or she was going out with Les, so mostly that time it was Mary and me, and sometimes Dorothy.<sup>29</sup>

I have concentrated above on the early, pre-affluent part of the period to make the point that at a time when 'traditional' working-class restricted sociability might be thought to pertain, young people did not conform to this model. Later generations recalled a similar period of sociability in early adulthood. Although the content of

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<sup>26</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>27</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>28</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.36 mins.

<sup>29</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.40 mins.

youth culture - fashions, music styles – were to change radically across the affluent era, structural changes were perhaps less significant. The Regal, despite name changes, remained the central venue for youth sociability, popular with successive generations. Les White recalled of the 1960s:

Your community, your dance night, that was Beverley Regal, that was your centre... That was your youth club, that's where you all went.<sup>30</sup>

The hall became the 'Beverley Hills' discotheque in 1979 and continued to attract the town's youth until its closure in 1986.<sup>31</sup>

### **Mothers' sociability, 1945-1955**

As Gwen's testimony quoted above indicates, peer-group sociability with friends was often limited once steady courtship began.<sup>32</sup> Marriage could complete this process of separation from friends. Gwen recalled that after her old friend Sylvia got married, 'of course, we lost touch'.<sup>33</sup> She suggested that her principal social period of 'concert going and pictures' had been early adulthood: 'Say from me being 16 to 22, getting married, it was sort of condensed in those few years.'<sup>34</sup> Gwen was married at the age of 22 in 1958, after the period of affluence commenced, but her experience mirrored that of those married in the austerity years and seemed to confirm cultural expectations that courtship and marriage reduced women's contact with friends. Like others, Gwen felt it was only natural that marriage had reduced her contact with female friends. It was perhaps significant that the one friend from her single days who Gwen continued to see was unmarried.<sup>35</sup>

The practice some noted in the early part of the period of women giving up work upon getting married could reinforce the separation of women from the networks of friends and acquaintances they had enjoyed during their single years. Joyce Sumner married in 1948 and gave up work.<sup>36</sup> During young adulthood Joyce had a friend who worked in greenhouses with her, whom she regularly visited at her home in Hull and went out to the pictures, but after her wedding they lost touch:

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<sup>30</sup> Les White, 29 October 2010, c.1 hour 5 mins.

<sup>31</sup> Les White, 29 October 2010, c. 1 hour 5 mins; Peter Stephenson, 27 May 2010, track 2, c.8 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 3 January 1980.

<sup>32</sup> See also, for eg, Matthew Walton, 22 July 2010, c.90 mins; Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.63 mins.

<sup>33</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>34</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>35</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, track two, c.6 mins.

<sup>36</sup> For others giving up work when they got married, see for example: Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c.1 hour 7 mins; Mary Robertson, 11 February 2010, c.25 mins.

S: Did you have a social life with your husband, did you have friends who you saw together?

No, no, didn't seem to have a social life like that, no. I don't know, it didn't seem to be a done thing in them days, not like it is today...[I used to] just stay in, read or knit... my mam used to come or my sisters would come along...I hadn't any close friends, what you could call close-knit friends at all.

S: Not these friends you met through work, you didn't continue with them?

No, no, well no, cause they was in Hull and we was in Beverley, they was sort of, a different class type of thing, we didn't keep a close relationship or anything like that...if you saw anyone from school you'd say hello but wasn't close to anybody.<sup>37</sup>

Women's opportunities for sociable leisure were further restricted by parenthood; but their domestic role was not necessarily viewed negatively by women themselves, as Eva White, who had her first baby in 1946, recalled:

I never went out, no. I never left them...it was very rare. When they got older [I sometimes did]. I would never leave them when they were babies, ooh no...You were content. I mean, [you had] lived through the war, and you get a house and children, and you were content with your life...women didn't go out.<sup>38</sup>

For more testimony about women bringing up families during this period, it is helpful to turn to interviewees' memories of their own mothers. Interviewees often remembered that their mothers in the 1930s through to the 1950s did not have extensive social lives. Peggy Alexander remembered that although her father regularly went to the pub, 'I don't recall her [my mother] having a babysitter... I don't recall mum going out socially'.<sup>39</sup> Dick Gibson recalled of his mother and other women of her generation in the 1940s:

They didn't have a social side, not as married women do now. They were bloody slaves really...she did belong Coop [Society]...but that was later in

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<sup>37</sup> Joyce Sumner, 13 August 2010, c.56 mins.

<sup>38</sup> Eva White, 18 June 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>39</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.0 mins. See also, for example: Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.31 mins; Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.15 mins.

life as we were growing up. All I remember at home was her working – ironing, washing, getting food ready, baking.<sup>40</sup>

In this respect, the interview findings confirmed Claire Langhamer's portrayal of women's leisure in the period 1920-1960: after a period of sociability in early adulthood, married women's notions of leisure were limited by ideologies of femininity and motherhood, and structured around the demands of domestic work and childcare.<sup>41</sup>

Although many women with children in these years did not 'go out' in terms of visiting social venues such as pubs, cinemas, dance hall and clubs, this did not mean they could not still find some time and space for socialising with chosen friends. The constraints mentioned above meant that, for many women with young families, it was understandable that friendly companions were often sought from amongst 'given' social contacts – neighbours and family. These were the women who were closest at hand or with whom kinship made a casual, 'dropping in' form of sociability more conducive.<sup>42</sup> But such relationships could still imply choice and friendship. Klein, developing her model of traditional working-class 'communal' sociability, suggested that in traditional working-class districts, distinctions between neighbours in terms of 'friends' and 'not friends' were irrelevant since all were engaged at a similar level, with companionship and help required at some times but a degree of social distance always maintained:

The fact that neighbours are 'familiar figures in the landscape' does not mean that they are 'friends' in the sense in which that word is used by middle-class people. Nor indeed, should it be assumed that neighbours are 'not-friends'. Friendship is a category of social behaviour which does not fit easily into traditional working-class life.<sup>43</sup>

However, interviewees describing their own or their mothers' relations with neighbours in the pre-affluent years indicated that relationships with particular neighbours were closer and more friend-like than with others. Matthew Walton recalled that in the 1940s his mother was:

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<sup>40</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.1 hour 5 mins.

<sup>41</sup> Langhamer, *Women's leisure*, pp.25-26.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter Two, p.61, and Chapter Three, pp.74-80.

<sup>43</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.137.



very friendly with Mrs Lawson on one side, [whereas] Mrs Ford on the other side, they were on sort of, conversational terms occasionally, but they were not in and out of each other's houses. But Mrs Lawson on the other side, in fact I can remember my father putting a gate in the fence so they could get through to each other.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, Jack Binnington recalled that a particular neighbouring couple provided his mother with emotional support in the early 1950s.<sup>45</sup> Relationships with relatives were also chosen to some extent, since favoured relatives were visited regularly and others not at all.<sup>46</sup>

But busy mothers were sometimes able to conduct a small number of friendships with others who were neither kin nor neighbours. Janet Hill recalled that from the thirties through to the 1950s her mother had a friend who lived a few streets away with whom she was particularly close: 'Aunty Molly, I called her, and she used to come down every night...for years. She used to knit all my jumpers for school.'<sup>47</sup> Judy Whittles' mother had a friend who visited once a week for a coffee in the 1940s; others recalled their mothers popping round to a friend's home.<sup>48</sup> This pattern of women's sociability – female friends engaged independently of their husbands, visited usually in homes whilst husbands were out at work or in the pub – resembled the 'callin'' that Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter described as women's principal form of social interaction in Ashton.<sup>49</sup>

As noted in Chapter Two, 'Families', many working-class women socialised at least occasionally with their husbands in the 1930s and 1940s in venues apart from the home, for example spending Saturday nights in their husband's favoured pub or club.<sup>50</sup> In the 1940s, Anna Mason's mother and father had friends whom they regularly met in the pub to play dominoes.<sup>51</sup> There was also occasional testimony of couples with shared friends whom they visited or entertained at home in ways which anticipated the forms of conjugal sociability which will be described below for the later part of our

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<sup>44</sup> Matthew Walton, 22 July 2010, c.45 mins.

<sup>45</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.80 mins.

<sup>46</sup> See for example, Chapter Two, p.63, p.66.

<sup>47</sup> Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c. 20 mins.

<sup>48</sup> Judy and John Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.1 hour 26 mins;

<sup>49</sup> Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life*, p.170.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter Two, 'Families', p.50.

<sup>51</sup> Anna Mason, 12 July 2010, c.20 mins.

period. Hannah Witham recalled that in the 1930s and 1940s her parents often played whist in the homes of shared friends who lived nearby:

Most days someone had a whist drive in their house... and they just used to go from house to house. It was a pleasant evening and they enjoyed it...they'd stop and have a cup of tea and sometimes fish and chips.<sup>52</sup>

Ellen Ingleton remembered that her parents called on friends casually and were called on in turn: 'We often had people in the house who just called.'<sup>53</sup>

Although Graham Allan considered that there was 'little evidence of organised female sociability' in traditional working-class districts, some interviewees remembered women's informal clubs, whist nights and trips away (see Chapter Three 'Neighbours' and Chapter Six 'Civil Society'), which certainly seemed to constitute communal organised sociability.<sup>54</sup> For example, Doris Daniels remembered a women's club held in a room of the Foresters' pub on Beckside, organised by the landlady, which she attended with her mother in the 1940s and 1950s. Activities included organised trips away, and rehearsing and performing for charity concerts in the pub.<sup>55</sup>

So, during the early part of our period, friendships developed during early adulthood were often lost as women married and started a family, and became at least temporarily focused on their homes. But, despite these limitations on sociability in this period, women did still exercise some choice in companionship from amongst neighbours, family and sometimes wider social ties. It is also worth noting that in later life-stages, many women said that they again picked up older friendships. Gwen Harris recalled that in later life she again struck up a friendship with her friend Sylvia:

When she got married of course, we lost touch... we always sent a card at Christmas but we didn't often see each other in those years, but later on, I suppose after her family had grown up and my family had grown up, we just wrote a bit sometimes to each other, telephoned each other... I think by the time we really got involved her husband had retired.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>53</sup> Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c. 40 mins.

<sup>54</sup> Allan, *Kinship and Friendship*, p.17. See Chapter Three, p.79, and Chapter Five, p.164, of present thesis.

<sup>55</sup> Doris Daniels, 16 December 2009, track 2, c.6 mins.

<sup>56</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c. 25 mins. See also: Marianne Wooly, 22 February 2010, c.82 mins; Ellen Watton, 8 March 2010, c.60 mins.

### New forms of sociability, 1955-1980

The evidence above suggested a mixed picture for the early post-war years, with much that matched the view of 'traditional' working-class sociability, but also evidence of friendship patterns implying choice and some conjugal joint sociability. It will be argued here that as living standards rose from the 1950s, it was these latter tendencies that came more into focus. The Beverley evidence offers some corroboration of Franklin's description of affluent tobacco workers' shift towards shared conjugal sociability with friends drawn from beyond the neighbourhood and family; support is thus also given to Klein's hypothesis that the affluent working classes sought and maintained friendships across a wider geography.<sup>57</sup>

A pattern of couples socialising with other couples began in courtship. Jack Binnington remembered that in the 1960s:

Your mates came first until you got seriously courting...you didn't see your mates so often and you saw the girl a little bit more ...if your best mate, he was courting, then you meet up in the pub and talk... obviously there was times when I'd probably not like my mate's girlfriend, and so you didn't meet up because there'd be an atmosphere, but by and large you all generally got on together and talked and socialised together.<sup>58</sup>

Elaine Mateer began seeing a member of a local rock group in the late 1960s:

S: Did you stop seeing your girlfriends as much?

Yes, yes, totally. It was exciting to go off with groups where they were playing and all like that for a while, and then meet the other lads' girlfriends and so you'd hang around all together.<sup>59</sup>

Many interviewees spoke of 'our' friends from their early married life in the 1960s and 1970s, some of whom they still saw:

We had lots of friends that I made and that Jen had and we are still friends now, from then, some friends who were Jen's best friends...and friends of mine.<sup>60</sup>

When we had the children, we did more family things didn't we?...With friends who had families as well... And you used to play golf with Tom

<sup>57</sup> Franklin, "Working-Class Privatism", p.110; Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.263-264.

<sup>58</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.55 mins.

<sup>59</sup> Elaine Mateer, 29 March 2010, Track Three, c.0 mins.

<sup>60</sup> Gerald Ibbotson, 7 July 2010, c.135 mins.

didn't you? And I met Brenda [Tom's wife] – I didn't know Tom and Brenda before I had the children, and we both had [our first children] Tom and Jonathan within three weeks of each other, and then we've sort of been pals.<sup>61</sup>

Yes, [my wife and I] we always socialised together, we was very close. Obviously we used to go out occasionally on our own, you know what women are, their shopping and that, you know, but we used to go out a fair bit, for meals and what have you.

S: did you have a group of friends who you saw?

Yes, yes, various couples we knew.<sup>62</sup>

Janet Thompson remembered that after she and Pete were married in the early 1970s they shared a social life based around the pub and a group of shared friends:

It didn't seem to make a lot of difference, just carried on the same...we still went out on the Friday and Saturday night...we both went out together...When I met Pete there was a load of them in the George and Dragon, and he'd got quite friendly with a particular two or three of these gentlemen, who we are still very good friends with nowadays.<sup>63</sup>

Although for financial reasons the couple were not able to go out together as much while the children were young, Pete was keen to ensure that Janet was able to socialise whilst the children were small during the 1970s.<sup>64</sup> The couple had a rule that they each spent at least one night out a week with their friends, and throughout their adult life the couple socialised either together or as a pair with the same peer group.<sup>65</sup> Other couples had a similar shared social life in pubs.<sup>66</sup> For example, Jim Fisher recalled that his parents in the late 1950s and 1960s went out to pubs and Hodgson's social club together most nights, and that he was himself practically brought up by his grandparents.<sup>67</sup>

Whereas in the 1940s and early 1950s, conjugal shared sociability might be limited to particular contexts, such as a regular pub or club night, couples in the

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<sup>61</sup> June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.101 mins.

<sup>62</sup> Denis Duke, 14 July 2010, c.75 mins

<sup>63</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.70 mins.

<sup>64</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.75 mins.

<sup>65</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.70 mins.

<sup>66</sup> Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, 1 hour 19 mins; Sally Adams, 23 June 2010, c.80 mins. Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>67</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.0 mins.

affluent era often socialised with shared friends in several contexts. In addition to their pub sociability, Janet and Pete Thompson also went on holidays with their friends in the 1970s: 'We used to rent a cottage there in Kettlewell, Wharfedale, slept ten, and we used to go, us four, Pat and Bruce and their two girls and two of the chaps that I've just been talking about.'<sup>68</sup> In the later 1970s, Dennis Duke began working as a driver at a local haulage firm and he and a fellow driver became friendly, socialising together with their wives in a number of settings:

Sandra got on very well with his wife, and we just used to go out socialising, you know. Out for meals...restaurants, pubs, wherever we fancied...further afield sometimes, we'd go for a day, you know.<sup>69</sup>

Couples increasingly incorporated cars in their sociability. Many bought their first car in the 1960s – whilst only around 20% of interviewees born before 1941 mentioned having a car whilst bringing up children, 40% of those born after 1940 did so, suggesting confirmation of national trends that saw the number of domestic households with use of a car doubling between 1955 and 1965.<sup>70</sup> Trips with friends to country pubs became common in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>71</sup> The rise in sociable eating out was perhaps connected with this increased mobility, with couples travelling to go for 'basket meals' with friends in the 1970s.<sup>72</sup> Gerald Ibbotson and his wife in the 1970s would sometimes leave their children with babysitters whilst they went out with friends to pubs or restaurants in villages or in Hull.<sup>73</sup> A 1973 'advertorial' piece in the *Beverley Guardian* claimed that 'more and more' people were eating out and that more establishments – clubs, hotels and inns – were serving food.<sup>74</sup>

Some interviewees saw differences between their own more wide-ranging sociability and that of their parents. Sarah and Vic Baker recalled that neighbours were less important for their own generation:

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<sup>68</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 09, c.70 mins.

<sup>69</sup> Dennis Duke, 14 July 2010, c.106 mins.

<sup>70</sup> Simon Gunn, "The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problem of Traffic in 1960s Britain", *Twentieth Century British History*, 22, No. 4, (2011): 521-542, p.524.

<sup>71</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.110 mins; James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.115 mins; Ron Pearce, 2 December 2010, c.1hour 30 mins, 1 hour 25 mins.

<sup>72</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.115 mins; Ron Pearce, 2 December 2010, c.1hour 30 mins.

<sup>73</sup> Gerald Ibbotson, 7 July 2010, c.145 mins.

<sup>74</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 26 January 1973.

Sarah: We got on with them all [neighbours]...but we never used to go socialising with them...I think in our days, people didn't socialise [with neighbours], not like our parents did....

Stefan: Did you have friends round to the house?

Sarah: Yes, we'd have Christmas parties and things like that.

Vic: You'd probably spend more time with your friends who lived a few streets away, and you didn't with your direct neighbours.<sup>75</sup>

Asked whether she had been involved in the Townswomen's Guild like her mother, Margaret Day compared her own generation's expanded range of sociable leisure opportunities with their parents' more limited pallet:

I didn't [want to get involved with the townswomen's guild]. I used to like socialising, and I played golf for a little while...In those days [when mother was young] there wasn't other things to do, you know what I mean, it was a real good night out for them wasn't it?<sup>76</sup>

These interviewees clearly felt that there was some degree of novelty in aspects of their own generation's sociability.

One clear difference between interviewees own and earlier generations was the use of homes for sociability. Increased use of the home for entertaining friends appeared to be connected to the post-war rise in home ownership. As noted in Chapter Two, although few interviewees who grew up before the Second World War lived in homes that their parents owned, at least 60% of the interviewees born after 1940 had eventually bought their own homes. If their parents had used their homes for sociability with friends at all, this was typically casual, of short duration, and usually took place during the day.<sup>77</sup> Interviewees who married in the 1950s onwards often entertained shared friends in a more structured way, with this entertaining taking place on an evening. John and Margaret Day regularly entertained friends in their semi-detached home in the east of Beverley in the 1960s and early 1970s:

We used to come back after here after we'd been out for a drink or something...we've always had people round, haven't we? And we used to go to other people's houses...

S: Did you cook meals for people?

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<sup>75</sup> Sarah and Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.145 mins.

<sup>76</sup> John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.1 hour 28 mins.

<sup>77</sup> For eg, Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.47 mins; Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c. 40 mins.

You didn't do that sort of thing then, did you? We did more things like buffets, you know, sandwiches and sausage rolls, chicken legs, pineapple and cheese on sticks, and that sort of thing, we did lots of little buffets and things. But we now, more, if anybody comes you have a meal, you know.

S: Buffets, what were they for birthdays, or -?

Yes, or if you had anyone over on a Saturday night, 'come round to us on a Saturday night', and there might be six, seven or eight of you, and I used to set the table up and make a bit of a buffet.<sup>78</sup>

By the 1970s interviewees recalled cooking meals in homes for friends. Gerald Ibbotson recalled:

I can't remember them [parents] having hardly anybody round for a meal, they might have been round for a scone and a cup of tea, but that was about it. But I think from the ...early seventies, we had a circle of friends from the [music] group and people that used to knock around with us from the group, but we've all got married, or just before we've got married or whatever, we've been to their houses for a meal, and they've been to our house for a meal, and it just built up.<sup>79</sup>

Graham Allan saw home-based sociability as particularly significant in differentiating 'friends' from 'mates' – inviting people into the home signified an extension of the relationship beyond the original context in which it was established (pub, club or workplace for example).<sup>80</sup> The Beverley evidence that working classes used their homes in this way in the 1960s and 1970s confirms Franklin's observation of home-based 'external' sociability amongst members of an inter-war affluent working-class population in Bristol.<sup>81</sup> Material and cultural shifts clearly made home-based conjugal sociability with shared friends desirable and possible, and entertaining friends in this way may have been part of the post-war cultural emphasis on the home noted by historians of this period.<sup>82</sup> The time and money invested in purchasing and improving homes meant that they might be shown off rather than kept private.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.48 mins.

<sup>79</sup> Gerald Ibbotson, 7 July 2010, c.140 mins; see also: Dennis Duke, 14 July 2010, c.81 mins.

<sup>80</sup> Allan, *Kinship and Friendship*, p.87.

<sup>81</sup> Franklin, "Working-Class Privatism", p.108.

<sup>82</sup> Langhamer, "The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain"; Tebbutt, *Women's Talk?* pp.150-153.

<sup>83</sup> One interviewee suggested this was her mother's motivation for maintaining strictly the privacy of the home: Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.10 mins; see also: Tebbutt, *Women's Talk?* p.81.

Friends shared between husband and wife were usually chosen from a wider range of contacts than just the neighbourhood or family (although people from these contexts might well be accommodated in friendship networks). Many of Margaret and John's friends were from the golf club, Gerald's and his wife's friends were often of long standing, from their pre-married days. Vic and Sarah Baker regularly socialised with a group of friends in the 1960s and 1970s who were an assortment of current and former workmates and people Vic 'had grown up with'.<sup>84</sup>

Other developments helped to bring new patterns of sociable interaction with friends. The rise in married women's work outside of the home in the post-war decades brought opportunities for women to forge friendly relationships away from the neighbourhood and family.<sup>85</sup> Doris Daniels married immediately after the Second World War and had a large family. Much of her sociability in the 1950s and 1960s resembled that often attributed to working-class women, of informal outdoor chatting with neighbouring women and closer relationships with her mother and sister. However, she returned to work in the 1970s in Skelton's bakery in the town, a move which brought new friends and social opportunities:

Now we all did good years at Skeltons, and Madge...she said, 'oh Mave, do you fancy going to Blackpool?' I said 'I can't go to Blackpool and leave all them!' [husband and children] 'Course you can!' And I said 'oh I don't know, I'll have to see', like. I had to look into it, and Jim said 'I don't see why not'...and, course, I had a bit of pocket money and things like that, and you're thinking, 'oh, I can do' – anyway I decided to go...and I thoroughly enjoyed it...and the next year, 'eh, shall we go again?' well of course, it ended up twelve years...I thoroughly enjoyed it, I really, really did. Of course, they were devils you know, and we used to go out all hours dancing, you really filled the weekend in...Elaine, Jackie, Linda, Me, Elaine... Jackie would only take eight.<sup>86</sup>

In the early part of the period, married women socialising together often had to arrange whist nights or informal clubs in the back rooms of pubs, as it was taboo for

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<sup>84</sup> Vic and Sarah Baker, 29 May 2010, c.111 mins.

<sup>85</sup> For married women's rising participation in the workforce in this period, see: Thane, "Women Since 1945," pp.393-395.

<sup>86</sup> Doris Daniels, 13 November 2009, c.1 hour 30 mins.



respectable younger women to go to the pub without their husbands.<sup>87</sup> However, during the affluent period married women gained some limited access to pubs on their own terms, through women's darts teams.<sup>88</sup> Janet Hill recalled that this was a way to socialise with friends she made while working at Armstrong's part-time when her daughter was young in the 1960s:

S: Did you see these ladies outside of work...?

Yes, you used to play darts. I didn't play a lot, I did the adding up and marking up...

S: What team were they in?

It was a pub, a pub team...Mariners Pub. Real good it was...once a week, darts night.<sup>89</sup>

Janet Thompson first became involved in ladies darts in the early 1980s, but her testimony chimed with that of other women who played in earlier decades in emphasising the social aspect of the game:

I mean, we don't profess to be able to play, we never have done. And I think everybody's about the same, they just go to have a night out and have a natter and a laugh...It's nice to catch up, because they're normally somebody who you maybe don't see all the time, apart from Helen [workmate], the rest of them I wouldn't see from one week to the next, and yet they're lovely girls, they're lovely ladies, so it's nice to have a get together and all have a good natter together.<sup>90</sup>

Friends were clearly important to the generations who reached adulthood in the 1950s onwards; many friendships which interviewees discussed had been nurtured and maintained over decades. Janet and Pete Thompson shared a long-term friendship group since the 1960s:

P: We're more friends-oriented than relatives to be truthful...

J: They're long term friends as well, aren't they?

P: One of 'ems just died, been a friend for over forty two year, he was older than us but he was still a good friend, he just died...it hit me

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<sup>87</sup> Stella Moss, "'She is Everywhere in Publand'. Older Women Drinkers and the English Public House in the Mid-Twentieth Century', unpublished conference paper, Urban History Group Annual Conference, Robinson College, University of Cambridge, UK, 31 March-1 April 2011.

<sup>88</sup> See Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c.55 mins; Jean Benson, 14 January 2010, c.1 hour 9 mins; ERYMS interview with Mary Elizabeth Miles, November 2005, p.12.

<sup>89</sup> Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c.55 mins.

<sup>90</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.80 mins.

about as much as it hit me when my mum and dad died...I used to really go out with him more times than with my mum and dad...

J: Our really close-knit ones [friends], which we call our family, you know, they're always there and they always will be.<sup>91</sup>

That such a high valuation was placed on friends corroborated sociologists' suggestions of an increasing emphasis on friendship in the latter half of the twentieth century. Spencer and Pahl, for example, commented that amongst those they interviewed in the early twenty first century, many had the kinds of close bonds of support and mutual obligation with friends that are often associated with families. The authors described these as 'chosen-as-given' relationships – what began as 'chosen' friendships became invested with the characteristics of 'given', family relationships.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, Anthony Giddens posited a 'transformation of intimacy' during late modernity – individuals increasingly channelled effort into the maintenance of friendships as a replacement for the erosion of older, more solid and less self-conscious sources of 'ontological security' (institutions such as the family and local community).<sup>93</sup>

In previous chapters it was seen that affluence loosened the necessity for some types of mutual material assistance amongst neighbours and family, but that new forms of support could develop. It is suggested here that a further corollary of changes associated with the affluent era – improved housing, more time and money for leisure, emphasis on the conjugal bond – was the development of new forms of sociability with friends who were neither kin nor neighbour. If there is merit in Graham Allan's suggestion that those with limited material means often limited the contexts in which they engage with friends for fear of entering into obligations of reciprocity, then rising levels of affluence might be expected to allow more expansive friendships.<sup>94</sup> Although the evidence from the Beverley study does not allow secure conclusions about long-term developments in friendship patterns, it was certainly the case that some younger interviewees appeared to have had more time and space for developing friendships in their married life than had their parents.

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<sup>91</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c. 106 mins.

<sup>92</sup> Spencer and Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship*, pp.117-120.

<sup>93</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp.117-121.

<sup>94</sup> Allan, *Kinship and Friendship*, p.90.

### Friendship and acquaintanceship in a geographical context

Klein saw a tendency for the affluent working classes to ‘maintain non-local social networks’.<sup>95</sup> More geographically dispersed friendship networks were thus part of the weakening of traditional working-class community centred on particular streets.<sup>96</sup> However, Klein did not stipulate how far residents were travelling in their social life, or define ‘non-local’. The Beverley evidence suggests that, though immediate neighbours in particular streets may have been less important for sociability in the affluent era, the town itself continued to contain a large part of the friendship networks of most of the interviewees.

Surprisingly often, interviewees stated that they had not had any friends from outside of the town during the period of the study.<sup>97</sup> This was true of across the age range of interviewees. Even those relatively affluent workers who owned homes and reported a wide range of friends nevertheless usually said that the majority of these friends lived in the town. Ellen and Harry Malster were married in 1953. Harry was a skilled electrician and the couple built their own house. They reported a varied sociability from the 1950s through to the 1970s with a range of friends:

S: Did you have friends who lived away from Beverley who you went to visit or was all your social life in Beverley?

E: I should think it would be wouldn’t it? Yes, I’m sure it was.<sup>98</sup>

Similarly, in the 1960s and 1970s Margaret and John Day had a full and active social life, with shared friends from work and associational life, but the great majority of these friends also lived in Beverley.<sup>99</sup> Margaret valued the proximity of friends: ‘I can’t imagine all these people who want to move away, and retire...you’re leaving all your friends and your surroundings’.<sup>100</sup> Although Margaret was here speaking in the present tense, Les White indicated that his own attachment to local friendships was the reason for a brief relocation to London in the 1970s coming to an end:

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<sup>95</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.265.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.* pp.264-265.

<sup>97</sup> For example, Amy Easterling, 15 February 2010, c.26 mins; Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.60 mins; Jean Benson, 14 January 2010, track 2 c.7 mins.

<sup>98</sup> Harry and Ellen Malster, 21 May 2010, c.105 mins.

<sup>99</sup> Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.42 mins.

<sup>100</sup> Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.24 mins.

Why would you want to move and leave all your mates? I wouldn't dream of moving to London and living in Hackney...I went there, they were all strangers in flats from all over the place.<sup>101</sup>

The simple material fact of proximity and ease of interaction helps explain the concentration of friends within the town. Even movements over a small distance could be significant: 'A few of my friends married farmers [in the 1960s], so they went out, I've got a friend lives in [the nearby village of] Holme on Spalding Moor...[and friends in] Thwing...Scorborough, they went away, so it's sort of sending cards for so long and then you just break away, don't you?'<sup>102</sup> Elaine and Patrick Mateer, who also had an active social life, nevertheless recalled that upon moving to a village about ten miles away in the 1970s they lost contact with most friends in Beverley, and that when they moved back to the town more recently they stopped seeing friends they had made in the village.<sup>103</sup> Similarly, many of those who left Beverley in their youth and later returned said they did not maintain ties with friends made whilst they were away. Mick Underwood did national service in the early 1950s:

S: Did you make any friends in the army?

Yes, tremendous, unbelievable...that's why it annoys me that, I've got pictures of them all...

S: Was it difficult to keep in touch with them afterwards?

I lost touch with them immediately I got back to Beverley.<sup>104</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, Iris Brown spent many years away from the town, serving in the armed forces herself and bringing up a family as the wife of a serviceman, but when she returned to the town did not maintain friendships with the people she met during these years, and instead took up again with friends from her youth in the town.<sup>105</sup>

However, rising standards of living, larger homes, the possession of cars and money for travel facilitated the maintenance of some long-distance relationships. Particularly close and valued friendships could withstand geographical separation. Hilda Little moved to Beverley with her family as a young girl in the 1940s, and soon

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<sup>101</sup> Les White, 29 October 2010, c.1 hour 15 mins.

<sup>102</sup> Margaret and John Day, 8 December 2009, c. 1 hour 37 mins.

<sup>103</sup> Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>104</sup> Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.60 mins; see also: Dave and June Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.116 mins; James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.80 mins.

<sup>105</sup> Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.62 mins

after went to grammar school in Bridlington, 20 miles from Beverley. She did not make many friends in Beverley, but shared experience of grammar school appeared to underpin her close friendship with a small group:

From going to Brid, that's when I became friends with who was, and who has always been, my best friend. And her sister went to Beverley High, and another girl who lived near them, so there were the four of us...sadly Anne has died, and her sister Gwen is still, is now, my closest friend. I don't have a lot of friends as such, I've a lot of acquaintances, but they are really the only people who I would go to see unannounced... it wouldn't matter, or if I needed anything.<sup>106</sup>

When her friends married servicemen and left the town in the 1950s, Hilda married George, a maintenance engineer who worked at Hodgson's, and she stayed in Beverley. However, she always stayed in touch with her friends who had moved away.<sup>107</sup> The friendship group incorporated their husbands and then children into their sociability, with the families making visits to each other's homes, as was reported in Chapter Two, 'Families'.<sup>108</sup>

But more long-distance friendships were reported rarely, were usually only a small part of individuals' social networks, and were maintained not instead of, but alongside, local friendships and acquaintances. Thus in the 1960s and 1970s, networks of sociable friendships, if not so closely centred on particular streets, were still concentrated locally for most. Furthermore, there was still a role for the informal 'effortless' sociability which Klein suggested was central to traditional working-class communities.<sup>109</sup> Informal interaction with casual acquaintances in the public spaces of the town remained important, and could make the town feel like a 'knowable community'.<sup>110</sup>

Because they had been to school, socialised and worked in the town where members of their extended family also lived, many interviewees had lots of casual acquaintances in Beverley. Doreen Lee, born in 1942, was shown a random selection of photos of local sporting teams, workplaces and public events taken in the decades

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<sup>106</sup> Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>107</sup> Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c. 110 mins; George Little, 12 March 2010, c.150 mins; Anna Mason, 12 July 2010, track 2.

<sup>108</sup> See Chapter Two, p.60.

<sup>109</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.265.

<sup>110</sup> Phrase taken from Tebbutt, *Women's Talk?* p.74.

from the 1940s to the 1970s (copied from the local museum's collection), and asked to identify people she knew and to talk about how she knew them. She cited a range of reasons for her recognition of people shown in the pictures. Family connections were important: one woman had been known to her mother; one man's nephew married Doreen's niece; another man was an acquaintance of her father; a younger person was a friend of her nephew. Some were familiar because of Doreen's knowledge of former neighbours and their families: one of those pictured had lived in the same neighbourhood Doreen had grown up in; a man was related to a former next-door neighbour; a girl had married a man who lived around the corner. Others were familiar because of a public role: a woman had worked as doctor's receptionist; several were 'well-known' local personalities (councillors for example); some had been owners of local shops. Many of those Doreen identified were simply known through a lifetime in the town: one person was a friend of a friend of a friend; several were known by sight; some women were members of her ladies' group; several had been to the same school as Doreen; one man went into the same pub she had used; some she had met and spoken to 'round town'. Summing up, Doreen said:

I've lived in Beverley all my life. 'Cause he [son] used to say to me, 'Do you know everybody?' I said 'no', but I know an awful lot of people. People you've been to school with, people you've worked with.<sup>111</sup>

Those who did not use their neighbourhood pubs or shops would nevertheless stand a good chance of bumping into acquaintances in central public spaces – whilst shopping in town or drinking in pubs in and around the market square. Many interviewees of different ages recalled across the period, from the 1950s to the 1970s, a sense that the faces in the crowd were familiar:

Yes, you could walk down the shopping street and you knew everybody, everybody. So it was like a big family really.<sup>112</sup>

You could go into town when I was younger and you would know more or less, not everybody, but, you know, you recognised most people.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Doreen Lee, 9 November 2009, c.53 mins.

<sup>112</sup> Ellen Watton, 8 March 2010, c.0 mins.

<sup>113</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.110 mins. See also: Jane Holland, 19 November 2009, c.34 mins; Elaine Mateer, 29 March 2011, c.31 mins.

At one time Beverley, it was a small town, hell of a lot smaller than what it is now. And, to be quite honest with you, most people knew each other by sight.<sup>114</sup>

A shopping trip into town could therefore involve multiple minor social interactions, as William Vincent recalled of the late 1950s: ‘We’d go shopping with Mum into town to the market or whatever, and every few yards along the road: ‘oh hello’ ‘hello’ ‘hello so and so’ – everybody knew everybody.’<sup>115</sup> Although interviewees did not give much detail about these interactions in the period of the study, occasional accounts of more recent meetings suggest something of the flavour of these frequent, casual encounters: ‘I went for my paper, about three or four days ago, and he [a councillor known since youth] was in there, and I said “ah, I want a word with you.”’; ‘I met Betty [old school friend], she’s nearly the same age as me, I met her in Morrison’s...I see more people from working at Skelton’s for twenty year, you see I get girls who were sixteen coming up and saying ‘you don’t remember me do you Mavis?’’; ‘I was telling a bloke this morning, in Netto’s [supermarket], an old shipyarder.’<sup>116</sup>

Interviewees had often valued this sense of familiarity. Ivy Shipton moved away from Beverley twice, once in the 1960s and again in the 2000s, and realised that she missed familiar faces:

I went to live in Liverpool. I didn’t settle...it was like an alien environment really... you don’t realise, do you, until you do start talking about it, how intertwined with a community you actually, actually were really.

S: So what did you miss about Beverley, can you remember?

(pause) You couldn’t put your finger on it, I think it came home more to me when we moved from Beverley to here [Driffield], two years ago, the fact that I was used to walking down the street and I was used to seeing faces that I knew, either people I went to school with, or somebody, a relative.<sup>117</sup>

Mick Underwood valued his own local fame (partly achieved through his involvement in local cricket and football), as well as his knowledge of others. He discussed how his

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<sup>114</sup> Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c.0 mins. See also: Jane Holland, 19 November 2009, c.34 mins; Elaine Mateer, 29 March 2011, c.31 mins.

<sup>115</sup> William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.53 mins.

<sup>116</sup> Quotes from: Vic Baker, 19 May 2010, c. 111 mins, Doris Daniels, 13 November 2009, c.19 mins; Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c.15 mins.

<sup>117</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.40 mins. See also: Jean Benson, 14 January 2010, c.25 mins.

wife made friends when she married him and moved to Beverley from Hull in the 1950s:

She was bound to get to know people, through me... There must be some people if they were listening, honestly Stefan, would think “who does he think he is?”, but that is fact, you know, I mean, everybody knows me.<sup>118</sup>

The sense of belonging gained from being part of a knowable community could coexist alongside a nuclear-family orientation:

If we went up town [my wife and I in the 1960s] we’d go on our own, and if we bumped into them [friends] so be it. So, my circle of friends was very small. Very, very small. And is now. Although I know a lot of people, and talk to a lot of people... I’ve never been unhappy with Becksides or people who live around. I’ve never been unhappy with people who live on the [council] estate. In my opinion they’re my people and I’m part of it... it’s a belonging thing for me... I know the people around this area [east Beverley].<sup>119</sup>

Those who, unlike Jack, did establish regular sociability with friends during the period of the study also derived satisfaction from the wider sense of a knowable community. Although George and Hilda Little maintained close friendships with Hilda’s childhood friends who moved away from Beverley, visiting each other in their homes, they also now missed the former sense that you knew many of the other people in town when out shopping.<sup>120</sup> Like other interviewees, they felt they knew far fewer of those they encountered in day to day life since the town’s expansion from the 1990s.<sup>121</sup>

Robert Putnam argued that even small and superficial daily interactions such as nodding to a fellow jogger have social and psychological benefits, adding to the stock of ‘social capital’ which makes people feel comfortable in places, engage positively with society and invest trust in social institutions.<sup>122</sup> The casual interactions with

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<sup>118</sup> Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>119</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.91 mins.

<sup>120</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, c.25 mins.

<sup>121</sup> Beverley expanded rapidly in the 1990s, growing from a population of 23,110 in 1991, to 30,351 in 2001. Economic Development Services ‘1991 Census Profile, East Riding of Yorkshire’, (Beverley: Humberside County Council, 1991); Office of National Statistics website <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk> [Accessed: 28 September 2008]; Vision of Britain Website [http://vision.edina.ac.uk/data\\_cube\\_table\\_page.jsp?data\\_theme=T\\_POP&data\\_cube=N\\_TPop&u\\_id=10217660&c\\_id=10001043&add=N](http://vision.edina.ac.uk/data_cube_table_page.jsp?data_theme=T_POP&data_cube=N_TPop&u_id=10217660&c_id=10001043&add=N), [Accessed: 29 September 2008].

<sup>122</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone : The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p.93.



acquaintances described above were not of the same intensity as the close daily gossiping with neighbours described in the older streets in the early part of the period in Chapter Three, 'Neighbours'. But the more fleeting and casual interactions in the public spaces of the town which have been indicated here helped create a sense of the town as a knowable community, and were valued by interviewees.

### *Conclusion*

Klein hypothesised that the rising affluence of the 1960s might lead to a broader, more selective sociability with chosen friends, replacing the communal but restricted neighbourhood sociability of traditional working-class communities. In response to this, the current chapter firstly noted that sociability with friends varied across the lifecycle, and so generalisations about working-class friendship need to be qualified. Both before and after the onset of the era of affluence, young adulthood was a period of intensive sociable leisure, pursued in peer groups against a backdrop of broader communal sociability in the town's public spaces and dance halls. For women in particular, marriage and child-rearing limited this sociability, and often brought at least temporary disengagement from friends. This was perhaps more marked amongst women in the early part of the period, the first post-war decade. Women in these years who did not work outside of the home and whose husbands pursued extensive sociability away from the household had limited opportunities to engage with friends.

Compared with this, the evidence suggested new forms of sociability coming into focus for women and married couples in the era of affluence, and therefore some support for Klein's argument. Younger interviewees, married in the 1950s onwards, were more likely to remember joint conjugal sociability with friends from contexts other than the immediate neighbourhood. From the 1960s, couples reported evening sociability in their homes and from the 1970s they sometimes entertained friends by cooking meals. Furthermore, the steady post-war rise of married women's employment outside of the home brought increased opportunity for women to meet and socialise away from their streets and independently of their husbands.

However, the chapter challenged Klein's straightforward conceptual divide between limited, 'given' social relationships in the pre-affluent traditional working-class communities and freely chosen relationships with friends arising as a result of affluence. Chosen friendships amongst the working classes were not new to the affluent era of the later 1950s and 1960s, though the parameters of choice may

formerly have been more limited. Even amongst married women in the older streets in the early years of the period, closer relationships developed between neighbours who liked one another, women chose which relatives they would socialise with and often maintained at least one friendship with a woman who was neither neighbour nor relative.

Just as Klein's interpretation did not account for the extent to which women in the early 'traditional' part of the period developed friendships with chosen others, it also did not encompass the ways geographical considerations continued to limit friendship ties in the affluent era. The effort and will required to maintain more long-distance social ties tended to restrict these to a small number of very close relationships. Although friends in the 1960s and 1970s might not be neighbours, they *were* usually Beverley residents. Similarly, the extent to which a locality might remain a 'knowable community' during the period was not considered by Klein. Whilst she outlined the decline of the older communal sociability of particular streets, she did not account for the continuity of more nebulous, though still important, networks of acquaintanceship across broader geographies.<sup>123</sup> In Beverley, meeting casually with acquaintances in the course of day to day life represented at least some continuity of the 'effortless' sociability which Klein attributed to 'traditional' forms of working-class community. The chapter therefore posited a continuing role for considerations of locality, though an expanded locality, in discussions of the sociability of the 1960s and 1970s affluent working classes.

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<sup>123</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.261-264; Franklin, "Working-Class Privatism", p.111; Allan, *Kinship and Friendship*, pp.87-88.

## Chapter Five. Workplaces

Of course, in them days there'd be a lot of work people from Shipyard would be in the pub ... Get to be a community don't they.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Klein nor Goldthorpe *et al* considered that there was much overlap between workplaces and the community life of the populations they described. The same could not be said for affluent-era Beverley, where long-standing workplaces were integrated into the town's social and cultural life.

Klein made scant reference to workplaces in her extended treatment of post-war social transformations, and considered working-class community primarily in terms of the informal sociability within a small collection of streets.<sup>2</sup> Goldthorpe *et al* were more explicit, arguing that there was little evidence of a connection between the workplace and the social life and leisure of the affluent workers they studied. Workers rarely socialised together outside the factory gates or engaged with works social and sporting clubs (which were instead used by white-collar workers). Their orientation to employment was instrumental – workplaces were valued for the wages and the affluent lifestyles they supported rather than for any social benefits, and work and non-work were regarded as separate.<sup>3</sup>

Some historians also omitted workplaces from their discussions of community. Joanna Bourke and Elizabeth Roberts each concentrated on neighbourhoods in their discussions of working-class community in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> Trevor Lummis denied a significant connection between occupation and community in the early twentieth century fishing towns and villages he studied; for Lummis, 'community' was simply another word for the social worlds of women and children, constructed in the absence of working men.<sup>5</sup>

However, the designation 'working-class community' implies at least some relationship between a population and its economic basis, and many authors have connected local social structures with particular industries. John Clarke wrote that in

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<sup>1</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March, 2010, c.1 hour 10 mins.

<sup>2</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.121-302.

<sup>3</sup> Goldthorpe et al., *The Affluent Worker*, pp.59-72.

<sup>4</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, pp.136-169; Roberts, *A Woman's Place*, pp.183-201.

<sup>5</sup> Trevor Lummis, *Occupation and Society : The East Anglian fishermen 1880-1914*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.76.

the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, working-class communities may only have developed in places where there was a 'close, dovetailed relationship between work and non-work', and Doreen Massey argued that the spatial organisation of labour created the distinctive social formations of particular localities.<sup>6</sup> Mining, fishing and shipbuilding districts have been seen as the settings for archetypal working-class communities, where gender roles, leisure patterns and social networks were shaped by the demands of the dominant local industry.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to a concern with social structures, some authors connected occupation and identity. Workplaces were bound up with identity in two senses – firstly, workers might identify with their jobs and places of work. Robert Blauner argued that skilled workers often identified with their occupation, and unskilled workers with their place of employment.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, whether or not residents worked in local industry, their sense of local distinctiveness was often linked to that industry. To some extent this was at the level of the senses – Jeremy Tunstall described how 'the tall kippering ovens give the Hessle Road district [of Hull] its distinctive skyline and their black smoke helps to thicken the winter fogs'.<sup>9</sup> But Tunstall also wrote that Hessle Road residents, even when they did not work in dominant industry of fishing, knew that others viewed the street as a fishing area – therefore they would vigorously defend the fishermen against imputations of roughness, 'realizing that in this context they are defending themselves'.<sup>10</sup>

Post-war authors often described how urban restructuring broke connections between work and community. Willmott and Young showed that local workplaces provided continuity and stability in 1950s Bethnal Green, something lost along with close family ties in the movement to Essex council estates.<sup>11</sup> Stephen Hill felt that although there may once have been a close link between London dockers' residential and occupational communities, this connection was effaced by the movement of

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<sup>6</sup> Clarke, "Capital and Culture", p.240; Doreen B. Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labour : Social Structures and the Geography of Production*, Second ed. (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.189.

<sup>7</sup> D. H. Allcorn and C. M. Marsh, "Occupational Communities - Communities of What?" in *Working-Class Images of Society*, ed. Martin Bulmer (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 206-219, pp.207-209; Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life*, pp.248-249; Jeremy Tunstall, *The Fishermen*, (London: McGibbon & Kee, 1962), pp.162-163, p.85; Brown and Brannen, "Social Relations and Social Perspectives".

<sup>8</sup> Robert Blauner, *Alienation and Freedom: The Factory Worker and his Industry*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p.47, p.50.

<sup>9</sup> Tunstall, *The Fishermen*, p.78.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.* pp.93-94.

<sup>11</sup> Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, pp.89-103.

workers to suburban housing estates in the two decades after the Second World War.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Tunstall thought that the social character of Hessle Road changed as many fishermen moved to estates around the outskirts of Hull, far from the fish docks.<sup>13</sup>

The argument made in this chapter will be that large, traditional workplaces remained important as contexts for the creation of social ties and as components of identity across the three post-war decades in Beverley. Work and community had not become uncoupled as in the larger cities subject to major post-war urban reconstruction. Beverley's industrial continuity from the earlier twentieth century meant that links between work and community had become established, in contrast with the recently migrant population studied by Goldthorpe *et al* which had not yet formed such links. The chapter will first outline the history of Beverley's economy and industrial employment during the period of the study, before turning to an exploration of evidence relating to sociability within workplaces. The chapter will then consider the overlap of work, home and leisure before concluding with an account of the ways in which local industries contributed to the sociability and collective identity of the town as a whole across the affluent era.

### **An industrial town**

Beverley had a thriving industrial sector in the third quarter of the twentieth century but was not dominated by any single industry. The 1951 census shows that there were more employee jobs (7,968) in the town than residents in work (6,757 out of a total population of 15,504), hence Beverley was importing workers.<sup>14</sup> In 1951, 47% of workers working in the Beverley Municipal Borough worked in some kind of manufacturing industry, whilst 35% worked in the service sector.<sup>15</sup> Beverley's booming industrial sector reflected the national picture – for example, Peter Howlett noted that 1955 represented the point where industrial employment in Britain reached its height at 48% of total civilian employment, driven by the post-war export drive.<sup>16</sup>

Until the late 1970s Beverley's industrial employment was dominated by a handful of large, traditional industrial concerns which had been in the town since the

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<sup>12</sup> Hill, *The Dockers*, pp.8-9

<sup>13</sup> Tunstall, *The Fishermen*, pp.85-87.

<sup>14</sup> *Census 1951. England and Wales. Industry Tables* p.246; *Census 1951. England and Wales. Occupation Tables*. (London: HMSO, 1956), p.439; *Census 1961 England and Wales. County Report. Yorkshire, East Riding* (London HMSO 1964).

<sup>15</sup> *Census 1951. England and Wales. Industry Tables* (London: HMSO, 1957), p.246.

<sup>16</sup> Howlett, *The 'Golden Age'*, p.337.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>17</sup> In 1960, 14 firms employed 50 and above workers each. Of a total of 4,829 workers in these firms, 3,286 were employed in the largest three factories, Armstrong Patents Co. (a shock absorber factory employing 1,987), R. Hodgson and Sons Ltd (a tannery employing 729) and Cook, Welton and Gemmell Ltd (a shipyard employing 570).<sup>18</sup> These three factories had deep roots in the town. Shipbuilding in Beverley dated back to the medieval period, reflecting the town's links to the wider world via the River Hull and the Humber to other inland waterways or the North Sea.<sup>19</sup> Cook, Welton and Gemmell (CWG) moved to Beverley from Hull in 1901 to build trawlers for Hull's burgeoning fishing industry.<sup>20</sup> Another medieval industry was represented by R. Hodgson and Sons tannery (known locally as Hodgson's), established by William Hodgson in 1812.<sup>21</sup> This tannery was taken over by Barrow, Hepburn and Gale in 1922, and by 1948 the factory was 'one of the largest and best equipped leather-producing units in Britain...covering more than 14 acres... with 850 employees and a wages bill of a quarter of a million pounds a year.'<sup>22</sup> Armstrong Patents Ltd. (known in the town as Armstrong's) began with Beverley engineer Gordon Armstrong's invention of a shock absorber in 1921; by 1938 he employed 400 people.<sup>23</sup> In the 1950s the firm grew to be the largest manufacturer in Beverley, with two factories employing almost 2000 people.<sup>24</sup> By the 1960s the firm had factories in York and owned manufacturing and warehousing companies in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and South Africa.<sup>25</sup>

As we have seen, Beverley could not supply enough workers to meet the demand of local industry. Dodd, writing in 1978, commented on Beverley's reliance on labour from Hull, 'especially in the vehicle industry'.<sup>26</sup> In 1960 over 50% of Armstrong Patents' employees commuted from Hull, and more than 45% of its

<sup>17</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*, pp. 154-160. [Accessed 7 September 2008].

<sup>18</sup> 'Summary of number of employees in major industrial undertakings in Beverley May 1960' Local Government Commission 1960, ERALS: CCER/9/2/1.

<sup>19</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*, pp.34-42. [Accessed: 8 October 2008].

<sup>20</sup> M. Thompson, D. Newton, R. Robinson, T. Lofthouse, *Cook, Welton and Gemmell. Shipbuilders of Hull and Beverley, 1863 – 1963*, (Beverley: Hutton Press, 1999), p.5.

<sup>21</sup> R.M.J. Dodd, 'The Changing Structure of Industry in Beverley, North Humberside 1801-1978' (Unpublished BA thesis, University of Durham, October 1978), p.35.

<sup>22</sup> *Everything in Leather. The Story of Barrow Hepburn and Gale Ltd.* (Bermondsey: Barrow, Hepburn and Gale Ltd, 1948), p.22.

<sup>23</sup> Dodd, *Changing Structure*, p.41.

<sup>24</sup> Local Government Commission 1960.

<sup>25</sup> *Armstrong Motor Industry Supplement. Motor Show Issue, October 1969.*

<sup>26</sup> Dodd, *Changing Structure*, p.26.

workers were women.<sup>27</sup> An historian who grew up in Beverley recalled that the young Hull women leaving the shock absorber factory each night and boarding buses home dressed to go out for the evening were known locally as ‘Armstrong’s Shockers’.<sup>28</sup> Among Beverley’s own residents, the largest single occupational category in the 1961 census figures was that of skilled manual worker (30.7 % of occupied males).<sup>29</sup> The figures support the suggestion by an interviewee (and the overwhelming impression from the interview data) that Beverley factories drew in short-term, unskilled workers from Hull whereas skilled workers were more likely to be from the town.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the three largest factories, Beverley in 1960 contained many smaller manufacturing units, including: Deans and Sons (who started out making parts for musical instruments, moved on to production of fittings for public transport vehicles and Rolls Royce engines, and had 436 employees); Overton Brothers’ ropery (119 employees); Barker and Lee Smith (animal feed manufacturers, with 118 employees); and Melrose Tannery (employing 70).<sup>31</sup> As well as manufacturing, there were other significant employers in the town including the council offices, providing work for young working-class women with clerical qualifications and also for grammar school boys. The Westwood hospital provided work and nurse training for working-class girls, with Broadgates mental hospital having a larger number of male nurses.<sup>32</sup> A multitude of smaller employers included building firms, shops, solicitors’ offices, utility companies, the railway, pubs and restaurants.

The council attempted to encourage industrial diversification by building the Swinemoor industrial estate in 1964, leading to a range of smaller factories in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in the caravan manufacturing business: ‘By 1971 six firms [manufacturing caravans] were established in the town and another was about to be launched on the Swinemoor Lane estate.’<sup>33</sup> Twenty firms extant in 1978 had been established since 1960, and 40% of these were caravan manufacturers.<sup>34</sup> The factories

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<sup>27</sup> Local Government Commission 1960.

<sup>28</sup> Conversation with Dr. Susan Neave, 16 September 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Census 1961 *England and Wales. Occupation, Industry and Socio- Economic Groups. Yorkshire, East Riding*. (London: HMSO, 1966).

<sup>30</sup> Linda Roberts, 29 April 2010, c.15 mins.

<sup>31</sup> Dodd, *Changing Structure*.

<sup>32</sup> Marianne Woolly, 22 Feb 2010, c.53 mins; Anna Mason, 12 July 2010, c.35 mins; June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.90 mins.

<sup>33</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*, pp. 164-170. [Accessed: 7 September 2008].

<sup>34</sup> Dodd, *Changing Structure*, p.45.

established since 1960 tended to be smaller.<sup>35</sup> This establishing of smaller industrial units and a diversified industrial base was a wider British trend at the time.<sup>36</sup>

Industrial sector employment held up, with some slight reduction, across the three decades following 1945. Employment was still booming in the town in 1965, when the *Beverley Guardian* reported 160 unfilled vacancies but only 93 unemployed in the Beverley area. The paper reported an urgent demand for female unskilled labour and male skilled and semi-skilled workers.<sup>37</sup> In 1970 too, industrial geographers Peter Lewis and Philip Jones were able to describe the town's 'considerable industrial sector'.<sup>38</sup> However, Cook Welton and Gemmell, a long-standing employer of skilled male workers, closed in 1963, citing a number of factors – competition from foreign shipyards, a reduction of clients and the demand for larger trawlers which could not be built at the yard.<sup>39</sup> The shipyard was taken over by another firm, but never again employed the high numbers of the 1950s (peaking at around 650 men in 1957).<sup>40</sup>

RMJ Dodd, writing in 1978 and using data from 1976, remarked that Beverley's 'industrial structure very closely resembles that of Great Britain and is surprisingly well balanced and comprehensive for so small a town'. He produced a graph based on Department of Employment figures showing how closely the proportions of the labour force working in primary, secondary, construction and service industries did indeed mirror national percentages.<sup>41</sup> But the town was subject to the same economic pressures affecting the country as a whole at the time. 'The over-riding economic fact was the shrinkage in Britain's industrial base' wrote Arthur Marwick of the British economy in the 1970s, reporting that total numbers in manufacturing employment declined by 2.2 % between 1971 and 1974, and by a further 6.1% between 1974 and 1977.<sup>42</sup> The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the collapse of Beverley's older and larger factories. Beverley Shipyard had survived various closures and takeovers since 1963 and finally closed for good in 1977 with 180 redundancies.<sup>43</sup> Barrow Hepburn & Gale (the owners of Hodgson's tannery) closed

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* p.57.

<sup>36</sup> J. Black, *Modern British History since 1900* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 251.

<sup>37</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 21 May 1965.

<sup>38</sup> Lewis and Jones, *Industrial Britain. The Humberside Region.* p.38.

<sup>39</sup> Thompson et al. *Cook, Welton and Gemmell*, p.9.

<sup>40</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 23 March 1957.

<sup>41</sup> Dodd, 'Changing Structure', pp.5-6.

<sup>42</sup> A. Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*. Second ed. (London: Penguin, 1990), p.186.

<sup>43</sup> Allison et al., *A History of the County of York; Volume Six*, pp. 164-170. [Accessed 7 September 2008].



most of its departments in the town in 1978, with 750 redundancies.<sup>44</sup> In the same year, Dodd reported ‘considerable anxiety’ over the future of Beverley due to the scale of recent closures.<sup>45</sup> In 1978 there were 1000 unemployed in the town, a post-war record (unemployment figures had remained low in the town through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s).<sup>46</sup> In 1981 Armstrong’s was affected by the decline in the British car industry and shed 300 jobs. In addition to the collapse of the larger factories, smaller concerns such as caravan-builders, a whiting works, and Beverley cattle market all closed during this period. Beverley’s smaller tannery, Melrose, closed in 1986, at which point unemployment in the town was 9-10%.

However, the effects of the collapse of the industrial sector on Beverley were ameliorated by the fact that many of those made redundant from the factories were commuting workers from Hull, and also because of the town’s expanding role as administrative centre for the East Riding provided service sector employment.<sup>47</sup> The proportion of Beverley residents employed in working-class manual jobs decreased, while service sector employment increased (see tables 1 and 2). Again, this reflects national trends – Duncan Gallie wrote that between 1951 and 1991 ‘the overall share of manual jobs plummeted from two-thirds of employment to only 38 per cent’.<sup>48</sup>

Nationally, census statistics showed a clear rise in women’s employment outside of the home across the second half of the twentieth century. Women made up 31% of the workforce in 1951, 33% in 1961 and 40% in 1981. The percentage of married women aged 15-59 in the workforce rose more steeply, from 26% in 1951 to 49% in 1971 and 62% in 1981.<sup>49</sup> Trends in women’s employment in Beverley across this period are difficult to chart precisely but the indications are that the movement reflected the national upward trend. Beverley Employment Exchange statistics from 1965 showed that 40% of Beverley’s labour force were ‘women and girls’ and the *Beverley Guardian* reported that this figure had been steadily growing. The paper wrote that ‘the biggest and most urgent demand is for full time female factory and laundry workers’, although employers were ‘in certain circumstances accepting part

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Dodd, ‘Changing Structure’.

<sup>46</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 30 April 1955; 26 January 1957; 6 February 1960; 22 March 1963; 21 May 1965; 20 July 1978; Dodd, ‘Changing Structure’, p.71.

<sup>47</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York; Volume Six*, pp.164-170.

<sup>48</sup> D. Gallie, “The Labour Force,” in *Twentieth Century British Social Trends*, eds. A. H. Halsey and J. Webb. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p.288.

<sup>49</sup> Thane, “Women Since 1945,” pp.393-395.

time work'.<sup>50</sup> The available census figures for women's employment in Beverley do not record exactly the same categories over time, but are indicative. In 1951, 31% of women aged over 15 were 'occupied', the vast majority of these as 'operatives'.<sup>51</sup> By 1981, 58% of married women aged 16-59 in Beverley were in employment (over half of these were part-time) and 64% of single, widowed or divorced women worked (only 16% of these were part-time).<sup>52</sup> These figures suggest that Beverley broadly followed national trends in female employment, which were towards more married women working outside the home, with a particular concentration in part-time work.<sup>53</sup>

By the standards of the time, the size of Beverley's industrial sector in the three post-war decades was respectable but unexceptional. From a 21<sup>st</sup> century vantage point, the Beverley of the 1950s and 1960s might be described as an industrial town. There was an abundance of skilled and unskilled working-class employment available in the town which enabled people to remain living locally if they chose to. This work was reasonably well paid and secure and allowed participation in rising standards of living. There were economic shocks during this period however - the shipyard's shrinkage in the early '60s meant that many workers were forced to commute to other shipyards in the area or to diversify into other types of work. Overall, the local decline of traditional male employment at the shipyard as women's employment gradually increased may be seen as symptomatic of shifts in the national economy away from manufacturing and towards the service sector.

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<sup>50</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 21 May 1965.

<sup>51</sup> Census 1951, *England and Wales: Occupation Tables*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1956), p.439.

<sup>52</sup> Census 1981, *Census 1981: Key Statistics for Urban Areas: the North: Cities and Towns*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1984), table 3.

<sup>53</sup> Clarke, *Hope and Glory*. p.62.

**Table two: manual occupations, 1961-1991<sup>54</sup>**

*Percentages of economically active males, including both employed and unemployed men (who gave a previous occupation) but excludes the retired, in occupations in socio- economic group classifications 9,10, and 11. All figures based on 10% sample.*

	1961	1971	1981	1991
<b>Beverley</b>	56.3	54	47	39
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>	54.6	50	46	36

**Table three: middle-class occupations 1961-1991<sup>55</sup>**

*Percentages of economically active males in Socio Economic Groups 1- 4.*

	1961	1971	1981	1991
<b>Beverley</b>	13.4	14	16.2	24
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>	13.4	17	18.6	24

<sup>54</sup> From 1951 until 1991 inclusive, the census organised occupations into seventeen socio-economic groups (SEGs), including sub-groups. The system was extensively reorganised in 1961, and thereafter provides some consistency as a way of examining occupations until 1991. The data relates to slightly different geographical areas – 1961-1971 data refers to Beverley Municipal Borough, the 1981-1991 data refers to the four wards of Beverley (St Marys East and West, Minster North and South). Both geographical areas essentially cover the urban area of Beverley for their respective periods. All figures are for the occupations of those economically active *resident* in Beverley, and do not necessarily correlate with jobs *in* the town. For comparison, I have included data for England and Wales. Figures from: *Census 1961 England and Wales Occupation, Industry, socioeconomic groups. Yorkshire, East Riding*. (London:HMSO 1966) Table 5 p.14; *Census 1971 England and Wales – Economic Activity County Leaflet. Yorkshire East Riding*. (London HMSO 1975); Nomis statistics for socio-economic group for four wards of Beverley 1981 and 1991, [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/submit.asp?forward=yes&menuopt=201&subcomp=201&Session\\_GUID={1511608A-E375-413F-8D4B-4C0766959310}](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/submit.asp?forward=yes&menuopt=201&subcomp=201&Session_GUID={1511608A-E375-413F-8D4B-4C0766959310}) [Accessed: 27 August.2009]; Table S92, NOMIS website: [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/components/cellComponent.asp?menuopt=10&subcomp=&Session\\_GUID={535C658D-FA41-48BE-99E1-84EC419BF4EC}](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/components/cellComponent.asp?menuopt=10&subcomp=&Session_GUID={535C658D-FA41-48BE-99E1-84EC419BF4EC}) [Accessed: 1 September 2009]; *Census 1961 Socio-economic group tables part 1*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1966), Table 1, p.2; *Census 1971 Great Britain. Economic Activity Part IV* (London: Her Majesty's stationary office, 1975), Table 31, p.198; *Census 1981 Economic Activity. Great Britain* (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1984),Table 17.

<sup>55</sup> Sources as for graph one.

## Workplace cultures

The meanings which interviewees ascribed to their work histories were not simply in terms of earning a living, although many did move around in order to seek better wages. The social aspect to work was a clear part of workers' enjoyment of their toil, or at least a compensation for it.

Different types of occupation and workplace had different cultures. Robert Blauner suggested skilled workers such as printers were the most likely to identify with their occupation, and that amongst the American workers he studied it was printers who had the most active work-based associational life (social clubs, fraternal orders, discussion groups, sports teams).<sup>56</sup> The extent to which Beverley workers in different trades had continuity of occupation and employer varied. For example, those who were apprenticed remained in the same place of work for several years; skills developed at the shipyard were highly specific and so could lead to a lifetime working in the yard (many interviewees had fathers who had worked their whole life in Beverley shipyard). By contrast, unskilled workers had less invested in their particular occupation or workplace and were therefore perhaps more likely to move around, taking advantage of an abundance of available work when looking for higher wages. However, while the evidence did not allow statistical comparisons, it seemed that identification with work and workplace, and an engagement in workplace sociability, clubs and activities was not restricted to skilled workers. Unskilled workers also often took great pride in their work and remained in the same workplace for many years.

A brief comparison of the three largest employers in Beverley in the 1950s reveals the variety in workplace contexts. The shipyard was a relatively large employer of skilled men, particularly during the boom years of the late 1940s and 1950s. The workforce in 1957 consisted of 301 skilled men, 289 semi-skilled and unskilled men, and 67 apprentices.<sup>57</sup> There was a strong culture of trade-unionism in the yard, with separate unions for different trades.<sup>58</sup> Union representatives addressed men using a language of 'brotherhood', and a certain amount of mutuality was shown at funerals

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<sup>56</sup> Blauner, *Alienation and Freedom*, p.47, p.50.

<sup>57</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 23 March 1957.

<sup>58</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c. 31 mins; John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.57 mins; Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c. 1 hr 42 mins.

for example.<sup>59</sup> Demarcation was strong.<sup>60</sup> Until the demise of CWG in 1963, a piecework system operated; this meant a certain amount of independence for small squads of workers who divided their wages among themselves.<sup>61</sup> Skilled workers in the yard were largely unsupervised, trusted to know their job and motivated by piecework rates.<sup>62</sup> By contrast, Hodgson's tannery had a larger workforce and a smaller proportion of skilled workers.<sup>63</sup> Some reported that the work was hard, dirty and dangerous.<sup>64</sup> Women were present in the workforce. A strong culture of paternalism in Hodgson's included provision of sports fields, a social club, dance hall and an in-house doctor and dentist.<sup>65</sup> The last of the three big industrial employers, Armstrong's had a large number of workers from Hull, particularly unskilled younger women working temporarily, which created a division between skilled and unskilled workers.<sup>66</sup> Armstrong's also operated shifts and part-time work. Like the other two employers, Armstrong's had a social club and a variety of sports teams.

Many interviewees had clearly prized the camaraderie they enjoyed at work. Fun and humour were particularly valued in work-time social relationships. For example, John Day left his first job in an office because the man he worked with rarely spoke, and began an apprenticeship at the shipyard where he enjoyed the male company and atmosphere of comradeship and joking, and where he had envisaged working the rest of his life had it not closed in 1963.<sup>67</sup> Those who spent many years in the same workplace got to know lots of fellow employees, and bonds developed amongst those who worked together in the same trade.<sup>68</sup> It was not necessary to be friends with people outside of work to enjoy their company within work. Jane Holland recalled of her time at Deans and Light Alloys:

We used to have a laugh. We should have paid them for letting us go to work...

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<sup>59</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.47 mins.

<sup>60</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, track 2, c. 11 mins; Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c. 1hr 49 mins.

<sup>61</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.27 mins; Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.15 mins; John Cooper ERYMS interview, c.4 mins 20.

<sup>62</sup> Tom Chambers, ERYMS interview, cassette 2; John Cooper, ERYMS interview, c.4 mins.

<sup>63</sup> John Cooper ERYMS interview 2, c.40 mins.

<sup>64</sup> Les White, 21 Oct 2010 c. 30 mins; Ray Stocks and Vera Macleod, 20 May 2010, c.15 mins; Mr Thompson and Mr Walker, ERYMS interview.

<sup>65</sup> Herbert Thompson, ERYC interview; John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>66</sup> Local Government Commission 1960; *Beverley Guardian*, 17 January 1948; Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010, c.105 mins; George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008; Linda Roberts, 29 April 2010, c.15 mins.

<sup>67</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.17 mins, c.31 mins.

<sup>68</sup> George Wigton, 15 February 2010, c.60 mins; Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.17 mins.

S: And did you see any of these people after work?

No, not really. Because a lot of them was married.<sup>69</sup>

Workers of a similar age often gravitated together, for example apprentices who might also know one other from school.<sup>70</sup>

Whilst unskilled workers, young women and people commuting from outside the town might not expect to stay long in a workplace and had little real emotional attachment to it, they nevertheless described passing away boring hours in routine jobs through collective singing and sociable chatting in downtime.<sup>71</sup> Amongst such workers, moments of togetherness could take place. Linda Roberts, who commuted from Hull to work in Armstrong's for a few months in 1966, recalled how she organised a brief unofficial strike of the women on her line in response to harassment from a male charge-hand. The women were not unionised, and arranged their action between themselves, stopping the work machinery and going 'upstairs' to visit the personnel officer with their concerns.<sup>72</sup> This kind of action could be described in terms of Philip Abram's 'communion' – a brief moment in which people through a specific action or ritual feel a sense of togetherness.<sup>73</sup>

Although for many employees sociability might be concentrated within small working teams, wider networks could develop in the larger workplaces. Over and above variations in personality and propensity for sociability, three factors might be seen as particularly important in this respect. Firstly, length of service. Sharing the same work space with others for a long period of time inevitably led to casual acquaintances with people apart from those operating in the same room or part of the labour process. Most people who had worked in larger establishments for several years claimed to have known many of the other workers, and could often identify a large number of people (if not all) on old photographs of works they showed me or which I took to interviews.<sup>74</sup> Secondly, the type of job an individual undertook might be more likely to bring him or her into contact with a range of others. Fred Reid for example recalled how he got to know more people in the tannery when he became a lorry driver

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<sup>69</sup> Jane Holland, 19 November 2009, c.18 mins.

<sup>70</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.34 mins; Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>71</sup> Linda Roberts, 29 April 2010, track 2, c.12 mins; Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>72</sup> Linda Roberts, 29 April 2010, c. 9 mins.

<sup>73</sup> Philip Abrams, *Communes, Sociology and Society*, ed. Andrew McCulloch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p.165.

<sup>74</sup> John Whittles, 27 April 2010, c.110 mins; Richard and Jane Holland, 11 November 2009, c.57 mins; John Day, 10 November 2009, c.53 mins; Eva White, 18 June 2010, c.51 mins.

and visited lots of different parts of the factory.<sup>75</sup> In the shipyard small teams undertook highly specific jobs for which they were trained, but as all workers were constructing a single product, cooperation and interaction across teams was necessary. For example: joiners needed welders to attach their lining work to the bulkhead; plumbers had to wait for welders to attach pipes; caulkers followed on from welders, cleaning up their work.<sup>76</sup> Demarcation made this trend more pronounced, as it was strictly taboo to undertake a task which fell within the job description of another tradesman.<sup>77</sup> A third factor in determining whether a worker became involved in wider networks of sociability across a large workplace was involvement in works teams and social clubs (which I will discuss in more detail below). Women less often reported broad networks of sociability at work because they were less likely to work in particular factories for long periods of time, were less likely to have the kinds of jobs (skilled maintenance work for example) which took them around factory sites, and were less likely to take part in works sports and social clubs. In addition, with the exception of Armstrong's, women were usually a minority in the larger Beverley factories at this time.<sup>78</sup>

As well as informal social interaction and cooperation imposed by the demands of the job, there were a variety of structured interactions in work time which were the result of workers' own initiative. Piecework payment in the shipyard until 1963 led to a system whereby skilled workers tipped labourers and apprentices (who were paid by the hour) from their own pocket to reward efficient work.<sup>79</sup> A plumber subcontracted to work on Beverley ships paid shipyard welders and drillers a tip to ensure they were prompt in undertaking the work on which his business depended.<sup>80</sup> This corresponds with Mark Granovetter's suggestion that firms' informal organisation was often more important than their formal organisation in determining how work got done.<sup>81</sup> A variety of structured leisure activities also took place within work. For example,

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<sup>75</sup> Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.40 mins.

<sup>76</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.28 mins; Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c.1hr 49 mins; Tom Chambers, ERYMS interview; Derek Mitchell, ERYMS interview track 3.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c. 1hr 49 mins; Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, track 2 c.11 mins.

<sup>78</sup> Local Government Commission 1960.

<sup>79</sup> John Cooper, ERYMS interview 2, c.32 mins.

<sup>80</sup> Derek Mitchell, ERYMS interview, track 3. John Day, 10 Nov 2009, c.27 mins.

<sup>81</sup> Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," *American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 3 (1985): 481-510, p.502.

shipyard and tannery workers ran illicit bookmaking businesses during work time.<sup>82</sup> Women in workplaces often ran savings clubs, known as ‘didlums’.<sup>83</sup> Workplace culture was tinged with the trade union ethos of mutuality. For example, John Day recalled that in the shipyard when a worker died the relevant union would call a meeting:

The union man, there’d be two of them on the gate and they’d say we’re meeting, on the boards, and you had to go straight to the boards ... that was an area of the shipyard where they marked off frames, and then they’d just say ‘I’m sorry worthy brothers, I have to tell you about the death of so and so, and the funeral’s next Tuesday, and we’d like four volunteers for bearers...and they’d get four volunteers and there’d be a levy of two shillings, and everybody used to give two bob for the funeral, and then the blokes who’d taken say half a day off work’d get their pay and the rest’d go to the widow or whatever.’<sup>84</sup>

Workplaces were thus small social worlds in themselves, and, as in the communities based around streets and in the town more generally, sociability and mutuality were only a part of the story. There were many divisions and conflicts within workplaces, as in the wider community. A clear divide existed between employees categorised as ‘staff’ and ‘workers’. Hilda Little worked in the shipyard offices in a secretarial position for several years and did not mix at all with the yard workers; June Hutton recalled that in Armstrong’s in the 1950s the club house was not for office employees like herself, and that she could sense that the factory workers ‘weren’t keen’ on those from the office when she walked across the shopfloor.<sup>85</sup> Workers were also divided in terms of skill level (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers), trade, and affiliation to different unions. Tradesmen often spent most time in the workplace with others from their own trade – interviewees recalled this being the case for maintenance workers in Hodgson’s, and joiners and welders in the shipyard.<sup>86</sup> Demarcation fed into this separation, with different tradesmen affiliated to their own

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<sup>82</sup> Bob Garbutt, 26 June 2010, c.12 mins; Derek Saltmer, 25 January 2010, c.20 mins; Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.92 mins.

<sup>83</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>84</sup> John Day, 10 November 2010, c.47 mins.

<sup>85</sup> Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c.90 mins; Ellen Watton, 8 March 2010, c.40 mins.

<sup>86</sup> Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c. 1hr 22 mins; Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.31 mins; Richard Brice, ERYMS interview, c.6 mins.



unions and jealously defending their rights to perform specific tasks.<sup>87</sup> Divisions became apparent during industrial action, when members of some unions struck and some did not – as for example recalled by Harry Malster:

And then all the other trades, [said] like: ‘Silly joiners! Silly joiners!’ all of that cause we’d gone out. None of the others went out to help the labourers, it was only us silly buggers.<sup>88</sup>

Groups of workers or individuals who defied workplace strikes could engender hard feelings amongst fellow workers.<sup>89</sup> This might manifest itself in an uncooperative attitude, as Bob Garbutt remembered from the shipyard:

They don’t forget it, you know. You’d go to a burner maybe and say, ‘Do you mind burning this through?’ And they’d say, ‘No get someone else, I’m not doing it.’ Little, niggling things.<sup>90</sup>

Wider prejudices about outsiders were sometimes reinforced in the workplace, for example in Armstrong’s where a large number of people from Hull worked in unskilled jobs, skilled men who were also Beverley residents were sometimes disparaging about Hull workers’ accents and manners.<sup>91</sup> The shipyard recruited a lot of workers from north-eastern shipyards during the boom period in the 1950s, which could lead to tension initially (these migratory workers were known as ‘foreigners’) and even fights.<sup>92</sup> As well as group distinctions, individuals could fall out with workmates with whom they spent all day. Disagreements might arise because of jealousy over pay or simple personality clashes.<sup>93</sup> Bullies could make life unpleasant.<sup>94</sup>

The degree to which workers identified with their workplaces or fellow workers could be seen as a measure of the extent of occupational community. Robert Blauner suggested that an affiliation to occupation – one’s fellow tradesmen and the culture of a particular trade – was more likely amongst skilled men in large workplaces, and an affiliation to a particular workplace or employer was more likely

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<sup>87</sup> Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c. 1hr 49 mins; Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.60 mins; Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, track 2 c.11 mins; John Cooper, ERYMS interview 2, c.56 mins.

<sup>88</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, track 2, c.15 mins.

<sup>89</sup> Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c 0 mins; Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010, c.10 mins, Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>90</sup> Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c 0 mins.

<sup>91</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008.

<sup>92</sup> John Cooper, ERYMS interview 1, c.12 mins; Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c. 25 mins.

<sup>93</sup> Vic Baker 29 May 2010, c.90 mins; Jane Holland, 19 November 2009, c.8 mins

<sup>94</sup> George Hunter, 14 January 2010, c.35 mins; John Cooper Interview 2, c.31 mins

amongst less skilled workers and those in smaller establishments.<sup>95</sup> In Beverley tradesmen undoubtedly took pride in their work and skills, and often praised the craftsmanship of fellow workers and emphasised the thoroughness of apprenticeship training.<sup>96</sup> But it was not only formally ‘skilled’ workers who expressed this kind of identification with their occupation. Sally Adams was an unskilled worker in Melrose tannery and recalled:

You took pride in your machine...you looked after it and cleaned it, cleaned the runners and regreased it...It was *your* machine.<sup>97</sup>

For many workers, whether skilled or unskilled, pride in their own work and identification with their workplaces were connected. There was an oft-stated belief that the products of one’s own workplace had a wide reputation for quality:

Fred: I mean I just loved building the ships, it was marvellous. From just a piece of metal keel, and you ended up with a ship. And we were sent to Hull, Princess Dock, where the big centre is now, and we did all the fitting out, and it was just like a hotel when we used to see them, absolutely magnificent.

May: And on launch days everybody stopped and even where I worked at Deans we all went out on launch day to see them being launched. They always let us out to see the launch.

S: Do you think, it sort of sounds as though people had pride in their work?

Fred: Oh I think so, very much so, pride in their work. They wanted to do a good job, they were really first class the product that they turned out, I mean it was second to none.<sup>98</sup>

Identification with occupation and workplace could be seen in the reaction of those who faced the prospect of leaving through redundancy or retirement. In the shipyard in the 1950s John Cooper recalled that retirement had to be forced onto some older workers:

I remember one old man working on bending the frames which was one of the hardest jobs, it was really hard graft, and he was 75, and often he would be swinging this big hammer and you could see he was worn out...then they

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<sup>95</sup> Blauner, *Alienation and Freedom*, p.50.

<sup>96</sup> Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.25 mins; Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.90 mins; Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.17 mins; John Cooper, ERYMS interview 1, c.53 mins; Les White, 21 October 2010, c.1hr 5 mins.

<sup>97</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.90 mins.

<sup>98</sup> Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.70 mins. See also: John Cooper, ERYMS interview 1, c.64 mins; Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.120 mins.

brought in a rule, everybody had to go at 65. I remember all the old men coming round shaking hands and some were crying, you know, they didn't know what they were going to do.<sup>99</sup>

Albert Newby recalled that being made redundant from Hodgson's in 1978 after over forty years 'came as a bit of a body blow'.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Sally Adams described workers' mixture of sadness and fear for the future upon being told that Melrose tannery was going to close in the early 1980s:

It was a shock thing really, 'cause I remember seeing a lot of the people in tears over it 'cause they'd worked there, way before I'd even started there, because I suppose there was this strong community, this like, link thing, you were all so close, it was a big shock, and the thought of where, a lot of them had worked there and done nothing else. It was like, what am I going to do, I don't know anything else.<sup>101</sup>

Disappointment at leaving a strong workplace community was obviously only one of the emotions connected to redundancy. John Day, whose father and grandfather had worked at the shipyard, and who enjoyed his own work there, described his emotions on the closure of the yard in 1963 as being fear connected to the need to pay the mortgage. His father was not upset about the closure of the place he had worked all his life, being an ill man and having already secured alternative, more sedate work.<sup>102</sup> Some emphasised the undesirability of much industrial work, and told how they had moved between jobs either because they got bored or wanted more money.<sup>103</sup>

Despite acknowledging the divisions and conflicts which existed, overall it appears that workplaces were valued sites of sociability even where work itself was disliked. Larger factories inevitably brought people into contact with others, although this was not an evenly distributed benefit, and knowledge of co-workers depended on length of service, type of work, and propensity to sociability of the individual. Identification with occupation and workplace was not only expressed by skilled tradesmen.

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<sup>99</sup> John Cooper, ERYMS interview 2, p.15.

<sup>100</sup> Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c.1hr 48 mins.

<sup>101</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.90 mins.

<sup>102</sup> John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.57 mins.

<sup>103</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c. 30 mins, and 29 October 2010, c. 26 mins; Notes on interview with James Bolton 14 January 2010; Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.1hr 1 mins; Richard and Jane Holland, 11 November 2009, c. 34 mins.

## Occupational community beyond the factory gates

Sociability with workmates extended beyond the workplace itself. Workplaces organised trips and had their own social and sporting clubs. Close friendships could form amongst those who spent all day together. There was some degree of role 'complexity' in a small town – a workmate could easily also be a neighbour, a drinking mate, a local councillor or a leader of a son's – or daughter's – Scout or Guide group (for example).<sup>104</sup> Similarly, it was likely that those who knew each other from the workplace would also meet casually in shops, pubs and street. This section discusses the interaction of work with family, neighbourhood and leisure and the ways in which large workplaces in a small town may have contributed to social cohesion through the creation of social ties amongst residents.

Richard Whipp argued that rather than Industrialisation opening a huge divide between work and home life, 'social ties and bonds between home and work have often transcended that divide'.<sup>105</sup> The interviews I conducted supported this. Personal contacts including family and neighbourhood links were important avenues of recruitment for manual work in the older industries of shipbuilding and tanning, whereas office posts in all industries tended to be filled via more formal methods of employment exchange and newspaper advertisement.<sup>106</sup> Certainly many of my interviewees considered that there was continuity of family employment in particular Beverley works such as the shipyard and Hodgson's tannery.<sup>107</sup> Because tradesmen at the shipyard commanded relatively high wages, some interviewees suggested that it was necessary to be related to an employee in order to get an apprenticeship there.<sup>108</sup> Of the thirteen people I interviewed who had been manual workers in the shipyard, only three had had fathers who worked there at the same time, but five others reported family connections (the remainder were not specifically questioned on family links). Some families were concentrated in particular works, for example Bob Garbutt's father, uncle, brother and maternal grandfather all worked at the shipyard; Fred Reid's father and grandfather worked at Hodgson's tannery before him, and father and brother worked there at the same time as him; interviewees reported that the Clarks and the

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<sup>104</sup> For discussion of complex social roles, see: Frankenburg, *Communities in Britain*, pp.238-242.

<sup>105</sup> R. Whipp, "Labour Markets and Communities," *Sociological Review* 33 (1985): 768-791, p.784.

<sup>106</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.26 mins; Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>107</sup> Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c.0mins; Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.57 mins; Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>108</sup> Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.57 mins; John Cooper, ERYMS interview, p.1.

Blakes were highly represented at the tannery and the Jobsons and Thompsons at the shipyard.<sup>109</sup> The mechanism through which this could take place is suggested by interviewees' recollections of fairly limited job aspirations and opportunities at this time. Schools and parents rarely encouraged boys to look beyond immediately available industrial employment or girls beyond clerical work.<sup>110</sup> Most interviewees left school at fourteen or fifteen, and boys in particular were often found employment by their parents. It was easiest for parents to get their children jobs in the places they themselves worked.<sup>111</sup>

Richard Whipp also considered that the overlapping of kinship, neighbourhood and work could lead to moral obligations.<sup>112</sup> In Beverley, the culture and mores of work and home were often in harmony – for example, when parents worked in the same place as their children, there was some expectation on the part of the management that they would help with discipline.<sup>113</sup> Neighbours were often also co-workers and this could enhance the moral obligation to help in times of need. Bob Garbutt followed his father into the shipyard in the 1940s and remembered how the foreman, who lived nearby, gave him overtime immediately after his father's death to help the family finances: 'His wife used to talk to my mam and they was good friends and I didn't realise at the time what he was doing but I think it was his way of supporting us.'<sup>114</sup> There were no complaints about this from Bob's fellow workers. Albert Newby recalled how he felt obliged to help a neighbour who was the widow of a former work colleague.<sup>115</sup>

Beverley's larger workplaces provided social and sporting facilities which helped to cement working relationships. In Britain as a whole, such works provision burgeoned after World War One according to Robert Fitzgerald.<sup>116</sup> Across the period of the study, most industrial employers in Beverley entered sporting teams into local

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<sup>109</sup> Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.0 mins; Les White, 21 October 2010, c.30 mins; Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.6 mins; Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.39 mins; Tom Chambers, ERYMS interview.

<sup>110</sup> Dick Gibson, c.26 mins; Dick Gibson Guildhall interview; Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c.1hr 7mins; Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.57 mins; Ivy Shipton c.80 mins; Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.50 mins and c.58 mins.

<sup>111</sup> Fred Reid 26 January 2010, c.35 mins; Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.97 mins; Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c. 58 mins; Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.46 mins.

<sup>112</sup> R. Whipp, "Labour Markets and Communities," pp. 773-775.

<sup>113</sup> John Cooper Int 1 c.12 mins and Int 2 c.22 mins; Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.46 mins.

<sup>114</sup> Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.12 mins.

<sup>115</sup> Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c.1 hour 40 mins.

<sup>116</sup> Robert Fitzgerald, *British Labour Management and Industrial Welfare 1846-1939*, (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1988) p.16.

leagues for football, rugby, cricket and darts. Factories provided facilities in which workers could run their own clubs. There was a boxing club and a horticultural club run by employees at the shipyard in the 1950s. Many shipyard employees kept birds, rabbits and mice, gardens or allotments and so ‘fur and feather’ shows and vegetable shows were held on works premises.<sup>117</sup> The *Beverley Guardian* in 1950 reported that there were 800 entries in a rabbit show held at the shipyard.<sup>118</sup> CWG, Armstrong’s, Deans and Hodgson’s each had social clubs with snooker tables and a bar. The larger factories had inter-departmental sporting matches (Hodgson’s held theirs on Whit Monday).<sup>119</sup>

Hodgson’s tannery was the most generous employer in terms of sports and social provision. The firm’s social club was in Fleming House, the former residence of Richard Hodgson, and the grounds of this house were opened as sports fields in 1948.<sup>120</sup> Hodgson’s sports and social club hosted a wide variety of the firm’s sporting teams and clubs, including football, hockey, rugby, golf, tennis, cricket, darts, snooker, bowls, netball, table tennis, angling and shooting.<sup>121</sup> Former Hodgson’s workers considered that the social element of sporting clubs helped employees from all over the large factory get to know one another. Eric Ross worked in the laboratories in Hodgson’s in the 1960s and discussed how the works sports and social club could bring people together, whilst also recalling some of the divisions that existed in workplaces:

It was a good way of people mixing, you went in the club and you knew everybody... It’s funny, the table tennis teams tended to be staff, it depended who organised it... so there was some demarcation there. Certainly the football teams were mainly works, with a few in like me [staff]... The nice thing about it was we used to have football competitions between the departments, we had... cricket between the departments, we had darts... So as long as someone was willing to organise them, the firm would actually stump up money for it and things and let it go on because they wanted it to happen. And the

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<sup>117</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.34 mins; John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.8 mins and c.18 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 2 and 9 February 1946; *Beverley Guardian*, 20 October 1945; John Cooper interview 1 c. 22 mins.

<sup>118</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 28 October 1950.

<sup>119</sup> John and Judy Whittles, c.15 mins; *Beverley Guardian* October 23 1948; Cook, *Welton and Gemmell Ltd Annual Review*, 1959 p.23.

<sup>120</sup> *Green’s Household Almanack*, 1949; Bernard Hunt, c.15 mins.

<sup>121</sup> John and Judy Whittles, c.5 mins; William Vincent c.6 mins; Fred Reid 26 January 2010, c.6mins; Bernard Hunt, c.15 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 14 February 1948 and 28 February 1948.

interdepartmental football things were when I started to meet my relations, right, because we'd play Extract [a tannery department] or something... and there'd be Jim Ross in it, or Harry Ross...and I got to say 'are we related then?' and they'd say 'yeah, yeah, you're our cousin,' and they'd kick hell out of me.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to the sporting clubs and social club facilities, firms provided a range of social events including annual trips and Christmas parties for employees and their families, retired workers' outings. An employees' 'monthly bonus' dance was held at Armstrong's social club.<sup>123</sup> The *Beverley Guardian* reported that over 1000 attended Armstrong's works' dance in 1955.<sup>124</sup> The cumulative effect of the sports and social clubs attached to works was to enable at least some sociability across the internal boundaries imposed by the constraints of day to day departmental working or by the staff/worker and trade divisions.

However, not all participated in works sports and social clubs. As noted above, these clubs were used by men more than women.<sup>125</sup> Female employees of Hodgson's tannery in the 1950s did not recall making much use of works sports and social clubs.<sup>126</sup> Eric and Helen Ross remembered some female tennis players, bowls players and possibly a mixed hockey team in Hodgson's during the 1960s, though out of a league of two hundred table tennis players perhaps only ten were women.<sup>127</sup> At Armstrong's, where female workers made up over 45% of the workforce in 1960, women did not often use the social club or join works sports teams and hobby clubs.<sup>128</sup> Linda Roberts never went once to Armstrong's social club during her time in the factory in the 1960s.<sup>129</sup> Despite deductions being taken from all employees' wages to pay for sports and social clubs, Jean Benson working behind the bar in Armstrong's social club remembered a female employee asking: 'What happened to all my three pences?'<sup>130</sup> The predominant use made by men of works social clubs reflects the

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<sup>122</sup> John and Judy Whittles, c.15 mins; Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.78 mins; Fred Reid 26 January 2010, c.6mins; Jean Benson, c.30 mins.

<sup>123</sup> Julie Davis, c.3 mins; Austin Lee, c.50 mins; *Green's Household Almanack* 1949; Ray Stocks and Vera Macleod, 20 May 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>124</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 19 February 1955.

<sup>125</sup> John and Judy Whittles c.5 mins and c.15 mins; John Day 10 November 2010; Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.36 mins.

<sup>126</sup> Hannah Witham c.30 mins; Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.36 mins.

<sup>127</sup> Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.82 mins.

<sup>128</sup> *Armstrong Review*, Number 9, October 1964; *Armstrong Review*, Number 10, October 1965.

<sup>129</sup> Linda Roberts, 29 April 2010, track 2 c. 0 mins.

<sup>130</sup> Jean Benson, c. 54 mins.

general male domination of pub culture at the time (see Chapter Three, ‘Privatism – families and personal communities’), although there was no formal exclusion of women, and some would go to the social clubs along with their husbands especially, though not only, at weekends.<sup>131</sup> The fact that Hodgson’s in the late 1940s and early 1950s provided a youth club only for male employees is further indication of the gender divide which existed in organised works activities the time.<sup>132</sup>

Furthermore, the very youngest workers (most left school at 15 during this period) could not attend works’ licensed social clubs and instead socialised with their peers in the open air, attended youth clubs, organisations such as the Church Lads Brigade or in the 1960s formed rock bands.<sup>133</sup> Young people in their later teens were often more interested in meeting the opposite sex and in peer group sociability in pubs and dances than in spending time in works’ social clubs playing dominoes, although sports teams were appealing to young men.<sup>134</sup> Commuting to work could be a further barrier preventing some from socialising and playing sport with workmates outside of work hours, as those who had lived in Beverley but worked in Hull or Brough found.<sup>135</sup> George Little suggested that the Armstrong’s works teams found it increasingly difficult to get members solely from their own workforce as cars enabled workers who might once have lived in Beverley to move out to villages.<sup>136</sup>

Fitzgerald noted that works leisure facilities were highly valued in the 1920s when there were often few alternatives.<sup>137</sup> By the 1950s and 1960s, relative affluence and expanded leisure opportunities meant that many workers had other interests which reduced their reliance on works’ social and sporting provision.<sup>138</sup> In 1950 the CWG sports and social club secretary bemoaned workers’ ‘couldn’t care less’ attitude towards the club and urged them to ‘redouble their efforts’.<sup>139</sup> Many men, like shipyard worker John Day, could afford to join other sports clubs; the town’s golf and cricket

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<sup>131</sup> Fred Reid 26 January 2010, c.52 mins; Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.85 mins; Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.12 mins.

<sup>132</sup> John and Judy Whittles, c. 27 mins; Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.78 mins.

<sup>133</sup> Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c.41 mins and 46 mins; Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.70 mins; Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.37 mins; William Vincent c.80 mins; George Little 12 March 2010, c.96 mins.

<sup>134</sup> Mick Underwood 16 June 2010, c.53 mins; Jack Binnington 13 July 2010, c.15 mins; Eva White c.22 mins; Dennis Duke, c.45 mins; Margaret Day, c.26 mins.

<sup>135</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.120 mins; George Wigton, 15 February 2010, c.70 mins.

<sup>136</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.* p.16.

<sup>138</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.120 mins.

<sup>139</sup> Cook, Welton and Gemmell Ltd. *Shipyard Journal*, vol 1. No.7, 1950, ERYMS:(Guildhall) 2007.13.5.



club admitted the working classes and in general appeared to become less socially exclusive across the period.<sup>140</sup> Alan Otter worked as an engineer at both Hodgson's and Armstrong's in the 1950s through to the 1970s and made little use of their works sports and social club because his principal interest was sub-aqua diving, which he pursued in amateur clubs unconnected to any workplace.<sup>141</sup>

The divide between those who did and did not participate in particular forms of sociability with workmates also reflected internal work-force distinctions. The staff/worker division was respected in the arrangement of social events such as Christmas dinners. Peter Cooper recalled Hodgson's Christmas dinners in the 1960s were for staff only.<sup>142</sup> There were maintenance engineers' dinners at Hodgson's, and the *Beverley Guardian* reported a Shipyard plater's nights out in 1960.<sup>143</sup> Julie Davis's mother (the wife of a Hodgson's maintenance tradesman) took her daughter on one work's coach trip to Bridlington in the 1970s and said she would never do so again because she found those who went on the trip to be 'riff-raffy'.<sup>144</sup> The separation of the workers according to trade and union was underlined by the custom, reported until the mid-1960s, of paying union fees in a pub on a specific evening of the week, a bi-monthly ritual which sometimes involved sociable drinking with workmates.<sup>145</sup>

For women, who rarely engaged in works social club or trade union culture and who were often employed in small establishments or were not free to move around factory sites, work was nevertheless important as a place to form friendships which transcended working hours. Gwen Harris and Hannah Witham each remembered sociability outside of work with the small team of women from their work room in Hodgson's.<sup>146</sup> Linda Roberts, commuting from Hull to Armstrong's for a few months in 1966, made a friend with whom she was still close at the time of the interview.<sup>147</sup> Team-mates for ladies' pub darts teams were often recruited from the workplace.<sup>148</sup> The number of employees was in this sense relatively unimportant, as what mattered

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<sup>140</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.24 mins; Tom Potter, 24 October 2008. See also Chapter Five, 'Civil Society'.

<sup>141</sup> Ray Stocks and Vera Macleod, 20 May 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>142</sup> Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview 1, track 1.

<sup>143</sup> Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c.1hr 15 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 23 January 1960.

<sup>144</sup> Julie Davis, c.3 mins.

<sup>145</sup> Ray Stocks and Vera Macleod 20 May 2010, c.25 mins; Tom Chambers, ERYMS interview, cassette 3.

<sup>146</sup> Gwen Harris, 30 July 2010, c.25 mins; Hannah Witham c.25 mins.

<sup>147</sup> Linda Roberts, 29 April 2010, c.21 mins.

<sup>148</sup> Janet Hill, c51 mins and c.55 mins; Jean Benson, 1hr 13 mins; Janet Thompson, c.77 mins; see also Hunt and Satterlee, *Darts, Drinks and the Pub: The Culture of Female Drinking*, 575-601.

was a group of fellow workers who could bond together and do things outside of work. Doris Daniels remembered yearly holidays with 'the girls' from Skelton's, a shop employing a handful of workers, in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>149</sup> In this later period, Janet Thompson recalled how working in the very large Humberside County Council headquarters did not lead to social ties beyond one's own immediate workmates but that the immediate team she worked with had been the source of significant friendships.<sup>150</sup>

In addition to friendships and active sociability with workmates, the presence of large workplaces assisted the formation of networks of 'weak' social ties of acquaintanceship in the town. Mark Granovetter's theory of weak and strong social ties can be used to conceptualise this social contribution made by large industrial employers to the town. Granovetter theorised a range of social ties, from the strong ties between close friends and family to the weak ties of acquaintanceship. Weak ties were needed to form 'bridges' linking separate strongly-tied peer groups. Places with an abundance of the bridging weak ties were more likely to feel like a community: residents would know a large number of people other than those in their own peer groups or immediate neighbourhood, and were likely to invest trust in local leadership since there was a good chance of their being linked through their social networks to those in leadership positions.<sup>151</sup> Granovetter hypothesised that districts which contained large workplaces would be more likely to have criss-crossing networks of weak ties, and hence to feel like a community, since workplaces were social milieu in which such ties could form.<sup>152</sup>

The oral evidence from Beverley supported the suggestion that workplaces helped build networks of these weaker social ties of acquaintanceship. As Eva White recalled of war work in Armstrong's: 'When you work in a factory you get to know people, don't you?'<sup>153</sup> Asked to identify people on old photographs, interviewees frequently cited work as the reason they knew those pictured.<sup>154</sup> Those known from work would be encountered in the street and in shops and pubs, and such casual

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<sup>149</sup> Doris Daniels, 13 November 2009, c.1hr 30 mins.

<sup>150</sup> Janet Thompson c.96 mins.

<sup>151</sup> Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties".

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.* pp.1373-1375. For 'peer groups' see Gans, *The Urban Villagers*, pp.36-39. A British analogue for the urban districts Granovetter has in mind might be Bethnal Green as described by Willmott and Young.

<sup>153</sup> Eva White, 18 June 2010, c. 51 mins.

<sup>154</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, track 2 c.53 mins; Bill and Jane Holland, 11 November 2009, c.51 mins.

acquaintanceships contributed towards the sense of familiarity many expressed, the feeling that ‘everyone in Beverley knew everyone else’.<sup>155</sup>

The evidence also supported Granovetter’s suggestion that weak ties made in contexts such as workplaces could encourage community cohesion by providing personal links to those in leadership roles.<sup>156</sup> From the 1940s until the 1970s two prominent working men in Hodgson’s, who were also involved in the organisation of the works social club and well-known to many employees, were also local councillors and could be approached with issues.<sup>157</sup> The Hodgson’s director, George Odey was an MP for several years in the 1950s and also a county councillor in the 1960s, and many men and women who worked at Hodgson’s felt they had at least some personal connection to him – an impression he liked to cultivate by learning at least some workers’ names.<sup>158</sup> Therefore workplaces could be seen as sites through which people were connected to one another and also to those in leadership positions in the town.

However, it was not only large industry which provided weak ties. Employees in workplaces which were small but which were public-facing – for example shop work, insurance sales, meter reading – all got to know many of their fellow townspeople.<sup>159</sup> As will be seen, weak ties were formed in many other contexts, including neighbourhood, school, pubs, dancehalls, clubs, societies and the myriad encounters of day to day life in a small town.<sup>160</sup>

To summarise, the extent to which large workplaces produced ‘occupational communities’ was uneven, with some workers engaging in such communities outside of working hours to a greater extent than others. However, workplaces undoubtedly contributed to their employees’ networks of social ties. Because many lived and worked in Beverley, these social networks centred on the town and therefore played a part in overall social cohesion. People did not necessarily need to engage in close sociability with one another outside of work to feel part of the networks which shared workplaces helped to build.

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<sup>155</sup> Notes on interview with James Bolton, 14 January 2010; Eva White, 18 June 2010, c.51 mins; George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, c.25 mins.

<sup>156</sup> Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," p.1374.

<sup>157</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.36 mins; Bernard Hunt, 12 January 2010, c.0 mins.

<sup>158</sup> Bill Johnson, 8 July 2010, c.8 mins; Herbert Thompson, ERYMS interview; Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview September 2005, p.2.

<sup>159</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March, 2010, track 3 c.6 mins; Doris Danials, 13 November 2009, c.19 mins.

<sup>160</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.17 mins; Bill Andrews, 20 January 2010, c.1 hour 44 mins; for multitude of contexts in which weak ties were formed see Chapter Seven, ‘Generational Community’, pp.192-200.

## Industry's contribution to the wider community

Industry did not only play a part in the social life and identity of employees. In Beverley such businesses also contributed to the public life of the town. Firms put capital and facilities at the disposal of the wider population. Industrial leaders involved themselves in local politics and civil society. Industrial production was part of local distinctiveness and helped create positive identification with place.

Factory premises, when not in use by employees, could be put at the service of local residents. In 1945 many local firms, including Hodgson's, Armstrong's and the Ropery, allowed their buildings to be used for VE day celebrations.<sup>161</sup> Beverley had no sports field of its own, and Hodgson's sports ground, opened in 1948, was made available for a number of other groups to use, as were rooms in the firm's sports and social club house. For example, the East Riding police rugby team, Barkers and Lee Smith's football team and the Beverley Whippet Club used Hodgson's sports field in the 1960s.<sup>162</sup> The Sea Angling club were offered use of a room in Hodgson's social club for their meetings in 1967.<sup>163</sup> In 1978 the *Beverley Guardian* described Hodgson's as the foremost sports and social club in the town; thirty organisations were then using the firm's facilities, 95% of which did not pay room hire.<sup>164</sup> Hodgson's also had a dance hall which was used for public functions, particularly by teenagers who attended weekly dances there in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>165</sup>

Many of the owners and managing directors of industrial concerns lived in Beverley in this period, and gave funds and gifts-in-kind to the town's voluntary sector. Ken Ingleton described how local business people patronised the Scout group he was involved with in the 1950s. George Odey, the managing director of Hodgson's, served as chairman of the District Scouts Association and made sure that local troops got 'a lot of bits and pieces'. Gordon Armstrong, of the large local car components manufacturer Armstrong's, 'backed us quite a lot', and the boss of a local bakery donated headquarters for the Scouts. Bobby Dean of Dean's factory which made musical instruments and components for buses provided musical instruments for a 'drum and fife band'. Mr Etherington ran a local haulage firm and provided a lorry for

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<sup>161</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 26 May, 2 June, 23 June 1945.

<sup>162</sup> Bernard Hunt, c.15 mins; Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.155 mins.

<sup>163</sup> *Minutes of the Beverley and District Sea Angling Club*, ERALS, DDX 1150/2; Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.155 mins.

<sup>164</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 27 July 1978, 21 September 1978.

<sup>165</sup> Fred and May Peters, 24 June 2010, c.65 mins.

taking the Scouts to camp.<sup>166</sup> Local industry also supported the Church Lads Brigade. Bernard Hunt remembered that the secretary of the Hodgson's sports and social club, Harold Godbold, donated a minibus to the Church Lads Brigade in the 1970s.<sup>167</sup> In 1955 the shipyard presented a carved oak reredos, made by their own craftsmen, to St Nicholas church, in whose parish the works lay.<sup>168</sup>

Industrial leaders were also local dignitaries and played a number of public roles in the town. Some served as trustees or chairmen of groups. George Odey, the managing director of Hodgson's tannery from 1927-1974, was involved in politics and the civic life of the town and was at various times president of the Beverley Chamber of Trade, Beverley and Hornsea District Scout Council, and Beverley Operatic Society. He was connected with Beverley Consolidated Charities, Beverley Minster Old Fund and the Minster Restoration appeal as well as with conservation movements in the town.<sup>169</sup> Harold Sheardown, chairman of the Beverley Shipyard, was president of the Hull Works Sports Association (to which many local works sports teams were affiliated) from 1935 to 1950 and a member of the East Riding County Council.<sup>170</sup> Industrial leaders played a role in civic ceremonial as local dignitaries, as for example in 1945 when Harold Sheardown and Ambrose Hunter (the managing director of the shipyard) and their wives attended the prize ceremony for the Turner domestic service charity in 1945.<sup>171</sup> George Odey and his wife were prominent guests at the annual St John's Day ceremonies organised by the borough council in 1958.<sup>172</sup> The public profile of industrialists could contribute to a sense that decisions about the town's economic destiny were made by people who lived locally and might have the town's best interests at heart.<sup>173</sup> The geographer Doreen Massey has commented on the importance of this kind of local leadership for a community's sense of self-determinism.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Ken Ingleton 20 April 2010, c. 0 mins.

<sup>167</sup> Bernard Hunt, 12 January 2010, track 3 c.10 mins.

<sup>168</sup> *Cook, Welton and Gemmell Annual Review of 1955*, ERYMS: (Guildhall) 2007.13.8.

<sup>169</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 20 January 1977.

<sup>170</sup> *Cook, Welton and Gemmell Annual Review, 1953*, ERYMS: (Guildhall) 2007.13.6.

<sup>171</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 20 January 1945.

<sup>172</sup> Beverley Borough Council file on St John of Beverley Day, 4 May 1958, ERALS, BOBE 2/15/1/191.

<sup>173</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 20 January 1977, Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview 1, track 1; Notes on interview with James Bolton, 14 January 2010; Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>174</sup> Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labour*, pp.189-215.

Those industrial leaders with a long and demonstrable concern with the town gained some respect from town residents.<sup>175</sup> However, their involvement in civil society and local politics could also be viewed with cynicism. Whilst he felt that George Odey did a lot for the town, Ken Ingleton also acknowledged that Odey's omni-presence in local affairs was partly a result of his political career and a need to be seen.<sup>176</sup> Several interviewees felt that Odey had his own men on the borough council in order to influence decisions in his favour (two tanyard workers, Harold Godbold and James Smedley, were perennial members from the 1940s until the 1960s). In particular, the issue of the tannery's pollution of the Beck was thought by some to be ignored by the borough council as a result of this 'placing' of councillors.<sup>177</sup>

Industry was a part of the town's identity, and gave its eastern half in particular a distinctly working-class feel. A speaker at a local Labour party meeting in 1945 commented that the town was three quarters working-class, and this was how many residents perceived it across the period.<sup>178</sup> A consciousness of the industrial character of the town was unavoidable for those who lived to the east of the town, where the sounds, smells and sights of industry were an integral part of daily life.<sup>179</sup> Residents of Beckside lived within the manufacturing process. Not only were there an animal feed mill and a pump-making works alongside the Beck, but barges also unloaded coal and other products for local industry into warehouses on the quayside; small three-wheeled vehicles transported hides from Beckside to the nearby tannery.<sup>180</sup> Hodgson's was just upwind of the area and gave out a strong smell; effluent from the tannery polluted the Beck.<sup>181</sup> Peter Cooper recalled the childhood experience of living amongst Beckside industry in the 1940s:

We loved watching Cherry's on the Beck side, pump makers...we could stand in the doorway watching the men with their machine tools, milling machines taking slivers of metal off...The barges on the Beck were mostly from

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<sup>175</sup> Peter Cooper interview, ERYMS September 2005, p.3; Notes on interview with James Bolton, 14 January 2010.

<sup>176</sup> Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>177</sup> Jack Binnington, 26 October 2010, c.36 mins; Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>178</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 27 October 1945; George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, c.49 mins; Notes on interview with James Bolton, 14 January 2010.

<sup>179</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, c.0 mins.

<sup>180</sup> James and Peggy Alexander, c.27 minutes; Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, track 3, c.10 mins; John and Judy Whittles, c.20 mins.

<sup>181</sup> A.A. James, ERYMS interview, c.25 mins; George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008; John and Judy Whittles, c. 1hr 10 mins; Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.5 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 18 June 1965.

Hodgson's... Freeman the coal man...he was on the Becksid there, so coal would be coming for him. There was always activity on the Beck in those days... The blacksmith – we would stand in the doorway watching him at work. And one thing that you never forget is the smell of a hot horseshoe going onto the horse's hoof...Then the slaughterhouse...<sup>182</sup>

Large numbers of workers on bicycles occupied the roads in the east of the town in the morning and evening, and buses and trains disgorged workers from Hull each morning.<sup>183</sup>

Consciousness of industry's place in town life was enhanced by public ritual, discourse and a sense of tradition. The sideways slide into the River Hull of sizeable trawlers created a literal and metaphorical big splash. Launch ceremonies involved a cross-section of Beverley's population, including the mayor, leaders from other parts of Beverley's industrial sector, the whole of the shipyard's workforce and a crowd of interested locals including school groups.<sup>184</sup> At a launch in 1948, speeches were made lauding Beverley's shipbuilding tradition and its connection to the wider world through this contribution.<sup>185</sup> The *Beverley Guardian* ran a series in 1948 highlighting the achievements of the town's industry and the part it played in the national economy; an exhibition of locally manufactured products was held in the museum in 1949.<sup>186</sup> Industrial items were included in harvest festival displays at the Minster in 1948.<sup>187</sup> As well as a strong presence in daily life, many firms had a long history in the town. Hodgson's, Deans' and Armstrong's had been established by local men and were intertwined with residents' personal histories, since grandparents and parents had often worked in these factories.<sup>188</sup> The closure of the shipyard and its reopening with a smaller workforce in 1963 prompted comment in the paper asserting the importance of the historic industry of shipbuilding to Beverley's distinctive character, including a speech by the mayor who said: "The shipyard is part of the Beverley tradition...the threatened closure of the yard seemed like someone was taking a knife and cutting the town right in two."<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview 2a, p.9, pp.12-13.

<sup>183</sup> Janet Hill, c.55 mins; Eva White, c.70 mins; Jane Holland, 19 November 2009, c.12 mins.

<sup>184</sup> John Cooper, ERYMS interview 1, c.15 mins; John and Judy Whittles, c.52 mins.

<sup>185</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 3 January 1948.

<sup>186</sup> *Beverley Guardian* 17 January 1948, 26 February 1949.

<sup>187</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 2 October 1948.

<sup>188</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.30 mins; Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.55 mins.

<sup>189</sup> *Beverley Guardian* 11 January, 28 June, 23 August 1963.

When most of Beverley's traditional industries closed in the later 1970s, many would have agreed with Albert Newby that 'it was a shock, you never dreamt of Hodgson's closing'.<sup>190</sup> In addition to providing employment for many, industry had been woven into the social, physical and cultural life of the town since the late nineteenth century. An important part of the character of working-class life in the town was thus lost with the closure of the shipyard, tanneries and engineering works in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter responded to authors who assumed (Klein) or asserted (Goldthorpe *et al*) that working-class community largely took place in the residential and leisure sphere, away from workplaces. This was challenged by showing that in the small town of Beverley there was often an overlap between the spheres of work, family and neighbourhood. Furthermore, workplaces were contexts for the formation of social networks of what Granovetter called 'weak ties' at a town-wide scale. A further contribution of industrial workplaces to community life at the town level stemmed from the fact that many industries were run by men who lived locally and concerned themselves with Beverley and its public life, supporting and sponsoring associational activity.

Traditional industries were important to the identities of many of their employees. Moreover, the principal factories were well-known to most residents whether or not they themselves worked there. Industry formed a part of the texture of local life, and was celebrated through public ritual and discursively in the town's newspaper. The industrial sector and its masculine cultures gave the town a distinctively working-class atmosphere up until the late 1970s.

I have discussed change over time to a lesser extent in this chapter than in the previous three. This is because the larger industrial concerns held up well across the period, with the exception of the reduction of the Shipyard's workforce in the early 1960s. Industry continued to fulfil similar functions in terms of bringing people into contact with one another and as a touchstone for local identity. Working-class employment, in factories familiar from the earlier twentieth century, continued to occupy a large section of the town's population across the three post-war decades.

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<sup>190</sup> Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c.1hr 48 mins. See also: Ivy Shipton, track 2 c.0 mins; Tom Chambers, ERYMS interview.



Such industrial continuity adds to a picture of post-war working-class communities changing more slowly in some ways than others, and supports the resistance mounted across the thesis to authors such as Josephine Klein and Eric Hobsbawm who depicted post-war affluence as a watershed between traditional working-class communities and a new age of individualism.

Many workers upon being made redundant – whether from the shipyard in the early 1960s or from other industries in the later 1970s – abandoned their trades and sought unrelated work locally because they did not want to leave Beverley.<sup>191</sup> Not all were able to find such work, and some had to travel to find employment. This reminds us that one of the most important contributions made by local industry to a sense of community was practical: an abundance of work enabled people to stay in the town in which they had been brought up and where the majority of their family and friends remained.

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<sup>191</sup> Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c.10 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 1 June 1978; John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.57 mins.

## Chapter Six. Civil Society

In his final speech after a year as mayor of Beverley in 1960, Albert Meadley said he had been surprised by ‘the many charitable institutions, youth organisations and associations doing work to the benefit of the community existing in the town.’<sup>1</sup> Not only did the town have many charities, but a search through the Beverley Guardian across the period reveals a wealth of sporting, cultural, religious, political and sociable associations. How were working-class people involved in this associational life and what part did this ‘civil society’ play in creating local community?

Herbert Gans in an influential 1962 study of the ‘West End’ district of Boston, USA, suggested that working-class society was a ‘peer group society’.<sup>2</sup> Gans considered that working-class culture militated against involvement with groups beyond the intimate circle of friends and family. The working classes, unlike the middle classes, had scant time or inclination for clubs, societies and the civic organs of the wider community.<sup>3</sup> Gans compared his own study with international literature and suggested that the ‘peer group society’ was a cultural phenomenon common to the working-class populations of westernised societies.<sup>4</sup>

Many British authors did not address working-class involvement in associational life, and like Gans described working-class social life as primarily focused within small groups. Willmott and Young did not investigate membership of clubs and societies in their influential account of working-class life in East London, describing instead the informal sociability which flourished in the public spaces of established neighbourhoods.<sup>5</sup> J.M. Mogey argued that in an old working-class area of Oxford in the 1950s:

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence to and from Councillor Meadley 1954-1973, Beverley Borough Council records, ERALS, DDX 1463/2/1.

<sup>2</sup> Gans, *The Urban Villagers*. Many authors engage with Gans study, for example: Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," p.1373-1374; Lee and Newby, *The Problem of Sociology*, p.10; Spencer and Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship*, 2006, p.18

<sup>3</sup> Gans, *The Urban Villagers*, p.41, p.246.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* pp.36-39.

<sup>5</sup> Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, pp.115-116.

Everybody participates in the very minimum of group activities. Only the family, the kindred, workmates and the well-accepted neighbourhood set of cronies are commonly accepted groups.<sup>6</sup>

Josephine Klein suggested that the preferred form of associational life was ‘non-committal’ – the working classes did not like the regular commitment necessary for membership of formal associations.<sup>7</sup> Historian Joanna Bourke limited her discussion of working-class associations to church and youth groups.<sup>8</sup>

I will argue that, contrary to Gans’ assertion, many working-class people engaged in associational life with alacrity. In a small town, clubs and societies brought the working classes into contact with each other and with other classes, and helped create some sense of the town as a community. Although it was the ‘respectable’ working classes who were most likely to engage in elements of civil society (such as the borough council) which professed service to the town community as a whole, the networks of social ties which formed as a result of associational activity opened lines of communication which were important to overall community cohesion.

The first two sections of this chapter will address Gans’ suggestion that the working classes were essentially a peer group society by showing how associational life helped link the working classes into a broader civil society in the town across the period. The first section will describe working-class involvement in groups and societies which met their needs for sociability, sport, hobbies and leisure, and the second section will describe involvement with philanthropic groups which aimed to serve the wider community. In sections three and four I turn to a consideration of changes in associational life across the period, arguing firstly that there was some erosion of previous class divisions in associational life, and secondly that the conservative hegemonic values which characterised the town’s civil society in the early part of the period were not as confidently asserted by the 1970s.

## **In the club**

### *Traditional working-class associations*

Traditional working-class institutions of mutual assistance and political solidarity (friendly societies, trade unions, the Cooperative Society and Labour Party) still

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<sup>6</sup> Mogey, *Family and Neighbourhood*, p.155.

<sup>7</sup> Klein, *Samples From English Cultures*, p.142, pp.206-209.

<sup>8</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, pp. 136-169.

existed in the post-war decades in Beverley, but did not appear to play a large part in the lives of most interviewees. Whilst friendly societies continued in a reduced form as charitable and social institutions, they had lost their former importance as a source of help in sickness and infirmity due to increasing state welfare provision.<sup>9</sup> Interviewees who worked as tradesmen were usually members of unions but were rarely involved in their organisation; only two interviewees had any history of trade-union activism.<sup>10</sup> Many interviewees displayed apathy, suspicion and even hostility towards unions.<sup>11</sup> Whilst the Labour Party gained seats in the borough council for the first time in 1951, and always enjoyed a majority of Minster ward votes in local elections subsequently, attendance at local Party meetings fluctuated between approximately 12 and 20 members in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>12</sup>

The relatively low level of trade union and political activism may have been due to a combination of rising affluence and local working-class conservatism. Mark Abrams, Richard Rose and Rita Hinden noted the tendency of the British working classes to disengage from class-based politics during the years of post-war affluence in the later 1950s:

They now have opportunities for leisure, for the enjoyment of most of the good things in life...the day is gone when workers must regard their station in life as fixed...Is it any wonder that in these circumstances we should be reaching the limit of the old class appeal?<sup>13</sup>

There was some suggestion of a pervasive small-town conservatism in Beverley. In 1945 an incomer compared his previous home, 'the progressive industrial town of Manchester', with Beverley, where many councillors were 'conservative and parochial in outlook'.<sup>14</sup> Jerry Young, a member of the Beverley Labour Party since the 1960s recalled a streak of working-class conservatism in the town in the 1960s and 1970s, especially evident amongst Hodgson's tannery workers who were impressed by the

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<sup>9</sup> They appear to have become charitable and social rather than based on mutual aid. A meeting of 34 delegates of the Beverley and District branch of the Oddfellows in 1948 committed funds to support the Beverley Town Nursing Fund and the Unity Orphans fund: *Beverley Guardian*, 7 February 1948; in 1977 the Oddfellows organised a fundraising dance for a CLB trip to London: *Beverley Guardian*, 21 April 1977.

<sup>10</sup> Jack Binnington, 26 October 2010, c. 46 mins; Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.60 mins.

<sup>11</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.65 mins; Dennis Duke, 14 July 2010, c.100 mins.

<sup>12</sup> Beverley Labour Branch Minutes, 1947-1956; Beverley Labour Party Minute Book 1964-1970. Minster ward was the eastern part of the town including Beckside and much of the Swinemoor council estate.

<sup>13</sup> Abrams, Rose, and Hinden, *Must Labour Lose?* p.105.

<sup>14</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 9 June 1945.

paternalism of their director, George Odey. Furthermore, he suggested that during the 1950s and 1960s, such labourist sentiment as there was (amongst workers in the shipyard) was partly a result of workers migrating from Tyneside and Wearside and bringing their political traditions with them.<sup>15</sup> These observations gained some support from interviews with former workers.<sup>16</sup>

### *Leisure-based associational life*

Whilst there was limited engagement with traditional working-class institutions and politics, there was enthusiasm for all kinds of leisure-based associational life. John Day's recollection of a shipyard strike in the 1950s is indicative of this:

When I was on strike, I painted golf club... they wanted volunteers to paint it, there was me and someone else from shipyard who played golf... I used to do a bit of painting and then get washed and changed and have a shower and have a game of golf in the afternoon.<sup>17</sup>

A letter-writer to the *Beverley Guardian* in 1948 suggested that the town was partaking in a post-war national enthusiasm for culture: 'There is evidence of this in the local clubs and societies and guilds which are supposed to serve such a purpose'.<sup>18</sup> It is difficult to quantify exactly these clubs and societies. Surveying editions of the *Beverley Guardian* from 1948 suggests that there were least 50 clubs, associations and sports teams. This figure does not include the twelve churches in Beverley in the late 1940s, most of which had a range of auxiliary groups catering separately for women, children and men. Nor does it count works sports and social clubs. The figure probably undercounts many darts, snooker and football teams, as well as informal groups described in the oral interviews. Beverley may have been comparable with the only slightly-larger town of Glossop, (18,000 people in 1953), surveyed by A.H. Birch in 1953-4. Birch counted nearly 100 voluntary associations.<sup>19</sup> In Beverley, sources were not available to measure the total involvement in associational life across the period, but the oral evidence suggests civil society in the town remained lively, and the

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<sup>15</sup> Jerry Young, 18 May 2010, c.10, c.20, c.35 mins.

<sup>16</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.11 mins; John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.58 mins; John Cooper ERYMS interview 2, c.27 mins. Les White, 21 October 2010, c.1 hour 5 mins; Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview September 2005, p.5.

<sup>17</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.44 mins.

<sup>18</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 30 October 1948.

<sup>19</sup> Anthony Harold Birch, *Small-Town Politics : A Study of Political Life in Glossop*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p.195.

Humberside County Council listed 77 groups in the town in 1977, more than the number suggested above for 1948.<sup>20</sup>

*Strata of associational life*

At one step up from the informal, non-committal, peer group sociability which Gans described as the mainstay of working-class social life, relatively informal voluntary association took place in neighbourhoods and amongst pub regulars. Across the period, working-class people came together to organise coach trips (for children or pub customers), bonfires, coronation parties, charitable collections and sponsored events.<sup>21</sup> Some women established neighbourhood social clubs; Doreen Lee remembered that in the 1950s:

We used to go to this lady's house, and a few of us would play cards, rummy, you know...dominoes, and we had a cup of tea... it was a good gathering.

SR:*Who was the lady?*

Mrs Johnson, who, her and her husband used to keep Foresters Arms at one time... We just used to put something in, I suppose to help with the trips and that.<sup>22</sup>

Jack Blakeston remembered that his mother organised a regular whist night for women living in the Beckside area in the upstairs room of a local pub in the 1940s.<sup>23</sup> In neighbourhoods and workplaces women ran 'didlums' or savings clubs; small amounts were deposited weekly, to be withdrawn when needed, perhaps at Christmas.<sup>24</sup> One interviewee said she and her mother still paid into a 'didlum' at the time of the interview.<sup>25</sup> Across the period, many pubs acted as informal clubs. Regulars joined darts and dominoes teams, went on pub outings, and took a proprietorial attitude towards their own chairs on busy Saturday nights.<sup>26</sup> One interviewee described how

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<sup>20</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 10 March, 17 March 1977.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter Three ('Neighbours'), also: Derek Mitchell, ERYMS interview, c.15 minutes; Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.31 mins; Bill and Alice Andrews 20 January 2010, c.2 hours 30 mins.

<sup>22</sup> Doreen Lee, 9 November 2009, c.5 mins.

<sup>23</sup> Jack Blakeston 10 August 2010, track 2 c.5 mins; 1 hr 21 mins.

<sup>24</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.30 mins; Keith Barrett, 2 December 2010, c.29 mins.

<sup>25</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>26</sup> Doreen Lee, 9 November 2009, c.18 mins; Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.37 mins; Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.100 mins.

the group cohesion of regulars in one pub during the 1970s was so strong that in recent years they had organised reunions.<sup>27</sup>

Involvement with churches and church youth groups was a form of working-class associational life at a stage further removed from the informality of peer group, but still with a connection to the community of the neighbourhood. In the 1950s and 1960s the majority of a church's congregation usually lived within the parish (there were three parish churches in the town).<sup>28</sup> In 1952, five of the six voluntary officers at St Nicholas Church lived in the same working-class district in the east of Beverley; the sixth lived just to the west of the railway lines.<sup>29</sup> Churches had a range of associated groups – for example in 1955 the Latimer Congregationalist Church had a Sunday School, a Girls' Bible Class, and young Men's Bible Class, Life Boys, Women's Own, a meeting for boys aged 6 to 8, teacher training classes, a Prayer Meeting, Brownies, Guides and a choir.<sup>30</sup> Many youth organisations were connected to particular churches, including the Church Lads' Brigade, the Life Boys, and Girls' Friendly Society.

Associations with working-class membership which were organised on a town rather than neighbourhood level were often in the leisure sphere. In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s these included a caged bird society, two pigeon clubs, a whippet racing club, a rabbit club, a sea angling club, motor clubs, a model aeroplane club, an allotment society, and clubs and teams dedicated to the sports of rugby union, cricket, tennis, football, snooker, darts, cycling and boxing. Social clubs frequented by working-class men during this period included the Grosvenor Working Men's Club, the British Legion, the Catholic Club and Conservative Club as well as various works clubs.<sup>31</sup> Across the period, working-class men were more likely than women to participate in associational life at this town-wide level, although wives were often involved in a supportive capacity, attending and catering for functions as well as washing kit or volunteering in the club tea house.<sup>32</sup>

### *Clubs and sociability*

The variety of associational life was reflected in the complexity of motivations for engaging in particular voluntary activities. But in practice most groups had a social

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<sup>27</sup> Les White, 29 October 2010, c.34 mins.

<sup>28</sup> Janet Thompson, 27 November 2009, c.19 mins.

<sup>29</sup> St Nicholas Church Magazine, January 1952, ERALS, PE 193/T54.

<sup>30</sup> *Green's Almanac 1955* (Beverley: Green and Son, 1956).

<sup>31</sup> Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010 c.81 mins.

<sup>32</sup> Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c.117 mins; Marianne Woolly, c.10 mins.

element. For example, although political belief motivated those involved with the Trade Union and Labour movement, involvement also implied sociability. Jack Binnington became an active trade unionist in the 1970s and relished meeting like-minded people at meetings in Hull.<sup>33</sup> The Beverley Labour Party minutes from 1947 to 1970 record regular social events (annual dinners, garden parties, fundraising dances), and monthly meetings (often in pubs) were a social activity.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, membership of sporting teams was not only about the sport. Football teams went to the pub after matches, darts and snooker matches were held in licensed premises, the golf club had a bar and the rugby and cricket club had regular social events.<sup>35</sup> Women's involvement in darts teams from the 1960s often had little to do with competition and everything to do with getting out of the house for the evening and socialising with other women.<sup>36</sup> The competitive aspect of many hobby clubs – pigeon clubs, the Allotment Society and the Caged Bird Club – should be seen as evidence of their social role.<sup>37</sup>

The minutes of the Beverley and District Sea Angling Society offer an insight into the motivations of working-class men setting up a sporting club.<sup>38</sup> At a public meeting in the King's Head pub to launch the idea of the club in 1967, a Mr Stephens appealed both to the instrumental and social instincts of his audience:

They had to get together these days when everything seemed to be more expensive and pocket money remained stable. By cooperating, he said, they could get cheaper sport...He thought the club could provide a service to every one of its members who would be able to travel to the coast with new friends and meet new friends from other parts of the Riding.<sup>39</sup>

The minutes of subsequent meetings record this mix of instrumentalism and sociability. In 1968 the meeting discussed members who never attended club meetings but nevertheless obtained places on the club's boat fishing excursions. The club failed to gather sufficient support to hold an annual dinner in its first year, but in the 1970s held a social evening attended by 'more than 200 anglers from many parts of the East

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<sup>33</sup> Jack Binnington, 17 July 2010, c.76 mins.

<sup>34</sup> Beverley Labour Party Minutes, 1947-1960, 1947-1956, 1964-1970.

<sup>35</sup> Bob Garbutt 28 June 2010, c.130 mins; John Day, 10 November 2009, track 2 c.20 mins; Hilda Little 19 March 2010, c.117 mins.

<sup>36</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.80 mins; Janet Thompson, 27 November 2009, c.77 mins.

<sup>37</sup> James and Peggy Alexander 18 February 2010 c.65 mins; Marianne Woolly 22 February 2010, c.16 mins.

<sup>38</sup> Two former members testified to the working-class membership of this club: Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010 c. 1 hour 35 mins; Bill Andrews, 20 January 2010, 2 hour 20 mins.

<sup>39</sup> Minutes of Beverley and District Sea Angling club. ERALS: DDX 1150/2.



Riding'. Letters to and from other sea angling clubs in the area referred to an 'interclub social and prize presentation', an 'intertown angling meeting' a 'fisherman's evening' and a 'casting competition'.<sup>40</sup> A former club member testified to the range of social activities.<sup>41</sup>

The working-class members of the Sea-Angling Club followed the conventions of associational life, appointing officers and a president (the mayor of Beverley), holding regular minuted meetings and printing a rule book. Meetings were conducted in a formal way, with motions proposed, seconded and amended.<sup>42</sup> The working classes' long experience of formal associations through union and labour movements, local politics and friendly societies has sometimes been missed by authors who concentrate on community solely in terms of neighbourhood and kinship.<sup>43</sup> David Neave described how the friendly society movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century East Riding adapted some of the formal language and processes of association from middle-class culture.<sup>44</sup> By the middle of the twentieth century this grammar of associational life was perhaps second nature.

#### *Associational life and 'weak ties'*

As outlined in the Chapter Five, 'Workplaces', Mark Granovetter argued that workplaces and associations could contribute to 'weak' social ties. Sociability in clubs helped build networks of acquaintanceship across the town. Contacts from clubs could connect people to resources (such as information about jobs) and to individuals with some local power, such as borough councillors.<sup>45</sup> Dorothy Jackson recalled that she got to know lots of people in the town from visits to the British Legion with her husband on weekends in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>46</sup> Mick Underwood stated that he was well known in the town from a lifetime playing cricket in the local club.<sup>47</sup> Sports teams competed in leagues and therefore met members of other teams, and angling clubs

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<sup>40</sup> Minutes of Beverley and District Sea Angling club. ERALS: DDX 1150/1; DDX 1150/2.

<sup>41</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010 c. 15 mins.

<sup>42</sup> Minutes of Beverley and District Sea Angling club. ERALS: DDX 1150/2.

<sup>43</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*; Roberts, *Women and Families*; Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*.

<sup>44</sup> David Neave, *Mutual Aid In The Victorian Countryside : Friendly Societies in the Rural East Riding 1830-1912*, (Hull: Hull University Press, 1990), pp.54-56, pp.95-96.

<sup>45</sup> Andrew Tyler, 1 July 2010, c.11 mins; Lynne Norton, 9 November 2009, c.59 mins.

<sup>46</sup> Dorothy Jackson, 10 February 2010, c.13 mins.

<sup>47</sup> 16 June 2010, c.5 mins.

cooperated to organise matches.<sup>48</sup> Groups sometimes worked together for charitable and philanthropic purposes, or loaned each other facilities and equipment (which will be discussed further in the section below). Associational life was therefore one of the contexts, along with work, school, neighbourhood and family, through which individuals got to know others, and contributed to the sense, often mentioned by interviewees, that in the 1940s through to the 1970s ‘everybody in Beverley knew everybody else’.<sup>49</sup>

#### *Life-cycle variation in associational involvement*

Involvement in clubs and societies varied across the lifecycle. Childhood and adolescence was a period in which youth groups provided diversion for most. In the 1940s and 1950s for example, there was a range of clubs for children and adolescents. Many of these were connected to a greater or lesser extent with various churches, including the Church Lads’ Brigade, the Life Boys, Girls’ Friendly Society, several Scouts, Cubs troops and Guides companies, as well as church youth clubs. In addition, the St John’s Ambulance brigade had strong youth divisions, and there were army cadets groups and a short-lived Labour League of Youth.<sup>50</sup> The local authority became involved with youth provision in the post-war era, and from the later 1950s interviewees remembered youth clubs run by the local authorities.<sup>51</sup> In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, the parents of interviewees had usually insisted on Sunday school attendance, even though their own religious commitment might be ambiguous at best. In later adolescence there was often a reduction in the attraction of clubs and more emphasis on peer group sociability. Across the period, child-rearing years were usually the low point of associational involvement, particularly for women. However, children’s involvement in youth groups could often bring their parents some voluntary duties - for example sitting on parents’ committees or helping run sports teams.<sup>52</sup> Once children had grown up, there was again time for involvement in voluntary activity. Studies which have downplayed the extent of associational life amongst the working-class have often based their assessment on the activities which research participants

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<sup>48</sup> For example: Beverley and District Sea Angling Club records, ERALS, DDX 1150/1.

<sup>49</sup> George Little, 12 March 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>50</sup> Andrew Tyler, 1 July 2010, c.28 mins; John Whittles, 26 April 2010; Beverley Labour Party minutes 5 August 1948; Anna Mason, c.53 mins.

<sup>51</sup> *Beverley Guardian* 21 January 1945; Elaine Mateer 29 March 2010 c.51 minutes; Dennis Duke, 14 July 2010 c.40 mins.

<sup>52</sup> Bernard Hunt 12 January 2010, c.83 mins; Louise Christopher c.45 mins.

were engaged in at the time of the study; but it is possible to suggest that the benefits of club and society membership in terms of local social ties continued after the period of membership ended.<sup>53</sup> People continued to encounter others in their locality whom they had first met through clubs and societies.

None of the interviewees failed to mention contact with voluntary associations at some point in their lives, whether it be work's club, darts team or Sunday school; nevertheless it is important to note that many people had only fleeting contact with associational life. Some described themselves as not suited to this kind of sociability.<sup>54</sup> Typical of these interviewees was Ellen Ingleton who, although she liked 'being with people', claimed: 'I've not really been a person...just to go in and join a club'.<sup>55</sup> This corresponds with the distinction made by Robert Putnam between those who engaged in an organised and structured sociability through clubs and societies and those who preferred personal sociability in less structured ways. Putnam suggested age and class continuums in connection with these tendencies, with the young and working classes tending towards informal sociability, and older people and middle classes more likely to join clubs and societies.<sup>56</sup> My research suggests the abundance of both kinds of sociability amongst the working classes in this period, although as noted above, membership of formal clubs and societies was more prevalent amongst males than female.

### **Philanthropy and civil society**

Many working-class residents committed considerable time and energy to philanthropic associations which served the wider community. Some of those interviewed had volunteered for long periods of time. For example, Ken Ingleton volunteered for almost sixty years leading local Cub Scout packs; John Whittles gave forty years' service to the St John's Ambulance Brigade. Often those who acted in a philanthropic voluntary capacity did so in a number of contexts. The *Beverley Guardian* in 1947 reported the many public roles of the new mayor, James Smedley, a labourer at the tanyard. He had been a long-term councillor, a member of the Working Men's and Women's Committee of the Beverley Cottage Hospital, was currently serving as secretary of the local branch of the Manchester Unity of the Independent

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<sup>53</sup> Moge, *Family and Neighbourhood*, pp.153-154; Gans, *The Urban Villagers*, pp.106-109.

<sup>54</sup> William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.71 mins; Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c.47 mins.

<sup>55</sup> Ellen Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.70 mins.

<sup>56</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp.93-96.

Order of Oddfellows, had ‘held every office a layman could enjoy’ in the Baptist church, and was a founder member of the Hodgson’s Recreation Club, playing ‘a great part in the creation of that well-known and helpful organisation’. The paper praised Smedley’s contribution to ‘the good of the town’.<sup>57</sup> Harold Godbold, also a Hodgson’s worker, was a councillor from 1940s until the 1970s, a committee member at Hodgson’s recreation club and held other voluntary posts such as secretary of the snooker league.<sup>58</sup>

Working-class women also played roles in such philanthropic organisations, though often in lower profile positions. Women from all classes volunteered to help run children’s groups, including the Brownies, Guides, Cubs, Girls’ Friendly Society and Sunday school groups.<sup>59</sup> Mothers sometimes became involved in these groups as a result of their children’s membership. Wives of youth group leaders often helped in an informal way, providing support at camps and outings.<sup>60</sup> Women were also members of the voluntary fire service and the Red Cross.<sup>61</sup> Mothers with young children across the period perhaps had less time and inclination to engage in voluntary activity, especially as many worked part-time in addition to looking after children and running the home.<sup>62</sup>

### *The borough council*

As noted above, some men (and increasingly across the period, women) sought to serve the wider community by becoming borough councillors. Definitions of civil society usually exclude the state, but borough councillors are included in the discussion here because they acted in a voluntary capacity and were often involved in, and supported, wider civil society. Borough councillors were integrated into civil society through the performance of public roles beyond the representation of their constituents in the council chamber. Mayors were kept busy ensuring that the borough council was represented in public life; they attended fund-raising events, sports league prize evenings, cultural performances and visiting almshouses and hospitals at Christmas time. Milestone wedding anniversary celebrations could even occasion a

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<sup>57</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 15 November 1947.

<sup>58</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 7 May 1955.

<sup>59</sup> Bernard Hunt, 12 Jan 2010, c.77 mins; Louise Christopher, 25 November 2010, c.8 mins; Eliza Wood, 18 November 2009, c.13 mins; June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.125 mins.

<sup>60</sup> John Whittles, 27 April 2010, c.55 mins; Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.83 mins.

<sup>61</sup> Hannah Witham, 26 April 2010, c.36 mins; Bernard Hunt, 12 January 2010, c. 31 mins.

<sup>62</sup> Sally Adams, 21 June 2010, c.20 mins; Vic Baker, 29 May 2010, c.120 mins.

mayoral visit.<sup>63</sup> At busy times, other councillors assisted. Councillors attended the many street parties held to celebrate VE day, distributing small cash gifts to children.<sup>64</sup> Councillors even judged an annual council house garden competition in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>65</sup>

The borough council supported civil society morally and materially. The council gave cash grants to community organisations and loaned out meeting rooms in their Guildhall to clubs and societies.<sup>66</sup> Borough councillors worked in partnership with the many local people and organisations undertaking charitable work. For example, in the 1950s the mayor helped run the 'Boots for Bairns' charity in conjunction with the local police superintendent.<sup>67</sup> In 1955 the Beverley Station Christmas Tree Appeal distributed gifts to local children's homes with the assistance of the mayor.<sup>68</sup> In turn, councillors' initiated their own charitable activities which attracted support from wider civil society. In 1945 the Rotary club, the residents of Anne Routh's almshouse and a darts league all donated money to the borough council's 'comforts fund' for sending gifts to Beverley men serving abroad.<sup>69</sup> Most local firms and many shops donated prizes to the mayor's charity ball in 1957.<sup>70</sup> Mayor Albert Meadley noted that he had been supported by the Rotary, Lions and Roundtable during his year in office in 1960.<sup>71</sup> The borough council's support and partnership of civil society often worked informally through the mechanism of interpersonal networks. For example, both Ken Ingleton and John Whittles considered that the considerable personal social capital of Neville Hobson helped him ensure that council grants went to his Church Lads' Brigade. Bernard Hunt recalled that in the years after Neville Hobson's retirement from the CLB it was necessary to lobby councillors to secure grants.<sup>72</sup>

The fact that councillors were often also active in other areas of associational life made them accessible to other members. John Day recalled that as a young man in

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<sup>63</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 3 January 1948.

<sup>64</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 26 May 1945; Jack Binnington 26 October 2010, 1 hour 58 mins.

<sup>65</sup> Eva White, c. 55 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 16 October 1948.

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Hunt, 12 January 2010, track 3 c.10 mins; Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, track 2 c.10 mins.

<sup>67</sup> Borough of Beverley Council file on boots for poor children, 1928 -1959, ERALS: BOBE 2/15/1/198.

<sup>68</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 15 January 1955.

<sup>69</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 6 January 1945.

<sup>70</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 6 April 1957.

<sup>71</sup> Beverley Town Council records, correspondence to and from Councillor Meadley 1954-1973, ERALS, DDX 1463/2/1.

<sup>72</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c. 85 mins; John Whittles, 27 April 2010, c.51 mins; Bernard Hunt, 12 January 2010, track 3 c.10 mins.

the 1950s he knew many of the local councillors, often through their involvement in clubs he attended:

S: Did you know any of the councillors?

Yes, Harold Godbold, Smedley, Roberts, Burgess

S: How did you get to know them?

Well, Beverley Swimming Club, I was a big member of Beverley Swimming Club, I was junior captain there and was on committee, and there was a councillor there used to go, and I was a member of Conservative club, Snooker Club, and Dennis Dunn he used to be a member, he was a vet, and he used to be member of the Golf Club, he only used to go for a drink on a Sunday dinner time.<sup>73</sup>

Working-class involvement in the borough council enabled those who were not personally involved in associational life to feel that they had some avenue of influence or connection to those who made decisions locally. Many interviewees had known local working-class men who were borough councillors in the period of the study, and could approach them with issues. In the early 1970s, Doreen Lee's husband obtained the help of a councillor in order to get the family a council home:

It was a councillor who helped us get this house. Now, you could walk down Beverley and you would maybe run into one. You could sort of ask him... I think it was... George Nelson... went to see him when we wanted that house... You could walk down the street and you'd probably see them, just going about their business, and you could have a word with them. But you don't know, you don't see anybody now.<sup>74</sup>

Granovetter argued that such connections, the feeling that there was a personal link to those in positions of power in a particular district, were important for creating a sense of community across that district which transcended Gans' fragmentary peer groups.<sup>75</sup>

### *Inter-associational giving*

Associations were linked to one another through philanthropic activities. There were many examples of inter-associational giving in Beverley across the period.<sup>76</sup> Clubs and

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<sup>73</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, track 2, c.0 mins.

<sup>74</sup> Doreen Lee, 9 November 2009, c.60 mins.

<sup>75</sup> Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties", pp.1373-1374.

<sup>76</sup> An example of cooperating to arrange matches: Beverley and District Sea Angling Club records, ERALS, DDX 1150/1. For a further discussion of inter-associational giving, see: Susan Eckstein,

societies might support each other through the loan of facilities or through gifts of money or help. Hodgson's social club allowed other groups to use its meeting rooms.<sup>77</sup> In 1948 the Beverley and District Oddfellows gave money to the Beverley Town Nursing Fund and the Unity Orphan Fund and in 1977 raised funds for the Church Lads' Brigade to make a trip to London.<sup>78</sup> Groups whose purpose was not primarily philanthropic nevertheless gave charitably to other groups within the town. For example, in 1945 the Beverley and District Rabbit Club gave funds to the cottage hospital, and in 1955 the Beverley Racing Pigeon Club raised funds for the hospital through their annual Cottage Hospital Cup competition.<sup>79</sup> Beverley pub darts teams raised money to help support the East Riding Branch of the Forces Help Society in 1955.<sup>80</sup> Left-wing associations had their own mutual networks of support; the Beverley Labour Party minutes recorded cash donations from local trade union branches and the Cooperative Society toward expenses incurred fighting local elections, as well as loans of equipment such as loudspeakers.<sup>81</sup>

Whilst not all interviewees recalled sustained involvement with formal associations and Beverley's civil society, the interview evidence suggests that many were. It is therefore a mistake to discuss working-class community purely in terms of informal sociability amongst family, peer groups and neighbours and to overlook working-class contribution to the public life of the places in which they lived.

### **Meeting in the middle**

Margeret Stacey found in her first study of Banbury, beginning in the late 1940s, that class structured many aspects of community life, including associational membership. Although she found distinctions between 'traditionals' who had been born and brought up in the town and 'non-traditionals' who moved in and brought new ideas, class trumped these divisions.<sup>82</sup> However, by the time Stacey restudied the town in the later 1960s, she found that class distinctions were no longer so clear. There was evidence of

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"Community as Gift-Giving: Collectivistic Roots of Volunteerism," *American Sociological Review* 66, no. 6 (2001): 829-851.

<sup>77</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 21 September 1978.

<sup>78</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 21 April 1977.

<sup>79</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 17 March 1945; *Beverley Guardian*, 14 May 1955.

<sup>80</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 19 March 1955.

<sup>81</sup> *Beverley Labour Party Minute Book 1947-1960*, 2 July 1959.

<sup>82</sup> Stacey, *Tradition and Change*, p.171.

a greater mixture of classes in associational life.<sup>83</sup> A similar development appears to have taken place in Beverley. Although many clubs and associations had distinct class memberships, with rising affluence there was some blurring of lines. Working-class men and women gained access to clubs which had previously been middle-class.

Some authors in the 1950s and 1960s considered that working-class adoption of types of leisure formerly beyond their reach was part of a wider move away from working-class culture and an embracing of middle-class culture and identity – this became known as the ‘*embourgeoisement*’ thesis.<sup>84</sup> The evidence described below, however, suggests that in a small town like Beverley there was some overlap between working-class and middle-class cultures in terms of their common assumptions and social ties. Rather than the working classes simply aspiring to and adopting middle-class social and cultural practices, influence went both ways. When they joined previously middle-class clubs, working-class men and women were not only fitting into new social milieux but were also changing the cultures of the clubs into which they were integrating.

#### *The class divide in associational life*

That class was often more fundamental to associational membership than the division between ‘local’ and ‘incomer’ is suggested by the fact that incomers with the right class backgrounds were welcomed into particular clubs that did not welcome locals with the wrong class backgrounds. The Lions and the Rotary clubs welcomed incoming male professionals or businessmen.<sup>85</sup> Working-class men and women moving into Beverley could make friends by joining sports teams, working men’s clubs, churches, other voluntary associations or simply by visiting the local pub.<sup>86</sup> Jean Benson’s husband was from Liverpool and integrated into local society by playing for Barker’s and Lee Smith’s football team.<sup>87</sup> Working-class women moving into the town seem to have been easily accepted into church groups, neighbourhood informal women’s clubs, or voluntary groups such as Red Cross or Scouts’ parents’

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<sup>83</sup> Margaret Stacey *et al.*, *Power, Persistence and Change : A Second Study of Banbury*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp.130-133.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p.ix; Abrams, Rose, and Hinden, *Must Labour Lose?* p.23,p.100; Klein, *Samples From English Cultures*, pp.422-429; Goldthorpe *et al.*, *The Affluent Worker*, pp.21-23.

<sup>85</sup> Ben Curry, 19 April 2010, c.80 mins; Evelyn Frith, 10 February 2010, c.36 mins.

<sup>86</sup> John Whittles 27 April 2010 c.18 mins; Beverley Labour Party Minutes 1 April 1948; Jerry Young, 18 May 2010, c.10 mins.

<sup>87</sup> Jean Benson 14 January 2010, c.30 mins.



associations.<sup>88</sup> The corollary of this inclusion was the exclusion of those who did not fit with the social milieu of a particular club. Les White, born and bred in Beverley, played rugby for a team in Hull in the 1960s but would have nothing to do with the Beverley Rugby Club, whose members he described as: ‘bigheads... [who] don’t want to know the likes of me.’<sup>89</sup> Dick Gibson and his wife Joan played golf since the 1980s, but joined a club in Brandesburton rather than the Beverley club which Joan described as ‘snooty’.<sup>90</sup> Some clubs remained exclusively middle-class, such as the Lions and Rotary Clubs.<sup>91</sup>

Class codes implicit in associational life in the earlier part of the period were illustrated in a *Beverley Guardian* report of an occasion when Mayor James Smedley, a manual worker at Hodgson’s, invited fellow councillors to the firm’s social club to play the club committee at dominoes and snooker. (On Smedley’s election to the mayoral office, another councillor had suggested that there was ‘no disgrace in him being a working man’.)<sup>92</sup> The trip to the Hodgson’s club was reported in a way that suggested councillors were crossing a divide by entering a working-class environment. A return match was organised but this would be in a setting understood tacitly as being the councillors’ home turf – Beverley Golf Club.<sup>93</sup> So while associational life did link individuals to one another, the social networks which arose were often shaped by class.

Furthermore, there were class hierarchies within groups. In youth groups for example, working-class volunteers worked with the children but middle-class men and women were involved in the higher organisational echelons. In 1963 Lord Hotham was elected president of the Beverley and District Scouts, with Neville Hobson (a local solicitor), Dr C. Cameron and Dr Paul Pearson among the vice presidents, Alderman Bielby, was re-elected chairman and Superintendent Maidment was vice chairman.<sup>94</sup> Tannery director George Odey was a sometime chairman of the District Scouting association.<sup>95</sup> Clubs and societies sought presidents who had status within civil society,

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<sup>88</sup> Dorothy Jackson, 10 February 2010, c.13 mins. Doreen Lee 9 November 2009, c.7 mins; Gerald Ibbotson, 7 July 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>89</sup> Les White, 1hr 5 mins.

<sup>90</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010 c.1hr 40 mins.

<sup>91</sup> Ben Curry, 19 April 2010, c.73 mins; Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010, c.30 mins

<sup>92</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 15 November 1947.

<sup>93</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 17 January 1948.

<sup>94</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 17 May 1963.

<sup>95</sup> Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c. 0 mins.

often the mayor, although local dignitaries such as Neville Hobson were also chosen.<sup>96</sup> In the political sphere, those with higher status such as George Odey became county councillors; borough councillors were usually shopkeepers, smaller business owners and the skilled working classes.<sup>97</sup>

*The erosion of the class divide in associational life*

As noted above, Margaret Stacey's second study of Banbury described erosion of strict class demarcations in associational life in the 1960s.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, oral evidence from Beverley describing the 1950s onwards suggests that not only were the working classes joining previously middle-class clubs in the decades after the Second World War, but that they were also participating in sociability with middle-class members of these clubs.

Golf was described by Ross McKibbin as a solidly middle-class pursuit in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>99</sup> However, it became popular amongst more affluent manual workers after the Second World War, with numbers of golfers doubling in the 1950s.<sup>100</sup> Beverley Golf Club's historian described a gradual widening of participation in the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>101</sup> David Hughes worked as barman at the Beverley golf club in the 1960s and recalled that the membership at that time included butchers, shopkeepers, and workers from Hodgson's tannery and from the aircraft factory at Brough (12 miles to the south-west).<sup>102</sup> John Day, son of a Beverley shipyard caulker, joined the golf club whilst himself working as an apprentice caulker in the 1950s. He remembered that several other shipyard workers were also members and that working-class men were an increasing proportion of the clubs' membership at this time.<sup>103</sup> Initially John joined the 'Artisans' club, a subsidiary golf club set up to provide cheap sport for working men, but was soon taken under the wing of existing members who introduced him to the main club where he had no problems being

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<sup>96</sup> Minutes of Beverley and District Sea Angling club. ERALS: DDX 1150/1; 1150/2; *Beverley Guardian*, 17 May 1963.

<sup>97</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 20 January 1977; Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, c.85 mins; Tom Potter, 24 October 2008, track 2, c.15 mins.

<sup>98</sup> Stacey et al., *Power, Persistence and Change*, pp.120-121.

<sup>99</sup> McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, pp.359-362.

<sup>100</sup> Richard Holt, "Sport and Recreation," in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*, eds. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones. (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 110-126, p.113.

<sup>101</sup> J. G. M. Ward, *One Hundred Years of Golf on Westwood*, (Beverley: Coxon, 1990) p.61.

<sup>102</sup> David Hughes, 24 June 2010, c.100 mins; c.105 mins.

<sup>103</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.34 mins, track 2 c.24 mins.

accepted, which he put down to his good manners.<sup>104</sup> John and his wife Margaret's social life in the 1960s largely centred on the golf club. The couple recalled frequent discos at the club, after which they invited friends back for drinks at their semi-detached house.<sup>105</sup> Dave Ireland grew up in a working-class family, attended Beverley grammar school and obtained a white collar job in the council offices. He joined the golf club in the 1950s following the suggestion of friends at work, where he met and played regularly with John Day. Like John, Dave participated in the social life connected with the golf club, and thought that golf had moved from being a sport in which 'it was all shopkeepers and bankers and top bank managers' to something which 'everybody plays'.<sup>106</sup>

It was not only the golf club that appeared to become more open to working-class membership as the post-war decades progressed. Neil Cooper was the son of a foreman toolmaker at Deans Light Alloys and himself worked much of his life as an electrician at Armstrong's. He was a self-confessed sportaholic, and by the 1960s had joined the Beverley Town Cricket and Recreation Club at Norwood (cricket, tennis and bowls), the golf club and later a more exclusive tennis club at Seven Corners Lane. Neil recalled the sociability that membership of these clubs brought, and he himself organised social evenings including bingo nights at the Norwood clubhouse.<sup>107</sup> George Little, an electrician at Armstrong's, set up the Beverley Rugby Club (a rugby union club) with friends in 1959. McKibbin suggested that rugby union had been more of a middle-class sport earlier in the century, but in Beverley it seemed to have been a sport with broad-based class appeal after the war.<sup>108</sup> Like the golf club, the rugby club included a significant social element.<sup>109</sup>

The mixing of small businessmen, white collar workers and manual workers in the rugby, golf and cricket clubs was eased by the fact that in practice they often shared similar social backgrounds and cultural assumptions. It was fairly common for interviewees to have moved between socio-economic classes through their lives. Some shopkeepers and businessmen had once been shipyard workers, or had grown up in

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<sup>104</sup> John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.41 mins.

<sup>105</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.20 mins.

<sup>106</sup> Dave and June Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.106 mins.

<sup>107</sup> Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010, c.35 mins.

<sup>108</sup> McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p.352.

<sup>109</sup> Hilda Little, 19 March 2010, c.117 mins.

working-class families.<sup>110</sup> Grammar school was a way for people from a solidly working-class background to achieve middle-class jobs, including clerical positions in the offices of the borough council, county council or local factories.<sup>111</sup> That this kind of mobility could take place without people leaving the town meant that links with working-class background, family and values could be maintained. This combination of social mobility with geographic immobility meant that there was a certain overlap in terms of the personnel of the classes, with particular close links between the skilled working classes and lower middle classes. The culture of male sociability which dominated the solidly working-class associations such as bird and rabbit clubs, football and darts teams was not so different to the types of sociability which obtained in the more middle-class golf, tennis, cricket and rugby union clubs. This was a culture of male camaraderie consisting of competition, sporting enjoyment and, often, drinking. Therefore, once wages allowed working-class men to pay club fees and buy the requisite equipment, membership of these clubs did not necessarily involve a readjustment of social expectations.

The workers who were becoming involved in what were previously more middle-class clubs were those who were gaining ground materially in the age of affluence, and who through rising wages were able to purchase their own houses and cars. It is possible that some did consider that they were advancing socially by joining golf or tennis clubs. David Hughes, barman at the golf clubhouse in the 1960s, recalled the social pretensions of many clubs members, who often treated him in a patronising manner while themselves being 'working men'.<sup>112</sup> However, interviewees who had themselves joined these clubs preferred to describe the sport as the principle motivation. Neil Cooper, a sports enthusiast, was prepared to tolerate some social discomfort to join sport clubs perceived as elitist but which had facilities he wished to use. He recalled that he had tried to conceal his council estate address from fellow members of his tennis club, a sport he described as 'snobbish', and he had to draw on personal networks to gain membership of the golf club.<sup>113</sup> Neil told how he had an

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<sup>110</sup> Mick Underwood, 21 July 2010, c.0-6 mins; Marianne Woolly, 22 February 2010, c.10 mins; James and Peggy Alexander, 18 February 2010, c.100 mins.

<sup>111</sup> Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.0-5 mins; Dave and June Ireland, 15 July 2010; Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview 2a.

<sup>112</sup> David Hughes, 24 June 2010, c.100 mins; c.105 mins.

<sup>113</sup> Neil Cooper 14 April 2010 c.25 mins, c.81 mins.

interview in a big house at the ‘posh end of Beverley’ in order to move from Norwood to Seven Lanes tennis club:

I sat there, looking round this blooming great house, Tommy Ward they called him, he was an ex colonel or something like... [asked] ‘Why do you want to leave them to come to us?’ because it was unknown, anyone leaving Norwood...and I said, ‘Yours is a better club, better tennis,’ I think they had teaching there...ours didn’t want to progress at Norwood.<sup>114</sup>

Many affluent workers who joined previously more middle-class clubs had an ambivalent relationship to class differences, and expressed an awareness of class mixed with a denial that such differences represented a significant barrier to sociability. John Day, describing the golf club of the 1950s, mimicked the middle-class accents of some of the members whilst also insisting that he never felt out of place in the club because of his class.<sup>115</sup> Dave and June Ireland disagreed about the extent to which class mattered in the golf club, and in sociability more generally. June claimed that class was no longer important whereas Dave was less certain and thought some class distinctions still operated amongst club golfers.<sup>116</sup> Interviewees’ reactions to the subject of class in club life corroborated Jeffrey Hill’s observation that sports and social clubs were places in which different classes could mix at this time, so long as all members submitted to unwritten codes of behaviour emphasising the principles of good humour, fellowship, sportsmanship and avoidance of controversial subjects such as class.<sup>117</sup>

Affluence and social mobility lifted some material restrictions on leisure. Interviewees perceived themselves as having had more leisure choices than their parents, who had grown up between the wars.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, interviewees’ cultural tastes continued to be influenced by their working-class background, and they took this influence with them into the clubs they shared with the middle classes. For example, John Day described how the habit of drinking pints rather than half pints of beer became normal at the golf club as a result of a growing working-class membership.<sup>119</sup> Those who attained middle-class status or jobs could often retain an interest in sports

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<sup>114</sup> Neil Cooper, 14 April 2010, c.30 mins.

<sup>115</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.24 mins; John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.41 mins.

<sup>116</sup> June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.106 mins,

<sup>117</sup> Hill, *Sport, Leisure and Culture*, p.140.

<sup>118</sup> John and Margaret Day, 8 December 2009, c.1 hour 28 mins.

<sup>119</sup> John Day, 10 November 2009, c.24 mins.

and associations which were more working-class. For example Eric Ross, although playing tennis along with other staff members at Hodgson's, also played in the factory's working-class football teams.<sup>120</sup> June and Dave Ireland were from working-class backgrounds but had lower middle-class jobs and regularly socialised at golf club events with their friends but also spent evenings at Armstrong's club and at the British Legion with June's parents in the 1960s.<sup>121</sup> Tom Potter described how the Grosvenor working men's club, with which he had been involved since the 1960s, had previously been solidly working-class but was increasingly frequented by middle-class men including lawyers and accountants as well as working-class men.<sup>122</sup> Rather than the working classes simply aspiring to and adopting middle-class culture, as suggested by the *embourgeoisement* thesis, a 'pick and mix' approach led to a process of negotiation and mutual accommodation between different class cultures in the social spaces of associational life.<sup>123</sup>

### **The values of civil society**

A conservative ethos emphasising service and hierarchy, and supportive of existing institutions, underpinned much of the civil society of Beverley in the early part of our period (approximating to the 1940s through to the 1960s). Beverley's civil society in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s was broadly supportive of the institutions of church and state, and promoted the principle of service and the idea of stable hierarchical communities.<sup>124</sup> Many members of the working classes shared in this ethos, which can be seen as part of wider societal hegemony.<sup>125</sup> However, this hegemony was challenged locally by left-wing politics from the earliest years of our period, and was beginning to seem anachronistic by the 1970s.

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<sup>120</sup> Eric and Helen Ross, 16 February 2010, c.78 mins.

<sup>121</sup> June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.110 mins.

<sup>122</sup> Tom Potter, 24 October 2008.

<sup>123</sup> For *embourgeoisement* see Chapter One (p.18), for 'stratified diffusion', see Young and Willmott, *The Symmetrical Family*, pp.20-25.

<sup>124</sup> According to Manuel Castells, for example, civil society was partly a product of persuasive work on the part of dominant institutions, which sought to legitimise their pre-eminence. Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity, Second ed.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp.8-9.

<sup>125</sup> Peter Burke described hegemony as a way of understanding the relationship between dominant and subordinate cultures. According to Burke, the term denotes an ideology broadly accepted across society, part of the means by which a ruling class persuade those who are ruled to accept their subordination: Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory, Second ed.* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), pp.88-89.

### *Conservative hegemonic values*

The town's Turner charity, which distributed prize money to domestic servants every year, is a good example of the way that the charitable activities of civil society were infused with conservative hegemonic values. The mayor distributed prizes at a ceremony often attended by industrial leaders, clergymen and other leading citizens. The ceremony in 1946 was typical. The mayor, accompanied by a local JP and an Anglican clergyman, gave out 34 cash prizes. In his speech to the recipients of prizes, the mayor said:

A good servant could not be too highly valued, they had to shoulder certain responsibilities. He wished them the best of luck and continuity of good health to enable them to perform their duties.<sup>126</sup>

Similar speeches were reported in subsequent years. For example, in 1948 the mayor 'hoped that those who were receiving the bequest would be encouraged to give of their best to their employers'.<sup>127</sup>

A charity known as 'Boots for Bairns' was administered by the mayor in cooperation with the police superintendent and further illustrates the moral categories which underpinned the charitable work of civil society. Until 1955 the charity was funded by an annual police ball along with other charitable contributions, for example from local industrialist Gordon Armstrong, but since 1955 a bequest made this fundraising unnecessary. Every year the mayor asked school head teachers to nominate children to receive new shoes from the charity. Letters to and from the mayor and head teachers reveal categories of worthiness based on judgements about mothers' efforts to make sure their children were clean and tidy. A letter of 1958 from the head of St Mary's school was typical, referring a particular family to the charity because of 'commendable effort made to equip child for school so that she is neat and tidy'.<sup>128</sup> In 1956 a teacher put two girls from the Stokes family on the list of possible beneficiaries, writing that they could have been better turned out but that they were neglected by their mother. They did not receive assistance from the charity that year, whereas a boy whose family were on national assistance because of ill health but whom nevertheless made an effort to ensure he was 'clean and tidy' did get help.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 19 January, 1946.

<sup>127</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 17 January, 1948.

<sup>128</sup> Beverley Borough Council file on boots for poor children, 1928 -1959, ERALS, BOBE 2/15/1/198.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*

Similarly, certain organisations were judged more or less worthy of civil society's support. For example, in 1967 the Sea Angling Society's new president, Mayor Neville Hobson, said that this was 'a pastime that ought to be encouraged.'<sup>130</sup> Likewise, Ed Byrne, a former mayor of Beverley, said that he had supported local clubs and societies deemed 'worthy' by allowing them to use the Mayor's Parlour in the Guildhall as a meeting place.<sup>131</sup> The charitable activities of middle-class organisations such as the Lions and the Round Table came with an element of moral encouragement. The *Beverley Guardian* in 1955 reported that the Round Table distributed Christmas food parcels to 33 'deserving people in Beverley'.<sup>132</sup>

Civil society supported youth organisations which had regimental and religious overtones and an ethos of moral improvement. The Scouts were one such group, tied into a national organisation which celebrated King (or Queen), country and church. Many Cub packs, Scout troops and Guide companies were attached to a church and interviewees remembered that in the 1950s they were required to attend services regularly.<sup>133</sup> Discipline emanated from the senior officers of the Scouting or Guiding organisation. Ken Ingleton's father believed he had been forced out of his role as scout leader in the interwar years by Admiral Walker because he had left wing political sympathies and because he had admitted 'rough kids' into the troop.<sup>134</sup> Ken Ingleton was himself a Cub Scout leader from the 1950s until the 2000s and remembered that during the 1960s and 1970s there was pressure from further up in the organisation to maintain dress standards in his troop.<sup>135</sup> He himself was told to fix a tooth he had broken in an accident before he was allowed to become a King Scout.<sup>136</sup> Local authority figures made a show of support for the values of the Scouts - the mayor wrote to the *Beverley Guardian* in 1963 to commend the Scouts' 'bob a job' week for inculcating in youth the necessity of earning their keep.<sup>137</sup> In the same year, the headmaster of the Beverley Grammar school praised the Scouts' 'ideal of helping other people at all times.'<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Beverley and District Sea Angling Club records, ERALS, DDX 1150/2.

<sup>131</sup> Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, c.48 mins.

<sup>132</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 1 January 1955.

<sup>133</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.90 mins; June and Dave Ireland, 15 July 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>134</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.51 and c.95 mins.

<sup>135</sup> Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, track 2 c.0 mins.

<sup>136</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>137</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 12 April 1963.

<sup>138</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 17 May 1963.



The Church Lads' Brigade promoted respectable values and behaviour amongst its charges and was thus deemed worthy of broader support. The Beverley CLB troop leader from 1908 until the 1960s, Neville Hobson, was a stalwart of the town's civil society and keen on discipline. When he entered the brigade's headquarters the boys were expected to stand to attention; those who did not submit to the organisation's military standards of discipline or who resisted the pressure to 'look smart' were asked to leave.<sup>139</sup> Ken Ingleton said that Neville Hobson's discipline on occasion extended to giving children a dressing down that could reduce them to tears, and remembered that his father called CLB 'Hitler Youth' and Neville Holgate 'Charlie Chaplin – the great dictator'.<sup>140</sup> While George Little enjoyed the CLB's discipline and marching practice, Keith Barrett remembered that his spell in the brigade was brief because he felt that he didn't fit in.<sup>141</sup> Ben Curry justified the Lions' long-standing support for the Church Lads' Brigade: 'I'm particularly involved with CLB, funnelling money from Lions through the CLB because they do a good job, they're looking after 140 kids, the majority of whom live on the other side of the railway lines, and they're really strict with them.'<sup>142</sup>

In civic parades, civil society came together to symbolise an ideal, unified town community which supported national and local institutions of state and church. Ed Byrne remembered four civic parades a year in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. These were Mayor's Sunday, St John of Beverley Day, Battle of Britain Day and Remembrance Sunday. Parades included the uniformed children's church groups (Cubs, Scouts, Guides, Church Lads' Brigade), St John's Ambulance brigade, town councillors, and for the remembrance parades, units of the armed forces. Oral evidence and surviving film from the period attests that parades were attended by large crowds.<sup>143</sup> Parades often featured the mayor taking the salute from the marching column at the Market Cross, the ceremonial centre of the town, and processed to one of the town's churches (usually the Minster) for a religious service.<sup>144</sup> Parades encompassed all classes in a display of community harmony – working-class and middle-class children were present in the uniformed youth groups, borough councillors

<sup>139</sup> George Little, 12 March 2010, c.70 mins.

<sup>140</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.95 mins.

<sup>141</sup> Keith Barrett, 2 December 2010, c.40 mins.

<sup>142</sup> Ben Curry, 19 April 2010, c.62 minutes.

<sup>143</sup> George Little, 12 March 2010, c.110 mins; Andrew Tyler, 1 July 2010, c.6 mins; 'Picture Playhouse News 1942' Ernest Symmons film collection, ERALS, DDX 1369/5/15.

<sup>144</sup> John Whittles, 27 April 2010, c.35 mins.

came from the working and middle classes, higher status members of the community such as George Odey were invited as guests and seated close to the front for the church ceremony.<sup>145</sup>

### *Alternative values*

The consensual image of a united local community, symbolised in town parades, was reflected in the belief that borough council politics should be about local issues, rather than divisive class-based party politics.<sup>146</sup> However, the alternative discourse emphasising class and party interests rather than community consensus was promoted by the local Labour Party, who gained their first borough council position in the town in 1952.<sup>147</sup> Ed Byrne found himself caught between the political imperative of Labour Party organisation and his own sense of the tradition and the dignity of local institutions in an argument over his candidacy for the mayoralty in 1957. He was thrown out of the Beverley Labour Party because he was not willing to withdraw from this candidacy, which had not been sanctioned by the party. He clearly had an affinity with Labour's politics, and remained the Haltemprice Constituency Labour Party's chairman during his year as Mayor in 1958.<sup>148</sup> But Ed was a proud Beverlonian, born and bred in the town, and 'regarded the position of the Mayor of the Borough – as an honour: He stressed that he regarded the Mayor as the Mayor of Beverley, not as Mayor of the L.P.'<sup>149</sup> Ed was at ease in local civil society; as mayor he enthusiastically supported the St John of Beverley day celebrations.<sup>150</sup> Significantly the borough council's Labour group opposed expenditure on this celebration in 1959.<sup>151</sup> When interviewed in 2010, Ed said that he disliked the interjection of national party politics into the local council.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> 'Plan of church seats left hand side of the nave' Beverley Borough Council file on St John of Beverley Day, 4 May 1958, ERALS, BOBE 2/15/1/191.

<sup>146</sup> This belief was evident in the fact that there were rarely Labour borough councillors until 1952, and most borough councillors remained Independent rather than politically aligned in the 1950s and 1960s, see for example: *Beverley Guardian*, 30 April 1965. The belief was also occasionally stated, for example by George Odey, in *Beverley Guardian* 9 March 1973.

<sup>147</sup> Beverley Labour Branch minutes, 14 May 1952.

<sup>148</sup> *Green's Almanac* 1958, ERALS, Y/914-274/Bev.

<sup>149</sup> Beverley Labour Party Minutes 1947-1960, 18 February 1957.

<sup>150</sup> Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, c.106 mins.

<sup>151</sup> Beverley Labour Party Minutes 1947-1960, 5 March 1959.

<sup>152</sup> Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, c.92 mins.

### *Loosening of conservative values*

Some of the older values of discipline and social hierarchy began to look out of date in the 1960s and 1970s. Cub leader Ken Ingleton remembered:

Everybody was, sort of flower power then. I mean, they used to come in fluorescent socks, you'd heck of a job trying to keep them into some sort of a uniform... It was the spell when Harold Wilson was in again, all the teachers were trendy liberals at the time, weren't they? Don't call me sir, call me Fred.<sup>153</sup>

Ken was himself phlegmatic about these changes: 'I got rid of berets...you can't really wear a beret with shoulder length hair,' but those higher up insisted upon conformity: 'some D.C.s [District Commissioners] wanted you to, it became a bit of a power struggle'.<sup>154</sup> It appeared that young people became self-conscious about involvement in parades – Ken explained that in recent times Cub Scouts were embarrassed to march in public because their friends 'take the mickey'.<sup>155</sup> The former requirement for Scout and Cub troops to attend church was loosened.<sup>156</sup> The Church Lads' Brigade also responded to cultural change. The Beverley branch allowed girls to join when the national organisation became the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade in 1978.<sup>157</sup> The CLB's regimental atmosphere was relaxed in favour of craft activities.<sup>158</sup>

Turner charity prize speeches exhorting the importance of service were still reported in the *Beverley Guardian* in 1965 but were not reported by 1973. This does not mean the content of speeches had necessarily changed, but that times had changed and the paper was no longer so confident in its role as broadcaster of this kind of moralising.

### *Conclusion*

Affluence did not appear to diminish working-class participation in a rich associational life which included informal neighbourhood organisation, pubs, sports and hobby clubs, working men's clubs, works' social clubs, youth organisations, political groups, the borough council and philanthropic activity. In this particular small town, therefore, it would be wrong to reduce discussions of working-class community to informal

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<sup>153</sup> Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, track 2.

<sup>154</sup> Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, track 2.

<sup>155</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.93 mins.

<sup>156</sup> Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.90 mins.

<sup>157</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 12 October 1978.

<sup>158</sup> George Little 12 March 2010, c.50 mins; George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, c.21 mins.

sociability amongst small close-knit peer groups of work-mates, neighbours and family, as Herbert Gans did in his study of the West End district of Boston.<sup>159</sup>

Furthermore, the purported rise in individualism which Eric Hobsbawm attributed to the affluent era did not stop working-class people from joining clubs and from undertaking voluntary associational activity for the benefit of their communities.

Although figures were not available to measure the total working-class involvement in associational life in the town, other authors have suggested that nationally, working-class involvement in associations declined *after* the period of affluence, and may have been connected to the fragmentation of working-class identities attendant on deindustrialisation from the later 1970s.<sup>160</sup>

In describing the contribution of local associational life to community cohesion, I again referred to Granovetter's hypothesis that networks of the weaker social ties militated against the fracturing of community into small, close-knit peer groups.<sup>161</sup> However, the present chapter acknowledged gender and social class divisions in associational life. Granovetter's theory was conceived with large single-class districts of cities in mind, and did not account for the strong class divisions which stratified places such as Beverley where much associational life followed the contours of class.

The chapter delineated two dimensions of change taking place in the period. Firstly, the sharp divisions between classes in associational life, whilst not disappearing, eased somewhat. In the era of affluence, working-class men and women joined clubs and societies that had previously been overwhelmingly middle-class. However, whereas proponents of the *embourgeoisement* thesis hypothesised that the post-war working classes aspired to and adopted middle-class culture, the suggestion from this study is that change was a complex process of adaptation and negotiation between cultures which in any case overlapped. Secondly, the strongly conservative ethos which dominated civil society in the early part of the period was asserted less robustly and self-confidently by the 1970s.

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<sup>159</sup> Gans, *The Urban Villagers*, pp.229-242. See also, for example: Roberts, *Women and Families*; Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*; Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*.

<sup>160</sup> Yaojun Li, Mike Savage, Andrew Pickles 'Social Capital and social exclusion in England and Wales (1972-1999)' *British Journal of Sociology* 54, issue 4, (2003), 497-526. p.520; the 1970s were the heyday in terms of membership of working men's clubs, for example, when there were 6 million members as opposed to 3.5 million in 2007: Ruth Lousie Cherrington, "The development of working men's clubs: a case study of implicit cultural policy" *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 15, no.2, 2009, 187-199, p.197.

<sup>161</sup> Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties", pp.1373-1374.

## Chapter Seven. Identity and Place

Beverley people are very proud of being Beverlonians...there is a great pride in the place.<sup>1</sup>

Josephine Klein was concerned with the impact of different forms of residential community on the social behaviour and psychology of residents.<sup>2</sup> Her analysis was based on the descriptions of patterns of social interaction which formed the larger part of the 1950s and 1960s British community studies which she utilised as source material. What was largely absent from Klein's account, featuring only marginally in many of the sources she used, was discussion of the ways in which people identified with particular places.<sup>3</sup> Authors since the 1970s have argued that discussions of community should include fuller consideration of how people attributed social meaning to spaces and places, and have sometimes prioritised this over patterns of sociability.<sup>4</sup> The current chapter explores ways in which identities were linked to place in Beverley in the post-war decades, and shows how other types of identification could cut across or reinforce place-based identities.

The evidence from Beverley will be compared to Mike Savage's recent reading of local attachment in England in the 1950s and 1960s. Savage analysed qualitative data from several 1960s community studies, arguing that a 'functional orientation to locale' predominated in the two or three decades after the Second World War. The data analysed by Savage suggested that attachment to place amongst 'born and bred' locals did not display 'an elaborated comparative frame of reference', did not contain an 'aesthetic sense regarding the quality or aura of place' and was instead defined by 'family affiliations'. Similarly, more mobile individuals valued places for practical

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<sup>1</sup> Anna Nicholl, 22 February 2010, track 2 c.0 mins.

<sup>2</sup> Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.x-xi, p.220.

<sup>3</sup> Where Klein did cite her sources on the localism of working classes, she used these citations to make points about the density of local networks rather than exploring local attachment in itself: Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, p.76, p.126, p.129. Many contemporary authors described working-class localism in the 1950s and 1960s but gave little space to its analysis, for example: Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, pp.51-61; Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*, p.113; Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life*, p.156-158.

<sup>4</sup> For example: Suttles, *The Social Construction of Communities*; Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*; Edwards, *Born and Bred*; Rogaly and Taylor, *Moving Histories of Class and Community*. Cohen considered that changes in patterns of social interaction did not necessarily destroy community, which inhered principally in symbolic renderings 'of the distinctive community through myth, ritual and "constructed" tradition' (p.37).

reasons – ‘work, schooling and local amenities’ – rather than for particular and aesthetic qualities. Savage contrasted this with ‘elective believers’ in the 1990s, who ‘waxed lyrical about where they lived’, emphasising ‘identity, meaning and “aura”’ of places in order to claim affiliation. There was certainly evidence in the Beverley study of working-class ‘functional’ attitudes to place.<sup>5</sup> However, there was more to local identity in the 1950s and 1960s than Savage allowed, as will be seen.

The chapter will first discuss how residents identified with their own residential areas of Beverley, and assigned social class and status characteristics to other parts of the town. The next two sections consider different ways in which identity as a ‘Beverlonian’ was understood and symbolised, including commonalities and divergences between middle-class and working-class identification with the town. Finally the limits to place-based identity are considered.

### **The ‘Berlin Wall’, ‘Becksiders’ and ‘Shanghai Shetrivers’**

Across the period, residents mentally partitioned Beverley into areas with different social characteristics, and interviewees frequently described how they had identified with, and felt comfortable in, distinct parts of town. As a corollary of this, social identities were ascribed to those living in other parts of the town. Gerald Suttles described this process as ‘cognitive mapping’, a means by which people symbolically subdivide the complexity of urban space. For Suttles, such cognitive maps relied on widely accepted understandings about the identities of particular neighbourhoods.<sup>6</sup> In Beverley it was clear that such processes could result in stigmatising the populations of some areas, who then had to accommodate or resist such stigma in their own identity construction.

Many residents recognised the simple division of Beverley by the railway line that split the town into east and west. Predominantly working-class residential areas were situated to the east, with wealthier neighbourhoods lying to the west of the railway. Topographical facts (the situation of waterways, the direction of prevailing winds) encouraged the situation of factories in 19<sup>th</sup> century Beverley to the east, and these factory sites continued to be the principal industrial employers in the twentieth century. Much of the new working-class housing built from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century was

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<sup>5</sup> Mike Savage “History, Belongings, Communities” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11, No.2, April 2008, 151-162, pp.151-152, p.156, pp.157-158, p.161.

<sup>6</sup> Suttles, *The Social Construction of Communities*, pp.28-32, p.52.

therefore situated east of the railway, adjoining the older working-class area of Beekside, which had been associated with industry since the Middle-Ages. So, although it was not an absolute dividing line (there was also working-class housing in the western part of the town) the railway was a potent symbolic boundary between areas understood to have different class characteristics. Railway lines as a marker of social space are a commonplace of popular imagination, enshrined proverbially in terms such as ‘the wrong side of the tracks’. Suttles noted that such physical markers could become ‘a point beyond which the gradation in what people are like is said to make a qualitative change’.<sup>7</sup> As Cristina Purcar has observed, the routing of railways through towns could provide a convenient boundary marker for subsequent town development, with lower status housing and industrial works becoming concentrated on one side of the rails.<sup>8</sup>

The symbolic marker of the railway remained significant across the period. ‘I came to know something about men of the working class’, recalled the Congregationalist Herbert Abba, of his 45 years’ ministry in industrial east Beverley.<sup>9</sup> George Wigton grew up in this area in the 1920s and 1930s and remembered:

They always used to say, well they still say, it just depends, which side of the railway lines you are. If you were at the shipyard side, well you were working, you were a cloth cap man, if you were at the other side, you weren’t, you were academic or something.<sup>10</sup>

Les White articulated a similar sense of us and them: ‘They always reckon you live at one side of the lines you’re not wanted at the other side of the lines, cause at the other side of the lines, when you think about it, all the poshies live.’<sup>11</sup> The class divide was obvious to a policeman who moved to the town in the 1960s:

In those days if people were going on holiday from the posh end of the town... you’d keep an eye on their house... You had a big east west split in those days.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* p.235.

<sup>8</sup> Cristina Purcar, "On the Wrong Side of the Track: Railways as Urban Boundaries in the Towns of the First Transylvanian Railway," *Urban History* 37, no. 1 (2010): 66-89, p.89.

<sup>9</sup> Herbert W. Abba, *To Build and to Plant. Memoirs of a Forty-Five Year's Ministry*, (London: Independent Press Ltd., 1958), p.42.

<sup>10</sup> George Wigton, 15 February 2010, c.65 mins.

<sup>11</sup> Les White, 29 October 2010, c.1 hour.

<sup>12</sup> Ben Curry, 19 April 2010, c.20 mins.

Tom Potter grew up on the Cherry Tree council estate in east Beverley; his father was a shipyard worker and Labour supporter but Tom became a businessman and a Conservative councillor. Tom discussed how local politics in the 1950s and 1960s were divided in class terms and how, for him, the railway lines symbolised this class and political dividing line:

People from my end of the town, they used to call it, he lives on the other side of the lines, which is the crossing, the railway line...that was a stigma in itself, that people who lived on that side were lowlife. So it was clearly defined. I went to the other side [the Conservative Party]...when you stood as a candidate in the 1970s you were welcome. You wouldn't have been welcome in 1940s and '50s, you were from the other side of the lines. If you worked at Shipyard or Hodgson's or Armstrong's you were expected to stand as a socialist... a clear, defined line.<sup>13</sup>

The railway line retained significance across the period and subsequently. In 1977 the Reverend Bruce Hannah of St Nicholas Church asked if the annual Lions Carnival procession could visit 'the Cinderella part of the town', since, 'we who live on the other side of the tracks are totally forgotten in the carnival processions'.<sup>14</sup> In 2008 the website of the Beverley Civic Society described the railway as a 'Berlin Wall', demonstrating the persistence of this symbolic boundary line.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, this division of the town was consolidated after the Second World War by the building of large council estates to the east, replacing old slum housing across the town. Between 1945 and 1965 the borough council built 1,000 houses, enlarging the pre-war Cherry Tree and Grovehill estates and linking them with the new Riding Fields and Swinemoor estates.<sup>16</sup> Together these formed a single large conglomeration of council housing, known to many residents simply as 'the council estate'. The inhabitants of council estate housing in this period were undeniably working-class.<sup>17</sup> There was therefore a growth in the proportion of the working-class population of the

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<sup>13</sup> Tom Potter, 24 October 2008, c. 7 mins.

<sup>14</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 20 June 1977.

<sup>15</sup> Beverley Civic Society website, <http://www.beverleycivic.co.uk/planning.html> ,[Accessed: 9 January 2008].

<sup>16</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 20 August 1965. See Appendix Three, 'Maps showing post-war development of Beverley'.

<sup>17</sup> William Vincent, 25 May 2010, c.6 mins; Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.10 mins; George Hunter, 14 January 2010, c.80 mins; Eva White, 18 June 2010, c.35 mins; Pete Daniels, 28 July 2010, c.31 and c.37 mins.



town living east of the railway lines, exaggerating the sense of a town divided by class and geography.<sup>18</sup>

Alongside understandings of Beverley as fundamentally divided by the railway, there were micro-geographical divisions, often expressed in terms of status. Working-class residents in the older terraced housing to the east of the lines had, since the early part of our period, observed finer spatial distinctions. Judy Whittles grew up on Becksides in the 1940s and identified a neighbouring street as having been ‘posh’.<sup>19</sup> Both Jack Binnington (who lived on Becksides) and Richard Webb (who lived on the adjacent street of Holme Church Lane) agreed that in the 1940s and 1950s Holme Church Lane was seen as socially superior.<sup>20</sup> Albert Newby claimed that when his aunt moved a few yards from a terraced house in a back street to a slightly grander house facing onto Grovehill Road in the 1930s, the doctor charged her more as she had moved up in the world.<sup>21</sup> The veracity of this story is less important than the perception of micro-degrees of socio-spatial differentiation.

Whilst the concentration of post-war council housing in the east helped consolidate east/west class divisions, it also contributed to the status distinctions within the working classes. Evidence of a stigmatisation of some rougher council estate streets could be seen as early as 1945 in letters to the *Beverley Guardian*. One letter-writer congratulated the council on appointing a housing manager, ‘having regard to conditions obtaining on at least one of the corporation’s estates’; another commented on the problems of moving people from ‘the slums’ into estates without making social facilities available: ‘Where this is not done it is unfair for anyone to speak disparagingly of corporation house tenants’.<sup>22</sup> All across the period, terms such as ‘Corned Beef Island’ and ‘Shanghai’ were used for small parts of the council estates deemed particularly rough.<sup>23</sup>

It was clear that council housing was regarded as a desirable option for many, including the skilled working classes, during the immediate post-war years of housing

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<sup>18</sup> Bill Andrews, 20 January 2010, c.1 hour 49 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 1 June 1945; Les White, 21 October 2010, c.0 mins; Ken Ingleton, 23 March 2010, c.15 mins; David Hughes, 24 June 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>19</sup> John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.1 hour 26 mins.

<sup>20</sup> Jack Binnington, 3 August 2010, c.20 mins; Richard Webb, ERYMS interview, c.1 min.

<sup>21</sup> Albert Newby, 12 January 2010, c.1 hour 7 mins.

<sup>22</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 9 June 1945.

<sup>23</sup> Bob Miles, 11 February 2010, c.5 mins; Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, 1 hour 58 mins.

shortages, and there were long waiting lists.<sup>24</sup> But by the 1960s the affordability of home ownership meant that council housing began to be seen as lower-status by some. Janet Thompson was born in 1948 and grew up on the Swinemoor council estate, but by the 1960s her parents wanted to move out, and did so in the early 1970s:

I think because you got a stigma with it ...you were seen to be a lower class of people if you were in a council house. I don't know why but that's how it appeared to be...in the sixties... And the amount of people round about us that did the same thing...moved out.<sup>25</sup>

Residents of neighbourhoods designated rough by those around them could use stigmatising labels as positive symbols of their own – Anthony Cohen termed this ‘honouring’ a stigma.<sup>26</sup> At least in retrospect, interviewees took a certain pride in coming from the rougher neighbourhoods. For example, some of those who grew up in the part of the estate termed ‘Shanghai’ appeared to have accepted the label ‘Shanghai Shetrivers’ with good humour.<sup>27</sup> Poverty could also be used by residents as a positive symbol of their social homogeneity and therefore togetherness, as in the remark: ‘Everybody was in the same boat ‘cause nobody had nowt.’<sup>28</sup> Neighbourhood homogeneity was emphasised by some interviewees despite the fact that they also recognised social distinctions within these neighbourhoods.<sup>29</sup> However, residents were not necessarily happy with stigmatisation. George Hunter recalled that the rough reputation his neighbourhood enjoyed in the 1940s was ‘far-fetched’; his mother had thought that the popular label of ‘Corned Beef Island’ used for their neighbourhood was ‘ridiculous’.<sup>30</sup> Pete Daniels grew up on the Swinemoor council estate in the 1960s and rejected implicit connotations of social superiority and inferiority in what he described as the ‘myth’ of an east/west split in the town: ‘I went to school up there [west Beverley], and [know] a lot, a lot of people from that area, and even then I didn’t see them as any better than myself or a lot of people from this side.’<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> For example: Jim Hardy 26 January 2010, c.82 mins; Olive Sissons, 30 July 2010, c.82 mins.

<sup>25</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.61 mins.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, p.60.

<sup>27</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.0 mins; Bob Miles, 11 February 2010, c.5 mins; Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.5 mins; Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.31 mins.

<sup>28</sup> Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.10 mins; Les White, 21 October 2010, c.0 mins.

<sup>29</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.45 mins ; and 3 August 2010, track 3 c.5 mins; Patrick Mateer, 13 January 2010, c.18 mins.

<sup>30</sup> George Hunter, 14 January 2010, c.20 mins.

<sup>31</sup> Pete Daniels, 28 July 2010, c.56 mins.

In addition to defining their own neighbourhoods in contradistinction to others, residents often found that their own residential areas provided the most comfortable and familiar social milieux. Some had a strong preference for certain parts of the town when it came to choosing a place to set up home. Fred Reid and his wife bought their first house on Cherry Tree lane (to the east of the railway lines) in 1954. Fred's preference was for the part of town in which he had grown up:

E: He didn't want to come up to this end of the town, did you? He wanted to stop Beckside end.

S: Why was that?

J: I don't know... I like Beck end and Flemingate way...

S: What did you like about Beckside area?

E: He didn't want to leave his mother.

J: I didn't want to leave my roots...It's just the area. I knew quite a lot of people.<sup>32</sup>

Janet Thompson grew up on the Swinemoor council estate and several members of her family had lived nearby on the eastern side of the tracks. In the 1970s, following four years of married life living around half a mile away in a privately owned house on the western side of the tracks, Janet and her husband moved back to a house next door to her grandmother in a street close to where she had grown up:

I settled reasonably ok when we were four years the other way, but I must admit I was happy to come back again...I've not really known anything else.<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, people felt uncomfortable in neighbourhoods which contained different types of people to those they were familiar with. Les White grew up on a Beverley council estate and worked on barges when, along with his wife, he bought a house on the new private-housing Model Farm estate in 1965. Les recalled of his neighbours:

They wasn't my kind of people. They were bank managers or deputy bank managers, one was a customs man, one was a dock manager, you know, they were all above me, all above my stakes.<sup>34</sup>

Les recalled perplexity at his neighbours' approach to budgeting, based around monthly salaries rather than weekly wages, and also found their willingness to incur

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<sup>32</sup> Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.86 mins.

<sup>33</sup> Janet Thompson, 23 November 2009, c.70 mins.

<sup>34</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.50 mins.

debt alien to his own background and expectations.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, in the early 1970s, newly-married Jim Fisher thought the private housing estate he moved onto on the west side of the town not as friendly as the Beckside area where he grew up: ‘It was one of those neighbourhoods where people are every Sunday out cleaning their cars.’<sup>36</sup> In the later 1970s when they decided to have a family Jim and his wife moved back east where he felt more at home: ‘We moved down here and the neighbours down here are just like they used to be in the olden days... I mean you know everyone and they’ll help each other.’<sup>37</sup>

Although residents identified with familiar neighbourhoods, the more positive creation of identification with place through myth and ritual which Cohen described was largely absent at a neighbourhood level in Beverley. The only neighbourhood in which there was a suggestion of this kind of positive community construction was Beckside in the 1940s and 1950s. Beckside had a long association with the barge trade, and had something of an occupational community, with several generations of ‘bargee’ families having lived in the area. The neighbourhood contained shops and industry and was positioned some distance from the centre of Beverley, all of which gave it a distinct atmosphere as a separate neighbourhood; indeed it was claimed in a public enquiry into a planning decision in 1973 that: ‘Beckside was regarded as a “little town on its own and cut off from the rest of Beverley.”’<sup>38</sup> Until the outbreak of World War Two, Beckside’s bargees celebrated their community through an annual water sports day.<sup>39</sup> There was also some suggestion of a symbolic construction of difference through slight dialectic variations and through storytelling amongst residents, as a former Becksider wrote of the 1940s and 1950s:

Becksiders had their own dialect words which seemed to be quite different to the surrounding area. The descriptive word ‘sleastering’ meant a furtive/sinister/up to no good way of walking (‘he came sleastering round the corner’). There were some interesting pronunciations of words such as ‘strength’ - the ‘st’ took on a ‘th’ sound... Folkloric tales were many – told to amuse around firesides or sitting on the bench at Low Brigg. Unfortunately I cannot remember much of the oft-longwinded detail of these. There was a

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<sup>35</sup> Les White, 21 October 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>36</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.57 minutes.

<sup>37</sup> Jim Fisher, 16 December 2009, c.57 minutes.

<sup>38</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 5 January 1973.

<sup>39</sup> George Wigton, 15 February 2010, c.30 mins; Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.115 mins.

woman known as 'Seagull Sarah' who lived by the beck. I remember her name was due to her pet seagull which came in to eat off the kitchen table. Also there was the tale of mariners in sloops and barges running aground on 'Tea-Leaf Island'.<sup>40</sup>

The term 'Becksiders' was commonly used, and symbolised some sense of belonging to a place with its own identity; Becksiders were often claimed to have embodied working-class virtues of hard work, toughness, helpfulness and humour.<sup>41</sup>

### **The construction of an 'ancient borough'**

Although residents identified with particular areas of Beverley, they also identified with the town as a whole. The imaginative 'local patriotism' of residents could be seen in the largely middle-class symbolic construction of Beverley as a historic and picturesque market town. The priorities of those whose civic pride was invested in this form of identity sometimes clashed with those of working-class residents who had different priorities in their attachment to place.

Cohen noted that the past was a valuable resource for community construction in the present, commenting on such varied contexts as Soviet Mongolian society and the Scottish island of Whalsey.<sup>42</sup> It has been noted that the past formed an imaginative resource for the symbolic construction of community in 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialising contexts also.<sup>43</sup> But it seems likely that one particular use of heritage – the concern with conserving towns' and cities' architectural antiquities as emblems of their historic identity – gained ground in the latter half of the twentieth century, as Kevin Walsh observed.<sup>44</sup> There is no reason to deviate from a similar chronology in Beverley. Local antiquarians writing about Beverley's history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century must have had at least some readership; community ceremonial using the past as a reference point took place in the form of an historical pageant in 1937.<sup>45</sup> But it was not until 1961 that members of the Rotary Club, prompted by the imminent demolition of one of the town's historic streets, formed a Civic Society, and conservation became an evergreen issue in the

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Malton written reminiscence, ERYMS.

<sup>41</sup> Jack Binnington, 22 June 2010, c.31 mins; Fred Reid, 26 January 2010, c.125 mins; John and Judy Whittles, 10 May 2010, c.1 hour 20 mins.

<sup>42</sup> Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, pp. 92-97, p.99, p.103.

<sup>43</sup> Robin Pearson, "Knowing One's Place: Perceptions of Community in the Industrial Suburbs of Leeds, 1790-1890," *Journal of Social History* 27, no. 2 (1993): 221-244, pp.235-236.

<sup>44</sup> Kevin Walsh, *Representation of the Past : Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World*, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.70-74.

<sup>45</sup> Programme for the historical pageant procession 'Beverley through the Ages', ERALS, DDBB/5/14.

town.<sup>46</sup> The Civic Society remained a largely middle-class association in the 1960s and 1970s, as a leading member of the society acknowledged.<sup>47</sup>

The Civic Society was informed by, and helped to perpetuate, an image of Beverley as historic and picturesque. They celebrated the town's unique and valuable monuments: Beverley Minster (a gothic church renowned across Europe); the Tudor splendour of St Mary's Church; the North Bar (a medieval gatehouse); the medieval street plan; the Georgian civic and domestic architectural heritage. The Civic Society considered Beverley:

An exceptional example of coherent unity. It still possesses qualities of character, both visible and intangible, which are rare and irreplaceable.<sup>48</sup>

It was almost mandatory that public statements of town patriotism include reference to the town's ancient heritage. For example, in 1945 Ernest Symmons, a businessman who ran the town's 'Picture Playhouse' cinema, wrote in praise of new street lighting: 'Old Beverley is picturesque in any sort of light, its quaint old streets and houses possess an individuality all of their own.'<sup>49</sup> Hodgson's director George Odey wrote in 1955 of 'this ancient borough', where the casual visitor would notice 'the Minster and St Mary's and the ancient red-roofed houses interspersed with trees.'<sup>50</sup> Even left-wing locals paid homage to the town's antiquity, with JP Mr. Millett announcing at a Labour adoption meeting in 1945 that the time 'had come when they should have representation on our ancient council'.<sup>51</sup> The medieval Minster church which dominated the town was the most potent symbol of historic Beverley. Following an appearance of the Minster on national television in 1957, the *Beverley Guardian* columnist 'Onlooker' wrote that a 'friend' had seen this and despite being only 'Beverlonian by adoption', was 'immensely proud of our glorious minster' and hoped other people saw it around the country.<sup>52</sup>

The conservation movement was clearly motivated by a need to protect Beverley's architectural heritage from some dramatic town planning proposals,

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<sup>46</sup> Beverley Civic Society website, <http://www.beverleycivic.co.uk/history.html>, [Accessed: 27 April 2011]; Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*, pp. 154-160. [Accessed: 27 April 2011].

<sup>47</sup> Email correspondence with Professor Barbara English, 27 April 2011.

<sup>48</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 22 January 1965.

<sup>49</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 28 July 1945.

<sup>50</sup> *Green's Household Almanac*, 1955.

<sup>51</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 27 October 1945.

<sup>52</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 12 January 1957.

prompted by increasing road traffic.<sup>53</sup> But there was also a sense in which the historic character of the town was emphasised as a means of distinguishing it from the nearby city of Hull. A local architect speaking at a Beverley Civic Society meeting in 1965 observed, perhaps playing to his audience:

Everybody loves Beverley...Not everybody loves Hull, it is so hard [to pursue conservation measures] in a place that people don't care about or live in to any great extent.<sup>54</sup>

There was some anxiety about the potential for Beverley to be subsumed, politically and physically, by its larger neighbour, which perhaps amplified the tendency for residents to emphasise the distinction. Hull was close to Beverley, and in practice entwined in everyday life. Residents of both Hull and Beverley might travel to the other place for work, leisure and sociability with friends and relatives. Hull was a relatively large city with a population of 303 000 in 1961 (compared with Beverley's 16,000).<sup>55</sup> The city spread outwards in the post-war years, with large sub-urban council estates encroaching on the countryside between the two settlements.<sup>56</sup> Anxiety about the threat to Beverley's integrity was expressed by a woman who described herself as 'exiled from the ancient borough': 'I hope Hull never, never really attach themselves to the ancient borough for there was a Beverley long before there was Hull.'<sup>57</sup> Local concern for the independence of the town in relation to Hull was noted by a letter-writer in 1963:

Beverley, despite its proximity to Hull, is very much Beverley. It is a proud, old-fashioned and somewhat insular type of community...It is certainly not Beverley, near Hull. Even the appendage of East Yorkshire to its name is resented by a true Beverlonian...that is how I, even as an interloper, would have it continue.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume Six*, pp. 154-160. [Accessed: 16 May 2011].

<sup>54</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 8 October 1965.

<sup>55</sup> K.J. Allison, *A History of the County of York East Riding: Volume One: The City of Kingston upon Hull* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), Online edition, URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66776> [Accessed: 2 May 2011], pp.215-286; *Census 1961 England and Wales. County Report. Yorkshire, East Riding*. (London: HMSO 1964).

<sup>56</sup> Allison, *A History of the County of York East Riding: Volume One*, pp.215-286. [Accessed: 2 May 2011].

<sup>57</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 9 January 1960.

<sup>58</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 11 January 1963.

Prickliness about Hull was also evident in a 1977 letter regarding an enquiry into the ownership of common land in Beverley: ‘Why is the inquiry to take place in Hull – it does not concern the people of Hull.’<sup>59</sup>

In the creation and reinforcing of the image of Beverley as an historic town, the discourse of antiquity and the enthusiasm for conservation were joined by public ritual as means for conveying history and tradition. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger described the centrality of appeals to tradition and antiquity in such rituals.<sup>60</sup> An ‘invented tradition’ of public civic ceremonial, St John of Beverley Day, was initiated in 1949.<sup>61</sup> This annual celebration (still undertaken at the time of writing) involved the mayor and civic leaders progressing through the town on the nearest Sunday to 7<sup>th</sup> May, at the head of a parade of mayors and mace bearers from other Yorkshire towns. Beverley notables such as George Odey were in prominent attendance. In 1973, 25 mayors from across Yorkshire attended the ceremony.<sup>62</sup> Other historic anniversaries were commemorated. For example, in 1973 the 400 year anniversary of Beverley’s charter of incorporation was commemorated with a procession of local people (including one working-class interviewee) dressed as characters from Beverley’s past, and a display of the town’s medieval charters in the library.<sup>63</sup>

This concern with local history and tradition can be identified with a conservative nostalgia for a cohesive, stable and deferential community imagined in the past. Such a conservative world-view informed portrayals in the *Beverley Guardian* of working-class Beverlonians as insular, deferential and hard-working. The paper reported milestone birthdays, wedding celebrations and retirements of locals, preferably ‘born and bred Beverlonians’ with lengthy service in a particular local industry.<sup>64</sup> The self-confessed ‘interloper’ cited earlier worried about the potential closure of the town’s shipyard in 1963, not in terms of the suffering of those made redundant, but because the artisans who worked at the shipyard would have to go

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<sup>59</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 10 March 1977.

<sup>60</sup> Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, pp.50-58; Hobsbawm, "Introduction," in *The Invention of Tradition*, pp.9-10.

<sup>61</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 9 May 1953. St John of Beverley established Beverley Minster in the eighth century.

<sup>62</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 14 May 1955; *Beverley Guardian*, 11 May 1973; Ed Byrne, 24 May 2010, c.48 mins.

<sup>63</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.101 mins; *Beverley Guardian*, 4 May 1973; Barbara English, Elizabeth Hall, and Vanessa Neave, *Old Beverley, An Exhibition of Charters, Costumes, Maps, Documents and Pictures*, (Beverley: Beverley 400 Committee, 1973).

<sup>64</sup> For example, Jennie Thornton in *Beverley Guardian*, 11 January 1963; Albert Meadley in *Beverley Guardian*, 7 May 1955; Mr and Mrs Walker in *Beverley Guardian*, 9 April 1965.



elsewhere, hence diminishing the character of the town.<sup>65</sup> In the 1940s through to the 1960s, though toned down somewhat thereafter, local journalists conveyed the conservative view that working-class people should know their place. One column, ‘Sportsman’s Notebook’, which often reported dialect speech and portrayed the quaint ways of country folk, lamented: ‘We live in an age when Jack is as good as his master and any outward acknowledgement of superior position...is judged a weakness.’<sup>66</sup> ‘Sportsman’s Notebook’ continued to appear until the 1970s, helping to define the general conservative tone of the paper.

As the above quote suggests, conservative versions of local community were partially a reaction to wider social and political change. The post-war rise of Labour had some impact locally, with a surge in the party’s Beverley constituency vote in 1945; Labour councillors, very infrequent previously, were a constant presence in the borough council from 1952.<sup>67</sup> The introduction of Labour into local politics was resisted through assertions that national party politics, with their class overtones, ought to have no place locally – post-war local councillors almost all listed as ‘Independent’ until 1952, and a Labour candidate in 1949 claimed: ‘The old cry has been raised that there should be no politics in Local Government, yet the majority of Beverley Councillors are prominent members of the Conservative and Liberal Parties.’<sup>68</sup> Strikes were reported as essentially ‘un-Beverlonian’ behaviour in the *Beverley Guardian*, which took a noticeably pro-management stance. During a shipyard strike in 1955 a reporter claimed to have ‘spoken to many shipyard workers in the town this week, and I have yet to meet one who is in favour of the strike’. The clear implication was that the strike was nationally imposed.<sup>69</sup> In 1965 another shipyard strike was reported: ‘Is all this effort [of management staff to secure orders] going to come to nothing through petty disagreements and grumbles which could sound the death-knell for Beverley’s centuries old shipbuilding industry?’<sup>70</sup> Here the conservative appeal to a conception of an historic and traditional Beverley, as opposed to modern and conflictual class politics, was overt.

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<sup>65</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 11 January 1963.

<sup>66</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 13 January 1945.

<sup>67</sup> Beverley Labour Branch minutes, 14 May 1952.

<sup>68</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 25 April 1953; 7 May 1949. A Labour borough councillor was briefly in office in 1949, the first for 13 years: *Beverley Guardian*, 25 June 1949.

<sup>69</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 23 March 1957.

<sup>70</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 22 January 1965.

There were conflicting versions of local identity and belonging in Beverley that cast doubt on Cohen's suggestion that symbols of community identity glossed over internal difference.<sup>71</sup> Undoubtedly, some symbols were shared in an uncontroversial way – the Minster for example could be appropriated and understood in different ways, but still functioned as a symbol of belonging. However, it is clear that aesthetic emphases on Beverley's tradition and architectural heritage could be contested where these conflicted with more personal or practical attachments to place. A shipyard worker wrote to the *Beverley Guardian* in 1965 to protest against the paper's version of the shipyard strike as corrosive of Beverley's traditional shipbuilding industry; he appealed instead to a different kind of connection with the town and its past. He argued that the paper was cavalier in attaching little import to the loss of 400 jobs so long as the ancient tradition of shipbuilding continued – this ignored the plight of those who would now have to uproot from the town to look for work. 'Most of our fathers were also shipbuilders', he wrote, 'who were from time to time made redundant, and workers would be letting them down if they did not fight for good wages.'<sup>72</sup>

Opposing versions of belonging and identification were also suggested by conflict over a redevelopment project in the late 1970s. The borough council sought to demolish St Andrew's Street, a dilapidated street of working-class terraced houses sheltering in the shadow of the Minster. Residents, some of whom had lived in the street for many years, and had other relatives living in the same street, sought to resist this demolition. In 1977, on the advice of a group of architects, the residents formed a cooperative which later purchased the houses. The cooperative planned to refurbish those homes which could be saved and replace those which had to be demolished with new buildings on adjacent land. However, the proposed building scheme was contested by members of the Civic Society who claimed that the new homes would obstruct views of the Minster from the south. Three individuals put considerable amounts of their own money into fighting the planning proposal in a High Court case which they lost.<sup>73</sup>

Middle-class conservationism could appear to clash with working-class interests by obstructing local industry. In the 1960s and 1970s there was ongoing debate about the town's medieval friary, encircled by the Armstrong's shock absorber

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<sup>71</sup> Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, p.18.

<sup>72</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 29 January 1965.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with manager of St Andrews Housing Cooperative, 27 April 2010; Johnston Birchall, *Building Communities*, pp.135-140.

factory. Armstrong's applied to demolish the building in 1962. Opposition from conservation-minded residents secured a preservation order for the friary and Armstrong's was forced instead to expand on a new site to the east of Beverley. The long-term fate of the building remained uncertain across the period (it was later restored and turned into a youth hostel).<sup>74</sup> A 'Beverley Friary Preservation Trust', headed in 1978 by the now-retired George Odey, proposed the removal of the Armstrong's site altogether because of the visual pollution it wrought to the environs of the historic Minster and Friary. Odey suggested that the Armstrong's factory would be better situated to the east of railway on a disused part of the Hodgson's tannery site. Even were this not possible, he argued, and the company withdrew its operations from Beverley, this would only result in the loss of around 200 jobs to town residents, which would be made up with jobs in a stimulated tourism sector. This suggestion prompted debate in the *Beverley Guardian*. The case presented for maintaining the factory in its present site was expressed in terms of the need to safeguard Armstrong's jobs; furthermore, the preservationists were criticised for attempting to foist the expense of saving dilapidated buildings onto the rate payer. A letter writer with an east Beverley address (Grovehill Road) wrote: 'the question may be put as to whether some of those people who want to hack about with our town [by moving Armstrong's factory] actually live in it themselves'.<sup>75</sup> In the event, Armstrong's withdrew completely from their town-centre site in 1981.<sup>76</sup> Thus, over the period of the study, industrial processes and working-class residences had been removed from the historic core of the town and re-sited to the east of the railway.

To some extent, then, Beverley's identity as an historic and picturesque market town was a middle-class cultural construction which could contradict and even threaten different types of connection to place, including attachment to a particular street or desire to work in one's home town. But we will now see that Beverlonian identity was not *only* a middle-class construction. Working-class residents also conceived of themselves as 'Beverlonian' and expressed local patriotic sentiment.

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<sup>74</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume 6*, pp. 154-160. [Accessed: 15 September 2011].

<sup>75</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 3, 17, 24 August 1978.

<sup>76</sup> Allison *et al.*, *A History of the County of York: Volume 6*, pp. 154-160. [Accessed: 15 September 2011].

## Working-class Beverlonians

Mr. Harold Ewen told the *Yorkshire Post* in 1981: 'I don't want to move and start paying rent at my age. I have about an acre of land which I rent and I have cultivated for many years, and I need to live nearby.'<sup>77</sup> Mr. Ewen, aged 79, had lived on St Andrew's Street for 40 years, but his house was not included in the list of those for renovation by the cooperative who were buying the properties, and so he dropped out of the scheme. The council were now planning to demolish his home. The kind of attachment which Mr. Ewen conveyed, a consequence both of practical considerations and rootedness in place, was frequently expressed in the interviews. It was also noted by Richard Hoggart in his semi-autobiographical portrait of working-class Leeds before the Second World War.<sup>78</sup> It was this kind of 'functional' attachment – a 'resignation to place' – that Savage suggested was the extent of group belonging amongst 'locals' in the 1950s-1970s.<sup>79</sup> We have already seen that there was considerable local patriotism and appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of Beverley on the part of residents who were probably middle-class (those who corresponded with newspapers and formed civic societies). To what extent did working-class attachment to place also include local patriotism at a town-wide level and an identification as 'Beverlonian' that went beyond the 'functional'?

Their home town had a pull for many interviewees who had left and returned. Iris Brown left Beverley for extended periods, firstly as a member of the armed forces, and then as an army wife in the 1970s. She said that she had always felt that she would one day return to Beverley, the town she thought of as her home.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, when Jean Benson moved to Liverpool with her husband in the 1950s, she soon found that she wanted to return, claiming that it was easier to get to know people in Beverley than in the city.<sup>81</sup> George Little described how, when he was sent away to work in Wales, he had never felt comfortable and always looked forward to the familiarity of his home town.<sup>82</sup> For Margaret Day, the question of whether she had ever thought of moving

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<sup>77</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 8 May 1981.

<sup>78</sup> Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, pp.54-55.

<sup>79</sup> Savage, *History, Belongings, Communities*, 151-162, p.161.

<sup>80</sup> Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.73 mins.

<sup>81</sup> Jean Benson, 14 January 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>82</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008.

elsewhere prompted a statement of close identification with her home town: 'Well it's just home, Beverley's me.'<sup>83</sup>

Whilst this kind of identification could be interpreted as 'functional', it seems unrealistic to deny the emotional aspects of belonging. There were hints that the town pride which some working-class residents spoke about in the present was not simply a recent development – indeed it would be surprising if the relentless promotion of local patriotism in the *Beverley Guardian* and in civil society more broadly did not impact on the working classes' sense of place. Mick Underwood visited Ibiza annually since the 1970s and recalled telling friends from the island who had asked him why he wouldn't move to the island: 'I live in one of the finest towns in the world.'<sup>84</sup> The appreciation of the town's historic landmarks could be infused with the emotion of personal connection and memory as well as more abstract aesthetic values, as was evident in Ivy Shipton's avowed life-long love of the Minster:

When we bought the other bungalow and it looked across to the Minster I sort of gained some satisfaction from that in some strange way. Which I can't really explain. But I, don't know whether, I've always been interested in history, whether it was the history of it, or the beauty of it, or whatever it was. I don't really know. It's connected to where I lived. It was like...almost part of the furniture...because I went to school in the shadow of it, I lived in the shadow of it, and it was accessible, you could go in and you were trusted... And you used to do the nativity play inside the church itself.<sup>85</sup>

Whilst the emotional qualities of attachment to the town are difficult to capture in retrospect, categories such as 'Beverley people', 'Beverlonian', 'native' and 'born and bred' were all used in the period of the study and are suggestive of identification with place. Jack Binnington defined the category of a 'Beverley person': 'People like myself, who'd been born and bred in Beverley, that had a great feel for the town.'<sup>86</sup> Hilda Little thought her husband's attachment to Beverley was result of his having

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<sup>83</sup> Margaret Day, 23 November 2009, c.21 mins.

<sup>84</sup> Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.75 mins.

<sup>85</sup> Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.90 mins.

<sup>86</sup> Jack Binnington, 26 October 2010, c. 5 mins.

been ‘born and bred’ there.<sup>87</sup> Dick Gibson noted that Beverlonians were the best local politicians:

One of the finest local politicians in Beverley was ... Harold Godbold...he did a lot for Beverley did that man. He’s a bit like Katy Gray is now... She’s a proper Beverlonian and she goes for the things that are right for us. And Harold Godbold was like that.<sup>88</sup>

Conversely, non-Beverlonians were seen to lack this sense of investment in the town and might behave irresponsibly as a result, both in local government and more generally. Derek Saltmer complained that the influx of non-Beverlonians was behind violence in the town centre pubs – he preferred to go to pubs where he could drink with Beverlonians.<sup>89</sup> The confluence between interviewees’ uses of these terms and their frequent occurrence in the *Beverley Guardian* during the period suggests that interviewees’ usage of such categories was not a recent innovation.<sup>90</sup>

Particularly in the 1940s and 1950s, the category of ‘Beverlonian’ was contrasted with that of ‘foreigner’, a term used to designate incomers:

Beverley was a close knit community in them days [1940s and 1950s]. If you didn’t come from Beverley you was a ‘foreigner’. As far as Carol’s dad [a Becksides coal merchant] was concerned, anybody out of Beverley was ‘foreigners’.<sup>91</sup>

Beverley people were considered to have a greater right to local resources than ‘foreigners’. A letter writer in 1946 compared the case of a family who had moved to Beverley to escape the bombing of Hull and were subsequently granted council housing with the plight of a ‘native’ family whom the council were evicting: ‘No one can deny the right of anyone to settle where they please, yet in the face of this incident, are the Housing Committee justified in evicting a native of the town from what has

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<sup>87</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.1 hour 15 mins. Harold Godbold was a Hodgson’s tannery foreman, a borough councillor from 1940s until the 1970s, a committee member at Hodgson’s recreation club and held other voluntary posts such as secretary of the snooker league. Kate Gray is an Independent Beverley Town councillor at the time of writing.

<sup>89</sup> Derek Saltmer, 25 January 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>90</sup> A few from countless examples: letter about injustice of evicting ‘native of Beverley’ from a tenancy, *Beverley Guardian*, 23 November 1946; article about ‘native of Beverley’ celebrating 97<sup>th</sup> birthday, *Beverley Guardian*, 17 June 1950; use of term ‘Beverlonian’ in ‘Onlooker’ column, *Beverley Guardian*, 12 January 1957; article about death of ‘born and bred’ woman, *Beverley Guardian*, 20 August 1965.

<sup>91</sup> John Whittles, 27 April 2010, c.10 mins; see also, for example, John Cooper, ERYMS interview, c.12 mins.

always been considered his home?’<sup>92</sup> Les White made a similar complaint at the time of the interview, contending that in the past Beverley people had priority in the allocation of local housing, which was now being taken up by ‘foreigners’. Bernard Walling felt that Labour Exchange staff had been less than enthusiastic in helping him to find a job when he moved to Beverley from London in the 1960s until he told them that he was married to a born and bred Beverley girl.<sup>93</sup> At times the distinction between Beverlonians and foreigners could result in open antagonism. Bob Garbutt recalled fights in the later 1940s between local shipyard workers and workers who had moved down from the North-east of England, brawls which he thought were fuelled by the belief that the incomers were taking work which rightfully belonged to locals.<sup>94</sup> Fighting between local lads and locally stationed soldiers was common in the 1970s. Indeed, a special police squad was formed to look after the interests of young soldiers in 1978; a Beverley man charged with threatening behaviour towards soldiers told magistrates: ‘They deserve it. They come into town and take our girlfriends.’<sup>95</sup>

This kind of ‘local xenophobia’ has a long history, as Keith Snell has shown.<sup>96</sup> In Beverley it frequently found expression in relation to people from Hull. The middle-class construction of Beverley identity in opposition to Hull was noted above, and the working classes shared this sense of their town’s superiority over the city. Doris Daniels told how her mother and father had been the victims of local xenophobia when they moved to Beverley to escape the bombing of Hull in the Second World War:

The Beverley people did treat them a bit rough. They always thought them a bit dirty cause they’d come from Hull and been bombed out... they was a little bit nasty... This lady, I think I’d got into some kind of argument with her daughter, and of course we was having a go. And Mam come to door, and her mam said to my mam ‘you want to get back to Hull, Hull Bulldog.’<sup>97</sup>

Doris’ sister, Lynne Norton, told a similar family story about the anti-Hull feeling they had encountered when they moved to the town to escape the Blitz:

Hull people had a bad name. I don’t know why but they got a bad name with Beverley people. And once my dad pulled a chap up... and this chap referred

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<sup>92</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 23 November 1946.

<sup>93</sup> Bernard Walling, ERYMS interview, c.18 mins.

<sup>94</sup> Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.25 mins.

<sup>95</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 21 September 1978.

<sup>96</sup> Keith Snell, "The Culture of Local Xenophobia," *Social History* 28, no. 1 (2003): 1-30, p.3.

<sup>97</sup> Doris Daniels, 16 December 2009, c.12 mins.

to them from Hull as ‘mucky buggers’. And my dad pulled him up, he said ‘have you ever been under them bombs?’ ... ‘Well shut up then ‘cause you don’t know what you’re talking about.’ ... They always seemed to have a down on Hull people here.<sup>98</sup>

Class and status perceptions were implicated in this distinction – Hull’s working classes were perceived by many to be from a lower strata than Beverley’s own working classes. Jack Blakeston recalled: ‘What me mum always said, after the war they built all these council houses and lots and lots of people flocked in from Hull, and she always said it sort of lowered the tone.’<sup>99</sup> George and Hilda Little’s conversations about the differences between Hull and Beverley captured some of the ways in which Beverley people (and, it seems, those from other small towns around Hull) frequently thought of those whom they encountered from the city:

There was a chap actually came in from Hessle to work at Armstrong’s, and he used to say to me, he said, ‘Well if I’m working-class, some of them lot out there’, that came from Hull, he said, ‘they must be lower working-class’ ... cause heck, was there a distinction ... The women on the shop floor at Armstrong’s, they used to come in a train, and they, you used to think that the men swore, but if you got some of them women swearing, they used words you’d never heard of.<sup>100</sup>

Hilda Little shared in her husband’s view of Hull people:

Hull people have a disadvantage, they don’t sound educated ... if they were describing what they did last weekend, ‘and I goes upstairs, and I puts me frock on, and I comes downstairs, and I gets out and I goes to the taxi.’ All their verbs are the wrong tense and they all speak like that don’t they?<sup>101</sup>

It appears that in relation to their Hull neighbours, Beverley residents often assumed a superior status, temporarily screening out the many status differences within their own town.

The differences between Hull and Beverley people were understood as part of a distinction between opposing social environments – Beverley as a market town was

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<sup>98</sup> Lynne Norton, 9 November 2009, c.120 mins.

<sup>99</sup> Jack Blakeston, 10 August 2010, c.1 hour 8 mins.

<sup>100</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, track 2.

<sup>101</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, track 2.



contrasted with Hull as a city. This distinction was commented on by a number of interviewees, including George Little as part of the conversation quoted above:

High School to me meant Beverley High School, Beverley Grammar School...you'd passed your eleven plus to go there. And we got to this [Hull] Maybury High School [to play rugby], and they were a set of thugs, and the teachers didn't seem like they had any control over them... you felt they were a totally different group all together. A city environment to being a market town environment...there was certainly a distinction.<sup>102</sup>

Bill Andrews spoke for many interviewees who identified with the market town, semi-rural environment of Beverley and didn't like visiting Hull. He thought friendliness was inversely proportionate to settlement size:

Hull's never been a place for me really, 'cept when I worked there... Nothing there for me, nothing there what appeals to me really in Hull, it's just, I don't like big places anyway...I like small places. Beverley's big enough...the bigger you get, the less friendly a place gets I think.<sup>103</sup>

Les White described the rural/urban division as a continuum when discussing why his gang in the 1970s had only ever started trouble in Beverley:

You didn't go into Hull and start any bother there, 'cause you got kicked to fuck...city people are different from town people, they're a bit wiser aren't they? A lot wiser anyway...and then when you get into country you're wiser than they are, or you think you are.<sup>104</sup>

This understanding of the urban environment as inculcating different behaviours and attitudes perhaps informed discussions of how Hull workers in Beverley's factories were frequently more politically militant than those from Beverley.<sup>105</sup> In short, it was plain that Hull was a symbolic resource for the construction of Beverlonian identity, for the working classes as well as for the middle classes.

Whilst identity could be understood and symbolically constructed through reference to 'others', there was also significant working-class involvement in more positive creations of a sense of town togetherness. Working-class men formed, or were

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<sup>102</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, track 2.

<sup>103</sup> Bill Andrews, 20 January 2010, c.1 hour 44 mins,

<sup>104</sup> Les White, 29 October 2010, c.1 hour.

<sup>105</sup> Ken Ingleton, 20 April 2010, c.10 mins; Jack Binnington, 26 October 2010, c.36 mins; John Cooper interview 2, ERYMS, c. 27 mins.

involved in forming, sports clubs which carried the town name such as the Beverley Rugby Union club in 1959 and the Beverley and District Sea Angling club in 1967.<sup>106</sup> Working-class people represented the town in cricket and rugby teams and watched their town teams play.<sup>107</sup> In 1969 working-class men and women helped form, run and play in a Beverley Brass Band which competed nationally, performed at town events and during the 1970s visited Germany several times with the Town Twinning Society.<sup>108</sup> Working-class men in particular were often local councillors and thus took leadership roles in civic ceremonial. Working-class children certainly participated in the parades and civic ceremonies that helped symbolise town unity. Many interviewees had been members of Scouts, Guides, and Church Lads' Brigade as children and thus marched through the town on Armistice Day, the Mayor's Parade and St George's Day.<sup>109</sup> Those who didn't take part directly often witnessed such civic events, as large crowds were reported – and appear on photographic and filmic evidence.<sup>110</sup> Children's groups such as the Church Lads' Brigade competed with others nationally in drill and athletics competitions.<sup>111</sup> There were occasional events bringing Beverley together as a town, including the Charter anniversary celebrations of 1973, in which one interviewee recalled taking part in a procession dressed as a monk and carrying a representation of the shrine of St John.<sup>112</sup> These kinds of activity could provide symbolic affirmation of town identity for those who took part.

In summary, working-class residents of Beverley appeared to identify with their town across the period. Such attachment often contained an emotional element, and cannot be simply reduced to a 'functional orientation' to local services and the advantages of living near relatives. Residents used categories such as 'born and bred', 'Beverlonian' and 'foreigner' to denote their sense of belonging to a community. The nearby 'other' of the city of Hull helped residents to symbolise their identity in terms of superior status and urban/rural contrast. The working classes participated in, and

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<sup>106</sup> George Little, 12 March 2010, c.155 mins; Dick Gibson, 11 March 2010, c.15 mins; Records of Beverley and District Sea Angling club, 1967 minutes, ERALS, DDX/1150/2

<sup>107</sup> George Little, 12 March 2010, c.24 mins; Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.5 mins, c.16 mins; Keith Barrett, 2 September 2010, c.50 mins.

<sup>108</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.125 mins.

<sup>109</sup> For eg. Iris Brown, 21 May 2010, c.42 mins; Evelyn Frith, 10 February 2010, c.15 mins.

<sup>110</sup> Ernest Symmons films, 'Picture Playhouse News', ERALS, DDX 1369/5/15.

<sup>111</sup> Beverley Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade Records, ERALS, DDX1344/4/289.

<sup>112</sup> Ellen and Harry Malster, 21 May 2010, c.101 mins.

sometimes led, activities organised on a town-wide level which added to a sense of Beverley identity.

### **The limits of identification with place**

Place-based identities were not fixed and constant; interviewees claimed different identities at different times. For many purposes, place was not important in the boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Class, status and other identifications could cut across place. Writers have advanced the concept of ‘relational’ identity to deal with the multiplicity and fluidity of identifications – identities are not fixed but conditional on different social contexts and the varying purposes of individuals and groups who assert them.<sup>113</sup>

For example, Beverlonian Mick Underwood sometimes asserted a strong Beverley identity in relation to Hull. He considered that ‘there is a defining difference between an ‘ullite and a Beverlonian’, identifying Hullites’ ‘awful dialect’ and fickle support for their sports teams as distinguishing factors.<sup>114</sup> Within his identification as Beverlonian, however, Mick had a particular affinity with the eastern half of the town, where he had spent his entire life:

I grew up in this estate, this side of Beverley, if you know what I mean, not the other side of the track...Even a lottery win wouldn’t knock me loose.<sup>115</sup>

But Mick also sought to distinguish himself from others within that geographical area using ideas of class or status:

Everybody knows me. But everybody that I want to know, the nice people of Beverley, the decent people of Beverley, the funny people of Beverley, I know. There’s some right bags of shite mate, I’ll tell you, in this town, there really is, unfortunately...On there, Cherry Tree estate. It’s running with them...guys, kids, females as well as males but mostly males...I mean, I can spot them mate, I’ve got used to it because I lived on there didn’t I.<sup>116</sup>

Although the distinctions reported here were made in the present tense, Mick also pointed out that there were rough people with whom he disassociated himself in his youth during the 1940s and 1950s. He described these rough individuals as:

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<sup>113</sup> Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, p.12; Edwards, *Born and Bred*, p.21; Rogaly and Taylor, *Moving Histories*, p.6.

<sup>114</sup> Mick Underwood, 21 July 2010, c.79 mins.

<sup>115</sup> Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.5 mins.

<sup>116</sup> Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.85 mins.

People who didn't want to work. People who are, were violent...Riding Fields Square housed most of them. Don't get me wrong there was lots and lots of guys on Cherry Tree that I see today that were good guys.<sup>117</sup>

This is suggestive of the ways in which internal differences were temporarily glossed over when making distinctions. When stressing Hull's difference to Beverley, Beverley's internal differentiation was temporarily forgotten; when claiming a working-class east Beverley identity, the internal status divisions between the respectable and the rough within these neighbourhoods were forgotten. Gerald Suttles described a similar phenomenon, albeit in the large urban context of Chicago:

Almost any local urban neighbourhood is likely to be part of a larger sector of the wider community. Often these sectors are acknowledged by such banal labels as East Side...In any case these are the largest acknowledged or named segments of the city, and often they are subdivided further before telescoping down to the local defended neighbourhood.<sup>118</sup>

Place-based identities might be stressed at some times, whereas class identification came to the fore at others. For example, Jack Binnington claimed he had a particular 'feeling' for Beverley having been 'born and bred' in the town. He also felt an intense local patriotism for his particular part of Beverley: 'I was born and bred down Beckside, and if I could have lived down Beckside, I would have lived down Beckside, 'cause I've never moved far away from it.'<sup>119</sup> Jack was also intensely conscious of social divisions within the town and beyond. His sense of class injustice drove him to a deepening involvement with trade union organisation and Labour party activism from the 1960s onwards, a political life which involved meetings outside the town and concern with broader class struggle.<sup>120</sup>

Like Jack, many interviewees could move from an assertion of Beverlonian identity to discussions of group affiliations in which such localism was largely irrelevant. With the exception of children and perhaps mothers tied to locality without resources to leave, for many people neighbourhoods were only important as occasional social contexts; important sociability was organised at the level of the town and often more widely. Friendship groups and workmates, as well as workplaces, were spread

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<sup>117</sup> Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.85 mins.

<sup>118</sup> Suttles, *The Social Construction of Communities*, p.248.

<sup>119</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.91 mins.

<sup>120</sup> Jack Binnington, 13 July 2010, c.126-140 mins.

across the town and beyond. Sports and interest groups were organised at a town or regional level or were located in a different towns. Therefore neighbourhood and town localism could often be an irrelevance. For example, Bill Andrews remembered joining the Beverley and District Motor Club during the 1950s:

They were all working people, joiners, brickies, people off the fish docks... There was a lot of Hull people, more than Beverley people.<sup>121</sup>

Although Mick Underwood stressed differences between ‘Hullites’ and Beverlonians, he had also enjoyed extensive sociability with people from Hull across his life – his wife was from Hull, and during the seventies he regularly socialised in the city with a group of Hull friends; he spent happy years playing cricket for a Hull team, was a lifelong Hull City fan and currently met a regular crowd of Hull men at a sauna in one of the city’s sports centres. Therefore, whilst sometimes stressing a distinction between people from Beverley and Hull, Mick also answered a question about whether there was a difference between residents of the two towns: ‘I don’t think there is actually.’<sup>122</sup>

Just as place-based identities could be less important in some social contexts, the strength of attachment to place inevitably varied from individual to individual. Peter Cooper described how he broke his social ties to Becksides when his family moved away in the 1950s, whereas his brother did not.<sup>123</sup> Positive memories of childhood created associations which helped produce stronger attachment to place amongst some. George Little and his wife Hilda had different views on Beverley. George was ‘born and bred’, and had many layers of positive memories associated with the town. He had warm memories of his parents, and his father was also a born and bred Beverlonian. George had been an enthusiastic member of the Beverley Church Lads brigade, remaining involved in their Old Boys’ group as an adult. He helped set up the local rugby union club in 1959, and he had always worked in Beverley factories. Overall, George identified strongly with the town and had never wanted to live anywhere else. Hilda on the other hand moved to Beverley at the age of 12, attended Bridlington Grammar School, an experience she had not enjoyed and which had prevented her from making many friends locally as a girl. Throughout her life Hilda had had a smaller circle of friends than her husband – the friends with whom she remained especially close had moved away from the town in the 1950s. For Hilda,

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<sup>121</sup> Bill Andrews, 20 January 2010, c.45 mins.

<sup>122</sup> Mick Underwood, 21 July 2010, c.79 mins; Mick Underwood, 16 June 2010, c.0 mins and c.11 mins.

<sup>123</sup> Peter Cooper, ERYMS interview 2a, p.7.

her husband's involvement in the rugby club had brought unhappiness – she disliked her support role, washing kits and helping with the catering at events. Hilda's appraisal of the town was negative - she claimed there had been nothing to do there for young girls, and that she would have happily moved away.<sup>124</sup>

Because this study was conducted in a single place, the majority of people interviewed were those who had chosen to remain living in Beverley. However, many could talk about brothers, sisters and friends who had left, both for 'push' and 'pull' reasons. Several moved away settle down with husbands or wives met whilst in the forces or whilst the future spouse was stationed in Beverley (which was a garrison town during the war and for years afterwards).<sup>125</sup> Some left for work reasons, particularly those with specific skills who could no longer find employment when local industries contracted or closed (as, for example, when the shipyard shed hundreds of jobs in the early 1960s and then again in the late 1970s).<sup>126</sup> Some interviewees currently resident in Beverley described how they had followed their youthful urge to leave the town. Betty Carr left Beverley as a young woman because she met a serviceman; she went eagerly because she had always had a difficult relationship with her mother, and enjoyed her new life in her husband's West Yorkshire village.<sup>127</sup> Anna Mason always thought she would leave Beverley and did so with her RAF husband in the 1957.<sup>128</sup>

Those who lived in Beverley most of their lives did not always express positive feelings about place and community. Some, as Savage suggested, continued to live in Beverley simply through familiarity, for practical reasons or the lack of an imagined alternative. Peter Lawson for example was made redundant from the shipyard in 1978, and subsequently worked on short term contracts which took him away from his family for weeks at a time. He did not attempt to leave Beverley permanently, however:

[Peter:] I don't know whether I'd have left to be quite honest with you... There's nobody I knew who left, they all sort of diversified their work... a lot of lads changed jobs, postmen, and things like that... They never moved,

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<sup>124</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2010.

<sup>125</sup> Derek Saltmer, 25 January 2010 ,c.52 mins; Bill Andrews, 20 January 2010, c.2 hours; Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.40 mins.

<sup>126</sup> Bob Garbutt, 28 June 2010, c.7 mins; John Cooper, ERYMS shipyard interview, c.25 mins.

<sup>127</sup> Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.81 and c.86 mins.

<sup>128</sup> Anna Mason, 12 July 2010, c.70 mins.

‘cause as I say you couldn’t move cause there was nothing, there was nowhere to go.

[Joan, (wife):] Well where do you go, that’s the thing?<sup>129</sup>

Similarly, George Cattle, a worker made redundant from Hodgson’s tannery in 1978, told the *Beverley Guardian* that he ‘does not want to move away from Beverley to find work because he has lived in the town all his life’.<sup>130</sup> This was suggestive of Hoggart’s description of long standing residents in Hunslett, Leeds, for whom their neighbourhoods came to exercise a ‘grip’, which made it difficult to leave.<sup>131</sup>

Neither should the strength of local xenophobia be overstated. ‘Foreigners’ were soon integrated into the town once some early tensions had been dealt with. Just as for Margaret Stacey’s Banbury residents, there was seldom long-term hostility between ‘born and bred’ Beverlonians and incomers.<sup>132</sup> Bob Garbutt worked at the shipyard in the 1940s and 1950s, at a time when lots of shipyard workers moved to Beverley from other shipbuilding areas, particularly the North East. Initial hostility soon mellowed:

The Geordies was a bit strange at first but they got to know them...They settled, you know, they’re still, well there’s still a few...they didn’t just come and pinch a couple of years work, they stayed in Beverley, married Beverley lasses.<sup>133</sup>

Sociability did not exclude incomers. Working-class culture of pubs, working men’s clubs and team sports such as football enabled men in particular to assimilate quickly when moving to new places. Whilst some interviewees felt that a distinction between workers from Hull and Beverley was observed in factories, this perhaps depended on the viewpoint. For a skilled worker like George Little at Armstrong’s, there was clearly a distinction between the tradesmen (who often lived in Beverley) and the unskilled women from Hull.<sup>134</sup> These workers were often temporary and did not have the same investment in their jobs as the tradesmen, as was noted by a former female worker from Hull.<sup>135</sup> However, amongst women workers in the factory, who perhaps shared

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<sup>129</sup> Peter Lawson, 4 May 2010, c.1 hour 56 mins.

<sup>130</sup> *Beverley Guardian*, 1 June 1978.

<sup>131</sup> Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, p.59.

<sup>132</sup> Stacey, *Tradition and Change*, p.165.

<sup>133</sup> Bob Garbutt, 25 June 2010, c.35 mins.

<sup>134</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, track 2.

<sup>135</sup> Linda Roberts, 29 April 2010, track 2 c.15 mins.

similar skill levels and commitment to their jobs, the distinction between those from Hull and Beverley was less obvious.<sup>136</sup>

Therefore, identification with place was not all-encompassing. It was cross-cut by other types of group identity. Different types of identity might be highlighted or suppressed according to context and in response to different perceived 'others'. Attachment to place could spring from inertia as much as from positive feelings about locality. Common class culture and economic position could quickly overcome any local xenophobic feeling in relation to incomers.

### *Conclusion*

Across the period, residents constructed 'cognitive maps' of their town based on assumptions about the social characteristics of particular neighbourhoods. The meanings attached to the division of the town by the railway lines remained relatively constant, and were reinforced by post-war developments such as the concentration of council housing to the east. This development also introduced new bases on which to make judgements about residential space, and there was evidence of increasing stigmatising of council estate tenants. Residents clearly identified with parts of the town with which they were familiar and where they felt comfortable socially. Children in particular could identify fiercely with particular streets. However, it is suggested that the strength of adults' identification with a particular street, seen in the traditions and symbolic construction of distinctiveness in Beckside, probably waned over the period, as the processes outlined in Chapter three ('Neighbours') weakened social cohesiveness of neighbourhood at this scale.

At the level of identification with the town as a whole, the Beverley evidence can usefully be compared with Mike Savage's findings about place-based identity in the 1950s and 1960s. Whilst there is much in the present study that confirms Savage's account – in particular the evidence of a strongly practical element in working-class attachment to place – I believe that he over-simplified the complexity of local identity and belonging in the past in order to highlight the late 20<sup>th</sup> century novelty of 'elective belonging'. Savage ignored civic pride and celebrations of local heritage and distinctiveness, which dated back to at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were described in this

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<sup>136</sup> Janet Hill, 3 March 2010, c.55 mins; Linda Roberts, track 2 c.0 mins.



study and elsewhere.<sup>137</sup> There is no doubting the extent to which middle-class residents of Beverley ‘waxed lyrical’ about the aesthetic and historic ‘particularities’ of the town.

Furthermore, whilst ‘functional orientation’ captures the practical dimension to working-class expressions of belonging, this formulation implies a lack of emotional depth which is not justified. The failure of working-class people to articulate expansively the virtues of place in the data studied by Savage may have been a symptom of communicative style rather than lack of feeling. As Craig Calhoun pointed out ‘we have a certain investment in the familiar even if it is not what we might choose’.<sup>138</sup> The attractions of the familiar – family, friends, acquaintances and memory – could be strong. Those who remained in Beverley did not do so only because of a lack of alternatives, and many who left were subsequently drawn back to the town. The apparent resonance of terms such as ‘born and bred’ and ‘foreigner’, as well as instances of ‘local xenophobia’, suggested that the town held a place in working-class residents’ sense of identity that went deeper than Savage’s portrayal of a functional concern for local amenities and ‘family affiliations’.<sup>139</sup>

Similarly, Savage’s hypothesis of functional orientation neglected the symbolic processes by which people made places meaningful. Whereas Savage found that respondents in Brian Jackson’s studies ‘did not compare features of Huddersfield with other places salient to them’, this could not be said of Beverley residents who conceptualised their town’s identity through comparison with the city of Hull.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> For eg. David Cannadine, “The Transformation of Civic Ritual in Modern Britain: The Colchester Oyster Feast,” *Past and Present* 94 (1982): 107-130; Pearson, *Knowing One's Place*, 221-244..

<sup>138</sup> Craig Calhoun, “Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research” in *History and Class. Essential Readings in Theory and Interpretation*, ed. R.S. Neale, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 86-113, p.98.

<sup>139</sup> Savage, *History, Belongings, Communities*, 151-162, p.161.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.* p.156.

## Chapter Eight. Conclusion

Two consciousnesses exist within us...The former represents only our individual personality, which it constitutes; the latter represents the collective type and consequently the society without which it would not exist.<sup>1</sup>

The central question motivating the study was: how did the social, economic and cultural changes associated with the decades of post-war affluence affect working-class community in this small town setting? 'Community' for the purposes of this study was taken to incorporate patterns of sociability and identity related to locality. In the introductory Chapter One, the question was related to narratives describing declining community in the two decades from 1955-1975. Two particular interpretations were selected for the purposes of comparing and analysing the empirical data from the study. Josephine Klein suggested that new forms of sociability, less constrained by place, might replace highly localised 'traditional working-class communities' which she thought were in terminal decline. Goldthorpe *et al* proposed the more negative thesis of 'privatisation', which was particularly influential, and was taken up by historian Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm argued that in Britain in the third quarter of the twentieth century an older, communal, localised form of working-class life was destroyed by 'prosperity and privatisation', part of the western world's descent into 'a society consisting of an otherwise unconnected assemblage of self-centred individuals pursuing only their own gratification'.<sup>2</sup>

A qualitative case-study of a particular small town was seen as appropriate for addressing the research question, since it would offer the opportunity to investigate multiple dimensions of local sociability and identity within a single given context. The Yorkshire town Beverley was deemed suitable for two reasons. Firstly, the empirical bases of Klein's and Goldthorpe *et al*'s accounts were studies of populations in the throes of moving to new housing estates many miles from old neighbourhoods. The more stable town of Beverley allowed consideration of the impact of general trends, such as rising standards of living and the changing social and economic position of women, without the distorting influence of such migration. Secondly, aspects of working-class community in small towns during this period have been relatively

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<sup>1</sup> Durkheim, *Division of Labour in Society*, p.61.

<sup>2</sup> Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture", p.188, p.185; Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes, 1914-1991*, p.16.

underexplored, and so the study would contribute meaningfully to the stock of empirical research about this subject. The thesis therefore responded to Paul Thompson's call for sociologists and historians, who have often concentrated on 'great cities' where social problems are most acute, to turn their attention to the 'less spectacular' smaller towns and 'the quiet push of working-class people towards improvement'.<sup>3</sup>

### **Summary of findings**

For the Beverley case-study, approaches emphasising a dichotomous shift from traditional working-class communities to new individualised or privatised working classes appeared overdrawn. There was undoubtedly change – close-knit street communities were less evident in the later years of the period, and sociability for many became spread across a wider geography. But most interviewees' support networks of family, friends and acquaintances were still largely contained within the town, and Beverley remained a salient unit for residents' identification in the 1970s. The substantive chapters supported this overall argument through a thematic exploration of distinct dimensions of local community. The chapter findings are briefly summarised below; these findings are then related in more detail to literature on working-class community. The chapter concludes with some remarks about the implications of the research.

The thesis was based on a qualitative research methodology – that is, the research aimed to develop an understanding of how historical change was experienced by individuals and groups, rather than to measure the quantity of particular changes. A more quantitative measurement of indicators of community would have required a precision not possible with retrospective evidence, and would not have provided the descriptive depth necessary to gain a nuanced understanding of the texture of local social life in this period. The enquiry therefore played to the strengths of the available source material, which was largely oral history, by asking how and why people did or did not engage in local sociability and express identification with place. Individual conclusions are more tentative than those made on the basis of quantitative research, but viewed together form a holistic picture. It would be possible to explore individual themes raised by the research, using a more focused methodology, at a later date.

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Richard Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History, Third ed.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.106-107.

Chapter Two, 'Families', argued that there was evidence of increased emphasis on the nuclear family and conjugal bond on the part of men from the generations who married in the 1950s and 1960s, though this should not be exaggerated. But extended family living locally, often within Beverley, remained important for support and sociability across the period, with new kinds of assistance appropriate to the times coming into focus.

Chapter Three, 'Neighbours', argued that affluence negated the need for close day-to-day material support amongst female neighbours. In the first post-war decade, many married mothers were tied to the neighbourhood by the demands of housework, and found daily companionship and material mutual support amongst their female neighbours, some of whom might be relatives. The extent to which streets contained the social worlds of women in this way declined over the period. But neighbours did not simply cease to matter; in the 1970s neighbours could be chosen as friends on the basis of like rather than need, and were often engaged socially as couples or whole families.

Chapter Four, 'Friends', argued that during the affluent era, working-class married couples developed extra-neighbourhood, extra-familial, shared friendships to a greater extent than had their parents. However, place still limited these social networks – most were contained within the town itself. Informal, 'effortless' sociability with acquaintances, similar to that associated with traditional working-class streets, continued into the later part of the period, often taking place in public spaces used by the town as a whole rather than in neighbourhood settings.

Chapter Five, 'Workplaces', argued that long-standing traditional industries were a part of community life in Beverley during the affluent era, a connection overlooked by Klein and denied by Goldthorpe *et al.* Workplaces provided contexts for sociability and for the formation of social networks, and were a reference point for local identity. Employers had some commitment to the public life of the town, providing sporting facilities as well as funds and in-kind help for local clubs and youth groups. Furthermore, long-standing industrial workplaces in Beverley underpinned demographic stability by providing abundant working-class employment.

Chapter Six, 'Civil Society', argued that the working classes should not be seen simply as a 'peer group society' as Herbert Gans argued. The Beverley working classes engaged in a rich variety of associational life across the period. Many volunteered their time and effort to the public good, running youth groups and working

as local councillors. As the period progressed, class boundaries in associational life became more permeable, and the conservative, hierarchical aspects of local civil society less assertive.

Chapter Seven, 'Identity and Place', argued that, contrary to Mike Savage's recent suggestion, the working classes identified with place at an emotional as well as a functional level. Across the period, such identification was demonstrated through instances of 'local xenophobia', and symbolised through language idioms and civic ceremonial; Hull was a constant reference point against which to assert Beverlonian identity. The strong identification of some residents with particular streets observable in the early part of the period was not so evident by the later part, but certain internal spatial divisions of the town were invested with status and class meanings that remained relatively constant. Expanding council estates in the 1950s and 1960s introduced a new basis on which to make judgements about residential space.

## **Discussion**

The study extends our understanding of change in working-class community of place by constructing an historical account focusing on the era of affluence (understood as approximately 1955-1975). Historians have not often investigated working-class community during this period, and though there are numerous sociological studies, each captures a single moment rather than considering development over time. The overall period of the study (1945-1980) is significant because it commences at a point when Klein and Goldthorpe *et al* agreed that there were traditional working-class communities; the period concludes following the decades of rising living standards, which both authors thought irrevocably weakened these traditional communities. It was during this third quarter of the twentieth century that Hobsbawm believed old communal bonds were replaced by a society of 'self-centred individuals'.

### *Traditional and new forms of working-class sociability*

The thesis compared the Beverley evidence from the first post-war decade with the model of traditional working-class community synthesised by Josephine Klein and used by Goldthorpe *et al* in their influential *Affluent Worker* study. In Klein's model of 'traditional working-class communities', male and female social worlds were divided, with men spending time with mates in pubs, and women gossiping in the streets with neighbours or visiting the homes of relatives. Streets and neighbourhoods were 'close-

knit' – everyone knew everyone else. Neighbours gave help when needed, but relatives often lived close at hand and provided the bulk of day-to-day assistance. The wholeness of these social worlds helped reinforce conservative community mores, which discouraged physical or social mobility.<sup>4</sup> Hobsbawm gave the 'traditional working class' model a historical dimension, arguing that an intensely local proletarian culture (which closely resembled Klein's description) developed in Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and remained remarkably consistent until the consumerism and privatism of the affluent society in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

Other authors challenged the notion of traditional working-class community. Joanna Bourke argued that the solidarity of such communities was a retrospective fiction, and that people shifted allegiance between 'neighbours, kin, friends, and acquaintances' in an instrumental way in the struggle to make ends meet.<sup>6</sup> Others did not dismiss the model, but considered that working-class communities had begun to lose some of their traditional cohesiveness before the Second World War.<sup>7</sup> Melanie Tebbutt, for example, wrote that during the interwar period, the 'growing influence of broader social and cultural forces encouraged a greater dissatisfaction with the more stifling aspects of street life'.<sup>8</sup>

To some extent, the Beverley evidence confirmed aspects of the model of 'traditional' working-class community. But whilst my research uncovered evidence of mutuality, friendliness and a sense of identity in some of the older and poorer neighbourhoods, divisions and elements of privatism were noted. For example, it was quite possible for women, keeping home and family with little money and anxious about the status judgements of neighbours, to avoid social contact with the other residents of supposedly close-knit working-class streets. Neither was nuclear-family orientation only a feature of the affluent decades.<sup>9</sup> Many interviewees' descriptions of their own upbringings suggested that their parents had socialised together and that fathers spent significant time with children in the 1940s. The findings therefore indicate that before the affluent era working-class life already contained elements

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<sup>4</sup> Klein, *Samples From English Cultures*, pp.121-212.

<sup>5</sup> Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture", pp.176-193.

<sup>6</sup> Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, p.169.

<sup>7</sup> McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, pp.164-205; Tebbutt, *Women's Talk?* pp.148-150. See also: Langhamer, "The Meanings of Home".

<sup>8</sup> Tebbutt, *Women's Talk?* p.150.

<sup>9</sup> For increased importance of the nuclear family as a feature of the 'new' working classes, see for example: Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, p.116; Harris, *The Family in Post-War Britain*, 49-56, p.56.

Klein associated with later developments, thus diluting notions of the affluent decades as transformative.

According to Goldthorpe *et al*'s thesis, during the affluent era a new consumerist individualism resulted in abandonment of traditional working-class communities; the authors saw this development leading in the direction of more socially isolated, 'privatised' nuclear families.<sup>10</sup> However, other authors noted that, even if we accept the decline of one form of community, it does not necessarily follow that this led to 'privatism', or to the decline of local community *per se*.<sup>11</sup> Andrew Clarke summarised this in 2009: 'research continues to reveal the significance of local face-to-face interactions in the reproduction of community relations'.<sup>12</sup>

The Beverley evidence suggests that some elements reminiscent of the 'traditional working-class community', apparent at the beginning of the period, did indeed recede in the affluent decades. Many interviewees were brought up in streets which contained members of their extended family, but few set up their own homes in such proximity to relatives. Material mutual exchange between neighbouring households became less important. Unlike their parents, many had never needed to borrow foodstuffs from neighbours. Women's neighbourhood communities became less all-encompassing, as married women increasingly worked away from the home. Associational life no longer took place exclusively in the contexts of working-class clubs and societies. Those who brought up families in these years were more child-oriented than their parents, and gender divisions in leisure between husbands and wives were less marked.

However, an expansion of the types of sociability in which working-class people engaged compensated for the decline of some of the older features of community such as women's close reliance on neighbours for sociability and mutual assistance. For many interviewees, nuclear-family orientation did not preclude wider social engagement. Cars, often perceived as the symbol of the new individualism, could

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<sup>10</sup> Goldthorpe *et al.*, *The Affluent Worker*, p.164. Later interpretations making positive use of the privatism thesis included: Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture" p.188; Marshall *et al.*, "Class, Citizenship, and Distributional Conflict in Modern Britain," p.276; Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families*.

<sup>11</sup> Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, p.76; Savage, Bagnall, and Longhurst, *Local Habitus and Working-Class Culture*, 95-122, p.108. Wight, *Workers Not Wasters*; Strangleman, "Networks, Place and Identities"; Elaine Batty, Ian Cole, Stephen Green, *Low-income neighbourhoods in Britain. The gap between policy ideas and residents' realities*, (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2011), pp.20-24.

<sup>12</sup> Clark, "From Neighbourhood to Network", p.1572.

facilitate sociability with friends and family living elsewhere; many interviewees had used their cars for holidays with their extended family and friends.<sup>13</sup> Improved standards of housing did not simply mean that people shut the world out, but could provide a context for sociability with others. Even television, usually portrayed as a harbinger of a privatised, home-centred existence, could provide a focus for sociability in the home. Mutual assistance took on new forms as living standards rose. Members of interviewees' extended family usually also lived in Beverley and were important as a source of help, in particular providing babysitting services for mothers going out to work. Many friends, family and neighbours helped one another with gardening and home improvement projects and could be relied on for assistance in emergencies.<sup>14</sup> Working-class people went to restaurants (from the 1970s) and joined clubs to which they had not had access in previous years. The fact that many were spending more time with their spouses is often taken as a corollary of the shift from communally-oriented to privatised working-class culture (men forsaking their 'mates' and the pub), but a great deal of sociability took place with other married couples.<sup>15</sup>

Although some older patterns of sociability declined and some new forms were ascendent, it was noted that two decades of rising living standards did not eradicate the influence of older cultures. Though less marked, there was still a degree of gender separation in sociability in the 1970s, and family and neighbours still featured prominently in the social worlds of many women. Although many looked further than their streets for sociability, most interviewees' friendship networks remained confined to the town itself across the period. Into the 1970s, the working classes continued to value the informal 'effortless' sociability that Klein associated with the traditional communities, though this often took place with acquaintances in the public spaces of the town rather than amongst neighbours.

### *Small-town community*

As described above, the selection of a small town for the case-study allowed consideration of social change in the era of affluence amongst a population which did not undergo the disruption of long-distance mobility. But small towns are relatively

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<sup>13</sup> See, also, for example: Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, pp.104-108.

<sup>14</sup> For self-provisioning, see Pahl, *Divisions of Labour*, p.324.

<sup>15</sup> For emphasis on conjugal relationship at expense of wider sociability see for eg: Gavron, *The Captive Wife*, p.138; Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, p.107; Young and Willmott, *Family and Kinship*; Young and Willmott, *The Symmetrical Family*, pp.30-31.



under-represented in the sociological and historiographical literature of working-class community, thus a secondary aim of the study was to provide an empirical account of features particular to working-class community in such a setting. How might structural factors specific to this small town setting be related to the particular patterns of local sociability and identity discovered there?

There has been sociological debate about the impact of settlement size on aspects of community. Ronald Frankenberg wrote that the size of settlements influenced the density of residents' social networks (the likelihood that the people known by an individual would also be known to each other) and the nature of social roles.<sup>16</sup> Frankenberg drew up a 'morphology' of community, a continuum in which small villages were considered the most community-like and large cities the least. Small towns such as Beverley were around the mid-point of this continuum (Glossop, a Lancashire town of a similar size to Beverley, was the example Frankenberg used).<sup>17</sup> However, other authors questioned the notion that there was more community in small settlements and less of it in cities. Studies found supposedly traditional village communities riven with conflict, mutual suspicion and envy, whereas others described communal sociability in cities.<sup>18</sup>

Interviewees often suggested that the small size of Beverley during the years of the study meant that many people knew one another (the population remained below 20,000 between 1951 and 1981).<sup>19</sup> Many recalled how it was difficult to walk through Beverley's streets without meeting and greeting acquaintances. Those I interviewed often turned out to know one another or to be related in some way. In Frankenberg's terms, this implied a relatively high network density.

However, it was not only the size of the town which resulted in this network density – it is possible to imagine a settlement of a similar size where most people travel beyond the boundaries for work, school and sociability. In such a setting, there would be less opportunity to get to know and to meet people living in the same area. For example, Victoria Nash compared community in different districts of Coventry in 2003 and found that in a post-war garden suburb estate, devoid of social amenities and shopping facilities, people appeared to have less knowledge of, and interact less with,

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<sup>16</sup> In small settlements, social roles were likely to be 'multiplex' the same person might be perform multiple roles, and therefore, for example, be a neighbour, customer, fellow member of a club.

<sup>17</sup> Frankenburg, *Communities in Britain*, pp.240-242.

<sup>18</sup> Lee and Newby, *The Problem of Sociology*, pp.58-59.

<sup>19</sup> *Census 1981: key statistics for urban areas: the north: cities and towns*, (London: HMSO, 1984).

fellow residents than in neighbourhoods that were well provisioned with shops and sociable venues.<sup>20</sup> In Beverley, a number of factors in addition to its size contributed to the density of social networks during the years of the study. A settled population meant that many had numerous relatives in the town. Schools, leisure venues, clubs and large workplaces were all situated in Beverley, providing many opportunities to meet fellow residents. The fact that there was an abundance of working class jobs in the town across the period, and therefore most interviewees had both lived and worked in Beverley, helped to keep social networks concentrated within the town - many interviewees had locally-based social networks with little or no reach beyond Beverley. Indeed, as one interviewee claimed, the reality for many townspeople was that ‘you lived together, you worked together and you played together’.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the social dimensions of the small town setting, it was apparent that Beverley was also a coherent conceptual unit for identity. The town was a distinct entity with well-defined boundaries, small enough to feel ‘knowable’, but large enough to contain its own institutions. The Beverley Borough Council had some power within the town (over housing for example) until local government reorganisation in 1974, giving residents some sense of local autonomy.<sup>22</sup> A civil society, linking members of civic, voluntary and industrial sectors, produced discourse representing the town *as* a community, evident in the symbolism of civic parades and in reported speech, letters and editorials in the town’s newspaper. The aesthetic notion of Beverley as an historic town with a long history as an independent borough was a key component of civic pride. Discursive construction of a town community incorporated the sense of shared economic purpose and historical continuity provided by industrial workplaces, many of which had been founded by local men in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of old Beverley factories and a general industrial ambience was seen as part of the town’s distinctive atmosphere. An array of shops, clubs, sports teams, pubs, cinemas and dancehalls all helped create an impression that Beverley was a self-contained place in which most social and economic needs could be met, even though there were, of

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<sup>20</sup> Nash and Christie, *Making Sense of Community*.

<sup>21</sup> George and Hilda Little, 24 October 2008, c.0 mins.

<sup>22</sup> The extent to which the local paper covered the borough as opposed to the county council suggests a similar phenomenon to that noted by Birch in Glossop in the 1950s, where residents persisted in attributing most importance to their borough council even though many powers had passed to the county council: Birch, *Small Town Politics*, p.187.

course, many social and economic links with the outside world, including surrounding villages and the nearby city of Hull.

### Implications

Instead of pronouncing community lost with the old traditional working-class culture, as Hobsbawm and others did, the Beverley case-study shows how working-class people during an age of rising living standards could take advantage of a greater choice of homes, consumer products and leisure without discarding their local networks of support and sociability. Although many working-class people did leave Beverley for a variety of reasons, as human beings have left their localities throughout history, many others embraced rising material standards of life without abandoning the reassurance and sociability of their communities. Goldthorpe *et al*'s suggestion that possibilities for material advancement would reduce the pull of community and lead workers into more privatised lifestyles, did not fit the experiences of this latter group.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, some authors considered that something was lost in the affluence of the 1950s and 1960s. According to Hobsbawm, what was formerly a working-class 'we' culture – built around a commitment to mutuality and solidarity in poor but supportive neighbourhood communities – became an 'I' culture of isolated individuals.<sup>24</sup> Hobsbawm's thesis appears as an incarnation of a 'golden age of community' narrative, whereby contemporary atomised society is compared with older, purportedly more communal, modes of living. Raymond Williams saw this as a cultural trope with origins in antiquity.<sup>25</sup> In his description of the traditional working-class culture, Hobsbawm evoked pre-modern villages, writing: 'Industrial centres long remained communities, either because they never ceased to be villages (as in the case of most mining settlements) or because they retained the character of 'neighbourhoods' even when they grew into the typical industrial town.'<sup>26</sup> In this, he followed a long tradition of authors connecting community to village life, dating back at least to Ferdinand Tönnies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Goldthorpe et al., *The Affluent Worker*, p.121.

<sup>24</sup> Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture", p.188, p.185; Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, p.16; See also, Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, p.318; Jeremy Seabrook, *The Idea of Neighbourhood : What Local Politics Should be About*, (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p.4; Offer, "British Manual Workers", p.25.

<sup>25</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973) p.35; pp.46-47.

<sup>26</sup> Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture", p.191.

<sup>27</sup> Tönnies, *Community and Association*, pp.26-27; see also Gans, *The Urban Villagers*; Frankenburg, *Communities in Britain*, p.247. Roberts, *The Classic Slum*, p.3.

In response to this, I suggest firstly that it is far from clear that such a ‘we’ culture was foremost in the traditional working classes. The present study confirmed that individualism, privatism and family-first attitudes existed alongside communal sociability and mutual assistance in the early, pre-affluent part of the period, as indeed they did later. Authors describing poor working-class neighbourhoods in the first quarter of the twentieth century attributed cultures of mutual assistance to a complex of motives and circumstances, amongst which was simple self-preservation. Those in precarious economic situations made loans to others in need because it was understood that they would themselves need help in turn.<sup>28</sup> Even in the pre-modern village, that embodiment of community according to some, Max Weber described mutual assistance as an ‘unsentimental economic brotherhood’, in part motivated by self-interest; Alan Macfarlane argued that individualism, calculation and the profit motive were pervasive aspects of English village life dating back to the thirteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

Secondly, there was whiff of moral judgement in many portrayals of working classes abandoning the mutuality of traditional neighbourhoods in favour of individualistic materialism. Hobsbawm did not hide his admiration for the working classes’ communally oriented culture, which he saw as an achievement they threw away when embracing post-war affluence.<sup>30</sup> Richard Hoggart also preferred the older culture, writing that, alongside material advances in working-class life, ‘the accompanying cultural changes are not always an improvement but in some of the more important instances are a worsening’.<sup>31</sup> Goldthorpe *et al.* cast the affluent working classes as active agents in the destruction of their own communities, which they abandoned in pursuit of materialistic goals.<sup>32</sup> Jeremy Seabrook wrote that community decline was part of a diminishing commitment to collective values which had previously sustained working-class movements such as Chartism, trade unionism, and the Labour party.<sup>33</sup> Avner Offer argued that rising affluence since the Second

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<sup>28</sup> Ross, "Survival Networks", p.26; Roberts, *The Classic Slum*.

<sup>29</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp.360-363; Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p.5, p.196.

<sup>30</sup> Hobsbawm "The Formation of British Working-Class Culture", p.193.

<sup>31</sup> Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, p.318.

<sup>32</sup> Goldthorpe et al., *The Affluent Worker*, pp.96-97.

<sup>33</sup> Seabrook, *The Idea of Neighbourhood*, p.4.

World War weakened the ‘commitment strategies’ inherent in the older communal culture and exposed the working classes to the panoply of present day social ills.<sup>34</sup>

Much of this castigating of the affluent-era working classes seems misplaced. Many older forms of mutuality, the social insurance implicit in networks of exchange, were simply not needed in the post-war decades, as the welfare state, rising living standards and improved housing took many above the poverty line; it would be strange had these forms of exchange continued. Working-class people could distance themselves from the less desirable aspects of the older patterns of community – pressing need for material mutual exchange amongst neighbours, intrusiveness of neighbourhood gossip, intimate knowledge of neighbours’ personal lives. But the desirable parts of community could be retained – locally available sociability, companionable exchange of services, help in emergencies. Ferdynand Zweig observed that post-war provision of social services eased the stress of poverty, and therefore ‘sweetened’ relationships between members of extended families, because younger generations no longer found the burden of caring for elderly relatives so onerous.<sup>35</sup> This principle can be extended to wider community relations, since as the need for mutual assistance became less urgent, relationships could be developed with an emphasis on like, sociability and enjoyment. Family, friends and neighbours continued to help each other in ways appropriate to the new times (for example, home improvement, babysitting); many working-class people in Beverley were committed to the broader public good during and after the affluent decades, for example working voluntarily as leaders of youth groups and as borough councillors.

The loss of some aspects of the older communities was cause for celebration rather than mourning. Hobsbawm admitted that women were the ‘most permanent victims of proletarian culture’.<sup>36</sup> Neighbourhood gossip, intense status awareness and the limited social horizons of the old poor working-class neighbourhoods could drive women to the edge of nervous breakdown.<sup>37</sup> In addition to more social freedom for women, the affluent era also saw both male and female working classes participate in a broader range of associational life. Cultural shifts loosened the grip of a conservative

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<sup>34</sup> Offer, “British Manual Workers” p.25; Avner Offer, *The Challenge of Affluence. Self-control and well-being in the United States and Britain since 1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.4.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Klein, *Samples from English Cultures*, pp.299-300.

<sup>36</sup> Hobsbawm “The Formation of British Working-Class Culture”, p.188; See also: Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), pp.170-172.

<sup>37</sup> See Betty Carr, 19 March 2010, c.10 mins; Tebbutt, *Women’s Talk?* p.87.

hegemony which reinforced social hierarchy and cast working-class people as deserving or undeserving of charitable hand-outs.

Some writers located the decline of working-class community of place not in the 1950s and 1960s, but in the final decades of the twentieth century, which encompassed the decimation of British manufacturing industry and the diffusion of Thatcherite individualistic ideology.<sup>38</sup> But even then, local community remained a persistent feature of working-class life. As noted above, sociological studies highlighted locally based networks of sociability and mutual assistance in working-class districts in the later twentieth and early twenty-first century. In poorer working-class areas, job insecurity and worklessness could again throw people back for material support on networks of local friends and family; those living in more affluent working-class towns and districts relied on their local networks for sociability, and continued to articulate identification with place.<sup>39</sup>

Instead of identifying community of place solely with the particular social configurations of a vanished 'golden age', the current thesis suggests that we need to recognise and document how working-class people utilised and adapted local community in response to wider structural change. In Beverley, the economic story after 1980 was mixed – although the disappearance of large traditional factories led to some rise in unemployment in the 1980s, this was ameliorated by the expansion of jobs in service industries and in the public sector.<sup>40</sup> From the 1990s Beverley grew in size, becoming home to an ever-larger proportion of middle-class residents, many of whom worked elsewhere.<sup>41</sup> The town's working classes are now a less visible presence – reduced as a percentage of the population, mostly living to the east of the railway lines, and no longer working in large factories in the heart of the town.<sup>42</sup> However,

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<sup>38</sup> See, for example: Taylor, *The Rise and Disintegration of the Working Classes*, pp.380-384. Colls, *When We Lived in Communities*, p.307; Michael Collins, *The Likes of Us: A Biography of the White Working Class*, (London: Granta, 2004), pp.149-155. Offer, "British Manual Workers", pp.29-30.

<sup>39</sup> For material interdependence in poorer communities, see: Strangleman, "Networks, Place and Identities"; Wight, *Workers Not Wasters*; Batty, Cole, Green, *Low-income neighbourhoods in Britain*; for local social networks among more affluent populations, see: Ian Procter, "The Privatisation of Working-Class Life - a Dissenting View," *British Journal of Sociology* 41, no. 2 (1990): 157-180; Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst, "Local Habitus and Working-Class Culture".

<sup>40</sup> Brown, "Modern Beverley: Beverley after 1945", pp.159-160.

<sup>41</sup> Beverley's population expanded from a population of 23,110 in 1991, to 30,351 in 2001, and a greater number of the resident pop worked outside than inside the town by this date. See: Trinnaman Milburn La Court, 'Facts and Figures for a Beverley Town Plan, Summary', (Beverley: Beverley Town Council and Partners, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> Males resident in Beverley in socioeconomic groups 9-11 (manual occupations) declined from 58% in 1961 to 38% in 1991. Census 1961 *England and Wales Occupation, Industry, socioeconomic groups*.

there was evidence of working-class community at the time of the interviews. One woman who moved to Beverley in the 1990s, and whose boyfriend lived on the Swinemoor council estate, claimed the estate was: ‘close-knit...everybody knows everybody and everybody is related to everybody’.<sup>43</sup> In conducting the research I visited clubs, societies and pubs which seemingly contained no shortage of community sentiment. Many older interviewees were surrounded by locally-resident family, neighbours and friends who visited and helped them on a day to day basis, belying the suggestion that selfish individualism is the characteristic *modus operandi* of modern life.

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Yorkshire, *East Riding*. (London:HMSO 1966), Table 5, p.14; Office of National Statistics, *Nomis. Official labour market statistics*:

[https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/components/cellComponent.asp?menuopt=10&subcomp=&Session\\_GUID={535C658D-FA41-48BE-99E1-84EC419BF4EC}](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/components/cellComponent.asp?menuopt=10&subcomp=&Session_GUID={535C658D-FA41-48BE-99E1-84EC419BF4EC}), Table S92, downloaded 1 September 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Hayley Adams, 30 November 2009, c.37 mins.

## **Appendix 1. Interviewees – generations and biographies**

For this project I recorded 102 interviews; some were with couples and some interviewees were visited several times. A total of 93 people were interviewed; the oldest was born in 1918 and the youngest in 1972. The sample contained 43 women and 50 men.

Eighteen interviewees were born before 1931. The largest group (40) were born between 1931 and 1940, 17 were born between 1941 and 1950 and the remainder were born after this. The majority of interviewees reached adulthood after the Second World War and started families at some time between the late 1940s and the 1970s.

The oldest generation, born before 1930, had memories of the unemployment and economic hardship of the 1930s. A small number had served in the Second World War; others remembered the ‘home front’ in Beverley and national service after the war. Many women from these generations married servicemen stationed in the town.<sup>1</sup> These interviewees were in their prime as living standards rose in the 1950s and 1960s.

The 1930s generation (those born between 1931 and 1940) sometimes had childhood memories of the 1930s, and many recalled occasional bombing of the town during the Second World War as well as the terrible destruction wreaked on the nearby city of Hull. They remembered the large numbers of servicemen stationed in Beverley during and after the war, and the sense of excitement and energy in these years. Their teenage years were spent socialising in the town’s dance halls and cinemas. This generation reached adulthood in the 1950s, and many men entered national service, some marrying girls who lived elsewhere. Some women married army or RAF personnel stationed in local barracks and moved away from Beverley, though this perhaps happened less often than during the mid-1940s. A few interviewees from this generation joined the forces seeking excitement and travel. However, many had always lived locally – they entered the labour market during the boom years of the late 1940s and 1950s and had not needed to leave home to find work. Interviewees from this generation married young and many were able to purchase homes early in their married lives. Families unable to buy could obtain good quality housing on the new council estates. Norms which had discouraged married women from working outside

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<sup>1</sup> Beverley St Nicholas Parish Records, marriage register 1945-49, ERALS, PE193/7; Ivy Shipton, 17 May 2010, c.40 minutes.



the home were changing and many female interviewees went out to work part-time once their children began school.<sup>2</sup> Most of the interviewees from this generation remained married to the same person from youth up until the time of the interview. These interviewees participated in the period of full employment and the high days of industry. In the late 1970s they experienced the closure of the larger, older local factories and some were made temporarily redundant.

The 1940s generation (those born between 1941 and 1950) had few memories of the war; some remembered the period of austerity and rationing in the late 1940s. Many spent their lives without serious material deprivation. Men frequently began their working lives as apprentices in local industry; women often trained in clerical work and found jobs in offices in the town or in nearby Hull. This generation included post-war 'baby boomers'. Interviewees were young during the 1960s and participated in changes in youth culture which hit the town during that decade (most notably in music).

The 1950s generation (those interviewees born between 1951 and 1960) were children of 'the age of affluence'. For many, childhood homes contained a television and weekends included outings in the family car. These interviewees usually reached working age during the years of full employment, and did not have difficulty finding work locally. Some experienced redundancy at a relatively early age, as unemployment rose in the 1970s. Many bought their own homes. None attended university but many had children who did. Some of these interviewees, along with those born subsequently, had less linear lives than the older generations. Divorce was more common. For this generation, and the few interviewees born after 1960, a counter-cultural ethos of resistance sometimes encouraged rebellion in ways not reported by older interviewees. Drug use and unconventional lifestyles were found amongst these younger generations. It is suggestive that of the seven interviewees born after 1954 none had the long-lasting marriage and stable nuclear family common amongst earlier generations. Each were either divorced, never-married or late-married childless.

The table below gives brief biographical details for each interviewee.

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<sup>2</sup> See also: McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures : England, 1918-1951*, p.111.



<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>D.O.B (and place if not Beverley)</b>	<b>Married y/n</b>	<b>Dates interviewed. Others present?</b>	<b>Brief employment and other details</b>
Adams, Sally	1959	Y (x2)	21.6.2010	Worked in Melrose tannery until it closed, and then an electronics factory in Beverley
Alexander, James	1936	y	18.2.2010 (with wife)	Trained as car mechanic, had a number of businesses including a garage.
Alexander, Peggy	1939	y	18.2.2010 (with husband)	Worked as telephonist then clerical work in Beverley offices, worked in businesses with husbands.
Andrews, Alice	1930 Etton (near Beverley)	y	22.10.2008 25.1.2010 (with husband)	The couple met while they were working in Armstrongs in 1951. Alice didn't work after marrying.
Andrews, Bill	1929	y	22.10.2008 25.1.2010 (with wife)	Started work in 1943 as apprentice at Deans and Light Alloys in Beverley. Spent six years in the army. Did not complete apprenticeship and worked in variety of semi-skilled jobs in the town.
Baker, Vic	1930	y	19.5.2010 29.5.2010	Father of Sally Adams. Worked in various unskilled jobs in Beverley, but many years in semi-skilled job in Melrose Tannery.
Barrett, Keith	1954	n	2.9.2010	Various unskilled jobs, also worked on tours for famous rock bands in the 1970s. Has had drug problems and been in trouble with police.
Ben Curry	1931 (North Ferriby)	y	22.10.2008 19.4.2010	Moved to Beverley in 1962 where he worked as a policeman until 1976 when he went to

				work for his son's haulage business.
Benson, Jean	1933	y	14.1.2010	Sister of Bill Holland. Various jobs including shopwork, barmaid, Armstrongs, in army for a few years. Lived in Liverpool briefly.
Binnington, Jack	1944	y (x2, 1 divorce)	22.6.2010 13.7.2010 3.8.2010 26.10.2010	Apprenticed in shipyard, then worked on barges, later became a lorry driver.
Blakeston, Jack	1938	y	14.7.2010.	Brother of Joyce Sumner. Worked as a motor mechanic.
Bolton, Enid	1919 (Weel)	y	10.3.2010	Worked on father's farm then ran a corner shop in Beverley. Husband a farm labourer.
Bolton, James	1955 (Knaresborough)	y	14.1.2010	Worked in unskilled jobs in various factories in Beverley and then in psychiatric hospital and trained in social care.
Brown, Iris	1943	Y (x2)	21.5.2010	Joined the RAF for four years after school. Married twice, divorced first time. Both husbands in the forces and lived all over Britain and in Germany before returning to Beverley in the 1990s.
Byrne, Ed	1921	y	24.5.2010	Working-class background. Served in WWII, then worked as administrator in hospital, becoming superintendent. Long service as borough councillor.
Carr, Betty	1934	y	19.3.2010	Worked in a shop and then married and left Beverley, later returned.
Christopher,	1954	y	25.11.2009	Various jobs including

Louise				managing shops, working as a nurse and as a recruitment consultant. Divorced. Lived on the Swinemoor council estate twice – as a child and then more recently since the 1980s.
Cooper, Neil	1931	y	14.4.2010	Worked as electrician at Armstrong's among other places.
Daniels, Doris	1932 (Hull)	y	13.11.2009 16.12.2009	Sister of Doreen Lee. Worked in shops, stopped working when married, later went back to shop work.
Daniels, Pete	1958	y	28.7.2010	Son of Doris Daniels. Worked for a garage and then as HGV driver.
Davies, Julie	1965	y	27.11.2009	Various jobs, including retail and clerical jobs.
Day, John	1937	y	10.11.2009 23.11.2009 8.12.2009 (twice with wife)	Worked as a caulker at the shipyard, and then as an electricity meter reader.
Day, Margaret	1938	y	23.11.2009 8.12.2009 (husband John present)	Worked in Boots shop after leaving school, and returned to work there after her children went to school.
Duke, Dennis	1949	y	14.7.2010	Worked on barges then became a lorry driver.
Easterling, Amy	1931	y	15.2.2010	Worked in Armstrong's, Hodgson's and other Beverley factories until moving to Hull.
Fisher, Jim	1950	y	16.12.2009	Worked in shipyard as a joiner until it closed and then for building firm.
Frith,	1928	y	10.2.2010	Working-class

Evelyn				background, became a police woman, moved away from Beverley and married a police man. Later moved back to Beverley.
Garbutt, Bob	1930	y	25.6.2010 18.6.2010	Worked as plater at the shipyard, had a side-line as a bookmaker and later did this as his main job.
Gibson, Dick	1932	y	11.3.2010	Worked as a cinema projectionist and then for the Coop shop in Beverley before becoming an insurance salesman. Lived most of adult life on Cherry Tree council estate.
Gibson, Joan	1934	y	17.3.2010	Went to grammar school and then worked as a nurse, after having children returned to nursing.
Harris, Gwen	1935	y	30.7.2010	Moved away from Beverley as a child, came back as a teenager, started working on shop floor at Hodgson's then Armstrong's, worked part-time after having children.
Hill, Janet	1926	Y (x2)	3.3.2010	Worked for 'WarAg' during the war. Gave up work when had children, when husband died got a clerical job in County Hall.
Holland, Bill	1934	y	11.11.2009 19.11.2009 (wife present each time)	Worked in unskilled jobs in the shipyard and other Beverley factories.
Holland, Jane	1936, Maltby	y	11.11.2009 19.11.2009 (with husband)	Moved to Beverley in 1950s, married a Beverley man. Worked in Deans'.
Hudson,	1968	y	17.12.2010	Worked for and then

Michael				took over father's glass-blowing business
Hughes, David	1926 (Prestatyn)	y	24.6.2010	Grew up in Wales but had relatives in Beverley, came to Beverley as a teenager to work as a jockey for a racing stables. Continued with stable work on and off through life while also working in unskilled jobs in factories in Beverley.
Hunt, Bernard	1938	y	12.1.2010	Worked for a market gardener and then as a groundsman for Hodgson's sports ground and continued working when the sports field was taken over by the local council.
Hunter, George	1931	y	14.1.2010	Worked at Deans and later as a painter and decorator, saw action in national service in Malaya. Later became a Labour councillor.
Ibbotson, Gerald	1948 (Nottingley)	y	7.7.2010	Came to Beverley as a child, father worked for the railways. Apprenticed as a printer, became a policeman, then went back to printing.
Ingleton, Ellen	1936	y	23.3.2010 20.4.2010 (once with husband)	Worked in offices in Hull until starting a family, and later returned to work in a solicitor's offices in Beverley.
Ingleton, Ken	1934	y	23.3.2010 20.4.2010 (wife present in 1 <sup>st</sup> )	Skilled engineer at Armstrong's.
Ireland, Dave	1938	y	15.7.2010 (with wife)	Went to grammar school. Clerical work including County Hall.
Ireland,	1946	y	15.7.2010	Daughter of Eva

June			(with husband)	White. Went to grammar school. Worked in bank before marrying and then after having children.
Jackson, Dorothy	1927, Hull	Y (divorced)	10.2.2010	Worked in retail in London, then married an East Riding farmer before moving to Beverley after divorce.
Johnson, Bill	1928	y	8.7.2010	Worked as crane operator in Hodgson's
Lawson, Peter	1947	y	4.5.2010 (wife and baby granddaughter present)	Worked as a plumber in Beverley shipyard until this closed down in 1978 and then travelled to work in various jobs around the country
Lee, Dave	1972	n	19.11.2009	Son of Doreen Lee. Worked in labouring jobs at caravan works and in greenhouses.
Lee, Doreen	1942	y	9.11.2009	Worked in a post office, a printing works and various other jobs including as a bar maid. Husband worked at Deans and at a caravan works.
Little, Hilda	1937 (Holme-on-Spalding-Moor)	y	24.10.2008 19.3.2010 (1x with husband)	Moved to Beverley in 1944, went to grammar school in Bridlington. Worked in offices at shipyard and after having children did part-time office work.
Little, Keith	1937	y	24.10.2008 12.3.2010 (1x with wife)	Worked as a fitter at Hodgson's and later Armstrong's.
Macleod, Vera	1922	y	20.5.2010 (with Ray Stocks)	Vera's husband was a painter and decorator. Vera had various jobs, including cleaning caravans for her son's caravan building business.
Malster,	1933	y	21.5.2010	Worked in shipyard



Ellen			(with husband)	offices. After had children became a surgery receptionist.
Malster, Harry	1931	y	21.5.2010 (with wife)	Worked as a joiner at the shipyard.
Mason, Anna	1935	y	12.7.2010	Working-class background; moved away from Beverley when married to RAF engineer, became teacher.
Mateer, Elaine	1952	y (x2)	29.3.2010	Worked in shops and offices in Beverley until having children. Second husband Patrick had a building business.
Mateer, Patrick	1949	Y (x2)	13.1.2010	Worked as a bricklayer and played in bands in the 1960s, later became self employed and had own building business.
Matthews, Ron	1946 (Hull)	Y (divorced)	2.12.2010	Moved with his parents to Swinemoor council estate in Beverley when he was 16. Had various unskilled jobs in factories and shops but has more recently worked with computers.
Miles, Bob	1926	y	11.2.2010	Bricklayer.
Newby, Albert	1925	y	12.1.2010 (with wife)	Albert worked as a skilled maintenance engineer at Hodgson's for thirty years.
Newby, Brenda	1926	y	12.1.2010 (with husband)	Brenda worked in clerical positions until married, and she did not work after this.
Nicholl, Anna	c.1920 (Norfolk)	n	22.2.2010	Came to Beverley in the 1940s to work as a social worker.
Peters, Fred	1937	y	24.6.2010 (with wife)	Apprenticeship as a plater in the shipyard.
Peters, May	1938	y	24.6.2010	Clerical position in

			(with husband)	Deans until the couple had children.
Potter, Tom	1934		24.10.2008	Father was a shipyard worker. Tom runs the Grosvenor working men's club and has been a conservative councillor in the Beverley Borough and East Riding councils for many years.
Ramshaw, Alison	1935	y	14.4.2010	Worked as a clerk in the police station and married a policeman and moved away from Beverley. Came back to the town when had child, later worked in offices of local factories.
Reid, Fred	1931	y	26.1.2010	Worked at Hodgson's and then became a lorry driver for Hodgson's.
Roberts, Linda	1947 (Hull)	y	29.4.2010	Worked in factories before marrying, including a year spent commuting to work in Armstrong's in Beverley.
Robinson, Mary	1922	y	11.2.2010	Worked in shops, in Armstrongs, in her brothers pubs. Didn't work when married first of all, later went to work shifts at Armstrongs.
Ross, Eric	1943	y	16.2.2010 (with wife)	Went to grammar school and was sent to college by Hodgson's, attaining a middle-class career in the firm's chemical works, which survived the closure of the rest of the factory in 1978.
Ross, Helen	1945	y	16.2.2010	Worked in laboratory

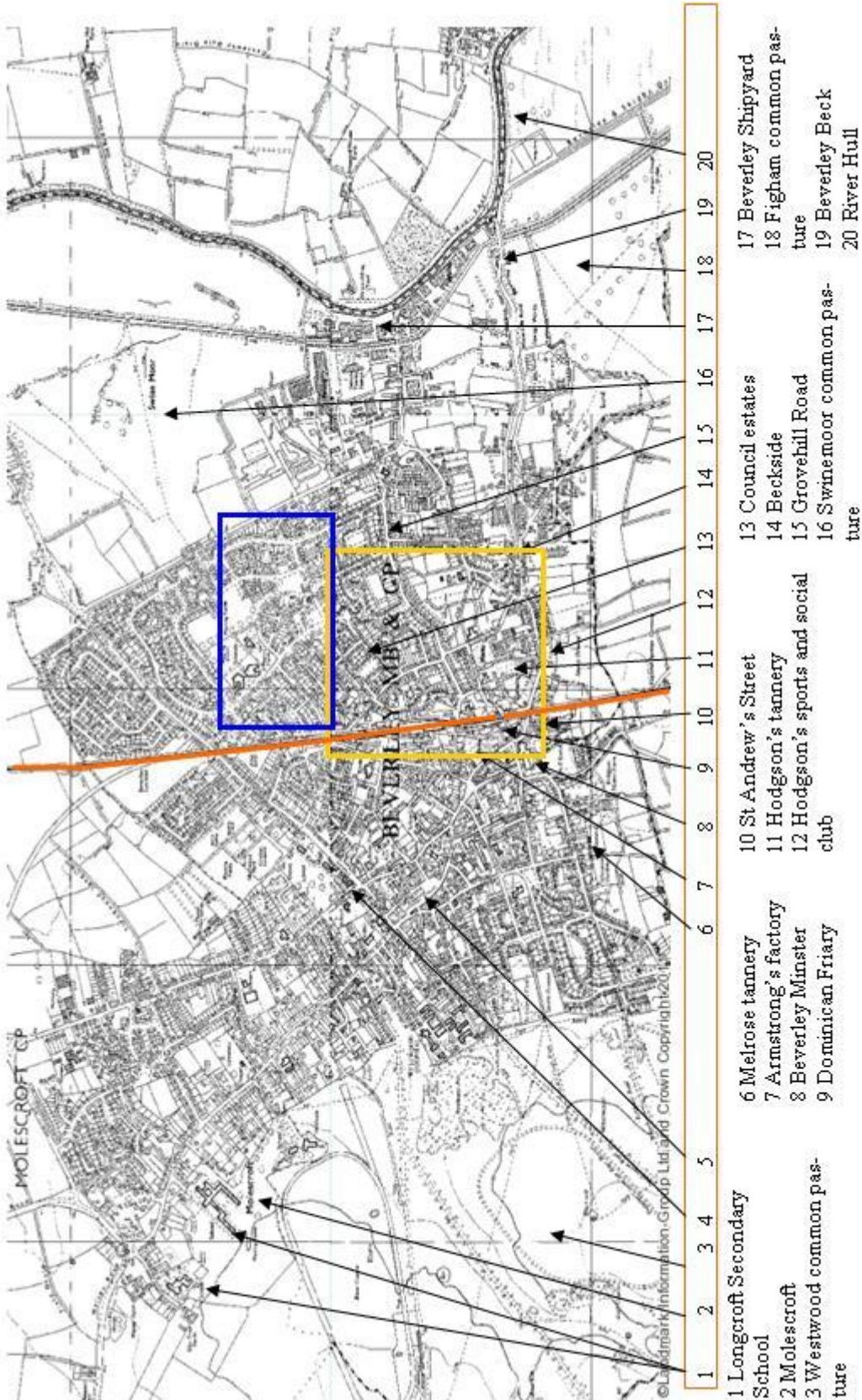
			(with husband)	in Hodgson's.
Saltmer, Derek	1934	y	25.1.2010	Was apprenticed at the shipyard for two years before joining the navy. After a few years in the navy returned to Beverley and worked in the fire brigade and then as a lorry driver while bringing up a family.
Shipton, Ivy	1943	y	17.5.2010	Worked in shops in Beverley. Husband worked as unskilled boilerman at Hodgson's then a hospital.
Smith, Janice	1967	y (divorced)	10.12.2009	Worked in retail management, now local government.
Stephenson, Peter	1945	y	27.5.2010	Was in the army, then worked in shipyard as a welder.
Stocks, Ray	1931	y	20.5.2010 (with Vera Macleod)	Ray worked most of his life as maintenance engineer, at both Hodgson's and Armstrong's.
Sumner, Joyce	1926	y (husband died while children still small)	13.8.2010	First job in market gardens. Stopped work while children young but later worked as a cleaner in a hospital.
Thompson, Janet	1948	y	27.11.2009 (with husband)	Clerical work in Armstrong's offices and later County Hall.
Thompson, Pete	1951	y	27.11.2009 (with wife)	Worked in the building trade.
Tyler, Andrew	1954	n	1.7.2010	In army for many years, and worked in various unskilled jobs since.
Underwood, Mick	1937	y	16.6.2010 21.7.2010	Worked as shipwright at the shipyard and later in the caravan industry. Had own caravan business.
Vincent,	1950	y	25.5.2010	Had various unskilled

William				jobs in Beverley before moving to Hull.
Walton, Matthew	1936	y	22.7.2010	Apprenticed as engineer at British Aerospace in Brough, and left Beverley to pursue professional career in aeronautical engineering, later returned to area.
Watton, Elleen	1934	y (separated)	8.3.2010	Worked in office at Armstrongs, moved to Midlands when married, later returned to Beverley.
White, Eva	1918	y	18.6.2010	Mother of June Ireland, June and husband present in the interview. Worked in factories after leaving school. Made munitions in Armstrong's during war. Gave up work when husband returned from war.
White, Les	1943	y	21.10.2010 29.10.2010	Worked on barges after leaving school, and bought a barge to live on in the late 1970s.
Whittles, John	1933 (Liverpool)	y	27.4.2010 10.5.2010 (with wife present)	Moved to Beverley in 1937. Worked in Hodgson's for many years as bricklayer.
Whittles, Judy	1937	y	27.4.2010 10.5.2010 (with husband)	Worked in Hodgson's before marriage.
Wigton, George	1923	y	15.2.2010	Served as infantryman in WWII. Worked in shipyard as construction worker, and later buildings maintenance in various firms. Boys Brigade leader for many years.
Witham,	1932	n	26.4.2010	Worked for many

Hannah				years in a shop floor job in Hodgson's tannery.
Wood, Eliza	1924	y (x2)	18.11.2009	Lived on Swinemoor council estate since approximately 1950, and did not work after marrying.
Woolly, Marianne	1929	y	3.10.2008 22.2.2010 (once with husband)	Father a shipyard worker, grew up on Grovehill council estate, worked in County Hall before marrying a policeman and moving away from Beverley. Later returned.
Woolly, Frank	1929 (?)	y	3.10.2008 (with wife)	Was a policeman and shopkeeper.
Young, Jerry	1936? (London)	y	18.5.2010	Worked as academic in Hull. Lived in Beverley from early 1960s and actively involved with Beverley Labour Party from that time.

# Appendix 2. Beverley map c.1970

Orange box - Appendix Four, East Beverley 1966. Blue box - Appendix Five, Swinemoor Council Estate, 1974. Orange Line - Railway line



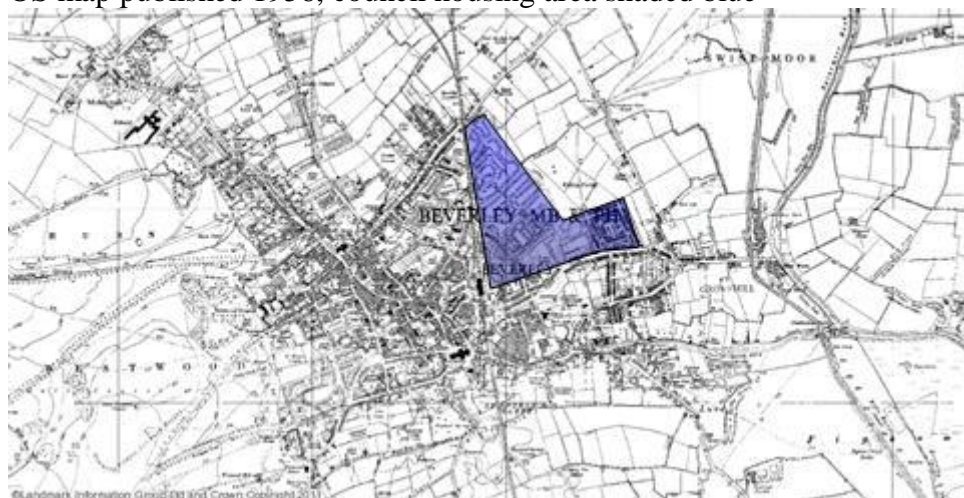


### Appendix 3. Maps showing post-war development of Beverley

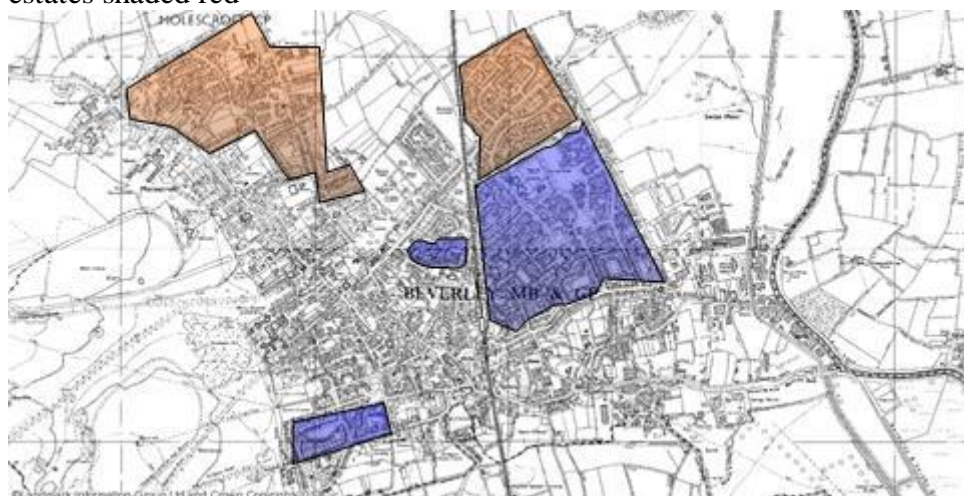
(All maps taken from <http://edina.ac.uk/digimaps> [Accessed: 20 September 2011])  
OS map 1940s, pre-Second World War council house areas shaded blue



OS map published 1956, council housing area shaded blue

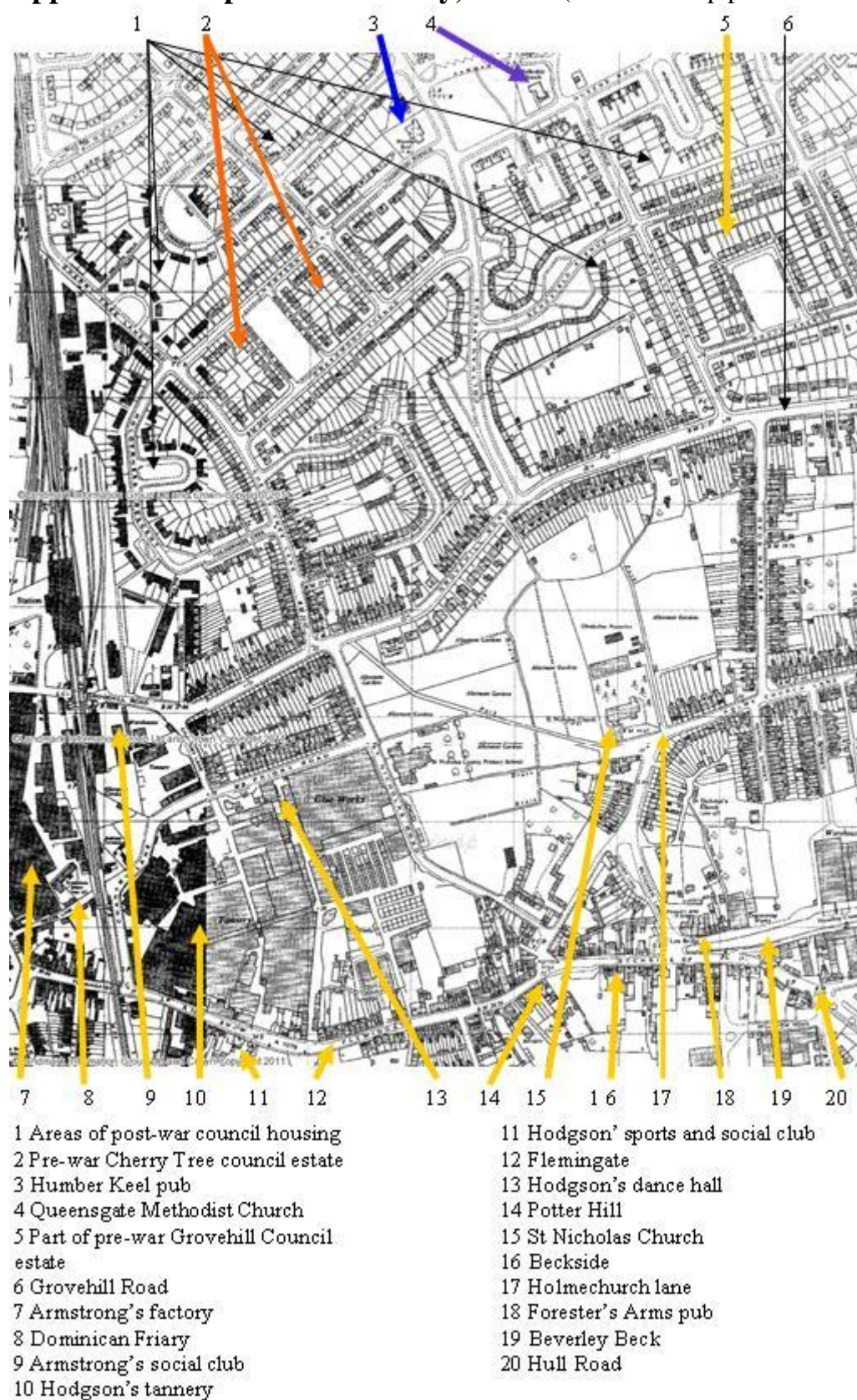


OS map published 1970, council housing areas shaded blue, private housing estates shaded red



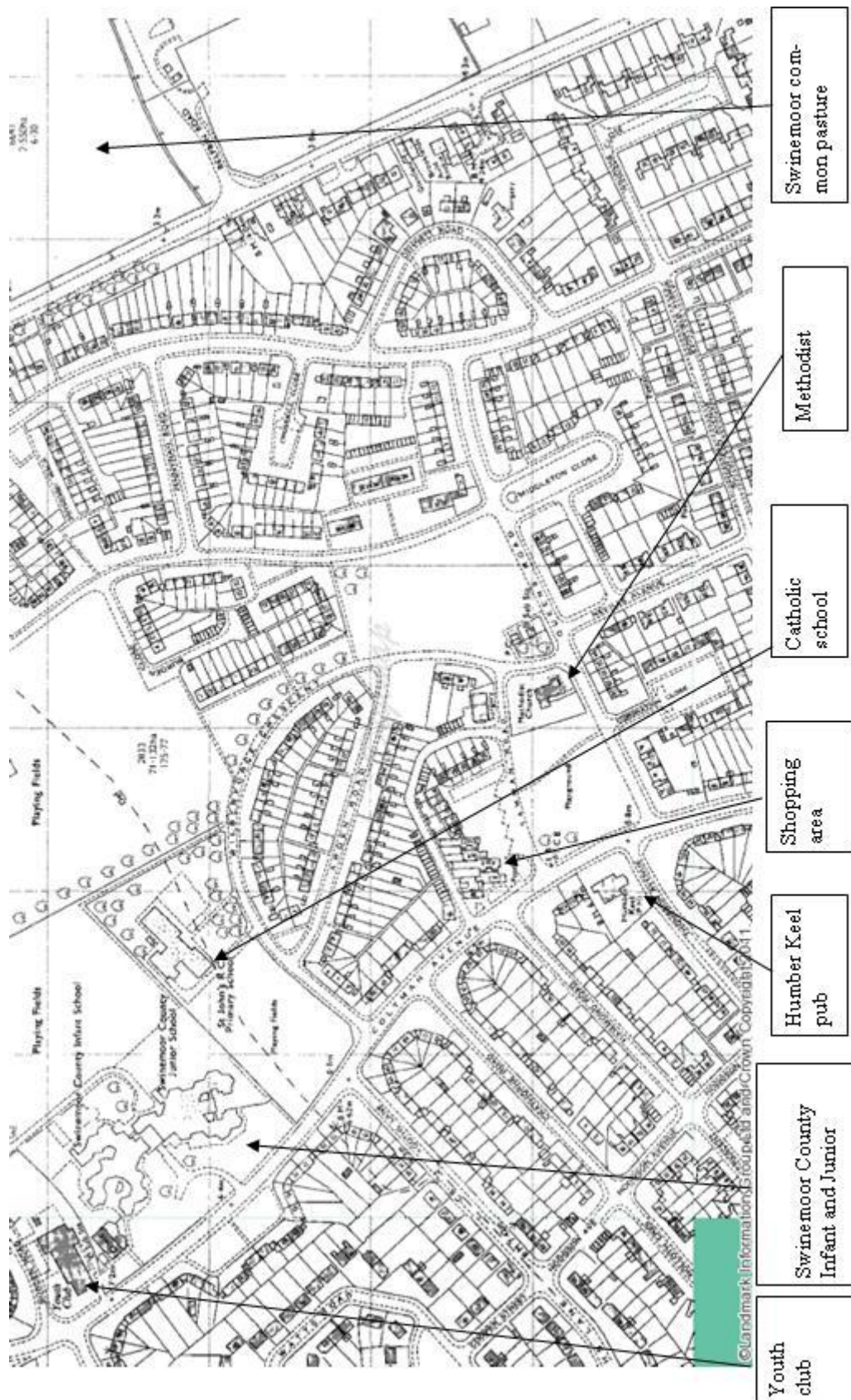


#### Appendix 4. Map – East Beverley, c.1966 (From OS map published 1966)

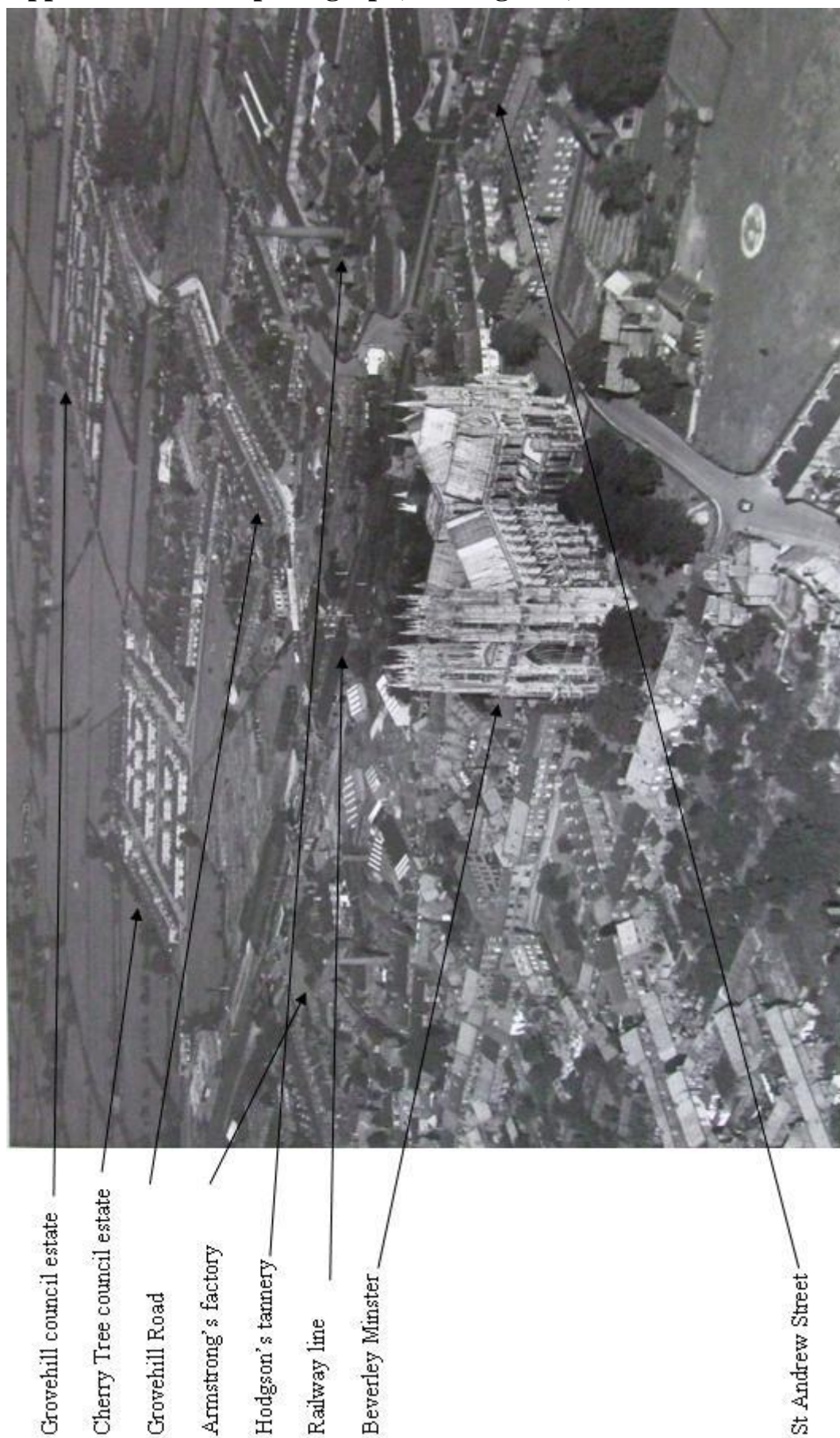




## Appendix 5. Map – Swinemoor council estate c.1974



**Appendix 6. Aerial photograph, looking east, 1937**



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