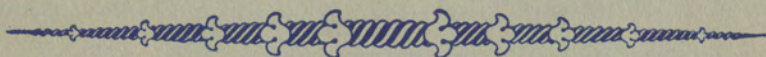


SMALL-
TOWN
POLITICS

*A STUDY OF
POLITICAL LIFE
IN GLOSSOP*



A · H · BIRCH

Glossop Chronicle

and Advertiser

New Telephone Number
GLOsop 2669

FRIDAY JANUARY 23rd. 1959

**THE AVERAGE NET
WEEKLY SALES** of
the Reporter Group of 13
Newspapers are:—

92,114

Certified by the Audit Bureau
of Circulations Ltd., London

Finding jobs

SIXTY THOUSAND firms, each employing a minimum of 25 people, have this week received a letter from the Board of Trade. The purpose of the letter is to point out to those who do not already know that Government aid is now available for the expansion of industry under the Distribution of Industry (Industrial Finance) Act 1958. Enclosed with each letter is a copy of a new leaflet on such aid, entitled, "The Move."



Feet firmly planted

It is encouraging to hear through the medium of television that the people of Glossop, typical of all our small northern industrial town populus, have their feet "firmly planted" on the ground, as far as local politics go.

This decision was concluded by Granada's questionnaire, Bill Grundy, in an interview with one of the town's better-known councillors, Sam Burgess, when the recently published insight into Glossop's "Small Town Politics" was highlighted in Thursday's edition of the popular ITV programme — "People and Places."

Although himself a "Glossoplan"—a fact which he admitted to the cameras—Councillor Burgess proved an admirable representative and had an answer for all the interviewer's searching remarks.

A fact that may have prompted Bill Grundy to arrive at this conclusion that we should have our feet firmly planted on the ground.

SMALL-TOWN POLITICS

SMALL-TOWN POLITICS

A Study of Political Life in Glossop

BY

A. H. BIRCH

*Senior Lecturer in Government in the
University of Manchester*

Anthony H. Birch.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1959

Oxford University Press, Amen House, London E.C.4

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI KUALA LUMPUR
CAPE TOWN IBADAN NAIROBI ACCRA

© *Oxford University Press 1959*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

THIS book is the result of a collaborative research project sponsored by the Department of Government in the University of Manchester. The project was planned by a group drawn from several fields of study who met, on my initiative, in the early spring of 1953. The group included R. N. Spann (now Professor of Government at Sydney), D. V. Donnison (now Reader in Social Administration at London), D. E. G. Plowman (now Lecturer in Psychology at Swansea), and Peter Campbell, P. G. Lucas, and J. F. Morris (of the Departments of Government, Philosophy, and Psychology, respectively, at Manchester). Professor E. A. Shils of the University of Chicago was kind enough to take part during one term.

The research, apart from what I did myself, was carried out by the persons whose names appear below, each of whom wrote a report on the topic or topics with which he was concerned. It was at first intended that these reports should be published in the form of a symposium, but this did not prove feasible. Accordingly, it was decided that I should attempt to weave the material into a continuous narrative, and my colleagues have been more than generous in permitting me to do this. The reports were as follows:

H. J. Perkin (Lecturer in Social History)

The Development of Modern Glossop (published without change).

J. F. Morris (Lecturer in Psychology)

Education, the Churches, Business and Professional Associations.

H. J. Hanham (Lecturer in Government)

The Conservative Party.

Peter Campbell (Lecturer in Government)

The Liberal Party.

D. E. G. Plowman

Trade Unions, the Trades Council, Attitudes of Party Members.

G. M. Higgins (lately Research Assistant in Government)

Municipal and County Administration.

J. B. K. Hunter (lately Research Assistant in Government, now Lecturer in Modern Economic History at Glasgow)

Housing.

Roy Sidebottom (Lecturer in Accounting)
Municipal Finance.

A. G. Rose (Lecturer in Social Administration)
The Administration of Justice.

My colleagues and I owe much to Professor W. J. M. Mackenzie, who has taken a close and continuous interest in the work, has taken the chair at many of our meetings, and has given us a great deal of encouragement and guidance. I am particularly grateful to him for his valuable advice during the final stages of writing.

I also wish to record my debt to Professor Max Gluckman, for some stimulating suggestions, to Dr. R. Frankenburg and Dr. W. Watson, for comments on particular chapters, and to Professor W. J. H. Sprott for his helpful advice on the presentation of the material. I need hardly add that none of them is responsible for the defects which remain.

The research expenses, which amounted to about £200, were borne from a grant made by the Rockefeller Foundation to the Research Section of the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies. We are particularly grateful to the Foundation for the freedom of action which they gave us in this matter, as this immensely increased the practical value of their grant.

Finally, all those concerned would like me to record their gratitude to the people of Glossop. We were received with the utmost courtesy by all whom we approached, and they gave us a great deal of their time. We enjoyed working in the town, and we wish it a most prosperous future.

A. H. B.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	viii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN GLOSSOP	8
3. SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP	34
4. THE POLITICAL PARTIES	44
5. THE PARTY MEMBERS	79
6. THE POLITICS OF THE UNPOLITICAL	95
7. THE BOROUGH COUNCIL	113
8. MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT	125
9. COUNTY GOVERNMENT	145
10. WHITEHALL IN GLOSSOP	159
11. BUSINESS GROUPS AND TRADE UNIONS	165
12. CHURCHES AND VOLUNTARY WELFARE ASSOCIATIONS	176
13. CONCLUSIONS	184
APPENDIX A. THE SAMPLE SURVEY	192
APPENDIX B. MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES AND VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS	193
INDEX	197

LIST OF TABLES

1. Population of Glossop and Charlesworth, 1801-1901	15
2. Places of Birth of Residents in 1851	16
3. Population of Glossop, 1901-51	30
4. Employment in Manufacturing Industry, October 1954	33
5. Proportion of School Leavers Entering Employment in Glossop, 1952-5	36
6. Grammar-School Leavers, 1945-55	37
7. Types of People Popularly Regarded as Influential	42
8. Glossop Labour Party Finance	65
9. Types of Occupation of Party Leaders, Members, and Voters	81
10. Political Opinions of Party Members	83
11. Party Allegiance Attributed by Members of each Party to Different Groups	87
12. Voting of certain Groups in the General Election of 1951	88
13. Estimates of Voting Behaviour of Different Groups by Party Members in Glossop and Gorton	89
14. Sex and Voting in the General Election of 1951	102
15. Age and Voting in the General Election of 1951	103
16. Type of Occupation and Voting in the General Election of 1951	106
17. Self-rated Class and Voting in the General Election of 1951	108
18. Type of Occupation, Self-rated Class, and Voting in the General Election of 1951	109
19. Religious Affiliation and Voting in the General Election of 1951: Industrial Workers Only	112
20. Occupation and Popularity in Municipal Elections	117
21. County Precept per head of Population in Boroughs in Derbyshire, 1954/5	139
22. Exchequer Equalization Grants in Derbyshire. Rate Relief Afforded to District Councils in terms of Rate Poundages in 1954/5	140

1

INTRODUCTION

THIS is a study of the political life of a small English town, and it has two primary objects. The first object is to examine the problems of small-town government in a period which is generally acknowledged to be one of difficulty for all but the largest local authorities. We have heard a great deal in the past few years about the problems of local government—the problem of areas, the problem of finance, the shortage of able councillors, the apathy of the public, the problem of co-ordination between authorities. But these problems have generally been discussed one by one, and they have generally been observed from the centre rather than from the periphery. Because of this many of the reforms that students of politics have suggested have seemed to be unrealistic or irrelevant to local councillors and officials, and in consequence they have not been adopted. Our aim in this study is to examine the working of local government in all its aspects in one area, and to discuss its problems in relation to the history and nature of the community, the activities of voluntary organizations, the behaviour of the political parties, the attitudes of the general public, and the trend of recent government policies.

Our second main object is to illustrate the nature of small-town party politics, and so to throw some light on the local bases of party support. A good deal has been written on the central organization of British political parties but, as a leader-writer in the *Manchester Guardian* recently observed, 'We do not know much about the way in which the political parties are run in the constituencies. Our academic excavators have not yet dug down to the grass roots.'¹ This is an attempt to dig down to the grass roots in one area, and to show how the parties there are organized and how they behave. We shall try to explain why people in this area take up party politics, and how political leaders emerge or are selected. We shall also examine the political behaviour of the ordinary citizens, and shall discuss the social and historical factors that influence this behaviour. In this way we hope to present a picture of small-town politics which, while

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 8 Sept. 1956.

true in detail of only one area, may yet serve as a general guide to the nature of politics in small towns all over the country.

Political behaviour is everywhere shaped by social conditions, and political life in the English provinces has been greatly affected by two aspects of the social history of the past fifty years. The first of these is the trend to centralization which has been manifest in many spheres of social and public life. In industry the extension of the joint-stock company with limited liability, and the consequent separation of ownership and management, has been accompanied by a tendency for locally owned firms to become associated with national combines whose policies are directed from London. In education and social welfare there has been a transformation from an age in which these services were mainly provided by local churches and voluntary organizations to one in which they are mainly provided by the state. In local government the smaller authorities have lost most of their more important powers to the county councils, the national government, and the various regional boards established by the national government. In the realm of party politics the two great national party organizations have grown so strong that they have seemed to control the political life of the whole country.

These developments have inevitably had a disintegrative effect on local community life. Communities which in the past were mainly dependent on their own efforts for their prosperity, welfare, and government now find themselves at the mercy of external authorities. Most of the important decisions regarding the economic, social, and political well-being of the smaller towns are now made in head offices and government departments in London or in a number of regional centres which are themselves in many respects dependent on London. In this way most of England has come to acquire some of the characteristics of a suburban area, in which people may happen to be friendly with their neighbours but are no longer organically linked to them by bonds of mutual dependence.

At the same time local differences are still important in English life, and local communities are still to some extent held together by bonds of sentiment. Residents of towns in which the basic industry has declined have often shown themselves reluctant to move to more prosperous areas, preferring to remain loyal to their home towns and hope for a revival of fortune there. Town planners have run into obstinate opposition when planning redevelopment schemes and the construction of new towns. Even though it can be shown that the

proposals would be to the advantage of local residents, the objection that 'the character of the town would be changed' is a difficult one to overcome. Equally, the Boundary Commissioners find that their recommendations are badly received if they ignore the boundaries of local communities when planning parliamentary constituencies.

In local government, public loyalties have not kept in step with the changes in the distribution of functions, and municipal boroughs attract greater interest than the far more powerful county councils. Plans for the reform of the local government system, which have been widely canvassed in recent years, have foundered partly because of the strong opposition to any scheme that would change the status of existing local authorities. The local political parties, although units in what sometimes appear to be disciplined national organizations, are entirely autonomous in their day-to-day activities, and the independent local selection committee is still the needle's eye through which the ambitious politician has to pass. Electors are influenced by local traditions and community pressures as well as by the trends of national policy, and their behaviour at the polls can only be understood if this is borne in mind. In short, there are many conflicts between the centralizing tendencies of the past half-century and the enduring strength of local ties, and these conflicts have an important and sometimes a dominant influence on the pattern of small-town politics.

The other social change which will play a large part in our discussion is the increase in the numbers and influence of the managerial classes. The growth of industrial combines has contributed to this development, for it has involved the replacement of individual entrepreneurs by salaried managers. Equally important has been the tendency of the larger firms to create specialized departments of scientific research, market research, personnel management, production planning, and so forth, all of them staffed by people with professional qualifications. Outside industry, the ranks of the professional classes have been swollen partly because the general improvement in the standard of living has increased the demand for doctors, lawyers, architects, and the like, and partly because of the immense extension of government activities. There are more civil servants than there were, more qualified teachers, and infinitely more trained social workers. It is perhaps an exaggeration to speak of 'the managerial revolution', but there is certainly a new middle class of professional and managerial people whose influence is great and

whose social and political attitudes are quite different from those of the self-made business men and the voluntary ladies distributing charity whose places they have largely taken. The growth of this class has tended to change the nature of party politics in the constituencies.

The Choice of a Town

In planning this study we faced an initial predicament: our main concern was with the nature of small-town politics rather than with the particular circumstances of any locality, yet this could only be done by choosing a particular community for study. In making this choice we did not attempt to find a typical English community, for we do not believe that such a place exists. All English towns share certain institutions, but the way in which these institutions work is affected by a host of geographical, historical, and social factors which vary from one town to the next. A study of political practice, as distinct from political forms, must necessarily take account of all these factors, and in this context the idea of typicality is no more than a myth. Our aim was simply to find a town in which the political and social activities which interested us could be conveniently and fruitfully studied, in the expectation that this would throw light on the nature of these activities in towns all over the country.

The town chosen for this study is Glossop, situated thirteen miles from the centre of Manchester, in the county of Derbyshire. It is a fairly small industrial town with a population of about 18,000, and it offers several advantages for a study of this kind.

The first of these is that the town is sufficiently isolated and self-contained to have a distinct community life of its own. It lies in a dale surrounded by bleak moorland of between 1,000 and 2,000 feet in height, and the gorge by which the river leaves the dale is so narrow that no road can follow it. In consequence the town is clearly separated from other urban areas and as many as 80 per cent. of its employed residents work within the borough boundaries.

A second advantage is that in the not-too-distant past Glossop was a well-integrated and largely independent community, in which local people controlled its government as well as its industrial and social life. At the beginning of the present century it was a thriving and prosperous town, the fortunes of which depended largely on the success of nine firms, of which eight were engaged in the manufacture of cotton goods. These firms were all large and their owners had

become rich. They all lived in the town and they played a prominent part in its social and political life. The community was bound together by common membership of social organizations, such as the churches, which drew members from all classes, and also by the fact that the leading positions in the churches, social clubs, political parties, and Borough Council were nearly all held by the same small group of wealthy industrialists. The contrast between this situation and the present one is very marked indeed, and the town therefore provides interesting examples of the ways in which the centralizing tendencies of recent years have affected community life and small-town politics.

In this connexion it should be noted that the population of the town has been stable for many years, and that about two-thirds of the present inhabitants were born there. In many areas the movements of population and industry have been so great in recent years that, in effect, there has been the replacement of one community by another rather than a change in the public life of the same community. In Glossop, because the community itself has been so stable, comparisons with the past can be made with more confidence and the effects of external change on the life of the town can be isolated more clearly.

A further advantage of Glossop is that it provides an interesting illustration of what is often called 'the area problem' in local government. The town is situated in the extreme north-west of Derbyshire and its social ties with the rest of the county are more tenuous, and communications more difficult, than with the industrial areas of south-east Lancashire and north-east Cheshire. Glossop would be one of the first towns to be affected by any major reform in local government areas, and it is therefore an interesting place in which to consider the case for such a reform.

A final advantage that may be mentioned is that in Glossop, as in many other of the smaller provincial towns, the Liberal Party has succeeded in remaining an active force in municipal politics. In the chapter dealing with the political parties we shall try to explain how the Liberal Party has managed to maintain its influence in local affairs, even though the Liberal vote in parliamentary elections reflects the nation-wide decline of support for the party.

Methods of Study

Information regarding the political life of the town has been collected in a number of ways. All documentary sources have been

explored and the files of the excellent local paper have been read from 1918 to the present day. Nearly all the persons holding influential positions in the public life of the town have been interviewed at length, and nearly all of them have proved most willing to help us. In all about eighty persons have been interviewed in this way. Secretaries of voluntary associations and trade unions were sent questionnaires, most of which were completed, and in some cases these were followed by interviews. Meetings of the Borough Council, the political parties, and some of the voluntary associations have been attended. Local and central government officials have been most co-operative and have provided us with all the information for which we asked. The Registrar-General kindly made some extra tabulations for us at the time that the Census data regarding Glossop were compiled. About 600 townsfolk were interviewed in their homes, these people being chosen so as to constitute a random sample of the electorate.¹ Finally, about thirty members of each of the three political parties were also interviewed, each group comprising, as far as was possible, a random sample of the members of that party. Most of this research was carried out in 1953 and 1954 and statements in the present tense in subsequent chapters refer to those years unless there is an indication to the contrary.

In some community studies the name of the town is not published. Although this procedure has obvious advantages it also has serious drawbacks. Precise information regarding the history, location, and industrial structure of the town cannot be given, though it may well be important. It is necessary to disguise or change some of the details, and the anonymity of the town protects the writer from factual criticisms. At the same time the identity of the town is unlikely to be a secret to the inhabitants, so it is no easier to publish statements about living persons than it would be if the town were named. These arguments against anonymity are considerably strengthened in this case by the fact that the focus of our interest is on the public rather than the private life of the community. One cannot sensibly discuss the administrative problems of an anonymous town, and we decided from the first not to try to do so. Indeed, we attach considerable importance to the geographical and historical circumstances that have shaped both the institutions and the pattern of social and political attitudes within the community. We believe that the political life of modern Glossop, as of other towns, cannot be understood

¹ A technical note on this sample will be found in Appendix A.

except in relation to the town's recent past, and that this is the natural point of departure for our study. Accordingly, in the following chapter the development of the modern town will be traced, and the character of the institutions and political leaders of an earlier generation will be discussed.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN GLOSSOP¹

GLOSSOP as a town is the creation of the industrial revolution, and grew up around the cotton mills on the brooks of Glossopdale.² When in 1761 John Wesley preached 'at Bridgefield in the midst of the Derbyshire hills', within half a mile of the present town-hall, the site was deserted. The villages of the dale—Hadfield, Padfield, Dinting, Old Glossop (as it is now called), Whitfield, Simmondley, Gamesley, and Charlesworth—hugged the hill-sides and were joined by straggling tracks which shunned the valley floor.³ Even when the first spinning mills came to the streams in the 1780's, they were built in or near the villages, and the town did not begin to grow until an important group of mills developed in the centre of the dale in the early years of the nineteenth century. Howard Town, as it was called after the local landowner, grew between 1820 and 1850 from a hamlet to a town approaching its present size, becoming the focus of settlement for the dale, and capturing the old name from the village.

Before the new town claimed it, the name stood for four concentric entities, village, dale, manor, and parish. The ancient village stood on the 'shining hillside' from which its name derived in 1086, and probably long before to judge by the nearby British camp and the Roman road passing through to Yorkshire from Melandra fort at the foot of the dale. The dale carried the soft, peaty waters of the Shelf, Chunal, and Glossop brooks down to the Etherow (or Mersey) in Longdendale. The parish, 49,960 acres, twelve miles long and

¹ This chapter is by H. J. Perkin.

² The chief source for the history of Glossop is the Local Collection, mainly of papers from Lord Howard of Glossop's estate office, preserved in the Municipal Library, Glossop. Unless otherwise stated documents referred to in the text are to be found there. The Collection is the remnant of a larger body of material most of which was destroyed on the sale of the Howard estate in 1925. Some of the lost papers were used by R. Hamnett in *A Sketch of the History of Glossop*, 1903, and 'Glossop a Hundred Years Ago' and other articles in the *Glossop Chronicle*, Nov. 1901–June 1902, and by T. W. Ellison, 'Reminiscences of Glossopdale', articles in the *Glossop Chronicle and Advertiser*, 1934–5.

³ P. S. Burdett, *A Survey of Derbyshire*, 1762–7 (map in the John Rylands Library, Manchester).

eleven wide, was one of those sprawling northern parishes arguing a poor and thinly scattered population. The manor, wider than the dale but narrower than the parish, was given with the High Peak by William I to his reputed son, William Peveril, forfeited for his crimes by his grandson, and granted by Henry II to the Cistercians of Basingwerk in Flintshire. From them it passed soon after the Dissolution to their leasehold tenants, the Talbots, Earls of Shrewsbury. Carried by a daughter of the 7th Earl into the family of Howard, Earls of Arundel, it was settled, before the restoration of the Howard dukedom of Norfolk by Charles II, on a younger brother of the restored 5th Duke. Thus the Howards were no ordinary squires. In 1816 the fourth of them, Bernard Edward Howard, succeeded his cousin as 12th Duke of Norfolk.¹

Of these four ancient Glossops it is the dale which corresponds most closely to the modern town, most of it being enclosed within the borough boundary of 1866. Before the town appeared, the dale cannot have changed much in centuries. It was pastoral country, too wet and cold for wheat, and there is no record of open-field agriculture.² The inclosures were all ancient, except for a thousand acres of common pasture, mainly moorland grazing, inclosed in 1813. The holdings were small, as the manorial and land-tax records show, yet the tenants, and the few freeholders of Whitfield, the only township where the Howards did not own all the land, were not without substance. In the early 1780's nearly half the families were paying tax on six or more windows in their solid, stone-built houses. They were for the most part, and had been for generations, domestic textile workers, chiefly in wool. In the earliest Manchester and Salford directories (1773 and 1781) Glossop and its Cheshire neighbours, Mottram and Stalybridge, made up three of the four areas from which came the few woollen dealers.³ Fulling mills for thickening and finishing the heavier woollens had come early to the district for the power and soft water of the streams. There were seven such mills in the parish in 1784, and some of the early carding and spinning mills were for wool rather than cotton.

¹ G. Brenan and E. P. Statham, *The House of Howard* (London, 1907); N. J. Frangopulo, *The History of the Parish of Glossop* (unpublished M.A. dissertation, Leeds University, 1936).

² Cf. J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country from thirty to forty miles round Manchester* (London, 1795), pp. 68–70, 478.

³ A. P. Wadsworth and J. de L. Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600–1780* (Manchester, 1931), p. 259.

Cotton had its place in the dale's economy, however, even before the spinning mills came. About 1740 merchants in the Manchester area began to give out warps and raw cotton for the manufacture of fustians and lighter mixtures.¹ Glossop had a share in the trade, and during a lull in 1757 it was natural for the charitable Duke of Norfolk, who maintained some interests in the dale through his cousin's agent, to instruct him to buy raw cotton and provide the distressed families with work, 'keeping the thread till a demand be made and a convenient opportunity appear to dispose of it with advantage'.² It was a profitable trade, especially in the last thirty years of the eighteenth century, when the appearance of cotton twist strong enough for warps led to the expansion of the manufacture of pure cotton goods. An ambitious weaver might rise to become himself an entrepreneur, as did William Radcliffe of nearby Mellor, one of the Stockport manufacturers who made power-loom weaving practicable.³

Earlier in the century an enterprising Glossopian would leave the dale to make his fortune. Joseph Hague of Whitfield became a London trader, and retired to his native parish to buy an estate and endow a school and other charities. When he died in 1786 at the age of ninety local men were already founding on their own doorsteps the mills which would raise their families to wealth and transform the villages into a thriving industrial town.

Industrial Development, 1780-1920

It was in Derbyshire that the factory production of cotton yarn began in earnest, with the founding of Cromford mill by Arkwright, Strutt, and Need in 1771. The north-west corner of the county was particularly suited to the new industry, near to Liverpool and Manchester, the chief port for the raw material and market for the product. Glossopdale had an established connexion with the trade, the humidity necessary for the spinning of yarn under tension, and above all an abundant flow of remarkably soft water, for power and the finishing processes of bleaching, dyeing, and printing.

When Arkwright's patents lapsed in 1785 the dale was admirably placed for an expansion of the industry. Mills, in fact, were already in operation, some perhaps licensed by Arkwright, all no doubt

¹ T. Middleton, *History of Hyde* (Hyde, 1932), p. 63.

² Local Collection, letter, Duke of Norfolk to Nathaniel Eyre, 15 April 1757.

³ W. Radcliffe, *Origin of the New System of Manufacture, commonly called Power-Loom Weaving* (Stockport, 1828).

with an eye to his probable failure to get his patents renewed. By 1788 Derbyshire was second only to Lancashire, with seventeen mills out of 120 in Britain, most of them in Glossop parish.¹ Throughout the following half-century there were few years in which mills were not being built or extended, and by 1831 there were at least thirty mills in Glossopdale.²

The early mills were small concerns, none of them in 1825 exceeding 10,000 spindles. With few exceptions they were built by local men whose names go back in the manorial and parish records for centuries. The Wagstaffes and Hadfields were old inhabitants when they bought their Whitfield freeholds in 1606. The Shepley, Shaw, Lees, Garlick, and Platt families had farmed land in the dale for generations. John Robinson of Gnat Hole and John Bennett of Turn Lee were clothiers. The Thornleys were successively carpenters, fustian manufacturers, and master colliers on a small scale before they put their capital into cotton spinning. The few outsiders had local connexions, or did not travel far. John Wood, a native of Marsden in the adjacent corner of Yorkshire, came from Manchester in 1815. Francis Sumner, who came from Coleshill, near Coventry, in 1827, had family connexions with Matthew Ellison, the Howards' agent, who built Wren Nest Mill for his sons in 1815.³

Wood and Sumner belonged to the second wave of millowners who took over and extended existing mills. It was between their mills, Wren Nest and Howardtoun, in the centre of the dale, that the industrial road was to grow into the High Street of the new town. Still more fundamentally, it was they and the Longdendale family of Sidebottom, builders of the Waterside mills in Hadfield, who in the second quarter of the nineteenth century took the lead in the decisive change in the scale and character of the Glossopdale cotton industry. In 1825 John Wood installed in one of his four mills the first steam-engine and the first power looms in the district. Sumner and the

¹ *An Important Crisis in the Calico and Muslin Manufacture*, quoted in P. Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 254.

² Derbyshire County Records, MS. list of mills inspected, dated 1831. In J. C. Cox, *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals* (London, 1890), vol. ii, p. 212, this list is inaccurately printed and wrongly ascribed to 1803. The figure of thirty-seven mills in Derbyshire and the false date were repeated in *Victoria County History of Derbyshire* (London, 1907), vol. ii, p. 372.

³ Information concerning early millowning families in this and the succeeding paragraphs is derived from Hamnett, op. cit., Ellison, op. cit., and from private conversations with members of surviving firms.

Sidebottoms followed his example, and within a few years the Howardtown, Wren Nest, and Waterside mills were producing on a large scale the printers and shirtings for which Glossop became known. Large vertical combines, spinning coarse counts of yarn from the cheaper American cotton and weaving them into cheap standard piece goods intended mostly for the tropical market, the leading Glossop firms expanded during the Victorian age to a size surpassed by few in the cotton region.

Combines were developed by three other Glossop families, the Shepleys of Brookfield, the Rhodes of Hadfield and Hollingworth, and the Platts of Hadfield, all families with deep local roots. Brookfield Mill, founded by Samuel Shepley in 1818, was the smallest, never operating more than 500 looms. By contrast Samuel's son-in-law, Thomas Rhodes, of a Tintwistle family of woollen manufacturers, operated on the largest scale. After learning the business at Brookfield he progressed so rapidly that at his death in 1883 he left to his sons two separate enterprises ranking fourth and fifth close behind the leading firms. The sixth in magnitude, Platts of Hadfield, grew out of the mills built by the Thornleys. By 1884, when full figures become available, the seven vertical firms owned between them 13,571 looms and 839,000 spindles—all the weaving and 82 per cent. of the spinning capacity in the district. The leading concern, that of Thomas and William Sidebottom, had no less than 293,000 spindles and 4,700 looms.¹ Glossop had become a town of very large mills, dependent on a highly specialized branch of the industry.

Large-scale production was also the keynote in the closely related calico-printing industry. Here the large enterprise was that of Edmund Potter at Dinting Vale, at the lower end of the new town. Edmund and his cousin Charles, scions of an established house of Manchester merchants, bought the disused 'Boggart'² Mill in 1824, and began printing calicoes by hand. Like earlier Glossopdale printers, they found the excise duty of 3½d. a yard an inhibiting burden, and Edmund addressed himself to the agitation for its repeal. It was successful in 1831, but within a few months the venture had been brought down by the failure of the related firm, Potter and Maude of Over Darwen. However, while Charles withdrew to found the Darwen firm of wallpaper manufacturers, Edmund was allowed by the creditors to carry on under the control of inspectors, and within

¹ *The Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Directory* (published by John Worrall), Oldham, 1884.

² Sprite, ghost.

five years had repaid in full over £24,000. His success was due to his faith in machine-printing, which he developed with a precision and taste which made 'Potter's Prints' famous throughout many countries.¹

By the middle of the century Glossop, it could be claimed, was 'one of the great seats of the cotton manufacture'. According to Edmund Potter, the output of the mills and print-works in the 1850's was 2½ million pieces of calico and print a year, 'probably four-fifths of which are exported'.² The town was committed to cotton for the livelihood of its people. In the Census registration district (approximately equal to the parish) in 1851 over 38 per cent. of the adult men and 27 per cent. of the women were employed in cotton manufacture and finishing, and the proportions for Glossopdale alone would undoubtedly be greater. This represented the great majority of the employment available for women, and for men the only considerable alternatives were agriculture, building, and general labouring, chiefly on the railway, none of which topped 11 per cent. Paper, the other important Glossop industry, was as yet insignificant.³

The vulnerability which goes with such a degree of specialization was exposed by the cotton famine of 1861-4, when the American Civil War and the Federal blockade of Confederate ports drove up raw cotton prices at a time when the trade in piece goods was on the down-swing. Glossop was more dependent than many other cotton towns on the American supply, and found the available if highly priced alternatives difficult to use. More than three years of exceptionally severe distress were the result, a warning of the dangers involved in dependence on one highly specialized industry. In nineteenth-century conditions, however, such warnings could be ignored. Crises and slumps served only to increase the concentration and specialization, as the smaller and weaker firms were squeezed out or absorbed by the stronger. In Glossop the trend was consistently in the direction of fewer and larger mills. In spite of an immense growth in floor space, looms, and spindles, the 26 spinning and weaving enterprises of 1831 had shrunk by 1884 to 19, by 1900 to 13, and by 1920 to 11. At the three later dates, some 5 or 6 firms, with the print-works, provided between 80 and 90 per cent. of the employment in cotton.⁴

¹ J. G. Hurst, *Edmund Potter and Dinting Vale* (Manchester, 1948).

² E. Potter, *A Picture of a Manufacturing District* (Manchester, 1856), p. 22.

³ Public Record Office, Census Enumerators' Returns, H.O. 107/2152.

⁴ *The Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Directory*, for dates cited.

Dependence on cotton was somewhat mitigated in the late Victorian period by the expansion of the paper industry under Edward Partington, later Lord Doverdale. The paper industry in Glossop began as an almost accidental adjunct to the cotton industry when in the early part of the century John Bennett and his sons at Turn Lee had begun as a sideline to manufacture cardboard hat-tips. Neither this mill nor several others in the district seem to have enjoyed much success. Turn Lee brought ruin to the Bennetts and to their successor Thomas Hamer Ibbotson before it was bought in 1874 by William Olive and Edward Partington. Partington, a young man from Bury who had risen by his technical and business acumen to be a partner in Olive's business there, was looking for a mill in which to try out his improved method of manufacturing high-quality paper from wood pulp by the sulphite process. From the moment of his arrival in Glossop his rise to fortune was rapid and seemingly limitless. In a few years he had become sole owner of Olive and Partington's expanded mills in Glossop, as well as of others in Salford and Barrow-in-Furness. Before the end of the century he had formed, with Kellner of Vienna, the Kellner-Partington Paper and Woodpulp Company, holding, in addition to the Olive and Partington concern, mills in Norway, Sweden, and Austria, and a forest in Canada. In Glossop, where he lived until his death in 1925, he came to provide in his Charlestown mills employment for nearly 1,000 workers, or (in the 1920's) one in twelve of the insured population.¹

Apart from John Walton's bleachworks at Charlestown, only two other firms provided much employment in Glossop before the First World War. The first, founded in the 1870's, was John Greenwood's quarry on Mouselow Hill, producing grindstones used all over the world. The other was founded in 1884 by Isaac Jackson, a local saddler who invented a highly successful fastener for industrial belts, and acquired a near-monopoly in this small but essential article. Neither employed many more than 100 workers.

By the early years of the present century Glossop was therefore a town of very large industrial enterprises. A majority of the occupied population was employed by only nine firms: the headquarters of an international paper empire, the largest calico print-works in the world, a large bleachworks, and six spinning and weaving combines each with an average (in 1913) of over 100,000 spindles and nearly

¹ Ellison, op. cit., and information supplied by Mr. R. J. Sutherland of Olive and Partington, Ltd., Glossop.

2,000 looms. Moreover, the print-works and one of the combines, the Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne firm of Gartside and Co., Ltd., which acquired Sidebottom's Waterside mills in the 1890's, had become founding constituents in 1899 of the Calico Printers Association, Ltd. The trend towards concentration showed no signs of slackening. The setback of the First World War, which closed several mills and converted others to war-time uses, worked in the same direction.

The post-war boom found the leading Glossop cotton firms ready for further expansion. Several of them, with a confidence in the future based on the experience of past revivals, joined in the rush for new capital which reached fever pitch in the company reconstructions of 1920, and were refloated with greatly increased nominal capitals. However, the future, as old owners and new shareholders alike were soon to discover, was to be very unlike the past. Glossop's overwhelming dependence on the most vulnerable branch of a vulnerable industry was to bring in the inter-war period not prosperity but despair.

The Genesis of the Town, 1821-66

The eight townships and hamlets of Glossopdale increased in population nearly ninefold during the nineteenth century, most of this growth taking place in the first half.

TABLE I

Population of Glossop and Charlesworth, 1801-1901

1801	2,759	1841	12,569	1881	21,393
1811	4,012*	1851	17,454	1891	24,557
1821	5,135	1861	19,126	1901	23,493
1831	7,897	1871	18,508		

* With Chisworth and Ludworth.

Growth was fastest in the 1820's and 1830's, corresponding very closely to the pattern of the cotton region as a whole, and it was during these decades that Glossop as a town was born. The cotton famine of the 1860's caused a 3 per cent. decline in population, after which the rate of increase was no more than the national average, until the small but significant decline of the 1890's.

Apart from the Irish, few of the immigrants, who account for most

of the expansion, travelled far. Most of them came from Derbyshire and the three counties whose boundaries lie within a few miles of Glossop.

TABLE 2
Places of Birth of Residents in 1851¹

Place of birth	Percentage of population
Glossop	50.4
Rest of Derbyshire	10.5
Cheshire	11.9
Lancashire	9.5
Yorkshire	8.8
Ireland	4.4
Staffordshire	0.6
Nottinghamshire	0.5

As late as 1819 Howard Town was merely a thin straggle of cottages parallel to the Glossop brook.² It was the opening of the Snake Pass route to Sheffield in 1821 which transformed the hamlet into a cross-roads town, at the hub of the dale's communications. The new turnpike, which reduced the distance between Manchester and Sheffield by six miles, crossed the 1792 turnpike from Buxton to the West Riding at Howard Town, and put it on the map.³ During the next quarter of a century its development was striking and rapid. By 1846 it had become 'the centre of the largest portion of the inhabitants' and presented 'one of the busiest scenes in the cotton trade that can well be conceived'.⁴ It had all the appurtenances of a town: shops, railway station, gasworks, high street, and central square fronted by a 'handsome town hall and market house with a prison and an office for the agent of the Duke of Norfolk—a noble range of buildings in the Italian style'.⁵ It was already beginning to be called Glossopdale, and occasionally Glossop.

During this initial period of growth the leading role in the develop-

¹ Public Record Office, Census Enumerators' Returns, H.O. 107/2152.

² Local Collection, estate map, 1819.

³ W. Harrison, 'The Development of the Turnpike System in Lancashire and Cheshire' and 'The Turnpike Roads of Lancashire and Cheshire', in *Transactions of Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, vol. iv, 1886, and vol. x, 1892; G. H. Tupling, 'The Turnpike Roads of Lancashire', in *Proceedings of Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society*, vol. xciv, 1952-3.

⁴ S. Bagshaw, *History, Gazetteer & Directory of Derbyshire* (Sheffield, 1846), p. 514.

⁵ S. Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary of England* (London, 1849 ed.), p. 300.

ment of the town was taken by the lords of the manor. Glossop was doubly fortunate in having an alert and far-sighted family of resident landowners who inherited immense resources, but who nevertheless retained for two generations a personal interest in the paternal estate and its inhabitants. Bernard Edward Howard was fifty when in 1815 he became 12th Duke of Norfolk, and had been the squire for thirty years, watching over the estate, developing the roads and watercourses, planting trees, and welcoming the new factories which were bringing prosperity to the dale. Though called, not unexpectedly, on to a wider stage, where he played a leading part in the struggle for Catholic emancipation and was a strong supporter of the Reform Bill, he continued to foster the interests of the dale. He it was who built the town-hall, the laying of the foundation stone of which on Coronation Day 1838 can be regarded as the official birthday of the town. This was a great occasion, attended by forty-three millowners and their sons, and the workers' friendly societies, their banners blazoned with their engaging names, the Oddfellows, Foresters, Ancient Shepherds, Ancient Gardeners, and the Orange Lodge. Characteristically, religious rivalry intervened: only one Sunday school, the Primitive Methodists, was represented, since the Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Independents could not agree on which of them should march first.

The town hall was only the culmination of the Duke's work for the town. He and his agents planned the streets and leased the building plots, partly rebuilt the old parish church (1831), built All Saints' Roman Catholic chapel (1836), helped the millowners to build the Hurst reservoir to improve the flow of water (1837), obtained a Court of Requests for the recovery of small debts (1839), and helped, along with the Sidebottom family, to set on foot the building of the Manchester-Sheffield railway (1838). The 'old Duke', as he was called with affection and pride long after he died in 1842, can claim to be the father of the town.

His son, Henry Charles, 13th Duke of Norfolk, the first Catholic M.P. since Mary's reign, holder of high office at court, and at home from an early age in national politics, might have been expected to neglect so remote and industrial a part of his estates. On the contrary, he took a warm interest in Glossop's affairs. Though he remained a Catholic, he was known as 'the Protestant Duke', startling his co-religionists by voting for the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill in 1851. He and his Anglican wife, daughter of the Duke of Sutherland,

patronized Anglican education in Glossop, built the parish school, and rebuilt the church tower and spire. His greatest contributions to the town's welfare were in supplying it with essential services: gas, water, an improved market, and railway link with Manchester and Sheffield. He obtained a market Act in 1844, and the next year fathered the Glossop Gas Company, headed by his second son, Lord Edward Howard, on whom the estate was to be settled. Tiring of the railway company's promises, he built and sold to them the branch line from Dinting, opened in July 1845. In 1853 he enlarged an old mill reservoir, and laid on piped water to the houses and cottages. No one did more to make Glossop a town than the first and second Glossop Dukes.¹

The millowners also played a significant part in the town's early development and welfare. Each of them, it is said with pardonable exaggeration, built a mill, a church, and a school. They were, almost without exception, strongly sectarian in outlook, and their competitive championship of different churches was the one rivalry around which every other revolved. There can have been few towns of its size in the nineteenth century in which so many new churches and chapels were built, or in which the religious groupings were so evenly matched. Both facts were due to the patronage of rival groups of millowners competing for influence in a patriarchal community. On all fundamental questions—the need for the strong moral discipline of religion, for goodwill and charity between the classes, for right relations between masters and workers and between God and man—they were in substantial agreement. They differed principally in their attachment to different religious institutions, and from this other differences, notably political, flowed.²

The leaders of the Anglican group—and therefore of the Tories—

¹ Hamnett, *op. cit.*; Ellison, *op. cit.*; Brenan and Statham, *op. cit.*; *Burke's Peerage*; G. E. C., *The Complete Peerage*, vol. ix (London 1936); *Statutes of the United Kingdom: Sheffield and Manchester Railway Act, 1837* (7 Wm. IV & 1 Vic. 21), *Glossop Reservoirs Act, 1837* (7 Wm. IV & 1 Vic. 79), *Act for Recovery of Small Debts in Glossop, 1839* (2 & 3 Vic. 88), *Glossop Market Act, 1844* (7 & 8 Vic. 8), *Glossop Gas Act, 1845* (8 & 9 Vic. 132), *Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester Railway Act, 1846* (for, *inter alia*, the purchase of the Glossop Branch Line) (9 & 10 Vic. 187), and *Glossop Water Act, 1865* (28 & 29 Vic. 115); monumental inscriptions; private information.

² This and the succeeding seven paragraphs are based upon Hamnett, *op. cit.*; Ellison, *op. cit.*; church, school, and club prospectuses in the Local Collections; the *Glossop Record*, *Glossop Chronicle*, and *Glossop Advertiser*; monumental inscriptions; private information.

were the Wood family of Howardtown mills, strongly supported by the Sidebottoms and the Old Glossop branch of the Shepleys. In the earlier part of the century their function was to support the parish church and dominate the vestry which, until the incorporation of the borough in 1866, was the principal organ of local government. Later on the Woods and the Sidebottoms took the leading part in the building of four new churches, the parish churches of St. James's, Whitfield (1846), St. Andrew's, Hadfield (1874), and Holy Trinity, Dinting (1875), as well as an additional chapel of ease, St. Luke's, Glossop (1905).

Francis Sumner was the only Roman Catholic millowner, but Catholicism was strong in Glossop because of the influence of the Howards and their estate staff, the Ellisons, Francis Hawke, and John des Jardins, whose patronage must have been an unusual experience for the immigrant Irish. The 12th Duke's chapel at Old Glossop served them for most of the century, but later the first Lord Howard built St. Charles's, Hadfield, and Francis Sumner's heirs completed St. Mary's, Glossop. In politics the Whig traditions of the Howards, as well as opposition to the established church, tended to swing the Roman Catholics with the Liberals.

The majority of the small millowners were Dissenters or Methodists. Their principal rendezvous was the Littlemoor Independent Chapel, built by the Hadfields in 1811, but no less than eleven chapels and meeting-houses were flourishing in 1851 and twenty-one before the end of the century.¹ Most of these were built or supported by small millowners, like John Thornley who built the first Methodist chapel at Hadfield in 1804, or Samuel Ridgway and John Cook who built the Wesleyan chapel at Whitfield in 1812. Sometimes, as in the case of the crop of seceding Methodist chapels in the 1840's, the cost was entirely borne by the working-class congregations, but more usually millowners and local traders were the trustees and substantial supporters. All these fragmentary sects came together in opposition to the Anglican-Tory groups and, although in a less patriarchal atmosphere than their opponents, accepted the leadership first of Edmund Potter, and later of Edward Partington—both Unitarians—supported by the Rhodes and Platt families, who were Independents.

The implications of this politico-religious rivalry in the later

¹ Public Record Office, Ecclesiastical Returns, 1851, H.O. 129/451; information supplied by ministers and trustees.

nineteenth century we shall return to. In the earlier period when the town was in process of growing, though most of the life of the dale revolved around the churches and chapels and their day and Sunday schools, there were other needs to be met, and the millowners and estate office were the agencies looked to for their fulfilment. Mill-owners built many of the cottages, though most were built by speculators and owned in small groups by local proprietors, some even by the local friendly societies, such as the Orange Lodge and the Oddfellows. The desire for education was met by three mechanics' and literary institutes founded in the 1840's by Robert Kershaw, Edmund Potter, the 13th Duke, and others—they had a total of only 183 members in 1851¹—and by a series of reading-rooms, mainly attached to churches, numbering twenty-seven in 1856, and containing nearly 10,000 volumes and over 400 periodicals.² Other patriarchal institutions were the cricket club, founded in 1833, and the savings bank, founded ten years later.

The workers themselves seem for the most part to have accepted the leadership of their employers. Those of more independent mind gravitated to the Methodist chapels, though there was undoubtedly pressure to conform to the millowner's religion and politics. One group in 1833, finding the existing Sunday schools unwilling to teach writing, set up their own non-sectarian school, meeting first, somewhat surprisingly, in the Norfolk Arms hotel. The most deeply felt need of the factory operatives was for security. Their strength lay in mutual aid, and their characteristic organization was the friendly society. Societies flourished in Glossop throughout the nineteenth century. Among the earliest was a Female Friendly Society, founded in 1798, meeting for a quarterly sermon and dinner, and maintaining a stewardess to visit the sick. Glossop men favoured the large Order, with its affiliated lodges and elaborate ceremonial, the most successful being the Oddfellows, with six lodges founded between 1814 and 1842. In 1856 Potter estimated there were 10,000 members of sick, burial, and building clubs—a measure of the comparative prosperity as well as the thrift of the Glossop workers.

Their relations with their employers seem to have been exceptionally good. Glossop escaped the worst troubles of the Luddite and Chartist periods. This is remarkable, considering that one of the most disturbed areas, that of Ashton-under-Lyne, Hyde, Dukinfield,

¹ *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Education, England and Wales* (Horace Mann's Report), London, 1854, p. 241.

² Potter, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

and Stalybridge, lay across its communications with Manchester. In the Peterloo period there were rumours of nocturnal drilling and of 'twisting-in'—the administering of illegal oaths to recruits to secret unions—on the moors across the Etherow, and a mill was wrecked on the Hollingworth side, but Glossop itself seems hardly to have been affected. In the second quarter of the century the towns to the east of Manchester were well-known trouble spots to which troops had frequently to be sent. Hyde, where in 1831 the son of a leading manufacturer was murdered, was associated with two of the most powerful agitators in the north of England, John Doherty and the Rev. J. R. Stephens.¹ Yet Glossop, left to itself, was always quiet. Whenever trouble broke out there it was associated with outbreaks farther west, and generally an offshoot of them. Glossop spinners sympathized with the '4/2d. or swing' strike of 1830, but it was Ashton men who by threat of force stopped the Glossop mills—though the Glossop brass band was committed to Derby Assizes for playing to keep up the strikers' morale.² In the 'great turnout of '42' against reduced piece-rates it was a Stalybridge mob, bent on drawing the boiler plugs, against whom Samuel Shepley defended his mill, shooting three of them before the troops arrived. Strikers from Hyde and district would often march to Glossop to hold meetings and recruit union members, but the response was usually lukewarm. Strikes were by no means unknown, and there seems to have been some fear of discrimination against their organizers, particularly by the smaller millowners, but there was in Glossop little of that bitterness between masters and men which elsewhere made the early nineteenth century the classical epoch of social antagonism and class struggle.

Glossop's comparative industrial peace cannot be ascribed to higher wages. For most of the period wages in the Glossop mills, though higher than in many other occupations, were no better and sometimes worse than in the towns nearer Manchester. The cause is to be found in the superior industrial relations of the Glossop masters, in their success in maintaining contact with their workers not only in the mills but outside in the churches and chapels, the reading-rooms and clubs, at public lectures and on the sports field. The masters demanded a loyalty that went far beyond obedience in the mill, and they seem to have received it. Antagonisms in Glossop

¹ Middleton, *op. cit.*, part 2, chaps. ii-vii.

² They were dismissed with a caution.

were not between classes but between rival religious groups, representing complete vertical sections through the class structure. The employing class inculcated in their workers their own principles, ideals, and animosities, anticipating by a generation the social pacification of mid-Victorian England.

In a lecture to his fellow townsmen in 1856 Edmund Potter challenged novelist or philanthropist to produce 'a picture of 10,000 workers of better condition or reputation'.¹ His simple, undogmatic identification of the interests of employers and employed is striking: 'We are literally nearly all workers. We have scarcely a resident amongst us living on independent means—leading a strictly idle life.' Glossop's blessing has been 'a very happy strength of capitalists beyond many other manufacturing districts'. Regular work and earnings, the discipline and sobriety of the factory have led to intelligence, morality, religion, and taste, and to 'a population improving in habits of regularity, physical strength, self-reliance and independence'. Finally, 'society will ever remain composed of classes. Some are born with fortune; more are born without any, and the struggle for it is very serious. It is the best educated of these, the most talented and industrious, who take the prize; but *all* may possess industry which is, after all, the *starting* point and by far the most valuable power'. There could hardly be a better statement of the social creed of the liberal-minded Victorian businessman, and the hope by which he justified the social order and gained the acquiescence and approval of ambitious workers.

The cotton famine of 1861–4 was a test of the mutual respect and understanding between the classes in Glossop.² Though a strike early in 1861 had soured relations to the point where the workers set up their own short-lived co-operative cotton manufacturing society, the deepening distress of the following winter produced an upsurge of benevolence. Lord Edward Howard called a 'family meeting' of millowners, clergy, and other 'respectable residents', and relief committees were set up for Glossop and Hadfield.³ Cheap soup was unsuccessfully experimented with, but the committees soon settled down to distribute thousands of pounds' worth of provisions, coals, clogs, and clothing. Potter made loans to his workers. Lord

¹ Potter, *op. cit.* The quotations are respectively from pp. 56, 24, 15, 14, and 54–55.

² This can be followed in complete detail in the *Glossop Record*, founded 1859.

³ *Glossop Record*, 25 Jan. 1862.

Edward Howard took on extra labourers on the estate, and later under the 1863 Public Works Act took a loan from the Guardians to extend the waterworks.¹ The patriarchal character of the relief can be seen in the schools set up for the children and young adults, where attendance was a condition of relief, and in the tea parties and brass-band concerts provided, not to mention the public readings of the *Pickwick Papers* by Lord Edward Howard.

More than three years of privation, at the height of which over 7,000 workers and their families were receiving relief from the committees and the parish authorities, were bound to fray nerves and strain tempers. The most exasperated were the large minority, mostly labourers and less skilled workers, who relied on the poor law for succour, and suffered from the Central Poor Law Board's insistence on a labour test, interpreted by the Glossop Guardians as 7½ hours' hard labour for a shilling. Only once, however, did the situation get out of hand. That was when the Glossop relief committee decided in March 1863 to auction, instead of distributing gratis, Federal American gifts of flour, bacon, and pigs' feet. A mob stopped the auction and plundered some of the barrels, before being dispersed by special constables.² With that exception, the infant *Glossop Record's* comment of 1862 holds good for the whole of the cotton famine:

A large measure of patience and heroic endurance under difficulties and privations are everywhere manifested. Employers and employed maintain the most friendly relations; riotous assemblages are unknown. Class is not arrayed against class, nor is one charging another with being the cause of its sufferings. . . . A general and intelligent feeling prevails that we are passing through a crisis which it was not in our power to avert.³

That feeling was the usual response to other, more normal crises in nineteenth-century Glossop. It was one more example of the community of interest and outlook between the classes in Glossop.

Glossop's Hey-day, 1866–1920

Until 1866 Glossop was governed by the parish vestry, the manorial court, and the county justices. In practice this meant a combination of the millowners with the landowner and his agents; an arrangement which worked because it was the governmental counterpart of the paternal social structure. Other *ad hoc* institutions as they appeared, such as the Guardians of the Poor elected in 1837 and the Street

¹ Glossop Borough Records, Waterworks Deeds.

² *Glossop Record*, 7 Mar. 1863.

³ *Ibid.*, 8 Feb. 1862.

Lighting Inspectors of 1860, were dove-tailed into the pattern, since they consisted of the same people.¹ The system might have survived longer if the parties involved could have agreed on a fair division of influence. But the millowners became suspicious of the landowner, and the Dissenting Liberals of the Anglican Tories who dominated the select vestry, and mutual distrust allied itself to a growing civic patriotism which demanded that Glossop should become a borough.

The occasion for incorporation was an extraordinary (and perhaps collusive) quarrel between the Catholic millowner and the Catholic landowner, when in 1864 Francis Sumner questioned Lord Edward Howard's right to supply and charge for domestic water. When proposals for a Local Board under the 1858 Act, to take over local government and the waterworks, were blocked by the vestry, Lord Edward gave his blessing and legal aid to a petition for a Borough charter. The charter, without the desired parliamentary representation, was granted in October 1866. Sumner became the first mayor—but the Borough did not take over the waterworks—and Lord Edward's solicitor, Thomas Michael Ellison, a grandson of the 12th Duke's agent, became the first town clerk.²

The Borough charter marked Glossop's coming of age. It was now a mature, if small, town, almost as large as today. Its cotton mills now settled down after the cotton famine to enjoy for half a century the fruits of their specialized industry. It was a period of considerable prosperity for Glossop, soon reinforced by the expansion of the paper mills, and large fortunes were made by the few whilst the many enjoyed steadily rising real wages.

The Borough Council elected in December 1866 was a 'cotton-ocracy'. Twelve millowners and a manager were elected amongst eighteen councillors, and five of them raised to the aldermanic bench of six (though they were replaced as councillors by small traders). The five borough J.P.s nominated in 1867, in addition to the county justices, John Hill Wood and Francis Sumner, were all millowners, as were all but three of the mayors up to the end of the century.³ This was natural and expected in Glossop, and provoked neither criticism nor comment. What mattered to Glossopians was

¹ Glossop Parish Records (in the possession of the Vicar of Glossop, Rev. E. B. Branwell); Derby County Records; other local government records in the possession of Glossop Borough Council.

² Hamnett, *op. cit.*; Glossop Borough Records, Charter, and Waterworks Deeds.

³ Glossop Borough Records, Council Minutes.

that they belonged to different churches and consequently, in Victorian England, to different political persuasions. The rival politico-religious groups, with one exception, were represented by their largest millowners. The exception was Edmund Potter, a man unsuited by temperament for the tea-cup storms of local politics, whose main interests lay elsewhere, in Manchester society, international calico-printing, and political support of his friends, Cobden and Bright.¹ Until the arrival of Edward Partington in 1874 the leadership of the Liberal Dissenters was shared by Edward and Thomas Platt and Thomas Rhodes. The Catholics were led by Sumner, and the Tory Anglicans by Daniel and Samuel Wood and their kinsmen, James and William Sidebottom.

The emulation bred by these rivalries stimulated rather than impeded the work of administration. Municipal duties were at first rudimentary, limited to policing, lighting, sanitary inspection, and the collection of rates. Over the following decades these were extended, chiefly by national legislation, to a host of humdrum but important responsibilities: public health, sewage works, waterworks (purchased from Lord Howard in 1880), and the inspection of food, workshops, weights and measures, cowsheds, milkshops and slaughterhouses, common lodging houses, house building, river pollution, and so on. As the turnpike trusts lapsed between 1875 and 1882 the borough shared with the county the maintenance of the roads. Since the town was well supplied by the churches with competitive day schools it never had a school board, but in 1887 a school-attendance committee was appointed, in the nineties technical evening classes were provided, and in 1903 an education committee was set up jointly with the voluntary agencies to operate the new Education Act. Altogether it was a typical small authority's record of painstaking if sometimes reluctant civic improvement.²

Against this background of quiet administration the foreground was filled by the rivalries of the leading industrial families. No longer overshadowed by ducal landowners, or preoccupied with the struggle for economic survival, they now, between the incorporation of the Borough and the First World War, came into their own. Glossop's hey-day is the history of a handful of leading families, luxuriating in their paternal relationship to the town, and competing for its political

¹ Notably as M.P. for Carlisle, 1861-74. He was a judge at all the great international exhibitions from 1851 until his death in 1883. Hurst, *op. cit.*

² Glossop Borough Records, Council and Committee Minutes.

control, civic honours, and corporate gratitude. The Howards, raised to a barony in 1869, stood more aloof than their ducal ancestors, perhaps because they were no longer separated from the leading millowners by an insuperable barrier of wealth. The first two barons took no part in borough politics, appearing only in a non-partisan role to grace civic occasions or bestow land for municipal improvements.

The rivalries of the leading millowners were at the patriarchal level and of the gentlemanly kind. They saw eye to eye on all important matters, attended the same functions, and shared the control of such paternal institutions as the cricket club and the Volunteers. Since the Howards stood aside and Sumner lost interest, the major struggle was between the Tory Anglicans and the Liberal Dissenters, and this rapidly crystallized in the personal rivalry between the Woods and the Partingtons.¹

When Edward Partington arrived in 1874 the Woods and their kinsmen, the Sidebottoms, were long and well established. Partington, a man of imposing presence and translucent ability, rose almost as rapidly in Glossop society as he did in the paper industry, becoming a captain in the Volunteers, J.P. for the Borough, and a county councillor. Yet in every direction he was overreached by the Woods and Sidebottoms. William Sidebottom, Colonel of the Volunteers, became in 1885 first M.P. for the High Peak—Partington, after hesitation, shrinking from the contest. Sidebottoms and Woods were mayors seventeen times before Partington passed the chair. When Partington built the cricket pavilion and his son Herbert patronized the rugby club, Samuel Hill Wood sponsored the football club to such effect that it won a place in the League second division, and for a brief season (1899–1900) in the first.

Competitive benevolence reached its zenith at the 1887 Jubilee celebrations. To mark the occasion and crown a long lifetime of pre-eminence in the town, the Wood family built and endowed the hospital, built the baths, and laid out the park. Partington and his friend Herbert Rhodes, boasting that the Liberals cared more for intellect, offered to build a library and public hall. Their plan assumed that Lord Howard would give the land, as he had done for the hospital, baths, and park, and that the Council would institute a

¹ The Wood-Partington rivalry is documented in the *Glossop Advertiser* and the *Glossop Chronicle* and to a smaller extent in the Borough Council Records, and is very fresh in the minds of older inhabitants of the town; information was also kindly supplied by Mr. R. Marsland of Wood Brothers (Glossop), Ltd., and Mr. R. J. Sutherland of Olive and Partington, Ltd.

library rate to provide books and staff. Landowner and Council proved fractious, and the scheme nearly foundered. Eventually Partington underwrote increased building costs, and the council was manœuvred by his threat to withdraw the gift into adopting the Public Libraries Act.

After the deaths of Daniel and Samuel Wood in 1888, the Tory-Anglican interest was championed first by Tom Harrop Sidebottom (M.P. for Stalybridge, 1874–80 and 1885–1900) and his brothers James (mayor of Glossop eight times) and William (M.P. for the High Peak, 1885–1900, a partner in the Woods' firm, and a director of such notable concerns as Cammell, Laird & Co., and Newton, Chambers & Co., of Sheffield). Later, especially after the failure and sale of the Sidebottoms combine in the early 1890's, the leadership fell to their sister, Mrs. Ann Kershaw Wood, widow of Daniel, and her son, Samuel Hill Wood. A woman of strong character and great energy, Mrs. Wood had long devoted herself to Anglican education, building missions and schools and in 1905 the fifth Anglican church, St. Luke's. Her zeal for the church was surpassed only by her dislike of state education, and to save the Dissenters' schools from mediatization under the 1902 Act she offered, unsuccessfully, to lend the cost of modernizing them. Her son, later Sir Samuel Hill-Wood, Bart., was a well-known sportsman, owner of famous horses and greyhounds, cricket captain of Glossop and Derbyshire, and chairman of the Glossop and Arsenal football clubs. Within a year of his election to the Glossop Council in 1897 the Conservatives made him mayor, and continued to re-elect him while their majority lasted. At his fourth election in 1901, he beat Edward Partington by the casting vote, and the following year he himself proposed Partington to a Liberal Council.

In the ensuing years it was Partington's turn to seal his relationship to the Borough with a munificent gift. He was now at the head of an international paper combine with interests in Norway, Sweden, Austria, and Canada. His son Herbert, heir apparent to the business, was a councillor, and his second son, Oswald, was M.P. for the High Peak. He now built and endowed the Partington Nurses' and Convalescent Home, opened by his son Herbert, as mayor, in 1908. In 1907 Partington was made the first freeman of the borough.

The Woods were not eclipsed. The sporting Samuel, at the third attempt, won the parliamentary seat from Oswald, and cut short a promising junior minister's career. Mrs. Wood levelled the score in

civic honours by becoming the first lady freeman of the borough. In reply, Herbert Partington became mayor again in 1913, and held office until his premature death in 1916, to be succeeded until 1919 by his widow, who received an O.B.E. for her services to the town.

The rivalry of the Woods and Partingtons, which brought large benefits as well as entertainment to Glossop, is still looked back on by Glossopians as the central theme of their heroic age. To the end honours remained remarkably even. The Woods achieved two baronetcies (John Wood in 1918, Samuel in 1921) against Partington's barony (in 1917, with the name of Doverdale). On what delicate balance are such distinctions weighed?

The Bad Years, 1919-39

In retrospect the peace celebrations at Glossop in 1919 look like a grand finale. All the great families were represented, for the last time: Lord Howard, Lord Doverdale and his daughter-in-law the mayoress, Sir John Wood, Major and Mrs. Samuel Wood, James Sidebottom, Colonel and Mrs. Heywood (heiress of the Platts), Thomas Rhodes, and Isaac Jackson. The Woods and Heywoods entertained old people to tea, Lord Doverdale gave the children medals. Lord Howard gave a landscaped avenue in memory of a son killed in the war. The highlight of the proceedings was the purchase and presentation to the Borough by Isaac Jackson of the town-hall and market rights.¹ These, apart from a charitable trust left by Jackson in 1932, were the last of the symbolic gifts to the town by men who not only made their fortunes in Glossop but made it their home. It was a sort of valediction, for the old families were soon to die out or drift away.

Yet at the time the celebrations seemed the opening of a new act in Glossop's prosperity. The post-war boom promised a revival of the cotton trade in the accustomed manner. The surviving combines seized the opportunity of the boom to refloat themselves on a larger scale. But the British cotton industry was not on the threshold of prosperity. Until 1929 it laboured in the doldrums; from 1929 it was caught in an economic blizzard. All the cotton towns suffered in the decay of the twenties and the disasters of the thirties, and Glossop as badly as any. Nearly all the town's looms and spindles were tied by a threefold specialization to the most depressed branch of the trade: the manufacture of low-priced goods from the coarser cottons,

¹ Local Collection, *Programme of the Peace Celebrations, 1919*.

in large mills lacking the flexibility of smaller units, for the most vulnerable export markets. Over-capitalization left the leading firms unprepared for cut-price competition and heavy losses. Cotton accounted for three-quarters of the working population, paper with 9 per cent. being the only important alternative. Glossop had lost the art of attracting new industries. No new enterprise employing more than fifty workers had been founded since 1884. From every point of view Glossop was a prototype victim of Japanese and Indian competition.

The first symptom of decline was the crash of the largest combine. Refloated in 1920, by 1924 John Wood and Brothers, Ltd., was bankrupt. The firm was refounded by its creditors, but never operated again on its previous scale.¹ Throughout the twenties unemployment in Glossop was high, standing in the summer of 1929 before the slump at 14 per cent.² By 1931, after two years of deepening depression, it had reached 55 per cent.; in Hadfield alone, 67 per cent. It remained high through the thirties: 36 per cent. in 1938, 23 per cent. in 1939—the figures taking no account of short-time working. The record was among the worst in the cotton region, and comparable with such distressed areas as west Cumberland or south Wales.

After the first two years of the slump, when no jobs were to be had elsewhere, there was a good deal of emigration from the district, and between 1931 and 1939 the population declined by 9 per cent. However, this decline was checked by the war and since 1939 the population has varied hardly at all. The detailed figures are given in Table 3 on page 30.

Emigration did little to relieve the distress, and may have increased it, since the emigrants were from the younger and more active sections of the community, and left behind a population more heavily weighted by the aged and dependent. With high unemployment, low purchasing power, slack trade in the shops, arrears of rent for the property owners, high pressure on inadequate social services, and the practical impossibility of raising the rates to improve them, the town was caught in the classical downward spiral of the depressed area.

¹ Information supplied by Mr. R. Marsland of Wood Brothers (Glossop), Ltd.

² H. N. Sheldon, 'Industrial Changes in the Glossop Area' (unpublished M.A.(Com.) dissertation, Manchester University, 1950), from which much of the economic information in this and the succeeding paragraphs has been derived.

TABLE 3

Population of Glossop, 1901-51

Year	Population and source			
	Census	Census (revised area)	Census (revised area)	Annual estimates of Registrar- General
1901	23,493	21,526
1911	..	21,688
1921	..	20,531
1931	..	19,509	20,000	19,710
1939	17,960
1951	18,004	17,900

In its distress, unprecedented save for the period of the cotton famine, the community found itself without its old leaders. 'The happy strength of capitalists' who had come to its rescue once before were all gone. The manorial estate was sold up in 1925 after the death of the second Lord Howard. Lord Doverdale died the same year, and in 1927 Olive and Partington's mills were absorbed by the Inveresk Group. Of the combines Platts' and Shepleys' did not survive the war, Sumners' was acquired in 1920 by a syndicate, Woods', as we have seen, collapsed temporarily in 1924, and neither of the Rhodes concerns survived the 1930's. In 1939 there remained only three of the vertical enterprises, each with a considerably reduced capacity, and six other cotton firms, including rope and banding mills. The total capacity, 299,364 spindles and 4,451 looms, was little more than one-third that of 1913, and even this was under-employed.¹ Potters' print-works, with the Sidebottoms' mills acquired by Gartside's of Manchester, had been absorbed by the Calico Printers Association, Ltd., forty years before. The feeling is still strong among older Glossopians that decay came with the giant combines and impersonal public companies. Unjustified as this opinion is, the loss to the town's morale and to its social and political life was severe. The places of the old owner-managers of redoubtable character, independent opinions, and large resources were not filled by the most benevolent of professional managers, even where they were resident in the town. The community which had once been a

¹ *The Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers' Directory*, from 1931 *The Lancashire Textile Industry* (published by John Worrall, Ltd.), Oldham, for dates cited.

well-endowed patriarchy found itself within a decade a stricken democracy of equals.

The shopkeepers, artisans, civil servants, and school-masters who inherited the responsibilities of local political leadership, faced a formidable task. They discerned that the town's chief need was for new, diversified industries, and set about attracting them. In 1931 they set up a Development Committee for Glossop, with representatives of the borough council, the leading industrial concerns, the banks, public utility and transport undertakings, the Trades Council, Chamber of Trade, and local Labour Exchange. In affiliation with the Lancashire Industrial Development Council, the committee compiled and tabulated information about available factory space and advertised it widely in this country and abroad. Their efforts bore some fruit. By 1939 eleven new firms, four of them foreign, had established themselves in Glossop. Five of these manufactured textiles other than traditional cotton yarn and piece-goods: worsted suitings, silk and silk noil, sports netting, and webbing and belting. The other six were in industries completely new to the district: rubber, chemicals, ferro-alloys, bricks, vulcanized fibre, and instrument making. The total employment they provided, however, was small, only the rubber company employing more than fifty workers. Glossop's malady was not to be cured by anything less than a general revival of economic activity on the national scale.

Revival, 1939-55

Like other depressed towns, Glossop was saved by the war. Within a few months of its outbreak, unemployment turned to labour shortage. Though several more cotton mills closed down, suitable factory space in a safe area attracted Naval and R.A.F. stores establishments employing over 2,000, two small strategically important firms manufacturing rare metals and small machine tools, a small munitions factory, and a forces' clothing firm. The remaining textile firms were busy with war orders. In addition there came a group of bombed-out concerns, including a large food-processing firm, and smaller ones handling waste rubber, manufacturing brushes, tanning liquors, and industrial clothing, all of which settled permanently in Glossop.

Glossop emerged from the war with an economy better balanced than at any previous date. Its textile industry was more variegated, producing new high-quality cottons and a wide variety of rayons and

cotton mixtures with rayon, wool, and silk. Firms not engaged in textiles employed 40 per cent. of all manufacturing workers, and it seemed that only a few more such firms, if sizeable, were needed to diversify the town's industries sufficiently to secure its economic future.

For this to be achieved, however, the town had to have the co-operation of the national government. During the thirties the Government had been reluctant to assume responsibility for the location of industry and had done no more than encourage firms to go to the Special Areas. By 1945 the Government, encouraged by the Barlow Report,¹ was committed to a location policy and had the necessary powers of direction. Many of the cotton towns looked forward to government help in the approved policy of diversifying their industries so as to protect themselves against the consequences of the gradual decline of the British cotton industry. In this they were disappointed. In a time of full employment the introduction of new industries into the cotton towns could only have resulted in attracting workers away from the mills and a consequent decline in cotton exports. The immediate need of the country to increase cotton exports was given priority over the long-term need to diversify the industrial structure of the cotton towns. The Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour actively discouraged firms from establishing factories in the cotton-manufacturing areas and refused them the necessary licences if the issue was pressed.

Writing in 1950, a student of the local economy said: 'It is quite impossible to discover how many tentative enquiries from industrialists have been repulsed by the Ministry of Labour and the Board of Trade since the war, but I am assured that there have been many.'² In consequence only three firms have come to the town since 1945, and two of these are very small. The balance of the town's industries in the post-war period is indicated by the figures in Table 4.

It can be seen that the town is still rather heavily dependent on the cotton industry, although the mills have changed their products and are by no means so dependent on a single type of market as they were before the depression. It is ironical that government planning of the location of industry should have worked to the disadvantage of Glossop, a town whose exceptional unemployment rate and dependence on a single industry made it the classical type of area

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population*, Cmd. 6153, 1940.

² H. N. Sheldon, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

such planning was intended to help. The town would probably have fared better after the war had it been left to its own devices, as it was up to 1939.

TABLE 4¹*Employment in Manufacturing Industry, October 1954*

Industry	No. employed	%
Cotton (spinning, weaving, and finishing)	2,375	41
Other textiles	670	11
Clothing (including gloves)	675	12
Paper making	607	10
Food canning	429	7
Rubber products	254	4
Other industries	820	14
Total	5,830	100

In spite of this disappointment, Glossop since the war has enjoyed for the first time in a generation a prolonged period of peacetime prosperity of the kind it once took for granted. Employment has remained at a high level. Today nobody goes hungry; personal incomes are higher than ever before; and cars and television aerials as common as elsewhere. For all that, it remains an old town, carrying its past in its face; a product of the industrial revolution, and still recognizably the same town as that vigorous raw community which sprang up between the mills in the early nineteenth century.²

¹ These figures were kindly supplied by the Ministry of Labour.

² The author wishes to thank the many Glossopians who have helped a stranger to complete this brief history of their town. He also wishes to acknowledge a special debt to the following: Mr. H. B. Dolphin, M.C., M.A., Town Clerk of Warwick, formerly Town Clerk of Glossop, and his staff; the Rev. E. B. Branwell, M.A., vicar of Glossop, and Mrs. D. Branwell; Alderman J. D. Doyle; and Mr. R. Marsland of Wood Brothers (Glossop), Ltd.