

Note on the Author:

Nick Mansfield is Director of the National Museum of Labour History. He was awarded a Simon Research Fellowship by the University of Manchester to be held in the School of History and Classics (1991-2000). The National Museum of Labour History is based on two sites in central Manchester, with the headquarters at 103, Princess Street and the public spaces at the Pump House, People's History Museum, Bridge Street. The museum collection is 'designated' as nationally important by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and consists of several hundred thousand objects on the theme of the social history of working people in Britain. It is particularly strong on banners and on visual representations of the labour movement. Its Labour History Archive and Study Centre (run in conjunction with the John Rylands University Library) is the UK centre for the political side of the labour movement, containing the Labour Party and Communist Party of Great Britain papers, as well as those of Labour leaders.

Museums are collections of objects and by and large professional historians in England have been relatively slow to use these resources as evidence in their work. Only in Wales, Scotland and Ireland has there been any serious attempt to link material culture with academic study - connected perhaps with national identity – but this has not been on the same scale as the close relationship which has existed elsewhere, in Scandinavia for example, for well over a century. Typically social history academics will approach a museum when their publisher wants an image to go on the cover of a book.

Likewise curators of social history museums have often been woefully ignorant about their collections and unaware of their potential significance to academic debate. The Simon Fellowship project which I am working on, is an attempt to demonstrate how a category of museum objects – banners – can be analysed and related to the study of working class culture and politics in 19th century Britain.

John Gorman's book on trade union banners, Banner Bright, came out in my last year as an undergraduate. This was before cultural history became established, and Gorman's then novel approach was a major encouragement to me to eventually follow a career in museums. His work was also connected with the other strands in the development of 'history from below', especially the History Workshop and oral history movements and was influential in the beginnings of the National Museum of Labour History. At that time (1973), museums were, by and large, uninterested in banners, and it even took until the 1980s for labour history to be considered seriously within the sector. A conference held at the TUC in 1984, entitled Labour History in Museums, was a landmark in establishing the discipline. Since 1978, I have been pursuing labour history in a museum context and have been able to study, for example, friendly society, farmworkers and election banners in East Anglia, and coal miners and chapel banners in South Wales. In 1989 I was appointed Director of the National Museum of Labour History, as it was being re-constituted in Manchester.

The museum had been based in London and had collected around 100 mainly trade union banners. There was, though, considerable controversy in its policy of re-painting historic banners, offending both amateur scholars like Gorman and textile conservators in mainstream museums. From 1989, the National Museum of Labour History applied conservation standards to its banners and developed a textile conservative studio dedicated to this specialism. Building on the core of trade union banners, the museum's new professional stance encouraged donors to deposit more material, encompassing a whole range of working class organisations. This included a key group of early 19th c. trades society banners.

Now the museum has developed an expertise in the conservation and interpretation of banners, based on its collection of 360 trade union and other banners, the largest of its kind anywhere. Over the last decade other institutions which hold historic banners, from the UK and overseas, have sought the museum's help in researching, conserving and displaying their own collections. Although museum staff have unrivalled experience through examining large numbers of banners, the help that can be offered is limited, because of lack of money. Banners are probably the most difficult category of museum object to care for, because they are fragile and large. Almost all collections are at risk and it costs around £10,000 to conserve an average banner.

In 1997, the Heritage Lottery Fund were approached with a project to conserve the nation's banners, but they were unwilling to give grant aid until a major survey had been undertaken, demonstrating need. The National Banner Survey - based at the museum - employed four people for over 15 months in 1998-99 and circularised every museum in mainland Britain. Details of over 2,500 banners (excluding military ones) were recorded on a computerised data-base, along with images where possible and any available historical information. These banners were carried by a wide variety of organisations, and although, as might be expected, trade unions, friendly societies, political parties, church groups and women's organisations were the most represented categories, unusual ones demonstrated the eccentric nature of British cultural life.

Methodology

As a source, banners are not without problems – their very survival may be due to accident or a self conscious decision by a pressure group to preserve something of themselves for posterity. The latter point may link to the way in which groups used banners to give themselves respectable and well established historical antecedents. Nonetheless the 98% response rate from museums, means that, even with the absence of some significant collections within the 2% non responders, the National Banner Survey gives as good a picture as possible of what banners were carried by what groups over the last 200 years. Although it should be stressed that the survivors are only a small percentage of the thousands of banners that contemporary sources indicate as being made and used throughout the 19th c.

Although the quality of information provided by each museum was variable, as the returns were sifted by the survey team, it became apparent that the database was a valuable source to research a variety of themes. Individual museums often knew little about the national

significance of their collections, but the survey was creating an opportunity to achieve this goal. The impressive number of early 19th c. trade and reform banners, mostly hitherto unidentified or unknown, seemed to offer a useful case study on how the survey might be used. Connoisseurship is not normally a concept associated with social history research, yet it aptly describes how and why banners were included in the study group.

Almost all custodians of banners think that their treasures are older than they actually are. The old fashioned style of many trade union banners – a legacy of the popular design work of George Tutill, the most prolific manufacturer – causes romantic myths to be adopted, of a similar nature to those around say, military colours. This attitude also effects 'professional' custodians of banners and the survey was told by more than one curator, that a banner was carried at a historic event which was clearly impossible given its actual age. As repositories of antiquated design, banners are notoriously difficult to date and although conservators are skilled at identifying clues in construction – particularly materials and stitching - gut feeling and long experience play a major part in establishing provenance.

The majority of recorded banners are from the 20th century, and - given the fragility of their materials - very few from before 1800. What remained was a group of around 150 19th c. banners, mainly working class in origin, which form the core of the research project and are discussed here. The banners had to be arranged somehow and the initial typology is of three groups; the largest, the trades, trades societies and the remains of the guilds and Scottish incorporations, is of around 65; secondly, political banners – overwhelmingly from reform movements of various sorts - account for 50, and lastly about 30 banners are from community or civic groups. As will become apparent, there is considerable overlap between these groups. Chronologically in all three groups, there are more examples from the early 19th .c. , a tailing off in the 1840s - with for example, a complete absence of surviving Chartist banners - before a resurgence in the last decade of the century with well established trade unions and friendly societies carrying mass-produced banners.

Before these categories are discussed it is worth commenting on some of the available literature. Most of what has been written on British banners is on the 20th c. John Gorman's book on trade unions; Banner Bright (1973), particularly stands out. With the exception of art historian Lisa Tickner's account of the iconography of womens' suffrage - The Spectacle of Women – Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14 (1987) - most work on banners has been non-analytical. In recent times this has changed with the social anthropological approach of Neil

Jarman's Displaying Faith – Orange, Green and Trade Union Banners in Northern Ireland (1999), Hazel Edwards' local study of Northumberland miners' banners, Follow the Banner (1998) and the work of art historian Annie Ravenhill-Johnson. Huw Beynon and Terry Austin in Masters and Servants – Class and Patronage in the making of a Labour Organisation (1994) have briefly explored banners as part of a historical sociology of Durham miners. Paul Pickering in his Chartism and the Chartists in Manchester and Salford (1995) has researched Chartist banners and includes a brief discussion of their production and use. Some post-modernist cultural historians, like Patrick Joyce and James Vernon have made some use of 19th c. banners in their descriptions of political processes and some reference is made to this later. All these scholars were interested in how banners, as a particular form of political expression, could inform their accounts of political structures, and the role of popular participation within it. As a newcomer to the contemporary debates on 19th c. working class cultural politics, relating these histories to the banners about to be discussed is inevitably work in progress.

The Trades

There are 65 banners in this largest category, from a variety of trade organisations. Whilst the majority of these are for outdoor processional use, there are several small banners which seem likely to have been used as backdrops or aprons in secret indoor ritual. Edward Thompson and others have suggested that the underground nature of the trades in the early 19th c., compounded by persecution, resulted in radical, if not revolutionary tendencies. Unsurprisingly, surviving regalia does not illustrate these ideologies. Instead pieces from the United Female Friendly Society and the Loyal United Free Mechanics combine Old Testament scenes with magical and possibly masonic imagery, the significance of which can only be speculated upon. However the Mechanics apron already displays the linked hands of friendship and unity, as befits one of the components of the future Amalgamated Society of Engineers. ¹.

¹ Although the Loyal United Free Mechanics did not stand the test of time as a friendly society in Britain, it flourished in the West Indies, was reintroduced in the 1950s, and remains 'the Buffaloes of the Afro-Caribbean community'. I am grateful to Andy Durr of the University of Brighton for this information. The iconography of this and other friendly society and masonic regalia is discussed in his unpublished paper 'Popular Art : The Emblems and the Associations of Mutual Aid'. Here Durr also discusses the European and British tradition of emblems in High Art, which will also form an important strand of Annie Ravenhill-Johnson's forthcoming paper (see above). The iconography of the Mechanics apron is also

The Mechanics apron (*Illustration 1*) is block printed on linen and several other surviving examples in museums from Preston to Oxfordshire suggest that it was mass-produced, rather than made by members or local signwriters. Another small shoemakers hanging (typically displaying King Crispin's crown and half moon knife) is associated with a Shoemakers Reform banner of 1832, from Dunns, Berwickshire. It is also likely that an 1832 Plumbers Reform banner (probably from Cumberland) started life as a small wall-hanging before being sewn onto a larger sheet with the addition of a painted slogan for the Reform Act celebrations.

These small textiles share the characteristics and purpose of a small number of painted early 19th c. emblems, which hung in the 'houses of call' of trade societies. The Norwich Plumbers emblem, almost certainly dates from the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union of 1834, and typically includes the tools of the trade and supporters in anachronistic dress, framing a mock coat of arms copied (without permission) from those of the City Livery Company. The Wigan Miners emblem (*Illustration 2*) is of a similar style, with the addition of one supporter being dressed in working gear and the other in processional ceremonial costume, holding a long stave. It also includes an underground scene of work in a bell pit. This scene, together with the (invented) coat of arms and the two supporters (although these are in contemporary rather than antique dress), is reproduced on the banner of the White Lion Friendly Society, Ashover, Derbyshire (*Illustration 3*), along with the slogan 'Success to Miners'- making it the oldest surviving miners' banner. So at some point during the early 19th c., the symbolism of miners transferred literally from a private underground world of pit and pub to the open expression of values through public procession. By 1832, miners were using flags in the North East to assert their demand to form trade unions. The Northumberland print The Pitmens Union illustrates these as plain flags with slogans.²

similar to that used by the Loyal Black Institution in Northern Ireland on which see A. D. Buckley, "The Chosen Few : Biblical Texts in the Regalia of an Ulster Secret Society" Folk Life, Vol.29 (1985-6).

² See Nick Mansfield, "The Norwich Plumbers Emblem", Social History Curators Journal No.14 (1987). Miners' ceremonial uniforms survive today in Germany, Austria, Alsace and Poland; for Saxon illustrations contemporary with the Ashover banner and Wigan emblem see Paul Martin, Military Uniforms (1967), Plate 34, p.124. This transfer of symbolism from private to more public consumption is traceable too from the trade society iconography on jugs, plates and mugs used by them in public house meetings. In the first decades of the century they used crude slipware with commissioned slogans and pewter or brass metal vessels with home-made, often secret, inscriptions. These were gradually supplemented by mass produced ceramics, with transfer printed iconography, for which there seems to have been a market. The appearance of the first printed membership emblems and certificates for

An older trades banner tradition already existed. In contrast to the London Livery companies, provincial town guilds were still active in their various trades, despite the apparently draconian anti-trade union legislation during the French Wars. Around a dozen of their banners survive from towns like Carlisle, Chester, Coventry and Ludlow, some from the early 18th c., and accounts exist of their manufacture and use, which indicate that guilds also took part in civic and national ceremonial occasions as an integral and respected part of the civic community.³ These were mainly elaborate and expensive swallow-tailed flags, whose display rituals were probably similar to those of military colours, discussed later in this paper.

The guild tradition seems to have been most long lasting in Scotland, with incorporation banners still being carried today in some local ceremonies, despite their official abolition in burghs in 1846. Weavers' banners are particularly apparent, with at least a dozen survivals, which were probably used throughout the process of industrialisation. These Scottish incorporation banners are less ornate than comparable English guild banners. Both share the general backward looking symbolism (in, for example, the anachronistic dress of the supporters) and both traditions make unauthorised use of the City Livery coats of arms, but the Scottish examples are cruder - probably the work of local signwriters. They sometimes make use of democratic, if not radical slogans. So the probably early 19th c. Weavers banner from Cupar, Fife, has the date 1727, and supporters in early 18th c. costume, along with the following verse:

The Weaver trade it is most fine, and is renowned so:
That there is neither poor, nor rich, yet doth without it go⁴

trade unions and friendly societies around 1830 is probably also part of this process. The Pitmens Union is reproduced in Hazel Edwards, Follow the Banner (1998), p.14.

³ I am grateful to the Grosvenor Museum, Chester for providing material on their Guild banners, particularly a copy of Frank Simpson, "The City Gilds (sic) of Chester : The Smiths, Cutlers and Plumbers Company", Journal of Chester Archaeology Society, Vol.20 (1914). See Peter Borsay, "All the town's a stage': urban ritual and ceremony 1660-1800" in Peter Clarke (ed.), The Transformation of English Provincial Towns 1600-1800 (1984) and George A. Tressider, "Coronation Day Celebrations in English Towns, 1685-1821: Elite Hegemony and Local Relations on a Ceremonial Occasion", British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies, Vol.15, No.1 (Spring 1992).

⁴ Cupar was one of the centres of the revolutionary United Scotsmen at the turn of the 19th c., in which the trades were active, see Roger Wells, Insurrection - the British Experience 1795-1803 (1983), pp. 51, 74 and 124.

Given the lack of archival sources and the difficulty of dating surviving examples, it is impossible to indicate precisely when the first trade society (and then trade union) banners appeared. In the early 19th c. provincial guild banners seem to have survived alongside trade society banners and their use in guild ceremonies continued in places like Chester, until they were deposited in local museums during the late Victorian period. However, it is likely that the Hawick Hosiers banner (*Illustration 4*) can be considered the oldest extant trades society banner. Decorated with crude representations of the tools of the trade and emblematic Scottish thistles, the painted date of 1797 is, in this case, likely to be accurate. This is because the most striking aspect of the design is the union flag (union jack) in the top left hand canton, which is the pre-1801 version, not incorporating the St. Patrick's cross of Ireland.⁵

Whilst the use of the union jack on trade union banners was known before the National Banner Survey – on for example the Liverpool Tinsplate Workers banner of 1821 or 1834 and the Edinburgh Tobacconists banner of c.1840 (*Illustration 5*) - the survey has uncovered a dozen similar examples in all, a significant proportion of all banners in the trades category. (The union jack is also used in a similar way in several other surviving banners, ranging from reform groups, through friendly societies to ex-service associations.) The widespread of a potentially loyalist symbol during the anti-democratic repression of the early 19th c. may question E.P.Thompson's heroic 'making of the working class' and give support for more revisionist or diverse interpretations of the period including recent ones, which stress 'radical constitutionalism'.⁶

⁵ Simpson loc.cit. For the evolution of the union jack see A. C. Fox-Davies, Complete Guide to Heraldry (1925), pp.471-72 and 611-17. Although it is of course possible that the Hawick banner maker used the old version of the union jack after 1801, the new version - representing as it did an important political change - was rapidly taken into official use, see S. M. Milne, The Standards and Colours of the Army (1893), p.130 and J. E. Cookson, The Armed British Nation 1793-1815 (1997), p.220.

⁶ One painted trade society emblem also includes a union jack – that of the 1822 Tradesman's Friendly Union, in the British Collection of Naïve Art at Compton Verney, Warwickshire. The Liverpool banner is discussed in Ted Brake, Men of Good Character (1985), pp.78 and 83, and John Gorman, Banner Bright (1986), p.69. The present writer is of the opinion that the 'union jack' banner is stylistically earlier than another tinsplate workers banner with supporters, which Brake and Gorman state is the one referred to in an 1821 receipt surviving in the union's records. Before their deaths in 1993 and 1997 both these authors had accepted my argument! Almost identical images of Justice and Hope, found on the Tinsplate Workers banner also feature on a membership card of the Brief Institution - the Wiltshire woolcombers union of 1802 - reproduced in Adrian Randall, Before the Luddites - custom, community and machinery in the English woollen industry 1776-1809 (1991), p. 135. For the purposes of this paper the principal works relating to this debate are E. P.

The form of design in these 'union jack' banners had already been used since the early 18th c. in the regimental colours of regiments of the British army. As well as union jack cantons, the main body of the regimental colour (finished in the distinctive 'facing' colour of the regiment) contained badges and devices pertinent to the officers and men of the battalion. Sometimes the military tools of the trade were displayed exactly in the same way as tools were shown on trade society banners. Each regiment also carried a sovereign's colour, which consisted of a whole union jack, with appropriate badges, but it was the regimental colour which symbolised the body of soldiers and their relationship to the state.⁷

The work of Linda Colley and Clive Emsley has indicated the prevalence of military service during the French Wars and the role of ex-soldiers in post war radicalism. It may be that ex-service tradesmen adapted the military symbols they had marched under in uniform, for their own organisations, on discharge. They may also have envisaged a similar relationship between their societies and the state, or a hope for a national role and significance for trade societies. The union jacks may also indicate that – at a time when working class organisations were in danger of being accused of subversion – the trade society wished to demonstrate its unequivocal loyalty to the monarch and state. However the union jack may represent a bid for inclusion as part of the nation by organisations opposed to the current political status quo. Nonetheless we should not ignore the fact that a number of trade society banners - including 'union jack' types – were made especially for the coronation processions for Queen Victoria in 1838.⁸

Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (1963), Linda Colley, Britons – Forging the Nation 1709 -1837 (1992) and James Vernon, Politics and the People - A Study in English Political Culture c.1815-1867 (1993). Charles Tilly, Popular Contention in Great Britain 1758-1834 (1995) summarises the arguments of Thompson and his critics in Chapter 1.

⁷ See Milne, op.cit. See later for the military etiquette surrounding colours. Cookson, op.cit. p.171 points out that wreaths of roses, shamrocks and thistles were used on military colours to symbolise the United Kingdom.

⁸ Colley, op.cit., pp.284-7; Clive Emsley, British Society and the French Wars 1793-1815 (1979), pp.169 and 176-7. For the use of union jack banners in elections see Vernon, op.cit., p.112-13. Banners of the Liverpool Tinsplate workers and the Whitehaven sawyers were made for the 1838 coronation celebrations and it is likely that the Edinburgh tobacconists banner was also made for this occasion. For Coronation day celebrations, some discussion of trades involvement in Tressider, loc.cit. (Trades banners were also prominent in welcoming George IV during his famous visit to Edinburgh in 1822). Trade society banners were also used in other royal celebrations; the oldest extant seems to be a Dunstable shoemakers banner made for George III's jubilee in 1809 in Luton Museum. Interestingly there are overseas examples of the use of the national flag in the canton on trade societies'

There are a number of 'union jack' trade society banners in Scotland with some interesting variants. Banners like that of the Elgin Squarewrights are similar to English examples with the union jack canton and the tools of the trade, with the addition of thistle decoration. Part of a well documented incorporations group from the same Morayshire town, it was used regularly in the burgh's 'Common Riding' boundary ceremony, as well as for political reform demonstrations (the last in 1884).⁹

Scottish trade society banners are often described as 'blue blankets' making deliberate reference to an older Presbyterian or Covenanting tradition, which will be discussed later. Both the Hawick Hosiers banner already mentioned and the Kirkwall Hammermen's banner, retain blue as the body of the flag, with crude union jacks in the upper left canton. Eleven Scottish banners display the St Andrews saltire, either again in the upper left canton (e.g. the Elgin Hammermen's banner of 1822). or alongside other trades iconography in the body of the banner (e.g. the Elgin shoemakers of 1818, *Illustration 6*). Sometimes yellow or red is used instead of the white St Andrews cross, usual on the modern flag, particularly in those banners associated with the Common Riding tradition.

Colley has described the importance of emerging Scottish identity in the early 19th.c. and its contribution to British state formation, but it is hard to be definitive about the role of banners in this process. Whilst 'union jack' Scottish trade society banners may indicate support for a British state, the use of St Andrew's saltires is unlikely to demonstrate proto Scottish nationalism, especially when a related group of banners, like those of Elgin, includes those of both types. How are we to interpret the early 19th.c. Wanlockhead lead miners (*Illustration 7*) which displays the union jack and St Andrew's saltire, side by side, or the Stirling incorporation of shoemakers banner whose curious design takes the form of a 'swastika' St George's cross, a device that appears nowhere in surviving English trades banners? Both are clear instances of what Colley terms 'multiple identities'.¹⁰

regalia. A surviving New York pewterers banner made for the 1788 procession to ratify the American constitution is discussed in Howard Rock, "All Her Sons Join in One Social Band: Visual Images of New York Artisan Societies in the Early Republic", *Labor's Heritage*, (July 1991), p.10. A shoemakers's loving cup in the Nordiska Museum in Stockholm, has a silver model of a shoemaker holding a banner with a Swedish cross in the upper left canton.

⁹ From notes made from the Incorporation Trades of Elgin records by James Welsh, current Deacon of the Elgin weavers for Elgin Museum 1993 and 1998.

¹⁰ Colley, op.cit. See also Nicola H. Richards, "A Sense of Belonging – National Identity and Popular Literature in England and Scotland in the late 18th and early 19th century" *PhD*

Whilst acknowledging the overall problem with extant banners as source material, as outlined in the introduction, the large numbers of surviving union jacks and St Andrews saltires is clearly of significance. At this stage no one immediate explanation is apparent and we may be looking at a series of individual complex motivations by banner designers, but it is likely that ultimate decisions on what image to project to the outside world were made deliberately and collectively. Although this significance has been lost over time, the fact that some trade society banners have survived as half understood 'holy relics' of a heroic past by modern trade unions underlines its serious intent.¹¹

As trade societies – or the successful ones - evolved into New Model Unions, banners became part of their corporate identity. Surprisingly few late 19th c. banners have survived and whilst some (like the Chatham Woodworkers c.1890) are based on the new logos produced for the London based national union, others (like that of the Bolton Bleachers, Finishers and Dyers c.1890) were made locally – in this case by G.J.French, an ecclesiastical furnishings supplier. Both types of banner continued to include details of the tools and processes of the trade, which were a crucial feature of early 19th c. banners. The change was that local makers copied the basic layout which George Tutill and other large banner manufacturers had adapted from fairground art and perfected to popular taste. Both home-made and manufactured banner traditions went on, side by side, in the late 19th c., although the richer and more metropolitan trade union branches aspired to fashionable products, ordered from George Tutill's catalogue. As will be discussed later, the format of Tutill's banners - oil painting on silk - caused them to be inherently fragile, especially when given rough usage in the open air. This probably explains why so few of his products (perhaps two or three from the 19th c.) survive, when many more homely and less sophisticated examples exist in public collections. Even these survivors are only a small proportion of the numbers which contemporary accounts and illustrations tell us were used during the period. It also reflects the lack of interest amongst museums for trade union material until very recently. The late 19th c. trade union banners

University of Manchester (1997) and David Daiches (ed.), A Companion to Scottish Culture (1981).

¹¹The Plumbers Reform banner of 1832 in the NMLH collection was preserved by the AEEU's plumbing trade group and the 1821/1838 Liverpool Tinplate workers banner was preserved by the sheet metal workers section of MSF. Other banners e.g. the Dunns shoemakers Reform banner were handed down within families. The discussions which took place within individual trade unions about what iconography to display on their banners, are under researched: only Beynon and Austin, op. cit. and Edwards, op.cit. have covered this for 20th c. coalminers.

that do survive, seem to have been collected because they related to current events that seemed likely to retain 'historic' importance. An example of this is the Dunfermline Bakers banner of 1881, made (locally) for a visit of the town's famous son, Andrew Carnegie – the American industrialist and union buster! This tendency may also explain why, as outlined in the next section, many surviving trades banners relate to political movements.¹²

Politics

Fifty political banners, mainly from working class reform movements of various types, have been included in the study group, although election banners have been excluded. The work of Frank O'Gorman and James Vernon has covered the use of banners in elections both before and after 1832. Vernon, in particular, has argued that popular participation, through such activities, became more formalised and disciplined after the Reform Act. In contrast to plentiful reform banners, the National Banner Survey located surprisingly few election banners – only an additional 28 surviving examples are known to have been carried for particular candidates - with 4 others on which limited information is available – that, to judge from their design, might have been used in election campaigns. (This does not include banners from political parties from the late 19th c. onwards, which are also likely to have been used in electioneering.)

The 28 known examples divide fairly evenly between Whig and Tory, with the most complete collection being 8 banners used by the supporters of William Gladstone, when he stood as a Conservative at Newark in 1832. Only one trade society banner (that of the Kirkwall Hammermen) is as yet known to have been used in support of a parliamentary candidate – the Liberal candidate in the 1841 election at Orkney. Surviving election banners extol the virtues of candidates. Rather than promulgate individual policies through slogans, the gentry or aristocratic background of candidates is often suggested by the use of coats-of-arms. Surviving election banners are therefore elaborate constructions usually painted on silk; they were probably professionally made, and confirm Vernon's finding that large sums were spent on electioneering. The costly metallic paint, which was often used, is particularly harsh for textiles, and presents great difficulties for modern

¹² For Tutill see John Gorman, Banner Bright - An Illustrated History of Trade Union Banners (1973/1986), p.47-55. Fairground art is discussed in Margaret Lambert and Enid Marx, English Popular Art (1951/1989), pp.52-55 and in A. J. Lewery, Popular Art - Past and Present (1991). Letter from Lesley Botten, Fife Council Museums, 16.2.2000.

textile conservators; this may explain why so few election banners survive from the large numbers mentioned in contemporary accounts.¹³

Although banners were used by popular reformist groups from the 1790s, none have survived in the National Banner Survey, a product undoubtedly of the efficient wartime repression. Slightly predating them is the Revolution House banner from Chesterfield, made by 'The Civil Society' for the centenary of the Glorious Revolution. As well as a representation of the Cock and Pynot public house, where the overthrow of James II was plotted, the reverse image – the arms of the Duke of Devonshire – puts this banner in the electioneering category, and from the style, it may have been intended as a meeting backdrop, rather than as a marching banner.

The work of John Belchem and James Epstein stresses the importance of banners to the 'Platform' of post 1815 political protest. The symbol of the Cap of Liberty, was, according to Epstein, a particularly virulent provocation to those opposing reform, and was a key component in the Peterloo flashpoint. Without detracting from the substance of his argument, surviving radical banners from the Peterloo period do not display the Cap of Liberty, although there are examples of its continued use on mainstream banners from the early 19th c., indicating perhaps that its retention in non-reformist iconography was much later than Epstein contends.¹⁴ However the survival of so few banners from the 1815-20 period makes it difficult to be definitive on this point. Only 5 or 6 of these reform banners have survived – none from the trades - indicating perhaps the continued effectiveness of government repression, and upholding the view that these banners could be

¹³ Frank O'Gorman, "Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies : The Social Meaning of Elections in England 1780-1860", Past and Present, 135 (1992) and ID, Voters, Patrons and Parties The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832 (1989) and Vernon, op.cit. See also Mark Harrison, Crowds and History – Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835 (1988).

¹⁴ See: John Belchem, "Republicanism, popular constitutionalism and the radical platform in early 19th c. England" Social History, January 1981 and "Radical Language and Ideology in early 19th c. England : The Challenge of Platform" Albion Summer 1988; James Epstein Radical Expression : Political Language, Ritual and Symbol in England 1790-1850 (1994) particularly Chapter 3, "Understanding the Cap of Liberty : Symbolic Practice and Social Conflict in early 19th c. England". See later for a discussion of the cap of liberty on the early 19th c. Goosnargh Amicable Society banner. A cap of liberty made of turned wood, painted red, and said to have been carried at Peterloo, is in the Rochdale Museum collection. Only one radical banner in the study group, that of the 1832 Kirkintilloch weavers (discussed later), shows the cap of liberty, although there is a revival of its use in late Victorian socialist and trade union banners, associated with the designs of Walter Crane. Historians have also discussed the subversive nature of tricolour flags in this period, but similarly none of these have survived in the survey.

potentially dangerous evidence which could be used in law against their holders.

The only surviving banner used at Peterloo itself and reasonably well documented because of its association with Samuel Bamford, is the Middleton 'Unity and Strength' banner (still hanging in Middleton public library). From the post Peterloo protests there survives the Carlisle 'Death or Liberty' banner and the Skelmanthorpe banner (*Illustration 8*), for which a local history exists detailing its use in successive reform campaigns and local civic celebrations. The Gaston (Political) Union banner of 1819 from Scotland also dates from this phase of the movement. It includes a crude union jack in the top poleside canton, with a red field, a harp, thistles and roses, and the slogans 'Universal Suffrage' (sic) and 'The People's Charter'. The latter may be the first use of the slogan adopted by the Chartists in 1838. A fine Queen Caroline protest banner of 1820 also exists from Trowbridge, Wiltshire. This is the only survival from this movement and its painted silk design, as well as surviving accounts of its use, make it clear that it was a liberal gentry creation, similar in style to the election banners already discussed.¹⁵

Banners were often associated with the violent episodes in the post war period, like the Ely and Littleport rising of 1816, the Merthyr Tydfil outbreak of the same year and the 1831 rising in the same town. They seem to have taken a 'traditional' form of a staff with ribbons or a simple sheet of coloured cloth and were used as a symbol of authority by leaders of the protest. Gwyn Williams' account of the South Wales outbreaks sees these banners also used to 'bind' rioters to the cause :

To house after house, over a hundred of them, the banners went, witness to a great ritual of expiation and retribution. Into the ironworks they went, to summon forth the laggard. John Petherick, a works agent, met a party carrying one out through the gates. 'Here!' said the banner bearer, 'lay your

¹⁵ For the Carlisle banner see June C. F. Barnes, "Liberty or Death" Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeology Society Transactions LXXXIV (1984). It is possible that the short lived fashion for black banners in the Peterloo period was related to the popular interest in the death of the Duke of Brunswick and the exploits of his black uniformed troops as allies against Napoleon in the Waterloo campaign. Both used the skull and crossbones and 'Death or Glory' mottoes on their iconography. A black skull and crossbones flag was used as late as the Cold Bathh Fields riot of 1833, see Tilly op.cit.p.42. For the Skelmanthorpe example see Fred.Lawton, "Skelmanthorpe's Flag of Freedom", Hirst Buckley's Annual 1926, which is further interpreted in Vernon op.cit. p.109. The presentation of the Trowbridge banner to Queen Caroline herself and its subsequent return in triumph to the town is covered in the broadside "Trowbridge Address to Her Majesty" in Trowbridge Museum. I am grateful to David Tucker for the last reference.

hand on the flagstaff.' Petherick did so. 'Right,' said the bearer, 'you're sworn in.'¹⁶

Some violent protesters did have more sophisticated banners – the Thistlewood group carried elaborate flags in their pre-Cato Street phase, and the 'primitive' followers of Sir William Courtney fought under a blue standard with a rampant white lion at the battle of Bossenden Wood. Basic 'traditional' flags were still used; as late as 1832, George Beck, one of the Nottingham Reform rioters executed for firing a silk mill, was indicted: 'It was proved that Beck carried a flag or pole with ribbons attached at the head of the rioters and gave them orders.' Sadly none of the banners connected with these movements has been identified in the survey.¹⁷

One of the most surprisingly large groups of banners located in the survey were 24 associated with the Reform Crisis of 1829-32. The extensive use of banners in these reform campaigns is reasonably well documented and banners are prominently featured in the print of the New Hall Hill meeting of the Birmingham Political Union in 1832. This shows – amongst other designs – 'union jack' type banners being flown that day. However taking as a clue Vernon's view that the forms of popular protest became more regimented during this period, it has been impossible to establish any connection between Political Unions and union jacks, with only three political 'union jack' banners surviving from this period. (The two recently discovered in Galston, Ayrshire, have the crude union jack form, with colours and design not conforming to the heraldically correct union flag.) Similarly there has been no meaningful link found between trades banners which include 'union jacks' and which also use the word 'United' in their titles. There are, however, several surviving pieces of transfer printed pottery commemorating the Reform Act, decorated with flags with the union jack in the upper left canton,

¹⁶ A. J. Peacock, Bread or Blood (1965), Gwyn A. Williams, The Merthyr Rising (1978) pp.14,109,120,141-2 and his introduction to Gorman, op.cit. p.13. Cytharthfa Castle Museum at Merthyr Tydfil has a wonderful naïve oil painting of the 1816 riots by Penry Williams, a 15-year-old eye witness.

¹⁷ I. J. Prothero, Artisans and Politics in early 19th.c. London (1979), pp.141-2. See also I. McCalman, Radical Underworld : Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795 – 1840 (1988) and Barry Reay, The Last Rising of the Agricultural Labourers (1988). Reg Groves claimed to have located Courtney's banner in the late 1940s during his research for Sharpen the Sickle – The History of the Farmworkers Union (1949), conversation with author, (1982). See also Beck, Hearson and Armstrong, The Reform Bill Riots (1832), pp.135-6 and 143.

along with a more primitive Ewenny pottery slipware piece from South Wales.¹⁸

All but 6 of the 'Reform Crisis' banners are Scottish, and 8 were carried by particular groups of tradesmen. They divide roughly evenly between banners used in the campaigns leading up to the Act and those made for its celebration. They are very varied in design, with an emphasis, in the celebration banners, on the heroes of the day – Russell, Grey, Brougham and even William IV. The pre-Reform banners often express trenchant views, with the climax being the Kirkintilloch Weavers banner (*Illustration 9*), an extraordinary combination of Cap of Liberty, crossed pikes and union jack.

Both the campaigning and celebration styles of banner used rhymes and puns to emphasise slogans: 'If United We will be, A Reform we will see', in the words of the Galston reform banner and 'The Battle's won, Britannia's sons are free and Despots tremble at the Victory' or 'We will be true to the last', as proclaimed on the Shoemakers reform banner from Dunns. Scottish Reform Crisis banners also refer back to a noble heroic past which is claimed for popular radicalism. So the Lamington banner commemorates William Wallace's connection with Lanarkshire and the Edinburgh carpenters choose to illustrate a covenanting 'blue bonnet soldier'. The print of the New Hall Hill meeting also shows the tricolour flags which are mentioned in contemporary accounts, but the survey has not uncovered any examples of these. The only exception is a handful of trade society and friendly society banners, where it is clear that the tricolour design is due to shortages of cloth of one colour rather than to any republican intent.¹⁹

¹⁸ The New Hall Hill print is by Henry Harris. For Political Unions see Vernon, op.cit., Nancy D. LoPatin, Political Unions, Popular Politics and the Great Reform Act of 1832 (1999) and Carlos Flick, The Birmingham Political Union and the Movements for Reform in Britain 1830-1839 (1978). Many trades banners were also there, see A Short History of the Birmingham Branch of the Brushmakers (1904), MSS in William Kiddier Collection, Working Class Movement Library, Salford. The surviving Carlisle Rickergate reform banner has a Britannia image. A Reform banner in the West Fife Museums collection has a version of the royal coat of arms in the top left hand canton, with thistle decoration in the remaining three. Ceramics from the NMLH collection displaying union jacks are 1995.91.4 - a Peterloo Jug and 1998.24 - a Reform Union Jug. The Ewenny example is in Cytharthfa Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil.

¹⁹ For the 19th c. William Wallace cult see Colin Kidd, "Sentiment, race and revival – Scottish identities in the aftermath of Enlightenment" in Lawrence Brockliss and David Eastwood (eds.), A Union of Multiple Identities (1997). Examples of 'tricolours' are from the Kirkwall tailors, the Stourbridge Flint Glass Makers and Cutters Society, and an Oddfellows flag from Attleborough, Norfolk. The Stourbridge banner survives only in the form of an illustration. Tilly, op.cit., p.42, has also discovered that an American flag was used at Cold Bath Fields in 1833, presumably denoting republican sympathies.

A key factor, which helped prompt this whole project, is the entire absence of surviving banners from the Chartist movement. There are very few banners of any sort from the late 1830s and 1840s. Halifax has a remarkable, but simple, slogan banner from Oastler's Ten Hours Bill agitation and there are three survivals from the Anti-Corn Law League, of which two are probably Reform Bill celebration banners reused in 1846. Paul Pickering's opinion is that the League used banners mainly as backdrops for indoor meetings and its rapid success may explain why so few were preserved in public collections, especially as mid-Victorian museums had more classical interests.²⁰

It is likely that thousands of Chartist banners were made and used. Scores of contemporary accounts, both hostile and friendly, make reference to them. Chartist political rhetoric and Chartist poetry are full of imagery related to banners. It is possible to catch glimpses of them in surviving prints and (tantalisingly) blowing in the wind in the famous photographs of the 1848 Kennington Common meeting. Academics have analysed Chartist banner slogans and given thought to their production as part of the 'Trade of Agitation'. Although a few of the radical banners already discussed were used in Chartism, not a single Chartist banner has survived.²¹

This extraordinary absence has – for this author – assumed the nature of a quest. It has involved international enquiries, following up an (unfounded) rumour that a British Chartist banner was presented between the wars to the Museum of the Revolution in Moscow. A photograph of a banner from an unknown book illustration in the John Gorman papers (*Illustration 10*) is typical of this search. It is of a 'banner used in the Chartist riots' with a plain slogan 'Westminster

²⁰ The two Anti-Corn Law League/Reform Bill banners are from the Scottish lowlands, with an elaborate 'No Corn Law' banner at Wednesbury Museum in the Black Country, conversation with Paul Pickering 6.10.99. An Anti-Corn Law League banner is shown in the Illustrated London News, 11.2.1843.

²¹ See amongst many examples Gwyn Williams' introduction to Gorman, *op.cit.*, pp.13-4; Benjamin Wilson, Struggles of an Old Chartist (1887); Dorothy Thompson, The Chartists – Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution (1984), p.242; John Saville, The British State and the Chartist Movement (1987), pp.118 and 148; Jean Hawkes (ed.), The London Journal of Flora Tristan 1842 (1987), p.36; Peter Scheckner (ed), An Anthology of Chartist Poetry. Poetry of the British Working Class 1830s-1850s (1989); Dorothy Thompson and Stephen Roberts, Images of Chartism (1998); Paul Pickering, "Chartism and the 'Trade of Agitation' in early Victorian Britain", History Vol.76, No.247 (June 1991); ID, "Class without words : Symbolic Communication in the Chartist Movement" Past and Present, No.112 (August 1986); ID, Chartism and the Chartists in Manchester and Salford (1995), p.160-5 and 214-16. The best documented radical banners used in Chartism are the Skelmanthorpe (see Lawton, *loc.cit.* and Vernon, *op.cit.*, p.109) and one of the Carlisle collection (see Barnes, *loc.cit.*), but there were others.

District' and was said to be 'in the possession of the Police Authorities, New Scotland Yard'. Sadly the Metropolitan Police Museum can find no trace of it and there is a strong possibility that it was used by the police to muster special constables, since it bears a strong resemblance to a surviving near-contemporary special constables banner in the Greater Manchester Police Museum.

It is worth outlining some theories about this absence. It is claimed that in periods of government prosecution banners were clearly targeted by the police, both on demonstrations and in raids. (Andrew Carnegie, in his account of his radical family in 1842, describes being 'deeply impressed with the great danger overhanging us because a lawless flag was secreted in the garret'.) Dorothy Thompson is of the opinion that banners could have been destroyed by their owners, since their slogans may have been used as evidence of seditious intent. Whilst clear evidence is lacking, it is likely that, as many ex-Chartists became in later life Gladstonian Liberals (or Disraelian Conservatives) or stalwarts of the local Co-operative society, they may have wished to have played down their role in the confrontational force side of the movement during their youth. This may have involved disposing of Chartist regalia and banners, which, unlike the Reform period banners, did not yet have a patina of antiquarian respectability for preservation in a local museum. Working class people usually had small homes, with little storage space. Chartism also had no direct successor in organisational terms and a 'no politics rule' was often enforced in tangential organisations such as friendly societies, co-operatives and trade unions, which would make them less inclined to give Chartist banners house room. However this argument may be taken too far and is slightly contradicted by accounts of the use of material culture in later celebrations of the movement and a surviving photograph of Chartist pikes proudly being displayed outside the Failsworth Liberal Club in 1911.²²

²² The John Gorman collection is at the NMLH. Conversation with Dorothy Thompson, 6.10.99. I am grateful too for the views of Owen Ashton in Andrew Carnegie, Autobiography (1920), p.8. The phenomena of young radicals turning reactionary can be a cliché, but is apparent as early as Samuel Bamford's account of his journey from radical revolutionary to special constable in Passages of the Life of a Radical. See also Neville Kirk, The Growth of Working Class Reformism in Mid-Victorian England (1985), pp.138-144 and Miles Taylor, The Decline of English Radicalism 1847 - 1860 (1995), for this transition. There is a general paucity of other Chartist regalia in museum collections, compared with radical and even Owenite material. This was confirmed by a survey carried out at the NMLH in 1992, by Kevin Moore a Leicester University postgraduate museums studies student. This found that museums in what had been strongly Chartist areas, produced little material culture of the movement, compared what was available for its antecedents. See Pickering, loc.cit. for Chartist products and also Thompson and Roberts, op.cit.. Two essays in Owen Ashton, Robert Fyson and Stephen Roberts, The Chartist Legacy (1999), also discuss the material culture of Chartism. These are John Hugman, "A Small drop of Ink: Tyneside Chartism and

An additional explanation may lie in the increasing part that consumer goods played in the lives of Victorians. Older traditions of production and consumption of locally made items were gradually replaced by mass-produced objects, readily available through dynamic changes in transport, retailing, and marketing. The Great Exhibition of 1851 and other similar industrial design projects popularised this whole process. Historians of such diverse subjects as the black letter press and quilts have noted the tendency of older home-made forms to be undervalued and potentially discarded in the mid-Victorian period, in favour of shop-bought replacements. This had led to a similar gap in public collections, with early 19th c. and early 20th c. material represented, and less material from the Victorian period.²³

There is clear evidence that banner making became more professionalised in the 1830s. John Gorman's researches have indicated that George Tutill, who became Britain's foremost banner manufacturer, commenced work in 1837. One of his main competitors (although nowhere near on the same scale), Henry Slingsby started in 1843, and significant provincial makers, like Henry Whaite of Manchester, were banner making from at least the early 1840s. All these entrepreneurs, who had backgrounds in related businesses (fairground backdrops in Tutill's case and art supplies in Whaite's) are likely to have identified a gap in the market for banners. The growth of Chartism, alongside that of affiliated friendly societies and increasingly more acceptable trade unions, almost certainly fuelled this demand, although the destruction of Tutill's extensive records during the Second World War make it impossible to prove.

Surviving descriptions of Chartist banners make it clear that they soon adopted the large scale oil painting on silk style, which Tutill was to make his own. Often these were the impressive representations of Feargus O'Connor, subscribed for in penny contributions, which Bronterre O'Brien was to criticise as 'thousands of pounds of hard earned money squandered upon flags and banners and coaches and triumphal cars - and such like trumpery'. With Tutill's successful designs (much copied by his competitors, despite his patents) the elaborate metallic paint of the election banner tradition collided with the practical

the Northern Liberator", and Antony Taylor, "Commemoration, Memorialisation and Political Memory in post- Chartist Radicalism: The 1885 Halifax Reunion in Context". The pike photograph is reproduced in Ruth and Eddie Frow, Chartism in Manchester 1838-58 (1980).

²³ I am grateful for the specialist guidance of John Cole of Rochdale Museum Service and Anne Butcher, a postgraduate art history student at the MMU and member of the Quilters Guild, on this point. See also Asa Briggs, Victorian Things (1988).

difficulties of manoeuvring such monstrous objects in the British climate and streets to create a poor rate of survival.

In their working class determination to secure the 'best' banners for their protest, ironically the Chartists were perhaps ensuring that none of their proud symbols of protest were preserved for posterity. A similar gap in trade union banners exists between those of the pre-1850 trade societies and the earliest surviving Tutill examples from the 1890s. Again they are well documented from accounts and prints, but the few that remain from this period – like that of the Co-operative Smiths- tend to be made by the still flourishing sign-writers' tradition and not by Tutill and his rivals. The trade unions benefited from a lasting institutional structure, which might preserve their banners, but the Chartist movement, with its terminal decline, was not so lucky. So fashion and the early advent of built-in obsolescence may account for the lack of Chartist banners, as well as the factors discussed earlier.²⁴

Three banners survive from demonstrations during the 1866-7 Reform Act, all carried by tradesmen in Edinburgh. All three are of a small size and are clearly part of the locally made, sign-writing tradition, rather than the larger, 'Tutill' productions, to which working class organisations aspired, if they could raise the money. Firmly Liberal, this group includes a Leith Joiners banner with a prominent Britannia holding a union jack and a tinsplate workers banner with a cartoon showing Robert Lowe, a Tory opponent of the franchise extension, being ducked under a tinsplate shower. The latter is a rough copy of an Edinburgh tinsplate workers banner made for the 1832 demonstrations, which shows an earlier Tory adversary, Christopher North, being drenched under a water pump by a working class woman. The 1832 banner was active in 1867 with a proud inscription 'Carried in 1832'. This tradition - also found elsewhere - continued, with both these banners being carried in the 1884 franchise demonstration. Edinburgh museums also have other, larger banners from the Leith Joiners, and it seems probable that groups of workers carried more than one banner - the larger 'Tutill' type banners (perhaps 'representing' the branch) - being joined by smaller, more

²⁴ See Gorman, op.cit., pp.57-67 and Norman Emery, Banners of the Durham Coalfield, p.13. Gorman estimates (p.135) that Tutill made over three quarters of all trade union banners. Ruth Stephens, "Henry Whaite – The Manchester Banner Maker", Manchester Region History Review, Vol.XIII (1999) (the author worked on the National Banner Survey) and Tony Lewery, op.cit., pp.133-5. The quote from O'Brien, dating from 1847, is from Dorothy Thompson, op.cit., p.129. Iorwerth Prothero, Radical Artisans in England and France 1830-1870 (1997), p.301, briefly discusses Reform League banners and tricolours. I am grateful to Peter Carter of the GMB College for his views on the Co-operative Smiths banner and banners generally.

topical banners, which could be cheaply commissioned from local signwriters, or made by talented members themselves. This argument is supported by the existence of two other Edinburgh tinsplate banners, of the smaller sign-writer style, relating to opposition to the picketing clauses in the 1871 Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Contemporary accounts of the Nine Hours Movement indicate that banners were used extensively during the demonstrations or celebrations that welcomed its adoption in 1871-72. Only three related banners have survived –two from Sunderland and one from Edinburgh - and whilst this is perhaps too small a sample from which to draw firm conclusions, these are fairly elaborate, provincially made constructions, in a ‘Tutill’ style. The Sunderland Employers banner (*Illustration 11*) is particularly fine and is probably the first depiction of the sort of reconciliation scene, which was to become typical of British trade union banners. It was probably only carried on one occasion, which is likely to account for its unique survival.²⁵

The last group of political banners considered, relate to the 1884-85 franchise agitation in Scotland. It consists of 8 banners, all but one from the towns of Perth and Hawick, with a possibly related group of 3 others from North Lanarkshire, which may be from as late as the 1910-11 agitation against the House of Lords. One trade union banner – of the Hawick Tailors (*Illustration 12*) - is locally produced in the grander ‘Tutill’ style. Four banners were also locally made for particular factories for their workpeople to procession under and feature images of Gladstone and/or John Bright. Three banners are from the remains of the trade incorporations and still include the adopted coats of arms and tools of the trade, typical of much earlier iconography. In the case of the Elgin Squarewrights, a new banner was specifically made for the demonstration, an exact replica of a much older design, which includes a ‘union jack’ in the top left hand canton, as well as the tools of the trade. So organisations, which saw themselves as progressive, could deliberately choose symbolism with backward looking references.²⁶

In his work on 18th c. urban ritual, Peter Borsay refers to the way ceremonial regalia became ‘magically imbued’, and the way in which banners were used to seek out the power of past campaigns to aid present ones. The tendency for historical banners to be honoured as

²⁵ See for instance Eddowe’s Shropshire Journal, 13.12.1871 for the celebratory procession in Shrewsbury. In other places the movement was more confrontational see R.and E.Frow and Michael Katanga, Strikes – A Documentary History (1971), p.89 and E. Allen, The North-East Engineers Strike of 1871 (1971).

²⁶ Notes on Elgin incorporation banners, see footnote 9. There are local press accounts of the Hawick franchise processions, see for instance the Southern Reporter, 25.9.1884.

'holy relics' has already been mentioned, but there are more self-conscious references to the past in a number of examples. So the Stirling tailors banner of 1830 (probably itself made for the Reform agitation) commemorates the three hundredth anniversary of the appointment of Robert Spittal as tailor to James IV with the slogan: 'The Shears of man have done more good to Mankind than the swords of Conquerers'.

As we have seen, this tendency to refer to the past is found predominately in the Scottish banners, which are so prevalent in the group being studied. Whilst we can say that these examples in all categories represent some sort of statement of nationhood, whether this was from a position of strength, or from an English threat, is debatable. The need to proclaim Scottishness on Scots banners was not matched by any parallel English need; the St George's cross is absent from the iconography, except for one Scottish example already mentioned.

The survey uncovered three covenanting banners in Scotland, the authenticity of which must be questioned, given the rareness of large textiles from the 17th c. The one from Douglas, Lanarkshire, dated 1745 is well provenanced and the reputed 1679 East Monkland banner may be a scarce survival, but a covenanting flag from Cumnock, Ayrshire has a particular history, which may encompass forgery in the interest of a more modern political cause. Said to have been carried against Claverhouse (Bonnie Dundee) at the battle of Drumlog in 1679, it was conveniently rediscovered in the attic of a radical doctor around 1830. Its value and interest were at once recognised. In the public processions held at the time of the Reform Bill, it was frequently borne, as if to proclaim the kinship of the Covenanters of the 17th Century with the Reformers of 1832. In a similar fashion, it is claimed that a glovers' banner from Perth was carried by members of that trade in battle against the Duke of Montrose in 1644. Whilst certainly likely to be very old, this claim would make it practically the only banner to survive today from the Civil Wars. As it is, the survey has already identified more plausible gaps amongst surviving banners in much more recent areas like 18/19th c. elections and Chartism.²⁷

²⁷Quote from The Covenanting Flag of Cumnock pamphlet probably contemporary with presentation of the banner to the Baird Institute, Cumnock, in 1925. (Cumnock was the birthplace of Keir Hardie.) The Perth banner, to judge from the style of lettering is likely to be mid 18th c., though it may be based on an older banner which could have been carried against Montrose. For a discussion of the use of military colours in the 17th c. see Philip Haythornthwaite, The English Civil War 1642-1651 - An Illustrated Military History (1983), pp.146-9. Lest these myths which accompany banners be thought of as purely Scottish, this author recently examined what was claimed to be a banner carried at Flodden Field in Middleton parish church, near Manchester. It was clearly of 19th c. work though possibly a replacement for an earlier one.

Civics

The last category in the study group, numbering about 30, is less clear cut, and covers friendly societies, 'Common Riding', temperance and miscellaneous banners.

In addition there are a few banners from organisations which might be termed 'loyalist', rather than strictly 'political'. The banner of the Loyal Waterloo Veterans Association from Rochdale is similar to the regimental colours (and other banners) discussed earlier. A union jack is in the upper left canton and the blue body of the flag contains a royal coat of arms, a crown and red Lancashire roses. Whilst the existence of a post-Napoleonic Wars ex-service organisation with possible loyalist leanings might have been of great interest, it is likely that the banner was not made until 1856, when: 'Twenty Waterloo heroes, accompanied by a pipe and drum band left the town to witness the unveiling of the Wellington Statue, Manchester.'²⁸

Irish banners have not been considered in this study, and were excluded from the National Banner Survey, as a similar project was being undertaken in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless a couple of dozen Ancient Hibernian and Orange lodge banners are held in British museums in Lancashire, South Wales and Scotland, although all are late Victorian or Edwardian. One surviving Orange banner, of the hundreds in Irish museums, is of the 'union jack' type already discussed. The Newtown Mount Kennedy banner from Co.Wicklow has a pre-1801 union jack in the top left canton and images of crowns, (English?) roses and a representation of a statue of William III. However, it is clearly impossible to read too much into the similarities of design on either side of the Irish Sea from one example.²⁹

The last example of a 'loyalist' banner is the Hero of the Nile (*Illustration 13*) from the National Maritime Museum. This naïve art representation of a bust of Lord Nelson is said to date from the early 19th

²⁸ I am grateful to Andrew Moore and John Cole of Rochdale Museum Service for their help with this banner. The reference is from Robert D. Mattley, *The Annals of Rochdale* (1899); see also *Rochdale Observer*, 21.6.1856. Rochdale is also the home to one of the few surviving Conservative banners that of the Rochdale Conservative Sick and Burial Association, probably Edwardian. Whilst there ten examples of banners from the Primrose League – the late Victorian Conservative auxiliary organisation – in museums, only one party example seems to have survived. This is the Norwich 4th Ward banner in the Norfolk Museums Service collection.

²⁹ This banner is illustrated in Belinda Loftus, *Mirrors –William III and Mother Ireland* (1990), Plate 8. I am grateful to Anthony D. Buckley of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, which cares for this banner, for his opinion. For Northern Irish banners see Neil Jarman, op.cit.

c. and may well be the sole survivor of the banners that were specifically made to greet his triumphant tour of the country. Many banners of other organisations were used in similar official celebrations or royal anniversaries.

Friendly society banners form one of the largest categories within the Survey, with 216 examples. The vast majority of these are from the national affiliated orders, (eg. Oddfellows, Foresters etc.); they date from the late Victorian and Edwardian period and typically are made by Tutills with a 'widows and orphans' scene. The latter advertisement is totally lacking from an interesting group of eighteen 19th c. friendly society banners, whose linking iconography is mainly the 'loyalist' theme already identified in other categories.

The banner of the Goosnargh Amicable Society (*Illustration 14*) hangs in the parish church near Preston. Dating from the early 19th c., it includes the clasped hands, which were to become typical of friendly societies and trade unions and, as previously discussed, one of the supporters carries a Cap of Liberty. However, it is the adoption of the monarch's coat of arms and other royal symbolism which is most striking. This theme continues in other early friendly society banners, with that of the Newburgh Friendly society (from Fife) displaying a crown, the Strathaven Friendly Society showing a rampant Lion and that of the Appleby Friendly Society (from Leicestershire) c.1840, proclaiming: 'Fear God, Honour the King'. The centenary flag of the Armley Clothiers Loyal Friendly (1860), as well as demonstrating loyalism in its title includes crowns and sceptres and the motto: 'Pro Rege et Lege'.

The 'union jack' pattern of banner is continued in that of the Bride Friendly Union Society, c.1833, from the Isle of Man. This stunning piece of folk art uniquely has union jacks in both top corners as well as the Manx three-legged symbol. Union jacks are also apparent in a group of embroidered and home-made, west country village friendly society banners. These date from between 1819 and 1850 and measuring 8 by 5 feet are a late survival of the one-poled flag form. The Stratton-on-Fosse banner (*Illustration 15*) includes a crude union jack, a crown with George IV's monograph and a Britannia with union jack shield. The Oak Hill society (*Illustration 16*) has a union jack and the VR monogram with the words: 'God Save the Queen'. Another unknown society banner has the union jack in the top left-hand canton and the motto: 'In God Our Trust'. Loyalist iconography reaches its peak with the banners from the Somerset village of Midsomer Norton, said to date from 1850. One has a picture of William IV; another has Nelson and the royal coat of arms, with the Trafalgar signal: 'This Day England Expects Every Man to do his Duty'. The third has a representation of 'King Charles in the Oak Tree' and the last has 'Queen and Constitution' as its motto. Whilst, as

we have seen, William IV was celebrated on some radical banners, as some historians have discovered, the cult of Oak Apple Day in the west country was a key loyalist occasion.³⁰

There is also a tradition of locally made painted 19th c. friendly society banners in Wiltshire and Dorset which also seem to display loyal iconography. The Sherbourne Friendly Society have a Britannia and Devizes Museum have two banners with St George fighting the dragon, one with the slogan: 'Fear God, Honour the King'. Although other west country friendly society examples show more mainstream symbols like clasped hands (in three cases) and a single beehive, it is the royal and loyal which dominates the iconography of surviving early 19th c. friendly society banners.

Although ten temperance banners survive from the later period, only three Welsh examples are extant from before 1850. The most interesting of these was made by a Holywell signwriter for the Mostyn Temperance Society in North Wales (*Illustration 17*). It includes a scene of the dramatic suppression of the Holywell Races by the society in 1836; the only representation of a demonstration with banners on a surviving banner. Its central illustration shows an ideal family enjoying the healthy benefits of total abstention compared with a dissolute family whose life has been ruined by drink. (Interestingly this 'before and after' scene is also used in trade union banners as late as the 1930s, to demonstrate the benefits of organisation.) The reverse of the Mostyn banner includes a bible and a crown, giving perhaps a loyalist flavour to the respectability which it already proclaimed. Parading with church, chapel and Sunday school banners, particularly in the Whit Walk tradition of the industrial north, seems to have been a late 19th c. development. Although 263 banners from religious organisations are included in the National Banner Survey, all are 20th c. in origin and are beyond the scope of this study.

A fascinating group of 12 'Common Riding' banners commemorate the ancient custom of riding burgh boundaries and common lands, which seem to have largely died out by the late 19th c. S. F. Sanderson relates its revival to the issue of Scottish nationhood discussed earlier:

³⁰ Some of these banners are discussed in Margaret D. Fuller, West Country Friendly Societies -An Account of Village Benefit Clubs and their Brass Pole Heads (1964), pp.96-9, where she concludes, 'national and royalist symbols predominate'. Estelle Jakeman of Somerset Museums Service has told me that the Stratton banner was made by a Mr Couch, a tailor of Stoke Lane. The Midsomer Norton banners are also the ones encountered with agricultural tools of the trade represented. One is signed 'Maggs', (another tailor?). Another banner of this type from Hatch Beauchamp, was made by a group of women (wives of members?) and presented to the society (Fuller, op.cit., p.96) .For the cult of Oak Apple Day see Bob Bushaway, By Rite - Custom Ceremony and Community in England 1700-1880 (1982).

Though many features of present-day festivals are of recent innovation, the celebrations serve to re-affirm a sense of civic community, solidarity, and pride which is deeply rooted in history and legend, particularly in those Border burghs whose memories of Flodden Field and the Redewire Raid are woven into a romantic tapestry along with the Eildon tree, the Covenanters, the Incorporations of Weavers, Tailors and Hammermen and the traditional cry of 'safe oot and safe in' to the Standardbearer's retinue.³¹

Surviving Common Riding banners seem to date from before the late Victorian and Edwardian revival, as do the banners of other organisations which also took part in these ceremonies. The Elgin incorporations collection, discussed earlier, is mainly from the early 19th c. and was still paraded around the burgh in the Common Ridings until 1994, when it was deposited in the local museum. The Dumfries collection is a mixture of trades banners - Shoemakers and Incorporated trades - and specialised Common Riding standards. The latter consist of a red or yellow St. Andrews saltire on a blue background, sometimes with an additional upright cross. Hawick (*Illustration 18*) has the best collection, with six of these banners, some of which relate to organisations like the Grammar School or the Masons. Several have the dates 1513 and 1707, believed to refer to Flodden and the Act of Union, and one with the inscription 1832, was said to have been carried in the Reform Act celebrations. (They were also carried in the 1884 Franchise reform procession in the town.) A more elaborate banner was painted by the animal artist, James Howe, for the Biggar Whipman's society in 1807. Its central image shows a rural scene with the Common Riding procession complete with banner led by a mounted fiddler. This idyll symbolises the role of banners in affirming the community principles, which the Common Ridings demonstrated.

A few other miscellaneous 19th c. banners have been studied for this paper. These include a Chester House of Industry banner, part of the Chester Trades collection and presumably used for the same purpose and that of the Coventry Roebuck society - an elaborate guidon with royal coat of arms and Britannia. The royalist theme is continued with an Edinburgh banner made for the visit of the Prince of Orange after

³¹ For Whit walks banners see A. J. Lewery, Gold, Silk and Paint Scripture (1986) and for the exuberant use of temperance banners see John Rule, "Methodism, Popular Beliefs and Village Culture in Cornwall, 1800-50" in Robert D. Storch, Popular Customs in 19th c. England (1982), p.57. Entry in David Daiches (ed.), A Companion to Scottish Culture (1981), pp.121-2.

the battle of Waterloo. A banner from the Shaftesbury Agricultural Society is the sole survivor of what may have been a large number produced in the Victorian period of 'High Farming'. Its slogans proclaim 'God Speed the Plough', 'Success to the Shaftesbury Farmers Club' and 'God Save the Queen'. Unsurprisingly, this too reflects the loyalist theme typical of civic and community banners.

Changes in Design and Usage

The design of banners is directly related to how they were used. Virtually all banners from the early 19th c. and before were technically flags, which were carried on one pole and waved. At some time in the second quarter of the 19th c. there was a major change in design and usage, as banners began to be attached to a horizontal top pole and/or two vertical poles, with the fabric held rigidly by two or more people. This made the iconography and the slogans easier to read and the banner's message more powerful. Using evidence from surviving examples, contemporary accounts and illustrations of banner-carrying, this section analyses this process. These changes may be related to the more formalised and disciplined political and civic participation identified by Vernon and others.

Nearly all the English guild and Scottish incorporation banners discussed earlier are long and thin flags with tapering ends, often forked or swallow-tailed. Designs could be elaborate – like those of the Chester Guilds - or very simple - like the single image of the Stirling hammermen. These flags were used in the urban ritual described by Borsay and others, and some towns had small groups of semi-professional ceremonial workers. In 18th c. Norwich, a team consisting of Speech Boys, Whifflers, Snap (who manipulated a dragon costume) and a Standard Bearer processed on guild days and mayoral occasions. A drawing of the Standard Bearer from 1832 (*Illustration 19*), just prior to its demise during the Reform period, shows a man in an antiquated, clown-like costume, with an old fashioned version of a military grenadier cap, holding a swallow-tailed flag on a long pole. The body of the flag is held at an angle, which, even allowing for artistic licence, would have been difficult for observers to read. The Ludlow Gild 'streamers' are first recorded in 1693, with the two extant banners of the Stychemen and Hammermen dating from 1734:

At festivals and state occasions the Hammermen would take part in civic events about the town. It is recorded that it was the duty of the two youngest freemen to carry the gild's

streamers at the head of the 'fraternity' when it was in procession. The banners were also paraded at the pleasure fair, held annually on 1st May...The Hammermen's streamers were reported as last carried in procession at the birth of Robert Windsor-Clive, heir to the Clive estates in 1824.

The burden of carrying a village friendly society flag is described by William Howitt in 1838:

In front of them comes bearing the great banner, emblazoned with some fitting scene and motto, old Harry Lomax the blacksmith, deputed to that office for his brawny strength of his arms, and yet, if the wind be stirring, evidently staggering under its weight, and finding enough to hold it aloft. There it floats its length of blue and yellow, and on its top nods the huge posy of peonies, labernum flowers and lilacks, which our own garden has duly furnished.³²

Although no sources have been found detailing flag etiquette, it is likely that elaborate systems of flourishing existed which added to the civic festival. Milne records this etiquette in a military context:

Many old works on military drill and discipline devote a chapter to the proper mode of carrying flags or standards, and to their numerous positions and waves in the hands of the ensigns. Blackwell [1726] heads his chapter as follows: "There are eight several flourishes of the colours which were formerly were very much in use, but of late years it has been laid aside; however, I shall mention and describe them, in order to raise an emulation in the ensign-bearers to revive the practice of it."³³

³² The illustration is reproduced in David Jones, The Norwich Snapdragon (1984). A union jack is shown being carried in an identical way in a watercolour of William IV Coronation Celebration procession in Bristol in 1831, reproduced in James Ayres, The Georgian City (1998), p.138. The description from Ludlow is from the caption to the streamer in Ludlow Museum. William Howitt, The Rural Life of England (1838), Vol.II, pp.87-8; Durr, loc.cit., pp.25-6, also has an account of civic usages.

³³ Milne, op.cit., p.62. He then describes the success of this revival, largely through the influence of the Foot Guards. See also Haythornthwaite, op.cit. Although the Municipal Corporations Reform Act killed off archaic civic celebrations, the tradition may still flourish overseas, with, for example, the North Italian flag waving ceremonies. For a fascinating account of the role of flags in 16thc. Florentine politics see Richard C. Trexler, "Follow the Flag The Ciompi Revolt Seen from the Streets", Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, Tome XLVI, (1984), N.2, pp.357-392

Other evidence of how surviving banners were carried can be often deduced from the position of pole sleeves and fringing, with the proviso that these could have been altered over time. Numerous examples up to the 1830s, such as the Newburgh Reform, the Ashover miners, the Dunns Shoemakers Reform, the Midsomer Norton friendly society collection, as well as the Common Riding tradition, indicate that trades, political and civic banners were carried on one pole. The widespread 'union jack' banners, more properly colours, were also used on one pole and needed to be waved if the design was to be seen in all but high winds. Richard Carlile's account of Peterloo describes how a single pole banner was used:

About 12 Mr. Hunt and his friends entered the barouche. They had not proceeded far when they were met by the Committee of the Female Reform Society, one of whom, and interesting looking woman, bore a standard on which was printed a female holding in her hand a flag surmounted with the cap of liberty, whilst she trod under foot an emblem of corruption, on which was inscribed that word. She was requested to take a seat on the box of the carriage (a most appropriate one) which she boldly and immediately acquiesced in, and continued waving her flag and handkerchief until she reached the hustings, where she took her stand on the right hand corner in front.³⁴

Evidence of the first use of horizontal top poles is found in many surviving Reform period banners such as the 'Christopher Hill' Edinburgh tinplate workers, the Perth reformers and the Huddersfield Oastler. Initially, this was used on smaller banners carried by one person. The mechanism is usefully illustrated in a back view of one of the banner carriers in a detail of the print of the 1832 Birmingham New Hall meeting (*Illustration 20*). However, by about 1840, the carrying system common to 'Tutill' banners - of one long horizontal and two long vertical poles - can be seen in collections such as those of the Dundee trades, which were clearly locally made. This change in carrying technique may indicate how quickly, after commencing business in 1837, George Tutill anticipated and moulded working class demand

³⁴ In Sherwin's Weekly Political Register, 18.8.1819, reprinted in G.D.H.Cole and A.W. Filson, British Working Class Movements – Select Documents 1789 –1875 (1965), p.164.

amongst emergent trade union and Chartist groups, enabling him to dominate banner production from the latter half of the 19th c.

Having said that, the use of the more old fashioned flags continued, especially in remote parts of Britain or where groups lacked the funds to purchase one of Tutill's, modern products. Thus the Elgin incorporations continued to use their early 19thc. flags in their civic and political processions and, as we have seen, as late as 1885 commissioned an exact replica from a local maker when the existing Squarewrights banner wore out. In Northern Ireland, the use of flags, rather than banners, survived much later - into the 1950s - with groups like the Apprentice Boys and the Ancient Order of Hibernians.³⁵

The way in which Tutill dominated the aesthetics of banners has received little comment, beyond Tony Lewery's tactful :

'The Victorian love of elaboration usually fills the background with entwined renaissance scroll-work, with the lettering signwritten on a painted ribbon that echoes the material and movement of the banner itself. Pictures are painted in the style of acceptable if uninspired academic art, as befits respectable supporters of Culture, and some of the imagery leans that way as well....The painters were often better craftsmen than artists, however, and the figure paintings often lack the skill that truly naturalistic painting requires; some of their charm for later generations is an element of touching naivety.'

It takes an overtly hostile contemporary account to place Tutill's designs in their artistic context, such as that of a reporter of the Northampton shoemakers' strike of 1887 :

The organisation of processions, absorbing all the idlers and disorderly by means of brass bands and the flaunting of

³⁵ For an example of the thoroughness of Tutill's marketing and customer care see the use of several hundred unsolicited testimonials in his catalogues, four of which are in the John Gorman collection at the NMLH (1998.26). The replacement Elgin Squarewrights flag cost £ 2 14s.3d. from an unidentified local maker. Tutills were charging 32 guineas for a standard 12 x 11 feet banner in 1895, (Gorman, op.cit., p.53). Thomas Dunning's shoemakers lodge of the GNCTU in Nantwich was charged £25 by Thomas Jones ('herald painter') for 'a banner emblematic of our trade' in 1834. See W. H. Chaloner, "The Reminiscences of Thomas Dunning (1813-1894) and the Nantwich Shoemakers Case of 1834", Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society (1947), p.47. Even in Elgin, a new Joint Trades Convenery banner, also made in 1885, was designed with a top pole, in 'Tutills' style. For the Northern Irish flags see Jarman, op.cit, Chapters 10 and 14 and also letter to author 3.3.2000.

banners of more than Chinese gorgeousness and hideousness, is a much more easy, and to many a much more congenial task than to settle with even-handed justice a dispute between master and men. By the way, we may remark that there can scarcely be a more distressing evidence of the utter lack of art education in the working classes than is evidenced by the ludicrous hideousness of the trade banners that many powerful organisations seem to take satisfaction and pride in flaunting, in season and out of season; the most rudimentary training of eye or taste would convince them that the ragshop is the only fit scene for the display of such tawdry absurdities.³⁶

The other surviving sources of evidence for how banners were carried, are the surviving contemporary prints and drawings. These must be treated with some care, since artists may not have been eye witnesses of processions but were merely depicting their idea of what banners looked like or how they were carried. A clear example of this is in the anti-Chartist cartoon Torch Light Money Spec (1839). Nonetheless sufficient apparently authentic images survive which confirm the changes in banner design and usage outlined above. Flags are waved extensively in numerous Peterloo cartoons, naïve paintings of election meetings (*Illustration 21*), in a cartoon of Thomas Hepburn's north-east miners union of 1832 and in a representation of the Preston Guild Procession of 1842.³⁷

Union jacks, flags and the first small horizontal pole banners are detailed in prints of the Birmingham New Hall Reform meeting and of the Bristol election of 1832, as well as in a broadside produced for the Reform Act celebrations in Banbury. Whilst only flags are in evidence in the Chartist print commemorating the 1842 procession, both flags and banners with two vertical poles are shown being used together in an Illustrated London News engraving of the celebrations of the incorporation of North Shields in 1849 (*Illustration 22*). An oil painting of Blackfriars Bridge, Salford during Queen Victoria's visit in 1851 by

³⁶ Lewery, op.cit., "Popular Art", p.134; Leather Trades Circular and Review, 6.9.(1887).

³⁷ The Torch Light Money Spec. from 1839-40 is reproduced in John Cannon, Chartism in Bristol (1964). For Peterloo cartoons see Diana Donald, "The Power of Print – Graphic Images of Peterloo", Greater Manchester Regional History Review, Vol.III, No.1 (1989). For oil paintings of election and trades banners in use at Blackburn (1832) Limerick (1820) see James Ayres, English Naïve Painting 1750-1900 (1978) and Belinda Loftus, Marching Banners (1978) p.9. The Hepburn cartoon is in Edwards, op.cit., p.14 and the Preston Guild illustration in Durr, loc.cit., p.55.

James Parry, similarly shows both flags and banners being carried in procession.³⁸

However by 1856, a lithograph of the Peace Festival at Salisbury (following the Crimean War), shows that flags have generally been demoted to decorating buildings and other side-shows, with the main procession being of 'Tutill' style large painted banners with a recognisable Oddfellows banner in the forefront (*Illustration 23*). It is Tutill's designs again that stand out in the watercolour of the trades procession which opened Manchester Town Hall in 1877 (*Illustration 24*). The unknown artist almost certainly observed the occasion and includes some intimate details. A group struggling with their sail-like banner in the windy conditions depicts the larger team needed to successfully handle one of Tutill's creations, consisting of two men on each vertical pole and four guide rope handlers. Whilst smaller home-made banners continued to be made, it was the larger impressive products that needed teams of strong men to handle them and the greater numbers generated by mass movements to follow them, that dominated late Victorian popular processions.³⁹

Conclusion

Banners are symbolically indicative of changes and continuities in British society and surviving examples could be used to contribute an additional layer of meaning in the teasing out of popular ideologies in 19th c. Britain. Paul Pickering sees an analysis of logos on Manchester Chartist banners as 'an important means of looking at the views of rank-and-file' perhaps missing from newspaper sources. James Vernon and others are 'interested in what banners tell you about the political process more generally - how people experienced politics, what power structures were involved in articulating a particular form of political expression.' Frank O'Gorman has pointed out that it is difficult to separate out the

³⁸ The Birmingham print is by Henry Harris (NMLH collection), the Bristol print of the December 1832 election by J. Rowbotham and W. Miller is in Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.148 and the Banbury procession is described in the broadside Triumph of Reform (I am grateful to Crispin Paine for this last reference). Harrison (p.158) also reproduces a watercolour of glassworkers using a two pole banner as early as William IV's coronation procession, but this appears to have been provided by their employer, the Phoenix Works, in 1831.

³⁹ The Salisbury print is by M. and N. Hanhart and is reproduced in John Betjman, English Cities and Small Towns (1946). A full account of the procession, with details of the banners is in William E. A. Axon, An Architectural and General Description of the Town Hall, Manchester (1878); for a description of how Northumberland miners banner teams were recruited and paid Edwards, *op.cit.*, p.23.

impact of banners from the other visual and aural paraphernalia of political campaigning in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Vernon's suggestion that a select number of case studies be made, using the local press, on how surviving banners were actually used, may well be pursued at a later stage. However some initial investigations down this path have met with mixed results. Detailed newspaper accounts have been located connected to the Hawick banners - an interesting collection drawn from all three typological groups. This suggests a continuity in custom and usage throughout the 19th c., combining local pride with political radicalism drawn from the national stage. The 1884 reports indicate a mass community event, joined onto the very Scottish Common Riding Border tradition, with anti-aristocratic feeling and hero worship of Gladstone. However, the press reports from earlier in the century have much less detail on the content of political expression and the role of banners within it, making an analysis through time more difficult. This was confirmed by an attempt to ascribe correct dates to the surviving Liverpool Tinsplate Workers banners of 1821 and 1838, discussed earlier, through reports of usage in the local press. Tantalisingly, although tinsplate banners were mentioned in press reports of coronation celebration processions in 1821, 1831 and 1838, as well as in political reform marches, no descriptions were published. Nonetheless, this may be a fruitful avenue for future research, particularly if combined with archive sources such as exist with the Elgin Incorporations or the Ludlow Gilds.

My title referred to a search for ideologies. It is possible to find evidence for working class demands for radical, perhaps revolutionary change, in some of the symbolism and language displayed on banners. On the other hand the widespread use of union jacks and crowns may support more revisionist historians. However the general agreement from specialists, writing from considerable varied viewpoints, who have commented on an earlier draft of this paper, is that the use of union jacks by radicals is not surprising. Dorothy Thompson sees them as icons of contested loyalty in a fluid political discourse, where radicals were laying claim to symbols and iconography, which they believed had been appropriated by their enemies. John Belchem regards them as evidence of a sophisticated attempt of the trades and reformers to relate to the agenda of high geo-politics of the newly created United Kingdom and to the participation of their members in the freer labour market. For Paul Pickering, 'supporting reform and even radical change was a patriotic stance for many Chartists - they were reclaiming lost rights, their patriotism was purer, they were the voice of the nation.' James Vernon feels that the 'union jacks may not simply denote loyalism, they may denote a radical constitutionalism and the only way you can tell that is by

looking locally at how and when they were used.' Nonetheless, in the absence of further research, it seems likely that the universal use of loyalist symbolism in mainstream working class organisations like west country friendly societies, does give support to those who question heroic radical interpretations of the period.

What are we to make of banners which display icons from both loyalist and radical tendencies? The Kirkintilloch weavers or Wanlockhead leadminers seem to be proclaiming in cloth Linda Colley's observation that 'Crudely, but also fundamentally, class and nation in Britain at this time were not antithetical but two sides of the same historical process 'and she is of the opinion that 'the fusion of St Andrew's saltire and union jack is a classic case of multiple identities'.⁴⁰

This project is just one of the research possibilities which the National Banner Survey offers. Some of these issues were covered in 'Banners Unfurled', a conference which took place at the Pump House People's History Museum, Manchester on April 3rd 2000. The papers from this conference will be published later in 2000 in Social History in Museums, the journal of the Social History Curators Group⁴¹. Of particular interest will be a paper by art historian Annie Ravenhill-Johnson, on the origin of images used by late 19th c. professional banner artists and one by Ciaran Cregan on the banners in Northern Ireland. Also included will be Hazel Edwards' original research on the critical debates which went on in north-east miners' lodges, when deciding what banner images to commission. It would now be possible, using the National Banner Survey, to extend this work on the role of ideologies, to other types of 20th c. trade union banners. The growing interest in friendly societies, with the setting up of the Friendly Societies Research Group, based at the Open University, could be explored through their banners, whose details and images are now available on a national scale. More could be done on the production of banners, both amateur and professional, and its relationship to other 19th c. markets in consumables. Gender issues and overseas comparisons are under-researched and could also be explored using the survey.

⁴⁰ These summaries are from personal communications and meetings with the historians mentioned held at various times from the autumn of 1999 to the spring of 2000. See Linda Colley, "Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain 1750-1830", Past and Present, no.113 (November 1986), p.100.

⁴¹ The papers from Banners Unfurled will be published in Social History in Museums Vol.25, due out in December 2000; contact Nigel Wright at astleyhall@lineone.net.