'An Empire Dock': Place Promotion and the Local Acculturation of Imperial Discourse in 'Britain's Third Port'

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Abstract: This article explores the employment and adaptation of imperial ideas and imagery in the civic performance and presentation of Hull, the East Yorkshire port city, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Focusing, in particular, on the opening ceremony of a new dock in June 1914 - organised around the procession of King George V and the Queen-consort Mary - the article contests that imperial discourses were adapted for use in the local context during this period. At a time when the British empire was widely seen to require renewal, following military mistakes in South Africa and growing economic and naval competition with Germany and North America, civic performances such as dock openings provided a means for the presentation of the provincial city to a national and, potentially, international audience. They were also an opportunity to present an image of a still robust and powerful empire. Opening ceremonies provided local political and business elites with a stage for situating the city within the broader structures of empire, conferring, in concert with the approval of the Crown, an association with imperial grandeur and socioeconomic innovation.

Keywords: British empire; urban governance; Hull; civic culture; maritime identity.

Introduction

The opening of a new 'Joint Dock' on 26 June 1914 was an auspicious occasion for the people of Hull, full of 'pompous Pageantry' and brimming with optimism amid simmering international tensions.[1] The declaration of war would only be a month away, but local workers, political elites and naval servicemen stood together, though not necessarily in parity, to celebrate the building of 'one of the finest docks that has ever been constructed'.[2] In addition to the 1914 opening of what became known as King George Dock, in honour of George V, this article assesses the extent and significance of civic pageantry surrounding dock openings in Hull during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. It will be seen that the public celebration and procession marking the opening of new dock facilities, nominally led by local civic and commercial elites, played a prominent part in Hull's civic culture, as well as its insertion within a broader imperial framework. Hull offers an underutilised case study for the analysis of imperial culture and its intersection with the everyday life of urban inhabitants at a local level.

The opening of King George Dock built upon a tradition of civic ceremony in the city, especially surrounding royal visits. The public celebration of maritime development, in the case of King George Dock, wedded a royal visit with widespread evocations of civic pride,

[1] 'An Empire Dock', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, p. 12; Jan Rüger, *The Great Naval Game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, 2009), 203.
[2] 'The King and Queen at Hull', *Yorkshire Post*, 27 June 1914, 9-10.

while offering opportunities for further economic development and commercial self-promotion through newspaper and billboard advertising. This kind of place promotion, or 'boosterism', combined symbols of civic affiliation and belonging with references to the nation and empire.[3] Local authorities, civic leaders, newspapers and individuals all played a role in place-promotional activity, which became prevalent at a time of expanding local democracy, industrial and urban growth, and the attendant regional competition this encouraged between cities. [4] It will be argued in this article that the resplendent opening of King George Dock in June 1914 provided a stage for the local acculturation of imperial discourses, situating the port city of Hull within a global 'imperial system'.[5] The global empire was not only a source of new markets and raw materials. For cities connected to the business of empire, like Hull, underlining the intimate connections of the locale with Dominions overseas reaffirmed the city's elevated status; a process also observed in the interwar years through empire-centred public exhibitions.[6] This factor was particularly important for contemporary business leaders, who wished to promote the growing industrial prowess of the city. Indeed, as the Lord Mayor of Hull, John Henry Hargreaves, put it following the opening of the new dock, 'the city of Hull has obtained a huge advertisement, and should reap the benefit in hundreds of ways'.[7] Civic elites played a prominent role in 'boosting' the city, with an emphasis on the central role of local government in facilitating economic growth, in addition to social and cultural improvements in the public realm.

Historians have attested to a deeply popular engagement with imperial ideas and images from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century, with messages disseminated through advertising, illustrated magazines, the popular press, and festivals.[8] In addition, urban

[3] S. V. Ward, 'Time and place: key themes in place promotion in the USA, Canada and Britain since 1870', in J.R. Gold and S.V. Ward (eds.), *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions* (Chichester, 1995), 53-74; Ben Roberts, 'Entertaining the community: the evolution of civic ritual and public celebration, 1860-1953', *Urban History*, 44:3 (2017), 444-63; Tom Hulme, ''A nation of town criers': civic publicity and historical pageantry in inter-war Britain', *Urban History*, 44:2 (2017), 270-92.

[4] Andrew Jackson, 'Civic identity, municipal governance and provincial newspapers: the Lincoln of Bernard Gilbert, poet, critic and 'booster', 1914', *Urban History*, 42:1 (2015), 113-129; Jon Stobart, 'Building an urban identity. Cultural space and civic boosterism in a 'new' industrial town: Burslem, 1761-1911', *Social History*, 29:4 (2004), 485-498.

[5] Pierre Purseigle, 'Beyond and Below the Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War', in Jenny Macleod and Pierre Purseigle (eds.), *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden, 2004), 98-99; Brad Beaven, *Visions of empire: Patriotism, popular culture and the city, 1870-1939* (Manchester, 2012), 12-13.

[6] Michael Barke, 'The North East Coast Exhibition of 1929: Entrenchment or Modernity?', *Northern History*, 51:1 (2014), 163.

[7] 'Their Majesties' Impressions', *Hull Daily Mail*, 27 June 1914, 6.

[8] Keith McClelland and Sonya O. Rose, 'Citizenship and empire, 1867-1928', in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds.), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, 2008), 286;

streetscapes in the 'imperial city' were inscribed with references to colonial possessions, notable events and military heroes. The 'imperial relationship' to colonial dominions and peoples around the globe was displayed in the city's 'factories, products, shipping headquarters, architecture, statuary, street furniture, societies, institutions, regiments and ceremonials'.[9] Empire suffused 'domestic social attitudes and domestic political ideologies', enjoying a degree of working-class support.[10] In early twentieth-century Britain, fin de siècle and then post-war uncertainties fed attempts to renew the public image of empire. The imperial project became a 'visible symbol of national worth', and was utilised in definitions of British imperial citizenship and subjecthood. Indeed, service to the empire was intimately connected with obedience to the Crown, a relationship exemplified by royal visits and processions throughout the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries. In such moments, the monarch became a cypher for the local adaptation of imperial cultural tropes, where the prestige of the city mirrored, and even bolstered, that of the empire.[11] In these moments, the local and imperial were as one.

The city of Hull, on the north-east coast of England, was one such 'imperial city' in the early twentieth century, with a civic identity wedded to its maritime-industrial character as a busy fishing and trading port. During this period, Hull was 'Britain's Third Port' – behind Liverpool and London - in terms of the volume of cargoes handled by a total of nine docks.[12] In 1910, approximately ten million tons of shipping were handled in Hull, with an aggregate value of £73.2 million: the majority (7.2m tons) were associated with foreign trade and the remainder (2.7m) along the coast.[13] According to 1912 figures, out of the £88m-worth of grain and flour imported into Britain, £20 million was conveyed to the hinterlands via London, £17m via Liverpool and £12m via Hull. A similar third-place ranking was achieved in other areas, including the import of meat, wool and timber.[14] As the *Hull Daily Mail* reported on the day the Joint Dock was opened: 'Hull occupies the third place in the

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Jim English, 'Empire Day in Britain, 1904-1958', *Historical Journal*, 49:1 (2006), 247-76; Beaven, *Visions of empire*, 179.

[9] John M. Mackenzie, 'Passion or indifference? Popular imperialism in Britain: continuities and discontinuities over two centuries', in John M. Mackenzie (ed.), *European empires and the people: Popular responses to imperialism in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Italy* (Manchester, 2011), 77.

[10] Antoinette Burton, 'Rules of Thumb: British history and 'imperial culture' in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain', *Women's History Review*, 3:4 (1994), 485.

[11] McClelland and Rose, 'Citizenship and empire', 278.

[12] Michaela G. Barnard and David J. Starkey, 'Private Companies, Culture and Place in the Development of Hull's Maritime Business Sector, c.1860–1914' in Gelina Harlaftis, Stig Tenold and Jesús M. Valdaliso (eds.), *The World's Key Industry: History and Economics of International Shipping* (Basingstoke, 2012), 204.

[13] David J. Starkey, 'Ownership Structures in the British Shipping Industry: The Case of Hull, 1820-1916', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 8:2 (1996), 74.

[14] H(ull) H(istory) C(entre), C DFX/65/6, The Hull Joint Dock souvenir booklet (1914).

United Kingdom as a coal port, pure and simple, as well as from the standpoint of general trade'.[15]

The city's pre-First World War iterations of local identity and pride were connected with a wider maritime-imperial character, as an important cog in the global 'imperial system'.[16] Though remote in terms of geography and, for some, culture, Hull's reliance on 'sea-related activity' and substantial overseas links meant it was truly globally connected, both to Dominion ports and to prominent Baltic and other northern European states, such as Norway, Finland, Russia and Germany.[17] Commentators were keen to underline Hull's cheapness relative to other British ports, as well as its more convenient location for the purposes of international trade and internal distribution of goods, particularly coal.[18] In 1912, Hull's 'exceptionally attractive port rates' were seen as a vital selling point for the local Chamber of Commerce, capable of attracting as yet unaware 'shippers and traders' from the 'Colonies and the dominions beyond the seas', with Australia especially underlined as a target.[19] By the time of the Joint Dock's opening in June 1914, the Australian trade was firmly established, 'catered for by a direct line of steamships to and from Hull' – provided by the P&O Co. and Clan Line - unloading products such as wool and Tasmanian apples in the port.[20]

Civic ceremonial culture and dock openings in Hull

Prominent visits to the city by royalty were often connected with the opening of civic buildings, including the City Hall and Queen Victoria monument in 1903.[21] The opening of new docking facilities was also the occasion for civic display and celebration, and included royal visits during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The opening of Albert Dock in 1869 received a royal visit from the Prince and Princess of Wales. This was repeated with even greater fanfare in June 1914, for the opening of King George Dock.[22] This state-of-the-art dock, reportedly costing £3 million to build, was the joint venture of two railway

[15] 'Hull's Expanding Trade', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 22.
[16] 'The Third Port', *Hull Packet*, 2 September 1859, p. 5; Beaven, *Visions*, 12.
[17] Barnard and Starkey, 'Private Companies', 214; Starkey, 'Ownership Structures', 74.
[18] HHC, C DFX/65/6, The Hull Joint Dock souvenir booklet (1914); Advertisements placed by the municipality (Hull Development Committee) continued to intone businesses to 'Ship your Goods via Hull: Britain's Cheapest Port' into the interwar period. For example, see *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 August 1932, 10-11.
[19] 'Hull's Expanding Trade', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 22; 'More Trade for Hull', *Hull Daily Mail*, 3 September 1912, 4.
[20] 'Hull's Expanding Trade', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 22.
[21] 'The Royal Visit to Hull', *Hull Daily Mail*, 23 March 1903, 3.
[22] Martin Wilcox, 'Dock Development, 1778-1914', in David J. Starkey, David Atkinson, Briony McDonagh, Sarah McKeon and Elisabeth Salter (eds.), *Hull: Culture, History, Place* (Liverpool, 2017), 117-44.

enterprises, the North-Eastern Railway and Hull & Barnsley Railway companies (hence, the 'Joint Dock').[23] Directors of both companies comprised together the Hull Joint Dock Committee.[24] The new dock offered a water area of fifty-three acres (with room to expand to around ninety acres), making it the largest dock on the north-east coast. There were also quays equipped with electric cranes, six concrete warehouses (with a capacity to hold 73,000 tons of goods), coaling belts and hoists, and a grain silo, with a 40,000-ton capacity. All activities were to be fully electrified, rendering dockside stream-powered engines obsolete.[25] The period 1889-1910 saw marked increases in dock development in England and Wales, in response to an overall growth in trade. In particular, upswings in the coal trade, reaching a zenith in 1913, meant that ports that handled coal – such as Hull – required new and improved docking facilities.[26]

Underpinned by the work of Pierre Purseigle and Brad Beaven on the local adaptation of national and imperial cultures for use in localities, this article employs Hull as a case study in order to explore the permeation of imperial discourses within urban civic identities.[27] It does this through analysis of the local press and advertising in the city on the build up to and following the opening of the city's largest and best-equipped dock on 26 June 1914. The local and national press not only provides a rich historical source for the study of urban culture in this period, for contemporaries it was also integral to the formation of British imperial identities. As Magee and Thompson note:

> During the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa [the 'British Dominions'] were drawn together by what has been called an 'imperial press system'. Newspaper enterprises across these societies yoked together the three main geographical bases for British identity – regional, national and imperial – with the emphasis shifting according to the commercial interests of the paper in question. [28]

In the case of Hull and similar cities, the press provided a vehicle for the combination of these geographical bases, while centring the locale.[29] As will be demonstrated below, local

[23] 'The King and Queen at Hull', *Daily Mirror*, 27 June 1914, 1. This figure equates to around £177m today, according to the National Archives Currency Converter (http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/).
[24] 'Hull Joint Dock Committee', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 15.
[25] 'The New Dock Described', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 5.
[26] A.G. Kenwood, 'Port Investment in England and Wales, 1851-1913', *Bulletin of Economic Research*, 17:2 (1965), 164.
[27] Purseigle, 'Beyond and Below'; Beaven, *Visions*.
[28] Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2010), 28.
[29] Simon J. Potter, 'Empire and the English Press, *c.* 1857-1914' in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire c. 1857-1921* (Dublin, 2004), 39.

newspapers combined celebration of the city's newfound fortunes with its insertion into the structures of global empire. Indeed, with the added authority implied by the approval of the Crown, the opening of new docking facilities could become a means for merging the regional, national and imperial facets of British identity.[30] As Chandrika Kaul writes, the press provided a 'conduit for a reaffirmation of the country's worldwide imperial status'. With the relative rapidity allowed by innovations in communications technology (namely, the telegraph), it simultaneously presented events occurring in far-flung colonial territories while providing a stage for depicting the 'passage of imperial pageantry and spectacle'.[31] In addition, for large cities like Hull, such representations in the local press were vital in defining the character and boundaries of the urban realm (here, an industrial port). As Andrew Walker notes, 'the provincial press assisted readers in their imagining of the urban, helping them identify and understand the increasingly complex urban form'.[32]

This article also takes a longer view of civic ceremonial surrounding dock openings from the mid-nineteenth to the eve of the First World War, to some extent mirroring studies by historians of civic culture and performance in urban spaces. Urban historians, most notably Simon Gunn and, more recently, Ben Roberts – have explored in some detail the development of civic ceremonial in British towns and cities in the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries. For Gunn, public pageants in urban squares, thoroughfares and civic buildings 'represented the urban population to itself in a collective act of identification and celebration'. Taking the form of '[r]oyal coronations and visits, the opening of public buildings, the unveiling of statues and monuments, and funerals of civic worthies', these events provided both an entertaining spectacle for the public at large and a symbolic display of local authority and power structures.[33] If we apply this characterisation to the opening of the Joint Dock, the make-up of the assembled dignitaries and invited guests at the opening ceremony (explored below) provided an 'imaginary constitution' of the local community, with politicians and employers at its head.[34] Away from the royal procession and sedate

[30] Ibid., 32.
[31] Chandrika Kaul, *Communications, Media and the Imperial Experience: Britain and India in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke, 2014), 23.
[32] Andrew Walker, 'The Development of the Provincial Press in England, c. 1780-1914', *Journalism Studies,* 7:3 (2006), 379.
[33] Simon Gunn, *The public culture of the Victorian middle class: Ritual and authority in the English industrial city 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000), 163.
[34] Ibid.

dockside celebrations, ordinary people engaged in what was, in Roberts' words, 'a free form of entertainment'.[35]

While Gunn earmarks 1870 as the beginning of a steady decline of civic ritual and display due to the advent of commercialised popular entertainment and a general decline in enthusiasm, Roberts posits that it did not decline; rather 'it merely changed' to embrace 'democratisation' and to reflect changing patterns of working-class leisure and recreation.[36] Arguably, the opening of the Hull's newest dock in 1914 presents an example of the propensity of civic ritual and performance for 'reformation, reconstitution and redefinition'.[37] As Tom Hulme writes regarding the interwar period, civic culture - under the tutelage of local government in concert with private industry - could be 'ambitious and adaptive'.[38] This event represents a high point in civic performance for Hull in the early twentieth century, following some six decades of popular engagement with dock openings. It underlines the centrality of the maritime economy, seafaring and trade not only to Hull's business community and municipal leadership, but to the city and its people in general. In a period of imperial renewal and industrial development, the opening of King George Dock became a stage for the projection of positive images of the city. These were used not only to attract inward investment, but to situate the city within the wider imperial project, as a thoroughly modern component in the consolidation of the empire. Just as naval reviews - attended by the monarch - could provide a 'theatre' for performing imperial might, unity and loyalty, the pageantry and mass spectacle of dock openings could '[offer] an icon, at once modern and romantic, for the imagination of a shared imperial vision'.[39] Framed by notions of a 'Greater Britain', such performances 'called upon Britons and others to recognise and hence to legitimate Britain's role as a world-imperial power', as a centre of a vast and growing 'imperial network'.[40]

Hull in the mid- to late-nineteenth century enjoyed a diverse industrial base with the port function at its heart. Of major importance were deep-sea fishing, Baltic timber trading, and cotton and seed oil production. Increasing wages, particularly among cotton workers (including many women) and seamen, encouraged immigration into the town (Hull gained

[35] Ben Roberts, 'Entertaining the community: the evolution of civic ritual and public celebration, 1860–1953', *Urban History*, 44:3 (2017), 445.
[36] Ibid., 462.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Hulme, ''A nation of town criers'', 290.
[39] Rüger, *The Great Naval Game*, 13; John C. Mitcham, 'Navalism and Greater Britain, 1897-1914' in Duncan Redford (ed.), *Maritime History and Identity: The Sea and Culture in the Modern World* (London, 2014), 274.
[40] Burton, 'Rules of Thumb', 484; Mitcham, 'Navalism', 273.

city status in 1897). Rural inhabitants from the Lincolnshire countryside, as well as poorly-paid workers from the Yorkshire and Lancashire mill towns, were attracted by these burgeoning industries.[41] The figure of the marine engineer was also increasingly prominent, as R.G. Milburn has shown.[42] Hull seamen were able to demand higher wages, as the Baltic timber trade only operated eight months of the year, with some men taking home between £3 and £3 5s a month, compared to a maximum of £2 5s in London.[43] The coming of steam-powered vessels and deep sea trawling greatly affected the working conditions of seamen, with less skilled hands needed aboard, while the need for more labour swelled as the nineteenth century progressed.[44] Industrial developments were also subject to the stresses and strains of the market and periods of unemployment were particularly common among dockers, or 'lumpers' in contemporary parlance.[45] Overcrowded housing caused concerns regarding hygiene and the 'moral dangers' of multiple families, in addition to single adults, sharing small and unsanitary accommodation.[46] However, the latter decades of the nineteenth century saw an improvement in living and working conditions for many Hull workers. Increased imports of foodstuffs and buoyant oil cake and timber industries cemented the national status of the city as Britain's Third Port, providing work for many industrial and dockside workers and further entrenching the commanding role taken by dock facilities in the economic development of the city.[47] The development of port and dock facilities, responding to a variety of shifts in the wider economy, gained pace in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Ports across the north-east coast built new docks or redeveloped existing facilities. Tyneside's Albert Edward Dock, opened in 1884, served a growing export trade, whilst the growth of Middlesbrough's provision responded to expansions in iron manufacturing and trade. West Hartlepool, Sunderland and Goole also saw developments in terms of dock size due to the welcome pressures of coal exporting.[48]

The opening of Hull's Victoria Dock in 1850 began a wave of civic ceremonial that included working people, either as enthusiastic spectators or active participants. This dipped

[41] Gillett and MacMahon, *A History of Hull* (Oxford, 1980), 281-85, 343.
[42] R.G. Milburn, 'The emergence of the engineer in the British merchant shipping industry, 1812-1863', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 28:3 (2016), 559-575.
[43] Gillett and MacMahon, *Hull*, 281-85.
[44] Martin Wilcox, ''The want of sufficient men': Labour recruitment and training in the British North Sea fisheries, 1850-1950', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 27:4 (2015), 733.
[45] Gillett and MacMahon, 284.
[46] Ibid., 287, 327.
[47] 'The Third Port', *Hull Packet*, 2 September 1859, 5; Bernard Foster, *Living and Dying: A picture of Hull in the Nineteenth Century* (Hull, 1984), 266-67; Wilcox, 'Dock Development', 135.
[48] Kenwood, 'Port Investment', 156-67; Robert Lee, 'The socio-economic and demographic characteristics of port cities: a typology for comparative analysis?,' *Urban History*, 25:2 (1998), 147-172.

in the early 1880s with lacklustre displays for the openings of William Wright Dock (1880) and St. Andrew's Dock (1883) owing to, in the words of the *Hull Daily Mail*, the equivocations of the Hull Dock Company (HDC) as to the necessity of a new dock to the east of the city.[49] Never a popular presence in the city, with little purchase in the local business community, in the late 1850s the monopolistic HDC's prevarications had been blamed for allowing the rise of rival regional ports; namely, Goole, Grimsby and Hartlepool. With a leadership that denied the necessity of building new docks to the east of the River Hull, delays hampered development and the firm became ever more distanced from local affairs as the century progressed.[50] As a result, there was neither the time nor inclination to organise large-scale ceremonial events for the opening of William Wright Dock or St. Andrew's Dock.

The HDC's monopoly in dock development was ended by the building of Alexandra Dock in 1885, when the Hull & Barnsley Railway Co. spearheaded development, accompanied by a wholehearted return to commercial-civic ceremonial. The call for an eastern dock was answered by the Hull & Barnsley and North-Eastern Railway companies when they built the Joint Dock in 1914.[51] It is also notable that dock openings attended by royalty tended to garner larger crowds, with the last dock-related royal visit before 1914 being for the opening of Albert Dock in 1869, where Edward and Alexandra, then the Prince and Princess of Wales, processed through the city centre from Paragon Station to the dock.[52] Policing of the space around the railway station was seen, particularly by the conservative press, to be of paramount importance, given the short time allowed the royal couple in the city on this occasion.[53] The event itself passed without serious incident, and the streets through which the royal party passed were decorated with patriotic banners and flags, Hull being 'naturally (or nautically) [prolific] in bunting'. The crowds lining the short procession were apparently substantial, described as 'multitudes of men, women and children'. A 'dense crowd' filled the part of the dock side open to the public.[54] Concern with public order also pointed to the increasing involvement of working people in ceremonial displays, in an entertainment capacity, if not actively.[55]

[49] Hugh Calvert, *A History of Hull* (London, 1978), 208.
[50] Wilcox, 'Dock Development', 122, 127-9.
[51] 'A Century's Dock Opening Ceremonies at Hull: Humber Dock Opening, 1809', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 19.
[52] Ibid.
[53] 'The Visit of the Prince & Princess of Wales to Hull', *Hull Packet*, 2 July 1869, 5.
[54] 'The Royal Visit to Hull', *Leeds Times*, 24 July 1869, 8.
[55] Roberts, 'Entertaining the community', 9.

Opening the 'Joint Dock', 26 June 1914

The ceremony celebrating the opening of what became known as King George Dock on 26 June 1914 comprised a number of official and non-official elements, beginning with a formal civic greeting for the royal visitors, King George V and the Queen-consort, Mary. Alighting from their train at Paragon Station, the couple were greeted by local military and civic dignitaries, including Lord Nunburnholme, the Lord Lieutenant of the East Riding of Yorkshire, alongside the Archbishop of York. Commercial interests were represented by W.S. Wright, the chairman of the Hull & Barnsley Railway Co. and member of the Hull Joint Dock Committee, accompanied by his wife. Crowds assembled outside the station and cheered as the royal party passed into nearby Jameson Street.[56] Though there was a notable military and police presence, the crowds – some of whom had waited in the summer sun for more than two hours – were said to display 'exemplary patience'. This was a testament to the respect and loyalty of the Hull citizenry:

> This vast avenue of living beings was the Sovereign's bodyguard, and herein is the crux of a British monarch's popularity. The military and the police are merely the spectacular colourings to the great animated picture. King George's personal security is everywhere around him.[57]

At the formal civic ceremony at the City Hall, the King conferred the honour of a Lord Mayoralty upon future holders of the office. According to the King, this reflected the city's 'high position on the roll of the great ports of my kingdom'.[58] This ceremony was followed by the laying of foundation stones for two new municipal undertakings: a tuberculosis hospital and a secondary school for girls.[59] As such, this royal touch added additional authority to the Corporation's efforts in the provision of social services and public infrastructure (an aspect of the occasion explored in greater detail below).

The one-mile journey of the royal suite by carriage to the dock was greeted by further crowds, who lined both sides of Hedon Road. Some residents were keen to profit from the occasion:

> To-day being one of the proverbial times when it is wise to "gather the hay," many of the occupants of the smaller tenements were busy erecting movable seats in the small front gardens at the fixed tariff of 1s to 2s 6d for a fine view. Judging by the allotted space, slim people would derive greater comfort.[60]

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[56] 'The Royal Arrival', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 3.
[57] 'At Paragon Station: Huge and Enthusiastic Crowds', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 3.
[58] 'The King's Honour to Hull', *The Times*, 27 June 1914, 8.
[59] Ibid.
[60] 'Early Morning Scenes', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 3.

At the end of an adjacent street, several kitchen tables were arranged, 'so as to form a solid square, and lo! an impromptu stand'.[61] The official inauguration of the dock took place on a quayside platform, after the King and Queen-consort had 'steamed around the dock' aboard a yacht, the *Irene*, belonging to the Trinity House mariners' school.[62] In this same area, on the south quay, around 3,000 guests of the Hull & Barnsley and North-Eastern Railway companies were 'entertained to luncheon, which will probably be one of the biggest ever held anywhere'.[63] The upper floors of warehouses on the dock estate were utilised as makeshift 'grand stands', where more official guests were served light refreshments as they watched the spectacle unfold. Attendance at the event was organised through a system of colour-coded tickets, which designated how close to the royal reception pavilion guests would be sat. With the royal reception pavilion being situated next to warehouses no. 5 and 6, at the south-west end of the dock, this area afforded the best view. These attendees were also entitled to park road vehicles within the dock gates, under police guard. To the north-west of the dock, the roofs of warehouses 1-3, across the water from the reception pavilion, provided seating further from the royal suite but closer to the choir stand, from which music was played during the latter half of the ceremony.[64]

The *Hull Daily Mail* traced the historical lineage of royal visits and their consequences for the morale of the citizenry and their consequent economic and social successes, marking these events as indicative of the city's national importance since its founding.[65] As Simon Gunn has noted, royal events worked at multiple levels, through 'reciprocal gestures between the monarchy and the representatives of bourgeois industrial society'.[66] This was certainly the case in the opening ceremony of King George Dock, where addresses by local notables stressed the loyalty of the city to the monarch, rather than the central state, the former in turn '[consecrating] the importance and independence of the industrial city'.[67] The King's reply to the Corporation's welcome address on 26 June 1914 underlined this:

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[61] Ibid.
[62] 'The King's Honour to Hull', *The Times*, 27 June 1914, 8.
[63] Ibid.; The classical French menu included dishes of quail, salmon steak, lamb in hazelnuts, ham slices, nougatine cake, and strawberry and raspberry compote with Chantilly cream, accompanied by a selection of fine wines, brandy, whisky, Perrier water, cigars and cigarettes. See HHC, C DFX/65/3.
[64] 'The Joint Dock: A Great Undertaking', *Yorkshire Post*, 6 June 1914, 11; HHC, C DFX/12/5, 'Programme of Arrangements in Connection with the Opening of the Hull Joint Dock' (1914).
[65] 'History of the Joint Dock Scheme', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 5.
[66] Gunn, *Public culture*, 170.
[67] 'History of the Joint Dock Scheme', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 5.

> We thank you heartily for the loyal and dutiful address you have presented on our behalf. […] It is [a] deep satisfaction to me to know that the rapid progress in recent years of the trade of Hull with all parts of the world… have impelled you to increase your shipping facilities… I am glad to be with you to-day on an occasion of such good omen, not only for the development of the city and the surrounding district, but also for the strengthening of the peaceful ties which link our land to the Dominions across the seas […].[68]

This apparent belief in the upwards trajectory of Hull's fortunes was matched by the gratitude of the city: 'The King and Queen, we know, have identified themselves with our efforts, Commercial and Municipal. They have smiled upon them'.[69] Crucially, the King's reply connected Hull's economic development with that of the wider nation and empire, underlining the centrality of overseas trade, naval exploration and conquest in forging industry, promoting peace and spreading British influence internationally. Towns and cities of note, beyond London and Glasgow, operated within a broader 'imperial system' that linked disparate localities with the nation via the prowess of empire.[70] This was especially true in port cities like Hull, whose civic and commercial elite constantly reiterated, especially during periods of economic development, the city's status as Britain's Third Port. This was similar in tone to Glasgow's claim to the title of 'Second City of Empire', vying for position behind London's 'undisputed heart'. This was, indeed, a central tenet of the civic 'boosterism' that occupied many British cities from 1900.[71] Indeed, the *Hull Daily Mail*'s "Wanderer" column placed the city within an imperial context: 'Royal visitors would to-day enter a city, not only glorious in its spectacular display, but, what was of far greater importance, would meet with a spontaneous exhibition of love and loyalty not exceeded in any part of the British Dominions'.[72] Therefore, in this view, the event was not only a matter of regional and national importance, but exemplary within the British empire. The dock's opening ceremony was a mass spectacle, underlining not only economic and commercial ties but defining a global 'imperial community' exemplified by the city's maritime culture and historic connections to the sea – Hull was 'Greater Britain' in microcosm.[73]

Commentators described Hull as a gateway to the industrial 'northern and midland counties', suggesting an elevated position above regional towns and cities of similar character. In this view, without Hull's docking facilities, much of Britain's industrial base

[68] 'The King and Queen at Hull', *Yorkshire Post*, 27 June 1914, 9.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Beaven, *Visions*, 12-13.
[71] Ibid.; Ward, 'Time and place', 53-74.
[72] 'Early Morning Scenes', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 3.
[73] Mitcham, 'Navalism', 272.

would be impaired. However, as the *Yorkshire Post* stated in early June 1914, Hull was also crucial for maintaining international trade, particularly with the Dominions, marking out South Africa, Australia and Canada as primary partners. These international imperial connections rendered 'additional dock facilities absolutely imperative'.[74] The souvenir booklet which accompanied the opening of the Joint Dock presented the city as a bustling, cosmopolitan centre of trade and commerce, with docks filled with ships bearing the flags of France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Russia. These were carrying '[c]argoes from all regions of the earth – wool from Australia, mutton from New Zealand, corn from India, Argentina and the Black Sea ports, dairy produce from Scandinavia'.[75] The port was central to the northern English economy and a key link in the supply chains of empire:

> Hull is the natural doorway to a market with a population of twelve million people. They not only require foodstuffs such as wheat and frozen meat which distant lands can provide, but Hull is the natural inlet for the fine wools from Australia and New Zealand for manufacture in the West Riding of Yorkshire. In return, Hull can send to the outer world hardware goods and woollen cloths, and, above all, it can supply coal to whatever country may need it.[76]

While underlining the city's status as the Third Port, the booklet made the case for a shift of imports from other mercantile centres to Hull – namely Liverpool and London - where rates were lower. As such, firms would be able to take better advantage of the upswing in trade and consumers would be able to access cheaper foodstuffs from the empire. For the booklet's author, Scottish travel writer John Foster Fraser, these economic advantages were seen to benefit both British and Dominion businesses, with the port itself drawing together culturally and spatially these disparate imperial compatriots:

> As one who has visited our oversea Dominions, and had the opportunity of witnessing and appreciating the business capabilities of our fellow British subjects in those distant lands, I feel confident that the case which I have set forth has only to be studied by them for their associations of exporters and traders to meet in conference and bring the necessary pressure to bear upon the great shipping companies; so that, instead of dumping at London or Liverpool goods and food destined for use in the area of Yorkshire, and contingent counties, they should be taken direct to Hull.[77]

With celebration of the dock's construction overseen by local government, municipal leaders aided the production of a civic identity buoyed by maritime commercial expansion.

[74] 'The Joint Dock: A Great Undertaking', *Yorkshire Post*, 6 June 1914, 11.
[75] HHC, C DFX/65/6, The Hull Joint Dock souvenir booklet (1914).
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

Civic place promotion and display also readily leant upon notions of historical lineage and heritage to promote the city, such as historic bravery or ingenuity, while positing the city's status as a burgeoning force for future prosperity on the national and imperial stages.[78] It is clear that the opening of new docks and other facilities associated with maritime trade and economy was central to urban development in the industrialising towns and cities of the north of England. This includes the development of unique local identities, though the complexion of civic performance and ritual in urban ports like Hull was not entirely exceptional in the period, as Simon Gunn has shown through case studies of Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham.[79] As Groote and Haartsen highlight, the maintenance of such place-specific narratives provides a root for identity and often stresses a security of collective identity over time.[80]

The belief that Hull was a city of economic innovation and growth, with a rich local culture underpinned by local family firms and maritime traditions, was palpable in local newspapers during the immediately pre-First World War period. An advertisement released by Hull Corporation to coincide with King George Dock's inauguration, declared Hull the 'Ideal CITY for new Industries' and implored businesses to 'Come to Hull now – now that the immense general improvements of recent years are making their benefits felt… get in the thin end of the wedge'.[81] Such an evocation sought to encourage civic and local pride, sharing information about new municipal initiatives, while presenting opportunities for inward investment in land, factories and warehousing. In this narrative, the progressive reforms of the local administration made this economic development possible.[82] The blending of commercial success with political and civic leadership was also demonstrated by the central figures in the running of the dock's opening ceremony: a mixture of industrialists, religious leaders and politicians. For example, the ceremonial luncheon which took place within warehouses at the dock itself, was led by the chairmen of the North Eastern Railway (Lord Knaresborough) and the Hull & Barnsley Railway (W.S. Wright), with each presenting

[78] Ward, 'Time and place', 53-74; Robert J. Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. III 1840-1950,* ed. Martin Daunton (Cambridge, 2000), 395-428.
[79] Gunn, 60.
[80] Peter Groote and Tialda Haartsen, 'The Communication of Heritage: Creating Place Identities', in Brian Graham and Peter Howard (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot, 2008), 181-94.
[81] 'Come to Hull', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 3.
[82] James Moore and Richard Rodger, 'Who Really Ran the Cities? Municipal Knowledge and Policy Networks in British Local Government, 1832-1914', in Ralf Roth and Robert Beachy (eds.), *Who Ran the Cities? City Elites and Urban Power Structures in Europe and North America, 1750-1940* (Aldershot, 2007), 61; John R. Griffiths, 'Civic Communication in Britain: A Study of the Municipal Journal, c. 1893-1910', *Journal of Urban History*, 34:5 (2008), 777.

toasts to the King. Further toasts to the 'Success of the Dock' were proposed by T.R. Ferens, Liberal MP for Hull East, and supported by Guy Wilson, Liberal MP for Hull West. Toasts were also proposed by Lord Nunburnholme, Lord Lieutenant of the East Riding of Yorkshire and supported by Sir Mark Sykes, Unionist MP for Hull Central. Underlining the intimate connections between politics and business in the development of this auspicious project, replies were heard from Sir Hugh Bell, director of the Bell Brothers steelworks in Middlesbrough and chairman of the Joint Dock Committee, in addition to W.S. Wright.[83] Consistent with the development of European ports in the period, this auspicious list reflected the collaborative 'entanglement of public and private stakeholders' required to develop the dock: the 'flows of goods, people, and ideas that are the ultimate goal of port cities'.[84]

The 26 June 1914 issue of the *Hull Daily Mail* was steeped in evocations of civic pride, optimism and self-promotion. The advent of the new dock was merely the natural trajectory of an industrious history, led by a Liberal-dominated local authority unafraid of taking on major municipal works on behalf of its citizens:

> Hull, it will thus be noted, possesses more than the usual Corporation undertakings, the exceptions being the gas works and public abattoirs. As indicated, the more important are those concerning water, electricity, tramways, and telephones. There are also the markets, which yield a considerable profit, the Baths, which like those of other municipalities, are worked at a loss, the Museums, and Art Gallery, a fine public building in the City Hall… To the foresight of the Corporation was due the city's wide and straight thoroughfares, and they can also claim it is a well-kept city, comparing favourably with some of the larger cities in the kingdom, of which it is one, whilst it is on the threshold of a brighter era denoting Greater Hull.[85]

Local newspapers played a pivotal role as 'boosters' for growing industrial cities like Hull which, though central to the economic functioning of inland mill and market towns, was competition with other ports within the region. Andrew Jackson defines the urban 'booster' succinctly: 'Boosters sought to champion the economic success and future potential of their own city at a time of great industrial and urban growth, together with attendant stiff competition with other regional cities'.[86] In Hull, as in other cities in the industrial north of England, including Leeds, the progress of the city was equated with the foresight and

[83] HHC, C DFX/12/5, 'Programme of Arrangements in Connection with the Opening of the Hull Joint Dock' (1914).
[84] Carola Hein and Dirk Schubert, 'Resilience, Disaster, and Rebuilding in Modern Port Cities', *Journal of Urban History*, OnlineFirst, June 2020, 7. Available: https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144220925097.
[85] 'Hull's Municipal Undertakings', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 20.
[86] Jackson, 'Civic identity', 115.

generosity of local government, whose willingness to take on ambitious municipal schemes could mark them out against other towns and cities in the region.[87]

The liberal *Eastern Morning News* was even clearer in its celebration of Hull's municipal progress, tying economic and commercial development to improvements in living standards: 'The record has been one of steady advancement in all the departments which make for better social conditions and the health and general well-being of the people'. The article also speaks explicitly of the need for 'the working classes' to vacate polluted and congested central areas for 'more healthy and desirable surroundings', a migration made possible through the introduction of the cheapest tramway in England.[88] The historical development of municipalisation described by this newspaper evoked an enlightened and paternalistic Liberal elite whose central aim was social and moral reform.[89] T.R. Ferens was described as a 'most generous benefactor', while Alderman Alfred Gelder was largely responsible for recent street improvements, due to his 'energy and enthusiasm'.[90] However, as Dennis has noted, such 'municipal enterprise' often had the unintended consequence of attracting workers to the central business district, rather than encouraging a healthful dispersal of the working population away from the smoke and grind of the urban centre.[91] This may have reflected a propensity among elements of the urban bourgeoisie to over-estimate the extent of residential segregation (between 'workers' and 'capitalists'), as concern primarily focused on the concentration of groups from a limited number of trades in central industrial neighbourhoods.[92] As Lawton and Lee have shown, demographic segregation was prevalent in port cities during this period, occurring in tandem with urban expansion and significant in-migration.[93] This was particularly the case among maritime workers, who tended to have insecure lifestyles with a basis in the itinerant and dangerous nature of dockside work, seafaring and trawling. Therefore, some 'sailortowns' tended to be treated as an 'other' by civic elites, occupying the fringes of society at the nexus of land and sea.[94]

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[87] 'Hull's Progress: The Corporation and the City', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 20; Gunn, 53.
[88] 'Hull's Remarkable Municipal Progress', *Eastern Morning News*, 27 June 1914, 4.
[89] Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003), 156.
[90] 'Hull's Municipal Undertakings', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 20.
[91] Richard Dennis, *English industrial cities of the nineteenth century: A social geography* (Cambridge, 1986), 112.
[92] Ibid., 214.
[93] Robert Lee and Richard Lawton, 'Port Development and the Demographic Dynamics of European Urbanisation', in Robert Lee and Richard Lawton (eds.), *Population and Society in Western European Port-Cities, c.1650-1939* (Liverpool, 2002), 1-36.
[94] Brad Beaven, 'The resilience of sailortown culture in English naval ports, c. 1820-1900', *Urban History*, 43:1 (2016), 72-95; Isaac Land, 'The Humours of Sailortown: Atlantic History Meets Subculture Theory', in Glenn Clark, Judith Owens and Greg T. Smith (eds.), *City Limits: Perspectives on the Historical European City* (Montreal, 2010), 325-347; R. J. Blakemore, 'The Ship, the River and the Ocean Sea: Concepts of Space in the

However, as we have seen in the case of Hull's civic symbolism and imagery, port status was of utmost importance in the local imagination, as this was central to the socioeconomic basis of the city and the occupational mainstay of many of its inhabitants.[95]

The political and cultural content of social reform by local authorities was part of a middle-class ideal stressing the need for active citizenship and the pursuit of personal, social and environmental progress. As such, local elites, intertwined as they were with commercial interests, defined the parameters of urban and civic culture, using the city as an 'instrument in their social dominance'.[96] The fusing of elements of the past – in this case, the long history of royal patronage and loyalty, and centrality to national development – was also a fundamental part of the liberal 'doctrine of progress and the future'.[97] This discourse placed civic ritual and custom at the centre of the legitimation of liberal social values, by using historical pageantry and civic ceremonial to adapt elements of local historical narrative for use in the present.[98] This was local urban history presented as a 'Whiggish march towards contemporary industrial and civic power'.[99]

The urban elite, in Hull at this time a Liberal majority, deployed a 'notion of precedent' through processional culture as a basis for future-centred social reforms.[100] This ideology was centred upon, and operated through, the local community and perceived an alliance between different sections of urban society. As such, we can see the democratisation of civic ceremonial at dock openings from the 1850s (particularly the opening of Alexandra Dock in 1885) as part-and-parcel of this superficially-inclusive ideal. Popular liberalism itself was, as Joyce argues, 'an assertion of provincial identity'.[101] With proper investment by an enlightened Corporation ('the hand of the reformer'), the city could become self-regulating and, in turn, provide a much-improved standard of living.[102] In Hull, this ideal was written into urban space itself, through the naming of streets after prominent aldermen (Jameson Street, Alfred Gelder Street) and the construction of prominent civic buildings and public

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Seventeenth-Century London Maritime Community', in Duncan Redford (ed.), *Maritime History and Identity: The Sea and Culture in the Modern World* (London, 2014), 98-119.

[95] Sarah Palmer, 'Ports' in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol. III* (Cambridge, 2000), 133-150; Jo Byrne, 'Hull, Fishing and the Life and Death of Trawlertown: Living the Spaces of a Trawling Port-City' in Brad Beaven, Karl Bell and Robert James (eds.), *Port Towns and Urban Cultures: International Histories of the Waterfront, c.1700-2000* (London, 2016), 243-263.

[96] Jon Stobart, 'Identity, competition and place promotion in the Five Towns', *Urban History*, 30:2 (2003), 166.

[97] Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), 146.

[98] Paul Readman, 'The Place of the Past in English Culture c. 1890-1914', *Past & Present*, 186 (2005), 147-99.

[99] Hulme, 279.

[100] Joyce, *Visions*, 145.

[101] Ibid., 41.

[102] 'Hull's Remarkable Municipal Progress: Street Improvements', *Eastern Morning News*, 27 June 1914, 4.

amenities. In Queen Victoria Square, the 'palatial pile' of municipal and commercial (dock) buildings surrounded the statue of its regal namesake. The City Hall, Ferens Art Gallery and town dock offices provided a visual panorama spanning the city centre's urban landscape, representing the central facets of Hull's socioeconomic, cultural and social identity. The city's intersection with national and imperial politics was expressed through public rituals, particularly the combination of dock openings and royal processions.[103]

The opening of Hull City Hall in 1903 similarly provided a renewed model for civic procession, especially as it was also a royal visit. Place promotion in the press came into its own for this event, with George, the Prince of Wales and Princess Mary imbuing the civic celebration with a sense of authority and legitimacy, in terms of the wider nation and empire. Boosters underlined the importance of Hull's port status. An article from the period made this explicit, while alluding to one of the centre tenets of liberal culture mentioned above:

> To-day Hull realises in unwonted measure that she is part of a world-wide Empire. The occasion is as momentous and memorable as it is joyful. As a City, we have an ancient and honourable history. We are rooted in the dim historic past, and we have remained connected by living threads with every portion of the earth. […]
>
> Hull, it is true, is in a corner, and its claims are far too little known, but for all that the good Old Town is one of the Queen Cities of the Empire, and on such a day as this, when amidst general rejoicing, and in the presence of the King's son, we extend, as it were, our borders, and look forward with faith in Providence, and a good heart to a yet brighter future…[104]

The cultural and symbolic capital embodied in the construction of such a major civic building projected a positive and dynamic image of the city to those outside, be they regional cities or the nation at large. The above quote attests to the propensity of contemporary outsiders to overlook the city, so the building and royal opening of the City Hall, as with docking amenities, reminded the wider region and, potentially, nation, of the importance of Hull as the Third Port in a global 'imperial system'.[105] There is also an allusion to the ability of port cities to transcend national borders and the demarcated space of the nation-state, acting as "[windows] on a wider world."[106] By 1914, Hull's new dock to the east of the city was not only state-of-the-art, it was 'An Empire Dock'.[107]

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[103] Ibid.; Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 146-47.
[104] 'Royal Hull To-day', *Hull Daily Mail*, 12 May 1903, 2.
[105] Beaven, *Visions of empire*, 12.
[106] Brian Hoyle, 'Fields of Tension: Development Dynamics at the Port-city Interface', in David Cesarani (ed.), *Port Jews: Jewish communities in cosmopolitan maritime trading centres, 1550-1950* (London, 2002), 14.
[107] 'An Empire Dock', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 12.

At the opening of the Joint Dock in 1914, the local press described the route of King George V and Mary, the Queen-consort, through the city as a 'charming spectacle', replete with 'lavish decorations' of flowers, banners, flags and other ornaments:

> The streets have looked like Fairyland […]. Large quantities of real flowers were introduced into the schemes, and in many places the sky was practically concealed by huge banners of all descriptions and festoons that drooped across the street, whilst shields in bas relief, heraldic devices of all kinds, gilded lions on lofty Corinthian columns were all conspicuous features of the scheme.[108]

These displays were achieved through the combined efforts of the Corporation and 'leading Hull firms', foremost being the North-Eastern and Hull & Barnsley Railway companies. Direct commercial involvement included Joseph Rank's Clarence Flour Mills, whose staff 'decorated the bridge connecting their premises, beneath which the Royal procession passed'. Business premises, large and small, made similar efforts along the whole of the route to the dock. Banners, flags and floral garlands daubed lamp posts and railway bridges, adorned with the Hull coat of arms and Union flags.[109] Loyalty to the city and its future fortunes melded perfectly with loyalty to the monarch and was expressed through this spectacular symbolic display. Local firms sought to match this through newspaper advertising, with most notices adopting some kind of royal 'angle', stressing loyalty above all. For example, the fashion retailer Costello was said to

> [Owe] its very existence to Loyalty – to the staunch support of the Ladies… Surely that is the Loyalty that is the making of Cities – the LOYALTY that makes the true citizen say – "So long as my City supports me, so long will I do my share to support my City" – the LOYALTY that believes in, and in its turn deserves RECIPROCITY.[110]

This again underlined the importance of providing steadfast loyalty to the monarch in return for royal appreciation. More than this, it also suggested the need for ordinary working people - at this time an increasingly visible political grouping - to engage with the local polity through active citizenship and 'local patriotism'.[111] As Beaven and Griffiths note, the national and local press of the late nineteenth century were instrumental in popularising notions of inclusive citizenship, cementing a moral and spiritual bond between the individual and the

[108] *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 23.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid., 3.
[111] Beaven, 'The Provincial Press, Civic Ceremony and the Citizen-Soldier during the Boer War, 1899–1902: A Study of Local Patriotism', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 37:2 (2009), 207-28.

state, and inspiring citizens to dutifully serve their locality and country. Social increasingly combined with political citizenship as more and more people were enfranchised, though the majority of working men would not achieve this until 1918.[112] Ideas of patriotic duty and sacrifice had been at the centre of public debates surrounding imperial decline at the turn of the twentieth century. This 'imperial sentiment' was projected through local evocations of social loyalty and unity, and symbolically displayed through lavish public procession and performance, as well as through the press and in popular publications. From the turn of the century, royal visits could be seen as emblematic of a rejuvenated British empire, given the revival of public ritual under Edward VII following decades of quiet under a mourning, publicly-absent Queen Victoria.[113] This reassertion of British imperial might was required in the wake of military mistakes in the South African War (1899-1902) and in the context of growing economic and naval competition from Europe and North America, including Germany.[114] Rather than emphasising an ever-expanding empire, a process of consolidation was required.[115]

The frequent references to the role of the new dock in wider imperial processes, were not only material and economic but cultural in terms of the veritable triumph of British industry. The language used in praising industrial development evoked contemporary concerns with decline in racial stock and a waning empire, albeit from a position of overwhelming optimism: 'We believe devoutly in our Race's future, and in the destiny before Britain. We believe in Hull's "place in the sun". We believe that the Humber is becoming one of the greatest, commercially speaking, of the world's great estuaries'. [116] Here, notions of British racial identity and hygiene were evoked alongside the assumed prizes to be borne from the city's growing economic stature. Furthermore, much like the empire at its zenith, Hull's 'boundaries are growing fast', exemplified by the new dock.[117]

The *Eastern Morning News* highlighted the 'cosmopolitan' make-up of the crowd at the opening ceremony, which truly reflected the global reach of empire:

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[112] Brad Beaven and John Griffiths, 'Creating the Exemplary Citizen: The Changing Notion of Citizenship in Britain 1870-1939', *Contemporary British History*, 22:2 (2008), 203-25.
[113] Ben Roberts, 'The Complex Holiday Calendar of 1902: Responses to the Coronation of Edward VII and the Growth of Edwardian Event Fatigue', *Twentieth Century British History*, 28:4 (2017), 500.
[114] Jay Winter, 'British national identity and the First World War', in S.J.D. Green and R.C. Whiting (eds.), *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2002), 264; Christopher Prior, *Edwardian England and the Idea of Racial Decline* (Basingstoke, 2013), 4; Jan Rüger, 'Nation, Empire and Navy: Identity Politics in the United Kingdom 1887-1914', *Past & Present*, 185 (2004), 160.
[115] Andrew S. Thompson, 'The Language of Imperialism and the Meanings of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics, 1895-1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 36:2 (1997), 151.
[116] 'An Empire Dock', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 12.
[117] Ibid.; Prior, *Edwardian England*, 12.

> Their majesties were accorded a truly cosmopolitan welcome as they drove past the Alexandra Dock. Intermingled with the crowd were men of all nations – here and there the ebony black, further on a little group of quaintly-dressed bronze-faced Lascars. There were Japs and Turks, and in fact all manner of Asiatics, who had left their ships to pay a tribute of respect of England's King and Queen. They must have been impressed, as, indeed, the King's own subjects were, with the loyalty of the Britisher.[118]

Here again we see a clear interconnection being stressed between Hull's status as a pre-eminent British port and the reach of empire. Indeed, the very framing of this news item suggests that the foreign sailors that so enthusiastically greeted the King and Queen were the direct consequence of a far-reaching seafaring empire, and that the seamen felt a degree of accord with the British nation. The primacy of the British 'seafaring race' was based on conquering the seas and, by extension, aided in the ordering of Britain's colonial subjects. As such, in this instance, respect for Britain's empire and its royal figureheads was assumed.[119] The focus in this piece on the presence of 'men of all nations' sought to underline the city's central role in global maritime industry, and in facilitating the trade and movements of people and goods that undergirded the empire. It is notable that the Hull conservative press (namely, the *Hull Daily Mail*) did not report on this aspect of the plebeian welcome party in the same amount of depth, though the *Yorkshire Post* did refer to the enthusiastic crowds of 'dockside workers and seafaring men' present in their thousands near to the dock's entrance.[120] The lack of clear political delineation in the local press in this context is unsurprising. Debates surrounding the meanings of empire spanned the political spectrum, and even radical liberal and socialist voices rarely condemned imperialism outright.[121] On the contrary, it was often taken for granted as a process of government, transcending the left/right binary.[122] For example, for patriotic socialists such as Robert Blatchford (a prominent member of the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party), the figure of empire could be treated with ambivalence, its close association with the nation often complicating criticisms of imperial excess.[123] Other socialists, including fellow Fabian J. Ernest Jones, supported the imperial

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[118] 'Cosmopolitan Crowd', *Eastern Morning News*, 27 June 1914, 5.
[119] Daniel Owen Spence, 'Imperial Ideology, Identity and Naval Recruitment in Britain's Asian Empire, c.1928-1941' in Duncan Redford (ed.), *Maritime History and Identity: The Sea and Culture in the Modern World* (London, 2014), 311.
[120] 'The Dockers' Welcome', *Yorkshire Post*, 27 June 1914, 9.
[121] G.K. Peatling, 'Globalism, Hegemonism and British Power: J.A. Hobson and Alfred Zimmern Reconsidered', *History*, 89:295 (2004), 381-98; Thompson, 'Language of Imperialism'.
[122] Richard Whiting, 'The Empire and British Politics' in Andrew S. Thompson (ed.), *Britain's Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2011), 166.
[123] David Swift, *For Class and Country: The Patriotic Left and the First World War* (Liverpool, 2017), 15; Ibid., 172-5; Indeed, after being initially critical of empire at the start of the 1890s (particularly opposing

project in the name of 'internationalisation' and the gradual erosion of national differences.[124] The promotion of empire was a cross-class activity – the concern of a 'broad church' - with the motif of empire acting as a rhetorical device for supporters committed to encouraging the spread of causes such as tariff reform, naval supremacy and imperial migration, as well as conventionally left-leaning aims.[125] Therefore, empire was a flexible signifier, conferring different meanings depending on who applied it and to what end. As John M. MacKenzie notes, '[p]olitics tended everywhere to be polemicized by imperialism'.[126] Even if one was critical of imperialism from the left, the 'empire was a reality [that] had to be faced'.[127] During the fraught period prior to the outbreak of war, this reality was refracted through a concern in the press regarding Britain's imperial and naval authority.[128] An editorial in the *Eastern Morning News* of June 1914, only days after the opening of King George Dock, proclaimed 'England's Need' for 'national efficiency', in light of 'foreign competition, and of the way other countries, and Germany in particular, are arming themselves in the great industrial battle that is ever being fought'.[129] Here we see foreshadowed the war that was to follow.

The opening of King George Dock facilitated an outpouring of local pride and civic patriotism, evoked most clearly in the local press. The 26 June 1914 number of the *Hull Daily Mail* was given over wholesale to marking the great occasion. Hull's 'Empire Dock' placed the city at the centre of the prosperity of the region. It was the port feeding industries in the 'teeming West Riding and Lancashire, and to the South, the opulent Midlands'. Apparently referencing late-Victorian and Edwardian notions of a 'Greater Britain' (a 'composite Britannic culture' transcending the distance between Britain and its colonies)[130] – if only superficially - the concept of a 'Greater Hull' was reiterated throughout these pages, a status built on the back of the labour of the previous generation:[131]

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expansionism), by the outbreak of the South African War in 1899 Blatchford supported the conflict from the perspective of 'oppositional Englishness', pragmatic defence of the existing empire and as an old soldier wedded to the defence of the nation. See Paul Ward, *Red Flag and Union Jack: Englishness, Patriotism and the British Left, 1881-1924* (Woodbridge, 1998), 60-2.

[124] Ward, *Red Flag*, 64.

[125] Andrew S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880-1932* (Abingdon, 2014), 53.

[126] John M. MacKenzie, 'The Press and the Dominant Ideology of Empire' in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire c. 1857-1921* (Dublin, 2004), 27.

[127] Ward, 61.

[128] Michael Epkenhans, 'Was a Peaceful Outcome Thinkable? The Naval Race before 1914' in Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (eds.), *An Improbable War? The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture Before 1914* (New York, 2007), 121, 127.

[129] Editorial, *Eastern Morning News*, 29 June 1914, 2.

[130] John Darwin, cited in Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation*, 32.

[131] James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford, 2009), 457-60.

> Success to the new Dock, named to-day – Success to the Greater Hull! A backward glance in gratitude for our fathers' accomplishments and the heritage they left us, and then – forward! In our faces shines the morning sun, splendidly risen in the East. We are called to take up a Great Inheritance.[132]

The same page placed photographic portraits of the King and Queen-consort in the same frame as Lord Knaresborough, chairman of the North-Eastern Railway Co., and Edward Watkin, general manager of the Hull & Barnsley Railway. The *Eastern Morning News* produced a special supplement on Saturday 27 June 1914, which charted the historical preponderance of royal visits to the city in a similar way to the *Hull Daily Mail*. However, the illustrative header for the supplement's front page was overtly civic-patriotic in tone. With a panel of photographs illustrating Hull's maritime and industrial heritage – entitled 'Commercial & Industrial Hull" – the central image depicted the Guild Hall statue 'Maritime Prowess', with the 'Three Crowns' civic motif superimposed on its base.[133]

The amount spent by the Hull Corporation on staging the dock opening and royal visit underlines its importance for civic leaders. In the month preceding the event, the Corporation's city fund recorded £712 8s 6d, spent on improvement of council property and the provision of street decorations and other adornments.[134] The August report of the Royal Visit Committee (delivered to Council on 6 August 1914) details the total cost to the Corporation in terms of property improvements, event preparations and policing as £2,453 6s 4d (£105,639 in today's money).[135] Ten police forces from outside the city stewarded the procession, with Leeds City Police alone costing £85 8s.[136] The forces of Bradford, Sheffield, Nottingham, York, Doncaster and Birmingham ranked alongside the local East Riding Constabulary. The East Riding Territorials and East Riding Yeomanry were also drafted for crowd control, with the hire of horses and services costing £26 14s.[137] The expenditure alone suggests that a considerable crowd was anticipated for the royal opening, while local newspaper reports talked of a royal visit to put previous outings to shame: 'Never has Hull seen such crowds before. The city thought it made a brave display when it greeted Queen Victoria, now three score years ago, but what was the Hull of 1854 compared with the Hull of

[132] 'An Empire Dock', *Hull Daily Mail*, 26 June 1914, 12.
[133] 'Commercial and Industrial Hull: Special Supplement to the Eastern Morning News', *Eastern Morning News*, 27 June 1914.
[134] HHC, C TCM, City Fund, 19 June 1914, Minutes of Proceedings of the Council 1913-1914.
[135] National Archives Currency Converter, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/.
[136] HHC, C TCM, Council Meeting, 6 August 1914, Royal Visit Committee, Minutes of Proceedings of the Council 1913-1914.
[137] HHC, C TCM, Royal Visit Committee, 20 July 1914, Minutes of Proceedings of the Council 1913-1914.

1914?'[138] This comment suggests a clear relationship between the frequency of royal visits and the upwards trajectory of Hull as a thriving city.

Conclusion

The royal opening of the Joint Dock, or King George Dock, in June 1914, provided an ideal stage for the presentation of Hull as an imperial city to a national audience. As an overlooked provincial city, situated as it was 'in a corner', Hull wished to stake a claim to being an integral part of the supply chains, and cosmopolitan culture, of empire.[139] Civic leaders wished to underline their role in the socioeconomic development of the city. They, through enlightened planning according to liberal principles, saw themselves as facilitators of the economic progress the city was enjoying following the opening of further markets for trade. The building of state-of-the-art docking facilities – opened with the assent of the Crown – could be presented as the culmination of a long history of liberal paternalism, achieved in concert with business. Though markedly more interventionist in tone than earlier iterations of liberalism in local government, the onus was placed not only on paternalistic provision, but on the active participation of urban citizens in a project combining national and civic patriotism, resulting in socioeconomic improvement.[140] However, this progress would not have been possible were it not for broader developments within the global 'imperial system', where imperial sentiments were wedded to political and civic identities and used to underline the connectedness of the city to the rest of the empire, even bypassing London.[141] In short, Hull's continuing success was not only seen as the result of enlightened governance, but of the rewards reaped through an engagement with the wider empire.

The opening ceremony, through various activities away from the dock involving the Corporation, military leaders and local businessmen, reflected the social hierarchy of the city and county in a conventional sense: the royal suite first met with members of the gentry and armed forces, before moving on to industrialists and municipal leaders.[142] The ceremony at the dock itself revolved around the primary actors involved in its development – local politicians and railway company directors – who sought royal assent for their project, in return for loyalty and obedience. The presence of guests and cheering crowds lining the streets for the procession expressed the urban community in public space. In the words of

[138] 'King and Queen in Hull', *Eastern Morning News*, 27 June 1914, 1.
[139] 'Royal Hull To-day', *Hull Daily Mail*, 12 May 1903, 2.
[140] Griffiths, 'Civic Communication', 777-8.
[141] Beaven, *Visions*, 13.
[142] Gunn, 173.

Simon Gunn, this event 'represented the urban population to itself in a collective act of identification and celebration', including a symbolic presentation of the power structures of the community and the central role of enlightened civic leadership.[143]

Receiving the public approval of the nation and the empire's figurehead for the dock reinforced symbolically the city's claims to be a vital port of empire.[144] The event was not only a dramatic and entertaining performance, designed to promote the city in order to attract inward investment. The insertion of the port into the project of empire was an attempt to garner national prestige, renewing the public image of empire – one of innovation and socioeconomic improvement – at the same time as 'boosting' the city. Those involved in the civic ceremonial could define their citizenship as local, national and imperial in character, with the new dock acting as a conduit for imperial grandeur and success.

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[143] Ibid., 163.
[144] McClelland and Rose, 'Citizenship and empire', 278.